



# Cambridge City Council

## Cabinet

**Date:** Tuesday, 16 December 2025

**Time:** 5.00 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

### Agenda

**This meeting is open to any member of the Council who wishes to ask questions of the Cabinet on items included on this agenda. Could members please notify the Committee Manager if they wish to attend and speak.**

- 1 Apologies
- 2 Declarations of Interest
- 3 Minutes (Pages 3 - 4)
- 4 Public Questions

### NON-KEY DECISIONS & MONITORING REPORTS

- 5 Biodiversity Strategy (Mid-term review) (Pages 5 - 88)
- 6 Biodiversity Duty Reporting (Pages 89 - 122)
- 7 Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy (Pages 123 - 148)
- 8 Council Tax Reduction (Pages 149 - 200)
- 9 Quarterly Performance Report (Pages 201 - 228)

**Cabinet Members:** Holloway (Chair), Wade (Vice-Chair), Bird, Moore, Nestor, Smart, A. Smith, S. Smith, Thornburrow and Todd-Jones

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**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.

## **CABINET**

20 November 2025

7.15 - 7.30 pm

**Present:** Councillors Holloway (Chair), Wade (Vice-Chair), Bird, Moore, Nestor, Smart, S. Smith, Thornburrow and Todd-Jones

### **Officers Present:**

Chief Executive: Robert Pollock

Deputy Democratic Services Manager: Claire Tunnicliffe

### **Other Councillors present:**

Councillors Bick, Bennett and Porrer

<b>FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL</b>
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### **25/43/Cab Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillor A Smith.

### **25/44/Cab Declarations of Interest**

No declarations were declared.

### **25/45/Cab Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) proposal sign-off**

The Leader of the Council presented the report immediately following the Extraordinary Council Meeting.

The report highlighted that the Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution had requested proposals for the establishment of unitary authorities across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, with submissions to Government required by 28 November.

Cabinet **unanimously resolved** to:

- i. Note the reports and other documents which include all Local Government Reorganisation options likely to be submitted.
- ii. Consider the feedback and any recommendations made by Council at its meeting held immediately prior to this Cabinet meeting.
- iii. Approve the draft proposal, Option B, for submission to the Secretary of State as this Council's preferred option for Local Government Reorganisation.

- iv. Delegate to the Chief Executive Officer in consultation with the Leader the authority to make any necessary amendments prior to submitting the final proposal.

The meeting ended at 7.30 pm

**CHAIR**





**REPORT TITLE: Biodiversity Strategy Mid-Term Review (2022 – 2025) and  
Action Plan (2026 – 2031)**

**To:** Cabinet 16 December 2025

Cabinet Member: Cllr Martin Smart, Cabinet Member for Nature, Open Space and City Services

**Report by:**

Guy Belcher, Biodiversity Manager

Tel: 01223 458532 Email: [Guy.Belcher@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:Guy.Belcher@cambridge.gov.uk)

**Wards affected:**

All

**Director Approval:** Director James Elms confirms that the report author has sought the advice of all appropriate colleagues and given due regard to that advice; that the equalities impacts and other implications of the recommended decisions have been assessed and accurately presented in the report; and that they are content for the report to be put to the Cabinet/Cabinet Member for decision.

1.	Recommendations
1.1	<p>It is recommended that Cabinet:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Approves the progression to public consultation to inform a midterm review of the Cambridge City Council Biodiversity Strategy (2022 – 2031)</li> <li>2. Notes that the public consultation will run alongside the approved Urban Forest Strategy public consultation</li> <li>3. Delegate finalisation of consultation documents and proposals to the Director of City Services</li> <li>4. Note that following the proposed consultation the amended Biodiversity Strategy is on the Forward Plan to return to Cabinet for approval in March 2026, along with the Urban Forest Strategy and Climate Change Strategy.</li> </ol>

<b>2.</b>	<b>Purpose and reason for the report</b>
2.1	<p>Our current Biodiversity Strategy (2022 – 2030) pledged to undertake a 5-year review of actions and progress to ensure we continue to collaborate to protect, manage and enhance nature in the city.</p> <p>The draft revised Strategy proposes to retain the same vision and themes and support for the existing Cambridge Nature Network, however, suggests alternative actions and projects to align with our new statutory Biodiversity Reporting Duty, the draft Urban Forest Strategy (UFS), and wider initiatives including the statutory Cambridgeshire &amp; Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS, proposed for submission to the Secretary of State in December 2025), the BIG Chalk partnership and an ambition to collaborate to achieve future Nature City Accreditation. These more recent initiatives are described within the draft strategy.</p> <p>The report seeks approval to proceed to public consultation alongside the UFS consultation to seek views from residents, community groups, and other stakeholders.</p>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Alternative options considered</b>
3.1	<p><b>1. To not review and allow the current strategy to continue without review through to 2030.</b></p> <p>This option was rejected as it would fail to consider new initiatives and wider strategies and risk not aligning with future collaborations and associated funding priorities and opportunities.</p>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Background and key issues</b>
4.1	The current Biodiversity Strategy (Appendix A) was adopted in 2022 and set out a clear vision and actions to address our declared Biodiversity Emergency.

***‘Our vision is that over the next 9 years Cambridge will see a “measurable net gain” in biodiversity, both within the city and the surrounding countryside, including the extent and quality of priority habitats and populations of priority species. Wildlife habitats will be protected, enhanced and where possible expanded and linked.***

***The very best wildlife habitats will form part of a much wider Cambridge Nature Network that will permeate the whole of the city and beyond. Everyone who lives or works within Cambridge will have access to high quality natural greenspaces close to their home or place or work, and there will be a greater awareness and understanding of biodiversity with opportunities to be involved and collaborate in local wildlife enhancement projects and monitoring.’***

The draft document retains this vision through to 2031, with the addition of referencing the Local Nature Recovery Strategy. The consultation will seek continued support for this vision or alternative suggestions.

The 7 strategic objections to deliver the vision are proposed to be retained, with the addition of objective 2 referencing the Local Nature Recovery Strategy. As with the vision the consultation will seek continued support for these or alternative suggestions:

1. To secure a measurable net gain in biodiversity across the and support the Natural Cambridgeshire Doubling Nature Vision by 2030.
2. To ensure designated sites and priority habitats are in good / favourable condition and connected, where possible, to increase resilience to a changing climate and contribute to the Cambridge Nature Network and Local Nature Recovery Strategy
3. To promote awareness of biodiversity and wellbeing, supporting coordinated action in our communities, businesses, and institutions
4. To ensure that biodiversity is considered by all council service functions

and projects

5. To maximise the potential of our buildings, parks, open spaces, allotments and community gardens, watercourses and tree stock to support biodiversity, whilst balancing their multifunctional needs

6. To harness the wealth of local professional and amateur knowledge and experience in identifying and solving local issues.

7. To establish long term, species and habitat surveys and monitoring to measure the impact of activities and identify new threats and opportunities across the city

Since adoption we have delivered many diverse projects and initiatives across services and in collaboration with partners and communities. These have been summarised in the accompanying Biodiversity Duty Report, the submission of which is a new statutory requirement for all local authorities established within the Environment Act, 2021.

Since 2022 several new initiatives and partnership have arisen that require capturing in an updated plan:

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), proposed for submission to the Secretary of State in December 2025, will be a statutory strategic document that sets out the County wide sites, species and habitats priorities for action. These actions have been captured within the revised City Strategy and action plan to ensure we are coordinated with adjoining authorities within the remaining lifetime of the strategy, and that our plans are aligned for future Local Government Reorganisation.

Our existing cross-boundary Cambridge Nature Network and Greater Cambridge Chalk Stream Project have been formally recognised by BIG Chalk, a major landscape scale alliance of over 150 organisations working to restore nature across 20% of England focuses on chalk and limestone landscapes.

	<p>A key new ambition is to seek Nature City Accreditation through a recognised process of increased collaboration for nature recovery with our communities. The consultation will seek support for the initiative and identify new collaborations with diverse groups to ensure that everyone can help restore, appreciate and engage with local nature.</p>
<b>5.</b>	<b>Corporate plan</b>
5.1	<p>The Biodiversity Strategy review seeks to address the following corporate priorities (2022 – 2027):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <b>Responding to the climate and biodiversity emergencies and creating a net zero council by 2030</b> <p>Through collaboration with communities and partners to deliver strategic nature recovery in the city and beyond. Nature based solutions including increase canopy cover, sustainable urban drainage and restoration of urban chalk streams will help mitigate the impacts of climate change on both communities and nature.</p> </li> <li> <b>Tackling poverty and inequality and helping people in the greatest need</b> <p>Seeking to ensure everyone living or working in Cambridge has easy access to safe, high-quality, nature rich, natural green spaces, promoting wellbeing and social inclusion.</p> </li> <li> <b>Building a new generation of council and affordable homes and reducing homelessness</b> <p>Ensuring new council homes meet our ambition of delivering 20% Biodiversity Net Gain</p> </li> <li> <b>Modernising the council to lead a greener city that is fair for all</b> <p>Ensuring that we meet our Biodiversity duty through seeking opportunities to protect and enhance nature across all services and partnerships</p> </li> </ul>
<b>6.</b>	<p><b>Consultation, engagement and communication</b></p> <p>The current Biodiversity Strategy was adopted in 2022 following a public consultation held in 2021.</p> <p>A co-ordinated public consultation will be held alongside the approved UFS consultation,</p>

	<p>using an umbrella approach. This integrated engagement will enable stakeholders and residents to provide feedback across the two inter-related strategies, while ensuring efficient use of resources and maximising participation.</p> <p>The final Biodiversity Strategy is planned to be presented to Cabinet in March 2026 for adoption, alongside the Urban Forest Strategy and Climate Change Strategy. Presenting the three strategies together will demonstrate their interconnections and provide a joined-up framework for managing climate, nature, and the urban forest.</p>
<b>7.</b>	<b>Anticipated outcomes, benefits or impact</b>
7.1	<p>Approval to consult will let us review and improve our Biodiversity Strategy, continuing and strengthening our long-term approach to working in collaboration for nature recovery.</p> <p>The review is expected to deliver the following outcomes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Improved plan quality: insights from stakeholders and communities will help ensure the Biodiversity Strategy is both deliverable and widely supported, with projects and KPIs refined in response to feedback.</li> <li>2. Increased participation and engagement: the consultation will raise awareness of the Biodiversity Strategy and encourage greater involvement of residents, community groups, developers, and landowners in its delivery.</li> <li>3. Clearer accountability: the introduction of measurable KPIs will allow progress to be monitored transparently over the remaining lifetime of the strategy.</li> <li>4. Greater recognition: seeking Nature City Accreditation will ensure shared goals and new collaborations that can be celebrated.</li> </ol> <p><b>What does good look like?</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A Biodiversity Strategy that is accessible, evidence-based, and widely supported.</li> </ol>

	<p>2. Broad public awareness of and engagement with the Biodiversity Strategy and wider Cambridge Nature Network and Local Nature Recovery Strategy</p> <p>3. A clear route to achieve Nature City Accreditation in recognition and celebration of our shared vision, collaboration and delivery partnerships.</p>
<b>8.</b>	<b>Implications</b>
<b>8.1</b>	<b>Relevant risks</b>
	<p><b>Risk 1: Limited engagement or low participation in the consultation could reduce the quality of feedback.</b></p> <p><b>Mitigation:</b> Strong communications, by aligning with UFS consultations to maximise visibility.</p> <p><b>Risk 2: Loss of key personnel.</b> The Biodiversity Project Officer post is currently fixed term until 2026, with 50% of the role dedicated to delivering Biodiversity Strategy projects and engagement (the remaining 50% to delivery of the Urban Forest Strategy). If this post is not retained, delivery of the strategy will be limited by staff resource.</p> <p><b>Mitigation:</b> Options for extending this role will be explored ahead of 2026 deadline to secure continuity of delivery.</p>
	<b>Financial Implications</b>
<b>8.2</b>	<p>There are no direct financial implications arising from this decision, as approval is only sought to consult on a mid-term review of the strategy and action plan.</p> <p>Consultation and engagement will be delivered within existing City service budgets.</p>
	<b>Legal Implications</b>

8.3	<p>There are no direct legal implications arising from this decision to consult on the reviewed strategy.</p> <p>The Council already has statutory duties to consider biodiversity in all its services and report to national government. The strategy will help ensure these duties are met within a clear framework.</p>
	<p><b>Equalities and socio-economic Implications</b></p> <p>Assessment found that the strategy and associated actions will have overall positive equality impacts across Cambridge's communities.</p> <p>The actions promote equitable access to nature, health and wellbeing benefits, and inclusive community engagement. No negative or disproportionate impacts were identified, and equality outcomes will be monitored through annual reporting.</p>
8.4	<b>Net Zero Carbon, Climate Change and Environmental implications</b>
8.5	<p>The overall impact of the Biodiversity Strategy midterm review is assessed as being moderately positive in terms of reducing impacts of climate change and enhancing biodiversity.</p> <p>Healthy nature green spaces, wetlands, waterways and tree canopies form a vital part of climate mitigation and adaptation. The strategy sets out a proactive approach to protecting, maintaining, expanding and enhancing natural habitats, contributing to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carbon storage and sequestration, supporting the Council's net zero targets.</li> <li>• Urban cooling and shade, reducing the impacts of extreme heat.</li> <li>• Stormwater management, helping reduce local flood risk.</li> <li>• Biodiversity enhancement, contributing to Biodiversity Net Gain and habitat connectivity.</li> </ul> <p>The Strategy complements and aligns with the Council's draft Climate Change and Urban Forest Strategies.</p>



	<b>Procurement Implications</b>
8.6	There are no procurement implications arising directly from this decision as approval is only sought to consult on a reviewed strategy.
	<b>Community Safety Implications</b>
8.7	<p>There are no community safety implications arising directly from this decision to consult on the reviewed strategy.</p> <p>The strategy supports public safety through developing natural solutions to mitigating the adverse impacts of climate on our communities.</p> <p>Following adoption of the revised strategy any specific site project design or management reviews will consider community safety audits to ensure that the sites continue to be safe, inviting and accessible to all.</p>
	<b>Financial</b>
8.8	<p>No new funding is required for the consultation, which will be delivered within existing budgets.</p> <p>Future delivery of the strategy may require external funding, building on the Council's track record of securing over £900K (excluding Cambridge Canopy Project) of external funding since 2022.</p> <p>Actions without identified funding are included in the strategy as aspirational and will only be taken forward if resources become available.</p>
9.	<b>Background documents</b> Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

<b>10.</b>	<b>Appendices</b>
10.1	<p>Appendix A – Current Biodiversity Strategy (2022 – 2030)</p> <p><a href="#"><u>Biodiversity Strategy 2022-2030 - Cambridge City Council</u></a></p> <p><i>Appendix B – Draft Biodiversity Strategy (2026 – 2031) (for consultation)</i></p> <p><i>Appendix C – Draft Biodiversity Duty Report (2022 – 2025)</i></p>
	<p>To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact  Guy Belcher, Biodiversity Manager, tel: 01223 458532, email:  <a href="mailto:Guy.belcher@cambridge.gov.uk">Guy.belcher@cambridge.gov.uk</a></p>

# Cambridge City Council Biodiversity Strategy 2026 – 2031



Sheep's Green Local Nature Reserve, Newnham

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## 1. Foreword



**Councillor Martin Smart**

*Cabinet Member for Nature, Open Spaces & City Services*

When we adopted our 2022 Biodiversity Strategy, we pledged to undertake a midterm review on progress and direction. This draft revised strategy for consultation seeks to update changes in national legislation and recognise new regional strategies, partnerships and local projects. It provides an opportunity to reflect on and celebrate the many successful projects and partnerships working to protect and restore nature across the city and beyond.

The 2021 Environment Act places a new statutory duty on all Local Authorities to publish a Biodiversity Duty Report to demonstrate our collective efforts in support of biodiversity. The accompanying report showcases our shared regional and local visions, strategies and initiatives and provides case studies on what has been achieved between 2022 and 2025.

This summer I felt great pride in joining the Friends of Logan's Meadow Local Nature Reserve at their opening event of the newly created wetlands in East Chesterton. This ambitious project is a great example of the collaborative approach needed to restore urban habitats and wildlife. The original concept from the Friends, supported the vision of the Cambridge Nature Network, whose partners helped secure initial Lottery funding for design and consultation. Natural England provided additional Green Recovery Funding for a new woodland buffer, planted by the local community. The resulting momentum secured a Combined Authority grant and developer (S106) contributions to dig the new wetlands, which, following the planting of reeds by volunteers have already been visited by water voles, otters and kingfishers.



Such projects give us hope that the decline in nature can be reversed when communities and partners work together on shared challenges and goals. As I write we await adoption of the new statutory Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. We worked with the Combined Authority to produce this overarching vision for our region with shared priorities and goals that complement the existing objectives and projects of the Cambridge Nature Network, and we look forward to collaborating on delivery.

The repeating message of collaboration fundamentally supports our proposal for Cambridge to seek Nature City Accreditation for our collective work and ambition to put nature at the heart of our communities. We propose to take a lead on this and I hope you will feel inspired to respond to the consultation and join us in whatever way you are able.



## 2. Vision

Our corporate plan sets out a clear **'One Cambridge, Fair for All'** vision which we are working towards cooperatively with our residents and partner organisations. Collectively we are seeking **'Cambridge to be a net zero carbon city, where people and nature enjoy a clean river, clean air, and biodiverse green spaces'** and where **'strong nature networks are coordinated between relevant bodies to combat the impacts of social and climate injustice'**

We will deliver this vision through our Corporate Plan (2022 – 2027) priorities. The first of which is **'Leading Cambridge's response to the climate change and biodiversity emergencies'**

**'Our Biodiversity Strategy vision is that over the next 5 years Cambridge will see a "measurable net gain" in biodiversity, both within the city and the surrounding countryside, including the extent and quality of priority habitats and populations of priority species. Wildlife habitats will be protected, enhanced and where possible expanded and linked. The very best wildlife habitats will form the Cambridge Nature Network that will permeate the whole of the city and link to the wider Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy. Everyone who lives or works within Cambridge will have access to high quality natural greenspaces within walking distance of their home or place of work, and there will be a greater awareness and understanding of biodiversity with opportunities to be involved and collaborate in local wildlife enhancement projects and monitoring'.**

### 3. Executive Summary

The Cambridge City Council Biodiversity Strategy (2026–2031) sets out a renewed commitment to address the biodiversity emergency declared in 2019. Building on the 2022 strategy, this update aligns with the Environment Act 2021, regional Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), and the Natural Cambridgeshire (Local Nature Partnership) ‘Doubling Nature’ ambition.

#### **Vision:**

By 2031, Cambridge will achieve a measurable net gain in biodiversity, ensuring priority habitats and species are protected, enhanced, and connected. Every resident will have access to high-quality natural greenspaces, fostering engagement and wellbeing.

#### **Strategic Objectives:**

- Deliver measurable biodiversity net gain across the city.
- Improve condition and connectivity of designated sites and priority habitats.
- Embed biodiversity considerations across all council services and developments.
- Empower communities, businesses, and institutions to act.
- Maximise biodiversity potential of council assets and urban spaces.
- Establish long-term monitoring and research partnerships.

#### **Key Themes:**

- **Biodiversity Mainstreaming:** Integrate biodiversity into planning, housing, and operations; adopt LNRS; achieve 20% biodiversity net gain for council-led developments.



- The Core: Enhance Local Nature Reserves and Commons; support Cambridge Nature Network; restore chalk streams; review grazing practices.
- **Nature in Your Neighbourhood:** Promote community-led projects, Nature City Accreditation, pollinator-friendly initiatives, and biodiversity education.

#### **Action Plan (2026–2031):**

The strategy outlines targeted actions under these themes, including policy adoption, habitat restoration, species recovery, and collaborative projects with partners.

Progress will be monitored through biodiversity audits, site condition assessments, and community engagement metrics.

#### **Outcome:**

This strategy aims to reverse biodiversity decline, strengthen ecological resilience, and embed nature at the heart of Cambridge's communities—delivering environmental, social, and health benefits for future generations.

The term 'biodiversity' describes all forms of life, their interactions and the ecosystems that support them and us. It includes all species, both common and rare, which combine to provide us with the air we breathe, water we drink and the food we eat.

## **4.1 Why we need a strategy**

In 2019, we declared a biodiversity emergency in recognition of the pressures facing our natural world, both locally and internationally. We adopted the current Biodiversity Strategy in 2022 to guide our work to meet this challenge and pledged to undertake a mid-term review to ensure we are meeting our objectives.

As with the Council's climate change emergency, the biodiversity emergency requires all our services to consider their net impact on biodiversity within their operations. This revised strategy embeds biodiversity principles and considerations across all Council service areas and the communities we serve.

For many years, we have worked with our Friends Groups, Local Nature Reserve volunteers and partners such as the Wildlife Trust, Cambridge Past Present and Future, community gardens and orchards to maintain and improve the rich diversity of habitats in and around Cambridge. We greatly value this shared expertise and passion, recognising that we cannot hope to reverse the decline and help our species adapt to a changing climate alone. For this reason, the strategy review seeks to further engage with other city property owners, businesses, community groups and visitors to respect, protect and enhance our city's wildlife and the multiple benefits it provides our communities.

We are partners in the Cambridge Nature Network (CNN), which incorporates our iconic riverside commons and Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) and we look forward to continue to work closely with other network stakeholders including the East Cambridge Farmland Cluster, Cambridge University colleges and the wider local

community to conserve and enhance the network as a vital strategic piece of green infrastructure for the city.

Due to the economic success of Cambridge and the local region, major growth sites which were identified within the Cambridge City Council's former Nature Conservation Strategy (2006) have now been built, along with associated new country parks and habitats to complement the existing network of LNRs, woodlands and water courses. Trumpington Meadows Country Park and Hobson's Park are now vibrant new strategic green spaces, providing welcome respite for communities during the Covid pandemic and new homes for farmland and wetland species. These schemes demonstrate that with good design and planning policy, biodiversity net gain is achievable on multifunctional spaces, with Hobsons Park being designated a County Wildlife Site in 2025.

The Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service between the City and South Cambridgeshire District Council allows us to help plan on a strategic Greater Cambridge geography for existing and new green infrastructure and measurable biodiversity net gain within our emerging shared local plan. Identifying land not just for new homes but for new habitats and green connections to meet our duty under the Environment Act 2021.

In addition, developments have included planning conditions securing Section 106 contributions, which have helped fund biodiversity projects on existing green spaces, such as 'The Rush' fish pass at Sheep's Green LNR and new wetlands at Logan's Meadow LNR.

## **4.2 Cambridge biodiversity in context**

The biodiversity emergency we are experiencing is not just local but also global. Current global species extinction rates are 100 to 1000 times higher than the expected baseline rate, and they are increasing. Some of the key driving forces which are causing the emergency are increasing demands for housing, food and energy production. These can result in habitat loss, habitat degradation, habitat fragmentation and environmental pollution. They also contribute to, and exacerbate, the effects of climate change. The result is a decrease in species diversity, but also impacts on other elements of biodiversity, such as genetic diversity within species, or the functional characteristics of ecosystems. Ultimately these declines and changes undermine nature's productivity, resilience and adaptability placing it at risk of further damage or collapse.

All these pressures are damaging to the intrinsic value of biodiversity, and the ecosystem services that we rely on for our social, economic and environmental health and wellbeing - including clean air, urban cooling, flood alleviation and food to name but a few. A thriving biodiverse environment is critical for life with a growing evidence base to suggest that we lead healthier lives, both mentally and physically, if we have more opportunities to interact with nature.

The UK is one of the most nature depleted countries in the world (ranked 189 out of 218). Almost 15% of all species in the UK are at risk from extinction. With 72% of the UK land area managed for agriculture it is no surprise that changes in this industrial sector, responding to Government policy and societal changes, have one of the greatest impacts on our nation's biodiversity. Other drivers for change include urbanisation, invasive species, hydrological change and climate change.

In comparison to other parts of the UK, Cambridgeshire has some of the lowest proportions of Priority Habitats and land designated for nature conservation, and it has the second lowest proportion of woodland coverage. Within the region agricultural change has also been instrumental in land use changes and biodiversity

losses. Grassland cover has decreased from around 30% in the 1930s to less than 10% in 2018, being replaced in large part by arable farmland. Cambridgeshire also contains relatively little accessible green infrastructure for people, growing populations are placing greater recreational pressures on these existing greenspaces.

The same suite of threats impact on the biodiversity of Cambridge as they do throughout the rest of the world. Our city and its associated sub region are experiencing rapid urban growth, including housing, commercial and institutional development. Whilst this helps support a thriving local economy it places significant pressure on our green infrastructure<sup>1</sup> and the biodiversity it supports.

It is challenging in an urban environment to balance the needs of both wildlife and people. If we are to reverse the declines in biodiversity, we must value and make space for nature in the urban communities where we live and in the surrounding countryside. This will mean protecting and enhancing the precious biodiversity resources that we have left but also ensuring there is sufficient outdoor recreational space for residents to be able to access and enjoy.

The very fact that these pressures are occurring at a local level does mean that it is within our power to do something about them. Biodiversity is resilient, particularly in our towns and cities; and has the capacity to bounce back. There are many examples of positive interventions making a difference for biodiversity across the UK. The suite of actions set out within this strategy is the response of Cambridge City Council to the biodiversity emergency we face locally, nationally, and internationally. We recognise the importance of a healthy and biodiverse environment that is sustainably planned and managed to ensure the current and future prosperity and health and wellbeing of all sections of our communities. Our aim is to go beyond simply halting the decline in biodiversity but to actively restore the quality of our natural environment and leave our city's wildlife in a better state than that in which

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<sup>1</sup> The term green infrastructure also includes the blue infrastructure of our city such as rivers and streams

we found it. We hope the following strategy will inspire you to join us and help to deliver the proposed actions and associated changes needed to achieve this.

### **4.3 Legislation and policy**

This Biodiversity Strategy considers and is aligned with a range of national, regional and local policies and plans, as outlined below, Legislative documents, policy reports and reviews or policy drivers are described in further detail in Appendix 1.

#### *National Legislation*

- Environment Act 2021
- The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)
- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006
- The Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000

#### *Policy documents (national, regional and local)*

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012 (updated 2024)
- South Cambridgeshire Local Plan (2018) and Cambridge Local Plan (2018)
- Draft Greater Cambridge Local Plan (publication timeline December 2026)
- South Cambridgeshire District Council Doubling Nature Strategy (2021)
- Greater Cambridge Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document (2022)
- UK National Biodiversity Strategy & Action Plan (NBSAP) 2025
- Draft Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy (publication timeline December 2025)

#### *Reviews, plans and policy drivers (national, regional, and local)*

- Greater Cambridge Green Infrastructure Opportunity Mapping (2020/2021)

- Greater Cambridge chalk streams project report (2024)
- CCC/MKA Ecology Ltd Biodiversity Audit (2021)
- Natural England Nature Networks
- 25 Year Environment Plan (2018)
- Making Space for Nature: A review of England's Wildlife Sites and Ecological Network (The Lawton Report, 2010)
- Cambridge Nature Network Report

Our strategy recognises and adopts the principle of the following national initiatives that support our vision and objectives.

### **The Big Chalk Partnership**

An ambitious, national-scale alliance of over 150 organisations—primarily National Landscapes, National Parks, conservation groups, farms, community groups, and government agencies—working across southern England's chalk and limestone geologies. Covering around 20% of England's land, including iconic areas like the Cotswolds, Chilterns, North Wessex Downs, and the South Downs National Park, the partnership is uniting efforts to restore, reconnect, and enhance nature-rich habitats at landscape scale. By embedding ecological recovery within national commitments to protect at least 30% of land for biodiversity by 2030, Big Chalk promotes collaborative conservation, data-driven project planning, and dynamic partnerships to ensure these vulnerable landscapes thrive in a changing climate.

### **Butterfly Conservation - Butterfly-Friendly Cities**

Butterfly conservation focuses on protecting butterfly species and their habitats, which are vital indicators of a healthy ecosystem. Urban areas can play a key role through the concept of a “butterfly-friendly city,” where green spaces, parks, gardens, and roadside verges are managed to provide nectar-rich plants, native wildflowers, and shelter for butterflies. These cities reduce pesticide use, create pollinator corridors, and encourage community involvement in planting and monitoring. By integrating biodiversity into urban planning, butterfly-friendly cities

help reverse declines in pollinator populations, support climate resilience, and bring nature closer to people.

### **Nature Town & Cities**

Nature Towns and Cities is a coalition—led by Natural England, the National Trust, the National Lottery Heritage Fund, and partners—aiming to transform urban living through nature. It seeks to give more people access to green and blue spaces within a 15-minute walk and enable more children to play in nature on their doorstep. It champions green infrastructure planning, to improve mental and physical health, provide climate resilience, improve air quality, community cohesion, and encourage economic investment. Ultimately, it positions nature not as optional, but as fundamental infrastructure—ensuring urban areas are greener, healthier, and more equitable for people and wildlife alike

## **4.4 Local initiatives**

The continued decline in biodiversity has prompted several local and regional initiatives that seek to protect, restore and enhance biodiversity through both development and land management practices. Many of these seek landscape scale restoration of habitats to ensure that ecosystems are resilient. The City Council seeks to support these through both policies and projects to ensure that opportunities are realised on our land holdings, and we deliver measurable biodiversity net gain through our statutory functions, operational services and community influence.

### **Natural Cambridgeshire (Local Nature Partnership) Doubling Nature Vision**

Natural Cambridgeshire is a partnership of leaders from businesses, local authorities, the health sector, farming, wildlife and environmental organisations that exists to champion, influence and enable the fulfilment of the Doubling nature vision



### **Cambridge Nature Network**

The Cambridge Nature Network is a landscape scale biodiversity initiative led by the Local Wildlife Trust and Cambridge Past Present and Future with support from local Councils and other key landowning partners. The initiative is founded on an evidence based spatial plan for protecting and enhancing nature, focussed on the best of the remaining habitats within 10km of the city and key opportunities and locations for creating new habitats and associated linkages. Through collaboration with landowners and communities it represents an ambitious but achievable vision for local nature recovery. The Cambridge Nature Network will form a critical part of the emerging statutory Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Cambridgeshire, which will be overseen by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority.

### ***Draft South Cambridgeshire Climate & Nature Strategy 2026–2030***

Led by South Cambridgeshire District Council, establishes a clear vision: empower the district to lead in climate action, enhance environmental stewardship, protect and restore nature, and build resilience for communities in the face of escalating climate impacts. Its key principles focus on embedding climate and nature objectives throughout the council's work, leveraging partnerships, and prioritising actions that deliver co-benefits—benefiting both nature and people—while enabling sustainable economic growth and improving wellbeing

### **Cambridge University Biodiversity Action Plan**

Representing considerable land holdings across the city, this plan seeks to deliver a significant and measurable improvement in the biodiversity of the University of Cambridge estate, and the Greater Cambridge Area more generally, in a manner that educates and inspires an appreciation of the natural environment, and that

encourages interventions, research and innovation to enhance and protect biodiversity for future generations. It seeks to further collaborative working with the City Council on biodiversity initiatives.

### **Wicken Fen Vision**

The National Trust's Wicken Fen Vision is an ambitious, 100-year plan to create a diverse landscape for wildlife and people stretching from Wicken Fen to the edge of Cambridge. By restoring natural processes, careful management of water and grazing will allow the land to evolve a mosaic of habitats for a wide variety of abundant wildlife. People will be able to enjoy access and recreation opportunities across a beautiful, tranquil natural fenland landscape, with opportunities for volunteering, education, and interpretation.

### **Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)**

The LNRS a legally mandated framework under the Environment Act 2021, aimed at reversing nature decline in one of England's most depleted regions. Spearheaded by the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority (responsible authority) in partnership with Cambridgeshire County Council, Natural Cambridgeshire and local (supporting) authorities, the strategy sets biodiversity priorities, maps existing and potential habitats, and identifies key areas and species for ecological restoration.

Acting as a spatial roadmap, it targets the expansion and reconnection of wildlife-rich areas—aligning with the region's "Doubling Nature" ambition—and emphasises nature-based solutions for cleaner water, flood mitigation, carbon storage, community access, and resilience to climate change. Following extensive stakeholder engagement and public consultation (July–September 2025), the strategy is set to guide land-use planning, public investment, and local conservation efforts—building a nature-rich, productive, and sustainable landscape for both people and wildlife.



#### **4.5 Cambridge City Council role**

We manage more than 80 parks and open spaces, such as play areas, allotments, community gardens and orchards, totalling over 742 hectares. Some of these sites are designated and managed predominantly as nature reserves, for their wildlife value and form part of the key Cambridge Nature Network, whilst others provide valuable predominantly recreational open space for residents and visitors to enjoy. Whatever the primary purpose and size of these spaces, combined they provide a huge potential for increasing the extent, quality and connectivity of habitats within the city and their contribution to the wider Local Nature Recovery Strategy. Therefore, we have an obligation and opportunity to ensure that all sites maximise their potential for biodiversity, provide good examples of habitat management and creation and hopefully influence other landowners to do the same.

We manage approximately 23 kilometres of awarded watercourses, including some of our precious chalk streams, by ensuring management is sensitive to biodiversity, whilst providing our statutory drainage functions, we can protect such iconic species as otter, water vole, kingfishers and brown trout in the city. We are also riparian

owners of a significant stretch of the main riverbank through the city. Wherever possible we are seeking to 'naturalise' previously engineered banks such as at Stourbridge Common, creating new backwaters and wetland such as on Logan's Meadow LNR and providing passage for fish around artificial obstructions, such as at the weir at Byron's Pool LNR and 'The Rush' fish pass at Sheep's Green LNR.

We are custodians of our precious common land and oversee the historic grazing management practice that retains flood meadow landscapes and iconic cattle grazing in the heart of the city. These grasslands form a key part of the network of Cambridge spaces and offer potential for enhanced management to benefit biodiversity, urban drainage and capture carbon emissions.

Through implementation of our Tree Strategy (2016 – 2026), we manage over 30,000 trees, contributing to the urban forest that provides both wildlife and communities with a range of ecosystem services, making our neighbourhoods cooler, cleaner and more attractive places to live. Streets trees provide vital shade for communities as well as habitat and 'stepping stones' for species living in or moving through the built environment.

Our property estate includes rental units, iconic buildings such as the Guildhall and council housing properties with gardens and communal open spaces. How we manage, renovate, and invest in these assets will impact upon existing species present and provide huge opportunities for restoring nature where people live and work.

Through our Community Service, Community Engagement Team we offer support to local Friends Groups, providing opportunities for volunteering in our parks and open spaces, and work closely with local community groups including On the Verge promoting new wildflower meadows and Action for Swifts, with swift box provision such as on Queen Ann Terrace car park and at Edgecombe Flats.

We provide local schools with natural green spaces for valuable environmental education opportunities enabling pupils to explore, experience and value nature close to home.

As a local authority we are often a key partner in many local initiatives and projects with links to community groups. By promoting biodiversity through raising awareness in communities we can ensure that opportunities for people to connect with, protect, enhance, and appreciate nature are realised.



**Figure 1. Our role in local nature recovery**

## 4.6 Biodiversity in Cambridge

### *The geological and landscape setting*

There are three National Character Areas (NCA) around Cambridge, each with distinctive geological features which dictate the landscape character and biodiversity contained within them.

To the north and west is (NCA 88) Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Clay lands. A broad gently undulating lowland plateau with shallow rivers, and notably the Great Ouse and Nene, which broaden as they reach the Fens. The area is dominated by intensive arable farming. There is an underlying clay geology which is overlain by glacial deposits of chalky boulder clays which add great character to the ancient woodlands in the area.

To the south and east is (NCA 87) East Anglian Chalk. Characterised by smooth rolling chalkland hills with large irregular field enclosed by low-lying hedgerows. Much of the area is under cereal production but important semi-natural habitats include lowland calcareous grassland and the chalk streams which are under significant threat from modification, pollution and abstraction.

Further north and east of the city, and with a narrow corridor alongside the River Cam, is (NCA 46) The Fens. Characterised as an expansive low-lying wetland landscape. Woodland cover is sparse, and the open fields are bounded by drains and river systems which provide an important ecological network. An important area for biodiversity with several internationally recognised areas of nature conservation value.

Within the City of Cambridge, it is possible to see the influence of each of these regions on the habitats and species that are present. Directly to the south-east of the city are chalky grasslands with exposed chalk (such as East Pit in Cherry Hinton). To the north and east are areas which have characteristics of fenland with reedbeds and drains (such as Wilbraham Fen). To the west, and running right through the



heart of the city, are riverside meadows and pastures which are characteristic of the semi-natural habitats of the clay lands (such as Grantchester Meadows and Midsummer Common).

### ***The ecological setting***

#### *Statutory and non-statutory designated areas*

Within Cambridge there are a range of areas designated for their nature conservation value. These include statutorily designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) which are of national significance for the biodiversity and geological features they support. The statutory sites also include LNRs which are of statutory local significance for both people and wildlife.

Non-statutory sites include County Wildlife Sites (CWS), which represent some of the most important habitats in Cambridgeshire. Within the city itself are a suite of City Wildlife Sites (CiWS) and Protected Road Verges (PRVs). These areas do not meet national or County criteria for statutory designation, but they do meet important criteria at a local level and contain many locally significant habitats and species.

The habitats and species at these locations are varied but typically reflect the wider landscape with woodlands, chalk grasslands and rivers and streams. Some are designated for the species they support, such as water vole. Some habitats and species within Cambridge are listed as Habitats of Principal Importance and Species of Principal Importance, or Priority Habitats and Species. These are listed on the NERC Act (2006) and represent some of the most valued habitats and species in the UK.

#### *Other greenspaces*

Cambridge is fortunate to have a host of other greenspaces which all make a significant contribution to our biodiversity. These include country parks, such as those at Milton (just outside the city boundary in South Cambridgeshire) and

Trumpington Meadows (which straddles the border with South Cambridgeshire). There are also other accessible natural greenspaces including Grantchester Meadows, Hobson's Park, and new areas of open space at Eddington and Darwin Green in north-west Cambridge.

Cambridge is a 'green' city. Beyond the formal greenspaces such as designated areas and parks, there are also numerous informal greenspaces, including community gardens and orchards, private gardens as well as college grounds, street trees and increasingly, green roofs. Tree canopy covers approximately 17.6% of the city making a significant contribution to the biodiversity resource in Cambridge.

### *The Cambridge Nature Network*

Two priority areas of the Cambridge Nature Network directly interact with the city and surrounding countryside. The Cambridge Nature Network Priority Areas have been identified by grouping core sites based on landscape features, topography, and hydrology. Within these areas, potential extension habitats (or 'steppingstones') are proposed with a view to creating coherent joined up nature networks, which are resilient to the modern-day pressures on our biodiversity. The Cambridge Nature Network target is to achieve a 30% coverage of wildlife rich habitats within each Priority Area.

The River Cam Corridor Priority Area passes right through the heart of Cambridge following the course of the Cam. This Priority Area also includes the tributaries of the Cam which flow from the south, such as Cherry Hinton Brook and Hobson's Brook. This is a critical Priority Area within the network as it provides the connection linking other Priority Areas to the north, south, east and west. Many of these sites and watercourses are managed by Cambridge City Council so we are uniquely placed to help deliver the network through the city.

Just south of Cambridge, the Gog Magog Hills Priority Area reaches to the fringe of the city. This Priority Area is characterised by the underlying chalk with the key sites of nature conservation importance located at the Cherry Hinton chalk pit complex at



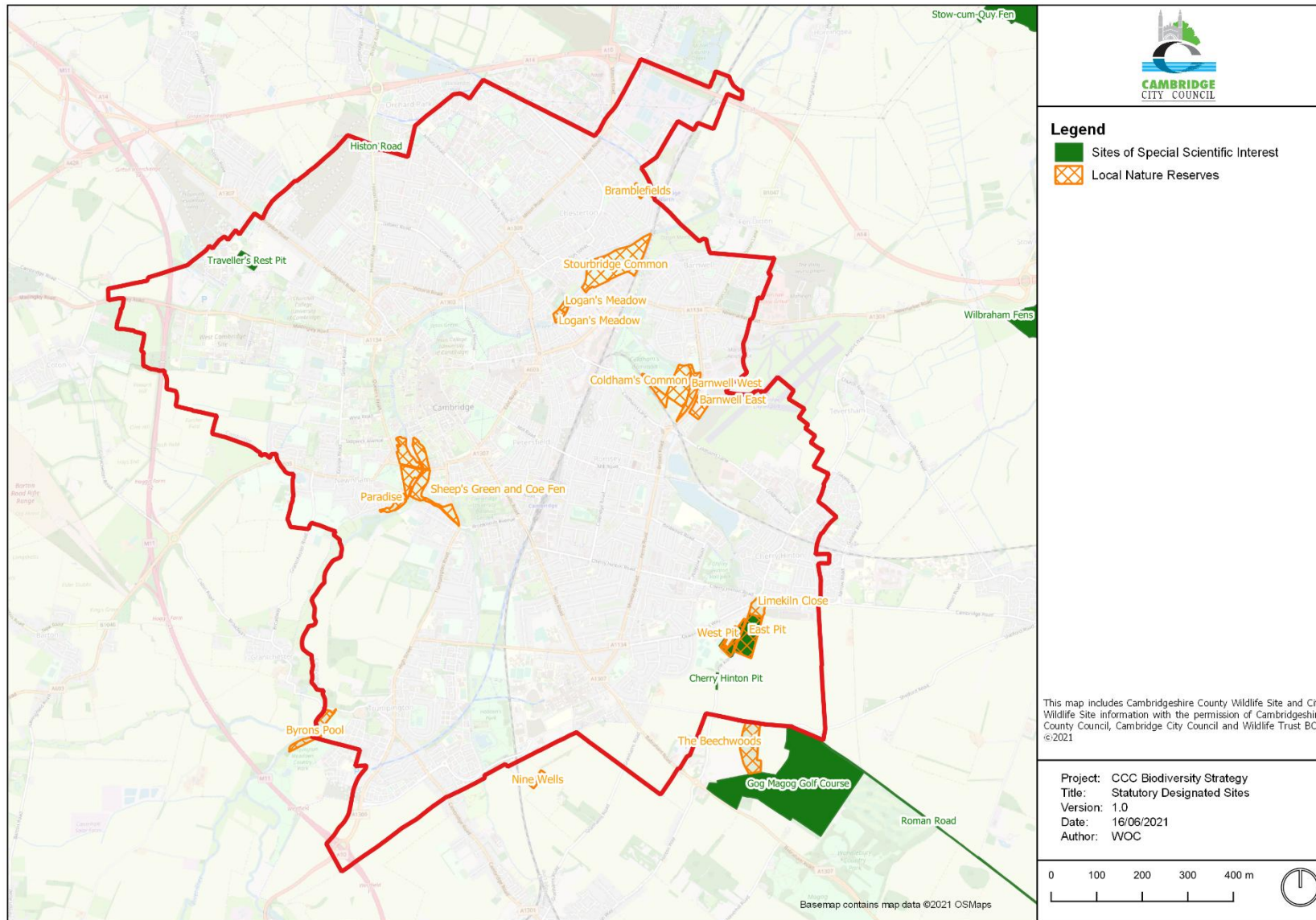
this point on the edge of Cambridge. It stretches further south and east of the city with other important chalk habitats, such as the Roman Road SSSI.

