

District and County Councillor's Report – September 2026

Local Plan

We are now at a very key time in the process for the District Council's Local Plan (the blueprint outlining where to build houses, public amenities and employment space over the next 20 years), we have entered the final round of public consultation that is being undertaken before the plan will be submitted to government for examination. This is very important as it's the last opportunity for us to comment on the proposals before the council can choose to make any final adjustments before submitting. The comments made at this stage will be seen by the planning inspector, who is the one that will make the final judgement on whether the Local Plan is deemed to be 'sound', or not.

The big-ticket item in our area is the Grange Farm new town proposal. Initially it was proposed to build a new 6000 house development to the north of Abington. There were over 1000 representations received via the first public consultation in January this year, on the Grange Farm proposal alone, so thank you to all those who engaged with the process. Following this the council has made some changes – the main two being the number of houses has been reduced from 6000 to 4500 giving a density of circa 45-60 houses per hectare. They have also increased the landscape buffer between the Roman Road, which is classed as a historic monument, and the nearest house.

The other big issue is water supply – where will it come from? Given the scale of the proposal at Grange Farm, the proposed plan is to not begin construction of the site until 2034, when a new pipeline from Graham Water is installed and operational. There is also a new reservoir being built in Fenland that will service our area, due around the same time.

Whatever the final proposal is, please do use this opportunity to comment on it – positively or negatively – as Grange Farm would be the largest settlement in our area, if taken forward.

You can submit your views on the Council's website -

<https://consultations.greatercambridgeplanning.org/proposed-submission-greater-cambridge-local-plan>

There are also a raft of public events that the Council are running around the area, where you can go and ask the team questions directly, get the actual facts about the proposals and get help submitting comments, if needed.

The events being held locally have all occurred but the full schedule of the public events can be seen here - <https://www.greatercambridgeplanning.org/local-and-neighbourhood-planning/emerging-plans-and-guidance/greater-cambridge-local-plan-the-20-year-plan-for-the-greater-cambridge-area>

Local Government Reorganisation

The government's plan to turn all local authorities in the country into 'Unitary Authorities' has hit yet another stumbling block. We were originally expecting an announcement from the minister on what the new geographies of the new councils would be back in July. This announcement was then postponed until October this year. We then heard in early September that the entire plan for Cambridgeshire was being paused until further notice, which came as a surprise to a lot of us given the amount of time, effort and money the local authorities have put into facilitating the request. This means that the timetable we had previously reported on, has changed – we now definitely won't have local elections for the new unitary council in 2027, with the earliest date 2028 and said council coming into being in 2029. A bit of a mess to say the least.

Other Planning Matters

You may have also seen that the planning situation in the Greater Cambridge area is to become more complicated. We already knew that we are to have a Development Corporation implemented in our area, which will make all of the decision on 'Strategic Sites' in the South Cambs and Cambridge City areas. This can be anything from a site of 250 houses and higher.

We now also have the added complication of Mayors being given more planning powers by central government than they already have, which is essentially only transport planning. They will soon have the power to veto any planning decision made by any of the local councils in the county.

Food Waste Collection

The roll out of separate food waste collections are slowly moving forward. The next tranche of food bins are being delivered in the first week of September. Our part of the District is the last to get the new bins and is currently on schedule to start in October this year.

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