

Cllr Liam Beckett

MONTHLY REPORT OCTOBER 2025

LOCAL GOVERNMENT RE-ORGANISATION

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.

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 be promoting Option C (which puts East Cambridgeshire in with Fenland and Peterborough), or the new three-council option described in the paragraph above. An extraordinary meeting will be held once the business cases have been published where the options will be debated and HDC cabinet will then decide which option should be promoted by HDC to government.

Cambridgeshire County Council is building the business case for Option A (East Cambridgeshire with Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire with Peterborough and Fenlands) which will be voted on this month.

EAST-WEST RAIL

Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) / Development Consent Order (DCO) Briefing

I was briefed on the current status of the East West Rail project for the section passing through and near to our county. There are six stages for NSIP's: Pre-Application, Acceptance, Pre-examination, Examination, Recommendation and Decision, and Post-Consent. We are currently at Pre-application.

Responsibility for accepting and examining the NSIP application rests with the Secretary of State and not the local authorities, who are identified as statutory consultees, or 'host' authorities, in the NSIP process. The council is most influential during the pre-application stage.

The council has challenged the current plans on its partial electrification, public rights of way impact, visual landscape impact, the road network and active travel corridors. You can see the full CCC documentation here (Agenda Item 5):

<https://cambridgeshire.cmis.uk.com/ccclive/MeetingsCalendar/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/2349/Committee/62/Default.aspx>

CCC technical officers are attending regular meetings with EWR to progress the technical aspects of the DCO and address design issues to do with highways, traffic, transport, archaeology,, consents, station designs in Tempsford and Cambourne.

Both EWR and CCC are now setting up working groups to tackle issues such as Active Travel, Public Rights of Way (PROW), Construction Management, Biodiversity net gain, flood and water.

The EWR company had originally planned to start their statutory consultation by Q1 2026, however in light of the Universal Studios announcement, and the proposed planning reforms by Labour, this has been indicated to be now Q1 2027.

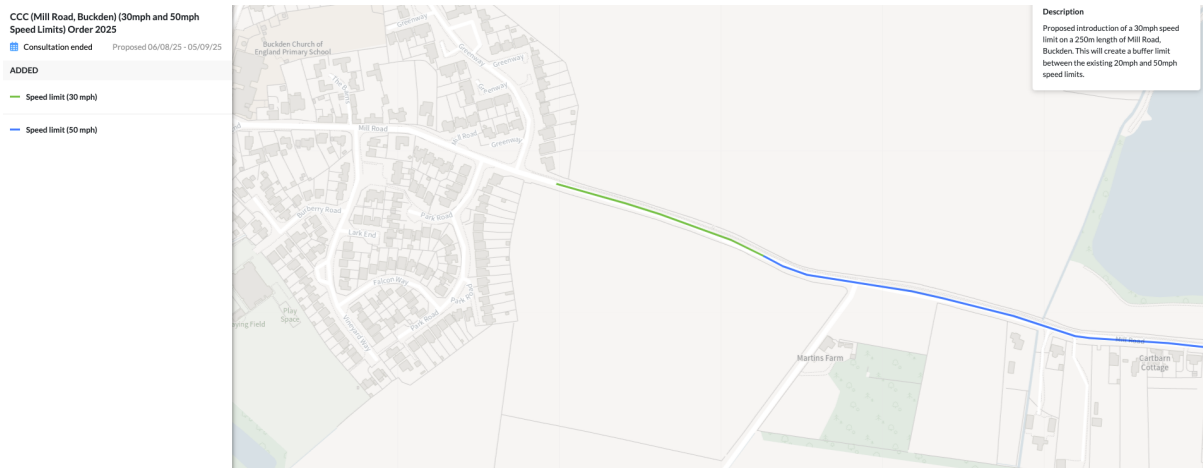
EWR has set up Local Working Groups across the county, of which members of some parishes are invited to attend with county and district councillors, the local working group papers can be found here along with which parishes are able to attend:

<https://eastwestrail.co.uk/community-hub/local-representatives-groups/huntingdonshire-and-south-cambridgeshire-lrg>

HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORT

Mill Road Buffer Zone

Designs for the Mill Road Buffer zone were consulted on in September. The current indicative 30mph zone can be seen in the image below (the green section):



See for yourself here: <https://consultation.appyway.com/huntingdonshire/moving-order/887de903-7202-424a-8a05-49ca113dcce4>

My comments on behalf of Mill Road residents were that the zone should be extended past Leaden's Lane to ensure vehicles are not accelerating as they arrive parallel to the junction; this is especially important here as this was where a fatality occurred a number of years ago.

