

Cambridgeshire County Council

MONTHLY REPORT DECEMBER 2025

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION

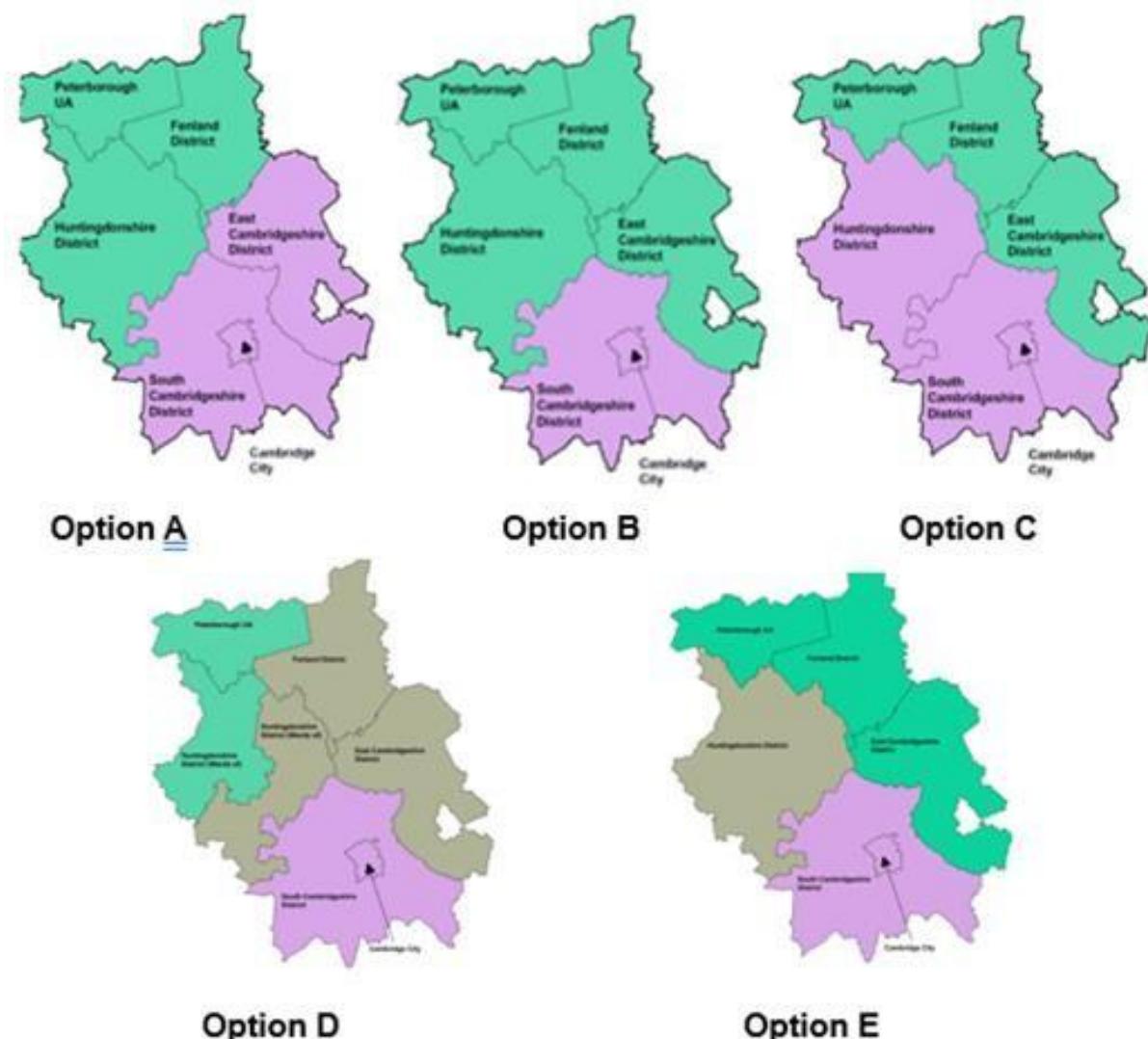
Councils in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough have between them submitted four different options to ministers for Local Government Reorganisation.

Option A: Cambridgeshire County Council

Option B: Cambridge City Council, East Cambridgeshire District Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council

Option D: Fenland District Council, Peterborough City Council

Option E: Huntingdonshire District Council



Option C was not submitted by any council.

The Government will launch a consultation on shortlisted options in the spring, and announce its decision in the summer.

ADULTS & HEALTH

Integrated Care System

Thousands of NHS staff redundancies in England will now go ahead after a deal was reached with the Treasury to allow the health service to overspend this year to cover the cost of pay-offs.

Last month I reported that the local NHS Integrated Care Boards were not being given any more money to meet the cost of the redundancies they are having to make in order to achieve the cuts of 50 per cent that the Government is requiring in their running costs. The Government has now decided that the NHS will now be allowed to overspend in order to make people redundant, and repay the costs in future years.

