



Cambridge City Council Notice of Council

Date: Thursday, 20 November 2025

Time: 5.30 pm

Venue: Downing Place United Reform Church, 4 Downing Place, Cambridge, CB2 3EL

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

Dear Councillor,

A meeting of Cambridge City Council will be held in the Downing Place United Reform Church, 4 Downing Place, Cambridge, CB2 3EL on Thursday, 20 November 2025 at 5.30 pm and I hereby summon you to attend.

Dated 12 November 2025

Yours faithfully

Robert Pollock

Chief Executive

Agenda

- 1 Apologies for absence
- 2 Declarations of Interest
- 3 Mayor's announcements
- 4 Minutes (Pages 5 - 40)
- 5 Public questions time
- 6 Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) Proposal (Pages 41 - 56)
Council to provide feedback and recommendations before sign-off of proposal by Cabinet.

The following appendices to the LGR report can be found at the link below:

[Agenda for Council on Thursday, 20th November, 2025, 5.30 pm - Cambridge Council](#)

- Option B - Draft LGR Proposal
- Option A - Cambridgeshire County Council report
- Option C – Huntingdonshire District Council proposal
- Option D – Peterborough City Council proposal
- Option E – Huntingdonshire District Council proposal
- Pixel – Cambridgeshire LGR balance sheet analysis
- Pixel - Cambridgeshire LGR funding disaggregation
- Newton People Services report

Emergency Evacuation Procedure

In the event of the fire alarm sounding all persons should vacate the building by way of the nearest escape route. The Duty Officer will assume overall control during any evacuation, however in the unlikely event the duty Officer is unavailable, this responsibility will be assumed by the Committee Chair.

Information for the public

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

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

Those wishing to address the meeting will be able to do by attending to speak in person.

As this is an extraordinary meeting any public question must relate to the item of business on the agenda. You must contact Democratic Services democratic.services@cambridge.gov.uk by 12 noon two working days before the meeting.

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

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

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COUNCIL

9 October 2025

6.00 - 9.30 pm

Present: Councillors Ashton, Baigent, Bennett, Bick, Bird, Blackburn-Horgan, Clough, Dalzell, Davey, Dryden, Flaubert, Gawthroe Wood, Glasberg, Griffin, Hauk, Holloway, Hossain, Howard, Illingworth, Lee, Lokhmotova, Martinelli, McPherson, Moore, Nestor, Payne, Porrer, Pounds, Robertson, Sheil, Smart, A. Smith, S. Smith, Swift, Thittala, Thornburrow, Todd-Jones, Tong, Wade and Young

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL**25/78/CNL Minutes of the meeting held on 24 July 2025**

A question was asked about the minute 25/67/CNL public questions time, Question 8, which it was stated that Market Traders had collected 1800 signatures which asked for 54 permanent stalls. Had this petition been received?

The Cabinet Member for Climate Action and Environment confirmed that no petition had been received since the last Council meeting.

Post Meeting Note: Democratic Services confirm that no petition has been received through the Council's petition scheme on this matter.

The minutes of 24 July 2025 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

25/79/CNL Mayor's announcements

Apologies were received from Councillors Gardiner-Smith and Divkovic.

The Mayor then expressed appreciation to the City Council's City Cultural Events and Active Lifestyles team for delivering a successful summer programme, which included events attended by both the Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

It was noted that the Mayor's diary had been particularly busy, encompassing a diverse range of charity and community engagements, including:

1. A football tournament for newly arrived Hongkongers, organised by the Cambridge Chinese Federation.
2. Hosting the Mayor of Heidelberg, Eckart Würzner, at the Guildhall.

3. A meeting with HRH The Duke of Edinburgh and the Lord Lieutenant at Murray Edwards College, which included a tour of the college's art collection.
4. Leading the civic procession alongside the Deputy Lieutenant to Great St. Mary's Church for the Chevin Sermon and Harvest Festival.

Members were also informed of an upcoming event hosted by the Cambridge Africa Network at Storey's Field on 25th October to mark Black History Month.

Finally, Members were encouraged to view the art display from the Trials of Democracy event/performance, currently exhibited outside the chamber. Originally held at the Guildhall's former tourist office, the display captured public feedback and expectations around the seven Nolan Principles, which underpinned the Council's Code of Conduct.

25/80/CNL Declarations of Interest

Councillor	Item	Reason
Bird	25/91/CNL 25/86/CNL	Personal: Member of Unison. Personal: Board Member of Cambridge Investment Partnership (CIP)
Davey	25/91/CNL	Personal: Member of National Association of Probation Officers
Lokhmotova	25/85/CNL 25/93/CNL	Prejudicial: Part of the design team. Did not take part of the discussion or vote.
A Smith	25/86/CNL	Personal: Board member of CIP
S Smith	25/86/CNL	Personal: Board member of CIP
Sheil	25/91/CNL	Personal: Member of Unison
Todd-Jones	25/91/CNL	Personal: Member of Unison
Thornburrow	25/86/CNL	Personal: Board member of CIP
Todd-Jones	25/91/CNL	Personal: Member of Unison
Tong	25/85/CNL 25/93/CNL	Personal: Personal relationship with a member of the design team. Did not take part of the discussion or vote.

25/81/CNL Public questions time

Question 1:

On the subject of the City Council's blue bin contract with Re-Gen of Newry in Northern Ireland. At the council meeting on 24th July you said that you didn't have any information on whether Re-Gen was proceeding with its plan to open an MRF (Materials Recovery Facility) in the Midlands in England.

This new MRF would avoid the long 400-mile trip that all our blue bin recycling currently takes to Northern Ireland, and the contribution to global warming that these frequent trips entail.

You said you would be happy to investigate and report back to us at this meeting how Re-Gen are progressing with this. What news do you have?

The Cabinet Member for Climate Action and Environment said the following:

- i. The Council acknowledged that it remained Re-Gen's intention to acquire a UK mainland Materials Recovery Facility (MRF), which would represent positive progress.
- ii. Contracts of this nature were inherently complex and as such, timelines may be subject to change. Officers would ensure all stakeholders, were kept informed as further updates become available.
- iii. Would like to reiterate, as previously stated in this chamber, that the contract was signed based on the MRF located in Newry, Northern Ireland.
- iv. Now that the contract had been in place for several months, could confirm the plant was currently achieving a high sorting efficiency of 96%, representing an approximate 16% improvement compared to the previous contract.
- v. This meant that virtually all materials placed in blue bins by Cambridge residents were now being successfully recycled which was excellent news for the city's sustainability efforts.

Supplementary:

Since 2019, Cambridge City Council announced their aim of becoming a net zero council by 2030. But every week since March, Re-Gen lorries had been emitting 56 tons of climate damaging CO2 as they carried resident's recycling 400 miles to Nuri in Northern Ireland, where I have visited and seen it.

These emissions were the Council's responsibility and contract, and it is residents' recycling. In the light of this, why should Cambridge residents believe this Council did care about fighting climate change?

Actions speak a lot louder than words.

Had the Council taken the easy option and made no efforts to find a more sustainable solution using a much more local MRF site because the Council didn't care?

The Cabinet Member responded:

- i. The Council had not taken the easy option; securing this contract had required significant time and effort from officers.
- ii. The original tender was issued two years ago under RECAP (Cambridgeshire and Peterborough), ahead of the previous contract's expiry. Unfortunately, no company was able to deliver services across all councils as had occurred previously.
- iii. The contract was subsequently divided into lots and re-tendered. However, no applications met the required criteria and it was not possible for the Council to proceed due to the lack of suitable bids.
- iv. Acknowledged concerns regarding emissions and confirmed these were being monitored and reported.
- v. Work had been undertaken to reduce emissions from the Waste Service, including the introduction of electric bin lorries and the successful rollout of hydrogenated vegetable oil (HVO) as an alternative fuel. The trial was so successful that officers had worked with Re-Gen to use this in their own fleet.
- vi. The recycling plant itself was modern and energy efficient. Its processes were significantly more efficient than those used previously.
- vii. Transportation to the MRF was just one aspect; the management and operation of the facility were equally important.
- viii. Once sorted, recyclable materials may be transported globally. Fortunately, most of Cambridge's waste continued to be recycled within the UK and Western Europe.
- ix. This recycling was part of a vast global network. Once materials were recycled and turned into new products, they could travel internationally again. Transport to the MRF was therefore just one small part of this wider system.

Question 2:

Cambridge City Council has rightly earned a reputation for its work to promote inclusion and advance the equality of all people regardless of background, race, disability, or disadvantage. This is a legacy of which all members and officers of this council can be proud.

How would the Leader of the Council ensure that rights of individuals with protected characteristics are safeguarded during the upcoming period of local government reorganisation?