Mill road residents have also experienced a recent collision along the straight section of road. Nobody was seriously hurt, however myself and BPC are now supporting

residents to apply for a series of Local Highway Improvement applications over the next few years to try and lower speeds, reduce collisions and reduce overtaking.

Free Winter Wheeler Events

In partnership with Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, we've organised four free Winter Wheeler events, designed to encourage Cambridgeshire residents to stay safe and keep cycling throughout the colder months.

Sign up for a free bicycle check with Dr Bike at one of the following locations:

Monday 3 November on Market Hill, **St Ives** PE27 5AP, 11am to 2pm

Tuesday 4 November outside The Guildhall, **Cambridge** CB2 3QJ, 4pm to 7pm

Thursday 13 November at **St Neots Market Square**, PE19 2AF 10am to 4pm

Saturday 15 November at **Huntingdon Market Hill**, PE29 3PJ 10am to 4pm

Each event will include **Dr Bike sessions (free bike checks)**, a bike light giveaway, bike marking by Cambridgeshire Police, cycle maps and cycling advice, and the opportunity to meet our Active Travel Officers for advice and support.

Please note that a limited number of spaces are available for Dr Bike sessions. There may be some availability for walk-in appointments subject to late cancellations and no shows. Bike markings and bike light giveaways do not require a booking.

<https://outlook.office.com/book/DrBikeSessions@cccandpcc.onmicrosoft.com/?ismsaljsauthenabaled>

Community Gritting Scheme

For those hearing about the Community Gritting Scheme for the first time, this is a scheme where Local volunteers can help to keep their community moving in freezing weather. Under this scheme, the parish or town council decides on specific footpaths in their area which are important to the local community and agrees them with the county council. Volunteers can then sign up to grit these local footpaths chosen by their parish council using equipment provided by us.

If you are a parish or town council looking to join the scheme, please send your completed form by 31st October 2025. The end of October deadline is to ensure we can order any equipment your volunteers will need.

[More info here.](#)

[Apply Here.](#)

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 expecting this to be extended.

<https://www.connectingcambridgeshire.co.uk/about/help-to-get-online/digital-hubs/>

Holiday Activities and Food Programme Set to Continue

The Holiday Activities and Food programme is set to continue until 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.

New Town at Tempsford

The Government has now announced (last month) 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, and is earmarked for a new railway station on the proposed alignment of East West Rail.

LOCAL GRANTS – CURRENTLY OPEN TO APPLICATIONS

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>

S2 Partnership Community Fund

The S2 fund offers grants of up to £5,000 for community projects within a 10-mile radius of Elsworth. S2 are keen to support projects that:

- Benefit children, young people, and families
- Provide support for educational events and experiences
- Focus on STEM, health & wellbeing, and environmental initiatives
- Improve local green spaces

Apply by 1st November 2025

Thalia WB Community Fund

The Thalia WB (formerly Amey) Community Fund is part of the national Landfill Communities Fund scheme. The fund offers grants for capital projects to improve the local environment, including public buildings and amenities, habitats and architecture. Grants between £10,000 and £50,000.

Apply by 1 December for projects starting March

The Cambridge Building Society Community Fund

The fund offers grants from £2,500 up to £10,000 to support organisations that are undertaking charitable work with a connection to homes or housing. We are within 15 miles of the St Ives Branch, meeting the eligibility criteria.

Apply by 1st November, 1st May

Other local and national grants can be found here:

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/council/communities/funding-opportunities-in-cambridgeshire>

Councillor Surgeries

13:30-15:00 on Sat, 8 Nov 25 – **Buckden** Village Hall – Lincoln Room (Location TBC)

10:30-11:30 on 6th December – **Grafham** Village Hall (Location TBC)

10:30-11:30 on 3rd January – Outside **Brampton** Co-op, High Street

11:45-12:45 on 3rd January – Lo's Cheesecake Emporium, **Brampton Park**

I can be contacted at...

- By email liam.beckett@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
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Cllr Liam Beckett

County Councillor for the Brampton and Buckden Division