

Cllr Liam Beckett

MONTHLY REPORT DECEMBER 2025

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION

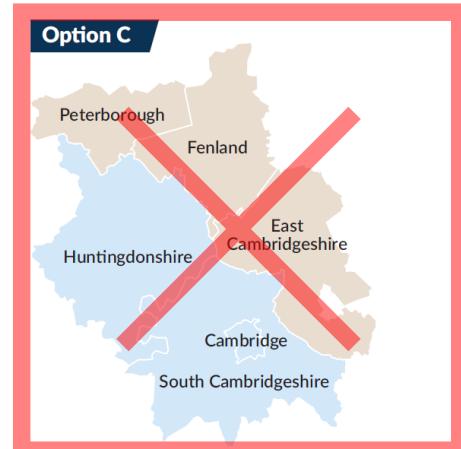
Councils in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough have now submitted four different options to ministers for consideration for Local Government Reorganisation.

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.

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

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

Bird flu

Following a confirmed case of bird flu near Ely, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) have put in place a three-kilometre Protection Zone and a ten-kilometre Surveillance Zone to try to stop the further spread of the disease.

The zones introduce a range of additional rules for bird keepers, as well as those involved in fresh meat and meat products, transporters and those involved in bird gatherings. Within the three-kilometre Protection Zone, virtually all captive birds must now be housed and strict bio-security measures with record-keeping requirements in place as well as movement restrictions.

An interactive map showing where the zones are is available at www.gov.uk/bird-flu. You can also view the Declaratory Order setting out the rules, and extensive guidance on things like symptoms and how to report them, housing birds safely and applying for movement licences. Anyone with concerns about breaches of the Order should report the information to the Citizens Advice Consumer Service on **0808 223 1133**. Road signs will also be placed by Cambridgeshire County Council on the main entry points to the zone on behalf of APHA, to make bird transporters aware they are entering an animal disease control zone.

Bird flu is primarily a disease of birds, and the risk to human health is very low. Nevertheless, the public is being advised not to touch dead wild birds, but to report them to DEFRA at www.gov.uk/guidance/report-dead-wild-birds or call **03459 33 55 77**.

The Food Standards Agency has said that on the basis of the current scientific evidence, Avian Influenza poses a very low food safety risk for UK consumers. Properly cooked poultry and poultry products, including eggs, are safe to eat. It is now a legal requirement to register all captive birds, even just a few hens in your garden. This will enable APHA to keep you up to date with bird flu developments. You can also sign up to APHA's animal disease text alert service.

HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT

Capital Maintenance Programme Survey

The capital maintenance team at Cambridgeshire County Council highways have identified multiple roads within our division that are now suitable to be considered for the capital maintenance programme in 2026. While roads on the list will be considered, they will have to be ranked against others across the district, and many will not meet the criteria threshold. At our next Local highways meeting with all parishes, (15th January) our Assets Strategy Manager will be in attendance to discuss and explain the thresholds for reactive and proactive maintenance.

If you have suggestions for large sections of road in need of repair, please make your suggestions known to me before the 11th December so I can submit these to the team for consideration.

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.

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.

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.

LOCAL GRANTS – CURRENTLY OPEN TO APPLICATIONS

13 Community Grants

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>

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 May

Other local and national grants can be found here:

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

Councillor Surgeries

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

11:45-12:45 on 3rd January – Outside Co-op, **Brampton Park**

I can be contacted at...

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- By phone 07312 081892

Cllr Liam Beckett

County Councillor for the Brampton and Buckden Division