The Leader of the Council said the following in response:

- i. The Council remained proud of its ongoing commitment to promoting equity and inclusion for everyone in our city.
- ii. This commitment was reflected in several key policy priorities, including:
 - Meeting the needs of diverse communities in a growing city,
 - Providing accessible and inclusive council services,
- iii. Enabling all residents to participate fully in a safe, welcoming, and inclusive city.
- iv. Equality, diversity, inclusion, and belonging were central to all the Council's work whether with residents, partners, or the wider communities we serve.
- v. As plans for potential unitary councils become clearer—possibly next year—these values would continue to underpin how services are designed and delivered, and how the Council prepares for the transition.
- v. Once the government determines the boundaries for the new unitary councils in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, the Council would work collaboratively with partner authorities to establish the new unitary.
- vi. As part of this process, we would focus on designing inclusive governance and decision-making frameworks. These would support the development of services that meet the needs of all communities and foster an equitable and inclusive culture within the new council's workforce.
- vii. Throughout the reorganisation, we would ensure meaningful engagement with individuals who may be at risk of discrimination based on protected characteristics. This included the engagement already undertaken as part of the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) proposal, as well as deeper consultation with residents during the design phase of the new council. We would work through existing council teams and local community groups to reach a diverse range of people.

Supplementary:

In light of the planned local government reorganization, would the Council support the formation of the city council's participation in a joint equality panel

with South Cambridge and Cambridge County Councils, to share best practices, co-develop shared priorities on equality and inclusion, and improve the equality impact assessments as local government reorganization approaches?

And would you support the equality panel considering participation in such a scheme at the panel's next meeting?

The Leader responded:

- i. The Council did have their own what was equality panel is now going to be an equity panel which for now was a successful way of working.
- ii. As the Council moved towards a new unitary council, the Council would develop new processes as a part of that.
- iii. To develop a new structure now not knowing what the structure of our new unitary council might be that probably wouldn't be the best approach at this time.
- iv. the current Equality Panel was an appropriate place for Council to be able to discuss the kinds of issues that had been raised.

Question 3:

Here is an evidence-based example of how funds could be raised by the Council by charging coach companies to bring tourists into Cambridge:

The city of Siena in Italy has operated an efficient system for the management of tourist coaches for over 10 years. It has a calibrated scale of charges to suit every kind of visit. There are two categories: a) day visits and b) parties staying in hotels. Clearly the system is designed to favour coach groups staying overnight, who would therefore contribute to the local economy.

Day visits: Coach companies in the Siena model are charged €160 for one dropoff and one pick-up in a day at one of 4 designated points just outside the walls of the city. These provide a total of 22 coach spaces. In between times, coaches park at the designated coach park lower down the hill, where there are 70 spaces. Bus companies can opt to buy 100 permits for €10,000.

Coach parties staying in hotels in Siena: Coach companies are charged a discounted rate for drop-off/pick-up of €75, payable through the hotel.

Besides this, as explained, there is a whole range of prices to reflect preferences. Website: <https://sigericospa.it/en/tourist-bus-rates/>

Estimated revenue from 50day visits: $50 \times \text{€}160$ (£140) = €8000 i.e. £7000. Assume 20 day visits every day of the year: $20 \times 365 \times \text{€}140 =$

£1,022,000 yearly, funds which could - if applied in Cambridge - go some way to subsidise our own existing bus services.

Question: Does the Council have statistics of the daily average number of coach drop-offs along the Backs? Given that the Council is seeking ways of boosting its finances, would it not make sense for it to adopt a similar system of charging tourist coaches for visiting Cambridge?

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Transport said the following:
Sienna has dealt with these issues. It's another reason to visit that wonderful inspiring city.

- i. The suggestions align with the Council's broader ambitions to manage congestion, enhance air quality and support sustainable travel.
- ii. The management of the high public highway including roads, laybys and on street drop off and pickup points is the statute responsibility of the Cambridgeshire County Council as the local highway authority.
- iii. The Council had no direct powers to introduce or enforce charges for coach movements or stopping on the public highway.
- iv. The Council did not collect data on the numbers or frequency of coach drop offs along the back as this activity takes place on the public highway and falls within the remit of the County Council.
- v. The Council would be happy to support the County Council and Combined Authority to explore options for improved coach management in and around the city.
- vi. This could include reviewing the location and suitability of the coach drop off points, exploring opportunities for designated coach parking and considering potential char charging mechanisms where legally permissible and engaging with local businesses and the tourist section.
- vii. Any formal scheme would require the County Council agreement, consultation with operators in compliance with the UK legislation for highways.
- viii. While the Council were supportive of exploring the measures that encouraged sustainable and well-managed tourism, any decision would be with the County Council; would raise these suggestions with them whenever the opportunity arose.

Supplementary:

Would this be part of the discussion when the Unitary Council was formed?

The Cabinet Member replied:

- i. When the Unitary Council was formed it would become responsible for highways and all transport issues within one council.

- ii. Hoped that it might be something the Council could discuss sooner because the Council were putting in a greater Cambridge Transport Strategy within the next 12 months.
- iii. The Transport Strategy would look the park and rides, which would become known as transport hubs. This would be an opportunity to improve the facilities for coaches where they could stop at the transport hubs and for buses and other perhaps the travelling community. The Council were keen to make a lot more of these transport hubs.
- iv. Certainly, when the Council became part of a Unitary transport and highways would come under one council.

Question 4:

The Labour Council's first priority must be to resolve our city's inequality problem and this has to start with housing the unhoused. In March 2021, the number of home seekers in Cambridge was 1119^[1]. In March this year, it was 1768^[2], an increase of 63%. Cambridge City Council's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, 2021 – 2026, states "our council house building programme is part of the solution. But it is not just about building. It is also about ensuring that the right support is available – to help people to remain in their homes or to find alternative accommodation where necessary" (p.1).

What is the Labour Council going to do to support the vulnerable 1768 households/individuals who are being failed?

[1]

<file:///home/saralina/Documents/Green/Motions%20and%20Public%20Questions/housing-key-facts-housing-register-applications-and-lettings.pdf>, page 7

[2]

<file:///home/saralina/Documents/Green/Motions%20and%20Public%20Questions/housing-key-facts-housing-register-applications-and-lettings.pdf>, page 7

The Cabinet Member for Cabinet Member for Safety, Wellbeing and Tackling Homelessness responded:

- i. To clarify, the figures referenced in the question did not relate to homeless individuals or rough sleepers supported through the Council's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy. Instead, they referred to the Housing Needs Register.
- ii. The individuals on the register were not "unhoused"; they were currently living in various types of accommodation and seeking to move into social housing. This included existing social housing tenants looking to transfer.
- iii. Applicants needed to demonstrate a housing need, such as overcrowding which determined their priority level, as set out in the Council's Lettings Policy. A rigorous and fair assessment process was used to establish the level of need.

- iv. As of this week, the number of applicants on the Housing Needs Register had decreased by nearly 400. New demand had been more than offset by allocations of social housing.
- v. The Council's housebuilding programme, unprecedented for a local authority of its size, had played a significant role in this reduction.
- vi. The Council went above and beyond its statutory duties to support vulnerable households. This included early intervention measures such as home visits and personalised housing plans.
- vii. Officers had supported thousands of residents in understanding their housing options and worked closely with local partners, including employment and debt advice services, health providers, and community organisations, to address issues such as financial hardship, mental health challenges, and domestic abuse.
- vi. The Tenancy Sustainment Service helped City Council tenants maintain their tenancies. Support included advice on maximising income, reducing debt or arrears, assistance with Universal Credit claims, and help with setting up new tenancies.
- viii. Officers also supported tenants in the private rented sector who are at risk of losing their homes. The Council's homelessness prevention service included Town Hall Lettings, intermediate housing options for applicants who were unable to access private rented accommodation.

Supplementary:

Twenty-two social homes (at social rent) were demolished on Fanshawe Road, which is where I live this year.

Of the eighty-four homes currently being built in their place,

- Thirty-nine would be at market sale,
- Eleven at 80% of market rent
- thirty-four at 60% of market rent,
- zero at social rent, which is 40% of market rent.

Thirty-two social homes (at social rent) are planned to be demolished at Davy Road. Of the ninety homes planned for Davy Road

- Forty-five would be at market sale.
- Eleven at 80% of market rent.
- Twenty-nine at 60% of market rent,
- Five at social rent.

This generated a loss of fifty-four social rents in our neighbourhood. Given the urgent need for social homes at social rents, why does the Council think it's

acceptable to knock them down and replace them with market homes or homes at a higher rent?

The Cabinet Member for Housing replied:

- i. The Council had built over a thousand homes and acknowledged that money did get tight to deliver these homes.
- ii. The Council were currently on target to deliver four hundred and twenty-four homes, two hundred and sixty-seven being council homes.
- iii. The Council were about to submit planning for another four hundred homes with half being council homes.
- iv. The Council remained committed to supporting residents and has successfully rehomed over 300 families from outdated, poor-quality housing. Some of these families had moved into the newly built, high-quality, and sustainable Council homes as part of the Council's broader housing programme.
- v. Regarding the developments at Fanshawe and Davy Road, the Council recognised the concern around the reduction in social rent homes. However, due to limited government funding, it was necessary to include a proportion of homes for market sale to generate income that could be reinvested into building more council homes.
- vi. There might not be so many social rents at Fanshawe Road and Davey Road, but there would be social rent homes built elsewhere in the city.
- vii. Residents would have the choice to come back to Fanshawe Road and Davey Road if they wanted.