ASSETS & PROCUREMENT

Schools procurements

The council has approved the awarding of a single supplier contract for the procurement of ICT hardware, software and associated services for resale to schools. Approval has also been given to continue to procure insurance for schools, authorising payment of the supplier appointed by schools using funding received from schools' budget contributions.

Procurement compliance

The council has considerably improved compliance with procurement rules. The Assets & Procurement Committee now receives regular reports of breaches of the rules by individual departments and services, and there is much greater awareness across the council of what the rules are and the importance of complying with them.

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

Holiday Activities and Food Programme

A reminder that the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme is offering free spaces to primary and secondary school children in Cambridgeshire who are eligible for benefit-related free school meals, giving them the chance to enjoy enriching experiences and nutritious food during the school holidays.

Around 20,000 HAF eligibility vouchers have been sent to families across the county by email or text this week. Each voucher offers sixteen hours of free access to a local HAF scheme during the festive period (subject to availability), helping families manage rising costs while keeping children active and engaged.

Delivered by approved providers and coordinated by Cambridgeshire County Council, the HAF programme offers a wide variety of activities, from sports, playschemes, drama, and technology to outdoor adventures and youth sessions. Every child attending will also receive at least one healthy meal a day, along with guidance on healthy eating, wellbeing, and positive behaviours.

Parents and carers will also be signposted to local services and additional cost-of-living support, reinforcing the council's wider commitment to helping households stay safe, warm, and well this winter. Families eligible for free school meals can redeem their HAF vouchers to book places at participating schemes across the county. Spaces are limited and offered on a first-come, first-served basis.

www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/council/communities/support-with-the-cost-of-living/holiday-activities-and-food-programme/haf-provider-directory

Best Start in Life

Cambridgeshire County Council has been awarded £200,000 under the government's *Best Start in Life* scheme, with more expected next April. The total value of the main grant has not yet been shared with the council.

The overall funding is for three years, and is intended to ensure that by 2028 75.5 per cent of reception-aged children will be assessed as having a good level of development and being ready to start school. The money will be used to create a new Family Hub at one of the council's existing Child and Family Centres, and to enhance the council's Home Learning scheme.

COMMUNITIES, SOCIAL MOBILITY & INCLUSION

Cambridge Central Library opens 'EverySpace'

The new '[EverySpace](#)' was opened on the top floor of Cambridge Central Library this month. The space can serve a range of functions and host community workshops and events. Part of the EverySpace offer is free access to a recording studio with high quality audio equipment, a green screen, and a light box, supporting local people in their creative or small business endeavors.

ENVIRONMENT & GREEN INVESTMENT

Progress towards Net Zero Cambridgeshire

Low carbon heating schemes and lower carbon fuels in vehicles has helped the County Council reduce its overall carbon footprint by 32 per cent since 2018.

Carbon savings have come from switching some highways fleet vehicles to biofuel and the continuation of a heat decarbonisation programme which has seen old gas and oil

boilers replaced with air source heat pumps at thirty out of fifty-nine council buildings with more under way.

- Major energy projects have delivered over 3,000 tonnes of carbon savings and around £1.2M income for the council over the last year.
- New Biodiversity and Tree and Woodland strategies have been adopted and published.
- To date, the low carbon heating programme has saved schools over £5.9 million on their energy bills.
- Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) were installed in two schools in Willingham and St Ives.
- The council was rated A- in the Carbon Disclosure Project's global rankings, reflecting its strong performance and leadership in climate action, and ranked among the top-performing county councils in the country in Climate Emergency UK's Climate Scorecards 2025.

The current Climate Change & Environment Strategy runs until 2025, with a new strategy in development. This will include new actions to support the council's ambition of achieving Net Zero carbon emissions for the county by 2045.

RECAP consultation

The Recycling in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough (RECAP) Waste Partnership is intending to consult on a new Draft Interim Resources and Waste Strategy 2025-2031 and a new Draft Waste Management Design Guide.

The Waste Partnership is made up of all the local authorities in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. It has been in existence since 1999 and has worked together on a strategic approach for collecting, managing and disposing of waste.

The Draft Strategy sets out the strategic direction for the Waste Partnership in the medium term and areas of consensus for future infrastructure projects, and priorities in waste collection, treatment and disposal.

The updated Draft Design Guide is a supplementary planning document to guide residential developers. Previously this guidance has been included as part of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan but will now be reviewed and updated separately, though still linked to the Minerals and Waste Plan.

HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORT

Capitally Funded Highway Maintenance schemes

Parish Councils should have received an email from the County Council's Highways department, advising them of how to submit requests to be included in the 2026/27 Highway Capital Maintenance Programme. This form is live until **23:45 Thursday 11 December**. Please do submit requests for works to areas of concern. As a reminder,

the following can be applied for (non-exhaustive list):

- Major resurfacing or reconstruction of a significant length of road or footway/cycleway.
- Installation of a new drainage system or replacement of a failed existing highway drainage system where there is severe flooding on the road.
- Major maintenance of a Public Right of Way which may be unpassable or difficult to use.

