



State of the District – South Cambridgeshire

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South Cambridgeshire Hall

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Introduction

South Cambridgeshire is a vibrant rural district of 350 square miles surrounding Cambridge City. It is home to world-leading centres of science and technology such as Granta Park, the Babraham Institute and the Genome Campus at Hinxton. In addition to hosting some of the most renowned science parks, it hosts over 8,000 businesses, the majority of whom are small to medium enterprises.

Although it is home to some of England's oldest villages, South Cambridgeshire is hosting the development of some of the most exciting and largest new towns in the country. This includes Cambourne, Northstowe and Waterbeach. Greater Cambridge (the city of Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire) has seen 19,000 new homes from April 2011 to March 2023. This brings with it the environmental and housing based pressures associated with one of the fastest growing areas of the UK.

This State of the District report gives a high level overview of the key dimensions of society and economy in South Cambridgeshire. Using data from a number of sources, the report includes areas such as the local economy, health and wellbeing, and carbon emissions.

Population

According to the 2021 Census, South Cambridgeshire has a total population of 162,119, made up of 82,563 females and 79,558 males. Between the last two censuses (held in 2011 and 2021), the population of South Cambridgeshire increased by 9%, from around 148,800 in 2011. This compares with an 8.3% population increase for the whole of the East of England and a 6.6% increase for England (1).



The average (median) age of South Cambridgeshire residents increased by one year since the last census, from 41 to 42 years of age. This is slightly higher than the median age of England which is 40 (1). The population pyramid in figure 1 shows the distribution of population between each age.

There are 31,800 individuals over the age of 64 in South Cambridgeshire, making up 19.6% of the total population. This is a higher proportion than both Cambridgeshire at 18.6%, and England at 18.4% (1). The number of people aged between 65 and 74 years rose by around 3,400 (an increase of 26.2%) since 2011, while the number of residents aged between 20 and 24 years fell by around 850 (a 12.0% decrease) (2).

The area with the lowest proportion of people aged over 64 in the district is in Cambourne and the surrounding area. Generally, a younger population is found in the northwest of the district, covering new communities such as Cambourne and Northstowe (3).

89% of South Cambridgeshire identify with the high level 'white' category of ethnicity, higher than England at 81%, but similar to Cambridgeshire which is 88.6% (1). Of the 11% that do not identify as white, the second biggest ethnic group is Asian, Asian British, or Asian Welsh, of which 5.8% of South Cambridgeshire identify. Figure 2 shows the number of different broad ethnic groups in South Cambridgeshire, and how this compares to both Cambridgeshire, and England as a whole.

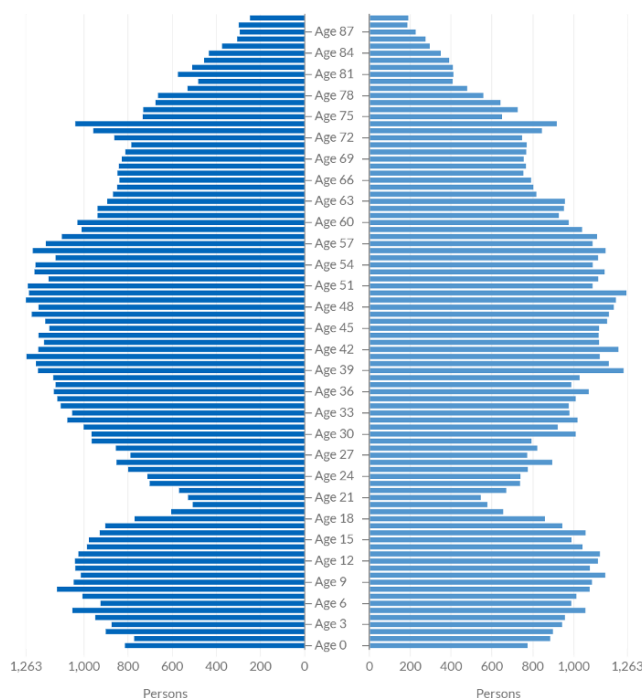


Figure 1 - Population distribution of South Cambridgeshire between ages

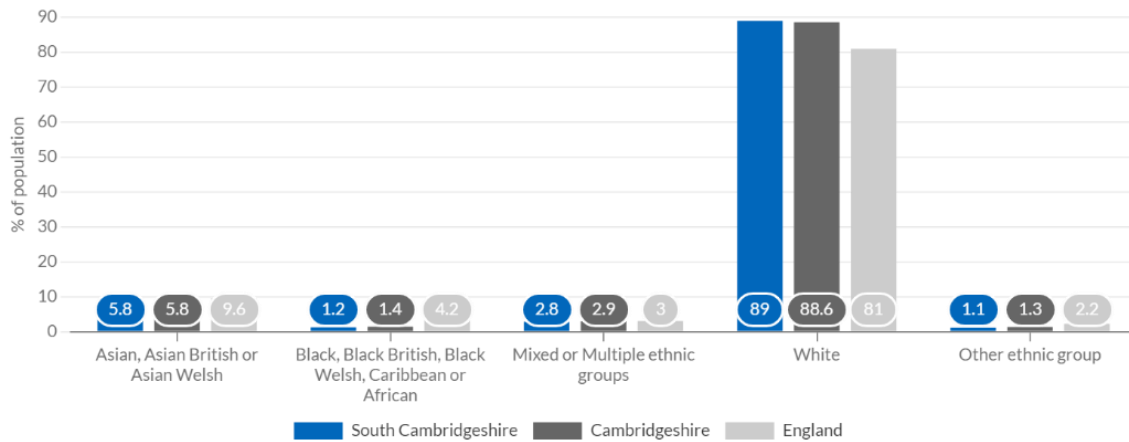


Figure 2 - Broad ethnic groups

According to Cambridgeshire County Council’s population forecasts, the population of South Cambridgeshire is projected to grow to 222,345 by 2041. This is an increase of 37.2%, much higher than all other districts in Cambridgeshire. There is projected to be an additional 16,480 people aged over 64 in the district by 2041, taking the proportion of those aged over 64 to 21.7% in 2041, compared to 19.6% in 2021. The proportion of working aged people (aged 16-64) is projected to decrease slightly over the same period from 62% to 61% (4).