Question 5:

Residents would like to know how Gonville & Caius Project Agora (Greek for Market Place) plans for Rose Crescent and Cambridge Market Square fit in with the Council's plans for a new Civic Quarter for the city centre. Residents note that the Gardenia, "Gardies" Cambridge's legendary Kebab shop has now closed for good. They point out that the College owns the building concerned on Rose Crescent.

The website of Mica, the architects for Project Agora and the Future Cities Forum <https://www.futurecitiesforum.london/single-post/mica-appointed-to-masterplan-project-agora-in-cambridge> state that there has been extensive consultation about Project Agora. Future Cities Forum reports 'This redevelopment will ensure seamless integration with the College's existing central Cambridge sites, and reinforce Caius' presence within the city centre, while maintaining the retail and commercial presence that makes Rose Crescent and Market Square one of the most charming areas of Cambridge.

The first “listening” phase has included an extensive consultation exercise with the fellowship, staff, students and alumni of Gonville & Caius College.’

Mica says on its website ‘Many Fellows, staff, students and alumni have contributed valuable thoughts on how the College might best take advantage of this exciting opportunity to create a vibrant, modern and “inclusive” space that enhances the student experience and supports the College’s academic and social functions’. But there is no mention of consulting Cambridge residents. How does Project Agora fit in with the council’s plans for the redevelopment of Cambridge Market Square as an event centre and the market traders and their customers?

The Cabinet Member for Climate Action and Environment said the following:

- i. The Civic Quarter Team held regular meetings with stakeholders, including Gonville and Caius College to update them on the changing civic quarter designs and to share any coordination issues such as road closures.
- ii. Gonville and Caius College had attended many of the Council’s civic quarter liaison group meetings as had the public speaker.
- iii. Gonville & Caius College had undertaken internal consultation with its Fellows, staff, students, and alumni regarding its proposed redevelopment plans. However, the Council has not yet been formally consulted or received details of the proposals. As the College was the freeholder of many buildings around the Market Square, the Council looked forward to reviewing the plans in due course.
- iv. Th Civic Quarter Team would continue to meet with Gonville & Caius College and coordinate the projects, works, road closures, etc. where suitable.

Question 6:

There is a controversial proposal for a new piece of public art at Milton Road public library costing £20,000. It will occupy a well-used and much-loved community space. Instead of mitigating any adverse impact of the development, it is increasing the damage by depriving the community of this much loved green space.

Why was the community not consulted about the proposal until a commission had already been granted?

The Cabinet Member for Culture, Economy and Skills said the following:

- i. The project was still in the concept design stage.

- ii. The decision with respect to the location of any proposed public art had not yet been confirmed.
- iii. Initial consultation had taken place with some members of the community and further consultation would be taking place in due course.

Question 7:

What evidence is there that the new unitary authority council will use the expensively remodeled council chamber for meetings?

The Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources said the following:

- i. By this time next year, the Council would decide whether to proceed with the Civic Quarter scheme, which included redevelopment of the Guildhall and the Council Chamber. This decision would be informed by greater clarity around local government reform.
- ii. The Council would also have a better understanding of both current and future accommodation needs.
- iii. These insights would help shape the business case for adapting the Chamber to meet the Council's requirements and potentially other uses, while respecting its historic significance.
- iv. Regardless of the outcome, Cambridge remained the most accessible location for Councillors and members of the public to attend council meetings. The Chamber had been built to support such democratic functions.
- v. Any refurbishment works would need to ensure the space is compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), increase seating capacity, and improve facilities to support effective meetings.

Supplementary:

What evidence did the Council have of requirements to remodel the Council Chamber.

Why was the Council Chamber project being included in firm plans and presumably budgeted, despite there being no confirmed requirements at this stage

The Cabinet Member replied:

- i. To date, alternative chamber had not been put forward to accommodate the new Unitary Council. Whichever councils were joined together when the decision is made by government, Cambridge would remain the centre of that new unitary council. This was the focal point and it's the historic centre of local democracy for centuries and would continue.

- ii. A refurbished chamber would be ready for the time the new Unitary Council would be established.
- iii. The County Council had made an error by relocating its headquarters out of Cambridge to a business park with poor public transport. The City Council did not want that.
- iv. The City Council wanted to be accountable to people in the city and the surrounding area for the decisions that were taken on their behalf.

Question 8:

Since the first proposals for the market the market traders has asked for 54 permanent pitches. Our petition received over 1800 signatures in support of this. The Civic Quarter team will argue that this is what they have moved towards. But when we created the petition, the plans for kiosks, with five year leases, had not been revealed so when the traders were asked for permanent stalls we were asking for stalls as we have them now, well designed, remaining in situ, traditional, functional, flexible and open. The civic quarter team has used our wording against us, saying it is providing what we have asked for but this is not true.

The businesses in Cambridge market are asking for very little to change from the current plans. We accept that some kiosks are necessary and desired. We accept that the council wishes to have a flexible space in front of the guildhall. We wish for some of our needs to also be met. Market traders just want some, traditional, in situ stalls. We do not believe this is too much to ask, or out of keeping with the current designs being shown. The ideal plan would be one third kiosks, one third permanent, traditional stalls, and one third gazebos.

We understand that the market needs work and this will involve a decant. Which we want to be well planned and managed, which I cannot believe will be objected to by anyone. We understand the desire for some kiosks and the reasons for them. We acknowledge the council's desire for a larger civic space outside the Guildhall and that fact that this means that some stalls will be gazebos in this space. We need a third option: which is traditional market stall. These allow the traders who trade 3-6 days a week a constant position on the market square. Which is absolutely key to a business being able to survive.

This option will also benefit the financial security of the market. The latest Market Business Plan puts the cost of the gazebos at £150,000 per year. A cost that the market will have to pay forever. With less gazebos, this huge expense is reduced. Traditional stalls also help to keep the history of the market alive, they convey the strong identity of Cambridge Market, they allow the beautiful evening light to flow over the market from Great St Mary's, and

they allow some of the longest established businesses on the market to continue to trade.

A question that needs answering is how will the event space work? The council is taking a huge amount away from the market but not offering us any ideas of what the space will be used for. We are told “small scale events” or “evening programs”. To the first I would suggest that removing over half of the stalls from the market is unnecessary to achieve such a goal. And to the second this comes with it's own problems. One of the proposals for the new market is longer opening hours on the weekends and for businesses to trade into the evening. However how are these two things possible at the same time? Also with 55 gazebos to remove on a Friday - Sunday, and this taking approximately three hours how will this also work with evening events, unless they start after 8pm.

The civic quarter team keeps stating that details can be worked out later. But with so many questions unanswered and the traders raising so many legitimate questions how is it feasible to continue pushing ahead with these designs.

Once again we ask would the council consider installing a section of open, well designed, in situ, traditional market stalls to help support the heart of Cambridge market and preserve it for the future?

Given all of the many serious concerns outlined in detail by market traders, how can the council say the current proposals will fulfill the project brief and support a thriving seven day a week market rather than hinder it? Concerns that included: Over development of the kiosk end, creating an appearance of a shuttered and closed market on quieter days, the huge rent increases, the financial and logistical issues of 55 gazebos, the lack of a plan for how stall allocation will be managed within the gazebos, how will night time trading coexist with evening events, the lack of stalls appropriate for 3-6 day traders and a complete fear of what will happen to traders and business over the decant time period.

The Cabinet Member for Climate Action and Environment said the following:

- i. Thanked the public speaker for their completed survey, ongoing feedback, including some very useful suggestions for the market aspect of the civic quarter project.
- ii. To date the Project Team had met with fifty-one traders through one-to-one meetings; there had been a positive response from traders with an

- interest in forty-eight of the permanent stalls and twelve traders looking to share pitches.
- iii. The Civic Quarter Project Team had engaged with traders in regular monthly meetings, as a result, several changes had been made based on feedback, which included the layouts of the stalls, the size of them, feedback on the demountables, and the support package, decant location and business plan which are yet to be agreed
 - iv. Understood the public speaker had made representations to the design team on the third stall option and the Project Team have explained why this design doesn't work.
 - v. The Council was working to balance the creation of a civic square with the need to support a thriving market that could flexibly expand and contract throughout the week and across seasons. The aim was to ensure the market remained accessible, safe, and inclusive for all users while enhancing the overall functionality and appeal of the space.
 - vi. A key part of the proposal was the introduction of demountable market stalls, allowing the square to be opened up as a flexible public space when the market was not operating. This would create a more welcoming environment for residents and visitors and help address ongoing issues of antisocial behaviour and crime, particularly at night when fixed stalls were left empty but remained in place
 - vii. Acknowledged the comments regarding the business plan and the Council have made a commitment to continue to review the costs.
 - viii. The business plan had been updated since it was last published, the Project Team were preparing the next iterations which would be shared with all the traders when ready.
 - ix. The one-to-one meetings with traders would be continuing next year and the Council had committed to the ongoing programme of trader meetings reviewing the next steps for further feedback.