As County Councillors, we have also been asked to make submissions to highlight areas that need attention. Please do email us if you would like us to also make a submission highlighting a problematic area within the Parish. Laurence can also provide the link to the form, and more details, if you require- please email.

Local Highways Improvements

November and close at 5:00PM on Friday 16 January. Further information is available on the [Applying for a Local Highway Improvement \(LHI\) CCC web page](#).

20mph schemes

Applications for the 2026/2027 20MPH initiative funding round opens on Monday 26 January and closes at 5:00PM on Friday 27 March. Further information is available on the [20mph funding CCC web pages](#).

Busway safety measures

The Council is currently implementing measures to improve safety on the Guided Busway. The speed limit has been reduced along the whole Busway including the maintenance track, and informal crossing points are being reviewed. Work began on 12 October to install fencing to separate the maintenance track and the busway across its whole length. A plan is also being developed for perimeter fencing at Histon.

Electronic roadside variable message and flood warning signs

Existing signs around the county are being upgraded to low carbon LED technology, which can display clearer messages and images to road users.

Electronic flooding signage is also being improved with better sensors for accuracy, alerting drivers early at times when roads need to be closed for safety. Final installations are under way for both these projects.

Abuse of road workers

Cambridgeshire County Council is supporting a national campaign to stop abuse of roadworkers. The council is appealing to the public to show respect for people working on the highway after repeated incidents of physical and verbal abuse.

Workers continue to face daily verbal abuse as well as more serious cases. In one incident, in South Cambridgeshire, a woman drove at the highway officer, rammed her vehicle into barriers, became extremely aggressive, got out of her car, shouted personal abuse at him, threatened him, and then called the police.

In another incident in East Cambridgeshire an officer was responding to a customer report of a drainage issue and when attempting to discuss the issue with the resident who had reported it, was assaulted, with their hair being grabbed whilst verbal abuse was directed at them.

On recent major projects, such as the GCP's work on Milton Road in Cambridge, teams on the ground have experienced horrific behaviour, from being threatened with violence to being driven at while managing traffic.

The Stamp It Out campaign hopes to raise awareness of the issue amongst the public and help remove the abuse that roadworkers receive every day. Research by the group found that 50 per cent of those in public-facing roles face weekly abuse, while 80 per cent do not report it, as they feel nothing will be done.

Highway workers have begun to wear bodycams and vehicles are fitted with dashcams. The council is also working with the police to report these incidents and pass on the recordings for further investigation and prosecution.

Council cracking down on non-compliant road works

Gas works on Hills Road in Cambridge were halted, permits withdrawn, and the company issued with six fines after work did not resume as planned after Remembrance Day. The failures by Cadent Gas and their contractors conducting the works caused complications for other utility companies, delays to buses, and disruption for residents and businesses.

In 2024-25, Cambridgeshire County Council issued fines totaling £483,000 to utility companies and developers for non-compliant and over-running roadworks. The council processed more than 32,000 street work permits last year, regulating when and how works can take place on the highway.

GREATER CAMBRIDGE PARTNERSHIP UPDATE

The November meeting of the GCP Board:

- Agreed to extend its Smart programme, responsible for technological trials and innovations including autonomous buses, for a further year.
- Adopted a proposed approach to biodiversity net gain on its various projects—I've been pressing for biodiversity schemes to take place on-site as much as possible.
- Updated plans for its Greenways including a new starting point for the Swaffham Greenway in East Cambridgeshire.

COMBINED AUTHORITY UPDATE

Local Nature Recovery Strategy

The Combined Authority has approved the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, subject to a 28-day period for 'supporting authorities' (local planning authorities and named partners) to object.

Bus reductions

A number of bus routes are having their funding withdrawn by the Combined Authority Board. Many routes have been running at high costs per passenger, with some routes running at costs of around £100 per journey. Included in these cuts are the Wednesday 15 bus service between Haslingfield and Royston. These services will not be cut immediately as 112 days' contractual notice must be given to the Traffic Commissioner.

Free parking in Peterborough and Huntingdonshire

The Mayor of the CPCA, Paul Bristow, continues with his plan to spend £1.2 million over the next two years to introduce free car parking in Peterborough and Huntingdonshire, which has raised concern that it could further reduce bus usage and be unfair on taxpayers across Cambridgeshire who would be funding free parking in selected areas.

Questions have been raised about whether the draft budget allocation is enough—Peterborough City Council leader Shabina Qayyum has estimated 24/7 free parking in Peterborough alone would cost £3.4 million. And Cambridge Area Bus Users group has warned that free parking elsewhere had led to lower bus ridership and higher fares. The cost of introducing free parking in Peterborough and Huntingdonshire would be paid by residents across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, whether or not they have a car or visit the places in question.

Commissioner appointments under scrutiny

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee reviewed the Mayor's appointment of a number of 'Commissioners' after concerns were raised by Board members. The Committee recommended that although the Mayoral Decision Notice was arrived at correctly and in accordance with the current procedure, the Mayor should ensure that terms of reference and job descriptions are shared with Board members before taking any further decisions on Commissioners.

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