There are four other Cambridge Nature Network Priority/Opportunity Areas. Directly to the north and east are the Cambridge Fens Priority Areas and Wicken Fen Vision South Priority Area. To the west lies the Boulder Clay Woodlands Priority Area and further north is the Fen Edge Orchards and Drovers Opportunity Area.

The Cambridge Nature Network has been integrated into the draft Cambridgeshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

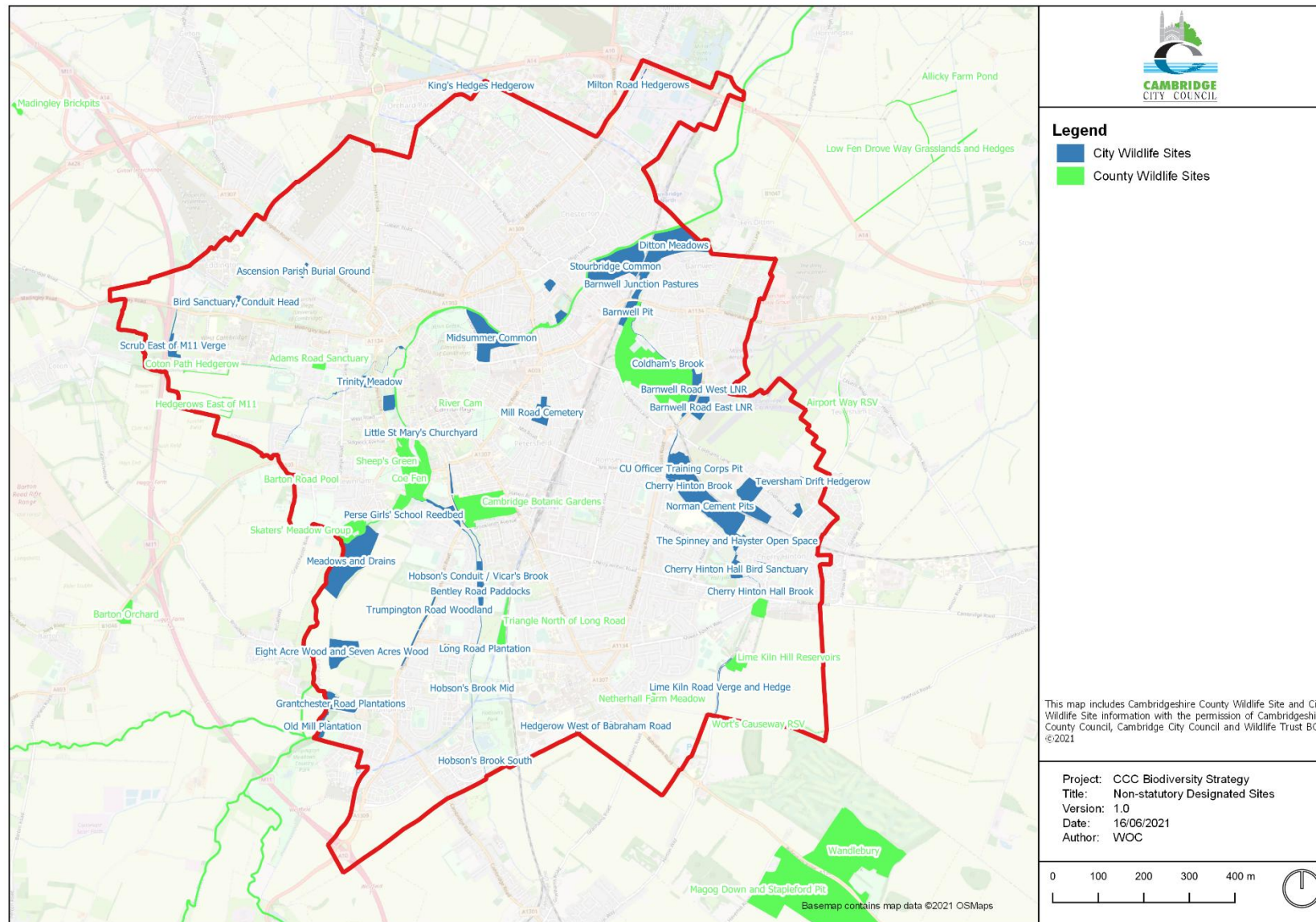


Map 1 showing statutory designated areas in Cambridge

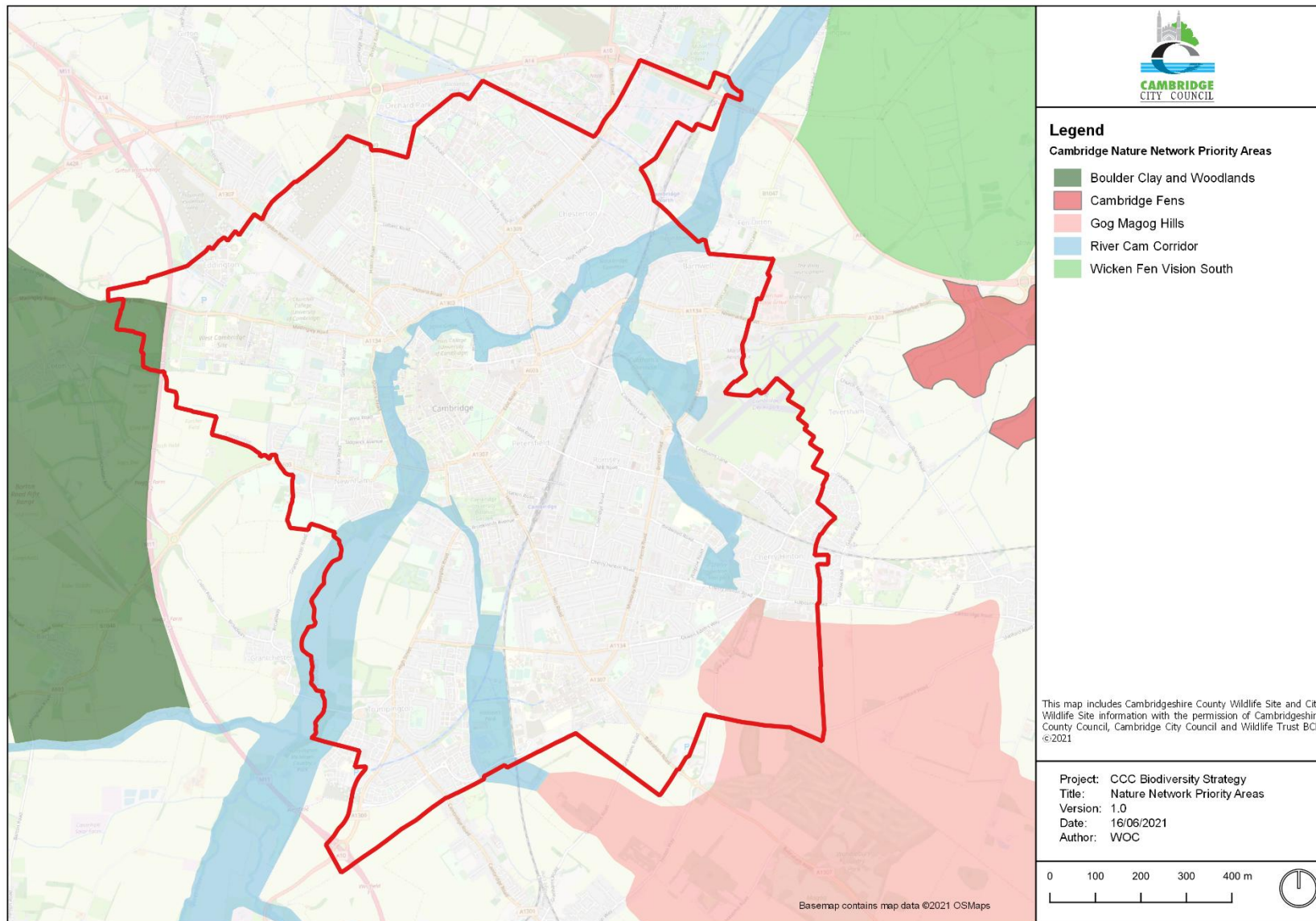




Map 2 showing non-statutory designated areas in Cambridge

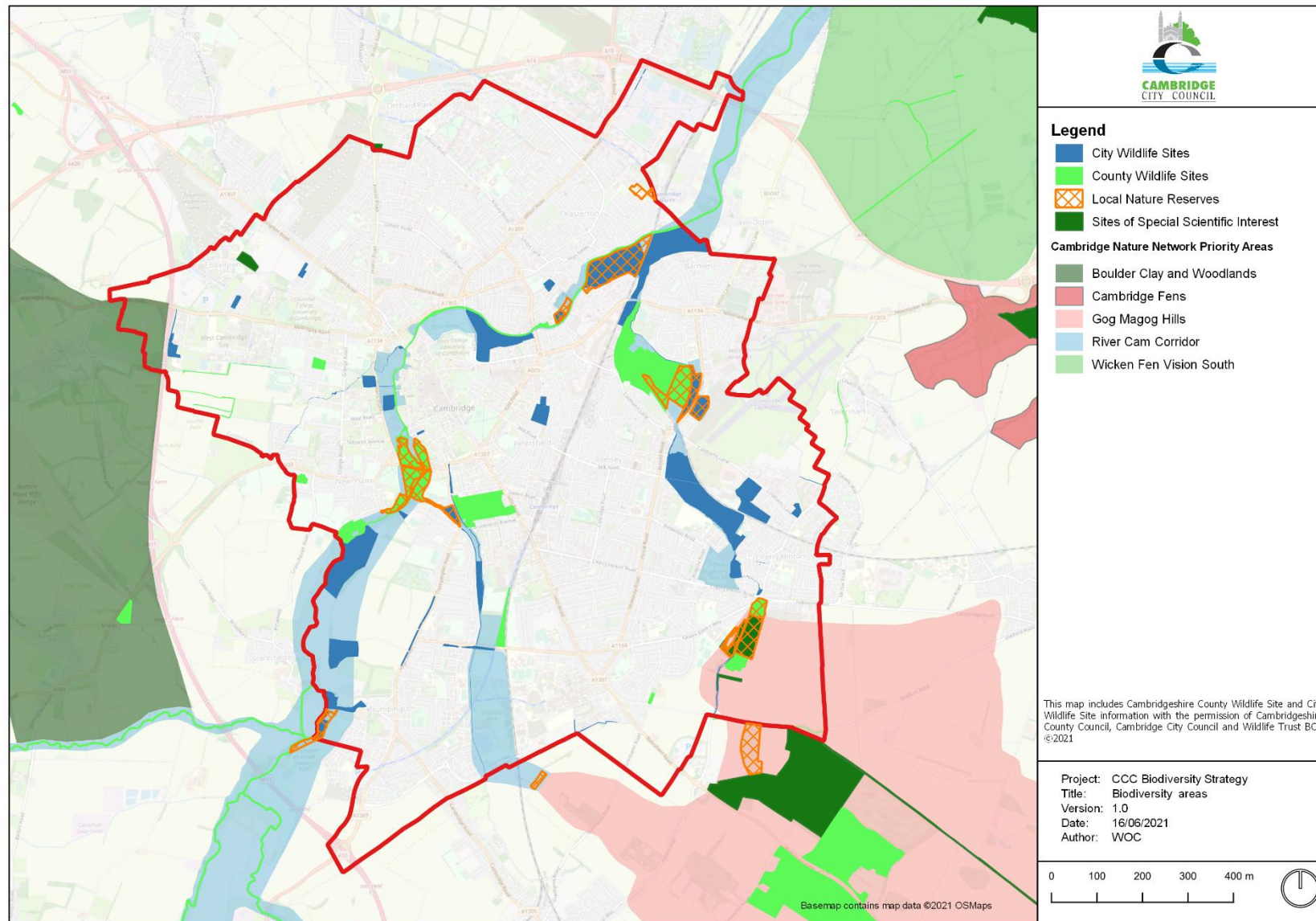


Map 3 showing Cambridge Nature Network Priority Areas in Cambridge





Map 4 showing biodiversity sites and areas in Cambridge



### *City key habitats*

The various sites in the Cambridge Nature Network support several core habitats with distinct species, pressures and management requirements.

#### *Grasslands*

Cambridge grasslands range from small areas of rare species-rich lowland calcareous grassland to wide expanses of species poor amenity grasslands, which are widespread throughout the city. Significant grassland habitats are present along the Cam corridor and these run through the centre of Cambridge including Sheep's Green, Midsummer Common and Stourbridge Common. These areas, with their grazing cattle, give Cambridge its unique rural character. Coldham's Common provides further large areas of grassland with a mix of amenity grassland through to more species diverse neutral and calcareous grasslands. There have been significant additions to the species-rich grassland resource in recent years with the creation of Trumpington Meadows Country Park and Hobson's Park to support local developments.

Priority grassland types within Cambridge include:

- Lowland calcareous grassland
- Lowland meadows

#### *Woodland*

Woodlands are uncommon in Cambridgeshire with very few areas of ancient woodland remaining. Areas of naturally regenerated woodland are present throughout the city however and include Byron's Pool in Trumpington and the Bird Sanctuary, The Spinney and Limekiln Road LNR, all situated in Cherry Hinton. Several areas of wet woodland occur, primarily at Paradise and Logan's Meadow LNR.

Priority woodland types within Cambridge include:

- Lowland beech and yew woodland
- Wet woodland
- Lowland mixed deciduous woodland

Sheep's Green contains wood pasture habitat which comprises mature trees set within semi-natural grassland habitats. This combination of habitats, and particularly the veteran and ancient pollard willows, is important for numerous invertebrates including the scarce musk beetle *Aromia moschata*. These woodlands and mature trees also provide roosting and foraging habitats for a range of bat species, such as common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* and brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus*.

#### *Hedgerows and scrub*

Old and mature hedgerows are uncommon in the city with a few remaining examples at King's Hedges and Cherry Hinton. There are significant areas of scrub habitats, particularly around Coldham's Common and Barnwell within the designated sites at these locations.

Priority hedgerow and scrub habitats within Cambridge include:

- Hedgerows

These old hedgerows and scrub habitats provide important habitats through the city and particularly for bird species which use them for breeding during the spring and summer months and for foraging and cover in the autumn and winter months.

## *Wetlands*

The River Cam corridor contains a variety of wetland habitats, including wet grasslands, reedbeds, and the chalk streams which form tributaries to the Cam. The chalk streams around and within the city are very scarce habitats of international importance. Other wetland habitats occur away from the River Cam and these include ponds, lakes, and ditches.

Priority wetland habitats within Cambridge include:

- Reedbeds
- Ponds
- Rivers (including Chalk Streams)

The River Cam presents one of our most important wetland habitats, and, combined with its tributaries, forms a network of habitats through the city. To the north Teversham and Wilbraham Fen are biodiversity 'hotspots', which are home to a wealth of specialist birds, invertebrates and other species which reside in the reedbed and wetland habitats there.

Our wetland habitats are home to eels, kingfisher, grey wagtail, otter and water vole. Water voles have suffered significant national declines as a species but Cambridgeshire, and Cambridge in particular, remains a stronghold. They thrive in the slow-flowing, well-vegetated ditches found through the city.

## *Urban*

Urban habitats dominate the city and often offer surprising opportunities for wildlife. There are pockets of habitats for species to thrive, including gardens, allotments, and street trees. Increasingly the built environment is purposefully designed to accommodate biodiversity with integrated bird and bat boxes or green roofs.



Priority urban habitats within Cambridge include:

- Open mosaic habitat on previously developed land

The David Attenborough Building on the New Museums Site is an example of how biodiversity can work with the built environment. Here green roofs provide habitats high above street level, and swifts nest in boxes that are built into the towers. Swifts are charismatic birds that form part of the backdrop to a Cambridge summer with squadrons of screaming birds swooping through the streets and nesting within the cracks and crevices of the buildings in Cambridge. Similarly, house martins use our buildings as nesting sites, for example at Addenbrookes Biomedical campus and in the gatehouse at King's College. The buildings of Cambridge also host breeding peregrine falcon, which can regularly be seen surveying the city from the spires of King's College Chapel.

Many species of bat roost in the buildings in the city, and some are specialists that will typically only roost in buildings. This includes serotine bat *Eptesicus serotinus*, which can be seen hawking and swooping for prey over Nightingale Recreation Ground. As you move towards the edge of the city where the gardens tend to be bigger you are more likely to encounter other important species such as song thrush, or even part of the thriving urban badger population.

- Gardens

Collectively private gardens form the biggest land use within the city and are therefore vital in providing green space and tree canopy cover. Multiple ownership means that the individual biodiversity value of these spaces varies greatly but there is potential to greatly increase biodiversity value through relatively simple changes to management or initiative such as creating hedgehog highways to link gardens. Studies have shown that sensitively managed gardens can support a wide range of species that are often declining in the wider farmland landscape. The installation of garden ponds can benefit many species include amphibians, particularly when

associated with other habitats such as long grass and wood piles that provide areas to forage and shelter.

### ***The cultural setting***

Cambridge is a place of naturalists and conservationists and has been for many years. We have perhaps one of the most studied natural histories of any city. It is possible to trace this history through just one plant in the city. The Butterbur patch which grows alongside the River Cam at Paradise LNR was first recorded in that location in the 1600s by the notable botanist John Ray. It has been recorded in that location ever since, its flowers appearing in early spring before the leaves.

Cambridge is home to many individuals, trusts, societies, groups, and institutes with nature conservation at the heart of what they do. Some groups have been well-established in the city for considerable periods of time, such as the Cambridge Natural History Society which has been studying the biodiversity of the area for over 164 years. Other more recently established organisations such as the Cambridge Conservation Initiative, a collaboration of the University and conservation organisations, have a world-wide reach far beyond the perimeter of the city. Whilst these groups are varied and diverse, they each have a shared goal to conserve and promote biodiversity. Collectively they present an enormous opportunity for successful collaboration to help Cambridge lead the way in the world as an example of how biodiversity and communities can co-exist and thrive together in a city geography.

## 4.7 Local threats and pressures

As with many other urban areas there are pressures and threats in Cambridge which degrade and deplete our biodiversity resource. To understand the opportunities and threats to biodiversity in Cambridge we commissioned the Biodiversity Audit and the Greater Cambridge Chalk Stream Project Report. These reports also identified several threats and pressures which are specific to our local area. The key pressures on biodiversity within Cambridge include:

- Habitat loss: Direct loss of biodiverse habitats and the species they support
- Habitat fragmentation: Removal of the links between areas resulting in smaller, less resilient habitats
- Habitat degradation: A deterioration in the condition of the habitat, such as reduction in species diversity

The key local causes of these are:

- Urbanisation: This can result in direct habitat loss and fragmentation. It could also lead to a degradation of habitats, for example from the effects of artificial light. Other indirect effects include poor air quality from increasing traffic. Nitrogen from exhaust fumes can over time increase nutrients in greenspaces and alter the composition of these habitats.
- Recreational pressure: As the population grows there is increasing demand on our greenspaces. Many habitats and species in the city are sensitive to disturbance. Impacts include trampling, or disturbance and nutrient deposition from the increasing popularity of dog walking in the city. Dog fouling deposits nutrients in sensitive habitats and this can change the vegetative composition of the area. Dogs off leads can have significant effects on ground nesting birds or disturbance of other animals such as mammals.
- Hydrological change: The Greater Cambridge Chalk Stream Project identified hydrological change as a major driver for negative impacts on our chalk streams and rivers. This includes channel modification or depleted aquifers

leading to low flow and poor water quality. These result in habitat loss and degradation.

There are also wider causes, such as climate change which has the potential to alter habitats and species populations, thereby making them more scarce or unviable. These threats and pressures do not recognise the boundaries that we impose as humans. They pass through natural pathways, such as river catchments, and consequently their solutions will lie outside the city too. This will require us to work with stakeholders across a greater area.



## 5. Biodiversity Audit

As part of the development of the 2022 Biodiversity Strategy, we established a baseline of habitat types and their condition for the key natural green spaces in our ownership so that we could plan and monitor management and enhancements to deliver a measurable gain in biodiversity. To quantify this we the Biodiversity Metric tool developed by Natural England in partnership with DEFRA, The Environment Agency and other organisations to provide developers, planners and land managers with the means of measuring the value of the biodiversity under their jurisdiction. It uses the size, type, and condition of habitats as a proxy for their importance and value for nature (Crosher *et al.*, 2019b).

Using a variation on the DEFRA Biodiversity Metric 2.0, the following attributes of the habitats within our natural green spaces were recorded:

- *Distinctiveness*: The type and importance of a habitat. Habitats that are rare and/or support a wide range of species are more distinctive.
- *Condition*: A measure of the quality of a given habitat type. It should be stressed that condition in biodiversity terms is not to be confused with traditional perceptions of condition or maintenance. A grassland that might be perceived to be well maintained (e.g., regularly mown) is very likely to be in poor condition. Distinctiveness and condition are also not wholly independent. Some of the factors that lead to a habitat being in poor condition may also lead to its definition as being a lower distinctiveness.
- *Strategic significance*: Any site that possesses a designation, or falls within the Cambridge Nature Network Priority Area, is considered High, those deemed ecologically valuable but without designation are considered Medium, and those with limited ecological value and no designation are classed as Low.

Each of these factors or scores is given a weighting and the scores multiplied together along with the area of habitats or lengths of linear features (e.g., hedgerows) to create a 'Biodiversity Unit'. Areas with large areas of rare habitats in

good condition have the highest number of units. Whilst the biodiversity unit can appear to overly simplify the complexity of the natural world, it does provide a method of measuring it to guide management decisions.

The baseline habitat audits for these important areas of green space within the city of Cambridge was conducted in the summer of 2020. It encompassed 32 sites ranging from SSSI to recreation grounds and parks in all areas of the city and included key City Council owned or managed locations.

A total of 1350 habitat units and 122 hedgerow/tree-line units were recorded across the 32 sites. Sites that scored highly were generally large or supported highly distinctive habitats in good condition. The top six sites listed in Table 1 account for 60% of the total biodiversity units within the audit. They comprise a mix of sites which highlight the methodological principles behind BNG.

Larger sites or areas will naturally hold more biodiversity; Hobson's Park (25ha) and Coldham's Common (41ha) are the two largest sites within the audit and are at the top of the list.

Even in smaller sites, more distinctive (i.e., rarer or more valuable) habitats in good condition also score highly; East Pit, a unit within the Cherry Hinton Pits SSSI is a third of the size of Hobson's Park and a fifth of Coldham's Common but holds over 40% of the biodiversity units of each. East Pit is dominated by the highly distinctive chalk grassland in good condition.

**Table 1: The top six most valuable sites within the 2020 Biodiversity Audit, as measured using the DEFRA Metric 2.0**

Site	Area Units	% Total area units	% Total survey area
Hobson's Park	263.1	19.5	12.4
Coldham's Common	251.2	18.6	19.9

East Pit (Cherry Hinton Pits SSSI)	109.7	8.1	3.9
Byron's Pool	80.3	5.9	2.1
Stourbridge Common	60.6	4.5	9.3
Limekiln Close LNR	53.8	4.0	1.4

Woodland provides the most biodiversity units among the habitats found within the surveyed sites, accounting for 32% of the total. Some of these units are associated with the highly distinctive 'wood pasture and parkland', a habitat found in large areas within the River Cam floodplain, particularly in Sheep's Green. Neutral grassland is the second most productive accounting for 21%. It is noteworthy that nearly half of the units from neutral grassland come from a single site - Hobson's Park.

The largest areas of habitat within the surveyed sites are modified and amenity grasslands. Many of the sites surveyed are large recreational areas (Pieces and recreation grounds) or Commons, which are dominated by these highly managed and therefore low value and poor condition habitats. By contrast, a much smaller area of habitat that nevertheless provides a relatively high proportion of the total is found in lowland calcareous grassland, a high distinctiveness habitat.

As well as measuring the distinctiveness of a given habitat, an assessment of its condition using published assessment guidelines (Crosher *et al.*, 2019a) was made. Overall, 123 ha (63%) of the total area of the audit is in poor condition, accounting for 28% of all the biodiversity units. A number of common observations emerged from the Audit. Several of these relate directly to constraints on the condition of some habitats:

- *Larger sites hold more biodiversity.* This presents both an opportunity for habitat creation; the large commons, pieces and recreation grounds offer enormous potential for habitat creation or restoration. It also highlights a risk;



at present, a lot of the biodiversity under City Council control is contained within a small number of sites.

- *Recreation pressure.* Many of the woodland and grassland sites suffer from high recreation pressure, particularly from dog-walking. The associated damage can be the main reason for a site's poor condition.
- *Less is more.* The large areas of grassland habitats within the city are intensively managed. Cutting less often will both promote higher value grasslands and improve their condition. Similarly, many of the Commons are over grazed and a relaxation of grazing pressure will benefit these areas; the right amount of grazing can bring the best results for grasslands.
- *Deadwood.* Woodlands across Britain are usually stripped of their deadwood and those in Cambridge are no different. Introduction of deadwood, either from selective felling within sites or from outside, plus techniques to 'veteranise' existing trees will lead to improvements in the condition of the City's woodland.<sup>2</sup>
- *Habitat succession and species.* The more objective approach taken in this audit is naturally habitat focussed. However, conservation objectives for species, particularly those of Local or National Importance is still an important consideration when determining future management strategies.

As well as providing a tool for calculating the value of current habitats, BNG and the DEFRA Metric that guides it, provides a framework to calculate whether changes to those habitats will lead to an increase or decrease in the biodiversity value of a given place. Typically, these comparisons are made in the context of development, but they also provide a method for planners and land managers to more easily identify how biodiversity under their jurisdiction can be improved. This is one of the key outcomes of the audit and it helps us identify areas of green space where there are opportunities.

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<sup>2</sup> We leave deadwood where it is safe to do so, specify conservation deadwood where appropriate to, shorten existing deadwood so that it is safe, leave both fallen and standing deadwood where appropriate, and deploy veteranisation techniques by employing a managed-decline approach to many trees.



To demonstrate on a more practical level how an increase in measurable biodiversity can be achieved, we include four case studies within the Audit Report. The case studies have been selected to highlight different approaches to increasing measurable biodiversity in Cambridge:

- *Habitat enhancement*: In many cases improving the *condition* of what is already there will bring about significant gains.
- *Habitat restoration*: There are opportunities, at both small and large scales, to create new or restore historical habitats and in so doing, improve the *distinctiveness* of habitats.

By estimating the *predicted* habitat types and their conditions, a comparison between the current and future value of land can be made and, if the changes are positive, a *net gain* will arise.

In addition to these specific case studies, below are three scenarios which also demonstrate how gains in biodiversity can be met by enhancing habitats within the city.

**Table 2: Scenarios of city-wide habitat enhancement**

Scenario	Current Units	Potential Units	% Increase	Notes
All (8.3ha) calcareous grassland in poor condition to moderate	57	68.3	20	80% of this scenario could be met at one site: Coldham's Common
50% (5.5ha) of all neutral grassland from poor to moderate condition	50.5	68.3	35	63% of all neutral grassland is also at Coldham's Common

Scenario	Current Units	Potential Units	% Increase	Notes
25% (10.5ha) of all amenity grassland to wildflower (assuming poor condition)	91.3	112	23	The potential value of adding wildflower areas to Recreation grounds and Pieces

The Audit provided several specific recommendations for each site which have been incorporated into our action plan. However, a number are common. These include, but are not limited to:

- Relaxation of grazing pressure or reduced mowing frequency on grasslands - to improve both value and condition of grassland, whilst potentially saving costs and allowing other work elsewhere.
- Restricting or limiting the impacts of recreation (especially dog walking) on grasslands, woodlands and watercourses.
- 'Meadow creation'. Many of the city's parks already have 'wildflower corners'. These could be made bigger and more permanent.
- Increase the volume of deadwood in woodlands.
- Wetland restoration on the River Cam floodplain.
- Improving the structural (e.g., widening by less frequent cutting) and floristic component of hedgerows and their ground flora.
- Improving the connectivity of sites and habitats, particularly south of the city centre.

To inform the 2025 midterm review we commissioned repeat habitat surveys, along with management and monitoring plan recommendations for 14 of our core nature sites. These demonstrate the changes and direction of travel (between 2020 and 2025) for site habitat condition and provides key futures actions to meet our objectives.

The table below provides an overall condition for each site, and the direction of travel, taking a view across all the habitats and conditions at each location. These overall conditions are based on professional judgement and do not necessarily consider just extent of conditions across the site. Instead, additional weight has been placed on what are perceived to be the most important features of each site. For example, at Nine Wells the site is assessed overall as moderate – stable even though the most extensive habitat (woodland has moved from moderate to good). This is because the key habitat at this location, the chalk springs have remained stable in moderate condition. Another example is West Pit where the most extensive habitat, woodland, has declined in condition. However, this site has overall been assessed as good – stable because this is the condition of the calcareous grassland at this location, its most important feature.

**Table 3: Summary of core site habitat condition and direction of travel**

Site	Overall condition assessment (RAG rating)
Coldham's Common LNR	<b>Moderate - stable</b>
Stourbridge Common LNR	<b>Poor - stable</b>
Sheep's Green, Coe Fen, Lower Vicar's Brook, New Bit and Coe Fen Straits LNR	<b>Moderate - stable</b>
Barnwell East LNR	<b>Moderate - stable</b>
Barnwell West LNR	<b>Moderate - declining</b>
Paradise LNR	<b>Good - stable</b>
Byron's Pool LNR	<b>Moderate - declining</b>
Nine Wells LNR	<b>Moderate - stable</b>
Midsummer Common (County Wildlife Site)	<b>Poor - stable</b>
Bramblefield's LNR	<b>Moderate - declining</b>
West Pit LNR	<b>Good - stable</b>
Logan's Meadow LNR	<b>Moderate - improving</b>
Mill Road Cemetery (County Wildlife Site)	<b>Moderate - stable</b>
Hobson's Park (County Wildlife Site)	<b>Moderate - improving</b>

Of 14 sites that were reassessed in 2025 two are in good condition, ten are in moderate condition and two are in poor condition. The two sites in good condition are West Pit and Paradise, both with critical and rare habitats in the city (calcareous grassland and wet woodland). It is notable that the two sites in poor condition are significant and extensive locations: Midsummer Common and Stourbridge Common. Whilst these sites are in poor condition their scale and prominence in the city does indicate great potential for improvement if grazing can be appropriately managed, together with recreational impacts.

Of the sites two are thought to be improving, whilst nine are stable and three are declining. The two improving sites are those which have undergone the most significant change in recent years (Logan's Meadow and Hobson's Park). The declining sites - Byron's Pool, Bramblefield's and West Barnwell – have seen negative change for a variety of reasons including maturing habitats with a lack of management, or recreational pressures in the case of Byron's Pool.

## **6. Biodiversity strategy**

Cambridge City Council recognises the global biodiversity emergency and the local impact this will have, and is having, on the city and communities we serve.

Therefore, in 2019 we pledged to provide leadership and to ensure that we work with all sections of the community, including schools, community groups, university colleges, businesses and residents to reverse the decline in biodiversity and deliver measurable net gain within Cambridge and the wider sub-region. Within this section we have defined our vision and objectives and set out our proposed actions to enable us to achieve this.

**‘Our vision is that over the next 5 years Cambridge will see a “measurable net gain” in biodiversity, both within the city and the surrounding countryside, including the extent and quality of priority habitats and populations of priority species. Wildlife habitats will be protected, enhanced and where possible**

**expanded and linked. The very best wildlife habitats will form the Cambridge Nature Network that will permeate the whole of the city and link to the wider Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy. Everyone who lives or works within Cambridge will have access to high quality natural greenspaces within walking distance of their home or place of work, and there will be a greater awareness and understanding of biodiversity with opportunities to be involved and collaborate in local wildlife enhancement projects and monitoring’.**

Our aim is to put biodiversity at the forefront of everything that we do. By maximising opportunities for collaboration, we are working in partnership with residents, businesses, and institutions, and building upon existing strategies for climate and trees, to achieve this goal.

We will promote the principles set out in the Lawton Report: bigger, better, more joined up. This will require improvements and enhancements to our core sites in the city to create a biodiverse blue and green thread through the heart of Cambridge. We will see a healthy river and tributaries flowing through their natural floodplain habitats. Areas of existing grasslands will be improved, former wetland features will be restored, and new ones created. This network will help to restore healthy populations of iconic species such as otter, eel, and water vole.

Beyond this core area we will strive to create a city that is more permeable for nature. We have made a commitment to enhance our own estate to maximise the opportunities for biodiversity. And we have also made a commitment to engage and enable others in the city to do the same. Building upon our core network this will help to join the dots and connect people to nature, creating a city where birdsong and buzzing invertebrates can be heard and experienced by everyone everywhere who lives, works, visits and studies in Cambridge.

The biodiversity emergency is intricately linked with the climate emergency. Many of the proposed actions set out below will also serve to alleviate the climate emergency. The actions set out within our climate strategy will contribute to resolving

the biodiversity emergency. Therefore, our updated climate, Urban Forest and biodiversity strategies will work together to ensure we do maximise our effort to tackle these threats.

**Our strategic objectives are:**

- 1. To secure a measurable net gain in biodiversity across the city by 2031 in support of the Natural Cambridgeshire Doubling Nature Vision by 2030**
- 2. To ensure designated sites and priority habitats are in good / favourable condition and connected, where possible, to increase resilience to a changing climate and contribute to the Cambridge Nature Network and Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy**
- 3. To engage and promote awareness of biodiversity and wellbeing, supporting and empowering coordinated action in our communities, businesses, and institutions**
- 4. To ensure that biodiversity protection and enhancement is considered by all council service functions and projects in line with our statutory Biodiversity Duty**
- 5. To maximise the potential of our buildings, parks, open spaces, allotments and community gardens, watercourses and tree stock to support biodiversity, whilst balancing their multifunctional needs**
- 6. To harness the wealth of local professional and amateur knowledge and experience in identifying and solving local issues.**
- 7. To work with partners to establish long term, species and habitat surveys and monitoring to measure the impact of activities and identify new threats and opportunities across the city**

To meet the objectives, the proposed actions have been grouped within three themes:

***Biodiversity mainstreaming:*** This theme is about embedding biodiversity into everything that we do, whether that is constructing new houses, buying materials, or undertaking our role as a planning authority. We will ensure that our actions minimise impacts on biodiversity as well as seek opportunities to enhance it. We will aim to develop cross-cutting strategies and solutions between all services that promote biodiversity and focus on nature-based solutions.

Our ambition is to consider the intrinsic value of conserving and enhancing biodiversity, as part of everything that we do. We will take steps to ensure that we review the effects of our activities and decisions on biodiversity and that, wherever feasible, we can be working to promote and enhance the biodiversity of the city. We will take our objectives concerning biodiversity policy and consider them within all other areas of our work, for example our housing, transport, and economy.

We recognise that biodiversity not only has intrinsic value and beauty but also provides our life support system, whilst further contributing to all our lives in Cambridge by generating economic, community, health and well-being benefits. The mainstreaming approach will also help us to explore sustainable nature-based solutions across the city. This means we can use nature to help us solve some of the biggest issues that face us today including climate change, water and flood management or atmospheric pollutants from vehicles. This process will recognise and value nature as an asset that delivers multiple benefits to us.

***The core:*** This theme is about developing our core of biodiversity sites in the City. This includes reviewing and updating management plans for our most important

nature conservation areas and working with partners to ensure a coherent and resilient nature network through Cambridge and beyond.

The Lawton Report encourages 'bigger, better and more joined up' habitats. The aim of this theme is to focus on our core sites, many of which are situated within the Cambridge Nature Recovery Network. Here we aim to focus on 'bigger and better' by improving biodiversity management of our core greenspaces, and wherever possible making more space for nature at these locations.

Many of these sites fall within the Cambridge Nature Network and Local Nature Recovery Strategy, our work here will help us make a meaningful contribution to these initiatives to deliver a joined up and resilient biodiversity network. The City Council will work to achieve a measurable biodiversity net gain in these core locations to contribute to our commitment to double nature.

***Nature in your neighbourhood:*** This theme is about encouraging nature to flourish across the city through empowerment and collaboration with communities, businesses and institutions. The aim is to ensure nature is not restricted to a few precious locations and that it can be enjoyed, understood, and experienced by all.

The biodiversity emergency is too big a problem to solve alone. In this theme we have developed actions which require a collaborative approach to the problem and to help encourage nature on your doorstep. Many of the actions relate to how people interact with nature in Cambridge, and we will provide the means and inspiration to help facilitate and encourage positive steps to be taken at a local level. We have developed actions to promote collaborative working in the city, drawing on the wealth of biodiversity expertise that we are fortunate to have in Cambridge. Other actions provide communities with the information or resources they need to help biodiversity in their neighbourhood. We will continue our commitment to existing initiatives, such as our hedgehog highways and neighbourhood canopy projects.



Our aim is to encourage engagement with nature to ensure that it is pervasive throughout the entire city. It is vitally important that we work hard to ensure that our key sites of nature conservation are protected and managed effectively. However, we need to go beyond these islands of biodiversity and work to create greater connectivity for nature. Within this theme we are focussing on the Lawton's Report 'more joined up'.

## 7 Action plan (2026 – 2031)

Since adoption of the strategy in 2022 we have been collaborating on actions to achieve our objectives. Appendix 2 Biodiversity Duty Report summarises our key activities under our 3 themes and celebrates successes to date.

Moving forward to achieve our vision and objectives we will continue to collaborate with partners to deliver the following proposed action plan (2026 – 2031) and monitor our collective outcomes.

### Biodiversity Mainstreaming '*Consider and embed nature in everything we do*'

Actions	Partners	Outcomes	Timeline
Adopt, support delivery and monitoring of the LNRS	City Services, Natural Cambridgeshire, CPCA, Cambridgeshire County Council	Strategic delivery of habitat and species actions	Adoption: December 2025 – Delivery ongoing
Adoption and implementation of Shared Local Plan	GCSPS, SCDC	Robust biodiversity policies, aligned with LNRS and BNG delivery to guide sustainable development	Proposed adoption by December 2026
Adoption and implementation of Urban Forest Strategy (2026 - 2036)	City Services, Community Services	Management, protection, planting of and engagement with the urban forest	Adoption March 2026 – Delivery 2026 – 2036
Ensure CIP and other City Council developments achieve a minimum 20% BNG target across all projects	CIP, GCSPS	New development secure high-quality habitats and species enhancement with long term management and monitoring in place.	Ongoing
Implement Environmental Management System	City Services	Improved environmental	March 2026 - ongoing

to secure ISO14001 accreditation for City operation hub and activities		performance across City Service	
Explore rainwater harvesting on Council owned properties	City Service, Property Services, <a href="#">Water Resources East</a> (WRE)	Reduced abstraction for aquifer for tree watering and other operation functions	Feasibility 2026, deliver 2027

**The Core ‘working with partners to ensure a coherent resilient nature network’**

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Partners</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
Continued support of CNN	City Services, CPPF, BCN WT, <a href="#">Cambridge Ahead</a> , National Trust, RSPB, <a href="#">East Cambridge Farming Cluster</a>	Collaborate on funding bids and sharing resource to create ‘Bigger, better, more joined up’ habitats across the CNN	Ongoing
<a href="#">Local Nature Reserve</a> and Commons management	City Service, Community Services, Volunteers and Corporate Groups	Complete ongoing habitat management of our 12 LNRs, including control of invasive species	Ongoing
Continue our work with the Wildlife Trust to provide advice to private landowners and managers to bring sites into positive management	City Services, BCN WT, private landowners	Increase number of designated Local Wildlife Sites in positive management	Ongoing
Identification and designation of additional City Wildlife Sites and LNRs	City Services	Secure protection and enhanced management of qualifying sites	2026 -Cowley Road drain CiWS, Church End LNR and Fulbourn Rd LNR
Adopt and deliver new Management Plan Reviews for LNRs and Commons	City Services	New management plans embedded to ensure favourable habitat condition	13 sites reviewed in 2025 to be adopted and

			delivered in 2026 to 2030
Conservation Cattle Grazing Review	City Service, CNN, Licensed graziers	Review grazing timescales and number of animals to ensure we meet site management plan conditions	Review in 2025 / 2026
Trial the use of hardy sheep breeds within temporary fenced compartments on smaller sites.	City Services, CNN, <a href="#">East Cambridge Farmers Cluster</a>	Enhanced management of key sites	Trial in 2026, if successful deliver from 2027 onwards
<a href="#">Greater Cambridge Chalk Stream Project</a> (GCCSP)	City Services, South Staffs Water, <a href="#">Cam Catchment Partnership</a> , Anglian Water, Environment Agency, Hobson's Conduit Trust	Deliver and monitor 6 case study sites.  Work with partners to deliver <a href="#">WINEP</a> and other investment in Cambridge chalk streams	2026 - 2028
<a href="#">Cambridge and Peterborough Environmental Records Centre</a> (CPERC)	City Service, GCSPS, CPERC	Continue support through Service Level Agreement and representation on the Steering Group	Ongoing

**Nature in your neighbourhood 'ensure nature is not restricted to a few precious locations and can be enjoyed, understood and experienced by all'**

Actions	Partners	Outcomes	Timeline
Seek support and agree actions to achieve <a href="#">Nature City Accreditation</a>	City Services, Community Services, CNN, CCF Community Groups, Business	Strengthened partnership, shared leadership, community engagement, external recognition, increase funding opportunities	2026 Self-assessment. Build Partnership, seek Foundation Accreditation

Parks Biodiversity Toolkit (publish 2021) promotion	City Services, Community services	Inspire communities to codesign and secure funding for local park biodiversity enhancement	Ongoing
Nature Recovery 'From the Ground Up' LNRS delivery ward-based community action	City Services, Community Services, Cambridgeshire County Council, Community Groups	4-year Cambridge County Council Project targeting Parish scale delivery of the LNRS. Selected wards: Cherry Hinton, Abbey, East Chesterton, Market & Trumpington	2026 – 2030 programme to enable communities to develop and deliver LNRS actions.
<a href="#">Butterfly Friendly Council</a> (BFC)	City Services, Butterfly Conservation	Meet the 5 steps to become an official BFC	2026
Cambridge Elm diversity Project – <i>celebrating the unique diversity of Cambridgeshire Elm</i>	City Services, Community Service, BCN WT	Establish a 'community nursery' of local Elm species for planting in partnership across the CNN	2026 - 2031
Native Black Poplar Project	City Services, Community Services,	Establish a 'community nursery' of local cultivars for planting in partnership across the CNN	2026 - 2031
<a href="#">River Cam CAN</a> , <a href="#">DiversiTree</a> legacy	City Services, Community Services	Seek further funding to secure management and replacement planting for willow pollards	2026 - 2031

Cambridge Nature Festival	City Services, Community Services, CNN	Month long programme of free and low-cost events to connect people with nature	Support events and promotion in 2026, seek funding 2026 onwards
Environmental Education Spaces Continue to support existing spaces and explore additional site resource	City Service, primary school / nursery license holders	Continued use of 3 spaces, explore at least 1 additional site	2026 - 2031
Environment Improvement Programme (EIP) project selection criteria / prioritisation	City Services	Seek to allocate future budget to projects that meet strategic biodiversity and urban forest objectives.	2026 - 2027
'Wild about Art' projects – continue to support funding bids and provide locations for nature-based art across Cambridge	City Services, Community Services, artist and communities	Innovative education and / or habitat creation temporary and permanent installations exploring the wonders of nature	2026 - 2031
Urban Nature <a href="#">Conservation Evidence</a>	City Services, <a href="#">Cambridge Conservation Initiative</a> , <a href="#">Cambridge Conservation Forum</a>	Facilitate research trials on our urban conservation actions to build a shared evidence base	2026 – Closed Churchyard grass cutting trials and monitoring invertebrate use of climate resilient non-native trees - Ongoing

## 8 References

[Draft Cambridge City Council Urban Forest Strategy](#)

[Draft Cambridge City Council Climate Change Strategy](#)

[Draft Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy](#)

[Draft Greater Cambridge Local Plan](#)

[Draft South Cambridgeshire District Council Climate & Nature Strategy](#)

[Cambridgeshire County Council Biodiversity Strategy](#)

[Cambridge Nature Network](#)

[Greater Cambridge Chalk Stream Project Report](#)

## 9 Appendix

### Appendix 1

#### National Legislation

##### [National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\) 2012 \(last updated July 2021\)](#)

The revised NPPF was updated on 20 July 2021 setting out the Government's planning policies for England and the process by which these should be applied. The policies within the NPPF are a material consideration in the planning process. The key principle of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, with sustainable development defined as a balance between economic, social and environmental needs.