Supplementary:

Traders were going to say yes to the kiosks whether they wanted them or not because they were not going to say no to something, as did not know what the cost was going to be and how they're going to work. Because the Council kept coming back to the fact that these things still needed to be worked out, traders were not going to say no to the kiosks.

What traders wanted was a market that could be traded from. That gives with the three options, the kiosks, the stalls as they were now, and the demountables. Everyone gets what they wanted.

This would provide the Council their space in front of the Guild Hall. Traders, the stock traders, the retail traders, the traders that have been on a market for generations a space. These traders were city residents and had supply chains within the city. They were supporting city residents and were the heart of the city.

All traders wanted was a market that worked for their businesses, it was not asking for much. The traders had agreed to so many things and all that was wanted was some open stores that businesses could be run successfully from.

The Cabinet Member said:

- i. Understood the concerns raised which was why there was the option of the kiosks, the more the permanent stalls would be shared so that different traders would use them on different days.
- ii. The Project Team were working on the design of the demountables. There had been further requests to trial the demountable stalls in the winter when it was more likely to be wet and windy, but also in high summer or in a heat wave, so testing would start again next summer.
- iii. The Project Team were working on ways for the stools to be tested as they would be used in the new market because although they're demountable, they'll have fixings in the ground, and when they were tested previously, it was just using weights like if you put up a gazebo.
- iv. Acknowledged that traders wanted to be able to trade from the same location each time. This was way it was so important to have the one-to-one conversations and be open honest in these conversations.
- v. Market traders were a central part to this project. Supporting these small businesses was essential, without the traders, there would be no market. The Council was committed to ensuring that traders remained as part of the heart of the redevelopment plans and that their needs were fully considered.

25/82/CNL To deal with oral questions

Question 1:

Councillor Tim Bick to the Leader

Earlier this year the administration refused to debate their considerable cutbacks in council staffing on the basis that they would not impact the standard of services to the public. Is the Leader still happy that their justification was a good one? Has there subsequently been no reduction in standard of service to the public?

The Leader responded with:

- i. The transformation process had been very difficult for council staff.
- ii. Discussion of specific roles would have entailed public discussion of the positions of specific staff members whose jobs were potentially at risk.
- iii. The decision to begin the transformation process was not one that the Council had taken lightly. It had been a long process, and the aim had been to do it in a way that limited impact on staff as far as possible.
- iv. The February 2025 implementation paper led to a reduction of around 3.5% of the Council's total workforce. Twenty-four staff members had left the council through redundancy as part of that, and of those, eighteen had taken voluntary redundancy.
- v. Acknowledged it was difficult for every one of those individuals as well as for a far larger number of staff members who were put at risk during the process. As far as possible, the impact for most staff had been limited. Expressed gratitude to staff for bearing with the process.
- vi. The process had helped the Council to achieve significant cost savings, and it could also bring benefits in terms of efficiency from modernised processes and strengthened accountability.
- vii. The restructure had been built around improving frontline resilience and accountability rather than reducing capacity.
- viii. Since the changes were introduced, there had been no reduction in the quality or standard of services provided to the public. Customer satisfaction measures, complaint volumes, and service delivery metrics remained stable.

Question 2:**Councillor Porrer to Cabinet Member for Nature, Open Space and City Services**

Can the Cabinet Member please update the Council on the closure of public toilets on Quayside, Midsummer Common and Parker's Piece and its impact on residents and businesses.

The Cabinet Member said the following:

- i. Three toilets had been closed.
- ii. These toilets had been carefully chosen for closure to make savings in Council budgets. A review of toilet provision considered usage levels, condition, accessibility, and cost of refurbishment and ongoing maintenance and had been subject to a public consultation.
- iii. The toilets at Quayside, was a low-use facility predominantly used by punting businesses.

- iv. Midsummer Common on Victoria Avenue, also a low-use facility predominantly used by taxi drivers, and Parker's Piece, a popular event site where event organisers provided their own toilets.
- v. Savings were estimated at £121,000 a year, or about £10,000 a month. Over the past three months, the Council had saved £30,000.
- vi. Recent investments had been made in toilets at Cherry Hinton Hall, Chester Recreation Ground, Coleridge Recreation Ground, Drummer Street, Nightingale Recreation Ground and Pavilion, with Silver Street to come soon. The total investment in all those works would be about £2 million. There were also five changing places toilets.
- vii. The Council were still looking to improve provision where budgets would allow. For example, plans for improved toilet provision at Jesus Green would come forward shortly.
- viii. The Council's priority was to ensure high quality, well-used toilets open and accessible in places where they were most needed, aligning with public feedback and in accordance with responsible budget management.
- ix. Whilst reducing public toilet provision may seem initially counterintuitive, it had been a move that reflected the realities of modern urban living. By reallocating resources, addressing security concerns, and responding to changing public behaviours, the Council could make a well-considered decision that benefited the broader community.

Question 3:

Councillor Blackburn-Horgan to the Chair of Licensing Committee

How does Cambridge City Council ensure enough affordable, available wheelchair accessible (WAV) private hire vehicles to book at the time residents require? Also, that drivers offer safe entry and exit from vehicles and this in place with ramps and clamps used correctly with all types of wheelchairs, to stop any residents being put at risk?

The Chair of Licensing Committee replied:

- i. There was a legal provision under the local government miscellaneous act 1976 for council to set policy regarding the number of hackney carriage vehicles that must be wheelchair accessible.
- ii. For vehicles licensed by the City Council, all new hackney carriage vehicles must be wheelchair accessible.
- iii. Currently 50% of Cambridge City vehicles were wheelchair accessible.
- iv. Hackney carriage vehicles operating from a rank could not refuse a hire and that included disabled passengers. However, for private hire vehicles, there was no such provision and therefore the Council could not require them to be wheelchair accessible. As self-employed drivers,

a private hire driver did not have to accept bookings received through the operator.

- v. All new Cambridge City licensed drivers, both hackney carriage and private hire were required to undertake safeguarding and disability awareness training.
- vi. Members of the Licensing Committee had approved a policy that all Cambridge wheelchair accessible vehicle drivers should have training on ramp use and how to support wheelchair users.

Question 4:

Councillor Elliott Tong to the Cabinet Member for Housing/Cabinet Member for Climate Action and Environment What was the Council's latest estimate of the cost of retrofitting the average council home, the total estimated cost of retrofit and the number of council homes that still required retrofit?

The Cabinet Member responded with:

- i. The cost of retrofit would vary depending on the age, condition and type of house. The current best estimate to get a house to EPC C was £32,835 per home. This was based on a combination of quotations received and costs obtained through the Council's current external wall insulation contract.
- ii. The price included the primary energy efficiency measures together with estimated additional costs such as essential repairs.
- iii. There could be individual additional costs related to individual needs and any fees associated with meeting PAS 2035, the retrofit standards required on all grant-funded projects.
- iv. Five council homes were rated EPC E and would cost an estimated £16,600 each as they had cavity walls and cavity wall insulation was
- v. There were 1,348 homes at band D, which would cost £44.26 million. Reiterated that these were estimates and the figures could change once individual assessments had been completed.

Question 5:

Councillor Delowar Hossein to the Cabinet Member for Climate Action and Environment

Ensuring Equitable Access to Community Clean-Up and Recycling Services for All Residents in Cambridge City. Over the past six months, only 10 community clean-up events have taken place in Cambridge, with these events predominantly concentrated in specific council block areas. This limited coverage effectively leaves many residents, who are contributing council tax, without access to these essential services. Furthermore, the high cost of large

item collection disproportionately affects those who rely on walking, cycling, or public transport. Moreover, the nearest recycling centre is located in Milton, making it impractical and difficult for residents without vehicles to dispose of large or bulky items responsibly. To prevent unfair penalties and to ensure that all residents benefit from these services, will the council consider establishing designated drop-off points within each ward? This would provide residents with accessible and affordable recycling options and help maintain a cleaner, safer environment for everyone.

The Cabinet Member responded with the following:

- i. The Council recognised and valued the contribution that residents and local groups had made in helping to keep Cambridge clean and welcoming.
- ii. The Council actively supported community-led litter picks and were always pleased to work with residents and local organisations who wished to arrange their own clean-up events. Equipment such as litter pickers, bags, and high viz vests could be provided on request.
- iii. Community clean-ups were not limited to any specific area of the city.
- iv. Groups across the city were welcome to self-organise, and residents were encouraged to come together where there was an interest or a need.
- v. Information and support for setting up a clean-up event could be found on the Council's website or by contacting the community services team.
- vi. Regarding the suggestion of designated drop offs, past experience had shown that these were difficult and costly to manage. Unsupervised collection sites often attracted fly tipping and unauthorised waste disposal which could create environmental and public health issues.
- vii. Mixed recycling points had been available around the city but had to be removed because of fly tipping.

