



Cambridge City Council

Notice of Council

Date: Thursday, 26 February 2026

Time: 6.00 pm

Venue: Council Chamber, The Guildhall, Market Square, Cambridge, CB2 3QJ [access the building via Peashill entrance]

Contact: democratic.services@cambridge.gov.uk, tel:01223 457000

Dear Councillor,

A meeting of Cambridge City Council will be held in the Council Chamber, The Guildhall, Market Square, Cambridge, CB2 3QJ [access the building via Peashill entrance] on Thursday, 26 February 2026 at 6.00 pm and I hereby summon you to attend.

Dated 18 February 2026

Yours faithfully

Robert Pollock

Chief Executive

Agenda

- 1 Apologies for absence
- 2 Declarations of Interest
- 3 Minutes
 - To approve the minutes of the meetings held on 20 & 27 November 2025.
- 3a Minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2025 (Pages 9 - 14)
- 3b Minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2025 (Pages 15 - 40)
- 4 Mayor's announcements

5 Public questions time

6 To deal with oral questions

7 To consider the recommendations of the Executive for adoption

7a Budget Setting Report and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2026-27 (Pages 41 - 320)
Appendix T(b) to the report contains exempt information during which the public is likely to be excluded from the meeting subject to determination by Full Council following consideration of a public interest test. This exclusion would be made under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

7b Council Tax Reduction Scheme (Pages 321 - 374)

8 To consider the recommendations of Committees for adoption

8a Pay Policy Statement (Pages 375 - 388)
Note the final recommendation will be presented following a meeting of the Employment Committee prior to the Full Council meeting.

8b Review of Statement of Licensing Policy (Pages 389 - 464)

9 To consider the following notices of motion, notice of which has been given by:

9a Councillor Tong: City of Sanctuary

1 City of sanctuary

This council asserts that it wishes Cambridge to be a city of sanctuary in both name and deed.

This council asserts that this aspiration is shared by its residents, including particularly those who have become Cambridge residents by choice after becoming refugees.

This council wishes to re-affirm its commitment to be a city of sanctuary and take concrete steps to ensure that it plays no part in directly or indirectly financing the warfare and war crimes that force innocent people to flee for their lives.

2 Pension scheme divestment

The council notes with concern that, despite passing a divestment motion and several questions asked by councillors, it has been unable to provide residents, employees and councillors with clear information on whether any of the pension contributions it pays from employees' salaries and council tax are invested in ways that directly finance aggressive acts of war and war crimes. This undermines the credibility of Cambridge's claim to be a city of sanctuary.

This council resolves to write to all other local authorities in their current and expected pension pool to request them to vote for this information to be obtained, circulated and a divestment plan put in place at the earliest possible date.

The council notes that the current pension pool is ACCESS and that this will join the BTCPP pension pool and accordingly proposes to write to members of both as well as the managers and trustees of the pension funds.

3 Barclays Bank

The council reaffirms its commitment to withdraw its accounts from Barclays Bank plc at the earliest date that the contract can be terminated without penalty and find a more ethical banking partner. This is on the grounds that this bank has loaned over £2 billion to companies providing arms to Israel alone.

4 Flag policy

The council commits to reviewing its flag protocol at the next Civic Affairs & Audit meeting and including the flag of the newly recognised state of Palestine in the list of national flags to be flown on appropriate occasions. It also commits to illuminating the Guildhall in the colours of the Palestinian flag on 28 November, the UN's International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

9b Councillor Dalzell: Unfair Business Rates Increases, Threatening Neighbourhood Shops

This Council notes:

1. That neighbourhood shopping areas across Cambridge are facing dramatic business rates increases from April 2026, with Valuation Office Agency (VOA) data showing particularly severe

impacts in areas outside the city centre including Milton Road (25% increases), Chesterton Road (43-46%), Cherry Hinton High Street (19-25%), Queen Edith's, and Arbury (approximately 20%).

2. That business rates are a nationally controlled tax, the proceeds of which are controlled by central government, with local councils only collecting them on Government's behalf and receiving a small incentive for increases in the total raised in their areas.
3. That these increases coincide with the removal of 40% Retail, Hospitality and Leisure (RHL) relief affecting 230,000 small firms across England, meaning actual bills for neighbourhood shops will increase by several hundred percent over the next three years despite so-called 'transitional protections'.
4. That the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) has warned of 'three years of business rates misery' with an average 52% hike in bills for small businesses such as cafés, shops and hairdressers, describing this as a 'tax timebomb' that threatens high streets and the jobs and services they provide.
5. That the Government has raised new funds from a high-value multiplier which it has the power to use to support retail, hospitality and leisure sectors but has chosen not to, leaving most of the high street without adequate support.
6. That the VOA operates geographical 'valuation schemes' grouping streets together, with neighbourhood shopping areas serving less affluent communities systematically facing higher increases than city centre areas.
7. That businesses in these neighbourhood areas provide essential local services, affordable goods, and employment to Cambridge's less affluent communities.

This Council believes:

8. That forcing neighbourhood shops to raise prices or close makes the cost of living crisis worse for families across Cambridge who can least afford it.
9. That viable local shopping areas are essential for community cohesion and supporting residents who cannot easily travel to city centre retail.
10. That there is no rational justification for neighbourhood shopping areas serving deprived communities to face massive increases of 20-46%.
11. That the Government has raised new revenue from high-value properties which could be used to support small businesses but

has chosen to provide only limited relief to pubs and music venues while leaving most of the high street without adequate support.

