

Cambridgeshire County Council

MONTHLY REPORT OCTOBER 2025

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION

The three options being considered by council leaders for the shape of future councils in Cambridgeshire have now expanded to five, or maybe four—with two new three-council options added to the mix.

Peterborough City Council is now working on the option proposed by its two MPs, with a 'Greater Peterborough'; a 'Greater Cambridge'; and a council covering East Cambridgeshire, Fenland, and what would be left over of Huntingdonshire.

And Huntingdonshire District Council announced at the end of September that it would be working on a proposal for a go-it-alone Huntingdonshire, with East Cambridgeshire joined to Peterborough and Fenland, and with Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire forming its own unitary council.

It is not yet clear (at the time of writing) whether this means Huntingdonshire will not be promoting Option C (which puts East Cambridgeshire in with Fenland and Peterborough), in which case it would not be presented to Government as no-one else is currently promoting that option.

East Cambridgeshire has not yet announced a go-it-alone option of its own, although the Leader of the District Council did say at the Full Council meeting of the District Council in mid-September "If I had my way we'd be a unitary council all of our own and I know that together we would do a brilliant job without fuss". East Cambridgeshire may well follow Huntingdonshire's lead. Ultimately, we know that in South Cambs we will form a new unitary authority with Cambridge City, the only question is if either Huntingdon or East Cambs join the new unitary authority.

Cambridgeshire County Council is building the business case for Option A (East Cambridgeshire with Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire) and launched a survey at <https://yourvoice.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/your-future-councils/> which closes on Friday 3 October.

Quality of Life Survey 2025

The results of the County Council's third annual Quality of Life survey have now been published.

1. Happiness is at its highest point since tracking began, but loneliness and mental health struggles remain high

Happiness levels remain high (84 per cent) consistent with the levels seen in previous years. Residents report often feeling lonely (30 per cent) and struggling with their mental health (28 per cent), with younger age groups more likely to report these concerns.

2. Residents remain concerned about the cost of living and jobs and investment

Concerns about cost of living increases remain high, with 87 per cent of residents reporting that they personally feel concerned. This is continuing to put pressure on residents, with over half of residents reporting taking action this year as a result of cost of living increases. Just under two thirds (62 per cent) of residents report concern over the level of investment and jobs in their local area. This has been steadily increasing year on year.

3. A sense of community and pride of place continues to be strong amongst residents

Consistent with previous years, residents continue to feel safe in (85 per cent) and have a sense of belonging to (76 per cent) their local communities. Around half (48 per cent) of residents are involved in their local community.

4. Residents' views on Cambridgeshire County Council performance are the most positive since tracking began

Residents continue to trust the Council to make decisions (52 per cent) and deliver value for money (47 per cent), higher than Local Government Association (LGA) averages. 50 per cent agree the Council acts on the concerns of local residents, lower than LGA averages but an increase locally compared to 45 per cent in the previous two years of the survey. Half (50 per cent) of residents feel that the Council keeps them well informed about the services and benefits it provides.

5. Usage of several services has increased since 2025 and residents' satisfaction with most CCC services is at its highest point since tracking began

Registration services, library services and waste management have the highest satisfaction ratings. Road and pavement maintenance continues to be the lowest area of satisfaction among service users but satisfaction has increased this year to 28 per cent.

More details of the survey and findings are available online.

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/council/quality-of-life-survey/quality-of-life-survey-2025>

COMMUNITIES, SOCIAL MOBILITY & INCLUSION

Community digital hubs

Connecting Cambridgeshire is inviting applications from community groups and organisations to enable Digital Hubs across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

Connecting Cambridgeshire will be supporting applicants by providing small grants of up to £4,200 to procure connectivity solutions and digital devices to be used in their spaces by the public, and provide the local community with access to digital skills and confidence.

These hubs aim to ensure holistic digital inclusion support can be delivered locally, through trusted partners, with established relationships within their communities.

The original deadline for applications was Tuesday 30 September, but I'm hoping this can be extended. <https://www.connectingcambridgeshire.co.uk/about/help-to-get-online/digital-hubs/>

Holiday Activities and Food Programme set to continue to 2029

The Holiday Activities and Food programme is set to continue to 2029, providing thousands of children in Cambridgeshire with food and fun during school holidays.

The Government has announced it will continue to fund the programme across England for a further three financial years, meaning that families in Cambridgeshire will continue to benefit from the scheme until March 2029.