25/83/CNL Appointment of Vice-Chair of the Planning Committee

Councillor Nestor proposed, and Councillor Smart seconded, the nomination of Councillor Thornburrow as Vice Chair to the Planning Committee for the remainder of the municipal year.

On a show of hands, 22 votes in favour

Councillor Illingworth proposed, and Councillor Bennet seconded, the nomination of Councillor Flaubert as Vice Chair to the Planning Committee for the remainder of the municipal year.

On a show of hands, 18 votes in favour.

Resolved that Councillor Thornburrow be elected as Vice Chair for the remainder of the municipal year 2025/26.

The meeting broke for 15 minutes at the conclusion of this item

25/84/CNL To consider the recommendations of the Executive for adoption

25/85/CNL Cambridge Civic Quarter Project Update

Councillor Tong and Lokhmotova recused themselves from this item.

Councillor Bick proposed and Councillor Porrer seconded the following amendment to the recommendations (additional text underlined and deleted text struck through).

1. A capital budget of up to £4.4m to be allocated to fund the technical design development, detailed development programme and to finalise the total direct and indirect costs of the project.

2. In addition, recommends that in the run-up to final approval in September 2026 Cabinet is requested to:

(a) Seek to improve the ongoing financial return from the **Guildhall** and **Corn Exchange** projects in relation to their capital costs, so that a better financial contribution to the protection and improvement of general council services to the public can be expected – as well as the other intrinsic benefits of the investment; and that this is achieved by rigorously reviewing the design & costings; the phasing; the proposed funding strategy (including the possibility of external grants) and the business plans for the operation of the refurbished facilities.

(b) Accept that the investment in **the public realm and Market Square** project must produce a widely experienced enhancement of the city centre for the community at large including those who work there - and not necessarily a financial return to the council; , it should however still benefit from refinement as a result of ongoing input from market traders and other stakeholders and be subject to the normal discipline of value engineering and a search for further external grant support.

The amendment was carried by 30 votes to 1 with 7 abstentions.

Resolved (30 votes to 6, 2 abstention) to agree:

1. A capital budget of up to £4.4m to be allocated to fund the technical design development, detailed development programme and to finalise the total direct and indirect costs of the project.

2. In addition, recommends that in the run-up to final approval in September 2026 Cabinet is requested to:

(a) Seek to improve the ongoing financial return from the **Guildhall** and **Corn Exchange** projects in relation to their capital costs, so that a better financial contribution to the protection and improvement of general council services to the public can be expected – as well as the other intrinsic benefits of the investment; and that this is achieved by rigorously reviewing the design & costings; the phasing; the proposed funding strategy (including the possibility of external grants) and the business plans for the operation of the refurbished facilities.

(b) Accept that the investment in **the public realm and Market Square** project must produce a widely experienced enhancement of the city centre for the community at large including those who work there - and not necessarily a financial return to the council; , it should however still benefit from refinement as a result of ongoing input from market traders and other stakeholders and be subject to the normal discipline of value engineering and a search for further external grant support.

25/86/CNL Establishment of new loan facilities for Cambridge Investment Partnership

Resolved (38 votes to 0, with 2 abstentions) to agree:

- i. A capital budget totalling £18.5 million for the provision of three new development loan facilities to Cambridge Investment Partnership LLP in respect of regeneration activities and new build development at Newbury Farm, ATS/Murketts Histon Road, and Fanshawe Road.
- ii. The setting of fixed interest rates applicable to the above loans at 3.5% per annum above the prevailing 5-year UK gilt rate (to be set no later than the date of each drawdown).
- iii. A capital budget totalling £4.677 million for the provision of equity loan facilities to Cambridge Investment Partnership LLP in respect of the

same three schemes, noting that such equity will be matched by an equal investment by Hill Investment Partnerships LLP.

- iv. The delegation of authority to the Council's Chief Finance Officer to agree the full and detailed terms of the loan with Cambridge Investment Partnership LLP, after taking appropriate professional advice and with due regard to relevant statutory requirements.

25/87/CNL Annual Treasury Management (Outturn) Report 2024/25

Resolved (40 votes to 0) to approve:

- i. The Annual Treasury Management Outturn report 2024/25, which includes the Council's actual Prudential and Treasury Indicators for 2024/25.

25/88/CNL To consider the recommendations of Committees for adoption

There were no recommendations for this meeting.

25/89/CNL To consider the following notices of motion, notice of which has been given by:

25/90/CNL Councillor Illingworth, Waste Water Plant Relocation: Rethink or our Money Back.

Councillor Illingworth proposed and Councillor Dalzell seconded the following motion:

Council **records** its huge disappointment at the government's last minute funding U-turn on the relocation (and expansion) of the Anglian Water waste water treatment plant from North East Cambridge which will:

- throw away 7 years of work by local councils and of council expenditure in planning and development;
- block the provision of at least 5,600 much-needed new homes on the most sustainable site around the city close to jobs and the provision of new amenities for the shared benefit of new and existing residents in north Cambridge;
- cause alternative development in other less suitable locations to be considered;
- make future waste water treatment capacity a new potential obstacle to all development in our area.

Council is **horrified** that their short-sighted decision is at complete variance with the government's earlier planning approval for the relocation, its wider ambition for Cambridge's future, and the promise of a local partnership approach, and that it will prevent an attractive return to the Treasury from the growth that it would have unlocked.

Council **resolves** accordingly to:

- demand that the government urgently reconsiders its funding decision, so that the waste water plant relocation and the planned development of North East Cambridge can go ahead;
- failing which, ask for the council's money back;
- request the Head of Finance, as a precaution, to prepare a comprehensive costing of all council resources deployed since the Housing Infrastructure Grant was awarded in 2019 and premised on it – including both planning for North East Cambridge and development of the new urban quarter of Hartree;
- urges the responsible government minister to attend our Performance, Assets & Strategy Overview & Scrutiny committee at the earliest opportunity, if invited, to discuss the status and outlook for the other expected financial support to back up its ambition for Cambridge.

Councillor Glasberg proposed and Councillor Bennett seconded the following amendment (deleted text struck through and additional text underlined):

WASTE WATER PLANT RELOCATION: ~~RETHINK OR OUR MONEY BACK~~

Council **records** ~~its huge disappointment at the government's last minute funding U-turn on the relocation (and expansion) of the Anglian Water waste water treatment plant from North East Cambridge which will:~~

- ~~• throw away 7 years of work by local councils and of council expenditure in planning and development;~~
- ~~• block the provision of at least 5,600 much-needed new homes on the most sustainable site around the city close to jobs and the provision of new amenities for the shared benefit of new and existing residents in north Cambridge;~~
- ~~• cause alternative development in other less suitable locations to be considered;~~
- ~~• make future waste water treatment capacity a new potential obstacle to all development in our area.~~

Council is **horrified** that their short-sighted decision is at complete variance with the government's earlier planning approval for the relocation, its wider ambition for Cambridge's future, and the promise of a local partnership approach, and that it will prevent an attractive return to the Treasury from the growth that it would have unlocked.

Council **resolves** accordingly to:

- demand that the government urgently reconsiders its funding decision, so that the waste water plant relocation and the planned development of North East Cambridge can go ahead;
- failing which, ask for the council's money back;
- request the Head of Finance, as a precaution, to prepare a comprehensive costing of all council resources deployed since the Housing Infrastructure Grant was awarded in 2019 and premised on it – including both planning for North East Cambridge and development of the new urban quarter of Hartree;
- urges the responsible government minister to attend our Performance, Assets & Strategy Overview & Scrutiny committee at the earliest opportunity, if invited, to discuss the status and outlook for the other expected financial support to back up its ambition for Cambridge.

Council notes that:

The decision of the Planning Inspectors on the waste water plant relocation was to refuse permission. The grounds for refusal included a finding that any additional capacity could be accommodated on the existing site.

The decision of the Planning Inspectors was based on a lengthy and thorough appeal process lead by a 3 person team.

There was strong local opposition to the relocation on cost and environmental grounds from several community groups including Save Honey Hill. The existing waste water plant was the most modern in the area and had been extensively modernised in 2014 at a cost of £21 million. By contrast, smaller local plants such as Haslingfield require considerable work to bring them up to standard.

Estimated costs of the projects had risen sharply and concerns had already been expressed over the financial risks involved.

Because of the need for extensive site remediation work on the existing site, no homes were expected to receive planning permission on this site in the next Local Plan period.

The number of new homes expected to be built on the site before 2035 was estimated at 500.

The council resolves to write to Anglian Water to ask it to prepare and publish a revised plan showing how it intends to increase capacity and reduce nuisance on the existing waste water site.