Health, wellbeing, and safety

The Office for National Statistics conducts an annual survey of the population to gauge feelings of anxiety, happiness, life satisfaction, and worthwhileness. In the 2021-22 survey, South Cambridgeshire ranked above the national average in all of these categories, suggesting that quality of life in South Cambridgeshire is above average for the United Kingdom. Since 2011, levels of anxiety, happiness, life satisfaction, and worthwhileness in South Cambridgeshire have generally stayed the same (5).

The Local Authority Health report undertaken by Public Health in 2019 outlined that South Cambridgeshire’s life expectancy is increasing, and is higher than the national average (6). Additionally, life expectancy is not significantly different for people in the



most deprived areas of South Cambridgeshire than in the least deprived areas. The report also sets out that the emergency hospital admission rate for intentional self-harm in South Cambridgeshire is increasing, and is much higher than the regional and national rate.

The most prevalent conditions recorded on GP registers in South Cambridgeshire are high blood pressure (13.4%), depression (11.2%), and asthma (7.5%). This is compared to 13.1%, 11.7%, and 6.7% for Cambridgeshire, respectively (7).

72.8% of year 6 children (aged 10-11 years) in the district are of a healthy weight, with 25.4% being overweight, and 1.8% being underweight (8). These are better figures than the region in which 34.2% of year 6 children are overweight, and England as a whole in which 36.6% are overweight.

Generally, South Cambridgeshire residents reported better general health than Cambridgeshire and England. Figure 3 shows how people's self-reported health compares to both Cambridgeshire and England as a whole (9).

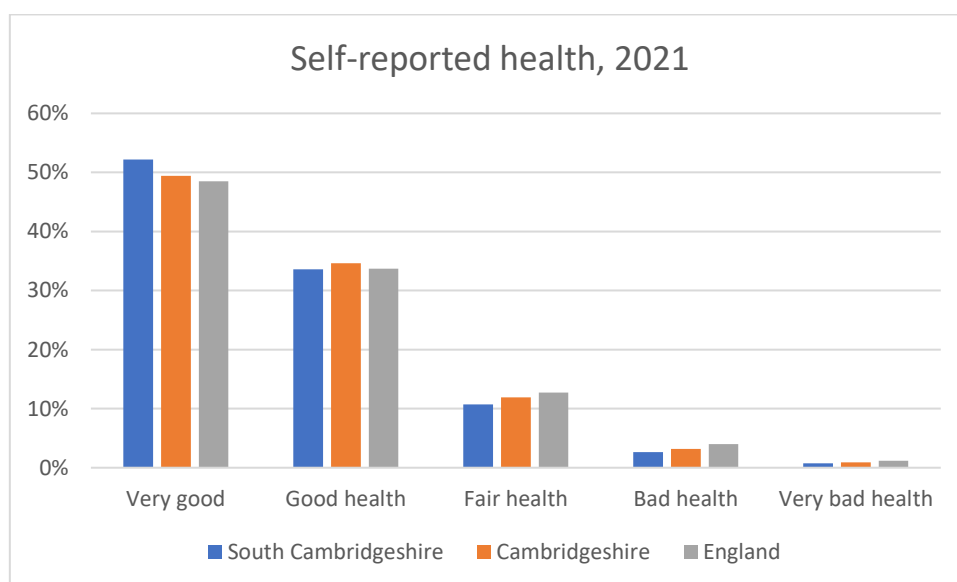


Figure 3 - Self-reported health



52.2% of residents reported that they had very good health, which is higher than that of England, where 48.5% reported that they had very good health. Additionally, the proportion of South Cambridgeshire residents that reported their health as bad or very bad is lower than both Cambridgeshire and England.

South Cambridgeshire remains a relatively low crime area, with the lowest overall crime rate of all districts in Cambridgeshire. Figure 4 shows how the total crime rate per 1,000 population in South Cambridgeshire compares the other districts in Cambridgeshire (10).

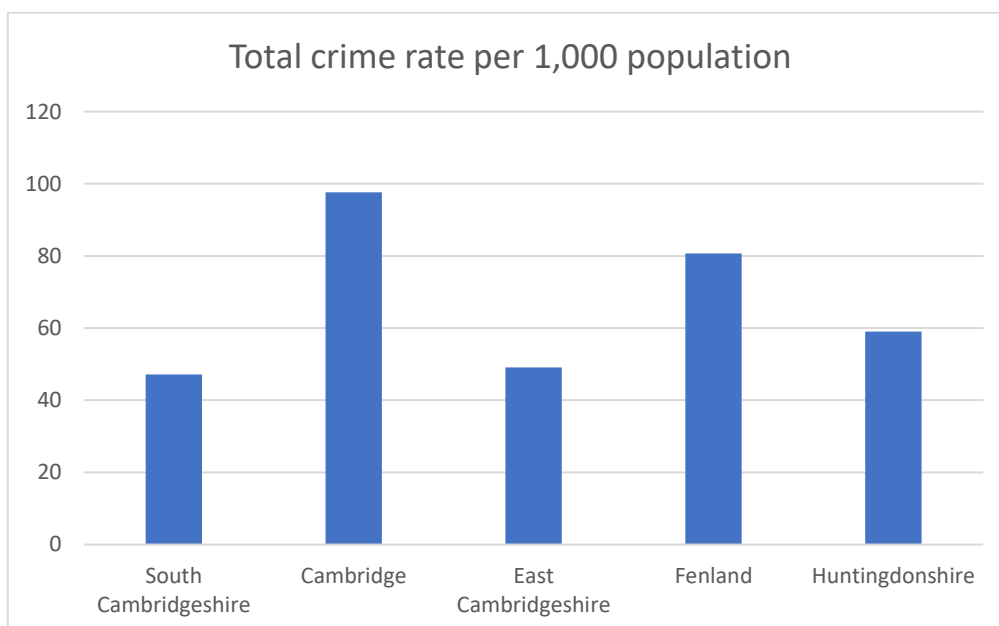


Figure 4 - Total crime rate per 1,000 population

The total crime rate per 1,000 population in South Cambridgeshire in 2022 was 47.1. This is an increase of 12% on the previous year, however this can likely be accounted for due to reduced crime figures through the pandemic. When compared to 2019 levels, the 2022 figures represent a 5% increase.



Deprivation

South Cambridgeshire ranks 301/317 of all local authorities nationally, where 1 is most deprived (11). This means South Cambridgeshire is the 16th least deprived district out of the 317 English Local Authorities.