Policies 174 to 188 of the NPPF address conserving and enhancing the natural environment, stating that the planning system should:

- Contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes.
- Recognise the wider benefits of ecosystem services; and
- Minimise impacts on biodiversity and provide net gains in biodiversity where possible, contributing to the Government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity.

Furthermore, there is a focus on re-use of existing brownfield sites or sites of low environmental value as a priority, and discouraging development in National Parks, Sites of Specific Scientific Interest, the Broads or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty other than in exceptional circumstances.

Where possible, planning policies should also "promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and



recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity”.

### [Environment Act 2021](#)

The Environment Act 2021 sets out key legislation after the UK’s exit from the European Union. With the largest changes to green regulations in decades, the Act includes the establishment of an Office for Environmental Protection, targets on air pollution, water quality and biodiversity, and the enshrinement of the 25 Year Environment Plan in law. The Act also makes provisions for a mandatory 10% net gain in biodiversity for all developments covered by the Town and Country Planning Act, and it also introduces a statutory requirement for Local Nature Recovery Strategies.

Public authorities who operate in England must consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity in England. This is the strengthened ‘biodiversity duty’ that the Environment Act 2021 introduced requiring local authorities to:

- Consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity.
- Agree policies and specific objectives based on your consideration.
- Act to deliver your policies and achieve your objectives

### [The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 \(as amended\)](#)

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) provides legal protection to natives UK species and enhances the protection of SSSIs. In addition to affording protection to some species, The Act also names species which are considered invasive and require control. Section 14 of the Act prohibits the introduction into the wild of any animal of a kind which is not ordinarily resident in, and is not a regular visitor to, Great Britain in a wild state, or any species of animal or plant listed in Schedule 9 to the Act. In the main, Schedule 9 lists non-native species that are already established in the wild, but which continue to pose a conservation threat to native biodiversity and habitats, such that further releases should be regulated.

### [The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 \(as amended\)](#)

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) is secondary legislation which puts into domestic law the EU Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC) and certain elements of the EU Wild Birds Directive (Directive 2009/147/EC). These Directives contain rules for the protection of habitats and species, the proper management of habitats and preventing exploitation of species. The Regulations ensure that the UK will continue to meet international commitments under the Bern Convention and the Bonn convention.

Schedule 2 offers protection to a number of notable species such as great crested newts, hazel dormouse, otter, and all bat species. Schedule 2 protects these species from deliberate capture, death, or injury as well as disturbance both to themselves and their breeding sites or resting places.

### [Natural Environment and Rural Communities \(NERC\) Act 2006](#)

Many of the species covered by The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, along with a host of others not afforded additional protection, are listed on Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006.

Section 41 (S41) of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC Act 2006) requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of habitats and species that are of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England. The list (including 56 habitats and 943 species) has been drawn up in consultation with Natural England and draws upon the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) List of Priority Species and Habitats.

The S41 list should be used to guide decision-makers such as local and regional authorities to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity in the exercise of their normal functions – as required under Section 40 of the NERC Act 2006. The duty applies to all local authorities and extends beyond just conserving what is already

there, to carrying out, supporting and requiring actions that may also restore or enhance biodiversity.

[The Countryside and Rights of Way \(CRoW\) Act 2000](#)

The CRoW Act (2000), as well as implementing the “right to roam”, also contains changes for nature conservation updating aspects of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 such as strengthening punishment for killing, injuring or disturbing protected species, and extending the regulations to cover reckless behaviour as well as intentional acts against protected species.

Section 74 of the act contains a list of habitats and species of Principal Importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England, which falls in accordance with the 1992 UN Convention on Biological Diversity.

**Policy documents (national, regional and local)**

[South Cambridgeshire Local Plan](#) (2018) and [Cambridge Local Plan](#) (2018) - currently being updated to the Greater Cambridge Shared Local Plan

South Cambridgeshire District Council adopted their Local Plan in 2018, with the overall environmental objectives of: “contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, prudent use of natural resources, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy”.

Key policies include:

Policy NH/4, which prevents developments from occurring that result in the loss, deterioration or fragmentation of irreplaceable habitats, and outlines that new developments must aim to maintain, enhance, restore or add to biodiversity.

Policy NH/5, which sets out protection for sites of biodiversity or geological importance; and

Policy NH/6, which encourages proposals that reinforce, link or create new green infrastructure in line with the Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy (2011).

Cambridge City Council also adopted their Local Plan in 2018, with a small selection of key policies including:

Policy 4: Green belt - new development in the Green Belt will not be approved except in very special circumstances, in line with Green Belt policy in the National Planning Policy Framework.

Policy 7: River Cam - development proposals that are situated along the River Cam should where possible enhance the natural resources of the river and provide opportunities for re-naturalisation of the river; and Policy 31 f: Any flat roofs should be a green or brown roof, as part of a key measure in Cambridge's climate change adaptation policy.

Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council are preparing a Greater Cambridge Local Plan, which will set out plans for infrastructure, new homes and economic growth in the region over the next 20 years.

[Greater Cambridge Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document \(2022\)](#)

Published in January 2022 this document provides guidance on how biodiversity should be addressed through the planning process. The document provides technical guidance to ensure that the biodiversity policies set out in the Local Plans are effectively implemented. The document provides accessible, accurate and up-to-date guidance on the planning regulations surrounding biodiversity, including relevant national legislation. It sets out the information that should be submitted with planning applications to demonstrate how development proposals meet the councils' requirements. The Supplementary Planning Document is a material planning consideration in determining planning applications in both Council areas.

[\*Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services\*](#)

DEFRA produced the Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services with the strategy mission defined to: "halt overall biodiversity loss, support healthy well-functioning ecosystems and establish coherent ecological networks, with more and better places for nature for the benefit of wildlife and people". The first two action areas include developing an integrated landscape-scale approach to conservation on land and at sea, and to "put people at the heart of biodiversity policy". The actions themselves are supported by numerous grants, campaigns and competitions.

**Reviews, plans and policy drivers (national, regional and local)**

[\*CCC/MKA Biodiversity Audit \(2020\)\*](#)

The Biodiversity Audit, released in conjunction with this Biodiversity Strategy, is a report calculating a baseline estimate of biodiversity across several statutorily and non-statutorily designated sites owned by Cambridge City Council. Habitat and condition maps provide the data on the existing value of sites, with opportunities for enhancement and alterations to management regimes also provided. Sites were assessed using the Defra Biodiversity Metric 2.0 (Crosher et al., 2019b) with the intention of providing measurable biodiversity gain in the future.

[\*Making Space for Nature: A review of England's Wildlife Sites and Ecological Network \(The Lawton Report, 2010\)\*](#)

The Lawton Report (2010) is an independent review of wildlife sites across England, with the key aim of assessing whether these sites are capable of responding and adapting to climate change. Professor Lawton reached this conclusion: "England's

collection of wildlife sites are generally too small and too isolated, leading to declines in many of England's characteristic species. With climate change, the situation is likely to get worse... We need more space for nature". The report outlines 24 recommendations to improve the situation, with key themes of "more, bigger, better and joined".

### [25 Year Environment Plan 2018](#)

The 25 Year Environment Plan published by DEFRA outlines long term government actions that prioritise environmental health in agriculture, fishing, land use and other areas. One of the six key areas identified for further action include "Recovering nature and enhancing the beauty of landscapes", under which the development of a Nature Recovery Network (NRN) and the opportunity to reintroduce native species are outlined. Through the NRN, the goal is to provide half a million hectares of additional wildlife habitat to provide linkages and promote connectivity between existing protected areas. Ensuring environmental net gain in housing and infrastructure developments is also discussed as a key method of achieving economic growth whilst providing measurable improvements for the environment.

### [The Economics of Biodiversity: The Dasgupta Review 2021](#)

The Dasgupta Review was prepared by Professor Sir Partha Dasgupta and released in February 2021. The review's critical message is that nature can no longer be ignored within economic decisions, and that human demands vastly outpace the capacity of the natural environment to provide the "goods and services" required. In direct relation to ecology, the review discusses the importance of biodiversity in increasing the stability of ecosystem functioning, and that the loss of biodiversity reduces the productivity of communities and their ability to produce biomass. The review also outlines a fundamental flaw in Gross Domestic Product (GDP), highlighting its lack of consideration of the depreciation of natural capital, and the economic costs of these losses.

## Cambridge City Council Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

This tool helps the Council ensure that we fulfil legal obligations of the [Public Sector Equality Duty](#) to have due regard to the need to –

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Guidance on how to complete this tool can be found on the Cambridge City Council intranet. For specific questions on the tool please contact the Community Equity Team at [equalities@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:equalities@cambridge.gov.uk).

Also, once you have drafted the EqIA please send this to [equalities@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:equalities@cambridge.gov.uk) for checking.

<b>1. Title of strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service</b>
Biodiversity Strategy (2022–2030), Biodiversity Duty Report (2022–2025), and Biodiversity Action Plan (2026–2031)

<b>2. Webpage link to full details of the strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service (if available)</b>
To be updated when published <b>Date?</b> . Existing Strategy link: <a href="https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/media/11066/biodiversity-strategy.pdf">https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/media/11066/biodiversity-strategy.pdf</a>

<b>3. What is the objective or purpose of your strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service?</b>
The combined programme sets out how Cambridge City Council will conserve and enhance biodiversity across the city, in line with statutory requirements in the Environment Act 2021 and amended NERC Act Section 40. It embeds biodiversity into council decision making, land management, planning policy and community engagement. A mid-term review of the Biodiversity Strategy is planned to celebrate achievements and align future actions with new legislation and initiatives. The Biodiversity Duty Report documents how Cambridge City Council has taken and will continue to take steps to conserve and enhance biodiversity in exercising its functions. The accompanying Action Plan (2026–2031) sets out future commitments to embed biodiversity across council operations, estate management, planning policy, and community engagement.



#### 4. Responsible Team and Group

City Services: Biodiversity Team

#### 5. Who will be affected by this strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service?

(Please tick all that apply)

- ☒ Residents
- ☒ Visitors
- ☒ Staff

- Council tenants and residents across all wards
- Community volunteers, Friends groups, and local schools engaged in biodiversity actions
- Developers and land managers participating in biodiversity net gain initiatives
- Staff across service areas involved in delivering biodiversity actions
- People who work in the city but do not live here
- Tourists

#### 6. What type of strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service is this?

- ☒ New
- ☐ Major change
- ☐ Minor change

#### 7. Are other departments or partners involved in delivering this strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service? (Please tick)

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No

Community Services, Cambridge Investment Partnership, Combined Authority, Natural Cambridgeshire, Cambridge Nature Network, Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire Wildlife Trust, community groups and Friends groups.

#### 8. What research methods/ evidence have you used in order to identify equality impacts of your strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service?

This EQIA draws on national guidance and a growing peer reviewed evidence base on the links between access to green space, biodiversity and health, with a focus on how these benefits and risks are patterned by age, disability, income, ethnicity and other characteristics.

Key sources include:

- **UK guidance and reviews**
  - Public Health England, *Improving access to greenspace: 2020 review* which summarises evidence that greener communities show lower levels of depression

and anxiety, reduced exposure to heat and flooding, and that disadvantaged groups often gain greater health benefit when green space is improved. [GOV.UK](#)

- Public Health England and wider UK reviews summarised in *Making the most of green space for people's health* and the EKLIPSE report on types and characteristics of green space that affect mental health. [Eclipse](#)
- Health Foundation and Friends of the Earth analyses of inequalities in access to green space and environmental hazards by deprivation and ethnicity. [health.org.uk](#)

- **Mental health and wellbeing**

- Systematic reviews and meta-analyses showing that exposure to nature and urban green space is consistently associated with improvements in mental health outcomes across age groups, including reduced depression and anxiety and improved quality of life. [Journal of Global Health](#)
- Evidence that urban green exercise and even short periods of nature exposure can improve mood and reduce stress, including for adults with existing mental illness. [Urban Green Exercise](#)

- **Children, young people and older adults**

- Systematic reviews showing that access to green space supports children's mental wellbeing, behaviour and cognitive development, and that outdoor learning in green environments benefits attention and academic performance. [Impact of Green Space](#)
- Reviews and longitudinal studies showing that green space can improve physical and mental health for middle-aged and older adults and reduce heat-related morbidity and mortality. [Health impacts of urban green spaces](#)

- **Disability and long-term conditions**

- Meta-analyses and scoping reviews indicating that nature exposure produces short term improvements in mood, stress and quality of life for adults with mental illness, and broader mental health benefits across diagnostic groups. [Nature Exposure Benefits](#)

- **Pregnancy and maternity**

- Systematic reviews and meta-analyses showing there is some evidence that residential greenness is associated with healthier pregnancy outcomes such as higher birthweight and lower risk of preterm birth and small for gestational age. [Greenspace and birth outcomes](#)

- **Race, income, climate vulnerability and intersectionality**

- UK analyses showing that people in more deprived areas and many ethnic minority communities have less access to high quality green space and are more exposed to

extreme heat and environmental risks, which increases health inequalities.

[Inequalities in access to green space](#)

- Evidence that neighbourhood green space can have particularly strong protective mental health effects for disadvantaged groups. [Greenspace and mental health in disadvantaged groups](#)
- **Safety, gender and quality of green space**
  - Systematic reviews and studies on green space quality, which highlight perceived safety as a key dimension of quality affecting mental health outcomes and park use. [Greenspace and safety](#)
  - Research showing that women and girls are more likely to feel unsafe in parks and other public green spaces, and that design features such as lighting, visibility and signs of disorder influence their use of these spaces. [Perceptions of safety in urban parks](#)

The evidence above has been used to identify where the combined Biodiversity Strategy, Duty Report and Action Plan can have positive impacts for different groups, where there are risks or barriers (for example linked to safety or unequal access), and where mitigation and inclusive design are needed. More detailed evidence is referenced under each protected characteristic in Section 9.

## 9. Potential impacts

For each category below, please explain if the strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service could have a positive/ negative impact or no impact. Where an impact has been identified, please explain what it is. Consider impacts on service users, visitors and staff members separately.

### (a) Age - Please also consider any safeguarding issues for children and adults at risk

#### Positive impacts

- Children and young people: Systematic reviews show that access to green space is associated with improved mental wellbeing, reduced stress, better behaviour and enhanced cognitive development and academic performance in children. School-based studies link greener school environments to gains in working memory and attention. [Greenspace and mental well-being of children](#)
- The Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan support outdoor learning, nature-based play and activities in parks and open spaces, including forest schools, which should therefore have positive impacts on children's learning and wellbeing.

- Older adults: Reviews and longitudinal studies indicate that green space and street trees can promote physical activity, social contact and better self-rated health for middle-aged and older adults, and can reduce heat-related morbidity and mortality in hotter periods. [Health impacts of urban greenspaces](#)
- Increasing canopy cover and nature-based cooling in neighbourhoods where older people live responds to evidence that they are particularly vulnerable to climate-related risks such as heatwaves. [Heat related morbidity and mortality](#)

#### **Safeguarding**

- No specific safeguarding risks have been identified at strategy level, but individual projects should follow safeguarding procedures for activities involving children, young people and adults at risk.

### **(b) Disability**

#### **Positive impacts**

- High quality green space, especially where it is accessible and well maintained, is consistently associated with improved mental health outcomes. Scoping reviews of nature-based interventions report improvements in mood, stress, anxiety and depression across diagnostic groups, including people with existing mental illness. [Impacts of nature on health](#)
- A recent meta-analysis focusing on adults with mental illness found that even brief (around 10 minutes) exposure to nature can yield short term improvements in depressive symptoms, stress and quality of life. [Nature exposure and the benefits for adults with mental illness](#)
- By increasing the quantity and quality of green space in the city, the programme has the potential to support mental health for disabled residents, including those with long term mental health conditions.

#### **Mitigation and design**

- Accessibility audits and engagement with disabled residents and representative groups are needed to ensure that paths, entrances, seating, signage and facilities are inclusive, and that sensory planting and quiet areas are designed with neurodivergent users in mind. For example, the city's new Butterfly Trail ensures the height of the trail signage is in line with recommendations from the government's [inclusive mobility](#).
- This is consistent with evidence that green space quality, including safety, accessibility and amenities, is crucial in determining who actually experiences health benefits. [Greenspace quality and health](#)

### **(c) Gender reassignment**

There is very limited peer reviewed evidence specifically on trans and non-binary people's use of green space. Existing research on public space suggests that trans and non-binary people may face harassment or exclusion in public settings, but this is not yet well studied for parks and nature spaces.

### **(d) Marriage and civil partnership**

No impacts have been identified specific to this equality group.

### **(e) Pregnancy and maternity**

#### **Positive impacts**

- Multiple systematic reviews and meta-analyses show that there is some evidence that residential greenness is associated with healthier pregnancy outcomes, including higher average birthweight and lower risk of preterm birth and small for gestational age births. [Greenspace and birth outcomes](#)
- The programme's focus on local, walkable green spaces, shade, benches and traffic-free routes is therefore likely to benefit pregnant women and new parents by supporting safe physical activity, stress reduction and social contact.

#### **Risks**

- A small number of recent studies highlight possible associations between certain types of greenness and childhood asthma, which may be related to specific pollen or air quality profiles, so this evidence remains mixed and developing. [Residential Greenspace and Asthma](#)
- These uncertainties underline the importance of integrating biodiversity, air quality and species selection considerations into planting schemes, rather than simply maximising greenness.

**(f) Race – Note that the protected characteristic ‘race’ refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.**

#### **Local context**

- Cambridge is relatively diverse compared with England and Wales overall. Census 2021 data for Cambridge City show:
  - Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: 14.8% of residents
  - Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African: 2.4%
  - Mixed or multiple ethnic groups: 5.1%
  - White: English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British: 53.0%
  - White: Other ethnic group: 21.5%
  - Other ethnic group: 3.1% [Cambridge City Council](#)
- This means that only just over half of residents identify as White British, compared with 74.4% for England and Wales overall, so Cambridge’s population is substantially more diverse than the national picture. [Office for National Statistics](#)

#### **National evidence on race, deprivation and green space**

- England wide analyses by Friends of the Earth show a strong correlation between green space deprivation, ethnicity and income. Their “England’s green space gap” report finds that Black, Asian and minority ethnic people are around 2.7 times as likely as White people to live in areas with the least green space, and that these neighbourhoods also tend to be more deprived. [Friends of the Earth](#)
- The Health Foundation’s evidence hub on green space similarly reports that people in more deprived areas, and those from minority ethnic groups, are more likely to live in neighbourhoods with limited access to green space, even though they may gain greater health benefits when high quality green space is available locally. [health.org.uk](#)
- Public Health England’s review of access to greenspace concludes that improving green spaces in disadvantaged areas can reduce health inequalities and provide the largest marginal benefits for groups who currently have least access. [GOV.UK](#)

#### **Positive impacts**

- Given Cambridge’s relatively high ethnic diversity, and the presence of pockets of deprivation in urban neighbourhoods, actions that increase the quantity, quality and accessibility of local green space have strong potential to reduce environmental and health inequalities for residents from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- UK analyses show that people from ethnic minority communities are more likely to live in neighbourhoods with lower access to high quality green space and are more exposed to environmental hazards such as extreme heat. [Ethnic minorities and access to greenspace](#)

- There is emerging evidence that improvements in residential greenness may contribute to better perinatal outcomes in under-resourced neighbourhoods, including for Black mothers. [Residential greenspace and maternal race](#)
- By targeting improvements to neighbourhood green space and canopy in areas of greatest need, the Strategy and Action Plan have potential to reduce environmental and health inequalities that currently fall disproportionately on some ethnic minority residents.

#### **Risks and mitigation**

- National research highlights that ethnic minority communities can be less likely to use existing green space where it feels unsafe, poorly maintained or not designed with their needs in mind. [Urban greenspace use among ethnic communities](#)
- **To avoid reinforcing inequalities, individual projects should:**
  - use Cambridge’s IMD and Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) mapping to identify and prioritise improvements in neighbourhoods with both higher deprivation and lower access to quality green space
  - involve ethnically diverse communities and organisations in co-design and stewardship of local green spaces
  - consider cultural preferences, language, and perceptions of safety in engagement and design
- No direct negative impacts on any ethnic group are anticipated if this targeting and engagement approach is followed. There is an opportunity to narrow existing environmental and health inequalities that currently fall disproportionately on some minority ethnic communities.

#### **Mitigation and engagement**

- Research on “green space gaps” highlights that provision, quality and cultural relevance of green space can all be barriers. [Greenspace gaps](#)
- Engagement work with community groups should therefore include ethnically diverse communities, co-design of spaces, and attention to cultural and language barriers.

#### **(g) Religion or belief**

No negative impacts for this protected characteristic have been identified at strategy level.



## **(h) Sex**

### **Positive impacts**

- Women and men can both benefit from the physical and mental health advantages associated with access to good quality green space described above. Systematic reviews suggest that green space is associated with better mental health, lower mortality and increased physical activity in adults of all genders. [Health impacts of urban green space](#)

### **Safety and barriers**

- A consistent finding in the literature is that women are more likely than men to feel unsafe in parks and other public spaces, especially after dark, and that these perceptions reduce their use of green space. [Perceptions of safety in urban parks](#)
- UK and international studies highlight that women and girls cite poor lighting, low visibility, presence of groups of men, and signs of neglect or disorder as key reasons for feeling unsafe in parks. [Women and girl's safety in parks](#)

### **Mitigation**

- In response, individual projects under the Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan should:
  - incorporate women's and girls' views in design and management of sites
  - review lighting, sightlines, vegetation management and routes with a gender-sensitive lens
  - work with community safety colleagues to ensure design and management reflects best practice.

## **(i) Sexual orientation**

There is limited direct research on how access to green space varies by sexual orientation. Some broader studies on public space and harassment indicate that LGBTQ+ people can experience discrimination or abuse in public settings, which may also apply in parks, but empirical evidence is sparse.

The Strategy and Action Plan are inclusive in intent and do not treat people differently by sexual orientation. Activities and volunteering are open to all and must comply with Council equalities and anti-harassment policies.

Engagement and consultation activity should ensure LGBTQ+ organisations are included so that any specific safety or inclusion concerns about particular sites can be identified and mitigated.

**(j) Other factors that may lead to inequality – in particular, please consider the impact of any changes on:**

- **Low-income groups or those experiencing the impacts of poverty.**
- **People of any age with care experience – this refers to individuals who spent part of their childhood in the care system due to situations beyond their control, primarily arising from abuse and neglect within their families. The term “Care experience” is a description of a definition in law, it includes anyone that had the state as its corporate parent by virtue of a care order in accordance with the Children Act 1989 and amendments.**
- **Groups who have more than one protected characteristic that taken together create overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage. (Here you are being asked to consider intersectionality, and for more information see: [https://media.ed.ac.uk/media/1\\_159kt25q](https://media.ed.ac.uk/media/1_159kt25q)).**

#### **Deprivation patterns and potential inequalities – Local context**

- Cambridge City as a whole is relatively less deprived than the national average, with average IMD domain scores around decile 7. However, there are clear pockets of deprivation:
  - Nine Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) are in the three most deprived deciles nationally on the Index of Multiple Deprivation.
  - Deprivation is concentrated in the northeast of the city, particularly parts of Abbey and King’s Hedges. [Cambridgeshire Insight](#)
  - On the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI), 20 out of 68 LSOAs are in the three most deprived deciles nationally. [Cambridgeshire Insight](#)
- The Council’s own “Mapping poverty” and IMD analysis highlight that these more deprived areas are also among the most built up and therefore more at risk of environmental inequalities such as poorer housing conditions, air quality and limited access to high quality green space. [Cambridge City Council](#)

#### **Low-income groups and deprived areas**

- National and local analyses show that people living in more deprived neighbourhoods are more likely to lack access to high quality green space and are disproportionately exposed to environmental risks such as air pollution and extreme heat. [Inequalities in access to green space](#)
- Reviews by Public Health England conclude that disadvantaged groups often gain greater health benefit when green space is improved, and that greener areas can reduce socio-economic inequalities in health. [Improving access to green space](#)

- The Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan therefore prioritise improvements that increase equitable access to nearby, good quality green space and canopy cover in areas of greatest need, which is likely to be particularly beneficial for low-income households.

#### **Intersectionality**

- Studies of environmental and health inequalities show that disadvantage often overlaps, for example where low income, ethnic minority status, gender and disability coincide, and that these groups can experience the highest exposure to environmental risks and the lowest access to green space. [Climate and nature impact on ethnic minorities](#)
- Evidence also shows that neighbourhood green space can provide strong protective mental health effects for disadvantaged groups when it is safe, high quality and culturally relevant. [The effects of neighbourhood green spaces on mental health of disadvantaged groups](#)
- By embedding equity into site prioritisation, design and engagement, the programme aims to ensure that those facing multiple disadvantages are not further excluded and can share in the benefits.

**10. Action plan – New equality impacts will be identified in different stages throughout the planning and implementation stages of changes to your strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service. How will you monitor these going forward? Also, how will you ensure that any potential negative impacts of the changes will be mitigated? (Please include dates where possible for when you will update this EqIA accordingly.)**

- Monitoring: Equality impacts will be undertaken for specific projects within the action plan
- Engagement: Strengthen partnerships with schools, community groups, and accessibility networks
- Mitigation: Embed accessibility and inclusion in project design
- Next EqIA review: December 2026

**11. Do you have any additional comments?**

**12. Sign off**

Lead officer: Natalie Lambert, Biodiversity Projects Officer. Others consulted: Guy Belcher, Biodiversity Manager; Lily Simmonite, Community Equity Officer.

All EqlAs need to be sent to the Community Equity Team at [equalities@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:equalities@cambridge.gov.uk)

1. IMPACT ON CARBON EMISSIONS (MITIGATION OF CLIMATE CHANGE)			CLIMATE CHANGE RATING: <i>Use drop down list</i>	WILL THE PROJECT MOVE CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL CLOSER TO THE OBJECTIVE OF BEING NET ZERO CARBON BY 2030? <i>Use drop down list</i>	WILL THE PROJECT MOVE THE CITY CLOSER TO THE OBJECTIVE OF A NET ZERO CARBON CAMBRIDGE BY 2030? <i>Use drop down list</i>	PLEASE DETAIL HERE THE ACTION THAT WILL BE TAKEN TO AVOID, MITIGATE OR COMPENSATE FOR THE NEGATIVE IMPACTS AND MAXIMISE POSITIVE IMPACTS?	HAS A NET ZERO CARBON OPTION BEEN CONSIDERED? PLEASE PROVIDE DETAILS.
1	ENERGY USE	Positive Impact: Energy use will be reduced or renewable energy will be used	Medium Positive	Yes	Yes	Consider: - Reducing demand for energy - Specifying energy efficiency measures (e.g. insulation, low energy lighting) - Generating renewable energy (e.g. heat pumps, Semi natural habitats, tree canopy and water courses cool the city and reduces energy demand in heatwaves.	
		Nil Impact: No extra energy use is involved					
		Negative Impact: More energy (gas and/ or electricity) will be consumed (by CCC or others)					
2	WASTE GENERATION	Positive Impact: Less waste will be generated OR amount of waste that is reused/ recycled will be increased	Nil	No	No	Consider: - Will resources be reduced or reused? - Will you use recycled goods? - Will recycling facilities be increased? Review of park leaf clearance will reduce operational carbon use and enhance soil carbon capture. However, additional meadow creation will require cut and collect management with transport of green waste within the City. Options for onsite composting will be explored for suitable sites.	No
		Nil Impact: No waste will be generated					
		Negative Impact: More waste will be generated (by CCC or others)					
3	USE OF TRANSPORT	Positive Impact: The use of transport and/or of fossil fuel-based transport will be reduced	Nil	No	No	Consider: - Will you purchase an electric vehicle? - Will you specify the use of public transport? - How will you reduce the need to travel or transport goods? Additional Hay cuts may require increase use of vehicle to move green waste. Options for onsite composting will be explored for suitable sites.	No
		Nil Impact: No extra transport will be necessary					
		Negative Impact: CCC or others will need to travel more OR transport goods more often/ further					
4	SUSTAINABLE FOOD	Positive Impact: Food will be locally grown and/ or meat-free	Low Positive	No	No	Consider: - Use of locally grown/ produced food - Reducing use of imported food - Reducing use of meat Produce available from community orchards and gardens. Foraging for blackberries, Sloes etc on Local Nature Reserves	No
		Nil Impact: No change in supply of food					
		Negative Impact: Food will travel long distances and include meat					
2. IMPACT ON RESILIENCE (ADAPTATION) TO THE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE							
HOW WILL THIS PROJECT/PROPOSAL AFFECT THE FOLLOWING KEY AREAS :			CLIMATE CHANGE RATING: <i>Use drop down list</i>	WILL THE PROJECT HELP CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL TO BE MORE RESILIENT TO THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE?	WILL THE PROJECT HELP CAMBRIDGE TO BE MORE RESILIENT TO THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE? <i>Use drop down list</i>	PLEASE DETAIL HERE THE ACTION THAT WILL BE TAKEN TO AVOID, MITIGATE OR COMPENSATE FOR THE NEGATIVE IMPACTS AND MAXIMISE POSITIVE IMPACTS?	HAS A NET ZERO CARBON OPTION BEEN CONSIDERED? PLEASE PROVIDE DETAILS.
5	HEATWAVES	Positive Impact: Increased/ improved shade & natural ventilation	High Positive	Yes	Yes	Consider: Building orientation and installing measures such as Brise Soleil to reduce heat gain and plant hydration methods. Significant contribution to reducing urban heat island effect, through shading and cooling effect of semi natural habitats	No
		Nil Impact: No impact on existing levels of shade & ventilation					
		Negative Impact: Lack of or reduced shade (e.g. from trees or buildings) & natural ventilation					
6	WATER AVAILABILITY	Positive Impact: Provision made for an enhancement of water efficiency measures to minimise the impact on water resource availability	Medium Positive	Yes	Yes	Consider: Managing water use efficiently, installing measures to use less water such as low water use taps, planting drought resistant plants and using rainwater for irrigation. Watercourse enhancements and reconnecting sites to their floodplain. Greater Cambridge Chalk Stream Project focuses on water use and quality. Rainwater harvesting project will reduce our reliance on aquifer abstraction for operations such as tree watering	No
		Nil Impact: Levels of water use will not be changed					
		Negative Impact: Water use will increase and/or no provision made for water management = Negative Impact					
7	FLOODING	Positive Impact: Sustainable drainage measures incorporated, positive steps to reduce & manage flood risk	Medium Positive	Yes	Yes	Consider: The installation of measures to reduce the speed and increase the absorption of rainwater e.g. green roofs, SuDS, permeable paving etc. and alternative arrangements (business continuity) Reconnecting the river to its floodplain through habitat creation schemes, tree canopy and sustainable urban drainage schemes will help 'slow the flow'	No
		Nil Impact: Levels of surface water run-off & flood risk are not affected					
		Negative Impact: Levels of surface water run-off will increase, no management of flood risk					
8	HIGH WINDS / STORMS	Positive Impact: Exposure to higher wind speeds is being actively managed & reduced	Low Positive	Yes	Yes	Consider: the need to install stabilisation measures and ensure robust structures resilient to high winds A healthy urban forest provides shelter for streets and parks	No
		Nil Impact: No change to existing level of exposure to higher wind speeds					
		Negative Impact: Exposure to higher wind speeds is increased or is not managed = Negative Impact					
9	FOOD SECURITY	Positive Impact: Opportunities & resources for local food production are increased/ enhanced	Medium Positive	Yes	Yes	Source food locally, and provide meat-free catering to reduce vulnerability to food shortages and reduce emissions from transport and farming of food Urban Forest and LNR habitats nurture a healthy pollinator population for pollination of food crops.	No
		Nil Impact: No change to opportunities & resources for local food production					
		Negative Impact: Opportunities & resources for local food production are reduced					
10	BIODIVERSITY	Positive Impact: Biodiversity will be protected/ enhanced	High Positive	Yes	Yes	Provide net gain mitigation if required and seek enhancement in projects of all types and scale Main outcomes are to protect and enhance biodiversity at a city and landscape scale.	No
		Nil Impact: Level of biodiversity will not change					
		Negative Impact: Biodiversity will decrease					
Weighing up the negative and positive impacts of your project, what is the overall rating you are assigning to your project?:			Medium Positive	This overall rating is what you need to include in your report/ budget proposal, together with your explanation to be included in the red box below			

## Guidance on Assessing the Degree of Negative and Positive Impacts:

Note: Not all of the considerations/ criteria listed below will necessarily be relevant to your project

## Low Impact (L)

- \* No publicity
- \* Relevant risks to the Council or community are Low or none
- \* No impact on service or corporate performance
- \* No capital assets; or capital assets with lifetime of less than 3 years

## Medium Impact (M)

- \* Local publicity (good or bad)
- \* Relevant risks to the Council or community are Medium
- \* Affects delivery of corporate commitments
- \* Affects service performance (e.g.: energy use; amount of waste; distance travelled) by more than 10%
- \* Capital assets with a lifetime of more than 3 years

## High Impact (H)

- \* National publicity (good or bad)
- \* Relevant risks to the Council or community are Significant or High
- \* Affects delivery of regulatory commitments
- \* Affects corporate performance by more than 10%
- \* Capital assets with a lifetime of more than 6 years

In the box below please summarise the projects impacts (the reasons for the ratings given in column E above) to explain how the overall rating for the project/ proposal has been derived (Cell E37). Please also highlight any negative impacts your project may have and how you plan to avoid, mitigate or compensate for these (as you will have detailed in column I above).

The overall impact of the Biodiversity Strategy mid term review is assessed as being moderately positive in terms of reducing impacts of climate change and enhancing biodiversity.

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## REPORT TITLE: Biodiversity Duty Reporting (2022 – 2025)

**To:** Cabinet 16 December 2025

Cabinet Member: Cllr Martin Smart, Cabinet Member for Nature, Open Space and City Services

### Report by:

Guy Belcher, Biodiversity Manager

Tel: 01223 458532 Email: Guy.Belcher@cambridge.gov.uk

### Wards affected:

All

Director Approval: Director James Elms confirms that the report author has sought the advice of all appropriate colleagues and given due regard to that advice; that the equalities impacts and other implications of the recommended decisions have been assessed and accurately presented in the report; and that they are content for the report to be put to the Cabinet/Cabinet Member for decision.

<b>1.</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
1.1	<p>It is recommended that Cabinet:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approves the content of the draft Biodiversity Duty Report for final document design and publication by the statutory submission deadline of 20<sup>th</sup> March 2026.</li> </ol>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Purpose and reason for the report</b>
2.1	<p>To introduce the new Biodiversity Reporting Duty to Cabinet and seek approval for the first report covering 2022 to 2025 to be submitted to central government and be published on our website.</p>



<b>3.</b>	<b>Alternative options considered</b>
3.1	None. Submission of a Biodiversity Duty Report is a statutory requirement under the Environment Act 2021.
<b>4.</b>	<b>Background and key issues</b>
4.1	<p>The Environment Act 2021 requires all local authorities and local planning authorities in England to publish a biodiversity report detailing actions they have taken and plan to take to comply with their statutory biodiversity duty. The end of the first reporting period is the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2026.</p> <p>The Biodiversity Duty Report (Appendix A) accompanying this paper follows the DEFRA template to report on actions undertaken since the adoption of our Biodiversity Strategy in 2022 through to the end October 2025.</p> <p>The report also covers proposed future actions following a 2026 midterm review of the Biodiversity Strategy to ensure alignment with recent initiatives including the submission of the Cambridgeshire &amp; Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy LNRS).</p>
<b>5.</b>	<b>Corporate plan</b>
5.1	<p>A key priority of the Corporate Plan (2022 to 2027) is:</p> <p>:</p> <p><b>Leading Cambridge's response to the climate and biodiversity emergencies and creating a net zero council by 2030</b></p> <p>The report highlights our last 4 years of action identified within the Biodiversity Strategy to meet this priority.</p> <p>Future actions are also described to continue this work, including a Biodiversity Strategy</p>

	and action plan midterm review in 2025/26
<b>6.</b>	<p><b>Consultation, engagement and communication</b></p> <p>The completed action described within the report were supported through consultation of the Biodiversity Strategy prior to its adoption in 2022. Individual projects have also included bespoke consultations on concept, specific design or site management options.</p> <p>Going forward the proposed future actions will be included in the review of the Biodiversity Action Plan that is seeking approval for public consultation in January / February 2026 at December Cabinet 2025 and is on the Forward Plan for Cabinet approval in March 2026, alongside the new Climate Change and Urban Forest Strategies.</p>
<b>7.</b>	<b>Anticipated outcomes, benefits or impact</b>
7.1	The publication of the report is a statutory requirement that will inform central government and our communities of our commitments and actions to meet our Biodiversity Duty and declared biodiversity emergency. It will highlight the considerable works we have undertaken over the last 4 years since adoption of our Biodiversity Strategy through collaboration across services, with partners and communities.
<b>8.</b>	<b>Implications</b>
8.1	<b>Relevant risks</b>
	Failure to submit a Biodiversity Duty report within the legislated timescale would be in contravention of the Environment Act 2021
	<b>Financial Implications</b>
8.2	There is no new financial implication to the City Council from a decision to approve submission of the Biodiversity Duty report to central government.