The amendment was lost by 35 votes against to 5 votes in favour,

Councillor Holloway proposed and Councillor S Smith seconded the following amendment (deleted text struck through and additional text underlined):

WASTE WATER PLANT RELOCATION: RETHINK OR OUR MONEY BACK
Delivering Sustainable Development and critical waste water treatment facilities

Council **records** its huge disappointment at the decision not to fund government's last minute funding U-turn on the relocation (and expansion) of the Anglian Water waste water treatment plant from North East Cambridge which will:

- put at risk much of the preparatory work done by Government and local councils over the last 7 years ~~throw away 7 years of work by local councils and of council expenditure in planning and development;~~
- block the provision of at least 5,600 much-needed new homes on the most sustainable site around the city close to jobs and the provision of new amenities for the shared benefit of new and existing residents in north Cambridge;
- cause alternative development in other less suitable locations to be considered;
- make future waste water treatment capacity a new potential obstacle to all development in our area.

Council **notes** that:

- The cost of relocation of the waste water treatment plant had risen significantly, requiring total Government cash funding of £338m.
- Anglian Water had previously stated that there was no operational need to move the plant, and that current waste water capacity was sufficient. However, they have recently raised objections to several planning

applications in Cambridge on the grounds of a lack of waste water treatment capacity to meet the requirements of new planned growth.

- Of the approximately £13m spent by the City Council in relation to this project, approximately £11m was spent on building a new operational hub, which will provide significant benefit to council staff and Cambridge residents.

Council is **horrified** concerned that ~~their short sighted~~ this decision is at complete variance with the government's earlier planning approval for the relocation, its wider ambition for Cambridge's future, and ~~the promise of a local partnership approach~~, and that it will prevent an attractive return to the Treasury of circa £1bn per annum from the growth that it would have unlocked.

Council **resolves** accordingly to:

- ~~demand that the government urgently reconsiders its funding decision, so that the waste water plant relocation and the planned development of North East Cambridge can go ahead;~~
- ~~failing which, ask for the council's money back;~~
- ~~request the Head of Finance, as a precaution, to prepare a comprehensive costing of all council resources deployed since the Housing Infrastructure Grant was awarded in 2019 and premised on it— including both planning for North East Cambridge and development of the new urban quarter of Hartree;~~
- ~~urges the responsible government minister to attend our Performance, Assets & Strategy Overview & Scrutiny committee at the earliest opportunity, if invited, to discuss the status and outlook for the other expected financial support to back up its ambition for Cambridge.~~
- Request that the government reviews the investment case for Hartree in the context of the infrastructure costs of bringing forward less sustainable sites to deliver at least 5600 homes, including the cost of the new pressure to expand waste water treatment capacities.
- If investment to move the waste water plant is not secured, request Anglian Water to work with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and the Council to prepare a plan, investment case and timetable to bring forward early works to limit as far as possible the odour from the existing waste water treatment plant, to release land for housing development at Hartree and increase its capacity to support delivery of development as proposed in the emerging Greater Cambridge Joint Local Plan.

- Request Council officers to complete a calculation of costs incurred by the Council since the Housing Infrastructure Grant was awarded in 2019 in respect of a) the North East Cambridge Action Plan and b) Hartree;
- Continue discussions with government ministers aimed at bringing forward comprehensive economic, social and environmental measures to support shared ambitions for the Greater Cambridge area to: become significantly more socially inclusive and equitable; protect and enhance the natural environment; be globally competitive in higher education, research, technology and life sciences.

The amendment was carried by 21 votes in favour to 19 votes against.

Resolved (33 votes to 6 votes with 1 abstention) that:

Delivering Sustainable Development and critical waste water treatment facilities

Council **records** its huge disappointment at the decision not to fund the relocation (and expansion) of the Anglian Water waste water treatment plant from North East Cambridge which will:

- put at risk much of the preparatory work done by Government and local councils over the last 7 years
- block the provision of at least 5,600 much-needed new homes on the most sustainable site around the city close to jobs and the provision of new amenities for the shared benefit of new and existing residents in north Cambridge;
- cause alternative development in other less suitable locations to be considered;
- make future waste water treatment capacity a new potential obstacle to all development in our area.

Council **notes** that:

- The cost of relocation of the waste water treatment plant had risen significantly, requiring total Government cash funding of £338m.
- Anglian Water had previously stated that there was no operational need to move the plant, and that current waste water capacity was sufficient. However, they have recently raised objections to several planning applications in Cambridge on the grounds of a lack of waste water treatment capacity to meet the requirements of new planned growth.
- Of the approximately £13m spent by the City Council in relation to this project, approximately £11m was spent on building a new operational

hub, which will provide significant benefit to council staff and Cambridge residents.

Council is concerned that this decision is at variance with the government's earlier planning approval for the relocation, its wider ambition for Cambridge's future, and that it will prevent an attractive return to the Treasury of circa £1bn per annum from the growth that it would have unlocked.

Council **resolves** accordingly to:

- Request that the government reviews the investment case for Hartree in the context of the infrastructure costs of bringing forward less sustainable sites to deliver at least 5600 homes, including the cost of the new pressure to expand waste water treatment capacities.
- If investment to move the waste water plant is not secured, request Anglian Water to work with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and the Council to prepare a plan, investment case and timetable to bring forward early works to limit as far as possible the odour from the existing waste water treatment plant, to release land for housing development at Hartree and increase its capacity to support delivery of development as proposed in the emerging Greater Cambridge Joint Local Plan.
- Request Council officers to complete a calculation of costs incurred by the Council since the Housing Infrastructure Grant was awarded in 2019 in respect of a) the North East Cambridge Action Plan and b) Hartree;
- Continue discussions with government ministers aimed at bringing forward comprehensive economic, social and environmental measures to support shared ambitions for the Greater Cambridge area to: become significantly more socially inclusive and equitable; protect and enhance the natural environment; be globally competitive in higher education, research, technology and life sciences.

25/91/CNL Councillor Anna Smith, Anti-Racism Charter

This Council notes that whilst it is already undertaking many of the actions in Unison's anti-racism charter, that it has never been more important to make a clear statement of the Council's opposition to racism in all its forms, and of our clear intent to tackle racism.

This Council therefore determines to endorse and implement Unison's anti-racism charter in full.

The text of the anti-racism charter is set out below:

Our organisation pledges we will introduce the following ongoing commitments within 12 months of signing:

Our leaders will

Recognise the need and benefit in championing a racially diverse workforce.

Challenge racism internally and externally wherever it arises in relation to the organisation.

Recognise the impact of racism upon staff members' wellbeing.

Set and regularly review strategy to improve racial equality, diversity and inclusion so that the organisation reflects the communities it serves.

Our organisation will

Have a clear and visible race equality policy championed by leadership.

Have a clear and visible anti-racism programme of initiatives and actions.

Undertake equality impact assessments for all strategic-level decisions.

Undertake ethnicity pay gap recording and publicly publish results.

Undertake workforce ethnicity recording and publicly publish results.

Provide unconscious bias and anti-racism training for all staff members.

Provide a racism reporting process for notifying, investigating and recording outcomes.

Provide robust equality training for managers involved in recruiting, promotions and

investigating allegations.

Provide a wellbeing support facility for staff experiencing racism in the workplace.

Be anti-racist, not just non-racist in all we do

Our equality auditing process will review

Recruitment processes to identify and address race disparities in equality of opportunity.

Exit interview results to identify and address race disparities in retention of staff members.

Promotional processes to identify and address race disparities in equality of opportunity.

Discipline and grievance to identify and address race disparity in outcomes of comparable cases.

Policies and research under a duty or commitment to promote solidarity and tackle racism.

Our mission, values, and support to removing racial discrimination in all its forms.

Resolved (unanimous) to approve the Anti-Racism Charter Motion.

Time (9.00pm) Under Council Procedure Rules 1.9.2 as the time allotted for the meeting had concluded Members went straight to the vote on the amendment to the motion. No discussion was held as the meeting time had passed. All remaining business on the agenda went straight to the vote at this point.

25/92/CNL Councillor Glasberg, New Homes & Old Myths

Councillor Glasberg proposed and Councillor Bennett seconded the following motion:

This Council notes that:

- Cambridge data on completions of new homes, unused planning permissions and affordability ratios for rents and mortgages demonstrate that “the market” is not solving the city’s housing crisis
- its high housing costs impose severe financial and mental stresses on residents, weaken the night time economy and increase social isolation
- Cambridge’s green spaces and wildlife habitats are essential for resident wellbeing, preserving biodiversity and resilience to climate habitats
- Part 3 of the proposed Planning and Infrastructure Bill would allow developers to continue to destroy habitats and species, providing that they pay into a proposed national nature fund.