12. That the removal of meaningful RHL relief, combined with aggressive revaluation, threatens the survival of neighbourhood shops across Cambridge.
13. That the Government's transitional protections are wholly inadequate - allowing bills to increase by £800 per year or 15-25% over three years amounts to managed decline of our local high streets.
14. That businesses facing these increases will be forced to raise prices (increasing the cost of living for residents across Cambridge who can least afford it), reduce services, or close entirely.
15. That Labour's handling of business rates reform has been chaotic and poorly communicated, with the Government's own calculator withdrawn after providing incorrect figures, leaving businesses unable to plan with certainty.

This Council resolves:

16. To write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and Cambridge's Members of Parliament calling on the Labour Government to provide meaningful relief for retail, hospitality and leisure businesses equivalent to the previous 40% support levels, using the new revenue raised from high-value properties, and urging Government to enact meaningful long-term reform by replacing business rates with a Commercial Landowner Levy (CLL) paid by property owners instead of tenants.
17. To write to the VOA demanding an explanation for the geographical disparities in rateable value increases across Cambridge, particularly why neighbourhood shopping areas are facing massive increases of 20-46%, and requesting an urgent review of the methodology used.

9c Councillor Gardiner-Smith: Holiday Voucher Scheme

This Council notes:

- The Cambridgeshire Holiday Voucher Scheme was championed by Labour and introduced in 2023 by the Joint Administration at Cambridgeshire County Council.
- The scheme provides over 20,000 thousand school-aged children with access to nutritious meals during school holidays.

- The scheme makes a very real and practical difference to struggling families — the equivalent of £15 per week per child during the 12 weeks of school holidays for the worst-off households in our county.
- The Liberal Democrat administration at Cambridgeshire County Council proposed and voted through a County Council budget for 2026-27 that scraps this vital lifeline for vulnerable children and their families from September 2026.
 - The cuts came just a month after the UK government confirmed it was increasing direct funding to Cambridgeshire County Council by 28.8%.
 - The cuts are in marked contrast to the food justice work being supported by Cambridge City Council, which includes support for holiday activity and lunch clubs across the city.
- The Liberal Democrat County Councillors sided with Conservative and Reform UK councillors to vote down the Labour group's fully costed amendment, which would have ensured vulnerable families received this vital support until 2029.

This council resolves to:

- Condemn the decision by Cambridgeshire County Council to cut the holiday vouchers scheme and call on the County Council to support Labour's proposal to keep the scheme.
- Thank the many voluntary and community groups who work alongside Cambridge City Council for food justice in Cambridge.

9d Councillor Ashton: Potholes Cambridge

This Council calls on Liberal Democrat-controlled Cambridgeshire County Council, who are in charge of pothole repairs, to take the urgent measures needed to reduce the current death traps Cambridge City residents face daily and to outline how this will be done.

This Council notes:

According to the County Council's own figures, there are currently 5600 potholes needing repair^[ii]. They state that they are fixing over 1000 per week. This would mean we should expect the residents of Cambridge to see an end to the current holes in 6 weeks' time.

A survey by go.compare found that Cambridgeshire has the highest number of potholes reported in England and Wales: 22 potholes per mile of road.

The Labour Government is investing £188m in road repairs and resurfacing in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough over the next four years.

This Council resolves:

That the Leader of Cambridge City Council should write to the Leader of Cambridgeshire County Council to highlight this Council's serious concerns for our residents' health and safety when using our roads.

To call on Cambridge's MPs to write to the Leader of the Liberal Democrat-controlled Cambridgeshire County Council to highlight the concerns of our residents.

The Council asks that those City Councillors who also sit on the County Council, representing Queen Ediths and Abbey Wards, ensure that action is taken to prevent the roads becoming even more of a death trap for users.

 <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/news/more-highways-officers-for-pothole-season>

10 Written questions

No discussion will take place on this item. Members will be asked to note the written questions and answers document as circulated around the Chamber.

Emergency Evacuation Procedure

In the event of the fire alarm sounding all persons should vacate the building by way of the nearest escape route and proceed directly to the assembly point in front St Mary's Church. The duty Officer will assume overall control during any evacuation, however in the unlikely event the duty Officer is unavailable, this responsibility will be assumed by the Committee Chair.

Information for the public

The public may record (e.g. film, audio, tweet, blog) meetings which are open to the public.

For full information about committee meetings, committee reports, councillors and the democratic process:

- Website: <http://democracy.cambridge.gov.uk>
- Email: democratic.services@cambridge.gov.uk
- Phone: 01223 457000

This Meeting will be live streamed to the Council's YouTube page. You can watch proceedings on the livestream or attend the meeting in person.

Those wishing to address the meeting will be able to do so virtually via Microsoft Teams, or by attending to speak in person. You must contact Democratic Services democratic.services@cambridge.gov.uk by 12 noon two working days before the meeting.

The full text of any public question must be submitted in writing by noon two working days before the date of the meeting or it will not be accepted. All questions submitted by the deadline will be published on the meeting webpage before the meeting is held.

Further information on public speaking will be supplied once registration and the written question / statement has been received.