	Ongoing and proposed projects detailed within the report will be funded through existing staff, revenue and capital budgets or relevant external funding. Where projects require additional funding, these will be bought forward as Project Proposals to establish and secure the necessary approvals and resource before committing to delivery.
	<b>Legal Implications</b>
8.3	Reporting on our Biodiversity Duty is a new statutory function, established under the Environment Act 2021.
	<b>Equalities and socio-economic Implications</b>
8.4	<p>Draft assessment found that the report and associated actions will have <b>overall positive equality impacts</b> across Cambridge's communities.</p> <p>The actions promote equitable access to nature, health and wellbeing benefits, and inclusive community engagement. No negative or disproportionate impacts were identified, and equality outcomes will be monitored through annual reporting.</p>
	<b>Net Zero Carbon, Climate Change and Environmental implications</b>
8.5	The overall impact of delivering the Biodiversity Duty Report future action plan is assessed as being moderately positive in terms of reducing impacts of climate change and enhancing biodiversity.
	<b>Procurement Implications</b>
8.6	There are no procurement implications for supporting the recommendation.
	<b>Community Safety Implications</b>

8.7	There are no community safety implication for supporting the recommendation.
8.8	<p><b>Checklist – Impact of the decision</b></p> <p><b>Financial:</b> No new funding is required to support submission of the Biodiversity Duty Report</p> <p><b>Legal:</b> Submission of the report will fulfil our statutory duty under the Environment Act 2021</p> <p><b>Climate Change, Biodiversity &amp; Sustainability:</b> Delivered and proposed actions within the report will have a positive impact through increase of canopy cover, carbon capture, boosting biodiversity, reducing storm water flooding and contributing to health and wellbeing</p> <p><b>Crime and disorder / Community Safety:</b> No direct impacts from supporting the submission of the Biodiversity Duty Report. Specific projects will consider and embed mitigation through consultation and good design.</p> <p><b>Discrimination and Equality:</b> The Biodiversity Report includes specific actions to address inequality in access to natural green space and champion the health and wellbeing benefits of regular access to nature.</p> <p><b>Human Resources:</b> Submission of the Biodiversity Duty Report does not require new posts, though it does highlight the need for sufficient resource to be prioritised to collaborate on future delivery and monitoring of our actions.</p> <p><b>ICT:</b> No additional ICT resource implications</p> <p><b>Property:</b> City owned land is included as priority sites for nature recovery within the draft Cambridgeshire &amp; Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS). Many of these have existing designations (City Wildlife Site, County Wildlife Sites and Local Nature Reserve) for their existing nature value. Officers are reviewing site management plans and exploring opportunities to deliver actions in support of the LNRS and our Biodiversity Duty.</p> <p><b>Procurement:</b> No procurement implications are associated with submission and publication of the Biodiversity Duty Report</p> <p><b>Customer Service:</b> The Biodiversity Duty Report provides a clear summary of actions for nature recovery that can be communicated to our communities through our web pages, social media and Cambridge Matters.</p>

	<p><b>Communications, Consultation &amp; Engagement:</b></p> <p>No additional consultation is required from the decision to support submission of the Biodiversity Duty Report. Going forward identified proposed projects will be consulted on through the midterm Biodiversity Strategy review and individual project consultations.</p> <p><b>Our values and Target Operating Model (TOM):</b> The Biodiversity Duty Report highlights example of how we have will continue to ‘enable partners, communities and the council to achieve outcomes together’ in line with the TOM approach to collaborative working.</p>
<b>9.</b>	<p><b>Background documents</b></p> <p>Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985</p>
9.1	<p><a href="https://www.gov.uk/guidance/reporting-your-biodiversity-duty-actions">https://www.gov.uk/guidance/reporting-your-biodiversity-duty-actions</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/media/11066/biodiversity-strategy.pdf">https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/media/11066/biodiversity-strategy.pdf</a></p>
<b>10.</b>	<p><b>Appendices</b></p>
<b>10.1</b>	<p>Appendix A – Draft Biodiversity Reporting Duty</p>
	<p>To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact Guy Belcher, Biodiversity Manager, tel: 01223 458532, email: <a href="mailto:Guy.belcher@cambridge.gov.uk">Guy.belcher@cambridge.gov.uk</a></p>

# **Cambridge City Council**

**November 2025**

## **Biodiversity Duty Report (2022 – 2025) and Action Plan (2026 – 2031)**

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What is a Biodiversity Duty Report?

Our role in nature recovery

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- 1.1 Our strategies and policies for biodiversity
- 1.2 Our visions and objectives for biodiversity
- 1.3 Our partnerships for biodiversity
- 1.4 Our delivered actions for biodiversity (2022 – 2025)
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#### **Section 2**

- 2.1 Our future actions for biodiversity (2026 – 2031)

#### **Section 3**

- 3.1 Our Biodiversity net gain (BNG) progress

### **Introduction**

#### **What is Biodiversity**

Biodiversity is the variety of life on Earth, including all living organisms, the genetic differences within species, and the ecosystems they form. It covers:

Species diversity – the range of different species.

Genetic diversity – variation within species.

Ecosystem diversity – different habitats and ecological processes.

#### **What is a Biodiversity Duty Report?**

The statutory [Biodiversity Duty](#) was first introduced by Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act in 2006 which required that:

***‘Every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, as far as is consistent with the proper exercise of these functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity’.***

In 2021, the Environment Act (Section 102 and 103) strengthened this duty by amending Section 40 of the NERC Act and by requiring all public authorities in England to take steps to conserve and enhance biodiversity in England.

As a public authority and local planning authority, the government guidance requires Cambridge City Council (CCC) to:

- Consider what we can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity.
- Agree policies and specific objectives based on our consideration.
- Act to deliver our policies and achieve our objectives.

To evidence the above we are required to publish a [Biodiversity Report](#) to communicate what we are doing to improve the environment and to show the positive changes that have been made. The first reporting period must end by 1<sup>st</sup> January 2026, and the report must be published within 12 weeks (by the end of March 2026).

This report follows the [government guidelines](#) and covers actions undertaken in the period from adoption of our [Biodiversity Strategy](#) in 2022 through to November 2025.

## **Our role in nature recovery**

### **Management of streets and open spaces**

Cambridge City Council manages more than 80 parks and open spaces, such as play areas, allotments, community gardens and orchards, totalling over 742 hectares. Some of these sites, such as our 12 [Local Nature Reserves](#), are designated and managed primarily for nature and form part of the core [Cambridge Nature Network](#), whilst others provide valuable predominantly recreational open space for residents and visitors to enjoy.

Whatever the primary purpose and size of these spaces, combined they provide a huge potential for increasing the extent, quality, and connectivity of habitats within the city. Therefore, we have an obligation and opportunity to ensure that all sites maximise their potential for biodiversity, provide good examples of habitat management and creation and hopefully encourage other landowners to do the same.



We manage approximately 23 kilometres of awarded watercourses, including some of our precious chalk streams, by ensuring management is sensitive to biodiversity, whilst providing our statutory drainage functions, we can protect such iconic species as water vole, kingfishers and brown trout in the city. We are also riparian owners of a significant stretch of the main riverbank through the city.

Wherever possible we are seeking to 'naturalise' previously engineered banks such as at Stourbridge Common, creating new backwaters and wetland such as on Logan's Meadow Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and providing passage for fish around artificial obstructions, such as the weir at Byron's Pool LNR and 'The Rush' fish pass at Sheep's Green LNR.

We are custodians of our precious common land and oversee the historic grazing management practice that retains flood meadow landscapes and iconic cattle grazing in the heart of the city. These grasslands form a key part of the network of Cambridge spaces and offer potential for enhanced management to benefit biodiversity and capture carbon emissions.

Through implementation of our tree strategy, we manage over 30,000 trees, contributing to the urban forest that provide both wildlife and communities with a range of ecosystem services, making our neighbourhoods cooler, cleaner and more attractive places to live. Street trees provide habitat and 'stepping stones' for species living in or moving through the built environment.

### **Management of our estate**

Our property estate includes rental units, iconic buildings such as the Guildhall, and council housing properties with gardens and communal open spaces. Decisions on how we manage, renovate, and invest in these assets will impact upon existing species present and provide huge opportunities for restoring nature where people live and work. Energy efficiency Investment towards net zero will contribute to reducing the impact of climate change on the natural world, whilst increased water efficiency measures and rainwater capture will reduce abstraction pressure on the chalk stream aquifer.

### **Community Empowerment**

Through our Community Services Engagement Team, we offer support to local Friends Groups, providing opportunities for volunteering in our parks and open spaces, and work closely with local community action groups including [On the Verge Cambridge](#), promoting new wildflower meadows and [Action for Swifts](#), with swift box provision on our estate such as on Queen Ann Terrace car park and at Edgecombe Flats.

As a local authority we are often a key partner in many local initiatives and projects with links to community groups. By promoting biodiversity through raising awareness in communities we can ensure that opportunities for people to connect with, protect, enhance, and appreciate nature are realised.

## Planning and Growth

Through our [Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service](#) we shape and implement policies that guide sustainable development seeking to protect, restore and enhance nature across administrative boundaries.

### Section 1: Our policies, objectives and actions for biodiversity

In 2019 we declared a [Biodiversity Emergency](#) in recognition of the global loss of biodiversity and the local impacts this could have on the communities and business we serve.

To address this, we have recognised and incorporated the importance of conserving and enhancing local biodiversity across numerous strategies, policies, partnerships and actions.

#### 1.1 Our corporate and partnership strategies and policies for biodiversity

Relevant strategies are summarised below, followed by further information on 4 key strategies:

Strategy or policy document	Summary of relevance to biodiversity
<b>Internal strategies</b>	
<a href="#">Cambridge City Corporate Plan (2022 – 2027)</a>	Sets out our 4 key priorities including:  Priority 1: Leading Cambridge's response to the climate change and biodiversity emergencies
<a href="#">Biodiversity Strategy</a> (2022 – 2030)	Our key biodiversity document that includes our vision, objectives and actions to meet the biodiversity emergency declaration and Biodiversity Duty.
<a href="#">Tree Strategy</a> (2016 – 2026)	Sets out policies and actions to manage the City tree stock, plus increase and diversify tree canopy for the benefit of people and nature.
<a href="#">Climate Change Strategy</a> (2021 – 2026)	Includes actions to reduce and mitigate the impacts of climate change on biodiversity.

<a href="#">Cambridge Local Plan (2018)</a>	Includes hierarchical policies to ensure development protects and enhances biodiversity.
<a href="#">Greater Cambridge Biodiversity SPD</a>	Provides technical guidance on how to comply with Local Plan policies to protect and enhance biodiversity.
Draft <a href="#">Greater Cambridge Local Plan</a> (a 20 year plan for Greater Cambridge Area)	Includes a key theme of 'Biodiversity and Green Spaces' and proposes policies to protect and enhance biodiversity and improve the network of green spaces in Greater Cambridge.
<b>External / partnership strategies</b>	
<a href="#">Draft Cambridgeshire &amp; Peterborough Local Nature Recover Strategy (LNRS)</a>	A proposed regional statutory plan that identifies local biodiversity priorities and maps areas for habitat restoration.
<a href="#">Natural Cambridgeshire's 'Doubling Nature' Vision</a> for Cambridgeshire & Peterborough	Our Local Nature Partnership vision for doubling the current area of wildlife rich habitats by 2050.
<a href="#">Cambridge Nature Network vision</a>	Sets out a shared vision for nature recovery in and around the city for collective delivery by partners.
<a href="#">BIG Chalk</a>	A shared vision for supporting nature recovery projects across the chalk and limestone landscapes of southern England.
<a href="#">Greater Cambridge Partnership</a> (GCP) - BNG Strategy	Commits to a minimum 20% BNG across the transport programme covering on and offsite delivery.

## 1.2 Our visions and objectives for biodiversity

### Biodiversity Strategy (2022 – 2030)

***‘Our vision is that over the next 9 years Cambridge will see a “measurable net gain” in biodiversity, both within the city and the surrounding countryside, including the extent and quality of priority habitats and populations of priority species. Wildlife habitats will be protected, enhanced and where possible expanded and linked. The very best wildlife habitats will form part of a much wider Cambridge Nature Network that will permeate the whole of the city and***

***beyond. Everyone who lives or works within Cambridge will have access to high quality natural greenspaces close to their home or place of work, and there will be a greater awareness and understanding of biodiversity with opportunities to be involved and collaborate in local wildlife enhancement projects and monitoring.'***

To deliver this vision we have been delivering on 7 strategic objectives:

1. To secure a measurable net gain in biodiversity across the city by 2025 and support the Natural Cambridgeshire Doubling Nature Vision by 2050
2. To ensure designated sites and priority habitats are in good / favourable condition and connected, where possible, to increase resilience to a changing climate and contribute to the Cambridge Nature Network
3. To promote awareness of biodiversity and wellbeing, supporting coordinated action in our communities, businesses, and institutions
4. To ensure that biodiversity is considered by all council service functions and projects
5. To maximise the potential of our buildings, parks, open spaces, allotments and community gardens, watercourses and tree stock to support biodiversity, whilst balancing their multifunctional needs
6. To harness the wealth of local professional and amateur knowledge and experience in identifying and solving local issues.
7. To establish long term, species and habitat surveys and monitoring to measure the impact of activities and identify new threats and opportunities across the city

To meet the objectives, the proposed actions have been grouped within the three main themes:

1. **Biodiversity mainstreaming:** This theme is about embedding biodiversity into everything that we do, whether that is constructing new houses, buying materials, or undertaking our role as a planning authority. We will ensure that our actions minimise impacts on biodiversity as well as seek opportunities to enhance it. We will aim to develop cross-cutting strategies and solutions between all services that promote biodiversity and focus on nature-based solutions.
2. **The core:** This theme is about developing our core of biodiversity sites in the city. This includes reviewing and updating management plans for our most important nature conservation areas and working with partners to ensure a coherent and resilient nature network through Cambridge and beyond.
3. **Nature in your neighbourhood:** This theme is about encouraging nature to flourish across the city through collaboration with communities, businesses

and institutions. The aim is to ensure nature is not restricted to a few precious locations and that it can be enjoyed, understood, and experienced by all.

## **Natural Cambridgeshire ‘Doubling Nature’ Vision**

‘Natural Cambridgeshire’ is the Local Nature Partnership for Cambridgeshire & Peterborough. A partnership of leaders from businesses, local authorities, the health sector, farming, wildlife and environmental organisations that exists to champion, influence and enable the fulfilment of the ‘Doubling Nature’ vision:

***‘Our Vision is that by doubling the area of rich wildlife habitats and natural green-space, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough will become a world-class environment where nature and people thrive, and businesses prosper’***

The key objective is to double the area of rich wildlife habitats and green space from 8.5% to 17% by 2050.

## **Cambridge Nature Network**

The Cambridge Nature Network is a landscape scale biodiversity initiative led by the Bedfordshire Cambridgeshire & Northamptonshire [Local Wildlife Trust](#) (BCN WT) and [Cambridge Past Present and Future](#) with support from the City Council and other key landowning partners.

***‘Our vision is for Cambridge to have significant areas of downland, fens, meadows, waterways and woodlands around it, where nature can recover and thrive and where people can experience a wilder countryside and nature on their doorstep.’***

The initiative is founded on an evidence based spatial plan for protecting and enhancing nature, focused on the best of the remaining habitats within 10km of the city and key opportunities and locations for creating new habitats and associated linkages.

Through collaboration with landowners and communities it represents an ambitious but achievable vision for local nature recovery. The Cambridge Nature Network has steered our actions over the past 5 years and forms a critical part of the emerging statutory LNRS.

## **Draft Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)**

The LNRS is a spatial strategy mandated by the Environment Act 2021. It identifies locations to improve nature and provide other environmental benefits including

carbon sequestration, flood risk mitigation, accessibility to green space to promote social well-being.

The LNRS covering Cambridge City is being developed by Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA), who are the government appointed 'Responsible Body' working with our Local Nature Partnership (Natural Cambridgeshire) and Cambridgeshire County Council.

As a supporting authority, we have contributed to the development of the LNRS through representation on the Steering Group and at technical workshops and approving the draft document for consultation. We have advocated for inclusion of the existing Cambridge Nature Network (CNN) vision within the LNRS to ensure existing plans and projects are recognised, celebrated and link to the wider ambitions.

Key objectives identified for Cambridge City within the draft LNRS include:

Theme	Objective	Action
Ecological Connectivity	Enhance and expand chalk downland, fens, meadows, and woodlands within the CNN	Prioritise habitat creation and enhancement across CNN corridors
Chalk Stream Restoration	Restore stream flow, water quality, and habitat	Implement restoration works on urban chalk streams
Urban Forest	Increase and diversify tree canopy building on the successful Cambridge Canopy Project	Coordinate protection and planting across public and private land

A Public consultation on the draft LNRS ran from July to September 2025 and the subsequent revised documents are awaiting final Supporting Authority approval before submission to the Secretary of State, planned for late December 2025.

### 1.3 Our partnerships for biodiversity

We recognise that nature recovery cannot be delivered without working in collaboration with others. The table below summarises some of our key partnerships for nature.

Key partnerships and groups	Relevance to our biodiversity work
Natural Cambridgeshire	Helping steer sustainable development, nature recovery and community engagement with nature and coordinating an annual <a href="#">Actions for Nature Report</a>
Cambridge Nature Network	Through the Steering Group we help guide strategic decisions, joint funding bids and project delivery, including the annual <a href="#">Cambridge Nature Festival</a>
<a href="#">Cambridgeshire &amp; Peterborough Environmental Records Centre (CPERC)</a>	Through the steering group and a service level agreement we support the work of the centre to collate, validate and supply habitat and species data across the County.
<a href="#">Cambridge Conservation Forum</a>	Strengthen links and developing collaborations across the diverse community of conservation practitioners and researchers based in Cambridge
<a href="#">Cambridge Conservation Initiative – Urban Nature</a>	A collaborative partnership which brings together the biggest names in international biodiversity conservation with the University of Cambridge and local conservation practitioners.
<a href="#">Cambridgeshire &amp; Peterborough Wildlife Site Partnership</a>	We guide selection and monitoring of public and private Local Wildlife Sites to protect and enhance these critical habitats and the species they support
<a href="#">BIG Chalk</a>	Both the Cambridge Nature Network and Greater Cambridge Chalk Stream Projects are recognised project partners sharing knowledge and expertise with the wider partnership
Local Friends and community groups	We consult and offer support and guidance to numerous, passionate,

	diverse groups across the city to protect, enhance and celebrate our chalk streams, commons, parks, community orchards and gardens.
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#### 1.4 Our actions for biodiversity (2022 – 2025)

Through implementation of the above strategies with our partners, we have collectively delivered many actions for nature over the reporting period. These are summarised in the table below under our 3 Biodiversity Strategy Themes.

##### **Biodiversity Mainstreaming ‘Consider and embed nature in everything we do’**

Action	Services & Partners	Outcome
Updated project ‘Climate Change Rating Tool’ to include a Biodiversity Assessment	All services	All corporate projects and programmes are assessed as to how they may impact or could enhance biodiversity prior to approval
<a href="#">Herbicide Reduction Plan</a> for phased transition to cease herbicide use on our estate	City Service, <a href="#">Pesticide Free Cambridge</a> ,	Ceased use of herbicide across all council owned sites, including parks, car parks and housing areas in March 2024
Ceased the use of Peat in all landscape schemes	City Services, City Homes	Reduced demand for unsustainable harvesting of rare peat habits and associated carbon emissions.
City Services Operatives Biodiversity Training	City Services, BCN Wildlife Trust, Cambridge University / colleges	Delivered 3 bespoke training events alongside university college gardening teams to increase understanding and skills around Biodiversity, grassland and watercourse management
Great Crested Newt Pond Restoration at Bar Hill Crematorium	City Services, <a href="#">Cambridgeshire &amp; Peterborough Amphibian &amp; Reptile Group</a>	2 Great Crested Newt breeding ponds restored under Natural England license



Delivering 20% BNG on all our developments	<a href="#">City Investment Partnership</a>	16 sites have delivered or secured minimum 20% BNG
Development of Draft Greater Cambridge Local Plan	GCSPS	'First Conversation' consultation in 2020, 'First Proposals' consultation in 2021, January 2025 update of the Local Plan timetable to submit Local Plan by December 2026.
Adopted Greater Cambridge Biodiversity SPD	GCSPS, SCDC, City Services	Adopted in 2022 to ensure planning applications meet best practice and comply with Local Plan policies

**The Core *'working with partners to ensure a coherent resilient nature network'***

Action	Partners	Outcome
Local Nature Reserve and Commons management	City Service, Community Services, Volunteers and Corporate Groups	Completed ongoing habitat management of our 12 LNRs, including control of invasive species
<a href="#">Open Mosaic Habitat (Brownfield) Creation trials at Bramblefield's LNR</a>	City Services, Cambridge University	Ongoing project continued with 3 new substrate mounds installed and studied.
Invertebrate banks and stumpy habitat trials	City Services, Anglia Ruskin University, Friend's of St. Thomas Park	Ongoing project being studied, with 8 new habitats installed.
'No Fence' Collar Trials	City Services, Licensed graziers	Positive demonstration of new technology that supports adopting conservation grazing on key sites
<a href="#">Logan's Meadow Wetland</a>	City Services, CPCA, Friends of Logan's Meadow	Over 1 hectare of new urban wetland habitat created
Cambridge Nature Network - <a href="#">Green Recovery Fund delivery</a>	City Services, CNN, Natural England	Over 20 partnership projects delivered. 7 City Services projects included: Sheep's Green LNR Veteran Willow Restoration and

		community engagement, Logan's Meadow LNR community tree planting, 'Artscaping' in Bramblefield's LNR, Stourbridge Common LNR habitat improvement, Commons grassland restoration trials
<a href="#">Greater Cambridge Chalk Stream Project</a>	City Services, CPCA, City Services, <a href="#">Hobson's Conduit Trust</a> , Anglia Ruskin University, Keele University, SCDC, Anglian Water, South Staffs Water, Environment Agency	Secured funding to deliver 6 evidence driven, case study restoration and demonstration sites.  Engaged over 50 Citizen Scientist in baseline and ongoing monitoring
Coldham's Brook enhancements, Abbey Ward	City Services, <a href="#">Abbey People</a> South Staffs Water	500m of in-channel habitat restoration with volunteers, 2 interpretation panels installed
<a href="#">Dog Control Orders</a> to reduce disturbance to breeding birds	City Services	Seasonal Dogs on Lead Orders in place for 6 Local Nature Reserve (2023)
Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy	CPCA, City Services, Greater Cambridge Shared Planning, Natural Cambridgeshire, Natural England, all neighbouring Local Authorities	Draft plan approved at CPCA Board, due for submission by December 2025, subject to 'Supporting Authority' Approval
Woodland Management Plans for Byron's Pool and Nine Wells LNRs	City Services, Forestry Commission (FC)	Plans consulted and approved by FC for phased delivery between 2025 and 2027
Hobson's Park County Wildlife Site designation	City Service, County Wildlife Site Panel, BCN WT	35.7 hectare of recently created grassland and wetlands designated for their value to breeding birds
Introduced conservation grazing at Netherhall School chalk slope	City Services, OTV, <a href="#">Netherhall School</a> , Local grazier	1.5 hectare of chalk grassland under favourable management

Byron's Pool Fish Pass enhancement	City Services, <a href="#">Wild Trout Trust</a> , Environment Agency	Fish pass redesigned to better guide fish around the weir
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**Nature in your neighbourhood 'ensure nature is not restricted to a few precious locations and can be enjoyed, understood and experienced by all'**

Action	Partners	Outcome
Supported the Cambridge Citizen UK Young Person's Assembly	Community Services, City Services, Kings College, <a href="#">Cambridge Citizens - UK</a> , local schools	Decision makers heard from young people about their concerns for local biodiversity and pledged to act
<a href="#">Cambridge Canopy Project</a>	City Services, Community Services, <a href="#">Nature Smart Cities</a>	Developed a <a href="#">business model</a> for the incorporation of more green infrastructure solutions in towns and cities.  Launched the <a href="#">i-Tree Eco project</a> and the <a href="#">Neighbourhood Canopy Campaign</a> .
<a href="#">Happy Bee Streets</a>	City Services, Community Services	Active groups on 14 streets across 8 wards
Declaration of Butterfly Emergency in 2024, <a href="#">Cambridge Butterfly Trail</a>	City Services, Butterfly Conservation (BC)	Creation of <a href="#">Cambridge Butterfly Trail</a> covering 30 green spaces across the city and surrounds.
Hedges for Kings Hedges	City Services, Community Services, <a href="#">Trees are Good</a> , <a href="#">Tree for Cities</a>	Volunteers planted 100 m of new mixed native hedge and fruit tree planted in the ward parks. Included a fruit tree grafting workshop.
<a href="#">Free Trees for babies' scheme</a>	City Services	878 trees donated over the reporting period to increase canopy cover. This has been running for over 30 years to incentivise tree planting in the city.
Neighbourhood Canopy Campaign	City Services, Community Services	Residents claimed 309 trees and shrubs over the reporting period to reduce inequality in canopy cover across wards.

<a href="#">Cambridge Nature Festival</a>	City Services, CNN	City-wide month-long festival running for 3 consecutive years. Multiple organisations delivering a month of over 100 free events for all ages. Voted as one of the best free festivals in 2023 by the i-news.
<a href="#">River Cam CAN, DiversiTree</a>	City Services, Community Services, <a href="#">Community Fund for Lottery</a>	23 artist-led workshops in 20 different spaces in the City. 8 public events attended by an estimated 6,000 people. x5 public walks and talks on the cultural and biodiversity significance of veteran trees in Cambridge City. x4 workshops for landowners and members of the public on how to manage veteran trees sustainably. Charter for sustainable veteran tree management being created.
<a href="#">Environmental Improvement Program</a>	City Services	28 biodiversity focused projects delivered on parks and public realm across the city including new meadows, stumperies, bird and bat boxes
<a href="#">Parks Biodiversity Toolkit</a>	City Services	Promotion of our toolkit inspired a local community to design, consult and deliver enhancement to St Thomas Park, Queen Edith's ward
<a href="#">S106</a> funded park enhancement schemes	City Services	Five Trees Park meadow and tree planting, Jesus Green stumpery, 700m <sup>2</sup> 'pictorial meadow' at Parkside Pool to provide pollinator 'steeping stone' through the urban environment
Environmental Education Spaces	City Service, primary school / nursery license holders	Licenses in place for 2 City owned spaces delivering access to nature for local pupils
Community Engagement Team <a href="#">Biodiversity Assembly / School visits</a>	Community Services	Approximately 35 school session held over the reporting period

Investment in new Cut and Collect machine	City Services	Enhanced management of long grass and meadow areas across our parks and road verges
<a href="#">Hobsons Conduit Bioblitz</a>	City Services, <a href="#">Hobsons Conduit Trust</a>	3 x Annual community event recording wildlife along the brook over 24hrs

## 1.5 Condition of Cambridge Local Wildlife Sites

Local Wildlife Sites (including 3 designations: County Wildlife Site, City Wildlife Sites & Protected Road Verges) are non-statutory designations for areas identified locally as having high biodiversity value, supporting important species or habitats at a city or County scale.

These sites can be on both private and public land. Through our annual monitoring to central government, we report on how many are in favourable management to support the habitats and species for which they are recognised.

### Cambridge City Local Wildlife Sites in positive management (public and private)

#### Results for the 2024/25 reporting year

Total number of Local Sites where positive conservation management has been or is being implemented within the last five years

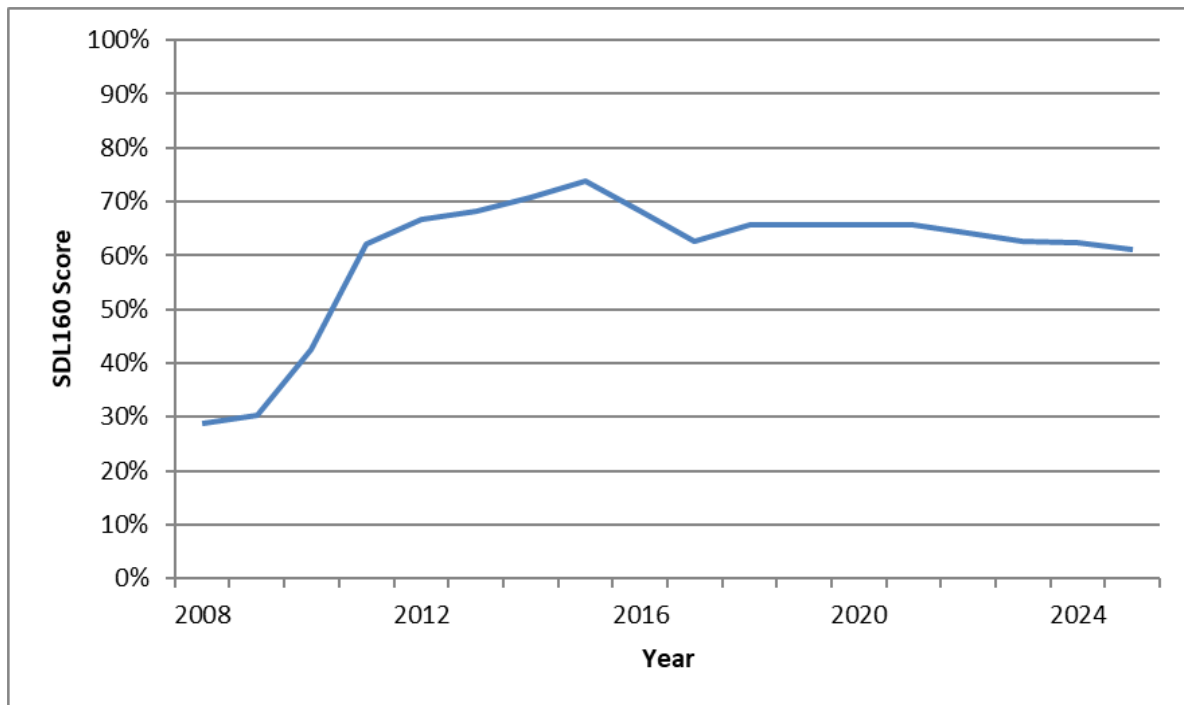
44

Total number of Local Sites

72

% of Local Sites where positive conservation management has been or is being implemented within the last five years

**61.1%**



Results over time, SDL160 scores 2008 – 2025

**Cambridge City Council (CCC) owned and/or managed sites only**  
**Results for the 2024/25 reporting year**

Total number of Local Sites (CCC owned and/or managed) where positive conservation management has been or is being implemented within the last five years	29
Total number of Local Sites (CCC owned and/or managed)	32
% of Local Sites (CCC owned and/or managed) where positive conservation management has been or is being implemented within the last five years	<b>90.6%</b>

## Section 2: Our future actions for biodiversity (2026 – 2031)

In 2026 we will review and consult on our Biodiversity Strategy, Climate Change Strategy and Tree Strategy.

Proposed updated actions have been included in the table below, grouped by theme. Please note these may be subject to change following consultation, prior to formal adoption.

*‘Our vision is that over the next 5 years Cambridge will see a “measurable net gain” in biodiversity, both within the city and the surrounding countryside, including the extent and quality of priority habitats and populations of priority species. Wildlife habitats will be protected, enhanced and where possible expanded and linked. The very best wildlife habitats will form the Cambridge Nature Network that will permeate the whole of the city and link to the wider Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy. Everyone who lives or works within Cambridge will have access to high quality natural greenspaces within walking distance of their home or place or work, and there will be a greater awareness and understanding of biodiversity with opportunities to be involved and collaborate in local wildlife enhancement projects and monitoring’.*

### Biodiversity Mainstreaming ‘Consider and embed nature in everything we do’

Actions	Partners	Outcomes	Timeline
Adopt, support delivery and monitoring of the LNRS	NC, CPCA, Cambridgeshire County Council	Strategic delivery of habitat and species actions	Adoption: December 2025 – Delivery ongoing
Adoption and implementation of Shared Local Plan	GCSPS, SCDC	Robust biodiversity policies, aligned with LNRS and	Proposed adoption by December 2026

		BNG delivery to guide sustainable	
Adoption and implementation of Urban Forest Strategy (2026 - 2036)	City Services, Community Services	Management, protection, planting of and engagement with the urban forest	Adoption March 2026 – Delivery 2026 – 2036
Ensure CIP and other City development achieve a minimum 20% BNG target across all projects	CIP, GCSPS	New development secure high-quality habitats and species enhancement with long term management and monitoring in place.	Ongoing
Implement Environmental Management System to secure ISO14001 accreditation for City operation hub and activities	City Services	Improved environmental performance across City Service	March 2026 - ongoing
Explore rainwater harvesting on Council owned properties	City Service, Property Services, <a href="#">Water Resources East</a> (WRE)	Reduced abstraction for aquifer for tree watering and other operation functions	Feasibility 2026, deliver 2027

**The Core ‘*working with partners to ensure a coherent resilient nature network*’**

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Partners</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
Continued support of CNN	City Services, CPPF, BCN WT, <a href="#">Cambridge Ahead</a> , National Trust, RSPB, <a href="#">East Cambridge Farming Cluster</a> , CU Botanic Garden, South Cambs DC, Magog	Collaborate on funding bids and sharing resource to create ‘Bigger, better, more joined up’ habitats across the CNN	Ongoing



	Down, Natural Cambs, Cambridge Sports Lake Trust		
<a href="#">Local Nature Reserve</a> and Commons management	City Service, Community Services, Volunteers and Corporate Groups	Complete ongoing habitat management of our 12 LNRs, including control of invasive species	Ongoing
Continue our work with the Wildlife Trust to provide advice to private landowners and managers to bring sites into positive management	City Services, BCN WT, private landowners	Increase number of designated Local Wildlife Sites in positive management	Ongoing
Identification and designation of additional City Wildlife Sites and LNRs	City Services	Secure protection and enhanced management of qualifying sites	2026 -Cowley Road drain CiWS, Church End LNR and Fulbourn Rd LNR
Adopt and deliver new Management Plan Reviews for LNRs and Commons	City Services	New management plans embedded to ensure favourable habitat condition	13 sites reviewed in 2025 to be adopted and delivered in 2026 to 2030
Conservation Cattle Grazing Review	City Service, CNN, Licensed graziers	Review grazing timescales and number of animals to ensure we meet site management plan conditions	Review in 2025 / 2026
Trial the use of hardy sheep breeds within temporary fenced compartments on smaller sites.	City Services, CNN, <a href="#">East Cambridge Farmers Cluster</a>	Enhanced management of key sites	Trial in 2026, if successful deliver from 2027 onwards
<a href="#">Greater Cambridge Chalk Stream Project</a> (GCCSP)	City Services, South Staffs Water, <a href="#">Cam Catchment Partnership</a> , Anglian Water, Environment	Deliver and monitor 6 case study sites.  Work with partners to deliver <a href="#">WINEP</a> and other investment in	2026 - 2028

	Agency, Hobson's Conduit Trust	Cambridge chalk streams	
<a href="#">Cambridge and Peterborough Environmental Records Centre (CPERC)</a>	City Service, GCSPS, CPERC	Continue support through Service Level Agreement and representation on the Steering Group	Ongoing

**Nature in your neighbourhood ‘ensure nature is not restricted to a few precious locations and can be enjoyed, understood and experienced by all’**

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Partners</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
Seek support and agree actions to achieve <a href="#">Nature City Accreditation</a>	City Services, Community Services, CNN, CCF Community Groups, Business	Strengthened partnership, shared leadership, community engagement, external recognition, increase funding opportunities	2026 Self-assessment. Build Partnership, seek Foundation Accreditation
Parks Biodiversity Toolkit (publish 2021) promotion	City Services, Community services	Inspire communities to codesign and secure funding for local park biodiversity enhancement	Ongoing
Nature Recovery 'From the Ground Up' LNRS delivery ward-based community action	City Services, Community Services, Cambridgeshire County Council, Community Groups	4-year Cambridge County Council Project targeting Parish scale delivery of the LNRS. Selected wards: Cherry Hinton, Abbey, East Chesterton, Market & Trumpington	2026 – 2030 programme to enable communities to develop and deliver LNRS actions.

<a href="#">Butterfly Friendly Council</a> (BFC)	City Services, Butterfly Conservation	Meet the 5 steps to become an official BFC	2026
Cambridge Elm diversity Project – <i>celebrating the unique diversity of Cambridgeshire Elm</i>	City Services, Community Service, BCN WT	Establish a 'community nursery' of local Elm species for planting in partnership across the CNN	2026 - 2030
Native Black Poplar Project	City Services, Community Services, Forest Research, Tree Council,	Establish a 'community nursery' of cultivars of known provenance for planting in partnership across the CNN	2026 - 2030
<a href="#">River Cam CAN</a> , <a href="#">DiversiTree</a> legacy	City Services, Community Services	Seek further funding to secure sustainable management and replacement planting for willow pollards, continue with engagement	2026 - 2030
Cambridge Nature Festival	City Services, Community Services, CNN	Month long programme of free and low-cost events to connect people with nature	Support events and promotion in 2026, seek funding 2026 onwards
Environmental Education Spaces Continue to support existing spaces and explore additional site resource	City Service, primary school / nursery license holders	Continued use of 3 spaces, explore at least 1 additional site	2026 - 2031
Environment Improvement Programme (EIP) project selection criteria / prioritisation	City Services	Seek to allocate future budget to meet strategic biodiversity and urban forest objectives.	2026 - 2027
'Wild about Art' projects – continue to	City Services, Community	Innovative education and / or	2026 - 2030

support funding bids and provide locations for nature-based art across Cambridge	Services, artist and communities	habitat creation temporary and permanent installations exploring the wonders of nature	
Urban Nature, <a href="#">Conservation Evidence</a>	City Services, <a href="#">Cambridge Conservation Initiative</a> , <a href="#">Cambridge Conservation Forum</a>	Facilitate research trials on our urban conservation actions to build a shared evidence base	2026 – Closed Churchyard grass cutting trials and monitoring invertebrate use of climate resilient non-native trees – Ongoing

## Section 3: Biodiversity net gain information

We deliver our local planning authority function through the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service (GCSPS) in partnership with South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC).

### 3.1 Actions we have carried out to meet BNG obligations

From 12 February 2024, we have been applying a mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain Pre-Commencement Condition to all relevant (except exempted) planning applications coming forward. This data has been captured and entered the corporate BNG tracking software (Verna's Mycelia), as well as being tracked through the corporate planning software (Uniform).

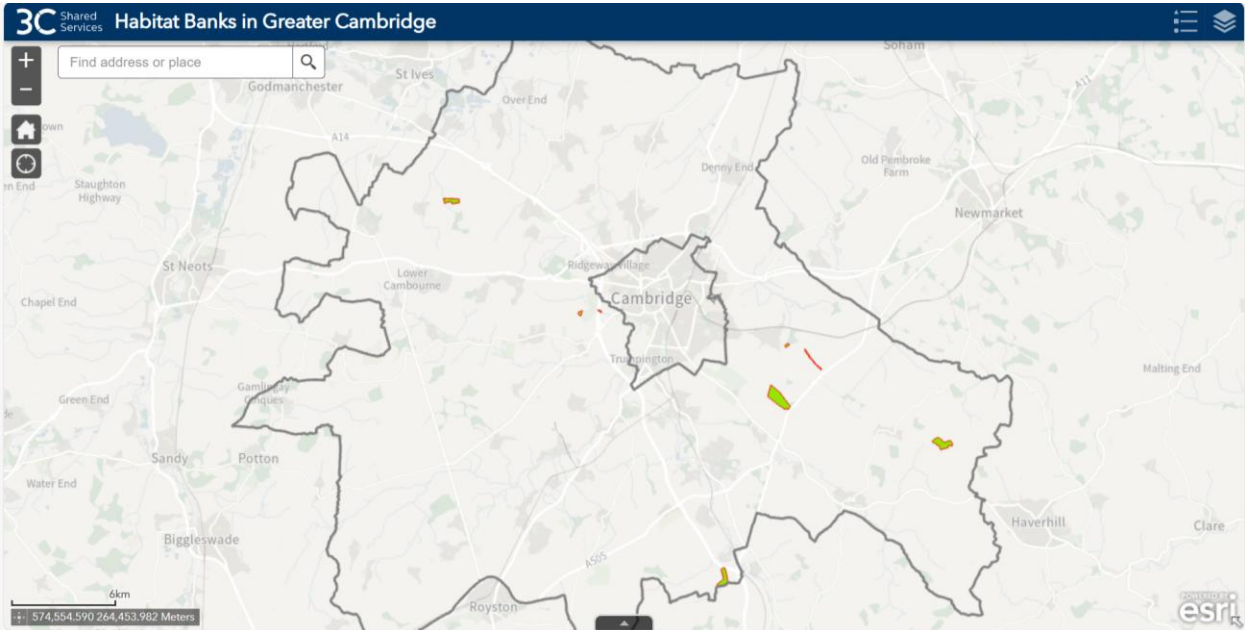
In Greater Cambridge, we have also facilitated the creation of **8** [offsite advance habitat creation offset sites](#) which cover a total land area of approximately **200** hectares. These sites are either already listed on DEFRA's [Biodiversity Register](#), or are in the process of finalising the Section 106 Agreements and registering.

These BNG Offset sites are where developers can purchase BNG credits to mitigate habitat loss from developments taking place in Greater Cambridge. For our work facilitating the creation of these sites, we won the Planning for the Natural Environment category at the June 2025 [Planning Awards](#).

Through the negotiation and creation of Section 106 Agreements, we have put in place a chargeable monitoring regime for the offsite BNG Providers to cover the costs of LPA monitoring of BNG on their recovery sites by our ecology team.

GCSP have also agreed **twelve** Section 106 Agreements for onsite delivery of BNG and as of October 2025 approximately **125** planning applications for which the mandatory BNG Condition has been applied for onsite BNG.

BNG offset provider sites in Greater Cambridge



**3.2 BNG resulting, or expected to result, from biodiversity gain plans you’ve approved**

The BNG resulting or expected to result from these collected activities both on and offsite is difficult to quantify at present as we have just begun to receive offsite reports and the process for collating and tracking onsite BNG is still emerging, but we can report that as of September 2025 the offset providers in Greater Cambridge have provided 177 BNG Units to developers in order to offset damage to the natural environment as a result of development.

Greater Cambridge Shared Planning has through the set-up of these offset sites enabled the creation of new habitats and thus new opportunities for biodiversity to thrive here.

BNG unit sales from offset sites created in Greater Cambridge

BNG Provider/Agent	Site	BNG unit sales as at 09/10/2025
Cambs County Council	Lower Valley Farm	64.46
Wildlife Trust BCN	Flack Field, Fulbourn	19.62
Groundworks	Devana Centre	7.4

The BNG Partnership	Boxworth	85.99
Cheffins	Coploe Hill,	0 (S106 being finalised)
Cambridge Past Present & Future	Coton Reserve	0 (S106 being finalised)
<b>Total Units</b>	-	<b>177.47</b>

We are in concept stage of developing a watercourse offsite BNG credit option at pour Sheep's Green Local Nature Reserve in Newnham to ensure that any offsite watercourse habitat requirements resulting from development can be delivered to the benefit of local habitats and communities.