Where the 1st decile is most deprived in the UK and the 10th decile is least deprived, 1% of Lower-layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in South Cambridgeshire are in the 3rd decile, and 34.4% of LSOAs in the district are in the 10th decile (11). LSOAs are smaller output areas than wards, and consist of between 1,000 and 3,000 people. Figure 5 shows the percentage of LSOAs in each national deprivation decile, while figure 6 shows the spatial distribution of deprivation by LSOA, where darker colours represent more deprived areas.

Local authority profile

% of LSOAs in each national deprivation decile

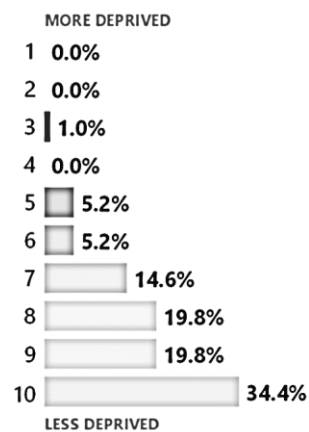


Figure 5 - % of LSOAs in each national deprivation decile

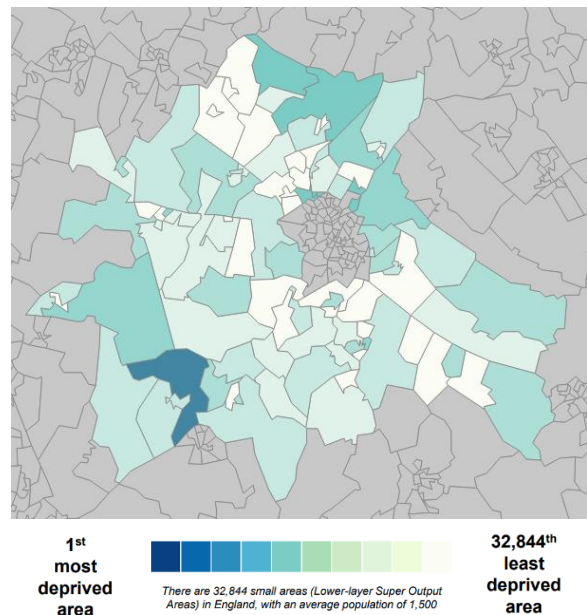


Figure 6 - IMD scores at LSOA level

The most deprived LSOA in South Cambridgeshire can be found in the south of the district covering areas of Bassingbourn, Melbourn, and The Mordens wards, which is in the 3rd decile nationally. The second most deprived LSOAs cover areas of Over & Willingham ward, Cottenham ward, and Milton & Waterbeach ward in the north of the district. Two LSOAs here rank in the 5th decile nationally.



The 'claimant count' refers to the number of people claiming Job Seekers Allowance and those claiming Universal Credit that are required to seek work. Latest figures from November 2023 indicate that the claimant count in South Cambridgeshire is 1,760, equating the 1.8% of residents aged 16 to 64. This is compared to a claimant count of 2.2% in Cambridgeshire, and 3.8% in England as a whole (12).

In October 2023, there were 8,488 Universal Credit claimants in South Cambridgeshire. Of these, 3,804 were in employment, and 4,644 were not in employment (13).

The Low Income Low Energy Efficiency (LILEE) definition of fuel poverty states that a household is fuel poor if they live in a property with an energy efficiency rating of band D, E, F, or G, and their disposable income is below the poverty line. In South Cambridgeshire, there are 6,411 households that are in fuel poverty, which is 9.8% of all households (14). This is comparatively better than Cambridgeshire as a whole, in which 12.3% of households are in fuel poverty, and England, in which 13.2% of households are in fuel poverty.

A survey of education statistics and pupil disadvantage was undertaken by the ONS in 2017. It outlined that in South Cambridgeshire, 67.1% of those aged 19 have attained a level 3 qualification, equivalent to an A Level. Of those that were eligible for free school meals, just 27.4% attained a level 3 qualification. In England as a whole, a lower proportion, 57.1%, of 19 year olds attained a level 3 qualification, but a higher proportion, 36.2%, of those eligible for free school meals, attained this (15).

The Local Economy

The ONS annual population survey estimates that 81.7% of residents in South Cambridgeshire are in employment. This is higher than both the East of England at 81.1%, and Great Britain at 78.6%. Of the 83,300 residents that are in employment,



72,600 are employees, while 10,700 are self-employed. The unemployment rate stands at 3%, below regional and national rates (16).

There are an estimated 16,000 economically inactive people in South Cambridgeshire, which is 16.7% of 16-64 year olds, a lower proportion than Great Britain which is 21.4%. Of this, 6,400 are students, making up 39.7% of economically inactive 16-64 year olds in South Cambridgeshire. This is a significantly higher proportion than Great Britain in which 26.7% of economically inactive people are students, and the East of England, in which 24.9% are (16).

In South Cambridgeshire, 33.6% of residents have a level 1, 2, or 3 qualification as their highest level of qualification. This is the third lowest in the country outside of London, indicating that South Cambridgeshire residents are highly educated compared to the rest of the UK. Similarly, 47.8% of residents have a level 4 qualification or above, equivalent to the first year of a bachelor's degree, which is second highest proportion in the region, behind only Cambridge City, and one of the highest levels across all local authority districts in England (17).

Figure 7 shows how people reported they travelled to work in the 2021 census.

