

Cambridgeshire County Council – Papworth and Swavesey Division

South Cambridgeshire District Council – Caxton and Papworth Ward

County and District Councillors' Monthly Report – February 2026

Local Government Reorganisation

The Government has launched its seven-week public consultation on the options for Local Government Reorganisation in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, with its final decision announced in summer. The new unitary councils are due to begin operating in a shadow capacity from May 2027, taking on full responsibility for delivering all services from April 2028. A statement from a minister has however indicated that the timetable by which the new unitary councils will be up and running in Spring 2028 is 'the most ambitious'.

You can access the consultation here:

<https://consult.communities.gov.uk/local-government-reorganisation/cambridgeshire-and-peterborough/>

Parish councils are not “statutory” consultees, although CAPALC is. However, parishes and individual residents may still submit comments and their views will be taken into account. You can comment on any or all of the options, not just the one you prefer. Effectively there are four consultations, one for each option, with a standard list of 10 questions per option. SCDC will also be submitting an agreed response for each option.

The public consultation will close on Thursday 26 March 2026.

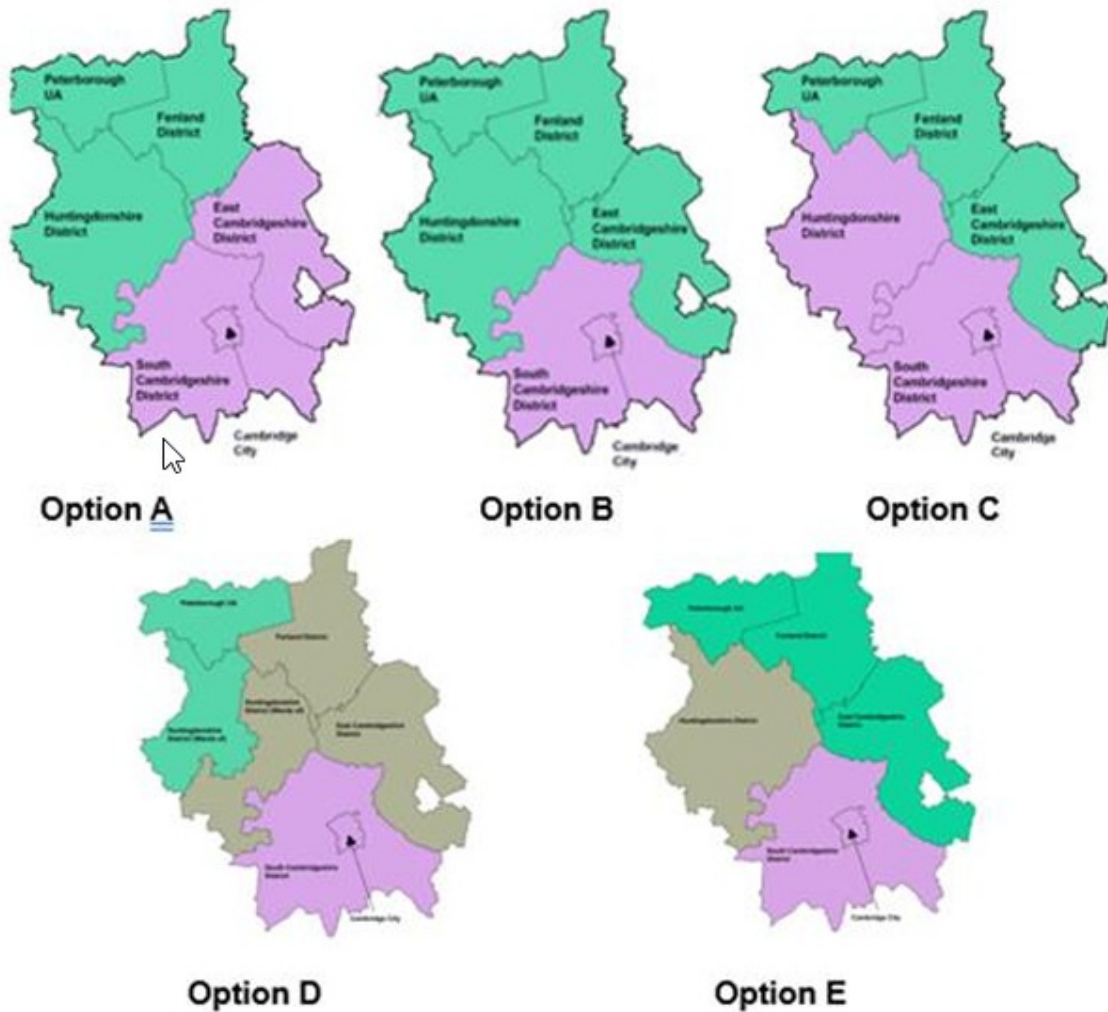
Councils in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough have between them submitted four different options to ministers for Local Government Reorganisation.