Council believes that:

Biodiversity lost in Cambridge now cannot meaningfully be replaced by potential future projects elsewhere o market housing cannot on its own address the city’s housing needs

This Council requests that:

The government maintains and increases protection for the environment and biodiversity.

in particular it urges the government not to pass part 3 of the vi proposed Planning and Infrastructure Bill currently going through the House of Lords without significant amendments to improve protection

it removes excessive restrictions on the use by councils of Right to Buy receipts so that councils have the flexibility to fund the full cost of bringing empty homes back into use, purchasing and repairing existing homes and building new 100% council housing

Accordingly, this Council proposes to write to Daniel Zeichner MP, Pippa Heyling MP and Steve Reed MP to share its concerns and make this request.

Councillor Thornburrow proposed, and Councillor Moore seconded the following amendment to the motion (additional text underlined and deleted text struck through):

(New Homes and Old Myths) Balancing Homes and Nature

~~This Council notes that:~~

- ~~• Cambridge data on completions of new homes, unused planning permissions and affordability ratios for rents and mortgages demonstrate that “the market” is not solving the city’s housing crisis—~~
- ~~• its high housing costs impose severe financial and mental stresses on residents, weaken the night time economy and increase social isolation—~~
- ~~• Cambridge’s green spaces and wildlife habitats are essential for resident wellbeing, preserving biodiversity and resilience to climate habitats—~~
- ~~• Part 3 of the proposed Planning and Infrastructure Bill would allow developers to continue to destroy habitats and species, providing that they pay into a proposed national nature fund—~~

~~Council believes that:~~

~~Biodiversity lost in Cambridge now cannot meaningfully be replaced by potential future projects elsewhere—
market housing cannot on its own address the city’s housing needs—~~

~~This Council requests that:~~

~~The government maintains and increases protection for the environment and biodiversity.—~~

~~in particular it urges the government not to pass part 3 of the proposed Planning and Infrastructure Bill currently going through the House of Lords without significant amendments to improve protection—~~

~~it removes excessive restrictions on the use by councils of Right to Buy receipts so that councils have the flexibility to fund the full cost of bringing empty homes back into use, purchasing and repairing existing homes and building new 100% council housing—~~

~~Accordingly, this Council proposes to write to Daniel Zeichner MP, Pippa Heyling MP and Steve Reed MP to share its concerns and make this request.—~~

This Council notes that:

Cambridge data on completions of new homes, unused planning permissions and affordability ratios for rents and mortgages demonstrate the need to support the approach taken in the Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy and the Council's Adopted Local Plan to identify housing needs that should be planned for, including requiring a high proportion of these to be affordable. The need to rebalance the housing market is demonstrated by research indicating that high housing costs impose severe financial and mental stresses on residents, weaken the night time economy and increase social isolation. There are significant challenges to regeneration on estates where large numbers of homes have been sold off through the right to buy, and this can make regeneration of some sites not financially viable for the council.

It further notes that:

Cambridge's green spaces and wildlife habitats are essential for the wellbeing of residents, preserving biodiversity and increasing resilience of climate habitats, as highlighted by the Tree Canopy Project Report. (see <https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/media/to0h50xn/i-tree-eco-project-report.pdf>)

The Planning and Infrastructure Bill proposes a national levy that developers would be required to fund, enabling funding to be pooled towards achieving wider ecological benefits.

This Council believes that:

The best way for the Council to address issues around housing needs is to be an exemplar developer and builder and to support the Joint Housing Strategy and the model embedded in the Draft Greater Cambridge Local Plan currently being prepared for members consideration, which will update the housing need and identify additional sites necessary to respond to that need

The introduction of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) has been a positive step forward in planning policy. It ensures that developers are required to leave nature in a better state than before, creating measurable improvements for wildlife and for communities.

That Shared planning has successfully implemented council policies to encourage developers to deliver BNG of 20% rather than the legal minimum of 10%.

This Council requests that:

The government follow through the commitment made in its response to the consultation on reforming the right to buy to amend the agreements made with local authorities under Section 11(6) of the Local Government Act 2003 on the use of Right to Buy receipts to simplify the rules and ensure that a greater

proportion of receipts are used to deliver new social and affordable housing, extend the existing flexibilities in spending receipts indefinitely and, permit councils to combine Right to Buy receipts with grant funding for affordable housing to accelerate delivery of replacement homes.

(see <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/reforming-the-right-to-buy/outcome/government-response-to-the-consultation-on-reforming-the-right-to-buy>)

The government maintains and increases protection for the environment and biodiversity and ensures that future planning policy works to complement and not undermine existing policy measures that protect and enhance local and site specific biodiversity,

Action:

Accordingly, this council resolves to continue to contribute to the development of government policy through responses to consultations and regular exchanges of views with local MPs.

The amendment was approved by 22 votes to 5, with 13 abstentions.

Resolved by 21 votes to 0, with 19 abstentions to:

Balancing Homes and Nature

This Council notes that:

Cambridge data on completions of new homes, unused planning permissions and affordability ratios for rents and mortgages demonstrate the need to support the approach taken in the Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy and the Council's Adopted Local Plan to identify housing needs that should be planned for, including requiring a high proportion of these to be affordable.

The need to rebalance the housing market is demonstrated by research indicating that high housing costs impose severe financial and mental stresses on residents, weaken the night time economy and increase social isolation.

There are significant challenges to regeneration on estates where large numbers of homes have been sold off through the right to buy, and this can make regeneration of some sites not financially viable for the Council.

It further notes that:

Cambridge's green spaces and wildlife habitats are essential for the wellbeing of residents, preserving biodiversity and increasing resilience of climate habitats, as highlighted by the Tree Canopy Project Report.

(see <https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/media/to0h50xn/i-tree-eco-project-report.pdf>)

The Planning and Infrastructure Bill proposes a national levy that developers would be required to fund, enabling funding to be pooled towards achieving wider ecological benefits.

This Council believes that:

The best way for the Council to address issues around housing needs is to be an exemplar developer and builder and to support the Joint Housing Strategy and the model embedded in the Draft Greater Cambridge Local Plan currently being prepared for members consideration, which will update the housing need and identify additional sites necessary to respond to that need

The introduction of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) has been a positive step forward in planning policy. It ensures that developers are required to leave nature in a better state than before, creating measurable improvements for wildlife and for communities.

That Shared planning has successfully implemented Council policies to encourage developers to deliver BNG of 20% rather than the legal minimum of 10%.

This Council requests that:

The government follow through the commitment made in its response to the consultation on reforming the right to buy to amend the agreements made with local authorities under Section 11(6) of the Local Government Act 2003 on the use of Right to Buy receipts to simplify the rules and ensure that a greater proportion of receipts are used to deliver new social and affordable housing, extend the existing flexibilities in spending receipts indefinitely and, permit councils to combine Right to Buy receipts with grant funding for affordable housing to accelerate delivery of replacement homes.

(see <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/reforming-the-right-to-buy/outcome/government-response-to-the-consultation-on-reforming-the-right-to-buy>)

The government maintains and increases protection for the environment and biodiversity and ensures that future planning policy works to complement and not undermine existing policy measures that protect and enhance local and site specific biodiversity,

Action:

Accordingly, this Council resolves to continue to contribute to the development of government policy through responses to consultations and regular exchanges of views with local MPs.

25/93/CNL Councillor Baigent, Civic Quarter Project - Council Chamber

Councillor Tong and Councillor Lokhmotova recused themselves from this item.

Councillor Baigent proposed the following motion:

Civic Quarter – Council Chamber

Council notes that:

The jury is still out on if the Civic Quarter Project is to have public support. Certainly at £92,000,000 it is a lot of money.

One part of that project, the Council Chamber, will be a significant cost. It is being sold as the place where the new Unitary will meet.

BUT, we do not know the size of the new Unitary. Nor do we know who will lead it, or the amount of councillors, or where it will meet.

Council resolves that:

Given all these unknowns, work on the chamber should be put on hold until there are answers to these questions.

The motion not carried by 30 votes to 8, with 1 abstention.

25/94/CNL Written questions

Council noted the responses to written questions contained within the additional information pack.

25/95/CNL Notification of Appointment - Alternate Member Greater Cambridge Partnership Executive Board

Unanimously noted the:

- i. Appointment of Councillor Katie Thornburrow as the alternate member of the Greater Cambridge Partnership Executive Board for Cambridge City Council.

The meeting ended at 9.30 pm

CHAIR

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION PROPOSALS

To: Council, 20 November 2025

Lead Cabinet Member: Councillor Cameron Holloway, Leader of the Council

Report by: David Kidston, Strategy Lead, david.kidston@cambridge.gov.uk

Wards affected: All

Director Approval: The Chief Executive 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 Council for decision.

1. Recommendations

1.1 It is recommended that Council:

- notes this report, including the options appraisal which scores Option B the highest against government criteria for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), as well as the annexes which include relevant Council motions
- debates the City Council's LGR proposal, Option B, and other proposals and provides feedback for Cabinet to consider
- supports submission of Option B to the Secretary of State on behalf of the council.