### Section 106 Agreements which include BNG Provision in Greater Cambridge

App No	Site Address	Decision	Ward	District	Type	Deed Date
21/00660/FUL	Land Adj 129 - 131 Ditton Fields Cambridge Cambridgeshire	Granted	Abbey	Cambridge City Council	BNG - Provision	05/11/2021
22/01384/FUL	Beech Farm Church Street Harston Cambridgeshire CB22 7NR	Granted	Harston & Comberton	South Cambridgeshire District Council	BNG - Provision	23/02/2023
22/02088/FUL	Bourn Golf Club, Health and Fitness Club Toft Road Bourn Cambridgeshire CB23 2TT	Granted	Caldecote	South Cambridgeshire District Council	BNG - Provision	18/11/2022
22/05549/OUT	TW1 Granta Park Great Abington Cambridgeshire CB21 6AL	Granted	Linton	South Cambridgeshire District Council	BNG - Provision	18/01/2024
23/01335/OUT	Land East Of Ermine Street Caxton Cambridgeshire	Granted	Caxton & Papworth	South Cambridgeshire District Council	BNG - Provision	26/07/2024
23/04233/FUL	Fitzwilliam College Storeys Way Cambridge Cambridgeshire CB3 0DG	Granted	Castle	Cambridge City Council	BNG - Provision	09/08/2024
23/04590/OUT	Land South Of Coldhams Lane Cambridge Cambridgeshire	Granted	Cherry Hinton	Cambridge City Council	BNG - Provision	31/01/2025
23/04687/FUL	Barnwell Local Centre Barnwell Road Cambridge Cambridgeshire CB5 8RG	Granted	Abbey	Cambridge City Council	BNG - Provision	26/11/2024
23/04952/FUL	19 - 35 Regent Street Cambridge Cambridgeshire CB2 3AS	Granted	Market	Cambridge City Council	BNG - Provision	18/12/2024
24/01080/OUT	Land At Green End/Heath Road Gamlingay Sandy SG19 3JZ	Granted	Gamlingay	South Cambridgeshire District Council	BNG - Provision	10/04/2025
24/01354/FUL	137 And 143 Histon Road Cambridge Cambridgeshire CB4 3HZ	Granted	Arbury	Cambridge City Council	BNG - Provision	06/03/2025
24/03285/OUT	Land Southwest Of Lanacre 86 Chrishall Road Fowlmere Cambridgeshire SG8 7RY	Granted	Foxton	South Cambridgeshire District Council	BNG - Provision	31/07/2025

### 3.3 How we plan to meet BNG obligations in the next reporting period

We will continue to support applicants and habitat bank providers through the planning system with the provision of expert advice from our team of three full-time in-house ecologists and the systems and process that we have put in place to record and report on BNG.

To track, monitor and report on our BNG data, we have purchased a specialist software package (Verna's Mycelia), which will be used to collate data from other corporate systems (Uniform, Exacom) to provide greater detail of BNG delivery in future Biodiversity Duty reports.

Our draft shared Local Plan proposes that all Major development in Greater Cambridge must provide a minimum 20% biodiversity net gain (BNG), unless exempt under the Environment Act 2021, to be provided onsite where this is feasible and effective. If adopted, we will implement this policy to ensure that our large developments deliver above mandatory 10% net gain. Where this requires offsite delivery, we will ensure that sites support the emerging LNRS.

ENDS

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1. IMPACT ON CARBON EMISSIONS (MITIGATION OF CLIMATE CHANGE)				CLIMATE CHANGE RATING: <i>Use drop down list</i>	WILL THE PROJECT MOVE CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL CLOSER TO THE OBJECTIVE OF BEING NET ZERO CARBON BY 2030? <i>Use drop down list</i>	WILL THE PROJECT MOVE THE CITY CLOSER TO THE OBJECTIVE OF A NET ZERO CARBON CAMBRIDGE BY 2030? <i>Use drop down list</i>	PLEASE DETAIL HERE THE ACTION THAT WILL BE TAKEN TO AVOID, MITIGATE OR COMPENSATE FOR THE NEGATIVE IMPACTS AND MAXIMISE POSITIVE IMPACTS?	HAS A NET ZERO CARBON OPTION BEEN CONSIDERED? PLEASE PROVIDE DETAILS.
1	ENERGY USE	Positive Impact:	Energy use will be reduced or renewable energy will be used	Medium Positive	Yes	Yes	Consider: - Reducing demand for energy - Specifying energy efficiency measures (e.g. insulation, low energy lighting) - Generating renewable energy (e.g. heat pumps, solar) Semi natural habitats and tree canopy and water courses cool the City and reduces energy demand in heatwaves.	No
		Nil Impact:	No extra energy use is involved					
		Negative Impact:	More energy (gas and/or electricity) will be consumed (by CCC or others)					
2	WASTE GENERATION	Positive Impact:	Less waste will be generated OR amount of waste that is reused/ recycled will be increased	Nil	No	No	Consider: - Will resources be reduced or reused? - Will you use recycled goods? - Will recycling facilities be increased? Review of park leaf clearance will reduce operational carbon use and enhance soil carbon capture. However, additional meadow creation will require cut and collect management with transport of green waste within the City.	No
		Nil Impact:	No waste will be generated					
		Negative Impact:	More waste will be generated (by CCC or others)					
3	USE OF TRANSPORT	Positive Impact:	The use of transport and/or of fossil fuel-based transport will be reduced	Nil	No	No	Consider: - Will you purchase an electric vehicle? - Will you specify the use of public transport? - How will you reduce the need to travel or transport goods? Additional Hay cuts may require increase use of vehicle to move green waste. Options for onsite composting will be explored for suitable sites.	No
		Nil Impact:	No extra transport will be necessary					
		Negative Impact:	CCC or others will need to travel more OR transport goods more often/ further					
4	SUSTAINABLE FOOD	Positive Impact:	Food will be locally grown and/ or meat-free	Low Positive	No	No	Consider: - Use of locally grown/ produced food - Reducing use of imported food - Reducing use of meat Produce available from community orchards and gardens. Foraging for blackberries, Sloes etc on Local Nature Reserves. Local meat production from grazing Common land	No
		Nil Impact:	No change in supply of food					
		Negative Impact:	Food will travel long distances and include meat					
2. IMPACT ON RESILIENCE (ADAPTATION) TO THE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE								
HOW WILL THIS PROJECT/PROPOSAL AFFECT THE FOLLOWING KEY AREAS:				CLIMATE CHANGE RATING: <i>Use drop down list</i>	WILL THE PROJECT HELP CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL TO BE MORE RESILIENT TO THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE? <i>Use drop down list</i>	WILL THE PROJECT HELP CAMBRIDGE TO BE MORE RESILIENT TO THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE? <i>Use drop down list</i>	PLEASE DETAIL HERE THE ACTION THAT WILL BE TAKEN TO AVOID, MITIGATE OR COMPENSATE FOR THE NEGATIVE IMPACTS AND MAXIMISE POSITIVE IMPACTS?	HAS A NET ZERO CARBON OPTION BEEN CONSIDERED? PLEASE PROVIDE DETAILS.
5	HEATWAVES	Positive Impact:	Increased/ improved shade & natural ventilation	High Positive	Yes	Yes	Consider: Building orientation and installing measures such as Brise Soleil to reduce heat gain and plant hydration methods. Significant contribution to reducing urban heat island effect, through shading etc	No
		Nil Impact:	No impact on existing levels of shade & ventilation					
		Negative Impact:	Lack of or reduced shade (e.g. from trees or buildings) & natural ventilation					
6	WATER AVAILABILITY	Positive Impact:	Provision made for an enhancement of water efficiency measures to minimise the impact on water resource availability	Medium Positive	Yes	Yes	Consider: Managing water use efficiently, installing measures to use less water such as low water use taps, planting drought resistant plants and using rainwater for irrigation. Greater Cambridge Chalk Stream Project focuses on water use and quality. Rainwater harvesting project will reduce our reliance on aquifer abstraction for operations such as tree watering.	No
		Nil Impact:	Levels of water use will not be changed					
		Negative Impact:	Water use will increase and/or no provision made for water management = Negative Impact					
7	FLOODING	Positive Impact:	Sustainable drainage measures incorporated, positive steps to reduce & manage flood risk	Medium Positive	Yes	Yes	Consider: The installation of measures to reduce the speed and increase the absorption of rainwater e.g. green roofs, SuDS, permeable paving etc. and alternative arrangements (business continuity) Reconnecting the river to its floodplain through habitat creation schemes, tree canopy and sustainable urban drainage schemes will help 'slow the flow'	No
		Nil Impact:	Levels of surface water run-off & flood risk are not affected					
		Negative Impact:	Levels of surface water run-off will increase, no management of flood risk					
8	HIGH WINDS / STORMS	Positive Impact:	Exposure to higher wind speeds is being actively managed & reduced	Low Positive	Yes	Yes	Consider: the need to install stabilisation measures and ensure robust structures resilient to high winds A healthy urban forest provides shelter for streets and parks	No
		Nil Impact:	No change to existing level of exposure to higher wind speeds					
		Negative Impact:	Exposure to higher wind speeds is increased or is not managed = Negative Impact					
9	FOOD SECURITY	Positive Impact:	Opportunities & resources for local food production are increased/ enhanced	Medium Positive	Yes	Yes	Source food locally, and provide meat-free catering to reduce vulnerability to food shortages and reduce emissions from transport and farming of food Healthy habitats and urban forest supports pollinator populations for pollination of food crops.	No
		Nil Impact:	No change to opportunities & resources for local food production					
		Negative Impact:	Opportunities & resources for local food production are reduced					
10	BIODIVERSITY	Positive Impact:	Biodiversity will be protected/ enhanced	High Positive	Yes	Yes	Provide net gain mitigation if required and seek enhancement in projects of all types and scale Main outcomes are to protect and enhance biodiversity at a landscape scale.	No
		Nil Impact:	Level of biodiversity will not change					
		Negative Impact:	Biodiversity will decrease					
Weighing up the negative and positive impacts of your project, what is the overall rating you are assigning to your project?:				Medium Positive	This overall rating is what you need to include in your report/ budget proposal, together with your explanation to be included in the red box below			

## Guidance on Assessing the Degree of Negative and Positive Impacts:

Note: Not all of the considerations/ criteria listed below will necessarily be relevant to your project

## Low Impact (L)

- \* No publicity
- \* Relevant risks to the Council or community are Low or none
- \* No impact on service or corporate performance
- \* No capital assets; or capital assets with lifetime of less than 3 years

## Medium Impact (M)

- \* Local publicity (good or bad)
- \* Relevant risks to the Council or community are Medium
- \* Affects delivery of corporate commitments
- \* Affects service performance (e.g.: energy use; amount of waste; distance travelled) by more than 10%

## High Impact (H)

- \* Capital assets with a lifetime of more than 3 years
- \* National publicity (good or bad)
- \* Relevant risks to the Council or community are Significant or High
- \* Affects delivery of regulatory commitments
- \* Affects corporate performance by more than 10%
- \* Capital assets with a lifetime of more than 6 years

In the box below please summarise the projects impacts (the reasons for the ratings given in column E above) to explain how the overall rating for the project/ proposal has been derived (Cell E37). Please also highlight any negative impacts your project may have and how you plan to avoid, mitigate or compensate for these (as you will have detailed in column I above).

The overall impact of delivering the Biodiversity Duty Report future action plan is assessed as being moderately positive in terms of reducing impacts of climate change and enhancing biodiversity.

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**REPORT TITLE: Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy**

**To:** Cabinet 16 December 2025

Cabinet Member: Cllr Martin Smart, Cabinet Member for Nature, Open Space and City Services

**Report by:**

Guy Belcher, Biodiversity Manager

Tel: 01223 458532 Email: Guy.Belcher@cambridge.gov.uk

**Wards affected:**

All

Director Approval: Director James Elms confirms that the report author has sought the advice of all appropriate colleagues and given due regard to that advice; that the equalities impacts and other implications of the recommended decisions have been assessed and accurately presented in the report; and that they are content for the report to be put to the Cabinet/Cabinet Member for decision.

1.	Recommendations
1.1	<p>It is recommended that Cabinet:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide Cambridge City Council 'supporting authority' approval for the Cambridgeshire &amp; Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) to submit the final Cambridgeshire &amp; Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) to the Secretary of State by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025.</li> <li>2. To note the CPCA proposals for supporting implementation and delivery of the LNRS, following submission</li> <li>2. Authorise officers to continue to represent Cambridge City Council as a</li> </ol>

	<p>'Supporting Authority' at future LNRS steering group or alternative forums as we collectively move towards delivery and monitoring phase of the LNRS.</p>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Purpose and reason for the report</b>
2.1	<p>Following public consultation on the draft Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), the revised LNRS, incorporating the changes in response to the consultation as outlined in section 6, was approved by the CPCA Committee on the 5<sup>th</sup> of November 2025.</p> <p>Following approval, there is a 28-day notification period for 'supporting authorities' and Natural England (NE) to provide support for the LNRS to be submitted to the Secretary of State.</p> <p>This report seeks approval from Cabinet for the CPCA to submit the LNRS to the Secretary of State.</p> <p>Approval will ensure the LNRS meets the government's expectation of a strategy submitted by the end of 2025.</p>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Alternative options considered</b>
3.1	<p><b>To not support approval of the LNRS</b></p> <p>This option was rejected.</p> <p>A decision to not provide support will require submission of a written 'Publication Advisory Notice' explaining the reason for objection before the end of the 28-day period. LNRS legislation sets out two potential reasons for a SA to register their objection to the LNRS submission, Namely the LNRS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "cannot be justified based on the results of the consultation under Reg 12"</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "is materially deficient",</li> </ul> <p>Officers have been involved with the LNRS planning, production and consultations, through representation on the LNRS Steering Group, ensuring the document meets the statutory guidance and provides an overarching strategy to coordinate collaborative action for nature recovery at scale and includes existing initiatives such as the Cambridge Nature Network.</p>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Background and key issues</b>
4.1	<p>The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) is a new statutory plan as required under the Environment Act 2021.</p> <p>A LNRS agrees priorities for nature recovery and proposes actions in the locations where it would make a particular contribution to achieving those priorities.</p> <p>There are 48 strategy areas covering the whole of England and the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs appointed 'responsible authorities' to lead the preparation of the strategy for each area. The responsible authority for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area is the Combined Authority.</p>
4.2	<p>In addition to the responsible authority, the LNRS legislation requires responsible authorities to involve all local authorities and Natural England (collectively termed 'supporting authorities') in the preparation.</p> <p>The Combined Authority commissioned Cambridgeshire County Council to programme manage the production of the LNRS. The Council established a Steering Group co-chaired by Natural Cambridgeshire (the Local Nature Partnership) to guide the development of the draft Strategy, supported by technical groups, contracted specialists and species experts.</p> <p>Officers have attended these steering groups and technical workshops to guide development of the LNRS and ensure it aligns with our existing initiatives and priorities,</p>

	<p>most notably the established vision, sites and partnership working within our adopted Biodiversity Strategy and the Cambridge Nature Network (CNN).</p> <p>The mapping element of the LNRS has been led by Natural Capital Solutions, a consultancy nationally recognised for their work in this field, who brought their experience with other areas LNRS to this process.</p>
4.3	<p>The need for nature recovery is a result of the decline in biodiversity across the UK. The national State of Nature report highlights the lost and endangerment of species and habitats over the past 50+ years, with the country globally being amongst the most nature deprived.</p> <p>Within the country Cambridgeshire and Peterborough has one of the lowest proportions of area designated for nature.</p> <p>The LNRS system aims to encourage nature recovery by prioritising key locations, setting actions and encouraging landowners to make changes.</p> <p>They will influence prioritisation of government expenditure on nature. However, this is a collaborative approach as, whilst LNRS do need to be taken account of in the planning system, the identification of land for a habitat or species priority does not proscribe how landowners use or manage that land.</p>
5.	<b>Corporate plan</b>
5.1	<p>A key priority of the Corporate Plan (2022 to 2027) is :</p> <p><b>Leading Cambridge's response to the climate and biodiversity emergencies and creating a net zero council by 2030</b></p> <p>Collaborate development, support and delivery of the statutory LNRS will provide a framework for future regional and local projects to delivery nature recovery at scale and harness the co-benefits of nature-based solutions to address the climate emergency and</p>

	mitigate the impacts of our changing climate on nature and our communities.
<b>6.</b>	<b>Consultation, engagement and communication</b>
<b>6.1</b>	<p>The CPCA Consultation on the Strategy included a web-based questionnaire/response form, an interactive version of the draft Strategy Habitats Map, physical material accessible via libraries, and a series of face-to-face events.</p> <p>The level of response was comparable to other LNRS consultations nationally. A summary of the consultation is attached as Appendix A.</p> <p>Overall, the Strategy received a positive response. Similarly, there was a positive response to the priority list of habitats and species from most respondents.</p> <p>There were suggestions for improvement of the Strategy and the mapping. 78 respondents requested changes to the mapping to include or exclude specific parcels of land for nature recovery. Reasons cited included the landowners having other uses in mind for the land (such as housing development), existing nature recovery improvements not captured by the mapping, ground conditions not suitable for the proposed habitat, or planning permission already granted for alternative use. Appendix D notes the location of mapping changes.</p> <p>The responses were assessed by an evaluation panel drawn from the LNRS Steering Group, with additional advice sought from the mapping consultants, and species/subject specialists. The Steering Group provided a steer on the main strategic issues. The issues are summarised in Appendix B. The key areas for change are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Priority species: adding the Yellow Wagtail bird and the Meadow Saxifrage plant species. Following expert advice, it is proposed that the Forester Moth would be removed from the species list, as it is functionally extinct in the area.</li> <li>• Merging several of the measures (i.e. actions) where they address a similar habitat with</li> </ul>

	<p>the same action (these cover woodland, grassland and urban greenspace habitat measures)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regarding the mapping there are some site-specific alterations reflecting evidence provided</li> <li>• Clarifying the relationship of the LNRS with the planning system</li> <li>• Emphasising the role of landowners in delivery, and that delivery needed to consider the detail of ground conditions</li> </ul>
<b>7.</b>	<b>Anticipated outcomes, benefits or impact</b>
7.1	<p>By supporting the submission of the LNRS we will ensure that a legislation compliant regional strategy is in place to provide a framework for prioritising collaborative nature recovery to meet our collective Biodiversity Duty under the Environment Act 2021.</p> <p>As required under the Environment Act 2021, there must be regard to the LNRS in preparing relevant plans including Local Plans. This duty will be strengthened from 'have regard' to 'take account' once the relevant sections of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 are activated.</p> <p>Beyond the enabling role of the Local Plan and planning system, the core delivery of nature recovery lies with the actions of landowners and land managers, the majority of which will take place on privately owned land. This can be assisted with appropriate public sector support schemes. Government is reviewing the national schemes to support environmental outcomes on farms, having closed the Sustainable Farming Incentive in March 2025. No long-term funding has been announced for Combined Authorities nor supporting authorities in relation to LNRS delivery.</p> <p>Initial discussions have been held on how to maximise the delivery on the ground of the Strategy's priorities and actions. This has included discussions facilitated by Natural Cambridgeshire's Policy and Planning Forum, the LNRS Steering Group, the Planning</p>



	<p>Advisory Service and with DEFRA. It is proposed to that CPCA will bring forward a delivery plan within the next six months. This will include a review of actions under the following four topics:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Governance/delivery partnership</li> <li>2. Embedding LNRS into local decision making</li> <li>3. How to identify strategic projects (including cross-boundary) and what role does the public sector have in the facilitation of project development</li> <li>4. Monitoring and reporting on the delivery of LNRS priorities</li> </ol> <p>The review will consider these against available resources, noting that future delivery funding from DEFRA has not been confirmed.</p>
<b>8.</b>	<b>Implications</b>
<b>8.1</b>	<b>Relevant risks</b>
	<p>Not to support the recommendation would risk delay to the CPCA LNRS timeline and CPCA 25/26 budget allocation to reach LNRS submission by end of December 2025.</p> <p>Submission of a supported LNRS by the end of the year is important in demonstrating to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) that our area is ready to take forward nature recovery. The majority of the 48 LNRS nationally are expected to have been submitted by December 2025.</p>
	<b>Financial Implications</b>
<b>8.2</b>	<p>There is no direct financial implication to the City Council from a decision to provide supporting authority approval for CPCA adoption of the LNRS.</p> <p>The CPCA has a budget allocation of £135k for the preparation, consultation and final approval of the LNRS during 25/26. A Grant Funding Agreement is in place with</p>

	<p>Cambridgeshire County Council to programme manage the development of the LNRS up to approval. There is no confirmed allocation from central government for delivery from 26/27.</p> <p>Many of our natural green spaces are identified as strategic sites for nature improvement within the LNRS. Future funding for delivery of the LNRS has yet to be announced by central government however, strategic sites and projects are anticipated to be prioritised for future external funding.</p>
	<b>Legal Implications</b>
8.3	<p>Local Nature Recovery Strategies are a new statutory framework for spatial planning aimed at promoting nature recovery, established under the Environment Act 2021. The statutory guidance for LNRS is issued by the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs under Section 106(5) of the Act. The Environment (Local Nature Recovery Strategies) (Procedure) Regulations 2023 set out the procedures and requirements for preparing these strategies. These regulations are made by the Secretary of State under the powers conferred by Sections 105(4) and (5), and 143(1) of the Environment Act 2021.</p> <p>In discharging its functions under the Local Nature Recovery Strategy framework, the CPCA, as responsible authority must engage with ‘supporting authorities’ to prepare, consult and agree a draft plan for submission. This process has been followed through representation of officers on the LNRS Steering Group and Leader support for the LNRS public consultation.</p>
	<b>Equalities and socio-economic Implications</b>
8.4	<p>The CPCA have produced an EqIA covering the writing, consultation and production of the LNRS that is available upon request.</p> <p>Relevant delivery impacts have been covered by the accompanying Biodiversity Duty and Biodiversity Strategy midterm reports and EqIA.</p>

	<p>The assessment found that the report and associated actions will have overall positive equality impacts across Cambridge's communities.</p> <p>The actions promote equitable access to nature, health and wellbeing benefits, and inclusive community engagement. No negative or disproportionate impacts were identified, and equality outcomes will be monitored through annual reporting.</p>
	<b>Net Zero Carbon, Climate Change and Environmental implications</b>
8.5	The overall impact of adopting and delivering the Local Nature Recovery Strategy is assessed as being moderately positive in terms of reducing impacts of climate change and enhancing biodiversity.
	<b>Procurement Implications</b>
8.6	There are no procurement implications for supporting the recommendation.
	<b>Community Safety Implications</b>
8.7	There are no community safety implications for supporting the recommendation.
8.8	<p><b>Checklist – Impact of the decision</b></p> <p><b>Financial:</b> No new funding is required to support submission of the LNRS</p> <p><b>Legal:</b> No new legal duties are created. The LNRS will support delivery of existing Environment Act 2021 duty and associated planning requirements</p> <p><b>Climate Change, Biodiversity &amp; Sustainability:</b> Delivery of the LNRS will have a positive impact through increase of canopy cover, carbon capture, boosting biodiversity, reducing storm water flooding.</p> <p><b>Crime and disorder / Community Safety:</b> No direct impacts from supporting the submission of the LNRS. Specific project will consider and embed mitigation though</p>

	<p>consultation and good design.</p> <p><b>Discrimination and Equality:</b> The LNR specifically targets action to address inequality in access to natural green space and champion the health and wellbeing benefits of regular access to nature.</p> <p><b>Human Resources:</b> Support for the LNRS does not require new posts, though it does highlight the need for sufficient resource to be prioritised to collaborate on future delivery and monitoring.</p> <p><b>ICT:</b> No additional ICT resource implications</p> <p><b>Property:</b> City owned land is included as priority sites for nature recovery within the LNRS. Many of these have existing designation (City Wildlife Site, County Wildlife Sites and Local Nature Reserve) for their existing nature value. Officer are reviewing site management plans and exploring opportunities to deliver Biodiversity Net Gain Credit on these and other City owned assets to deliver actions that meet the LNRS ambitions through BNG credit sales.</p> <p><b>Procurement:</b> No procurement implications are associated with supporting the LNRS</p> <p><b>Customer Service:</b> The LNRs provide a clear framework for prioritising sites and action for nature recovery that can be communicated to our communities through our web pages, social media and Cambridge Matters.</p> <p><b>Communications, Consultation &amp; Engagement:</b></p> <p>No additional consultation is required from the decision to support submission of the LNRS. Going forward the CPCA with support of the Steering Group will seek to engage with delivery partners and communities to establish how best to provide strategic support.</p> <p><b>Our values and Target Operating Model (TOM):</b> The LNRS is a prime example of an overarching strategy that will help to 'enable partners, communities and the council to achieve outcomes together' in line with the TOM approach to collaborative working.</p>
9.	<p><b>Background documents</b></p> <p>Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985</p>
10.	<p><b>Appendices</b></p>

10.1	<p>Appendix A - CPCA Summary of public consultation responses</p> <p><a href="#">Appendix A - Executive Summary of LNRS Consultation.pdf</a></p> <p>Appendix B - CPCA Summary of key issues from Consultation response:</p> <p><a href="#">Appendix B - Key issues from LNRS consultation.pdf</a></p> <p>Appendix C1 - Draft LNRS Part 1, Area Description:</p> <p><a href="#">Appendix C1 - Draft statement of Biodiversity Principles - Part 1 Area Description.pdf</a></p> <p>Appendix C2 – Draft LNRS Part 2, Statement of Biodiversity Priorities:</p> <p><a href="#">Appendix C2 - Draft Statement of Biodiversity principles - Part 2 Priorities and Actions.pdf</a></p> <p>Appendix D – Location of accepted mapping changes following LNRS consultation:</p> <p><a href="#">Appendix D - Location of Mapping changes.pdf</a></p> <p>Appendix E – EQIA</p> <p>Appendix F – Climate Change rating tool</p>
	<p>To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact Guy Belcher, Biodiversity Manager, tel: 01223 458532, email: <a href="mailto:Guy.belcher@cambridge.gov.uk">Guy.belcher@cambridge.gov.uk</a></p>

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## Cambridge City Council Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

This tool helps the Council ensure that we fulfil legal obligations of the [Public Sector Equality Duty](#) to have due regard to the need to –

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Guidance on how to complete this tool can be found on the Cambridge City Council intranet. For specific questions on the tool please contact the Community Equity Team at [equalities@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:equalities@cambridge.gov.uk).

Also, once you have drafted the EqIA please send this to [equalities@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:equalities@cambridge.gov.uk) for checking.

<b>1. Title of strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service</b>
Biodiversity Strategy (2022–2030), Biodiversity Duty Report (2022–2025), and Biodiversity Action Plan (2026–2031)

<b>2. Webpage link to full details of the strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service (if available)</b>
To be updated when published <b>Date?</b> . Existing Strategy link: <a href="https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/media/11066/biodiversity-strategy.pdf">https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/media/11066/biodiversity-strategy.pdf</a>

<b>3. What is the objective or purpose of your strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service?</b>
The combined programme sets out how Cambridge City Council will conserve and enhance biodiversity across the city, in line with statutory requirements in the Environment Act 2021 and amended NERC Act Section 40. It embeds biodiversity into council decision making, land management, planning policy and community engagement. A mid-term review of the Biodiversity Strategy is planned to celebrate achievements and align future actions with new legislation and initiatives. The Biodiversity Duty Report documents how Cambridge City Council has taken and will continue to take steps to conserve and enhance biodiversity in exercising its functions. The accompanying Action Plan (2026–2031) sets out future commitments to embed biodiversity across council operations, estate management, planning policy, and community engagement.

#### 4. Responsible Team and Group

City Services: Biodiversity Team

#### 5. Who will be affected by this strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service?

(Please tick all that apply)

- ☒ Residents
- ☒ Visitors
- ☒ Staff

- Council tenants and residents across all wards
- Community volunteers, Friends groups, and local schools engaged in biodiversity actions
- Developers and land managers participating in biodiversity net gain initiatives
- Staff across service areas involved in delivering biodiversity actions
- People who work in the city but do not live here
- Tourists

#### 6. What type of strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service is this?

- ☒ New
- ☐ Major change
- ☐ Minor change

#### 7. Are other departments or partners involved in delivering this strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service? (Please tick)

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No

Community Services, Cambridge Investment Partnership, Combined Authority, Natural Cambridgeshire, Cambridge Nature Network, Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire Wildlife Trust, community groups and Friends groups.

#### 8. What research methods/ evidence have you used in order to identify equality impacts of your strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service?

This EQIA draws on national guidance and a growing peer reviewed evidence base on the links between access to green space, biodiversity and health, with a focus on how these benefits and risks are patterned by age, disability, income, ethnicity and other characteristics.

Key sources include:

- **UK guidance and reviews**
  - Public Health England, *Improving access to greenspace: 2020 review* which summarises evidence that greener communities show lower levels of depression



and anxiety, reduced exposure to heat and flooding, and that disadvantaged groups often gain greater health benefit when green space is improved. [GOV.UK](#)

- Public Health England and wider UK reviews summarised in *Making the most of green space for people's health* and the EKLIPSE report on types and characteristics of green space that affect mental health. [Eklipse](#)
- Health Foundation and Friends of the Earth analyses of inequalities in access to green space and environmental hazards by deprivation and ethnicity. [health.org.uk](#)

- **Mental health and wellbeing**

- Systematic reviews and meta-analyses showing that exposure to nature and urban green space is consistently associated with improvements in mental health outcomes across age groups, including reduced depression and anxiety and improved quality of life. [Journal of Global Health](#)
- Evidence that urban green exercise and even short periods of nature exposure can improve mood and reduce stress, including for adults with existing mental illness. [Urban Green Exercise](#)

- **Children, young people and older adults**

- Systematic reviews showing that access to green space supports children's mental wellbeing, behaviour and cognitive development, and that outdoor learning in green environments benefits attention and academic performance. [Impact of Green Space](#)
- Reviews and longitudinal studies showing that green space can improve physical and mental health for middle-aged and older adults and reduce heat-related morbidity and mortality. [Health impacts of urban green spaces](#)

- **Disability and long-term conditions**

- Meta-analyses and scoping reviews indicating that nature exposure produces short term improvements in mood, stress and quality of life for adults with mental illness, and broader mental health benefits across diagnostic groups. [Nature Exposure Benefits](#)

- **Pregnancy and maternity**

- Systematic reviews and meta-analyses showing there is some evidence that residential greenness is associated with healthier pregnancy outcomes such as higher birthweight and lower risk of preterm birth and small for gestational age. [Greenspace and birth outcomes](#)

- **Race, income, climate vulnerability and intersectionality**

- UK analyses showing that people in more deprived areas and many ethnic minority communities have less access to high quality green space and are more exposed to

extreme heat and environmental risks, which increases health inequalities.

[Inequalities in access to green space](#)

- Evidence that neighbourhood green space can have particularly strong protective mental health effects for disadvantaged groups. [Greenspace and mental health in disadvantaged groups](#)
- **Safety, gender and quality of green space**
  - Systematic reviews and studies on green space quality, which highlight perceived safety as a key dimension of quality affecting mental health outcomes and park use. [Greenspace and safety](#)
  - Research showing that women and girls are more likely to feel unsafe in parks and other public green spaces, and that design features such as lighting, visibility and signs of disorder influence their use of these spaces. [Perceptions of safety in urban parks](#)

The evidence above has been used to identify where the combined Biodiversity Strategy, Duty Report and Action Plan can have positive impacts for different groups, where there are risks or barriers (for example linked to safety or unequal access), and where mitigation and inclusive design are needed. More detailed evidence is referenced under each protected characteristic in Section 9.

## 9. Potential impacts

For each category below, please explain if the strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service could have a positive/ negative impact or no impact. Where an impact has been identified, please explain what it is. Consider impacts on service users, visitors and staff members separately.

### (a) Age - Please also consider any safeguarding issues for children and adults at risk

#### Positive impacts

- Children and young people: Systematic reviews show that access to green space is associated with improved mental wellbeing, reduced stress, better behaviour and enhanced cognitive development and academic performance in children. School-based studies link greener school environments to gains in working memory and attention. [Greenspace and mental well-being of children](#)
- The Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan support outdoor learning, nature-based play and activities in parks and open spaces, including forest schools, which should therefore have positive impacts on children's learning and wellbeing.

- Older adults: Reviews and longitudinal studies indicate that green space and street trees can promote physical activity, social contact and better self-rated health for middle-aged and older adults, and can reduce heat-related morbidity and mortality in hotter periods. [Health impacts of urban greenspaces](#)
- Increasing canopy cover and nature-based cooling in neighbourhoods where older people live responds to evidence that they are particularly vulnerable to climate-related risks such as heatwaves. [Heat related morbidity and mortality](#)

#### **Safeguarding**

- No specific safeguarding risks have been identified at strategy level, but individual projects should follow safeguarding procedures for activities involving children, young people and adults at risk.

### **(b) Disability**

#### **Positive impacts**

- High quality green space, especially where it is accessible and well maintained, is consistently associated with improved mental health outcomes. Scoping reviews of nature-based interventions report improvements in mood, stress, anxiety and depression across diagnostic groups, including people with existing mental illness. [Impacts of nature on health](#)
- A recent meta-analysis focusing on adults with mental illness found that even brief (around 10 minutes) exposure to nature can yield short term improvements in depressive symptoms, stress and quality of life. [Nature exposure and the benefits for adults with mental illness](#)
- By increasing the quantity and quality of green space in the city, the programme has the potential to support mental health for disabled residents, including those with long term mental health conditions.

#### **Mitigation and design**

- Accessibility audits and engagement with disabled residents and representative groups are needed to ensure that paths, entrances, seating, signage and facilities are inclusive, and that sensory planting and quiet areas are designed with neurodivergent users in mind. For example, the city's new Butterfly Trail ensures the height of the trail signage is in line with recommendations from the government's [inclusive mobility](#).
- This is consistent with evidence that green space quality, including safety, accessibility and amenities, is crucial in determining who actually experiences health benefits. [Greenspace quality and health](#)

### **(c) Gender reassignment**

There is very limited peer reviewed evidence specifically on trans and non-binary people's use of green space. Existing research on public space suggests that trans and non-binary people may face harassment or exclusion in public settings, but this is not yet well studied for parks and nature spaces.

### **(d) Marriage and civil partnership**

No impacts have been identified specific to this equality group.

### **(e) Pregnancy and maternity**

#### **Positive impacts**

- Multiple systematic reviews and meta-analyses show that there is some evidence that residential greenness is associated with healthier pregnancy outcomes, including higher average birthweight and lower risk of preterm birth and small for gestational age births. [Greenspace and birth outcomes](#)
- The programme's focus on local, walkable green spaces, shade, benches and traffic-free routes is therefore likely to benefit pregnant women and new parents by supporting safe physical activity, stress reduction and social contact.

#### **Risks**

- A small number of recent studies highlight possible associations between certain types of greenness and childhood asthma, which may be related to specific pollen or air quality profiles, so this evidence remains mixed and developing. [Residential Greenspace and Asthma](#)
- These uncertainties underline the importance of integrating biodiversity, air quality and species selection considerations into planting schemes, rather than simply maximising greenness.

**(f) Race – Note that the protected characteristic ‘race’ refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.**

#### **Local context**

- Cambridge is relatively diverse compared with England and Wales overall. Census 2021 data for Cambridge City show:
  - Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: 14.8% of residents
  - Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African: 2.4%
  - Mixed or multiple ethnic groups: 5.1%
  - White: English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British: 53.0%
  - White: Other ethnic group: 21.5%
  - Other ethnic group: 3.1% [Cambridge City Council](#)
- This means that only just over half of residents identify as White British, compared with 74.4% for England and Wales overall, so Cambridge’s population is substantially more diverse than the national picture. [Office for National Statistics](#)

#### **National evidence on race, deprivation and green space**

- England wide analyses by Friends of the Earth show a strong correlation between green space deprivation, ethnicity and income. Their “England’s green space gap” report finds that Black, Asian and minority ethnic people are around 2.7 times as likely as White people to live in areas with the least green space, and that these neighbourhoods also tend to be more deprived. [Friends of the Earth](#)
- The Health Foundation’s evidence hub on green space similarly reports that people in more deprived areas, and those from minority ethnic groups, are more likely to live in neighbourhoods with limited access to green space, even though they may gain greater health benefits when high quality green space is available locally. [health.org.uk](#)
- Public Health England’s review of access to greenspace concludes that improving green spaces in disadvantaged areas can reduce health inequalities and provide the largest marginal benefits for groups who currently have least access. [GOV.UK](#)

#### **Positive impacts**

- Given Cambridge’s relatively high ethnic diversity, and the presence of pockets of deprivation in urban neighbourhoods, actions that increase the quantity, quality and accessibility of local green space have strong potential to reduce environmental and health inequalities for residents from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- UK analyses show that people from ethnic minority communities are more likely to live in neighbourhoods with lower access to high quality green space and are more exposed to environmental hazards such as extreme heat. [Ethnic minorities and access to greenspace](#)

- There is emerging evidence that improvements in residential greenness may contribute to better perinatal outcomes in under-resourced neighbourhoods, including for Black mothers. [Residential greenspace and maternal race](#)
- By targeting improvements to neighbourhood green space and canopy in areas of greatest need, the Strategy and Action Plan have potential to reduce environmental and health inequalities that currently fall disproportionately on some ethnic minority residents.

#### **Risks and mitigation**

- National research highlights that ethnic minority communities can be less likely to use existing green space where it feels unsafe, poorly maintained or not designed with their needs in mind. [Urban greenspace use among ethnic communities](#)
- **To avoid reinforcing inequalities, individual projects should:**
  - use Cambridge's IMD and Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) mapping to identify and prioritise improvements in neighbourhoods with both higher deprivation and lower access to quality green space
  - involve ethnically diverse communities and organisations in co-design and stewardship of local green spaces
  - consider cultural preferences, language, and perceptions of safety in engagement and design
- No direct negative impacts on any ethnic group are anticipated if this targeting and engagement approach is followed. There is an opportunity to narrow existing environmental and health inequalities that currently fall disproportionately on some minority ethnic communities.

#### **Mitigation and engagement**

- Research on “green space gaps” highlights that provision, quality and cultural relevance of green space can all be barriers. [Greenspace gaps](#)
- Engagement work with community groups should therefore include ethnically diverse communities, co-design of spaces, and attention to cultural and language barriers.

#### **(g) Religion or belief**

No negative impacts for this protected characteristic have been identified at strategy level.

## **(h) Sex**

### **Positive impacts**

- Women and men can both benefit from the physical and mental health advantages associated with access to good quality green space described above. Systematic reviews suggest that green space is associated with better mental health, lower mortality and increased physical activity in adults of all genders. [Health impacts of urban green space](#)

### **Safety and barriers**

- A consistent finding in the literature is that women are more likely than men to feel unsafe in parks and other public spaces, especially after dark, and that these perceptions reduce their use of green space. [Perceptions of safety in urban parks](#)
- UK and international studies highlight that women and girls cite poor lighting, low visibility, presence of groups of men, and signs of neglect or disorder as key reasons for feeling unsafe in parks. [Women and girl's safety in parks](#)

### **Mitigation**

- In response, individual projects under the Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan should:
  - incorporate women's and girls' views in design and management of sites
  - review lighting, sightlines, vegetation management and routes with a gender-sensitive lens
  - work with community safety colleagues to ensure design and management reflects best practice.

## **(i) Sexual orientation**

There is limited direct research on how access to green space varies by sexual orientation. Some broader studies on public space and harassment indicate that LGBTQ+ people can experience discrimination or abuse in public settings, which may also apply in parks, but empirical evidence is sparse.

The Strategy and Action Plan are inclusive in intent and do not treat people differently by sexual orientation. Activities and volunteering are open to all and must comply with Council equalities and anti-harassment policies.

Engagement and consultation activity should ensure LGBTQ+ organisations are included so that any specific safety or inclusion concerns about particular sites can be identified and mitigated.

**(j) Other factors that may lead to inequality – in particular, please consider the impact of any changes on:**

- **Low-income groups or those experiencing the impacts of poverty.**
- **People of any age with care experience – this refers to individuals who spent part of their childhood in the care system due to situations beyond their control, primarily arising from abuse and neglect within their families. The term “Care experience” is a description of a definition in law, it includes anyone that had the state as its corporate parent by virtue of a care order in accordance with the Children Act 1989 and amendments.**
- **Groups who have more than one protected characteristic that taken together create overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage. (Here you are being asked to consider intersectionality, and for more information see: [https://media.ed.ac.uk/media/1\\_159kt25q](https://media.ed.ac.uk/media/1_159kt25q)).**

#### **Deprivation patterns and potential inequalities – Local context**

- Cambridge City as a whole is relatively less deprived than the national average, with average IMD domain scores around decile 7. However, there are clear pockets of deprivation:
  - Nine Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) are in the three most deprived deciles nationally on the Index of Multiple Deprivation.
  - Deprivation is concentrated in the northeast of the city, particularly parts of Abbey and King’s Hedges. [Cambridgeshire Insight](#)
  - On the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI), 20 out of 68 LSOAs are in the three most deprived deciles nationally. [Cambridgeshire Insight](#)
- The Council’s own “Mapping poverty” and IMD analysis highlight that these more deprived areas are also among the most built up and therefore more at risk of environmental inequalities such as poorer housing conditions, air quality and limited access to high quality green space. [Cambridge City Council](#)

#### **Low-income groups and deprived areas**

- National and local analyses show that people living in more deprived neighbourhoods are more likely to lack access to high quality green space and are disproportionately exposed to environmental risks such as air pollution and extreme heat. [Inequalities in access to green space](#)
- Reviews by Public Health England conclude that disadvantaged groups often gain greater health benefit when green space is improved, and that greener areas can reduce socio-economic inequalities in health. [Improving access to green space](#)



- The Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan therefore prioritise improvements that increase equitable access to nearby, good quality green space and canopy cover in areas of greatest need, which is likely to be particularly beneficial for low-income households.

#### **Intersectionality**

- Studies of environmental and health inequalities show that disadvantage often overlaps, for example where low income, ethnic minority status, gender and disability coincide, and that these groups can experience the highest exposure to environmental risks and the lowest access to green space. [Climate and nature impact on ethnic minorities](#)
- Evidence also shows that neighbourhood green space can provide strong protective mental health effects for disadvantaged groups when it is safe, high quality and culturally relevant. [The effects of neighbourhood green spaces on mental health of disadvantaged groups](#)
- By embedding equity into site prioritisation, design and engagement, the programme aims to ensure that those facing multiple disadvantages are not further excluded and can share in the benefits.

**10. Action plan – New equality impacts will be identified in different stages throughout the planning and implementation stages of changes to your strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service. How will you monitor these going forward? Also, how will you ensure that any potential negative impacts of the changes will be mitigated? (Please include dates where possible for when you will update this EqIA accordingly.)**

- Monitoring: Equality impacts will be undertaken for specific projects within the action plan
- Engagement: Strengthen partnerships with schools, community groups, and accessibility networks
- Mitigation: Embed accessibility and inclusion in project design
- Next EqIA review: December 2026

**11. Do you have any additional comments?**

**12. Sign off**

Lead officer: Natalie Lambert, Biodiversity Projects Officer. Others consulted: Guy Belcher, Biodiversity Manager; Lily Simmonite, Community Equity Officer.