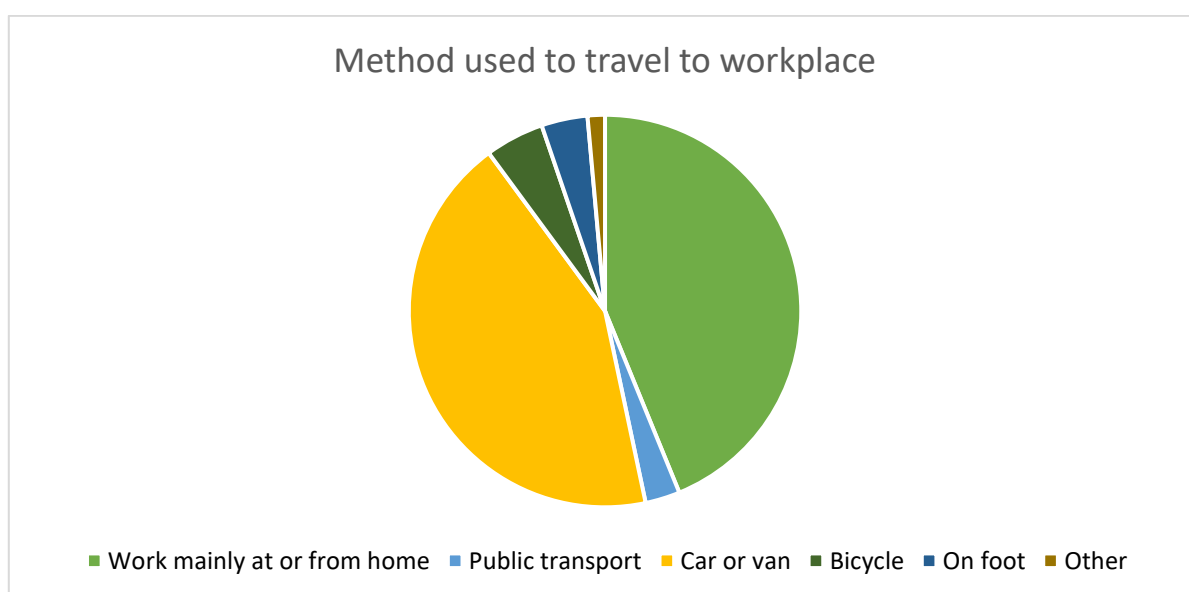


Figure 7 - Method used to travel to workplace



Of those in work, 43.8% reported that they work mainly at or from home, with 43.2% reporting that they drive or are a passenger in a car or van to work. There were just 2.9% that reported using public transport, with 8.7% reporting that they cycled or walked to work (18). This data collection is likely to have been affected by the pandemic in which a higher proportion of people began working from home.

Travel to Work Areas are areas where most people both live and work and therefore relatively few commuters cross a Travel to Work Area boundary on their way to work. South Cambridgeshire is situated within the extensive Cambridge Travel to Work Area, shown in figure 8, which reaches as far as Ely to the north, Haverhill to the east, and Hertford and Harlow to the south (19).

South Cambridgeshire residents who work tend to commute further than the national average, and this pattern increased substantively between 2011 and 2021 (in 2011, 47% of South Cambridgeshire residents commuting to work travelled 10km or more; this increased to 58% in 2021. Across England and Wales this measure was 38% in 2011 and 42% in 2021) (20).

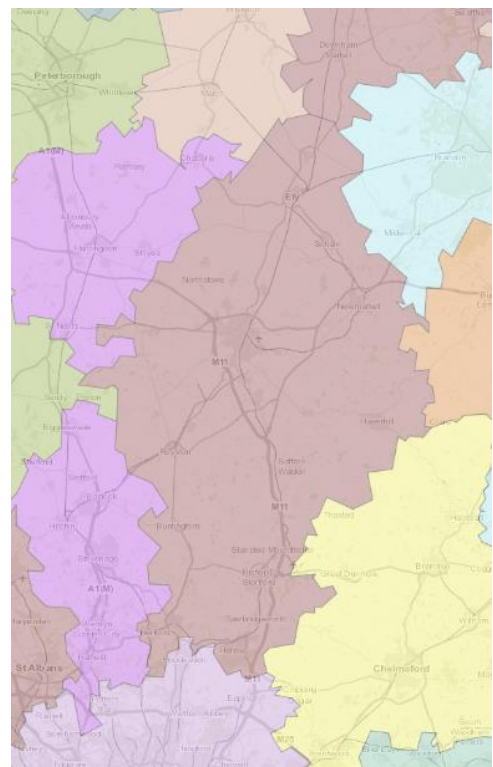


Figure 8 - Cambridge Travel to Work Area Map

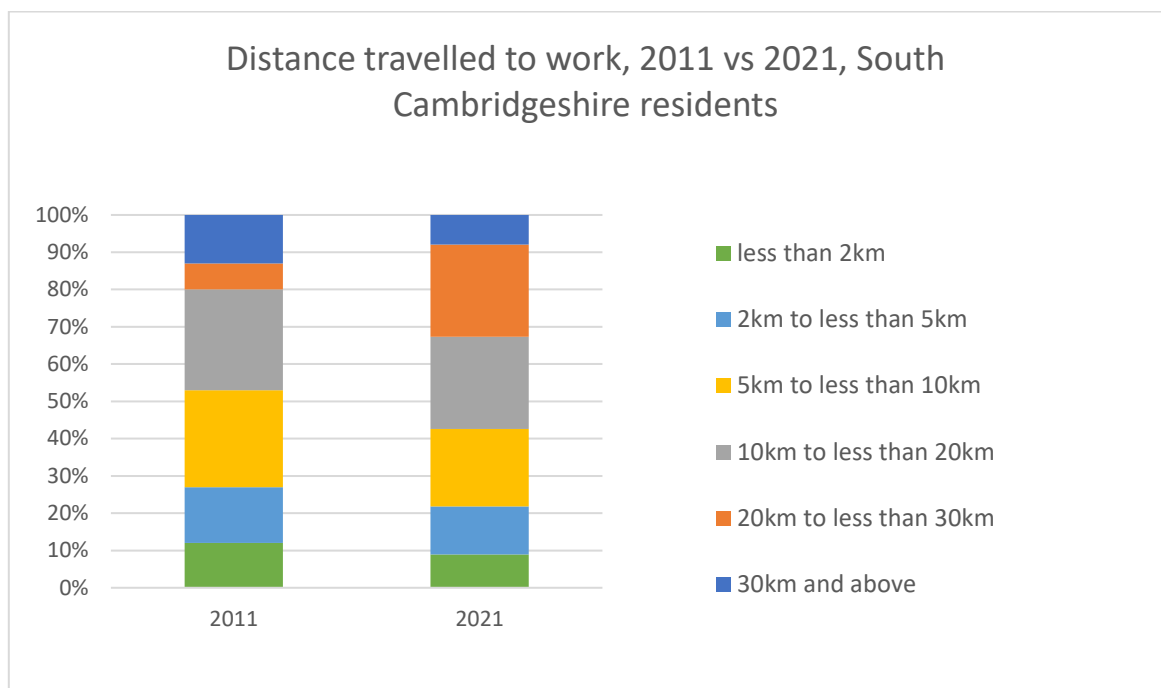


Figure 9 - Distance travelled to work, 2011 vs 2021, South Cambridgeshire residents

The highest numbers of commuters into and out of South Cambridgeshire travel for work to or from Cambridge and Huntingdonshire. Significant numbers of South Cambridgeshire residents and South Cambridgeshire workers also commute to or from other neighbouring or nearby districts. Around 1,000 South Cambridgeshire residents commuted to London in 2011. Given the COVID-19 context of Census 2021, it is not possible to understand whether this pattern has changed or not since then (20).



