

Cambridgeshire County Council – Papworth and Swavesey Division

South Cambridgeshire District Council – Caxton and Papworth Ward

County and District Councillors' Monthly Report – December 2025

As this is the last newsletter of the year, we would like to wish our parish councillors, clerks and residents an enjoyable holiday season. We don't plan to publish a report in January and will resume in February.

Local Government Reorganisation

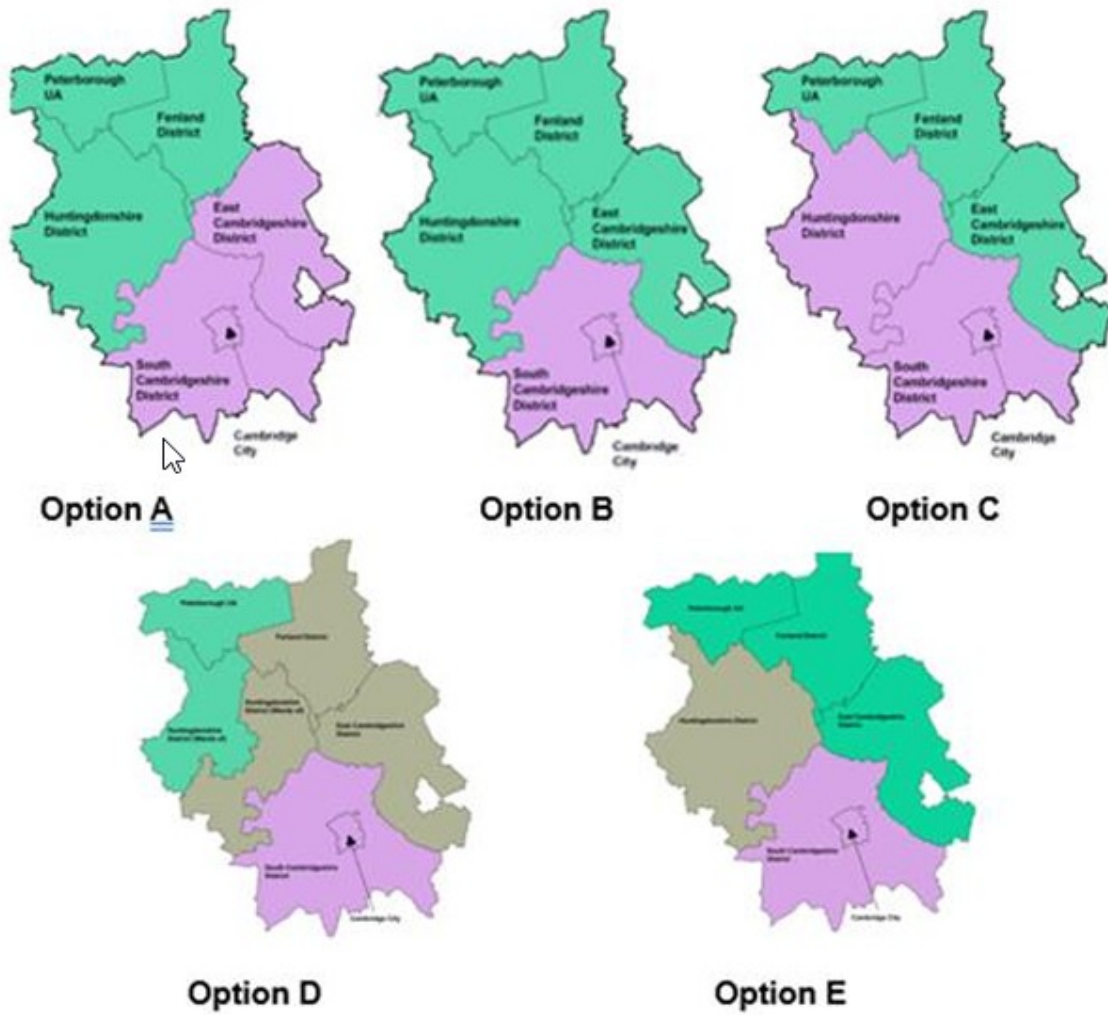
Councils in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough have between them submitted four different options to ministers for Local Government Reorganisation.