All EqlAs need to be sent to the Community Equity Team at [equalities@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:equalities@cambridge.gov.uk)

1. IMPACT ON CARBON EMISSIONS (MITIGATION OF CLIMATE CHANGE)			CLIMATE CHANGE RATING: <i>Use drop down list</i>	WILL THE PROJECT MOVE CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL CLOSER TO THE OBJECTIVE OF BEING NET ZERO CARBON BY 2030? <i>Use drop down list</i>	WILL THE PROJECT MOVE THE CITY CLOSER TO THE OBJECTIVE OF A NET ZERO CARBON CAMBRIDGE BY 2030? <i>Use drop down list</i>	PLEASE DETAIL HERE THE ACTION THAT WILL BE TAKEN TO AVOID, MITIGATE OR COMPENSATE FOR THE NEGATIVE IMPACTS AND MAXIMISE POSITIVE IMPACTS?	HAS A NET ZERO CARBON OPTION BEEN CONSIDERED? PLEASE PROVIDE DETAILS.
1	ENERGY USE	Positive Impact: Energy use will be reduced or renewable energy will be used	Medium Positive	Yes	Yes	Consider: - Reducing demand for energy - Specifying energy efficiency measures (e.g. insulation, low energy lighting) - Generating renewable energy (e.g. heat pumps, solar) Semi natural habitats and tree canopy and water courses cool the City and reduces energy demand in heatwaves.	No
		Nil Impact: No extra energy use is involved					
		Negative Impact: More energy (gas and/ or electricity) will be consumed (by CCC or others)					
2	WASTE GENERATION	Positive Impact: Less waste will be generated OR amount of waste that is reused/ recycled will be increased	Nil	No	No	Consider: - Will resources be reduced or reused? - Will you use recycled goods? - Will recycling facilities be increased? Review of park leaf clearance will reduce operational carbon use and enhance soil carbon capture. However, additional meadow creation will require cut and collect management with transport of green waste within the City.	No
		Nil Impact: No waste will be generated					
		Negative Impact: More waste will be generated (by CCC or others)					
3	USE OF TRANSPORT	Positive Impact: The use of transport and/or of fossil fuel-based transport will be reduced	Nil	No	No	Consider: - Will you purchase an electric vehicle? - Will you specify the use of public transport? - How will you reduce the need to travel or transport goods? Additional Hay cuts may require increase use of vehicle to move green waste. Options for onsite composting will be explored for suitable sites.	No
		Nil Impact: No extra transport will be necessary					
		Negative Impact: CCC or others will need to travel more OR transport goods more often/ further					
4	SUSTAINABLE FOOD	Positive Impact: Food will be locally grown and/ or meat-free	Low Positive	No	No	Consider: - Use of locally grown/ produced food - Reducing use of imported food - Reducing use of meat Produce available from community orchards and gardens. Foraging for blackberries, Sloes etc on Local Nature Reserves. Local meat production from grazing Common land	No
		Nil Impact: No change in supply of food					
		Negative Impact: Food will travel long distances and include meat					
2. IMPACT ON RESILIENCE (ADAPTATION) TO THE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE							
HOW WILL THIS PROJECT/PROPOSAL AFFECT THE FOLLOWING KEY AREAS:			CLIMATE CHANGE RATING: <i>Use drop down list</i>	WILL THE PROJECT HELP CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL TO BE MORE RESILIENT TO THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE? <i>Use drop down list</i>	WILL THE PROJECT HELP CAMBRIDGE TO BE MORE RESILIENT TO THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE? <i>Use drop down list</i>	PLEASE DETAIL HERE THE ACTION THAT WILL BE TAKEN TO AVOID, MITIGATE OR COMPENSATE FOR THE NEGATIVE IMPACTS AND MAXIMISE POSITIVE IMPACTS?	HAS A NET ZERO CARBON OPTION BEEN CONSIDERED? PLEASE PROVIDE DETAILS.
5	HEATWAVES	Positive Impact: Increased/ improved shade & natural ventilation	High Positive	Yes	Yes	Consider: Building orientation and installing measures such as Brise Soleil to reduce heat gain and plant hydration methods. Significant contribution to reducing urban heat island effect, through shading etc	No
		Nil Impact: No impact on existing levels of shade & ventilation					
		Negative Impact: Lack of or reduced shade (e.g. from trees or buildings) & natural ventilation					
6	WATER AVAILABILITY	Positive Impact: Provision made for an enhancement of water efficiency measures to minimise the impact on water resource availability	Medium Positive	Yes	Yes	Consider: Managing water use efficiently, installing measures to use less water such as low water use taps, planting drought resistant plants and using rainwater for irrigation. Greater Cambridge Chalk Stream Project focuses on water use and quality. Rainwater harvesting project will reduce our reliance on aquifer abatement for operations such as tree watering.	No
		Nil Impact: Levels of water use will not be changed					
		Negative Impact: Water use will increase and/or no provision made for water management = Negative Impact					
7	FLOODING	Positive Impact: Sustainable drainage measures incorporated, positive steps to reduce & manage flood risk	Medium Positive	Yes	Yes	Consider: The installation of measures to reduce the speed and increase the absorption of rainwater e.g. green roofs, SuDS, permeable paving etc. and alternative arrangements (business continuity) Reconnecting the river to its floodplain through habitat creation schemes, tree canopy and sustainable urban drainage schemes will help 'slow the flow'	No
		Nil Impact: Levels of surface water run-off & flood risk are not affected					
		Negative Impact: Levels of surface water run-off will increase, no management of flood risk					
8	HIGH WINDS / STORMS	Positive Impact: Exposure to higher wind speeds is being actively managed & reduced	Low Positive	Yes	Yes	Consider: the need to install stabilisation measures and ensure robust structures resilient to high winds A healthy urban forest provides shelter for streets and parks	No
		Nil Impact: No change to existing level of exposure to higher wind speeds					
		Negative Impact: Exposure to higher wind speeds is increased or is not managed = Negative Impact					
9	FOOD SECURITY	Positive Impact: Opportunities & resources for local food production are increased/ enhanced	Medium Positive	Yes	Yes	Source food locally, and provide meat-free catering to reduce vulnerability to food shortages and reduce emissions from transport and farming of food Healthy habitats and urban forest supports pollinator populations for pollination of food crops.	No
		Nil Impact: No change to opportunities & resources for local food production					
		Negative Impact: Opportunities & resources for local food production are reduced					
10	BIODIVERSITY	Positive Impact: Biodiversity will be protected/ enhanced	High Positive	Yes	Yes	Provide net gain mitigation if required and seek enhancement in projects of all types and scale Main outcomes are to protect and enhance biodiversity at a landscape scale.	No
		Nil Impact: Level of biodiversity will not change					
		Negative Impact: Biodiversity will decrease					
Weighing up the negative and positive impacts of your project, what is the overall rating you are assigning to your project?:			Medium Positive	This overall rating is what you need to include in your report/ budget proposal, together with your explanation to be included in the red box below			

## Guidance on Assessing the Degree of Negative and Positive Impacts:

Note: Not all of the considerations/ criteria listed below will necessarily be relevant to your project

## Low Impact (L)

- \* No publicity
- \* Relevant risks to the Council or community are Low or none
- \* No impact on service or corporate performance
- \* No capital assets; or capital assets with lifetime of less than 3 years

## Medium Impact (M)

- \* Local publicity (good or bad)
- \* Relevant risks to the Council or community are Medium
- \* Affects delivery of corporate commitments
- \* Affects service performance (e.g.: energy use; amount of waste; distance travelled) by more than 10%
- \* Capital assets with a lifetime of more than 3 years

## High Impact (H)

- \* National publicity (good or bad)
- \* Relevant risks to the Council or community are Significant or High
- \* Affects delivery of regulatory commitments
- \* Affects corporate performance by more than 10%
- \* Capital assets with a lifetime of more than 6 years

In the box below please summarise the projects impacts (the reasons for the ratings given in column E above) to explain how the overall rating for the project/ proposal has been derived (Cell E37). Please also highlight any negative impacts your project may have and how you plan to avoid, mitigate or compensate for these (as you will have detailed in column I above).

The overall impact of delivering the Biodiversity Duty Report future action plan is assessed as being moderately positive in terms of reducing impacts of climate change and enhancing biodiversity.

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## REPORT TITLE: Council Tax Reduction – April 2026 to March 2029

**To: Cabinet 16 December 2025**

**Lead Member: Councillor Simon Smith, Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources**

**Report by:**

Naomi Armstrong

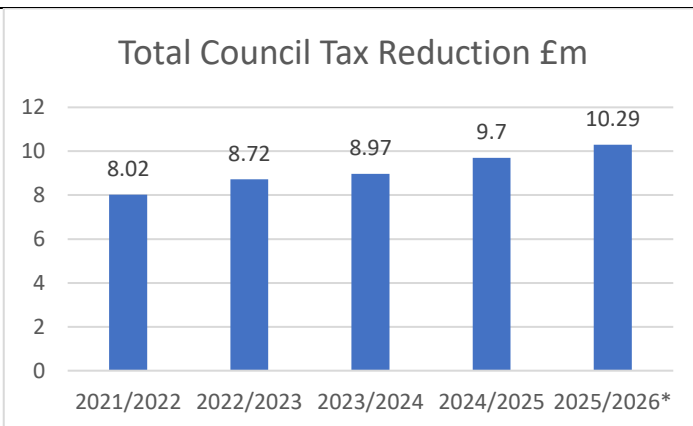
Tel: 01223 457752 Email: [naomi.armstrong@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:naomi.armstrong@cambridge.gov.uk)

**Wards affected: ALL**

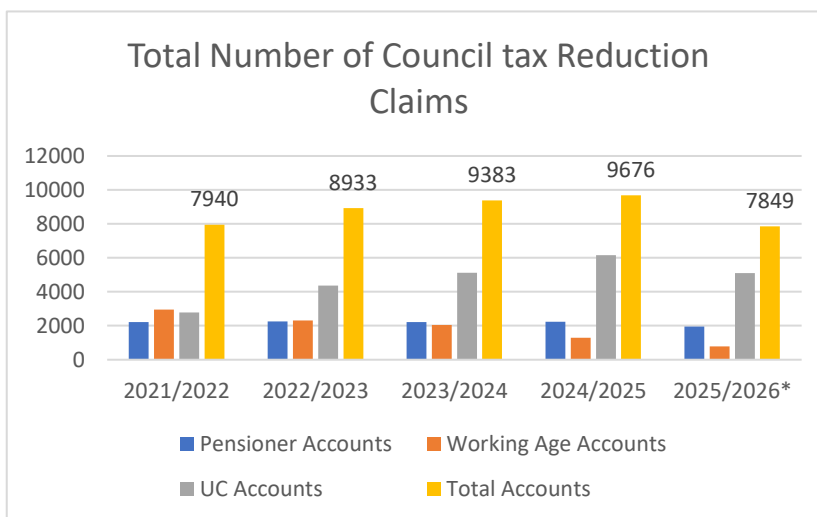
Director Approval: Director Jane Wilson confirms that the report author has sought the advice of all appropriate colleagues and given due regard to that advice; that the equalities impacts and other implications of the recommended decisions have been assessed and accurately presented in the report; and that they are content for the report to be put to the Executive Councillor for decision.

1.	<b>Recommendations</b>
1.1	<p>It is recommended that Cabinet agree:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Universal Credit Scheme Upating</b> To uprate the income bands and contribution levels within the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for households in receipt of Universal Credit in line with the annual percentage increase in the National Minimum Wage and better equalise earnings disregards.</li> <li>2. <b>Non-Universal Credit Working-Age Scheme</b> To retain a Council Tax Reduction Scheme for working-age households not in receipt of Universal Credit, and to apply: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Department for Work and Pensions applicable amounts and premiums where these continue to be published; or</li> <li>(b) where such figures are unavailable, to uprate scheme allowances annually in accordance with the September Consumer Price Index (CPI).</li> </ol> </li> <li>3. <b>Council Tax Liability Basis</b> That 100% of the Council Tax liability shall continue to be used as the starting point for the calculation of entitlement under both Council Tax Reduction Schemes.</li> <li>4. <b>Delegated Authority and Duration</b> To delegate authority to the Chief Finance Officer to carry out the annual review and uprating of the Council Tax Reduction Schemes in</li> </ol>

	accordance with legislative changes and the uprating principles set out above; and to confirm that the Schemes shall remain in operation (subject to any such annual uprating) until 31 March 2029.
<b>2.</b>	<b>Purpose and reason for the report</b>
2.1	<p>A national 'Prescribed' scheme is in place for pensioner households and is not subject to local changes.</p> <p>Councils are required to review their working age Council Tax Reduction scheme annually and determine whether to revise it or not, to ensure it meets the needs of residents and contributes towards Corporate objectives.</p> <p>Council Tax Reduction is funded by a reduction to the tax base and impacts all preceptors. The costs of the scheme has varied over the years, particularly during Covid 19 and the cost-of-living crisis, when there was an increase in applicants. However, the main cause for increase, has been the increase in Council Tax liability itself. Costs fall to local preceptors and are based on their percentage of the Council Tax levied. Cambridge City Council's share of the cost is currently approximately 9.86%.</p> <p>Universal Credit is in the final stages of national rollout and will be completed by March 2026.</p> <p>Council Tax Reduction, when calculated, is credited for the financial year; having a banded scheme for Universal Credit means that the number of changes are reduced during the year. Total spend does not vary much from the start of the financial year to the end of the year because similar numbers of households stop getting Council Tax Reduction, as new households apply. Total spend indicated below is generally driven by the increase in Council Tax liability.</p>



The graph below highlights the shift in claims with households on UC increasing year on year, Working Age not on UC reducing and pensioner households decreasing slightly.



\*The current year caseload figures are low but will likely mirror 2024/2025 by the end of this year.

The Council ran a consultation during August, September and October asking for feedback on the following:

- Limiting the starting point for the calculation of Council Tax Reduction. Whilst this could save the Council and the other preceptors, it does create a significant number of modest debts that are difficult to collect from households on means tested incomes. The cost of collection, which is met from total Council Tax income, can often be more than the debt itself. Details of the possible options considered are at point 3.1. Three quarters of respondents fully

	<p>supported not limiting the starting point. Only 12% disagreed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having two schemes, one for households on Universal Credit and one for households not on Universal Credit. Both schemes are fully set up so there are no set up and administration costs in continuing with two. We have seen few, less than 20 households, who for whatever reason do not wish to claim Universal Credit, even though they would be better off. Removing the non-Universal Credit scheme would push these few households to having to claim Universal Credit. Some would only benefit by a few pounds as they are already working, others would be much better off and the Council is looking at supporting them to maximise their incomes. In the consultation, nearly 2/3rds either agreed or strongly agreed to keep two schemes.</li> <li>• The next point is how we keep the schemes uprated. For the Universal Credit scheme, where only earnings are taken in to account, the proposal is to uprate the bands and the contribution levels by the increase in national minimum wage. Just over half agreed to this and only 19.5% said no. There was some confusion over what this meant as some comments were concerned that this was not in line with inflation. Universal Credit is uprated by CPI and this income is ignored in the Council Tax Reduction scheme, so there is some protection against inflation with total household income increasing.</li> <li>• For the non-Universal Credit scheme, if DWP do not issue working age allowances and premiums, which is a possibility as they are winding down non-Universal Credit working age benefits, the proposal is to use September CPI to uprate current allowances and premiums for the very small number of claims. 42% of respondents agreed with only 18.9% disagreeing. Again, there was some</li> </ul>
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confusion about what this meant in practice but the approach will maintain similar levels of support in the absence of DWP figures.

- The final area was equalising of earnings disregards. When the local Council Tax Scheme for Universal Credit households was initially designed, a disregard was put in place, ignoring the first £5-£20 of earned income. This is similar to pensioner and non-working claims. However, it did not take into account that Universal Credit already has it's own earning disregards that positively affect the calculation of Universal Credit giving rise to more Universal Credit, which is ignored in our scheme, meaning increased household income. Applying a second disregard in our scheme means the three schemes, Pensioner, non-Universal Credit and Universal Credit are not equal for working households. This has been difficult to explain in the consultation, however, 45% did agree or strongly agree to remove the disregard and therefore equalize support across schemes. Only just over 16% disagreed.

### **Universal Credit Scheme**

This scheme uses extensive data from the Department for Work and Pensions, and is beneficial for both the household and the Council in terms of reducing the administration burden.

As soon as a Universal Credit claim is made, this information is passed to the Council and used to set up a claim for Council Tax Reduction. No additional claim is required. This supports households at an often difficult time when circumstances have changed and they require financial support.

Once the Universal Credit claim has been processed, the information is again passed to the Council and entitlement to Council Tax Support is calculated using verified earnings and characteristics of non-dependants living in the property.

There will be 6 contribution levels, depending on the band. The values below are *indicative* and based on the current 2025/2026 National Minimum Wage.

Net Earnings			Net Earnings		
From	To	Weekly Contribution	From	To	Monthly Contribution
£0.00	£92.04	£0.00	£0.00	£398.84	£0.00
£92.05	£158.72	£7.50	£398.85	£687.79	£32.50
£158.73	£238.09	£15.00	£687.80	£1,031.72	£65.00
£238.10	£317.45	£22.50	£1,031.73	£1,375.62	£97.50
£317.46	£396.82	£30.00	£1,375.63	£1,719.55	£130.00
£396.83	£476.18	£37.50	£1,719.56	£2,063.45	£162.50
£476.19	£555.55	£45.00	£2,063.46	£2,407.38	£195.00
£555.56		<b>No Award</b>	£2,407.39		<b>No Award</b>

The proposal is to increase the bands and contribution levels based on the percentage increase of National Minimum wage effective from 1 April 2026, and annually thereafter. For example, if the national minimum wage increases by 2%, the above bands and contribution levels will increase too.

Using this metric for uprating, ensures that the scheme going forward is clear. Whilst a change in earnings could mean changing contribution bands, a small increase of just one hour per week employment, will more than cover that increase.

### Earnings disregard

Earnings disregards are designed to help working households with the additional costs associated with working such as commuting, clothing etc. Universal Credit has its own earnings disregard it is proposed to remove the earnings disregard in the Council Tax Reduction scheme calculation. This makes the schemes more equal, as pensioners and working age earners only get the one disregard.

### Non-Dependants

A non-dependant is an adult who lives in the household but who is not liable for the Council Tax. Often, adult children, friends or relatives. It is reasonable that these people should contribute to the household finances by contributing towards the Council Tax. Councils do not receive this information from the Department for Work and Pensions, therefore to

	<p>reduce the burden of asking for this information on a regular basis, a flat rate applies.</p> <p>Currently, this is £8.05 and is increased by the September CPI figure. This arrangement could continue in the next iteration of the scheme, or be set for the 3 years. A suggestion is that this is £10 per person, per week.</p> <p>Non-dependants who receive a disability income, Pension Credit or are in receipt of a War Pension or Armed Forces Independence Payment, will not be asked to contribute.</p> <p>Additionally, no deductions will be made where the applicant or partner have a disability or receive a carers benefit. This recognises that these individuals may have limited ability to work or increase their incomes.</p>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Alternative options considered</b>
<b>3.1</b>	<p><b>Limiting Liability</b></p> <p>Placing a limit on the Council Tax liability used in the calculation or expecting a flat rate contribution across all households is something that some other Councils have done. Cambridge City Council uses 100% of the Council Tax liability for both of its working-age schemes. The national scheme for pensioners also uses 100% of the liability as the starting point in calculating entitlement. This recognises that households who receive means tested benefits find it difficult to find even relatively small amounts of money from their benefits. Allowing 100% of the liability frees these households from worry and means that the Council is not chasing small, difficult to recover, debts. Details of the impact of limiting this are below.</p> <p><b>Flat rate</b></p> <p>Asking households to make a flat rate contribution, for example £5 per week. This would place a cost to all working age households of £260 per year. 2402 of these households have dependant children; 4674 children in total. Most of those without dependant children have disabilities or caring responsibilities. This restriction would mean the loss of Council Tax Reduction for households currently with entitlement below £5.00.</p> <p><b>Percentage cap</b></p>

Modelling entitlement based on 80% liability, would save £1.48m across all preceptors and would save Cambridge City Council £145,928 per year.

This change would leave an average of £251 to be paid by households. It may also mean that some households would no longer be entitled to Council Tax Reduction. These relatively small annual bills take more resources to collect and therefore prove to be more expensive.

### **Cap to Council Tax band**

Capping liability to Council Tax Band D would affect 245 households, 176 of these households have a total of 431 dependant children. Of the remaining households, overwhelmingly they have a disabled household member or have caring responsibilities. Enacting this change would result in £125k reduction in total Council Tax Reduction spend, and Cambridge City Council would benefit by £12,325. This restriction would impact families more as they tend to be in bigger properties that have a higher Council Tax Band.

Any of these changes would lead to additional sums to be collected, but with reduced chance of collection without significantly affecting households. Not applying restrictions to particularly vulnerable households such as those with dependant children, disability or carer incomes will reduce the impact but will also not make significant changes as 2,500 have children and 2,400 have a disability benefit income out of 5,891 working age households.

Council Tax Reduction is a benefit that leads to entitlement to discounted swim and play cards. Council Tax Reduction also enables applications for Taxi Cards and Discretionary Council Tax Reduction. If any of the above restrictions ultimately reduces entitlement to Council Tax Reduction, entitlement to these additional benefits, designed to support low-income households, could also be removed.

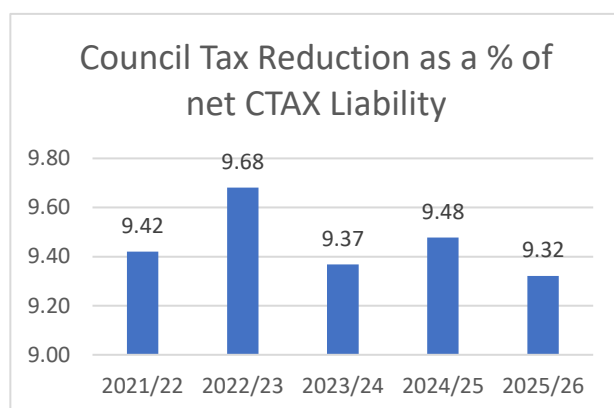
Penalties for non-payment, especially due to any the above changes, can

	<p>easily overwhelm financially vulnerable households without any real financial benefit to the preceptors, especially if the cost of collection is factored in. Court costs are currently £70 and Enforcement Agent fees can be substantially more than this.</p>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Background and key issues</b>
4.1	<p>The current two schemes have worked well, providing clear mechanisms for support that work sympathetically with Universal Credit and non-Universal Credit claims.</p> <p>Easy to understand rules for entitlement, clear earnings bands and contribution levels, flat rate deductions for some other adults living in the property and no complex lists of vulnerable groups has been supported by advice agencies, housing providers and the public.</p> <p>Utilising secure data from the Department for Work and Pensions to set up claims where possible and maintain them has significantly enhanced the number of days it takes to get entitlement credited to accounts. It also means that the schemes can be operated in a cost-effective way.</p> <p>Over the past 6 years, there have been no complaints or appeals against the structure of the schemes in place.</p>
<b>5.</b>	<b>Corporate plan</b>
5.1	<p><i>Explain how the decision links to the Councils Corporate Plan</i></p> <p><a href="#">Corporate plan 2022-27: our priorities for Cambridge - Cambridge City Council</a></p> <p><b>Tackling poverty and inequality and helping people in the greatest need</b></p> <p>Cambridge City has some of the highest disparities in the UK, the Local Council Tax</p>

	Reduction schemes seeks to continue the level of support by retaining 100% liability within the calculation, not placing high administration burdens on households by utilising secure data already given to the Council.
<b>6.</b>	<b>Consultation, engagement and communication</b>
6.1	<p>Consultation was carried out during August, September and October 2025, and in addition to general social media, Council publications and promotion on the website, the following groups were specifically invited to comment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All current working age Council Tax Reduction recipients.</li> <li>• A sample of pensioners currently receiving Council Tax Support via the national prescribed scheme.</li> <li>• Partnership meetings with Cambridge Citizen's Advice Department for Work and Pensions, financial inclusion organisations and third sector organisations.</li> <li>• Engagement with internal stakeholders.</li> <li>• A sample of Council Tax payers not receiving Council Tax Reduction.</li> <li>• Council Tax Precepting Authorities.</li> <li>• Groups representing those with protected characteristics.</li> </ul> <p>There were a number of questions in the consultation and some of them were quite technical which resulted in some higher than desired 'don't know' responses.</p> <p>Particularly, the need for a non-Universal Credit scheme and why was support given to households who were not maximising their entitlement.</p> <p>There are some households, at the margins of Universal Credit, who do not wish to undertake the claiming process for only a little Universal Credit. Also, there are some households who really are struggling to face claiming Universal Credit and whilst this cohort would benefit from making a claim and have been receiving support in their Universal Credit journey, are refusing to make a claim. Supporting them in reducing their Council Tax costs when their incomes are generally only disability benefits is one way to help this group. The scheme and software is already set up so there are no additional set up costs and linking the uprating to either Department for Work and Pensions rates or September CPI will keep the schemes relevant. It is anticipated that less than 20 households will be supported</p>

	<p>under this particular scheme as most working age households will be on Universal Credit.</p> <p>Another area was increasing the Universal Credit income bands by the percentage increase in the National Minimum Wage. If the national minimum wage increased above CPI but the bands increased by CPI, people may be moved to the next band and have to pay more towards their Council Tax. Conversely if national minimum wage increased less than CPI but the bands increased, this could make the scheme more expensive to administer as more people would be entitled to more support.</p> <p>Universal Credit generally increases by CPI, and this income is ignored in the Council Tax Reduction scheme, therefore total net household income will still afford some protection against inflation.</p>
<b>7.</b>	<b>Anticipated outcomes, benefits or impact</b>
7.1	Maintaining support for low-income households meets key objectives for Cambridge City Council. It benefits the wider community by encouraging healthy lifestyles by protecting family incomes and ensuring maximum entitlement to other Cambridge City Council healthy lifestyles activities.
<b>8.</b>	<b>Implications</b>
8.1	<b>Relevant risks</b>
	None, because maximising Council Tax Reduction will assist households pay their rent, and any residual Council Tax liability and utility bills. As a housing provider itself, maximising income will help with rent collection and reduce household debt which can be a factor in the causes of homelessness.
	<b>Financial Implications</b>
8.2	Although the actual cost of the schemes currently, including the prescribed scheme for pensioners, has increased from £8.02 in 2021/2021 to an estimated £10.29m in 2025/26, due to the increasing tax base and the

ongoing work of the Local Taxation Team in reviewing Council Tax discounts, the percentage loss due to Council Tax Reduction has reduced slightly.



This indicates that maintaining the structure of support is sustainable as growth in the City is forecast to continue.

Grant funding for the administration of Council tax Reduction is no longer separately identifiable but is included in the overall General Fund grant. The local schemes, which rely heavily on automation of available information from the Department for Work and Pensions in the calculation, make the most of the funding from central government.

The restructure of the Revenues and Benefits Teams in 2021, relied on this automation to achieve the savings it did. To move away from a highly automated, banded scheme, will necessitate additional assessment staff and increase costs, while not delivering a better, balanced scheme, that has been well received by applicants since 2020.

Having a less favourable scheme will create small debts that are difficult and expensive to recover and will encourage applications to the Discretionary Council Tax Reduction (S13A). The financial burden of which falls solely to Cambridge City Council and not spread across preceptors.

#### **Legal Implications**

8.3 Councils must have set their working age schemes by 11 March each year



	<p>and schemes cannot change during the financial year. The schemes must be agreed by Full Council.</p> <p>Schemes must be reviewed annually and if changes are to be made, consultations must take place.</p> <p>Having schemes with linked uprating, with delegation for reviews to Chief Finance Officer, helps achieve a level of transparency and reduces administration and a three-year reset allows for a structural review and wide-ranging consultation.</p>
	<b>Equalities and socio-economic Implications</b>
8.4	An Equality Impact Assessment is attached.
	<b>Net Zero Carbon, Climate Change and Environmental implications</b>
8.5	None.
	<b>Procurement Implications</b>
8.6	None.
	<b>Community Safety Implications</b>
8.7	None.
<b>9.</b>	<b>Background documents</b>
9.1	<i>None.</i>
<b>10.</b>	<b>Appendices</b>

10.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equality Impact Assessment</li> <li>• Consultation outcomes and AI generated synopsis of responses - PDF</li> <li>• Consultation outcomes and comments - Excel</li> </ul>
	To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact Naomi Armstrong, <a href="mailto:naomi.armstrong@cambridge.gov.uk">naomi.armstrong@cambridge.gov.uk</a> , 01223 457752.

## Cambridge City Council Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

This tool helps the Council ensure that we fulfil legal obligations of the [Public Sector Equality Duty](#) to have due regard to the need to –

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Guidance on how to complete this tool can be found on the Cambridge City Council intranet. For specific questions on the tool email Helen Crowther Equality and Anti-Poverty Officer at [equalities@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:equalities@cambridge.gov.uk) or phone 01223 457046.

Once you have drafted the EqIA please send this to [equalities@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:equalities@cambridge.gov.uk) for checking.

<b>1. Title of strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service</b>
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<b>Council Tax Reduction (CTR) Local Scheme</b>
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<b>2. Webpage link to full details of the strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service (if available)</b>
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<b>3. What is the objective or purpose of your strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service?</b>
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Council Tax Benefit, as a central government benefit, ended 31 March 2013 and Local Authorities had to define a scheme to support working age households pay their Council Tax. A national 'Prescribed' scheme is in place for pensioner households and is not subject to local control.
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Since April 2020, the council has been operating two local schemes:
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- |   |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Non-Universal Credit – for working age applicants based on pre 2013 Council Tax Benefit framework and uses annual uprating of</li></ul> |
|---|

allowances and premiums. This works well with the few remaining housing benefit claims as they use the same regulations, allowances and premiums.

- Universal Credit – for working age applicants on Universal Credit. Uses data from Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to create a claim and uses data on household and income including earnings. This scheme works well with Universal Credit claims and provides clarification and stability of entitlement despite fluctuating Universal Credit amounts. Applicants who are working or who have an adult non-dependant living with them are asked to pay a contribution towards their Council Tax.

This EqIA relates to a third review of the two working-age schemes and was subject to consultation during Summer 2025. Responses are available on Cambridge City Council website and form part of the Cabinet report.

Options under the consultation include:

- To continue with the current Council Tax Reduction scheme (to include annual uprating in line with housing benefit rates) for working age claimants who are not in receipt of Universal Credit.
- To continue with an earnings based banded local Council Tax Reduction scheme for Universal Credit claimants and to have fixed non-dependant deductions for these claims.
- To either continue with September CPI to uprate non-dependant deductions or have a flat rate fixed for 3 years for the Universal Credit scheme.
- To align the earned income bands and contribution amounts in line with national minimum wage levels and increase during the lifetime of the scheme by the percentage increase in the national minimum wage.
- To not introduce a minimum contribution or restriction to a Council Tax band towards Council Tax for households on Local Council Tax Reduction.

The consultation asked basic details about the respondents including the following:

Disability or caring – Just under 37% of respondents said that someone in the household had a disability or caring responsibilities.

Age – over 87% of respondents to the consultation were of working age and are the group who are impacted by the Local Scheme.

Sexual Orientation – Just under 69% of the consultation respondents identified as straight, whilst 20.1% preferred not to say. However, there was some, albeit small, representation from other groups.

Gender – Almost half of respondents to the consultation identified as female and 40%, male. The remaining respondents either preferred not to say or said Other.

#### 4. Responsible Team and Group

Revenues and Benefits, Corporate Group.

#### 5. Who will be affected by this strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service?

(Please tick all that apply)

- ☒ Residents
- ☐ Visitors
- ☐ Staff

Please state any specific client group or groups (e.g. City Council tenants, tourists, people who work in the city but do not live here):

Local Council Tax Reduction only applies to working age households who are liable for Council Tax to Cambridge City Council and are on a low income.

#### 6. What type of strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service is this?

- ☐ New
- ☐ Major change
- ☒ Minor change

<b>7. Are other departments or partners involved in delivering this strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service? (Please tick)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
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If 'Yes' please provide details below:
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<b>8. Has the report on your strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service gone to Committee? If so, which one?</b>
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Cabinet 16 December 2025
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<b>9. What research methods/ evidence have you used in order to identify equality impacts of your strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service?</b>
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<p>A consultation will be carried out and the responses will inform any changes.</p> <p>Modelling has taken place to ensure that any changes do not significantly impact on any particular protected characteristic below.</p> <p>All current recipients of working age Council tax Reduction will be contacted to invite them to comment of proposals to their scheme. In addition, groups representing individuals with protected characteristics will be encouraged to comment as well as partners supporting low income families in the City.</p>
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## **10. Potential impacts**

For each category below, please explain if the strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service could have a positive/ negative impact or no impact. Where an impact has been identified, please explain what it is. Consider impacts on service users, visitors and staff members separately.

### **(a)Age - Please also consider any safeguarding issues for children and adults at risk**

Local Council Tax only applies to working age households and calculation is based on whether the household is in receipt of Universal Credit or not. Over 87% of respondents to the consultation were of working age and are the group who are impacted by the Local Scheme.

The consultation is asking if households should make a contribution towards the Council Tax before calculation of any Reduction. Currently entitlement is based on 100% of liability.

However, should this change in the future, households with young persons aged under 5 or who have been looked after by a Local Authority (Care Leavers) will be classed as vulnerable and will be protected by inclusion in the vulnerable group. This protection means that entitlement to CTR will continue to be based on 100% of Council Tax liability should this reduce.

Pensioners are supported via the national prescribed Council Tax Reduction scheme and local authorities are not permitted to change this.

### **(b)Disability**

Additional expenses relating to disability are recognised by the addition of disability premiums and disregarding some disability benefits when

calculating Council Tax Reduction and Universal Credit. By not applying non-dependant deductions if the non-dependant receives a disability income further supports households where someone is disabled.

The Disability Price Tag by Scope gives many examples of the financial impact a disability has on an individual and household.

[Disability Price Tag 2024 | Disability charity Scope UK](#)

It shows that disabled households need an extra £1,095 each month. This is just to have the same standard of living as non-disabled households. Medical equipment, higher energy bills, and specialist support all add up.

22% of households in Cambridge have a disability. \* This contrasts with 17.8% from 2021 Census. In the consultation, nearly 37% of respondents said that someone in the household had a disability or had caring responsibilities. This is higher than the local and national averages. Generally, the consultation identified that households with disabilities and caring responsibilities should be protected as they often had higher costs.[Number of disabled people in the household \(Census TS040\) - 1 person disabled under the Equality Act in household % | Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Insight – Data Explorer](#)

Signposting and support to claim other reductions of Council tax liability are also done when CTR is applied for.

### **(c)Gender reassignment**

No impacts identified specific to this equality group.

### **(d)Marriage and civil partnership**

No impacts identified specific to this equality group.



### **(e) Pregnancy and maternity**

Pregnancy and maternity are a financially difficult time and although generally additional personal allowances in CTR and UC are not given during pregnancy they may be if the mother is unable to work during pregnancy.

Poverty rates for children in lone-parent families have risen by around twice as much as those for children in couple families according to a report [Shining a Light on the Inequalities Faced by Single Parent Families](#). Information around budgeting support is widely available and referrals can easily be made for this and to organisations who can provide additional funding at this time.

### **(f) Race – Note that the protected characteristic ‘race’ refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.**

Poverty rates are higher among all ethnic minority groups compared with those among the majority White British, therefore it could be that there are proportionally higher numbers of claims from some ethnic minority groups than others when compared to the proportion in population.

[UK Poverty 2025: The essential guide to understanding poverty in the UK | Joseph Rowntree Foundation](#) indicates that there are high poverty rates for some minority ethnic groups. In particular, between 2020/21 and 2022/23, over half of people in Bangladeshi (56%) and around half of people in Pakistani (49%) households lived in poverty, higher than the 19% of households headed by someone of white ethnicity.

The calculation of entitlement to CTR does not refer to race and is not impacted by it.

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**(g) Religion or belief**

No direct impacts identified specific to this equality group, however some families may be larger than others due to their beliefs and this could put financial strain on a household since the restriction of allowances to 2 children was introduced.

**(h) Sex**

Women are generally more likely to be single parents in the first place (90%) according to ONS 2019. Locally, when looking at Cambridge City Council's Council Tax Reduction data April 2025, of the 1,817 single parent households, 1,722 are women. This represents 95% female single parent households on Council Tax Reduction.

**(i) Sexual orientation**

No impacts identified specific to this equality group.

**(j) Other factors that may lead to inequality – in particular, please consider the impact of any changes on:**

- **Low-income groups or those experiencing the impacts of poverty.**
- **People of any age with care experience – this refers to individuals who spent part of their childhood in the care system due to situations beyond their control, primarily arising from abuse and neglect within their families. The term “Care experience” is a description of a definition in law, it includes anyone that had the state as its corporate parent by virtue of a care order in accordance with the Children Act 1989 and amendments.**
- **Groups who have more than one protected characteristic that taken together create overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage. (Here you are being asked to consider intersectionality, and for more information see: [https://media.ed.ac.uk/media/1\\_159kt25q](https://media.ed.ac.uk/media/1_159kt25q)).**

Running two Council Tax Reduction (CTR) schemes side by side may seem confusing but each works well with Universal Credit and the reducing Legacy Benefits. Retaining a non-Universal Credit scheme is supportive of households who refuse to claim this benefit.

The banded Universal Credit scheme removes the need for potentially monthly variations as Universal Credit entitlement can change, often by a few pence. Providing a structured banding, allows a household to be confident what their Council Tax liability will be. Moves from one band to another can occur but a modest increase in obtaining just one additional hours work will move than cover a band increase.

It important that families on a low income who are often less able to budget, are clear about the support they will receive.

The following link gives some insights on local poverty datasets.

**[Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Insight – Poverty – Key Datasets – Poverty](#)**

Just under 10% of the Cambridge population are on Universal Credit and whilst lower than the County average of 15.5%, this indicates that

there is still a significant number of households on the main means tested benefit and statistically, the proportion of disabled individuals and households headed by single women tend to be higher in benefit households compared to the wider population.

**11. Action plan – New equality impacts will be identified in different stages throughout the planning and implementation stages of changes to your strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service. How will you monitor these going forward? Also, how will you ensure that any potential negative impacts of the changes will be mitigated? (Please include dates where possible for when you will update this EqIA accordingly.)**

This this Eqia has been reviewed following a consultation and will again be reviewed in 3 years, allowing for changes in the scheme and caseload demographics to be fully realised.

**12. Do you have any additional comments?**

No.

### 13. Sign off

Name and job title of lead officer for this equality impact assessment:  
Naomi Armstrong, Benefits Manager.

Names and job titles of other assessment team members and people consulted: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Date of EqlA sign off: 11 November 2025

Date of next review of the equalities impact assessment: November 2028

Date to be published on Cambridge City Council website: 16 December 2025

**All EqlAs need to be sent to the Equality and Anti-Poverty Officer at [equalities@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:equalities@cambridge.gov.uk)**

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## End of survey report

### Are you currently receiving Council Tax Reduction?

169/169 - Multiple choice - choose one - required

No 53.3% (90 choices)



Yes 41.4% (70 choices)



Prefer not to say 5.3% (9 choices)



### Which of the following best describes you?

169/169 - Multiple choice - choose one - required

Resident 95.9% (162 choices)



Landlord or housing provider 1.8% (3 choices)



Representative of a community or voluntary organisation 0.6% (1 choice)



Other 1.8% (3 choices)



### Do you or someone in your household have a disability or caring responsibilities?

169/169 - Multiple choice - choose one - required

No 57.4% (97 choices)



Yes 36.7% (62 choices)



Prefer not to say 5.9% (10 choices)



## What is your age bracket?

169/169 - Multiple choice - choose one - required

45-65 45% (76 choices)



25-45 40.8% (69 choices)



Over 65 12.4% (21 choices)



Under 25 1.8% (3 choices)



## Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?

169/169 - Multiple choice - choose one - required

Heterosexual/straight 68.6% (116 choices)



Prefer not to say 20.1% (34 choices)



Bisexual 4.7% (8 choices)



Gay man 4.1% (7 choices)



Gay woman/lesbian 1.2% (2 choices)



Other 1.2% (2 choices)





## What is your gender?

169/169 - Multiple choice - choose one - required

Female 49.1% (83 choices)



Male 40.2% (68 choices)



Prefer not to say 9.5% (16 choices)



Other 1.2% (2 choices)



## Retaining two schemes

### Do you agree with this approach?

169/169 - Multiple choice - choose one - required

Strongly agree 34.3% (58 choices)



Agree 33.1% (56 choices)



Neutral 23.1% (39 choices)



Disagree 5.9% (10 choices)



Strongly disagree 3.6% (6 choices)



### Do you have any further comments to make about this approach?

29/169 - Long answer - optional

Many respondents expressed concern about the affordability of council tax, particularly for ordinary families and those on low incomes, with several calling for council tax to be reduced overall to help everyone in the community. There was a strong theme that support should be available to people in hardship regardless of whether they claim Universal Credit (UC), as not all those in need are UC recipients. Some respondents questioned why people would not claim UC if eligible, suggesting the system may be too complex or inflexible while others felt that if people choose not to claim UC, they should not receive additional council tax support.

There were mixed views on whether having two separate schemes (for UC and non-UC claimants) is necessary, with some seeing it as unnecessarily complex while others supported it to ensure no one in need is left out. Several respondents highlighted the need for clearer communication and simpler administration, especially for those with fluctuating incomes or complex circumstances. There were also calls to ensure that both UC and non-UC recipients receive equivalent support.

A few respondents mentioned personal experiences, such as struggling to pay council tax even while on UC or finding the current scheme meets their needs. Some responses indicated a lack of understanding or information about the scheme and its rationale.

Overall, the main trends were concerns about affordability, the need for inclusive support beyond just UC claimants, and calls for simpler, clearer processes.

## 100% Council Tax liability support

### Do you support this proposal?

169/169 - Multiple choice - choose one - required

Yes 66.9% (113 choices)



Not sure 20.7% (35 choices)



No 12.4% (21 choices)



### Do you have any further comments to make about this proposal?

20/169 - Long answer - optional

Many respondents expressed confusion or found the proposal unclear, with several specifically mentioning that the wording was difficult to understand or ambiguous. One respondent raised a specific concern about how the proposal affects the sole occupier discount. Only one response commented positively, stating that council tax offers good value for money and is underappreciated. Overall, the dominant trend is a lack of clarity and understanding of the proposal among respondents.