Top 10 commuting destinations of South Cambridgeshire residents			Top 10 commuting origins of South Cambridgeshire workers		
	2011	2021		2011	2021
1	South Cambridgeshire	South Cambridgeshire	1	South Cambridgeshire	South Cambridgeshire
2	Cambridge	Cambridge	2	Cambridge	Cambridge
3	Huntingdonshire	Huntingdonshire	3	Huntingdonshire	Huntingdonshire
4	North Hertfordshire	North Hertfordshire	4	East Cambridgeshire	West Suffolk
5	Uttlesford	West Suffolk	5	St Edmundsbury	East Cambridgeshire
6	London	East Cambridgeshire	6	North Hertfordshire	North Hertfordshire
7	East Cambridgeshire	Uttlesford	7	Forest Heath	Uttlesford
8	Central Bedfordshire	Central Bedfordshire	8	Uttlesford	Central Bedfordshire
9	St Edmundsbury	East Hertfordshire	9	Central Bedfordshire	Fenland
10	Forest Heath	Stevenage	10	Fenland	Peterborough

Figure 10 - Top 10 commuting destinations and origins of South Cambridgeshire residents and workers

According to the Inter Departmental Business Register, South Cambridgeshire is currently home to 8,080 enterprises (16). Of these, 7,090 (87.7%) are micro enterprises containing 9 or fewer employees, 775 (9.6%) are small enterprises containing 10 to 49 employees, 170 (2.1%) are medium enterprises containing 50 to 249 employees, and 40 (0.5%) are large enterprises containing 250 or more employees. South Cambridgeshire has a higher share of small, medium, and large enterprises than the East of England as a whole, and a smaller proportion of micro enterprises. Over the past decade, 1,015 additional enterprises have appeared in South Cambridgeshire, an increase of 14.4%. This compares to an increase of 26.1% across Great Britain.

Median gross weekly pay in South Cambridgeshire is above that of both the East of England and Great Britain (16).

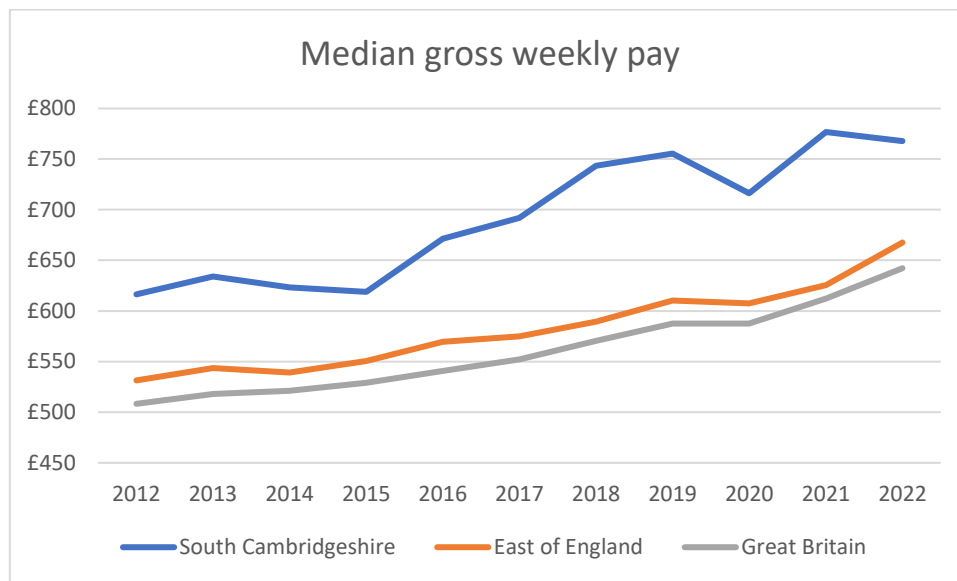


Figure 11 – Median gross weekly pay

The median gross weekly pay in South Cambridgeshire in 2022 was estimated to be £767.70, equating to an annual income of £39,920.40. This is an increase of 24.5% since 2012, which is a slightly lower rate than regional and national figures, however it is estimated that on average, employees in South Cambridgeshire earn £6,526 per annum more than the average employee in Great Britain.

Male full-time workers are earning £798.20 per week, while female full-time workers are earning £668.90 per week. Therefore, on average, male full-time workers are earning £6,723.60 (19.3%) more per annum than female full-time workers in South Cambridgeshire. This wage disparity is larger, although similar to the gender wage gap in Great Britain which is 17.4%. Despite the large disparity locally, this is a decrease from a 27.1% median wage difference in 2012.

The economy in South Cambridgeshire is dominated by the services sector, contributing to over two thirds of Gross Value Added (GVA, a measure of the output of local economy) contribution. Total GVA in South Cambridgeshire is £5.7bn, which is significantly higher than the other rural districts in Cambridgeshire. Figure 12 shows the breakdown of the local economy, and each sector's contribution to GVA and total employment (21).



Industry Sector Size by GVA and Employment, South Cambridgeshire 2021		
Sector	GVA contribution, £ million	% of total employment per sector
Agriculture, mining, electricity, gas, water, and waste	132	1.5
Manufacturing	1,271	11.6
Construction	468	5.8
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles	449	11.0
Transportation and storage	69	2.0
Accommodation and food service activities	74	4.7
Information and communication	703	10.5
Financial and insurance activities	118	1.2
Real estate activities	667	1.0
Professional, scientific, and technical activities	766	24.4
Administrative and support service activities	189	7.0
Public administration and defence	94	2.0
Education	282	8.1
Human health and social work activities	260	7.0
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	24	2.9

Figure 12 - Industry Sector Size by GVA and Employment, South Cambridgeshire 2021

81.8% of residents are employed in the services sector, with the largest single sector, professional, scientific, and technical activities, contributing to 24.4% of total employment in the district.

Employment growth in South Cambridgeshire was 9.1% in 2022-23, up substantially from 4.0% in 2021-22, and significantly higher than UK figures (22).