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 submitted options in the spring, and announce its decision in the summer.

You can download the business case for Option B here:

<https://www.scams.gov.uk/media/0vwntiak/option-b-ccc-scdc-ecdc-final-1-compressed.pdf>

An explanation of the process the Government will follow can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-government-reorganisation-letter-to-areas-invited-to-submitted-final-proposals/summary-of-the-local-government-reorganisation-process>

News from the District Council

Holiday Bin Collections

As usual, there are some changes to bin collection days over the holidays. Villages whose bins are normally collected on a Friday will have them emptied on Monday 29th December (black bin) and Saturday 3rd January (blue bin, not green bin). Villages whose bins are normally collected on a Thursday will have them emptied on Monday 22nd December (blue bin, not green bin) and Friday 2nd January (black bin). Other dates are unchanged.

Parish Precepts

Parish precepts should be sent to South Cambs DC by 30th January, by email to accountancy@scambs.gov.uk Even parishes that are implementing a nil precept should submit that information. Send queries to dawn.graham@scambs.gov.uk

Emerging Local Plan

The draft Local Plan and supporting evidence has been published ahead of a public consultation which will run between 1 Dec 2025 – 30 Jan 2026. Cambridge City Council and SCDC are working together to create this joint Local Plan for the Greater Cambridge area. The plan sets out the future land use and planning policies for the area for the period 2024-2045. The Local Plan identifies the need for new homes and jobs, the services and infrastructure to support them, and guides where this development should happen. It has been informed by several stages of public engagement and working with stakeholders. There is a useful little video to help people understand what the Local Plan is and its importance here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oa9MrnoELU0>

An explanation of the consultation process and a link to the consultation platform can be found here:

<https://engage.scambs.gov.uk/en-GB/projects/draft-greater-cambridge-local-plan-for-consultation/info>

District and some parish councillors have been briefed on the main points in the Plan, which is broadly based on the current Plan from 2018. In our area, the main impacts will be from the proposed North Cambourne development and potential warehouse/industrial units off the A14.

Food Waste Collections

Weekly collections of food waste will begin in parts of Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire in January – with Greater Cambridge Shared Waste rolling out collections to all households by the end of 2026.

The service will be extended across Greater Cambridge in phases throughout next year. All households will receive a letter with full details a few weeks before the service begins in their area to help ensure they are prepared.

Before their new collections begin, households will receive a new outdoor caddy to put out for collection at the kerbside with their wheelie bins each week, as well as a smaller indoor caddy to collect food waste in the kitchen. These caddies will be in addition to your current three wheelie

bins. Most flats will share an outdoor wheelie bin in their bin store to empty their indoor caddy into. The weekly food waste collections will take place on residents' usual bin days.

The new service is part of national legislation requiring councils to collect food waste separately. It aims to help boost recycling rates and reduce the amount of food that gets thrown away and ends-up in landfill.

SCDC is planning a roll-out in four phases in Jan, Apr, Jul, Sept, so some villages will receive their caddies before others. According to current plans, our villages will be in the July phase.

Around 20 new 12 ton vehicles have been purchased to collect the caddies and the waste will go to one of three local bio digesters. SCDC is not receiving additional revenue funding from the government and the current gap in funding is £900,000. The car park at the Waterbeach depot is being expanded to accommodate the new vehicles and the waste service is launching a recruitment campaign for new staff, including new management roles.

Cost of Living support budget agreed for 2026-2028

A budget of £449,000 has been approved to help South Cambridgeshire residents through the next two years of cost-of-living financial pressures. The 2026-2028 cost of living plan was agreed by the District Council at its latest Cabinet meeting.

The plan focuses on supporting vulnerable households by expanding access to emergency food and energy support, building financial resilience by delivering workshops on budgeting and debt advice and continuing community partnerships to provide coordinated support.