## Income Bands and Contributions - Universal Credit Scheme

## Do you agree with this method of updating the Universal Credit scheme?

169/169 - Multiple choice - choose one - required

Yes 50.3% (85 choices)



Not sure 30.2% (51 choices)



No 19.5% (33 choices)



## Do you have any further comments to make about this method?

27/169 - Long answer - optional

Many respondents expressed concern that linking council tax reduction solely to the National Living Wage (NLW) does not adequately account for inflation or the rising cost of living, which are outpacing increases in both wages and benefits. Several respondents argued that this risks penalising those on low incomes, as even small increases in council tax can be a significant burden for them, especially with the current cost of living crisis. There were repeated calls for inflation and benefit rates to be considered in the calculation, or for the scheme to be linked to Universal Credit (UC) increases instead.

A number of respondents highlighted the need for greater clarity and transparency, with some finding the explanation of the scheme confusing or lacking comparison to the current system. There was also concern that the proposed changes might lower the earnings thresholds for support, bringing more low-income people into payment.

Some respondents suggested that council tax increases should be frozen for residents and instead focus on raising business rates, as many people are already struggling. Others emphasised the importance of considering the needs of specific groups, such as under-25s, carers, and those on benefits.

A few respondents noted positive aspects, such as the simplicity, predictability, and administrative efficiency of linking the scheme to the NLW. However, concerns about regional inequity and the lack of a holistic approach were also raised.

Finally, some respondents requested more income brackets, especially for those with caring responsibilities or slightly higher incomes, and called for the scheme to be implemented in a way that avoids confusion from multiple recalculations during the year.

## Non-Universal Credit Scheme

## Do you agree with this proposal?

169/169 - Multiple choice - choose one - required

Yes 42% (71 choices)



Not sure 39.1% (66 choices)



No 18.9% (32 choices)



## Do you have any further comments to make about this proposal?

18/169 - Long answer - optional

Several respondents expressed confusion or lack of understanding about the proposal, with comments such as "Don't really understand what this means in practice" "No idea what this means" and questioning why useful information would not be published. Transparency and public access to data were highlighted as important, with calls for all data to be made available and criticism of the proposals' transparency.

There were concerns about fairness and the relationship between Universal Credit (UC) and non-UC schemes. Some respondents felt that non-UC discounts should not exceed UC discounts to prevent people from avoiding UC claims for higher council tax discounts and that any percentage increase should be linked to UC increases. One respondent called for stopping non-UC schemes altogether.

There were also comments about eligibility and fairness, with one respondent stating that those who can afford housing should not be required to pay for Universal Credit and another expressing concern about exemptions for asylum seekers. A few responses called for choice and not penalising people.

Overall, the most common themes were confusion about the proposal, demands for greater transparency, and concerns about fairness and the relationship between UC and non-UC council tax reduction schemes.

## Earned Income Disregards for Universal Credit Claimants

## Do you agree with removing the additional earned income disregard for Universal Credit claimants?

169/169 - Multiple choice - choose one - required

Neutral 38.5% (65 choices)



Agree 23.7% (40 choices)



Strongly agree 21.3% (36 choices)



Disagree 10.7% (18 choices)



Strongly disagree 5.9% (10 choices)



## Do you have any further comments to make about this?

17/169 - Long answer - optional

Many respondents expressed confusion or a lack of understanding about the details of the Council Tax Reduction scheme, with several stating they could not comment or needed more information. There was a recurring concern about fairness, particularly regarding pensioners and working-age claimants. Some felt pensioners are already well protected compared to others while others wanted more support for disadvantaged pensioners.

A few respondents questioned why certain benefits or disregards are not extended to other groups and one highlighted the issue of income being counted twice, suggesting the system should be more fair. Concerns were raised about the impact on working people, especially those on low wages or with caring responsibilities, noting that extra costs can make working less financially rewarding. There was also a worry that the scheme could disincentivise part-time work for Universal Credit claimants.

Some comments touched on technical aspects, such as whether travel and clothing costs are excluded from Universal Credit calculations and one respondent wanted any increases in bandings to be linked to Universal Credit percentage increases. There was also a single comment expressing concern about exemptions for asylum seekers.

Overall, the most common themes were confusion about the scheme, concerns about fairness between pensioners and working-age claimants, and the potential negative impact on those trying to work while claiming benefits.

## Do you believe the proposed scheme is fair and supports those most in need?

169/169 - Multiple choice - choose one - required

Not sure 43.2% (73 choices)



Yes 42.6% (72 choices)



No 14.2% (24 choices)



## Final thoughts

### Do you have any other comments or suggestions about the proposed Council Tax Reduction Scheme?

47/169 - Long answer - optional

Many respondents emphasised the need for greater support for those on low incomes, including single people, pensioners, disabled people, carers, and part-time workers. Several mentioned the impact of the cost of living crisis and rising bills, stating that council tax reductions are essential for those struggling financially.

There were repeated calls for the scheme to be fairer and more transparent, with some respondents finding the application process complex and hard to understand. Suggestions included simplifying the process, clearer communication, and consulting independent experts.

Some respondents raised concerns about fairness, such as the treatment of tenants versus property owners, the impact on disabled people, and the need for more rigorous scrutiny of claims to prevent fraud. There were also calls for specific changes, such as higher rates for second properties, exemptions for annex properties, and automatic reductions for over-65s.

A few respondents expressed frustration with the council's spending and suggested shifting the tax burden to businesses or reducing council costs. Others felt that council tax itself is an unnecessary burden and should be cancelled.

There were also comments about the need to ensure the scheme does not discourage work, particularly for part-time workers on Universal Credit. Some respondents wanted to see more protection for the most vulnerable and for the scheme to remain as equitable as possible.

A minority raised concerns about exemptions for asylum seekers or suggested that most residents should pay something.

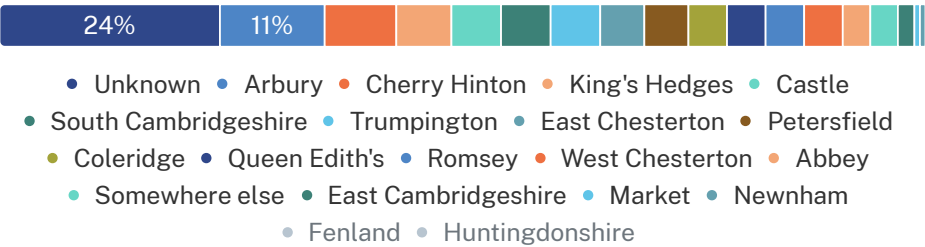
Overall, the most common themes were the need for increased support for those struggling financially, simplification and clarity of the scheme, and concerns about fairness and transparency.

# Demographic data

Respondents are invited to share some details about themselves as part of the registration process on our online engagement platform. This helps us better understand how representative the responses are of the people who live and work in Cambridge.

To ensure that the survey is accessible to as many people as possible, we do not make it compulsory to provide this data. The online engagement platform is continually working to improve how it presents this data.

## Place of residence



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Reference	Are you currently receiving Council Tax Reduction?	Which of the following best describes you?	Type your answer	Do you or someone in your household have a disability or caring responsibilities?	What is your age bracket?	Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?	Type your answer	What is your gender?	Type your answer	Do you agree with this approach?	Do you have any further comments to make about this approach?	Do you support this proposal?	Do you have any further comments to make about this proposal?	Do you agree with this method of updating the Universal Credit scheme?	Do you have any further comments to make about this method?	Do you agree with this proposal?	Do you have any further comments to make about this proposal?	Do you agree with removing the additional earned income disregard for Universal Credit claimants?	Do you have any further comments to make about this?	Do you believe the proposed scheme is fair and supports those most in need?	Do you have any other comments or suggestions about the proposed Council Tax Reduction Scheme?	Submitted at	Place of residence	
1	No	Resident		No	45-65	Gay man		Male		Strongly agree		Yes		Yes		Yes		Strongly agree		Yes			13/08/25	South Cambridgeshire
2	No	Resident		No	45-65	Other	Female	Female		Strongly agree	Council tax increase is too high for ordinary families	No		No	If one gets a salary increase and the council tax also increases, then people's life will never get better. Council should charge businesses which make big profit not ordinary residents	No		Agree		No			13/08/25	Romsey
3	No	Resident		No	Over 65	Heterosexual/straight		Male		Agree		No		Not sure		Not sure		Neutral		No			13/08/25	South Cambridgeshire
4	Prefer not to say	Resident		No	45-65	Heterosexual/straight		Female		Agree		Yes		Yes		Not sure		Disagree		Not sure			13/08/25	East Chesterton
5	No	Resident		No	Over 65	Heterosexual/straight		Male		Strongly agree		Yes		Yes		Yes		Strongly agree		Yes			13/08/25	Castle
6	No	Resident		No	25-45	Heterosexual/straight		Male		Strongly agree	Those who don't want to take universal credit and still need help should be helped out if they're not taking advantage so yes we need two systems. The council tax should come down in total to help everyone in cambridge which in turn will help every business as people have more money to spend going out for drinks and dinner and shopping.	Yes		Not sure		No	Strongly agree		Not sure			13/08/25	Trumpington	
7	Yes	Resident		Yes	45-65	Heterosexual/straight		Male		Neutral	I don't have any knowledge of the reasons given to support a household that does not wish to claim Universal Credit so I cannot provide an informed opinion either way	Yes		Yes		Yes	Agree		Yes			13/08/25	West Chesterton	
8	No	Resident		No	25-45	Gay man		Male		Disagree	Unnecessarily complex to administer a scheme for people who choose not to claim UC	Yes		Not sure		No	Neutral		Not sure			13/08/25	Petersfield	
9	No	Resident		No	25-45	Heterosexual/straight		Male		Strongly agree		Yes		Yes		Yes		Neutral		Yes			13/08/25	Queen Edith's
10	Yes	Resident		Yes	45-65	Heterosexual/straight		Female		Strongly agree		Yes		Yes		No	i believe we all should be able to make a choose	Agree		Yes	yes look to reduce the council tax for single people who are struggling with large bills	13/08/25	South Cambridgeshire	

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11	No	Resident		No	25-45	Prefer not to say		Male		Neutral		Yes		Yes		Yes	Agree		Yes		13/08/25	Trumpington	
12	No	Resident		No	45-65	Prefer not to say		Prefer not to say		Agree		No		No	Inflation should be taken into account to avoid penalising those with low incomes.	Yes	Agree		Not sure		13/08/25	East Chesterton	
13	Prefer not to say	Resident		Yes	Over 65	Prefer not to say		Female		Disagree		Not sure		Not sure		No	Disagree		Not sure		13/08/25		
14	No	Resident		No	25-45	Bisexual		Female		Neutral		Yes		Not sure		Yes	Agree		Not sure		13/08/25	East Chesterton	
15	Prefer not to say	Other	Rough Sleeper	Prefer not to say	25-45	Heterosexual/straight		Male		Neutral	I need to know more before I form a conclusive opinion.	Not sure		Not sure		Not sure	Neutral	Only if it's beneficial and not detrimental and easily explained to the disadvantaged pensioners.	Not sure	As long as it's beneficial i.e., more in the individuals' pocket, then it is good thing.	13/08/25	Arbury	
16	No	Resident		No	Over 65	Heterosexual/straight		Female		Neutral		Yes		Not sure		Not sure	Neutral		Not sure	I would welcome a reduction in Council tax for myself. I am applying for social housing.	13/08/25	Arbury	
17	No	Resident		No	25-45	Heterosexual/straight		Male		Disagree	If households aren't claiming UC then why do they need support?	Not sure		No	Don't lose out on council tax!	No	Stop the non universal credit schemes	Strongly agree	More fair system by not removing income twice	Not sure		13/08/25	Castle
18	No	Resident		Yes	25-45	Heterosexual/straight		Male		Strongly agree	It makes sense to support people in hardship regardless of their UC status.	Yes		No	You should freeze increases from residents, and focus on business rate increases. Many people are struggling enough already.	Yes	Strongly disagree	Why don't you give the disregard to the other groups?	No	Yes. Stop focusing on this. Focus instead on increasing business rates; the businesses in this city have a lot of money and they aren't going anywhere. Turn the screws on business. Use that to offer reductions on tax, as well as invest in the city.	13/08/25	Newnham	
19	Yes	Resident		Yes	25-45	Heterosexual/straight		Female		Neutral		Not sure		No		Not sure	Disagree		Not sure		13/08/25		
20	No	Resident		Yes	Over 65	Heterosexual/straight		Male		Agree		Yes		Yes		Not sure	Neutral		Yes		14/08/25		
21	No	Resident		Yes	45-65	Heterosexual/straight		Male		Disagree	If people are entitled to Universal credit and choose not to claim they should not have any additional premiums used to calculate their council tax support as they are choosing not to maximise their income entitlement	Yes		Yes		No	Disagree		No	More rigorous scrutiny of claims is needed. Pension credit is often not looked at carefully enough and is open to fraud more so than UC as there are no real checks on changes in household or circumstances.	14/08/25	Castle	
22	Yes	Resident		No	45-65	Prefer not to say		Prefer not to say		Strongly agree		Yes		Yes		Not sure	Agree		Yes		14/08/25	Castle	

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42	Yes	Resident		Prefer not to say	25-45	Prefer not to say		Female		Agree	I am very grateful to be in receipt of the CT reduction for UC claimants at the moment. However as a self-employed person with a fluctuating income, I find that it is very unpredictable how much I pay each month. The notification letters are complex and don't tell me directly how much will be taken from my account at the next DD. I would like to be able to overpay and put my account in credit some months, to make the payments more regular, and I would like to just know, at a glance, how much the DD will be.	Not sure		Not sure	It is not clear how this compares to what is done at present.	Not sure		Agree		Not sure	This survey did not explain the changes very clearly, so your results could easily not represent people's actual views.	21/08/25	Castle
43	Yes	Resident		No	25-45	Heterosexual/straight		Female		Agree		Yes		Not sure		Not sure		Agree		Not sure		21/08/25	Somewhere else
44	Yes	Resident		No	25-45	Bisexual		Female		Strongly agree		Yes		Yes		Yes		Neutral		Yes		21/08/25	West Chesterton
45	Yes	Resident		Yes	45-65	Heterosexual/straight		Female		Strongly agree		Yes		Not sure		Not sure		Agree		Yes		21/08/25	Cherry Hinton
46	Yes	Resident		No	25-45	Heterosexual/straight		Female		Strongly agree		Yes		Yes		Not sure		Strongly agree		Yes		21/08/25	
47	Yes	Resident		Yes	Over 65	Heterosexual/straight		Male		Strongly agree		Yes	Just that we are on disability reduction of 25% council tax relief	Not sure		Not sure		Neutral		Not sure		21/08/25	East Chesterton
48	Yes	Other	One person household	Yes	45-65	Prefer not to say		Prefer not to say		Strongly disagree	Non UC recipient does not mean you don't need the reduction	Not sure	Don't understand	No	Living cost rises also	No	Transparency!!! Shame on you and these proposals	Strongly disagree	A trick question. Just give to pensioners more to make it fair!!! This is a leading question	No	Do not take from people already poor and trick them into agreeing via this biased consultation. Very disappointed	21/08/25	Romsey
49	Yes	Resident		No	25-45	Heterosexual/straight		Male		Strongly agree		Yes	I strongly support this proposal.	Yes		Yes		Agree		Yes	None	21/08/25	Somewhere else
50	Yes	Resident		No	25-45	Heterosexual/straight		Female		Strongly agree		Yes		Yes		Not sure		Strongly agree		Not sure		21/08/25	King's Hedges
51	Yes	Resident		Yes	25-45	Heterosexual/straight		Female		Disagree	The current scheme works well. I am unsure how separating the schemes would help people when it just adds to confusion	Yes		Not sure		Not sure		Agree		Not sure		21/08/25	Trumpington



59	Yes	Resident		No	45-65	Heterosexual/ straight		Female		Agree			Not sure		Yes		Not sure		Neutral		Yes	Thank you for your support circumstances at present.	21/08/25	East Cambridges hire
60	Yes	Resident		Yes	Over 65	Heterosexual/ straight		Female		Neutral			No		Not sure	Those on benefits must be taken into consideration	Yes		Agree		Not sure		21/08/25	South Cambridges hire
61	No	Landlord or housing provider		No	25-45	Heterosexual/ straight		Female		Strongly agree			Yes		Yes	Can you have more income brackets for people show earn about £2500 a month? Maybe to also consider extra allowance for more income if people are carers (for disabled children and or adults). These people will likely have limitations on how much they can work and so their earning potential is not as others. Yet they still have to contribute the same amount.	Not sure	No idea what this means.	Agree		Yes		21/08/25	
62	Yes	Resident		Yes	45-65	Heterosexual/ straight		Male		Agree			Yes		Not sure		Yes		Neutral		Not sure		21/08/25	East Chesterton
63	Yes	Resident		Prefer not to say	45-65	Heterosexual/ straight		Female		Agree			Yes		No	Simplicity and Predictability 🏠: Linking income bands directly to the National Living Wage (NLW) provides a clear, transparent, and predictable mechanism for annual increases. Households and local authorities would know exactly how support levels will change, simplifying financial planning and administration.  Keeps Pace with Income 📈: The proposal ensures that council tax support keeps pace with the earnings of the lowest-paid workers. As the NLW increases, so does the level of support, preventing a situation where low-income households are forced to pay more council tax despite their earnings only rising by a small amount.  Administrative Efficiency ⚙️: This method automates the process of updating income bands and contribution levels. Instead of a new calculation or a lengthy review each year, the change is a simple percentage increase, reducing the administrative burden on the council.  Arguments Against the Proposal 🚫 Disregards Inflation and Cost of Living 📊: The primary flaw is that the NLW is not solely linked to inflation. While it aims to reflect the median wage, it doesn't always keep pace with the actual cost of living, particularly housing, food, and energy costs. If inflation outpaces the NLW increase, low-income households could see their real-term financial situation worsen, despite their council tax support going up.  Not a Holistic Approach ✖️: The proposal only considers one factor: the NLW. A more comprehensive approach would also consider other economic indicators like the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and regional variations in the cost of living. A 3% increase might be appropriate in one area but insufficient in a high-cost urban area.  Potential for Inequity ⚖️: The NLW is a single national figure. The cost of living varies	Yes		Strongly agree		Yes		Cherry Hinton	
64	Yes	Resident		Yes	Over 65	Heterosexual/ straight		Male		Agree			Yes		Yes		Yes		Agree		Yes	THE COUNCIL TAX IS AN UNNECESSARY BURDEN. BRITAIN IS RICH ENOUGH FOR THIS TAX. PLEASE CANCEL IT.	21/08/25	Trumpington

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[illegible]



80	Yes	Resident		Prefer not to say	25-45	Prefer not to say		Prefer not to say		Neutral	As a single person, I am on full job-seeking Universal Credit, I receive Single Persons Discount and reduction also. this suits my financial needs currently.	Not sure	You need to make it easy to understand what it means financially. People need positive incentives to motivate them to want to work, anything that effects finances negatively deters unemployed job seekers from truly wanting a job and they will just do what they have to so as to keep getting their income supported otherwise.	Not sure	If i was using the a.i i would ask the A.Ito explain it to me like I was 9. Make it simple to understand.	Not sure		Strongly disagree	It disincentivise s people from trying to work part time while on Universal Credit, if I understand it correctly. it seems you would charge them more, so why would they want a job If they lose more money?	Not sure	Make it so you don't deduct anything from part time workers on Universal Credit. Otherwise they might not want to keep working.	22/08/25	
81	Yes	Resident		Yes	45-65	Heterosexual/straight		Male		Strongly agree		Yes		Yes		Yes		Disagree		Yes		22/08/25	Coleridge
82	Yes	Resident		Yes	45-65	Heterosexual/straight		Male		Agree		Yes		Yes		No		Strongly agree		Yes		22/08/25	Abbey
83	Yes	Resident		Yes	45-65	Heterosexual/straight		Male		Neutral		No		No		Not sure		Agree		Not sure	Yes I think these bands is incorrect	22/08/25	Arbury
Page 193	84	Yes	Resident	No	45-65	Heterosexual/straight		Female		Strongly agree		Yes	People who do not work and claim Universal Credit as their income should not pay Council Tax.	Not sure		Not sure		Neutral		Yes	I don't work due to an ongoing gynaecological health condition and get Council Tax Reduction. I don't really understand this survey.	22/08/25	Petersfield
	85	No	Resident	Yes	45-65	Heterosexual/straight		Female		Agree		Yes		Yes		Yes		Neutral		Yes		22/08/25	Trumpington
	86	Yes	Resident	No	25-45	Heterosexual/straight		Female		Agree		Yes		Yes		Yes		Agree		Yes		23/08/25	Trumpington
	87	Yes	Resident	No	25-45	Heterosexual/straight		Female		Strongly agree		Yes		Not sure		Yes		Neutral		Not sure		23/08/25	Arbury
	88	Yes	Resident	Yes	25-45	Heterosexual/straight		Female		Strongly agree		Yes		Not sure	It's not clear as you haven't provided a contrast with current figures - so this survey fails to be transparent and support informed decisions	Yes		Strongly disagree		No		23/08/25	Arbury
89	Yes	Resident		No	45-65	Prefer not to say		Female		Neutral		Yes		Yes		Yes		Neutral		Yes		25/08/25	Cherry Hinton
90	Yes	Resident		Yes	45-65	Heterosexual/straight		Female		Strongly agree		Yes		Yes		Yes		Neutral		Yes		25/08/25	
91	No	Resident		Yes	25-45	Heterosexual/straight		Male		Agree		Yes		Yes		Yes		Agree		Not sure		25/08/25	Abbey



104	Yes	Resident		No	45-65	Prefer not to say		Female		Neutral	I currently receive UC but still have been charged the full amount of council tax. I think that needs to change.	Not sure	I think there would need to be specific lived experience examples to be able to comment on this. My experience is I am still charged the full amount, even though I receive UC	No	Cost of living is outstripping any very minor increases in UC or other benefits/wages. It's just taking away more from those who already have less	Not sure	Nope	Neutral	Not sure what you mean so can't comment on this	No	Take into consideration the constantly increasing cost of living, particularly impacting lower earners or those who can't work. My bills are currently way more than any slight annual increase in salary and UC, which means I'm actually not benefitting from this at all. I expect many others are in the same position.	03/09/25	King's Hedges
105	Yes	Resident		Yes	25-45	Heterosexual/straight		Female		Agree		Yes		Yes		Yes		Disagree		Yes	Proposed Council Tax Reduction Scheme For sure its very good an idea and help for single family with child, some one just part time to work then need to looking after child single mother or father. And help the disabled. It can help us feel less anxious.	07/09/25	West Chesterton
106	No	Representative of a community or voluntary organisation		No	45-65	Prefer not to say		Prefer not to say		Neutral		Yes		No	It would be better to link it to the % increase of UC	No	The % increase should be linked to the UC increase	Agree	I agree, but only if the other bandings increase are linked with UC % increase - see previous questions	Not sure		09/09/25	Castle
107	Yes	Resident		Yes	45-65	Heterosexual/straight		Female		Agree		Yes		Yes		Not sure		Disagree		Yes		10/09/25	
108	Yes	Resident		Yes	45-65	Heterosexual/straight		Female		Strongly agree		Yes		Yes		Not sure		Neutral		Yes		10/09/25	East Chesterton
109	Yes	Resident		Yes	25-45	Heterosexual/straight		Female		Disagree		Not sure		Not sure		Yes		Agree		Not sure		10/09/25	Cherry Hinton
110	No	Resident		Yes	25-45	Heterosexual/straight		Male		Strongly agree		No		No		Yes		Neutral		Not sure		12/09/25	South Cambridgeshire
111	No	Resident		No	Over 65	Heterosexual/straight		Female		Strongly agree		Yes		Yes		Yes		Neutral		Yes	I am pleased that the Council are retaining the existing scheme (more or less) as it's fair and reasonably equitable.	13/09/25	Petersfield
112	No	Resident		No	45-65	Heterosexual/straight		Female		Agree		Yes		Yes		Yes		Agree		Yes		15/09/25	
113	No	Resident		No	45-65	Heterosexual/straight		Male		Disagree		Yes		Yes		Yes		Strongly agree		Yes		15/09/25	Arbury

114	No	Resident		No	45-65	Heterosexual/straight		Female		Strongly agree	Need to help people who do not claim universal credit but just above cut off point. Expensive to live in Cambridge	Not sure		Yes		Not sure		Agree		Not sure	Definitely want to see this made available to non working family credit people. Need a cambridge allowance for lower earners to keep up with their bills.	15/09/25	
115	No	Resident		No	45-65	Heterosexual/straight		Female		Strongly agree		Yes		Yes		Yes		Neutral		Yes		16/09/25	Coleridge
116	No	Resident		No	45-65	Heterosexual/straight		Male		Agree		Yes		Yes		Yes		Strongly agree		Yes		17/09/25	West Chesterton
117	No	Resident		No	Over 65	Heterosexual/straight		Male		Agree	Attempt to help Universal Credit Claimant back to a working life	No	Not Applicable	Yes		No	All data must be mde available to the public	Agree		Yes		20/09/25	West Chesterton
118	No	Resident		Yes	25-45	Prefer not to say		Female		Agree		Yes		Yes		Yes		Agree		Yes		22/09/25	
119	No	Resident		No	25-45	Heterosexual/straight		Male		Strongly agree		Yes		Yes		Not sure		Strongly agree		Not sure		23/09/25	Cherry Hinton
120	No	Resident		Yes	45-65	Other	I refuse to engage in this trans mafia rubbish. let me do the survey without this crap.	Male		Neutral		No	people that do not declare their earnings claim will be rewarded for their tax evasion by getting discounts they do not deserve , at everybody else's expense.	No	the scale is too long. smaller discount for fewer people would be more sensible.	Not sure		Agree		No	The council should go back to working five proper days work a week for the money we pay them. The amount of money wasted on political hair brained schemes and massive pension contributions for council staff could lower council tax for everybody, unemployed ( supposedly) and employed alike.	24/09/25	Cherry Hinton
121	No	Resident		No	Over 65	Gay man		Male		Strongly agree		No	everyone should make some contribution to council services however small	Yes		Yes		Strongly agree		Yes	most residents should pay something	24/09/25	Trumpington
122	No	Resident		No	45-65	Gay man		Male		Strongly agree		Yes		Yes		Yes		Strongly agree		Yes		25/09/25	West Chesterton
123	Yes	Resident		No	45-65	Heterosexual/straight		Female		Agree		Yes		Yes		Yes		Agree		Yes		25/09/25	Coleridge
124	No	Resident		No	45-65	Heterosexual/straight		Male		Strongly agree		Not sure		No		No		Neutral		Yes		25/09/25	

125	No	Resident		No	Over 65	Heterosexual/ straight		Female		Strongly agree		Yes		Yes		No		Strongly agree		No	For married pensioners over 70 years old on JOINT fixed incomes, say below £25k per household, I think there should be a reduction in council tax, say 25% per household. The cost of living crisis is hugely affecting this income bracket. In effect, this would mean they only pay the single person council tax	27/09/25	
126	No	Resident		No	45-65	Prefer not to say		Male		Agree		No		No		No		Strongly agree		No		27/09/25	Romsey
127	No	Resident		No	45-65	Heterosexual/ straight		Female		Agree		Yes		Not sure		Not sure		Agree		Yes		29/09/25	South Cambridges hire
128	No	Resident		No	25-45	Heterosexual/ straight		Male		Strongly disagree	A council shutting public facilities for taxpayers due to unaffordability should not be offering extra discounts. Everyone should pay their share if they live in the city.	No	If reductions have to be made they should be only partial - it should not be expected that those that do not earn and save get a free pass in life	No		No	RPI uprates should be used in line with other government debts,	Strongly agree	Remove earnings disregard entirely. It's wholly unethical that people claiming charitable support from taxpayers who work (and have costs to do so) should be claiming increases in that support due to the costs of their own work.	No	The council should focus only on it's core functions. Collecting all council tax due and delivering solid core services for taxpayers, and stop trying to play house with communist ideas.	30/09/25	King's Hedges
129	No	Resident		No	25-45	Heterosexual/ straight		Male		Neutral		Not sure		Not sure		Not sure		Neutral		Not sure		01/10/25	Somewhere else
130	No	Other	Employer of Cambridge residents	No	45-65	Gay man		Male		Agree		Yes		Yes		Yes		Neutral		Not sure		01/10/25	Market
131	No	Resident		No	45-65	Heterosexual/ straight		Prefer not to say		Agree		Yes		Yes		No		Agree		Not sure		01/10/25	Abbey
132	No	Resident		No	25-45	Heterosexual/ straight		Female		Agree		Yes		Yes		No		Neutral		Yes	50%	01/10/25	Arbury
133	Prefer not to say	Resident		No	25-45	Heterosexual/ straight		Female		Agree		Yes		Yes		Yes		Strongly agree		Yes		02/10/25	
134	No	Resident		No	Over 65	Heterosexual/ straight		Male		Neutral		Not sure		Not sure		Not sure		Neutral		Not sure	I too the survey because I firmly believe that Council Tax is too for Oldies like me, and that more valuable properties should be more highly taxed - and wanted to be able to say this. Thanks	02/10/25	
135	No	Resident		No	45-65	Heterosexual/ straight		Male		Strongly agree		Yes		Not sure		Not sure		Disagree		Not sure		02/10/25	Romsey

136	Yes	Resident		No	25-45	Bisexual		Female		Strongly disagree	As far as I understand it, part of this scheme would abolish the Second Person rebate (where if all but one person living in the house are exempt eg are students, that one person would be entirely responsible for council tax). This is ludicrous. Cambridge has a huge population of young people - many of them students, and also a lot of young professionals. Some of those young professionals are paid well, especially those who commute to London, however not all are. As a young researcher working in a scientific lab I was paid £25K a year for the 3 years after I graduated. This is for a specialised job which required at minimum a Bachelor's degree, and preferably also a Master's degree. Many young people now live in large house shares, as this is the only way they can afford to live in Cambridge. Therefore it is very common to have many young people, a mixture of students and working people, in the same house. A house share may be a high council tax band - C or D - and then it is entirely possible that in theory the entire responsibility for council tax would rely on one person. I think more care needs to be taken when considering scrapping the Second Person Rebate. Cambridge is a hub for science, however that science requires people, often young graduates. If the rent keeps going up, as it has been, and then any council tax reductions are removed, it is going to be difficult to make living in Cambridge unachievable for many young scientists.	Not sure		Not sure		Not sure		Neutral		Not sure	As far as I understand it, part of this scheme would abolish the Second Person rebate (where if all but one person living in the house are exempt eg are students, that one person would be entirely responsible for council tax). This is ludicrous. Cambridge has a huge population of young people - many of them students, and also a lot of young professionals. Some of those young professionals are paid well, especially those who commute to London, however not all are. As a young researcher working in a scientific lab I was paid £25K a year for the 3 years after I graduated. This is for a specialised job which required at minimum a Bachelor's degree, and preferably also a Master's degree. Many young people now live in large house shares, as this is the only way they can afford to live in Cambridge. Therefore it is very common to have many young people, a mixture of students and working people, in the same house. A house share may be a high council tax band - C or D - and then it is entirely possible that in theory the entire responsibility for council tax would rely on one person. I think more care needs to be taken when considering scrapping the Second Person Rebate. Cambridge is a hub for science, however that science requires people, often young graduates. If the rent keeps going up, as it has been, and then any council tax reductions are removed, it is going to be difficult to make living in Cambridge unachievable for many young scientists.	03/10/25	Petersfield
137	No	Resident		No	Over 65	Heterosexual/straight		Female		Agree		Yes		Not sure		Not sure		Neutral		Not sure	Would like to see a range of case studies to gauge the effects	03/10/25	
138	Yes	Resident		No	Over 65	Prefer not to say		Male		Disagree	This survey is confusing	No	Again confusing. What about sole Occupier discount?	Not sure	What does this mean for pensioners that fall between claiming universal credit and low income ?	No	Do not understand what you meant. Is this deliberately meant to confuse?	Neutral	This again is so obtuse. Can not you explain this in simple English that can be understood by everyone?	Not sure	It makes little sense to me as a well educated person. Who thought of this survey? Is it intended to confuse and bamboozle?	04/10/25	
139		Resident		No	25-45	Heterosexual/straight		Female		Agree		Yes		Yes		Yes		Neutral		Yes		04/10/25	Cherry Hinton
140	Yes	Resident		Yes	45-65	Prefer not to say		Female		Neutral	I have no idea what this means. Its very ambiguous as usual.	No	No. Again ambiguous.	No	WOW	No	Really!	Neutral	Again what does it really mean. Try making sense.	No	Plain English and transparency throughout the council would be a good start.	04/10/25	East Chesterton
141	Yes	Resident		Prefer not to say	45-65	Prefer not to say		Prefer not to say		Neutral		Not sure		Yes		Not sure		Strongly agree		Yes		04/10/25	Queen Edith's
142	No	Resident		No	25-45	Heterosexual/straight		Male		Neutral		No		No		No		Strongly agree		Not sure		04/10/25	King's Hedges
143	No	Resident		No	45-65	Heterosexual/straight		Male		Strongly agree		No		No		No		Neutral		No		04/10/25	Cherry Hinton
144	Yes	Resident		No	45-65	Heterosexual/straight		Female		Neutral		Not sure	I am not clear on this.	Not sure		Not sure		Neutral		Not sure	I cannot pay anymore than what I'm paying now. thank you.	06/10/25	
145	Yes	Resident		No	45-65	Heterosexual/straight		Male		Strongly agree		Yes		Not sure		Not sure		Agree		Not sure		06/10/25	Romsey
146	No	Resident		No	25-45	Prefer not to say		Female		Agree		Not sure		Not sure		No		Strongly agree		Not sure		07/10/25	Coleridge
147	Yes	Resident		Yes	45-65	Heterosexual/straight		Male		Agree	The council tax should look at net income as in what you have left each month and not the gross income. Somethings have to be paid. Special diet, mortgage, credit cards etc. The council should also fix the potholes in the roads	Yes		Not sure		Not sure	Stop hurting people and affecting their lives	Neutral		Not sure	Help people and stop ticking boxes	08/10/25	Castle
148	No	Resident		No	25-45	Prefer not to say		Female		Agree		Yes		No		Not sure		Agree		Not sure		08/10/25	Somewhere else

149	No	Resident		Yes	45-65	Prefer not to say		Prefer not to say		Agree	Ot seems fair to include those on low wages but not in receipt of UC in a reduction scheme	Not sure	I dont quite understand the proposal	Yes		Not sure		Neutral		Not sure		10/10/25	Coleridge
150	No	Resident		No	45-65	Heterosexual/straight		Male		Neutral		Yes		No	Raising by inflation would seem more sensible, the Minimum/Living wage is quite a political/artificial figure that could be frozen or change a lot.	Yes		Agree		Not sure	Generally looks overly generous, especially when council finances are stretched. I'm surprised to see people earning £2k per month don't need to pay the full council tax.	11/10/25	
151	No	Resident		No	45-65	Heterosexual/straight		Female		Agree		Yes	Council tax is huge value for money - people under appreciate this.	Yes		Yes		Strongly agree		Yes		14/10/25	Queen Edith's
152	Yes	Resident		No	45-65	Heterosexual/straight		Female		Disagree		Yes		No		No		Disagree		No		14/10/25	South Cambridgeshire
153	No	Resident		No	45-65	Heterosexual/straight		Male		Agree		Yes		Yes		Yes		Strongly agree		Yes		14/10/25	
154	No	Resident		No	25-45	Bisexual		Female		Strongly agree		Yes		Yes		Yes		Disagree		Yes		14/10/25	Arbury
155	No	Resident		No	45-65	Heterosexual/straight		Male		Neutral	Without more context on why households may not wish to claim UC, I do not want to take a strong position here	Yes		No	I agree with updating in line with the national living wage as a reference point.  However: (1) I would like to see more context on overall budgeting within these amounts, and if the combination of council tax contributions is practical. (2) I would like to see avoidance of the cliff-edge effects (earn 1p more, and lose 7.50 GBP if I understand correctly?)	Not sure	I do not understand the current scheme so cannot comment in detail. Using CPI concerns me because it may under-represent the inflation people see in practice. Conversely, CPI may become negative, and reductions may not be intended	Neutral	I would encourage the council to set out a policy aim separate from the details of the implementation. For instance, if the aim is that the pensioner scheme, non-UC scheme, and UC scheme should provide broadly similar contributions to people in broadly similar financial circumstances.	Not sure		14/10/25	Queen Edith's
156	No	Resident		No	25-45	Prefer not to say		Prefer not to say		Disagree		Not sure		No		No		Strongly disagree		No		15/10/25	
157	No	Resident		No	25-45	Prefer not to say		Prefer not to say		Strongly agree		Yes		Not sure		No		Strongly agree		No	You should waste less of our tax, and that would be a better approach to reduce bills for everyone	18/10/25	Romsey
158	Yes	Landlord or housing provider		Yes	45-65	Heterosexual/straight		Female		Agree		Not sure		Yes		Not sure		Agree		Not sure		22/10/25	
159	Yes	Resident		Yes	25-45	Heterosexual/straight		Female		Agree		Yes	The wording used is difficult to understand	Not sure	I don't understand the question	No		Disagree		Not sure		23/10/25	Petersfield
160	No	Resident		Yes	Over 65	Heterosexual/straight		Male		Strongly agree		Yes		Yes		Yes		Agree		Yes		23/10/25	

161	No	Resident		No	25-45	Prefer not to say		Female		Agree		No		Yes		Yes	Neutral		Yes		27/10/25	Trumpington
162	No	Resident		No	Under 25	Heterosexual/straight		Female		Strongly agree		Yes		Yes		Yes	Strongly agree		Yes		29/10/25	
163	No	Resident		No	45-65	Heterosexual/straight		Male		Strongly agree		Yes		Yes		Yes	Strongly agree		Yes		30/10/25	
164	No	Resident		Yes	25-45	Prefer not to say		Male		Strongly agree	Reduction for those not claiming benefits sounds good, as I have no rights for any benefits, while struggling financially	Not sure		Not sure		Not sure	Disagree		Not sure	I am already paying to my landlord 1400, other bills, tv licence etc, there is no money for food , I do need to have this tax reduced.	30/10/25	
165	No	Resident		No	25-45	Heterosexual/straight		Female		Strongly agree		Yes		Yes		Yes	Strongly agree		Yes		30/10/25	Abbey
166	Yes	Resident		Yes	45-65	Heterosexual/straight		Female		Agree		Yes		Yes		Yes	Neutral		Yes	Continue discounted band for homes accommodating a disabled person	31/10/25	West Chesterton
167	Yes	Resident		Prefer not to say	Over 65	Heterosexual/straight		Male		Strongly agree		Yes		Not sure		Not sure	Neutral		Not sure		31/10/25	
168	No	Resident		No	25-45	Bisexual		Male		Strongly agree		Yes		Yes		Yes	Neutral		Yes		31/10/25	Queen Edith's
169	No	Resident		No	25-45	Gay man		Male		Strongly agree		Yes		Yes		Yes	Strongly agree		Yes		31/10/25	



## REPORT TITLE: Quarterly Performance Report July to September 2025

**To:**

Cabinet

16 December 2025

**Report by:**

Jane Wilson, Chief Operating Officer

Tel: 01223 457860 Email: jane.wilson@cambridge.gov.uk

**Wards affected:**

All

Director Approval: Jane Wilson confirms that the report author has sought the advice of all appropriate colleagues and given due regard to that advice; that the equalities impacts and other implications of the recommended decisions have been assessed and accurately presented in the report; and that they are content for the report to be put to the Committee.

<b>1.</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
1.1	It is recommended that the Cabinet 1. Note the contents of the attached Quarterly Performance Report for the period 1 July to 30 September 2025
<b>2.</b>	<b>Purpose and reason for the report</b>
2.1	This report is to provide Cabinet with an overview of the Council's performance over the period 1 July to 30 September 2025 (Q2).
<b>3.</b>	<b>Alternative options considered:</b> As this item is to note, no alternative options were considered.
<b>4.</b>	<b>Background and key issues</b>
4.1	<b>Background</b> This is the first presentation of what will be a regular Quarterly Performance Report for Cabinet. This report is one element in delivering the Council's Performance Management Framework Principles and Approach agreed March 2025. The primary objective of the Framework is to enable the Council to be an effective, efficient and high-performing organisation, successfully meeting its agreed objectives at every level, and enabling

effective scrutiny, both internally and publicly, of our performance against those objectives.

The development of a Quarterly Performance Report for Cabinet responds both to the Performance Management Framework and the new Cabinet Governance model adopted from May 2025.

### **Rationale for the Quarterly Performance Report**

The primary purpose of the report is to provide effective strategic oversight, enabling considered decision-making, effective scrutiny, and public visibility.

It will achieve this through a consistent, quarterly, high-level factual snapshot of the overall health of the Council, presented in clear, lay terms. It will complement the more reflective and in-depth Annual Report.

It brings together performance measures, finance, and risk information into one place. These three sources of information taken together provide a rounded picture of the health of the Council.

### **Format**

The report focuses at the whole Council level, split into two parts:

- The Council's general activities and responsibilities
- The Council as a residential Social Landlord

This separation reflects the financial separation between our General Fund, through which all income and expenditure relating the Council's general activities and responsibilities, and the Housing Revenue Account which is ring-fenced for all income and expenditure relating to the Council as a residential social landlord.

For each part, there is a high-level narrative overview, making the link between performance, finance and risk, and an appendix with supporting detail. This incorporates information previously supplied separately in reports covering finance, our social landlord function and the quarterly update on the Housing Development Agency. Their integration into the single quarterly report ensures that it provides an effective overview of the Council as a whole.

### **Style**

The intention is for the report to be straightforward and easy to understand using minimal jargon or specialist language, and where specialist terms are unavoidable, they are explained.