South Cambridgeshire has seen a rise of around £1.1 billion in its total GVA over the past decade. This is the second biggest rise in Cambridgeshire, behind only Cambridge City, which saw a rise of £1.26 billion over the same period. The trends over time are seen below.

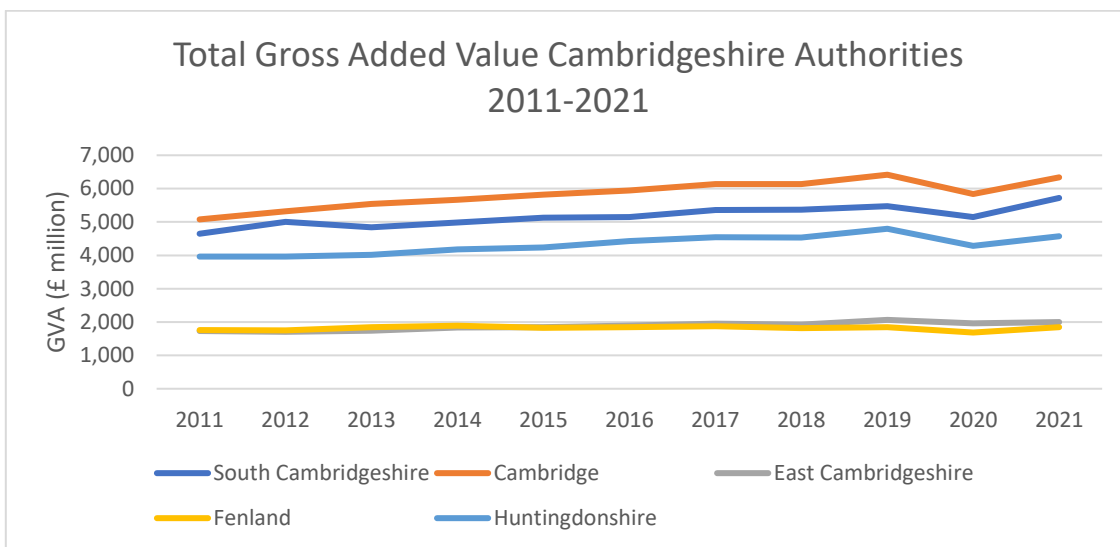


Figure 13 - Total Gross Added Value Cambridgeshire Authorities 2011-2021

South Cambridgeshire's productivity, measured by GVA per job filled, was 4.8% above the UK in 2021, and the highest of all districts in Cambridgeshire. Productivity in the district has increased over the past 10 years, and has consistently been higher than all other districts in Cambridgeshire, however it has increased at a slower rate than other local districts, and slower than the UK as a whole (21).

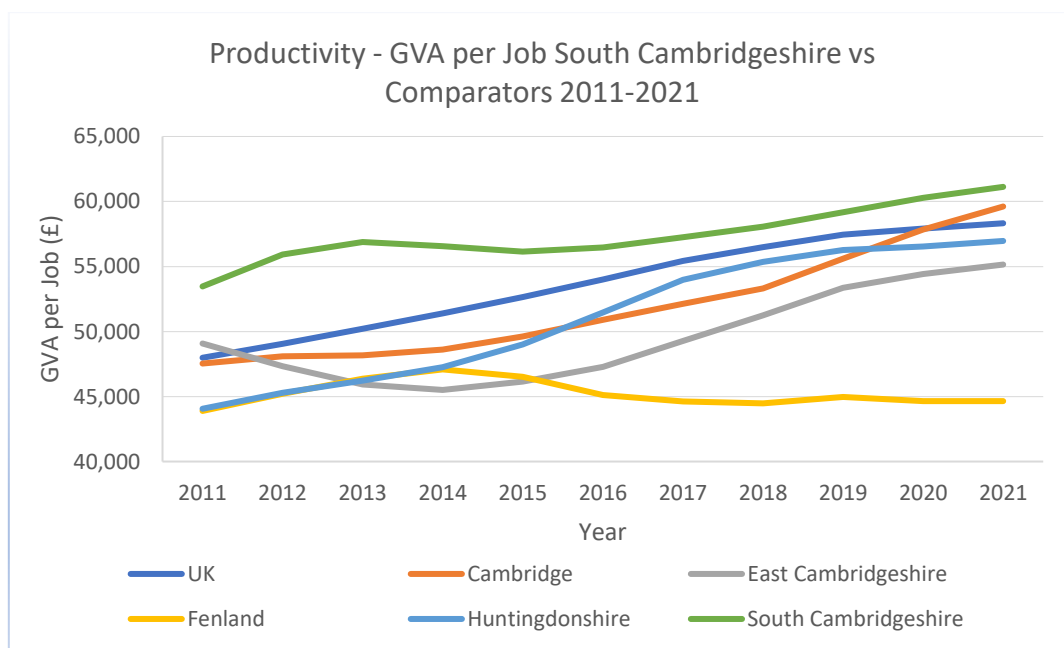


Figure 14 - Productivity - GVA per Job South Cambridgeshire vs Comparators 2011-2021



Gross Disposable Household Income (GDHI) is the total amount of money that a household has available for spending or saving after all taxes have been paid and all benefits have been received. Most recent figures show that in 2021, South Cambridgeshire's GDHI was £27,031 (23), higher than all other districts in Cambridgeshire.