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.

SCDC, Cambridge City and East Cambs all supported Option B. 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> Cambridgeshire County Council supported Option A.

Anyone who wants to learn more about Option B can attend a webinar on Friday 6 March from 5pm to 6pm. Leaders and representatives from all three councils will talk more about the options and specifically their preferred option B proposal. [Register your interest](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/webinar-option-b-for-residents-tickets-1982350680248?aff=oddtcreator) here: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/webinar-option-b-for-residents-tickets-1982350680248?aff=oddtcreator>

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

District Council Elections Thursday 7th May

The government wrote to the South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) in December asking whether the Council would like to request postponement of the district council elections scheduled for May. The Council did not ask the government to postpone May's district council elections. The government made the final decision and SCDC elections will take place on Thursday 7 May, alongside elections for parish and town councils in South Cambridgeshire.

As most of you may know, local elections are preceded by a quiet period, sometimes referred to as "purdah". This year, the pre-election period starts on Monday 30 March and runs until the close of polls on Thursday 7 May. During this period, routine business-as-usual council activities will continue but anything which may be considered "political" will be postponed.

Anyone wishing to stand for election to a parish or town council will need to submit a nomination paper. The period to submit nomination papers opens on 30 March, and closes on 9 April at 4pm. Completed nomination papers must be hand delivered with wet ink signatures to the Elections team at South Cambridgeshire Hall between 9.00am and 5.00pm during the nomination period (except on the last day, where the deadline is 4pm). SCDC will not accept nomination papers at weekends or on Easter bank holidays. Nomination papers may not be submitted by post. Please do not post nomination papers as we will have to return them to you.

Where a group of people are all submitting nomination papers together, the Elections team encourage you to have one trusted person bring in multiple nomination papers – this will help to make the process smoother for everyone. This person does not need to be a candidate – indeed many parish clerks have previously taken on this responsibility for sitting councillors seeking re-election (we understand that this will not be possible in all circumstances). The Elections team also encourage you to email elections@scambs.gov.uk to book an appointment for the submission of nomination papers. The Elections team will accept walk-ins but you may have to wait to be seen. Please be aware that before SCDC formally accepts any nomination papers an officer will undertake an informal check of the papers to identify any issues.

At the close of nominations SCDC will publish on the website a statement of the people standing nominated in each area. You will see from this notice which candidates are elected unopposed, and where there will be contested polls.

Over the course of the election period a number of notices will need to be published in each parish council area. The Elections team will issue these notices (by email, to clerks) periodically, with instructions on their display.

You can find further information and download nomination papers on our [Elections 2026 webpage](https://www.scambs.gov.uk/elections/elections-2026). (<https://www.scambs.gov.uk/elections/elections-2026>) Do not hesitate to contact the Elections team if you have any questions.

MHCLG consultation on establishing a Development Corporation (“DevCo”) for Greater Cambridge

The idea of a development corporation for Greater Cambridge has been around for some time. That idea is now one step closer, as MHCLG (Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government) have just launched a consultation on the establishment of a ‘Greater Cambridge Urban Development Corporation’.

The link to the consultation can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/establishing-a-development-corporation-in-greater-cambridge>

In brief, the government has drawn a red line around Cambridge City and South Cambs, then proposed the development of all “large sites” would be managed by the DevCo. The definition of “large” is open for discussion apparently but the consultation paper mentions Bourn Airfield, Waterbeach and Northstowe as current examples. They will also be looking at North Cambourne. The Greater Cambridge Planning service will be allowed to take the current Local Plan to completion and that will be the basis of the DevCo’s work.