	<p><b>Schedule</b></p> <p>This is the first Quarterly Performance Report and covers the second quarter of 25/26. The annual pattern of reporting will be Q1: September Cabinet, Q2: December Cabinet, Q3: March Cabinet, Q4: June Cabinet.</p> <p><b>Review</b></p> <p>There will be a review in Summer 2026, so that any revisions can be incorporated from Q1 of the 26/27 reporting cycle. This timescale reflects that this is a new approach as well as a new report for the Council, with early review and revision a key part of the process to ensure that it does deliver on its purpose. The Performance Management Framework as a whole will be subject to periodic review by Internal Audit as part of the risk-based audit plan, with outcomes reported to the Civic Affairs and Audit Committee, providing additional assurance on its effectiveness and alignment with the Council's governance arrangements.</p> <p><b>Link to Local Code of Corporate Governance</b></p> <p>The Quarterly Performance Report to Cabinet will be an additional route by which the Council adheres to the <a href="#">Local Code of Corporate Governance</a>. Most notably it practically demonstrates the management of risk and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management, and contributes to good practices in transparency, reporting and audit, to deliver effective accountability.</p>
<b>5.</b>	<b>Corporate plan</b>
5.1	<p><i>Explain how the decision links to the Councils Corporate Plan</i></p> <p><a href="#">Corporate plan 2022-27: our priorities for Cambridge - Cambridge City Council</a></p> <p>The primary link is to objective 4, Modernising the Council to lead a greener city that is fair for all.</p>
<b>6.</b>	<b>Consultation, engagement and communication</b>
6.1	<p>The Performance Management principles and approach were approved by the Exec Cllr for Finance and Resources following a presentation at the Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Committee in March 2025. Members of Cabinet, the two scrutiny committees and the chair and vice chair of this committee were invited to take part in workshops on the format of the report in October 2025. Extensive internal staff engagement has taken place, to inform both the data and the format.</p>
<b>7.</b>	<b>Anticipated outcomes, benefits or impact</b>
7.1	<p>As set out above, the report will provide a quarterly snapshot of the health of the Council,</p>

	to support effective decision making and scrutiny.
<b>8.</b>	<b>Implications</b>
<b>8.1</b>	<b>Relevant risks</b>
	This report is to note, there are no associated risks with doing so.
	<b>Financial Implications</b>
<b>8.2</b>	This report is to note, there are no associated financial implications
	<b>Legal Implications</b>
<b>8.3</b>	This report is to note, there are no associated legal implications
	<b>Equalities and socio-economic Implications</b>
<b>8.4</b>	There are no equalities or socio-economic implications in noting this report.
	<b>Net Zero Carbon, Climate Change and Environmental implications</b>
<b>8.5</b>	There are no net zero carbon, climate change or environmental implications in noting this report.
	<b>Procurement Implications</b>
<b>8.6</b>	There are no procurement implications in noting this report.
	<b>Community Safety Implications</b>
<b>8.7</b>	There are no community safety implications in noting this report.
<b>9.</b>	<b>Background documents</b> Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985
<b>9.1</b>	<i>n/a</i>
<b>10.</b>	<b>Appendices</b>
<b>10.1</b>	<i>n/a</i>
	To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact Jane Wilson, Chief Operating Officer tel: 01223 458760 email: jane.wilson@cambridge.gov.uk

# Cambridge City Council: Quarterly Performance Report July to September 2025

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## Introduction

This report provides a quarterly snapshot of how well the Council is performing, the risks we are facing, and whether we are delivering within our agreed budget.

It covers the period from 1 July to 30 September 2025 (called quarter 2 as it is the second three-month period in the financial year) and provides a high-level overview, highlighting areas where there are major achievements or outstanding delivery, and areas that have significant risks, issues or challenges.

The report is split into two parts, the first covering our general responsibilities, the second our role as a residential social landlord. For each part there is an appendix with more detailed information.

For simplicity, central corporate services, which support both our general responsibilities and our social landlord function, are covered in part one of the report. Where there are specific issues affecting the landlord role they are highlighted in the landlord report.

## Part One: Our General Responsibilities

The Council carries out a very broad range of activities as part of its general responsibilities. These range from activities relating to our environment, for example domestic waste collection, maintenance of parks and open spaces, air quality monitoring, the ‘scores on the doors’ food safety inspections; our communities, including community safety, leisure, culture and community facilities, and community engagement; and place making, including planning, inclusive growth, and responding to climate change.

### Overview

Between July and September 2025 (**Quarter 2**) the Council:

- Delivered its full range of services (metrics for key services, including waste, planning, customer support, environmental health are included in appendix 1)
- Continued the implementation of significant internal changes to staff structures, with nearly all of the changes completed by the end of September
- Commissioned work to review the buildings management and oversight of our corporate, commercial and community properties
- Worked with Councils across the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough footprint on the development of proposals for Local Government Reorganisation

Agreed:

- An investment in Greater Cambridge Impact<sup>1</sup>, recognising that it had achieved its target of £6m first close investment and made good progress towards the £10m final close target
- to progress the Civic Quarter project to its next stage
- a procurement pipeline for repairs, maintenance and compliance works
- to launch consultations for its Urban Forest and Climate Change Strategies
- that City Council services shared with and hosted by South Cambridgeshire DC (planning and waste) could continue to operate on a 32-hour working week

Key achievements in the period include:

- The Park Street development delivered on time and under budget by 16.8m
- Higher than budgeted income from our car parks
- The new Operations Hub building reaching practical completion and preparing to open

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<sup>1</sup> Greater Cambridge Impact aims to reduce inequality and promote inclusive growth in Cambridge by providing long-term capital for organisations working to improve life chances for disadvantaged children, care-experienced young people, families in crisis, and people facing homelessness

- Reaching agreement with National Highways to settle our long running compensation claim relating to the A14 improvement scheme. The agreed settlement is £1.8m compensation, plus statutory interest and payment of our costs, totalling £2.3m overall.

Significant risks and issues that emerged during the quarter include:

- Higher than budgeted costs for housing benefit and homelessness prevention (discretionary housing costs) expected to cost approximately £0.6m by the end of this financial year. There is a difference between the cost of certain kinds of supported housing and the amount we can reclaim from central government for those places. The Council is obliged to pay the full amount, covering the difference from its own funds
- Reduced income from some of our commercial properties, with an ongoing reduction of £0.4m, and a one-off cost of £1m in this year
- Recognition that we need to ensure that our corporate, commercial and community facilities are fully compliant with building regulations. As reported above, a new programme to build that assurance is now in place
- The central government announcement in August that funding for the relocation of the Anglian Waste Water Treatment plant would not be forthcoming. The relocation was an essential part of the proposed Hartree development. The council had incurred significant costs associated with developing the scheme to date, as well as relocating its operational depot and securing vacant possession on the site.
- Uncertainties generated by the outcome of the Fair Funding Review of the local government financial settlement. This means that the Council will not know what its central government financial settlement will be until near Christmas which makes it more difficult to plan for a balanced budget for 2026/27.

Overall, the impact of lower income and higher costs means that our projected financial position for the year is not on track to meet our agreed budget. Our forecast position is currently showing that we will spend £1.7 million more than planned by the end of the financial year (31 March 2026). The original budget included a contribution of £3.4 million to the General Fund balance. If our forecast is right the General Fund balance would still increase at the end of the year, but only by £1.7 million. A more detailed breakdown of our financial position at the end of the quarter is set out in Appendix One.

Although this is not an ideal position, recognising these risks, issues and financial pressures at this point in the year means that actions can be taken to address them, both in-year and into the future.



## Part Two: Residential Social Landlord

As well as our general responsibilities as a District Council, Cambridge City Council is also a residential social landlord. The council owns and manages around 7500 residential properties and is actively developing new social housing.

The performance and finances of our landlord function are managed and reported separately to our general responsibilities. Our finances as a landlord are separated out from our general finances and managed through what is called our Housing Revenue Account.

### Overview

From July to September 2025 the Council:

- continued with a strong focus on managing any issues our tenants experience linked to damp, condensation, and mould. As a result, we have been spending more than budgeted in this area, and this is forecast to continue throughout the year. However, this means that the Council was in a good position for the introduction of Awaab's Law on 27 October 2025, with clear processes and timescales to deal with any damp, condensation or mould issues our tenants experience, already in place and in use.

The council approved:

- a pipeline for maintenance and compliance contracts in September, with a total value of approximately 74m. These will ensure we continue have the right support in place to ensure all our residential properties meet the Decent Homes standard.
- Loan facilities for Cambridge Investment Partnership<sup>2</sup> for use on the Fanshawe Road, ATS Murketts, and Newbury Farm developments

The Regulator for Social Housing inspected the Council during the quarter. The outcome of the Inspection was that the Council received a consumer grading of C2 (grading run from C1 to C4, with C1 being the highest available grade). A C2 grading means that the Council, in its role as a landlord, is delivering a service to its tenants that is compliant with the national standards set out by the regulator. The regulator noted the Council's "respectful, fair and positive culture towards tenants". It recognised that the Council provides an effective, efficient and timely repairs service, with tenant satisfaction in the quality and timeliness of repairs continuing to rise.

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<sup>2</sup> Cambridge Investment Partnership is a 50:50 Joint Venture Partnership with Local developer Hill, using our combined expertise to bring forward large scale and sustainable housing delivery. This partnership started in 2017. To date, it has delivered a total of 1152 homes.

The regulator's report highlighted areas of good performance, including the management of anti-social behaviour, transparency and the sharing of information with tenants, and tailored, individual support provided to tenants.

The report also highlighted areas for improvement. These were stock condition surveys, which are property inspections to check their overall condition, identify repairs needed, and plan future maintenance or improvements; fire risk assessment remedial actions; and data management systems which are outdated. The regulator noted that there are already action plans in place for all of these areas, including programmes to accelerate stock condition surveys, complete the fire risk remedial actions, and update our data management systems.

The findings of the regulator are reflected in the performance indicators, for example, completion of work as a result of fire risk assessments, and their publication on a quarterly basis will provide public accountability as the work to improve them is delivered.

Progress with the correction of the rent errors previously identified is on track. It should be noted however that there has been an increase in both existing tenant arrears and former tenant arrears as a result of staff time focusing on the rent error corrections. As the work on the rent errors is completed the team will be refocused back to managing rent arrears.

Specifically in relation to our house building activity, schemes on site at Fanshawe Road, East Barnwell, ATS Murketts, and Newbury Farm were on budget and on schedule at the end of the quarter. Progress is being made with designs for schemes at Hanover and Princess Court and at Ekin Road, with the intention of submitting planning applications in the next quarter (October to December 2025).

# Appendix 1: General Responsibilities: Performance, Finance, and Risk indicators

## General Responsibilities: Performance Indicators

Key Performance Indicators: General Responsibilities			
Link to Corporate Plan Objectives		Ratings Key	
Leading Cambridge's response to the climate and biodiversity emergencies and creating a net zero council by 2030	1	At or above stretch target	<div></div>
Tackling poverty and inequality and helping people in the greatest need	2	At or above baseline target	<div></div>
Building a new generation of council and affordable housing and reducing homelessness	3	Below baseline target/ Needs action	<div></div>
Modernising the council to lead a greener city that is fair for all	4	No target for this measure	<div></div>

Title & Description	Baseline target	Stretch target	2025/26		2024/25				2023/24		Plan Item
			Q2	Q1	Q4	Q3	Q2	Q1	Q4	Q3	
Bins collected on schedule <i>This measures the effectiveness of our domestic waste collection service</i>	99.25%	99.70%	99.9%	99.9%	99.9%	99.9%	99.9%	99.8%	99.8%	99.8%	1
Household waste sent for reduce, recycling, composting <i>This tracks the percentage of the City's domestic waste that is not going to landfill</i>	48%	50.00%	50.92%	52.40%	50%	49%	53%	54%	44%	48%	1
Street Cleansing inspections of acceptable standard <i>Percentage of Spot inspections across Litter, Detritus, Graffiti &amp; Fly Posting that meet agreed standard</i>	90%	95%	90.6%	96.0%		95.6%	95.5%	99.0%			4
% food businesses broadly compliant (rated 3 +) <i>This tracks food safety compliance in the city, as monitored by our environmental health team</i>	93%	97%	97.6%	98.2%	98.0%	97.8%	97.8%	97.7%			-
Average time to determine validated householder planning applications <i>This is the number of weeks Greater Cambridge Planning Service takes to validate applications</i>	12	10	7.07	7.93	8.03	7.22	7.61	7.69	9.79	9.37	4
First Point of Contact resolution <i>This is the percentage of contacts our customer support team is able to resolve without having to refer onwards</i>	86%	89%	90%	90%	90%	89%	91%	90%	91%	91%	4
Complaints resolved within target <i>We aim to resolve complaints within 10 working days</i>	70%	85%	72%	75%	83%	84%	81%	76%	77%	65%	4
Community centre programme balance <i>We aim for facility time to be apportioned to Community (40%), Cultural (30%), and Commercial (30%) activities</i>	10pp away	5pp away	46:28:26	45:30:24							2
Private rented properties (inc. HMOs) in the city are made safe & suitable for occupancy <i>This is a 12 month rolling average, it is in line with Housing act 2004, associated regulations and the Councils Private Rented Sector Housing Standard</i>		250	286	353	428						4
Days to process benefit claims – Housing Benefits	9	7	2	3	2	2	3	3	2	3	2
Days to process benefit claims – Council Tax Reduction <i>These are the number of days taken to process claims for housing benefit and Council tax reduction- we are in the top decile nationally</i>		3	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	2

Title & Description	Baseline target	Stretch target	2025/26		2024/25				2023/24		Plan Item
			Q2	Q1	Q4	Q3	Q2	Q1	Q4	Q3	
Change of applicants in housing need <i>This is ensuring the need for social housing is decreasing, or we are meeting their needs</i>	0	-2%	-4.30%	-9.29%	-5.45%	3.27%	4.79%	4.79%			2
Number of families with children in B&B over 6 weeks <i>The goal is to have no families with children in B&amp;B accommodation for more than 6 weeks</i>	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0		3
Homelessness prevention cases with a successful outcome <i>Of the homelessness prevention cases we undertake, the % that are successful as defined by law</i>	60%		64%	47%	45%	51%	51%	46%			3
Repeat homelessness, or threat of homelessness, when previously resolved in last 2 years <i>Looking for effectiveness of past resolutions &amp; reduction in repeat homelessness (past resolutions through housing advice or statutory duty)</i>	6%		5.63%	6.15%	4.79%	7.80%	5.70%	5.65%			3
Rough sleepers on a single night <i>Quarterly average of a monthly count of rough sleepers, Rating comes from improvement compared to previous years results</i>	Year on Year Improvement		62	60	44	50	55	42	37	34	3
Private homes retrofitted to Increase EPC rating <i>We are funded to lead this work across the County, city numbers are currently low because this phase is for homes without gas</i>	n/a		3	3	2	0	1	0			1
No of volunteer Hours <i>Volunteers worked hours logged</i>	n/a		83	123	27						4
No of corporate groups worked with in volunteering	n/a		32	29	5						4

These measures reflect the core services the Council delivers as part of our general responsibilities and show that services are being delivered within our baseline thresholds. They indicate that our core services are being delivered effectively, in the main meeting not only our baseline targets but their stretch targets as well. The measures relating to homelessness reflect national pressures in this area.

## General Responsibilities: Finance

Finances for our general responsibilities are managed through our General Fund. Our detailed financial reports use our internal groups. These reflect the way we are organised internally, and all our financial reports use this structure, so you can compare our quarterly figures with our published accounts.

All of our reports show figures in a particular way:

- Expenditure is shown very simply as a number, i.e. 1234.
- Income is shown in brackets, i.e (1234)

So, where a budget has spent more than planned it is shown as a simple number because this is an increased amount of expenditure, and where a budget has spent less than planned that is shown in brackets.

## Revenue Budgets

The overall forecast position is that the Council will have spent £1.7 million more than planned by the end of the year (31 March 2026). The original budget included a planned contribution of £3.4 million to the General Fund balance. The overspend means that the General Fund balance would still increase, but only by £1.7 million. This is set out in the table below:

General Fund Forecast – Q2 2025/26	Current Budget £'000	Q2 Forecast £'000	(Under budget)/over budget £'000
<b>Net expenditure by group</b>			
City Services	1,015	1152	137
Communities	10,721	10,346	(375)
Corporate Hub	12,637	13,958	1,321
Economy & Place	(7,832)	(7,129)	703
Planning & Building Control	1,647	1,603	(44)
Non-service expenditure	7,600	7,600	0
<b>Total net expenditure</b>	<b>25,788</b>	<b>27,530</b>	<b>1,742</b>
<b>Funding</b>			
Business rates and council tax	(24,114)	(24,114)	0
Government grants	(4,375)	(4,375)	0
Use of earmarked reserves	(710)	(710)	0
<b>Total funding</b>	<b>(29,199)</b>	<b>(29,199)</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Contribution to GF reserve</b>	<b>3,411</b>	<b>1,669</b>	<b>(1,742)</b>

The forecast position has changed for the worse since Q1. The most notable changes since Q1 are:

- A forecast shortfall in commercial property income as a result of reduced footfall at Lion Yard (£676k worse than at Q1). This cost is shown under our Economy and Place Group
- Higher than budgeted expenditure on housing benefit (worse by £595k since Q1). The main reason for this is the high level of rents from charitable landlords, which cannot be fully recovered from DWP. The Council is obliged to cover the shortfall. Migration of claimants to Universal Credit also adversely impacts the level of subsidy that can be recovered from central government. This cost is shown under the Corporate Hub.
- The impact of the nationally agreed pay award of 3.5%, against a budget assumption of 2.5% (£359k worse across the General Fund). This is shown under the Corporate Hub
- Forecast income in relation to the fleet and crematorium continues to be lower than budgeted. The position has improved since Q1 as the crematorium has been able to recoup one-off costs related to the compulsory purchase of land adjacent to the A14. New external customers have also been secured at the garage. This is shown under City Services
- Continued higher than forecast income from our car parks (£812k better than budgeted as at Q2) mitigates some of the overall overspend. This is shown under City Services.

A more detailed breakdown to service level is shown below, followed by a table with explanations of the more significant variances.

Group / Service Grouping	Current Budget 2025/26 £'000	Current Forecast 2025/26 £'000	(Under)/ Over Budget 2025/26 £'000
<b>City Services</b>			
Bereavement Services	(734)	(603)	131
Car Parking	(6,473)	(7,287)	(814)
Community Safety	366	366	0
Garage Services	64	206	142
Management	379	491	112
Markets and Street Trading	(528)	(508)	20
Operational Hub	526	520	(6)
Sport and Recreation	649	774	125
Streets and Open Spaces	4,315	4,742	427
Waste & Recycling	2,451	2,451	0
<b>Total City Services</b>	<b>1,015</b>	<b>1,152</b>	<b>137</b>
<b>Communities</b>			
Active Lifestyles	2	3	1
Community Centres	1,037	907	(130)
Community Development	1,957	1,842	(115)
Community Safety	777	790	13
Culture and Community	1,082	990	(92)
Environmental Health	1,412	1,464	52
General Fund Housing	2,157	2,061	(96)
Grant Support	1,443	1,444	1
Homelessness	534	529	(5)
Housing Strategy	117	117	0
Management	203	199	(4)
<b>Total Communities</b>	<b>10,721</b>	<b>10,346</b>	<b>(375)</b>
<b>Corporate Hub</b>			
3C Legal	872	902	30
Central Contingency and Recharges to the HRA	(6,058)	(5,571)	487
Chief Executive's Office and Communications	920	941	21
Customer Support	2,207	2,206	(1)
Democratic Services	1,534	1,665	131
Financial Services, Insurance, Payroll and Pension Costs	5,759	5,669	(90)
Guildhall/Mandela House/Facilities Management	1,323	1,367	44
ICT & Digital	3,825	3,790	(35)
Management	227	206	(21)
Net Interest Payable/Receivable	(1,490)	(1,495)	(5)
People & Change	1,665	1,725	60
Procurement	291	353	62
Revenues and Benefits	1,305	1,953	648
Shared Audit	257	247	(10)
<b>Total Corporate Hub</b>	<b>12,637</b>	<b>13,958</b>	<b>1,321</b>
<b>Economy and Place</b>			
Development Team	141	140	(1)
Economy, Energy and Climate Change	1,012	1,006	(6)
General Fund Housing	289	289	0
Grant Support	88	93	5
Housing Strategy	121	120	(1)
Management	214	214	0
Property Services	(9,967)	(9,261)	706
Sustainable City	270	270	0
<b>Total Economy and Place</b>	<b>(7,832)</b>	<b>(7,129)</b>	<b>703</b>
<b>Planning and Building Control</b>			
3C Building Control	254	254	0
Greater Cambridge Planning	1,393	1,349	(44)
<b>Total Planning and Building Control</b>	<b>1,647</b>	<b>1,603</b>	<b>(44)</b>
<b>Total for all Groups</b>	<b>18,188</b>	<b>19,930</b>	<b>1,742</b>

Group	Cost Centre/Service	Reason for Variance	Forecast Over budget/ (under budget) £'000
City Services	Car Parks	Customer demand has exceeded expectations at the Grand Arcade, Park Street and Queen Anne Terrace Car Parks. This has more than offset reduced usage of the Grafton Centre Car Parks resulting from the closure of shops and cinema. New offices and laboratories are not yet open at the Grafton Centre site and the impact of these premises on car park usage therefore remains to be seen.	(814)
	Project Delivery	This variance is mainly accounted for by salaries. This is because the budget expectation was that changes would start on 1st April as part of the restructure. Changes did not start until 1st July.	102
	City Services Director	The £88k overspend in salaries is due to the regrading of 2 posts & the addition of the post of Programme Manager following colleague feedback on the restructure. It also reflects essential investment in leadership and management training to establish the new City Services leadership team, as no dedicated training budget is allocated.	112
	Recreation Assets	This variance is mainly accounted for by salaries. This is because the budget expectation was that changes would start on 1st April as part of the restructure. Changes did not start until 1st July.	133
	Bereavement Services and Crematorium	This is due to increased competition: More providers (including online-only services) are offering direct cremation, increasing consumer choice and price competition. Demand has also fallen due to changing preferences: Cultural shifts, environmental concerns, and economic pressures are pushing more people toward simpler, cost-effective options. The overspend has been partly mitigated from recouping legal costs associated with our successful A14 legal claim.	131
	Garage- External Work	East Cambridgeshire and South Cambridgeshire income is on track. Thalia contract income is lower than expected due to replacement of their fleet with a repairs & maintenance contract. Fleet manager actively looking for new business & in discussions with several companies. Private work less than forecast due to level of maintenance required on ageing City Council fleet. A vacant fitter post & long term sickness have reduced saleable hours.	168
	Grounds Maintenance & Street Cleaning	This variance is mainly accounted for by salaries. This is because the budget expectation was that changes would start on 1st April as part of the restructure. Changes did not start until 1st July. We also have staff members on long term sick leave, an overspend on agency staff covering both the sick leave and a vacant post. The cost of external cleaning contracts has risen, partly due to higher than expected increases in the National Living Wage. These pressures are partly mitigated by a forecast £100k overachievement of income.	300
Communities	Clay Farm Community Centre	Underspend made up of fixing cooling plant rather than replacing (£80k) and a saving following a 3 month lag in recruiting a replacement manager (£20k)	(91)
	Corn Exchange and Guildhalls	The positive variance is partly driven by a 17% increase in programme activity, which led to higher income from booking fees, hires, bar sales, and recharges. It is also attributed to reduced expenditure resulting from staffing shortages across the operational team.	(57)



Group	Cost Centre/Service	Reason for Variance	Forecast Over budget/ (under budget) £'000
Corporate Hub	Members Allowances	The overspend is due to the changes in Members' basic and special responsibility allowances. This is the net forecast for the cost centre as some of the other budget lines have underspent.	54
	People and Change	Overspend caused following changes made to the structure as part of the One Cambridge programme. The Assistant Director (People and Change) role, and the new People Advisor post were approved as part of the implementation process, but costs have been higher than the available budget. This will be reviewed as part of budget setting for 26/27.	60
	Procurement Services	£62k overspend due to additional fixed term resource for contract and procurement analysis.	62
	Local Taxation Services	The service is forecasting a net overspend of £70k due to a combination of factors. Main pressures include £50k for agency staff covering long-term sickness and maternity leave, £29k from underachieved Council Tax recovery income, £6.5k from the under recovery of legal costs, and £1k for business-as-usual spend. These are partly offset by a £13k MOD contribution for 81 Long Road and £3.2k net vacancy savings.	70
	Central Contingency	This central budget held the pay award contingency. The nationally agreed pay award was 3.5% which was higher than the budget assumption of 2.5%. All service budgets have received the full benefit of the pay award (and consequent increases in National Insurance and Pension contributions) and therefore the full impact of the shortfall is shown on this central budget line.	487
	Housing Benefit Subsidy & Expenditure	The projected subsidy loss to 31 March 2026 is £910k, partly offset by £270k in overpayment recovery, giving a net loss of £640k. A £45k Discretionary Housing Payments underspend further reduces the overspend to £595k. The main pressure on this budget is Rent Allowances (£723k) due to high rents from charitable landlords with restricted subsidy recovery due to the national regulations. Universal Credit migration has also increased unrecoverable subsidy by £60k. Losses are reviewed every four weeks with no further major changes expected.	595
Economy and Place	Park Street Aparthotel	The Park Street lease was completed on 22 October 2025. Rent will commence on 14 January 2026. The forecast has been adjusted to incorporate the rent-free period.	(461)
	Commercial Properties	A new letting at Cyrus Way has been completed at a higher rent. The property was previously vacant. There is a forecast overachievement in rental income on Barnwell Business Park following completion of a number of recent lease renewals and new relettings of previously vacant units on this estate. This higher income is partly offset by underachieved rental and service charge income from Orwell House Offices as units have been vacated pending the Hartree redevelopment. These empty units are also subject to business rates, payable by the Council.	(77)
	Property Services	This is due to a vacant post but a recruitment plan in progress.	(58)
	The Lion Yard	Despite best efforts, the tenant failed to provide ground rent calculations for 3 years. Upon reconciliation of outstanding years, it transpired that there was a reimbursement of c.£700,000 required, covering the last 3 years up to 24/25. The on-account income forecast for 25/26 has therefore been reduced by £350k to reflect the impact of the detailed ground rent information.	1,076
		Other Minor Variances across the Council	(51)
		<b>Total</b>	<b>1,742</b>

## General Responsibilities: Capital

The current forecast position on the council's general fund capital programme is as follows:

Capital Forecast – Q2 2025/26	Current Budget	Q2 Forecast	Forecast Slippage	(Under budget)/overbudget
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>General Fund</b>				
Park Street	32,797	16,000	0	(16,797)
Other	44,893	31,447	13,275	(171)
<b>GF Total</b>	<b>77,690</b>	<b>47,447</b>	<b>13,275</b>	<b>(16,968)</b>

We are expecting to spend £16.8 million less than budgeted on the Park Street redevelopment, which has recently fully opened, as a result of strong contract management. This project is funded from external borrowing, so the underspend reduces the need to borrow rather than releasing any new resource. There was an unavoidable overspend of £917k for the new Operational Hub, caused by delays from external contractors. It is important to note that the original capital bid was made over five years ago, and since then, inflationary pressures—particularly in construction, materials, and labour, have significantly increased the cost base for delivery.

Other General Fund capital projects are broadly forecast to deliver to budget. The timing of loans to the Cambridge Investment Partnership (CIP) for the Newbury Project means that £6.8m of this budget will need to be carried forward into 2026/27. Other projects where budgets are expected to be requested to be carried forward are East Barnwell (£1.5 million), the WREN Solar project at Waterbeach (£1.4m), swimming pool decarbonisation (£1.1m), repairs to Jesus Green river bank (£0.8 million), and remedial works at the Clay Farm Centre (£0.7m).

## General Responsibilities: Risk

We keep a list of risks that could prevent the Council meeting its goals and its responsibilities, we score those risks to understand how serious they are, and we put in place controls and actions to reduce the level of those risks.

All of our individual risks feed into our seven strategic risk areas. These strategic risk areas apply across all of our activities, covering both our general responsibilities and our social landlord function. Every risk area is rated either green, yellow, amber or red, as follows:

- Green shows that risk levels in that area are low and well managed.
- Yellow indicates that there is a higher level of risk, but it is still well managed and under control
- Amber flags that the risk level is higher than we want and we are taking action to bring the risk level down. Where the risk level is caused by external factors outside our control and cannot be lowered, it needs to be very closely monitored.
- Red is the most serious level, and where we have a red risk there should be a clear, agreed and closely monitored action plan to reduce the risk.

### *Strategic Risks*

The latest assessment of each strategic risk area is as follows:

	<b>Strategic Risk Area</b>	<b>Risk level</b>
<b>1</b>	The Council is able to deliver on our vision and objectives	Yellow
<b>2</b>	The Council is financially robust	Yellow
<b>3</b>	The Council has an effective and resilient workforce	Green
<b>4</b>	The Council's physical and digital infrastructure is fit for purpose	Yellow
<b>5</b>	The Council has viable and robust plans for the future	Yellow
<b>6</b>	The Council is able to meet its legal responsibilities	Yellow
<b>7</b>	The Council is well governed	Green

What this shows is that the Council has good overall control and effective risk management.

However, in order to make sure that there is full visibility, any operational risk which is rated either amber or red is also reported, split out by whether they are an operational risk for our general responsibilities (reported here) or for our role as a residential social landlord (reported in appendix 2).

Under our General Responsibilities there are 6 amber operational risks and no red risks. The Council's amber risks are as follows:

#### *Operational Risks*

<b>Description</b>	<b>Current Controls</b>	<b>Actions to reduce risk level</b>
Cyber-attack. This is a significant external risk, as seen through examples of attacks on national and international businesses, local authorities, NHS and others	Active system management, mandatory cybersecurity training for staff, easy reporting of suspected phishing emails.	Budget bid in place for additional external support to ensure 24/7 system oversight. This risk is likely to remain amber, even with additional controls
Reaching the Council's carbon reduction target	Climate Change Strategy, Climate Change Fund	Review and update of Strategic Asset Management Plan, providing costs and action plan to deliver MEES <sup>3</sup> and net zero
Compliance with property safety and repair standards for our corporate and commercial properties	Regular testing and servicing	Compliance review underway, to complete by April 2026
Recruitment and retention of staff within the commercial property team	Training plans, internal recruitment	Advertise vacancies more widely; using consultancy to cover gaps.
Impact of whole organisation restructure on operational Health and Safety	Programmed training and engagement with operational teams	There is a budget bid for additional operational H&S capacity
Accurate accounting for S106 funds as process is updated	S106 funds are logged and tracked in Excel but we are in the process of moving to a improved system	New process and systems are being developed, working across Economy and Place, City Services and Shared Planning

<sup>3</sup> Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard

## Appendix 2: Residential Social Landlord: Performance, Finance and Risk Indicators

### Residential Social Landlord: Performance Measures

These measures are the key pieces of information we track to understand how well we are performing as a landlord. As set out in the main report there are a number of measures that are below our baseline target, and there are specific improvement plans in place to bring them up to baseline and beyond.

(for Key, see appendix 1 Performance measures)

Title & Description	Baseline target	Stretch target	2025/26		2024/25				2023/24		Plan Item
			Q2	Q1	Q4	Q3	Q2	Q1	Q4	Q3	
% statutory safety inspections completed on time in our homes <i>Percentage of all safety-critical and statutory checks that are carried out as required.</i>	95%	99%	100%								2
FRAs, completed or within time, (snapshot of existing risk) <i>Ensures fire safety-critical and statutory checks are delivered as required, followed up by the appropriate actions</i>	95%	99%	94%								2
Emergency responsive repairs completed within the landlord's target timescale <i>Reflects speed and reliability of repairs, supporting tenant satisfaction.</i>	90%	95%	87%	93%	95%	88%	98%	97%	98%		2
Awaab's Law: % of emergency hazards resolved within 24 hours (pending) <i>Ensures all safety-critical quality of the Council's housing stock.</i>	TBC		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Average re-let time in days (standard re-lets) <i>Ensures both loss of income and the time a household is waiting for a home is minimised</i>	38.5	35	46.9	43.4	37.3	37.7	39.7	42.7	60.9	63.7	2
Void loss - % of rent lost through dwellings being vacant (LCRA) <i>Monitors the impact of empty homes on the council's income stream.</i>	3%	1%	4.21%	4.16%	3.22%	3.10%	2.96%	3.27%	2.84%		4
Current tenant arrears as a % of the annual rent debit <i>Monitors outstanding debts owed to the council</i>	3.50%	3.85%	3.82%	3.64%	3.27%	3.59%	3.52%	3.48%	3.45%	3.37%	4
Former tenant arrears as a % of the annual rent debit <i>Monitors outstanding debts owed to the council</i>	2%	2.2%	3.3%	3.0%	3.0%	2.8%	2.7%	2.5%	1.9%	1.8%	4
No. Council housing starts <i>Quarterly update of cumulative total on number of builds started this year</i>	n/a		29	29	105	0	0	0	84	84	3
No. new affordable homes completed within councils own programme <i>Quarterly update of cumulative total on number of builds completed this year</i>	n/a		70	70	98	70	24	0	248	152	3
% new build affordable homes to CamStandard on Council owned land <i>This is about improving the environmental impact of our homes</i>	n/a		84%	79%	78.65%	78.65%	77.71%	77.71%	76.57%	73.11%	3
Homes retrofitted to EPC C rating <i>This is about improving the environmental impact of our homes</i>	Variable based on funding		7	4	59	72	54	18			1

## Residential Social Landlord: Finance

We manage the finances of our social landlord responsibilities separately to the finances for our general responsibilities. This is done through a separate account called the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

### Revenue

At the end of September, our projections show that we will have spent £2.2m more than planned by the end of the year. The budget agreed at the beginning of the year had included a £1m contribution to the HRA balance by the end of the year. What our current projection shows is that the HRA balance will reduce by £1.2m at the end of the year

HRA Forecast – Q2 2025/26	Current Budget £'000	Q2 Forecast £'000	(Under budget)/over budget £'000
Income	(57,998)	(58,285)	(287)
Operating expenditure	36,897	40,320	3,423
<b>Net operating surplus</b>	<b>(21,101)</b>	<b>(17,965)</b>	<b>3,136</b>
Net interest cost	8,949	7,942	(1,007)
Capital financing	11,140	11,140	0
Contribution to earmarked reserves	0	36	36
<b>(Surplus)/deficit</b>	<b>(1,012)</b>	<b>1,153</b>	<b>2,165</b>

The main reasons for the forecast overspend are:

- the need for interim fire safety measures including waking watch at a number of sites (£459k). As a result of work already undertaken, the number of sites with waking watches in place has reduced from eleven to two, with the final two scheduled to be lifted in January 2026, which will remove this cost going forward
- increased spend on housing repairs including damp, condensation and mould (£1,180,000)
- cost of rectifications (£846k forecast overspend) as a result of fire and other damage to properties
- additional costs of dealing with voids due to the poor condition of significant numbers of void properties (£528,000)
- historic costs for the management of Mill Road estate (£471,000)
- these overspends are partly offset by reduced interest costs as the HRA has not yet needed to borrow externally this year (£1,222,000 better than budget)

The following table presents all the major variances on the Housing Revenue Account.

Category	Line Item	Service/Cost Centre	Reason for Variance	Over budget/ (under budget) £'000
Income	Rental income (dwellings)		Gross rents are forecast to be higher than budgeted. This is partly due to new council dwellings being let out to tenants earlier than assumed in the budget. The number of dwellings that are being re-let on the basis of rent flexibility is higher than anticipated with an overall positive impact on rental income.	(250)
	Interest Receivable		The forecast level of interest receivable from the HRA's share of cash investments is lower than budgeted as the rate of interest on investments is lower than assumed when the budget was set.	215
Expenditure	Supervision & management - General	Housing Support Staffing Costs	There have been additional staffing costs required to deliver the rent regulation project. Furthermore, the housing finance team was not fully staffed until October, so there was a need to use agency staffing, resulting in a forecast overspend. Permanent staff have now been recruited so no further agency expenditure is anticipated.	285
	Supervision & management - Special	Stanton House	This housing scheme has now been handed over to the Housing Development Agency and therefore the unspent budget will not be needed this year.	(64)
		Sheltered Scheme Cleaning	The reported underspend on this budget has reduced by £60k since Q1 following realignment of budgets and staffing within the overall HRA budget.	(62)
		Mill Road Third Party Management	Mill Road estate faced delays in year-end accounts from the estate management company, causing multiple overspends to fall due at once and increasing budget pressures. One-off utility costs, complex estate services, and new compliance requirements have also driven costs up. Accounts are now up to date, but late service charge information still makes budgeting difficult.	206
	Repairs & maintenance	Risk and Compliance	Currently there is a lower volume of electrical safety surveys being conducted due to more being completed in previous years.	(287)
		Citywide Schemes	Current overspend on door entry and lift maintenance is being offset by underspend in lamp column repairs. The remaining underspend is wholly on smoke/heat detector replacements due to a large portion of the programme being delivered ahead of schedule in the previous financial year.	(191)
		Compliance Team	Currently there are agency staff back filling roles within the team which is causing overspend. Active recruitment to fill the permanent roles is in progress	128
		Third Party Management Company Servicing and Repairs	Mill Road estate faced delays in year-end accounts from the estate management company, causing multiple overspends to fall due at once and increasing budget pressures. One-off utility costs, complex estate services, and new compliance requirements have also driven costs up. Accounts are now up to date, but late service charge information still makes budgeting difficult.	271
		Asset Management	Asset Management is expected to overspend significantly, predominantly due to the need to provide building security where fire safety works are awaited.	459
		Voids	High number of void properties are being returned into the service in very poor condition. There are also a high number of properties that need major clearance work before void works can commence which incurs additional costs.	528
		Insurance Related Repairs	There has been a high volume of insurance works during the year causing the overspend. This is partly as a result of fires at HRA properties, where some rectification costs cannot be claimed from insurers and the Council must also pay the excess on its claims.	846
		Repairs Day to Day	High volume of damp and mold works during the year, most of this has been undertaken by an external supplier due to the specialist nature of the works	1,180
	Interest Payable	Loan Interest	The loan interest budget assumed that external borrowing would be required from 1st October 2025. Borrowing is now not anticipated until Q4, therefore the forecast amount of interest payable has reduced. Furthermore, the level of internal borrowing outstanding as at 31 March 2025 was lower than had been assumed when the loan interest budget was set, therefore interest payments on this internal borrowing are forecast to be lower.	(1,222)
			Other Minor Variances across the Housing Revenue Account	123
			<b>Total</b>	<b>2,165</b>



## Capital Programme

The current forecast position on the HRA capital programme is as follows:

Capital Forecast – Q2 2025/26	Current Budget	Q2 Forecast	Forecast Slippage	(Under budget)/over budget
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Housing Revenue Account</b>				
Existing stock	40,894	30,909	10,011	27
New build and acquisitions	101,907	52,420	48,292	(1,195)
Other	3,284	13	96	(3,175)
<b>HRA Total</b>	<b>146,085</b>	<b>83,342</b>	<b>58,399</b>	<b>(4,343)</b>

## Residential Social Landlord: Risk

The approach to risk is the same as for our general responsibilities, with the overall risk level as set out in the part one appendix.

There is one amber risk and no red risks that relate specifically to our role as a residential social landlord

Description	Current Controls	Actions to reduce risk level
Failure of communal heating systems in newly developed housing blocks	Communal heating systems are monitored for any issues	Specialist consultants are advising the Council, with a list of key actions in place for our contractor

## Appendix 3: Treasury Management

The Council has a statutory responsibility to report its treasury management activity. In simple terms this sets out how we are managing our money, including our investments and our borrowing.

During the year to date, all treasury management activity has been carried out in line with the Treasury Management Strategy Statement as approved by Full Council in February 2025.

As at 30 September 2025, total council borrowing stood at £243.4 million, which is the same as the previous quarter and in line with expectations. This consists of £213.6 million of HRA self-financing loans which the council was required by government to take out in return for the transfer of its housing stock in 2012, and £29.8 million of external debt finance to support the Park Street development. Further planned borrowing will take place in the second half of the year.

Interest income on investments is currently forecast at £5.3 million for the year, compared to a budget of £5.4 million. This reflects the reduction in the Bank of England bank rate from 4.5% in April to 4% now and further forecast reductions in interest rates. This is partly offset by the impact of significant capital slippage which means that the council has higher balances to invest while it waits for capital projects to proceed.

The council's latest prudential indicators are set out in detail below.

## Prudential and Treasury Management Indicators

Prudential Indicator Estimates (£m)	BSR 2025/26	Q2 2025/26 (Forecast)
<b>Capital expenditure</b>		
- GF	77.690*	47.447
- HRA	146.085*	83.342
<b>Total</b>	<b>223.775*</b>	<b>130.789</b>
<b>Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) as at 31 March</b>		
- GF	155.830	154.843
- HRA	328.202	273.674
<b>Total</b>	<b>484.032</b>	<b>428.517</b>
<b>Deposits (average annualised balance)</b>	<b>90.000</b>	<b>90.000</b>
<b>External gross debt as at 31 March</b>	<b>340.793</b>	<b>340.539</b>
<b>Ratio of net financing costs to revenue stream</b>		
- GF %	1.87%	-4.85%
- HRA %	15.30%	12.36%
<b>Net income from commercial and service investments</b>		
- GF (£ million)	16.176	17.537
- HRA (£ million)	0.472	0.621
<b>Ratio of net income from commercial and service investments to net revenue stream</b>		
- GF %	42.21%	60.06%
- HRA %	0.79%	1.07%

\* Capital expenditure budgets have been updated to reflect rephasing and other changes to the capital programme approved since the BSR

<b>Treasury Indicator Estimates (£m)</b>	<b>BSR 2025/26</b>	<b>Q2 2025/26</b>
<b>Authorised limit</b>		
- Borrowing	600.000	600.000
- Other long-term liabilities	2.000	2.000
<b>Operational boundary</b>		
- Borrowing	494.032	408.601
- Other long-term liabilities	1.500	1.500
<b>Upper limit for total principal sums deposited for over 364 days and up to 5 years</b>	50.000	50.000
<b>Analysis of exposure to fixed and variable interest rates</b>		
- Net interest on fixed rate borrowing/deposits	11.311	11.311
- Net interest on variable rate borrowing/deposits	(1.675)	(1.675)
<b>Maturity structure of new fixed rate borrowing – 5 years and above</b>		
- Upper limit	100%	100%
- Lower limit	100%	100%