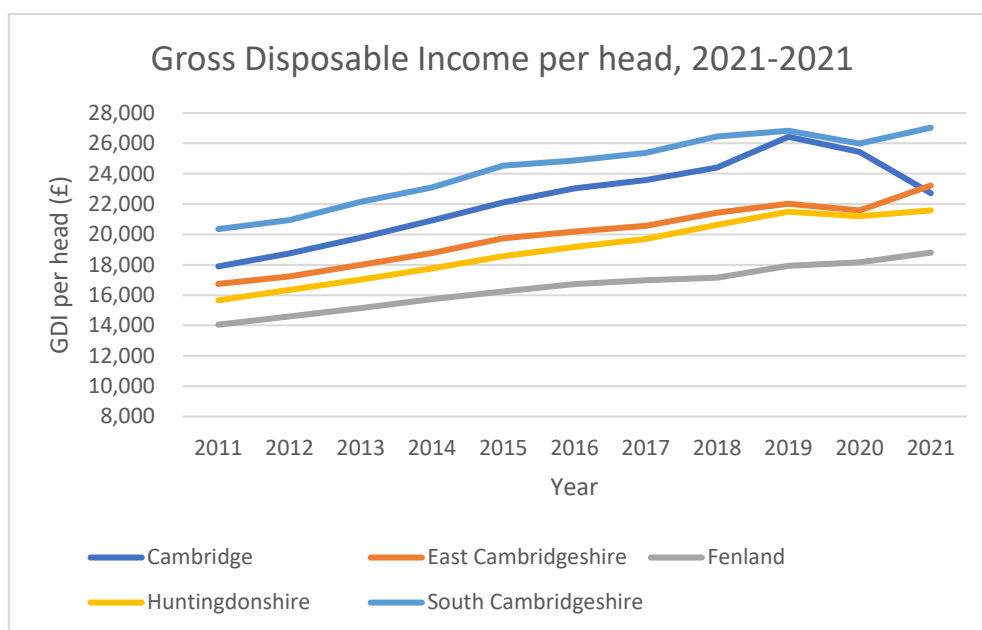


Figure 15 - Gross Disposable Income per head, 2021-2021

South Cambridgeshire has consistently had the highest GDHI of all Cambridgeshire districts since 2011 and these figures have increased at a similar rate. The slight downturn in 2020 was mainly as a result of COVID-19 lockdowns, and in the following year, South Cambridgeshire recovered comparatively better than Cambridge.

Housing

Latest figures estimate that there are 69,240 properties in South Cambridgeshire. Of these, 31% are detached houses, more than double the proportion of England as a whole (24).

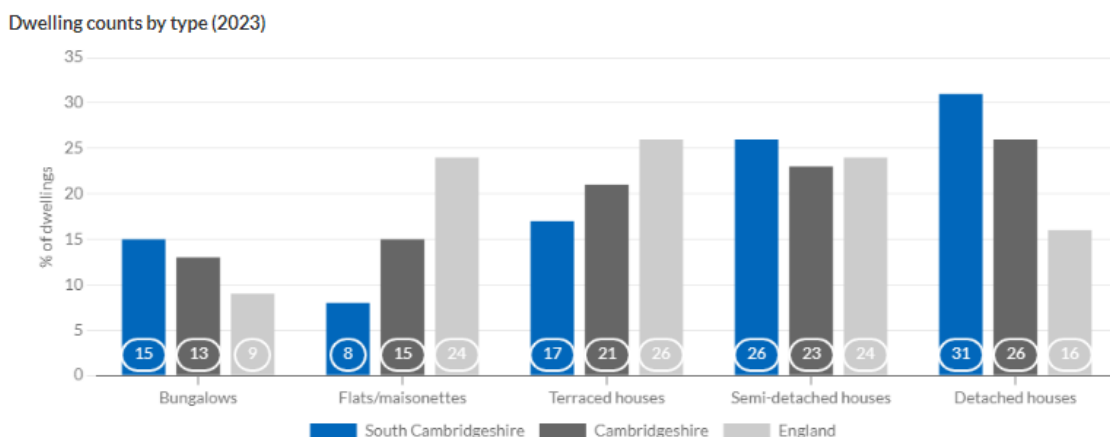


Figure 16 - Dwelling counts by type, 2023

South Cambridgeshire has 5,460 flats/maisonettes, accounting for 8% of total dwellings. This is significantly less than national figures in which 24% of total English dwellings are flats/maisonettes.

'Net additional dwellings' is the most accurate local measure of housing supply. South Cambridgeshire has seen its annual net additional dwellings more than double since 2016, from 545 in 2016-17, to 1213 in 2021-22. 2020-21 saw the highest number of net additional dwellings for over a decade, with a net increase of 1326 dwellings that year (24).

Housing continues to be more expensive in the district than other areas in the county, with average house prices 48.2% more than the English average (24).

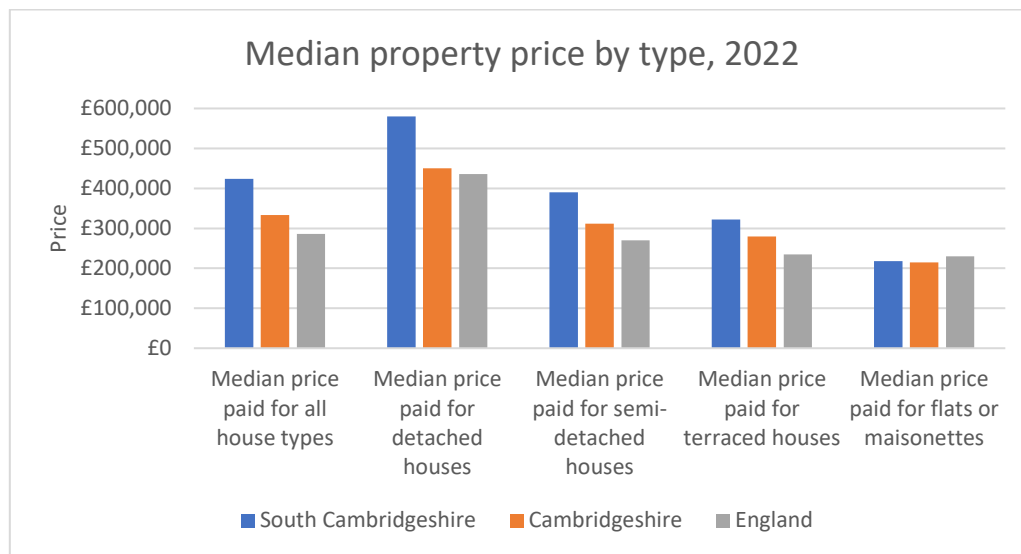


Figure 17 - Median property price by type, 2022

All property types apart from flats/maisonettes are more expensive than the averages in both Cambridgeshire and England. You can expect to pay £580,000 for a detached house in South Cambridgeshire, nearly £150,000 more than the average detached house in England. Additionally, detached properties in South Cambridgeshire have seen the highest rate of price increase compared to other property types since 2020, with a price increase of 17.2%. This equates to an £85,000 price increase in the average detached house over the past few years.

The median private rental for a two bedroom property in the district is £282 per week which is second highest in the county behind only Cambridge City, and higher than the East of England average at £264 per week (25). The median property price to earnings ratio in South Cambridgeshire is 10.5, ranking 3rd highest in Cambridgeshire behind Cambridge City at 13.3 and East Cambridgeshire at 10.6 (25).