Through the programme, local holiday schemes offer free access to fun, enriching activities and nutritious meals for children who are eligible for benefits-related free school meals. Running during the Easter, summer, and Christmas holidays, HAF helps reduce pressure on families by providing safe, engaging environments where children receive a meal while having fun.

Holiday scheme experiences include sports, creative arts, Forest School, playschemes, and outdoor adventures. The programme also supports families by reducing childcare costs, promoting social inclusion, and connecting them with local support services.

Cambridgeshire County Council ran 132 schemes over the summer holiday period, with an estimated 3,300 children participating.

Cambridgeshire Youth Work Conference

Cambridgeshire County Council's Communities Service will be hosting the annual Cambridgeshire Youth Work Conference on Saturday 15 November at Ely Community College.

Through a series of talks, workshops and stalls, the conference will enable local partners and youth practitioners to come together and access specialist resources to support them in their work with young people.

If your community works with young people and would like to raise awareness of the support you provide, then please liz.morris@cambridgeshire.gov.uk and nichola.west@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

ENVIRONMENT & GREEN INVESTMENT COMMITTEE

Fens 2100+ update

The Fens 2100+ project has issued the following update.

Baseline reports

The final draft of the catchment baseline reports is due mid-July. Once issued there will be a review process undertaken with EA colleagues, IDBs and key stakeholders to ensure they are an accurate reflection of the current system and meet the objectives of Fens 2100+. Following the review process there will be a final period of refinement alongside the development of a system wide report, capturing the key elements from each catchment.

Case for Change

The team continue to develop the Case for Change alongside our partners with the completed first draft due in July. Building upon the evidence highlighted by the Baseline Reports the Case for Change explores the current and potential value of the Fens, sets out our case for continued and enhanced investment in the area and considers how we shift to a system wide approach to asset management. To support this a 10-step action plan has been developed which will be implemented by the Partnership over the next 2 years to ensure we set ourselves up for success.

Flood Resilience Strategy

The work we have done to date has further highlighted the need for continued investment in our existing, ageing asset base to ensure we manage the inherited system that we currently have. In the autumn we will publish our approach to how we will develop a Flood and Coastal resilient Strategy which will be finalised in 2027. The strategy will include a costed 10-year pipeline of investment priorities with a focus on 'no regret' decisions as well as identifying potential transformational shifts. In addition, it will define a 'target end state' for the system at the end of 5, 10, 15 and 20 years to allow us to monitor success.

The update says that the Environment Agency will be 'publishing [their] first set of key deliverables in the Autumn'.

Anglian Water Waste Water Treatment Plant move de-funded

The move of Anglian Water's waste water treatment plant from north-east Cambridge to Horningsea has had its funding withdrawn by the Government.

£80M had already been spent on preparations for the move, and planning permission had already been granted.

The move was intended to make way for a large development of sustainable housing known as 'Hartree'. The decision to de-fund the project means that space will need to be found somewhere else in Greater Cambridge for those homes, and new plans will need to be drawn up for waste water treatment.

New town at Tempsford

The Government has announced its intention to build three new New Towns before the next General Election, in Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire, and Leeds. The Bedfordshire site is Tempsford, south of St Neots, earmarked for a new railway station on the proposed alignment of East West Rail.

Community watercourse maintenance grants

Community Watercourse Maintenance Grants of up to £10,000 are designed to support communities where the condition of local watercourses is increasing the risk of flooding. By providing funding directly, the County Council enables local people to take practical action to improve water flow, reduce flood risk, and enhance the surrounding environment.

The grant can be used for vegetation clearance and debris removal, minor repairs to banks or channels, equipment hire or contractor support, volunteer training and safety equipment, and other essential maintenance activities.

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/business/planning-and-development/flood-and-water/community-flood-action-programme/watercourse-maintenance-grant>

Explore green spaces this autumn

There are many free to access green spaces across Cambridgeshire, providing opportunities to get out on foot and connect with nature.

The Cambs Open Space website shares the top 200 parks in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to explore, as well as an interactive map of parks across the county and upcoming events in green spaces.

The county council also owns eight Local Nature Reserves, all of which are open to the public. They are excellent places to study and learn about wildlife or simply enjoy the health and wellbeing benefits of being in nature.

Visit the council's website to access walking routes and top tips.

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/travel-roads-and-parking/active-travel-in-cambridgeshire/getting-started/walking>

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