The DevCo board will be chaired by Peter Freeman, who is chair of the Cambridge Growth Company. He was formerly Chair of Homes England, which is charged with delivering the number of houses the government deems necessary across the country. The rest of the board will be drawn from leaders of the local councils, business and the university.

The consultation does recognise the barriers to growth around Cambridge including water scarcity, congested traffic infrastructure and pending power shortages. The paper does suggest some ambitious ideas, including looking at “mass rapid transit” (which I assume does not mean busways!).

All of the above will require an act of parliament to establish the DevCo.

SCDC will hold an Extraordinary Full Council on 17th March to draw opinions from councillors. An agreed response will then be submitted to MHCLG by Cabinet after their meeting on 24th March.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service has agreed to consult on a Community Infrastructure Levy (‘CIL’) for Greater Cambridge to help fund the infrastructure needed by new developments. The report can be found here: [CIL.pdf](https://scambs.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s142080/CIL.pdf)
(<https://scambs.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s142080/CIL.pdf>.)

Subject to Cambridge City Council’s Cabinet agreeing at their meeting on 10 February, GCSPS will then launch its own consultation which will last for six weeks.

A CIL is a form of development tax calculated on the amount of floorspace that is built. The charging schedule appended to the report sets out the types of development that will pay CIL and how much. We estimate that each new CIL liable dwelling will pay around £4,000 to £6,000.

Whilst the Councils are proposing introducing CILs to help fund strategic transport infrastructure, Parish Councils will be entitled to 15% of the receipts rising to 25% where a Neighbourhood Plan is in place.

The Parish Council must use the CIL receipts passed to it to support the development of the parish council's area by funding the provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure, or anything else that is concerned with addressing the demands that development places on the area.

If approved, the consultation will take place for 6 weeks between Monday 16 February and Sunday 29 March. The charging schedule will be subject to a public examination and, if approved, could be in place in South Cambridgeshire by the end of the year.

Parish Councils will be contacted directly when the consultation is live.

Food Waste Collections

Weekly collections of food waste have begun in parts of Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire designated Wave A. Apparently this is going well, with few complaints. Our villages are in Wave C and Greater Cambridge Shared Waste will be rolling out collections to all our households during the spring or summer.

Corporate Plan and Budget Update

South Cambs DC has published its proposed priorities for the year ahead, setting out a bold programme of environmental action and community support.

Plans for the next 12 months will see major progress on the Council's Being Green to Our Core priority, including the ongoing roll-out of [weekly food waste collections](#) and continued construction of [a solar energy park](#) at Waterbeach to help power the Council's growing fleet of electric bin lorries.

The draft Corporate Action Plan for next year was agreed by Cabinet Members at their meeting on Tuesday 3 February and goes forwards for discussion at the Full Council meeting on Tuesday 24 February.

Expanded funding for Service Support Grants

Alongside environmental action, the Council plans to significantly strengthen its support for the voluntary and community sector. [A total of £900,000 over three years](#) - £300,000 per year - has been made available through the Service Support Grants programme, offering long-term funding agreements for groups delivering community support and development services across the district.

An additional £49,650 is also available for the years ahead to support services that help prevent and relieve homelessness. This investment supports a wide range of activity including mental health

and wellbeing services, advice provision, independent living support, cost-of-living assistance and community projects.

Continuing support for Mobile Warden schemes

The draft Corporate Action Plan outlines ongoing funding for Mobile Warden Schemes, which provide crucial support for older, disabled and vulnerable residents, ensuring they can live safely and independently in their own homes. These schemes form a core part of the Council's work to promote healthy and supported communities.

Boosting financial resilience and tackling the cost of living

With many residents still facing financial pressures, the Council plans to continue providing its comprehensive [cost-of-living support package](#). A budget of £449,000 is set aside to help residents through the next two years through schemes such as emergency food and energy support, workshops, budgeting and debt advice, white goods and furniture for vulnerable people and laptops with digital training.

The [Low-Income Family Tracker](#) will continue to proactively identify households at risk of financial hardship and ensure they are claiming the benefits they are entitled to, helping prevent crises before they escalate. In the last year alone, this scheme supported South Cambridgeshire residents with more than 1,000 successful benefit claims, worth an estimated £4 million over the lifetime of those claims.