Each year the key measures will include:

- £28,000 for laptops and digital training for young people and older residents to reduce digital exclusion.
- £50,000 for [Community Hubs](#) - warm places run by trained volunteers that serve the local community's needs.
- £18,000 to continue to provide emergency food parcels to those in need to the door.
- £30,000 for an essential white goods and furniture scheme for vulnerable people moving into homes to address furniture poverty.
- £50,000 for to continue the mobile food hub providing affordable healthy food in rural communities – with the potential to expand reach.
- £20,000 for dehumidifier and /or air drier provision to help relieve damp and mould for low income and vulnerable households
- £5,000 for grants to set up village pantries to increase access to affordable food in rural communities.

The approved cost-of-living two-year funding is in addition to a significant level of support across a range of service areas through the Council's business-as-usual activity.

LIFT

South Cambs DC uses an innovative IT tool called the Low-Income Family Tracker (LIFT) to identify residents who are eligible for benefits but not currently claiming them. LIFT was

developed as part of the Council's previous cost-of-living work, and its success means it will continue to reach those most in need.

Through LIFT, the Council has helped secure nearly 1,000 additional benefit claims for residents who were previously unaware of their entitlement. These claims are worth over £500,000 in the first year alone, with an estimated lifetime value of nearly £4 million based on average claim lengths. This includes:

- 113 households now receiving [Pension Credit](#)
- 65 households now receiving [Healthy Start](#)
- 480 households receiving a payment from the Household Support Fund
- 69 households now on a reduced water tariff

The programme has now been extended to identify children who are entitled to free school meals but whose families are not currently claiming it. More than 80 extra children in South Cambridgeshire are now receiving free school meals, thanks to a pioneering initiative between South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council to identify families eligible for support.

The additional free school meals are expected to be worth more than £314,000 to the 66 families over the lifetime of their claims, if they claim from now until their children reach the end of year 11. Additionally, it is expected to be worth more than £1 million to local schools in government funding in the process. For each of the 81 extra children now claiming free school meals, South Cambridgeshire schools will also receive extra funding called pupil premium, aimed at improving educational outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. The additional funding schools will receive is worth £116,555 in its first year alone and is expected to be worth more than £1 million (£1,020,560) should families claim from now until each child reaches year 11.

To allow this, a pioneering data-sharing agreement was secured between the two authorities, becoming one of the first two-tier council areas in the country to have such an agreement. This agreement allowed the two councils to work together to identify households that were eligible and not claiming, using South Cambridgeshire District Council's LIFT software and benefits data, and Cambridgeshire County Council's free school meals data. Households that were identified as eligible and not claiming were contacted by letters, emails, and phone calls to encourage them to apply and access the support they're entitled to.

News from the County Council

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.

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/council/communities/support-with-the-cost-of-living/holiday-activities-and-food-programme>

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.

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

Local Highway Improvements

Applications for the 2026/2027 LHI application round opened on Monday 10 November and close at 5:00PM on Friday 16 January. Further information 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 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.

Peat soil roads

There has been noticeable deterioration of our fen roads over the summer and autumn. Several locations have required temporary traffic signals where significant localised subsidence has occurred. Roads where no capital scheme is planned this year are being patched so that the temporary traffic lights can be removed. On roads such as the B1050 Earith to Willingham the speed limit has been further reduced from 40MPH to 30MPH and safety inspection frequency has been increased as well as planned localised patching.

This situation is clearly unsustainable in the longer term. As previously reported, officers are awaiting the outcome of trials of different repair methods on a road in Fenland, and putting together evidence to present to Government for the multi-million pound investment these roads need.

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.

Getting tough on overstaying 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. This failure by Cadent Gas caused complications for other utility companies, delays to buses, and disruption for residents and businesses.

In 2024-25, Cambridgeshire County Council issued fines totalling £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.

East West Rail

East West Rail have announced new design proposals following consultation. A new Cambridge East station and an eastern entrance are two key proposed changes. If approved, these will help cut congestion in the centre of Cambridge and improve accessibility. There are also new proposals for a full mined tunnel at the A428 Bourn Airfield crossing and a new road around Harston. Also, the proposed station north of Cambourne is moved 700m west, nearer to the vehicle exit from the A428.

Peter Sandford and Chris Poulton

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Email: cllr.sandford@scambs.gov.uk (Peter) or Chris.Poulton@cambridgeshire.gov.uk (Chris)

Mobiles: 07985 425414 (Peter) or 07971 594037 (Chris)