68.9% of households in South Cambridgeshire are owner occupiers, with 52% of these owning their home outright, and 48% having a mortgage or loan. 5,397 properties are rented from the Council, making up 8.1% of total dwellings, and 9,383 (14%) are rented privately (24).



Of the 69,240 properties in the district, it is estimated that around 27% (18,000) of them are not connected to mains gas. This is a higher proportion than England as a whole in which 15% of properties are not connected to mains gas, and higher than the East of England in which the figure stands at 20%. This is also the second highest proportion of properties not connected to mains gas in Cambridgeshire, behind only East Cambridgeshire in which 29% of properties are not connected (26).

It is estimated that 51.38% of domestic properties in South Cambridgeshire have an energy performance certificate (EPC) rating of C or higher (27). This is higher than the East of England in which 44.55% of domestic properties have an EPC of C or higher.

Carbon Emissions

South Cambridgeshire's per capita CO₂ emissions in 2021 were 8.4 tonnes, down from 10 tonnes per capita in 2011 (28). This represents a 16% reduction in CO₂ emissions per capita over the past decade, continuing the general trend of reduced emissions since 2005, as shown in figure 18.

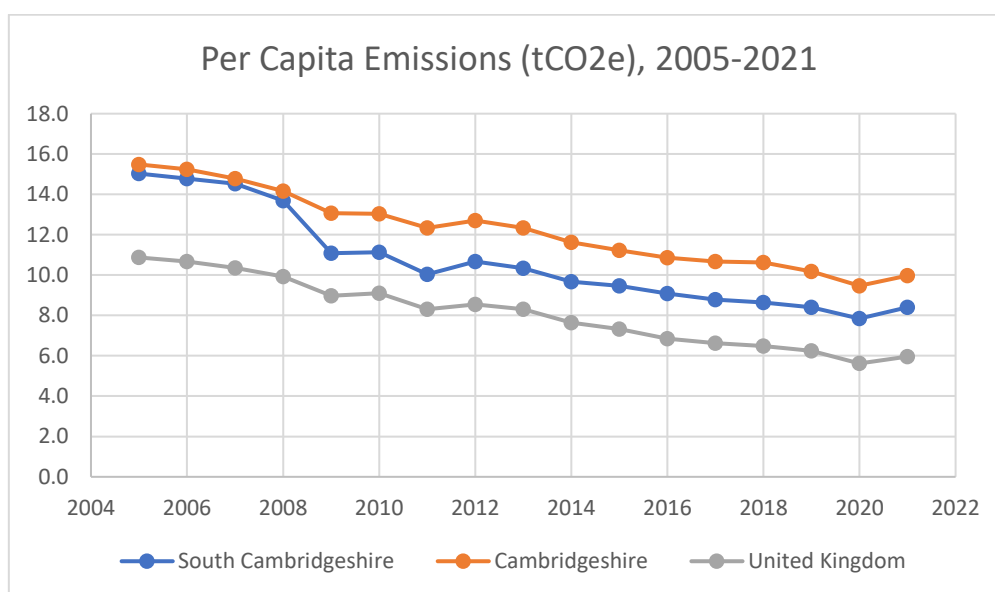


Figure 18 - Per Capita Emissions (tCO₂e)



Per capita emissions in the district continue to be higher than national figures, however that difference has reduced since 2005. South Cambridgeshire's figures are below that of Cambridgeshire's, and this difference has increased since 2005.

The highest contributing sector to South Cambridgeshire's total emissions is the transport sector, contributing to 42.8% of total emissions in 2021 (28).

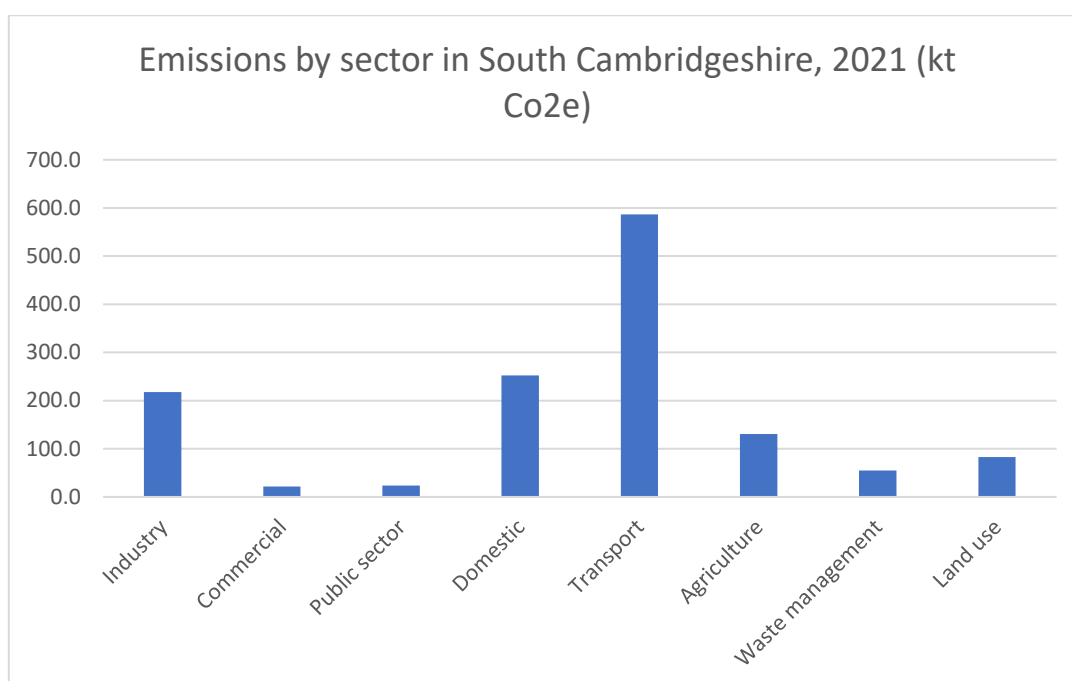


Figure 19 - Emissions by sector in South Cambridgeshire, 2021 (kt Co2e)

This is a higher proportion than Cambridgeshire in which 26.7% of total emissions are contributed by the transport sector, although that can be expected as South Cambridgeshire is one of the more rural districts in the county. The other significant contributors to total emissions in the district are industry and domestic emissions.



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