Next steps for the Greater Cambridge Local Plan

The Council continues to work on the new [Greater Cambridge Local Plan](#) through its Greater Cambridge Shared Planning (GCSP) service with Cambridge City Council. It will be the first joint Local Plan for Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire. This marks a major step in planning for the region's future, ensuring new homes, jobs and supporting facilities can come forwards sustainably while protecting the region's environment, character and quality of life.

Elsewhere, GCSP, which was recently crowned the [Royal Town Planning Institute's Local Planning Authority of the Year](#), will be supporting the Council's engagement with the Cambridge Growth Company and its response to the Government's ambition to establish a development corporation (DevCo) to take forward the national priorities for Greater Cambridge. This is all whilst continuing to process around 6,000 planning applications a year.

Delivering facilities for growing communities

The draft Action Plan continues the work to deliver new community facilities at Northstowe. This includes the new permanent community centre for phase one, [the Unity Centre](#), which is scheduled for completion within the coming months, helping ensure Northstowe has new, state of the art spaces to support its growing and thriving community.

A £5.24 per year, below inflation, increase in Council Tax for the average band D home is due to be discussed by councillors at the Full Council meeting in February. This will help to protect essential frontline services in the face of continued rising costs. It would mean the average band D home

charge for South Cambs DC would become £180.64 per year. It is expected that this would still maintain the Council's position among the lowest 25% of taxing District Councils in the country.

Note that South Cambs collects council tax for several other bodies including the County Council, Combined Authority, Fire and Police. If these bodies increase their precepts above inflation, residents overall council tax bills will increase above inflation.

Community Chest Funding Still Available

SCDC still has around £35,000 left in the Community Chest fund for projects until the 31st March 2026. Smaller Parish Councils or Parish Meetings (with fewer than 200 electors) are welcome to apply.

You can check the full eligibility criteria on the [website \(https://www.scams.gov.uk/grants-and-funding/community-chest-grants-open\)](https://www.scams.gov.uk/grants-and-funding/community-chest-grants-open) Please also let your local community groups know, as many could benefit from this support.

Examples of can be funded include:

- Small improvements to community buildings
- Equipment for local groups or venues
- Start-up costs for new community initiatives
- Activities that support wellbeing or help bring people together

Support Cambridgeshire has produced some [tips for making a good funding application here: https://supportcambridgeshire.org.uk/funding/tips-for-making-a-good-funding-application/](https://supportcambridgeshire.org.uk/funding/tips-for-making-a-good-funding-application/)

If you have any questions, email community.chest@scams.gov.uk

News from the County Council

Strategy, Resources & Performance

Business plan and budget

The Strategy Resources & Performance Committee met on Thursday 29 January to receive the views of council committees on the council's draft budget.

In response to the Children & Young People Committee, the Strategy Resources & Performance Committee agreed to amend the draft budget to provide an additional £1 million to support families following the Government's withdrawal of the Household Support Fund which has enabled the provision of supermarket food vouchers during school holidays for eligible children.

The council's Highways & Transport Committee expressed the ambition to be able to add £20 million to the road maintenance budget in 2027/28, as well as in 2026/27—for which that sum is already in the proposed budget.

Highways & Transport

Potholes

The council has significantly increased the number of highways crews dealing with both temporary and permanent fixes to the potholes on Cambridgeshire's roads. Normally eight crews and two dragon patchers are available across the county—now there are thirty crews and two dragon patchers out repairing potholes. This will significantly increase the number of repairs attended to each week.

In the winter, a lot more road defects and potholes form due to wet and freezing weather causing those worn areas of road and pavement surfaces to break up.

Since 2023/24, the amount of capital funding spent on highway maintenance in Cambridgeshire has increased by £35 million, from £24 million to £59 million. The Council allocated more than £73 million for highways maintenance in 2025/26—adding £20 million to the amount provided by Government—and expects to do so again this coming year.

Children & Young People

Holiday food vouchers

The Government is withdrawing the Household Support Fund from the end of March, and replacing it with a Crisis and Resilience Fund later this year.

The County Council has been spending the funding on holiday food vouchers for all children on Free School Meals, and was one of the first councils in the country to top it up to ensure no schoolchild went hungry over the holidays. However, the Government is prohibiting councils from using the new Crisis and Resilience Fund for this purpose, risking leaving many vulnerable families without support. The council is increasing its own financial commitment to holiday food vouchers this year to bridge the gap until September. Without a reversal from Government, however, any new scheme is likely to leave many families in need unsupported.

Education Health & Care Plans

The council invested an additional £780,000 last autumn to increase capacity across the Education Health & Care Plan process for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities, including assessments, casework and reviews, helping to improve the timeliness and therefore the number of plans completed within the twenty-week target. We were pleased to hear from officers that this is having a positive effect, enabling more children to receive their assessments in good time.

Special needs and disabilities funding campaign

Cambridgeshire County Council is backing a campaign by a group named f40, calling for increased and fairer education funding and sweeping reforms to solve the crisis in special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Publication of a Schools White Paper, setting out Government's plans for education and reforms to SEND, was expected last year but has been delayed. The County Council is urging Government to ensure that expected reforms are powerful enough to solve the crisis and are backed by sufficient funding to enable schools to implement them.

Based on initial allocations for 2026/27, published by the Department for Education in December, Cambridgeshire will receive £6,465 per pupil for the 'Schools Block' of education funding. This places Cambridgeshire 128th out of all 151 local education authorities.

The deficit the county council faces in spending on children with high needs is forecast to be around £94 million by the end of March this year, rising to around £200 million by the end of the following two years, placing the council at severe financial risk. This position is shared by around a hundred other councils.

Across the country demand for SEND support continues to outstrip funding, with the lowest funded local authority area currently receiving less than a third of the SEND funding that the highest funded council receives. This is unsustainable.

It has been estimated that local authorities in England will have accumulated a collective SEND deficit of £6 billion by April this year. Without significant reform, this figure will continue to grow. The County Councils Network, representing county councils across the country, estimates the shortfall could pass £13 billion nationally by March 2028.

Adults & Health

Arthur Rank Hospice

A private donation has enabled the hospice in Cambridge to remain open for a further year, following public outcry. The future beyond that is uncertain. Our local MPs have met with the responsible government minister and representatives of Addenbrooke's to make the case for permanent sustainable funding and lobbying will continue.

NHS dental services in Cambridgeshire

The County Council's Health Scrutiny Committee has delivered the following six recommendations to the Integrated Care Board (ICB) following its scrutiny of NHS dental provision in Cambridgeshire, and requested a response by 27 February.

The committee acknowledges the challenges which face the Integrated Care Board (ICB) in relation to NHS dental provision, but urges the ICB to be more ambitious in relation to the provision of NHS dental services in Cambridgeshire.

- The committee highlights a lack of transparency locally around the allocation and delivery of extra capacity for urgent dental appointments funded by Government. Whilst recognising the challenges that the Integrated Care Board is facing the committee urges more transparency around this to build public confidence and trust.
- The committee expresses serious concerns about the distance that some Cambridgeshire residents have to travel to access NHS dental services and welcomes the commitments given around collecting more data on this.
- The committee encourages and supports the pilot projects exploring a hub approach to primary care provision through the co-location of dental services with GP practices to provide wraparound care to the community and offer some savings from shared overhead costs. The committee requests a briefing note on the outcome of these pilot projects and, if they prove successful, where and when they will be introduced in Cambridgeshire.
- The committee expresses disappointment at the failure to take concrete steps towards establishing an undergraduate dental training school in the East of England following the undertakings given at the previous scrutiny of dental provision in March 2024. The committee urges the new Central East Integrated Care Board to champion this endeavour which could offer considerable benefits across its geography, and offers the good offices of Cambridgeshire County Council in support of this.
- The committee expresses some concern about the level of underspend on dental provision in Cambridgeshire and whether the money being clawed back is being used as efficiently and productively as possible.

East of England ambulance service performance

The East of England Ambulance Service has written to the council's Health Scrutiny Committee to update councillors on its performance, including shortened response times, and reduced handover times at hospitals.

News from the Combined Authority

Bus cuts

Thirty-five bus routes across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough are hanging by a thread as the Mayor of Cambridgeshire & Peterborough seeks to cut half a million pounds from local bus services.

At last month's Combined Authority Transport Committee, the Chair of the County Council's Highways & Transport Committee successfully stood out against the immediate removal of four routes, and insisted that there should be appropriate engagement with residents and parishes on proposals affecting contracted bus services.

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)