2. Purpose and reason for the report

2.1 To provide Council with an update on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and to present the five current options for new unitary councils being proposed for reorganisation for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

2.2 Previous papers and background

- [‘A Unitary Council’ motion](#), Council meeting, 19 October 2023, (annex A)
- [‘Update on Local Government Reorganisation’](#), Council meeting, 17 March 2025
- [‘Update on Local Government Reorganisation’](#), Council Meeting, 24 July 2025

- [Local Government Reorganisation motion](#), Council meeting, 24 July (Annex B)
- [Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation - Cambridge City Council](#), information and frequently asked question, council website.

3. Context

- 3.1 Cambridge City Council passed a motion on 19 October 2023, ‘A Unitary Council’, asking the Leader and Chief Executive of the Council to:

“... initiate discussions... to identify options for a less fragmented and more cohesive model of Government for Cambridge, that best serves the needs of its residents. These discussions should involve and engage with the people of the city in a meaningful way, thereby recognising the need for our governance structures to reflect the wishes of the people we serve.”

- 3.2 The City Council engaged residents about the ‘Future of Local Government for Cambridge’ in summer 2024, including via a survey and public meetings. Nearly 71% of over 500 respondents ‘agreed or strongly agreed’ that a unitary authority would serve their and the city’s interests more effectively; and nearly 83% ‘agreed’ that options for a unitary council for the Cambridge area should be explored. The Council unanimously endorsed recommendations arising from that exercise at a meeting on 28 November 2024.

- 3.3 In December 2024, the Government published its White Paper on English Devolution, which requires all two-tier local government areas to reorganise into unitary authorities. The government’s intention is to create stronger local councils, that are better able to drive economic growth, improve local public services, and empower local communities.

- 3.4 On 5 February 2025, the Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution invited proposals to establish unitary authorities across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. Councils wishing to submit proposals to Government must do so by 28 November 2025.

- 3.5 The City Council discussed Local Government Reorganisation at its meetings on 17 March 2025 and 24 July 2025. At its meeting in July, Council passed a motion stating:

“This Council believes that a unitary authority based on the current boundaries of Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council, alongside viable arrangements for the rest of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, is likely to be the best option for the residents of Cambridge.

This Council resolves to work with other local authorities in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough on a proposal for the whole area that can be submitted to the Government by 28 November 2025.”

- 3.6 Following submission of local government reorganisation proposals, the Secretary of State will consult on all valid proposals in early 2026 (i.e. proposals that meet the government’s criteria, as set out in correspondence from the [Minister for Local Government and English Devolution](#) – Annex C). There will be a formal consultation with statutory consultees, other stakeholders and members of the public.
- 3.7 A final proposal will then be selected by the Secretary of State, likely to be in summer 2026. Based on the Government’s timetable, shadow elections for the new unitary councils would take place in May 2027. New unitary councils would become operational from April 2028 and existing councils, including Cambridge City Council, would be abolished.
- 3.8 Cambridgeshire has complex local government arrangements, comprising:
- One County Council (Cambridgeshire)
 - Four District Councils (South Cambridgeshire, East Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire, and Fenland)
 - One City Council (Cambridge City Council)
 - One existing Unitary Authority (Peterborough, also a city council)
 - One Mayoral Combined Authority (Cambridgeshire & Peterborough)
 - The Greater Cambridge Partnership (a joint committee)
- 3.9 Under current eligibility criteria, from March 2026 the existing Mayoral Combined Authority for Cambridge and Peterborough will have the opportunity to transition to Established Mayoral Strategic Authority status. This would confer enhanced powers, including for aspects of transport and infrastructure, skills and employment, strategic planning, economic regeneration, public safety, and public service reform.

4. Overview of All Options

- 4.1 Five proposals have been developed to reorganise local government across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. These proposals are referred to in this report as Options A, B, C, D and E. Each Council can only submit one proposal.
- 4.2 The geography of the five proposals is set out at 4.3 and 4.4 below. The full proposals are included separately with the agenda for this meeting. The documents are working drafts and will be updated prior to submission including formatting for publication.

4.3 **Option A – Two unitary proposal**

- Unitary 1** Peterborough City Council, Huntingdonshire and Fenland District Councils along with County Council functions
- Unitary 2** Cambridge City Council, East Cambridgeshire and South Cambridgeshire District Councils along with County Council functions

Option B – Two unitary proposal

- Unitary 1** Peterborough City Council, Huntingdonshire and Fenland District Councils along with County Council functions (**North Cambridgeshire & Peterborough**)
- Unitary 2** Cambridge City Council, East Cambridgeshire and South Cambridgeshire District Councils along with County Council functions (**Greater Cambridge**)

Option C – Two unitary proposal

- Unitary 1** Peterborough City Council, East Cambridgeshire, Fenland and Huntingdonshire District Councils along with County Council functions
- Unitary 2** Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District along with County Council functions

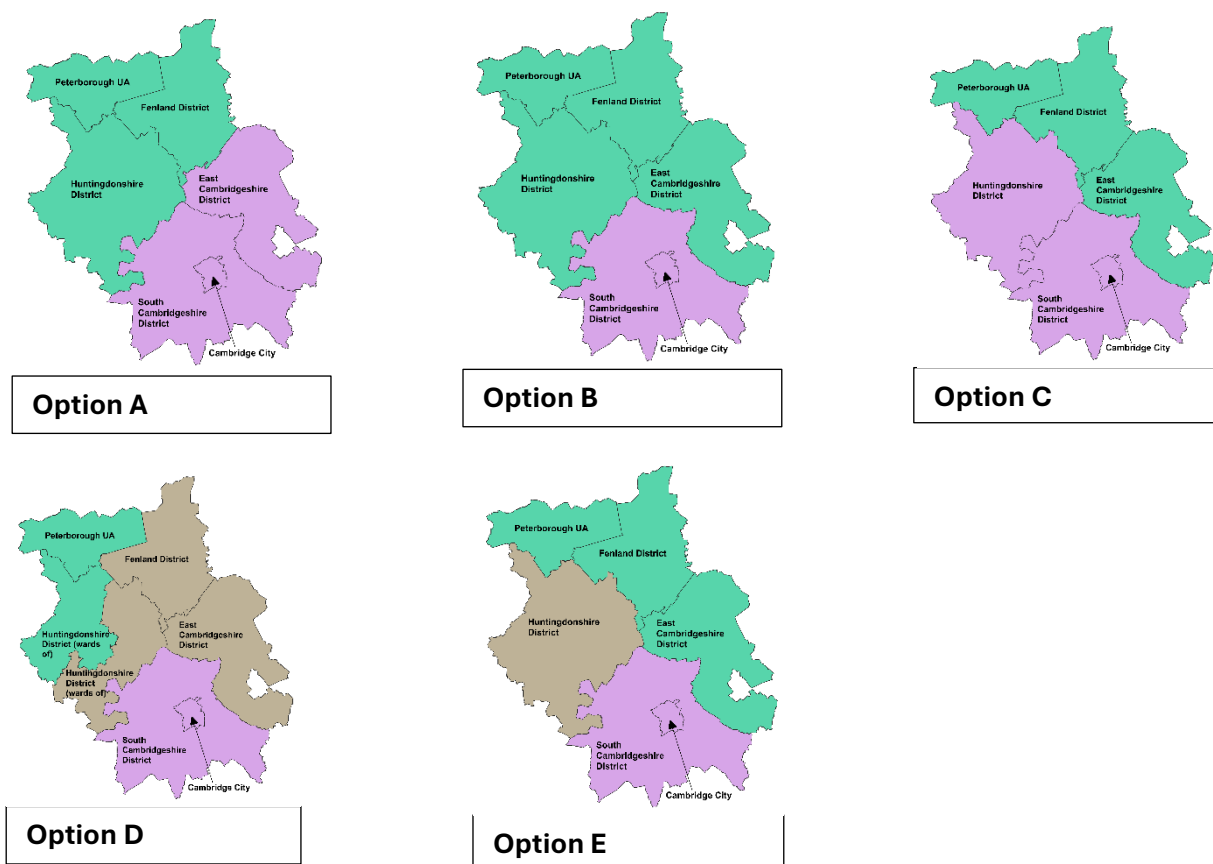
Option D – Three unitary proposal

- Unitary 1** Peterborough City Council, parts of Huntingdonshire District Councils along with County Council functions
- Unitary 2** Parts of Huntingdonshire District Council, Fenland, and East Cambridgeshire along with County Council functions
- Unitary 3** Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District along with County Council functions

Option E – Three unitary proposal

- Unitary 1** Peterborough City, Fenland, East Cambridgeshire District Councils with County Council functions
- Unitary 2** Huntingdonshire District Council with County Council functions
- Unitary 3** Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District along with County Council functions

4.4 Maps showing options A, B, C, D and E are shown below:



4.5 Each proposal has been written by different councils, as set out below:

Option	Lead Council(s)	Contributing Councils
A	Cambridgeshire County Council	-
B	Cambridge City Council, East Cambridgeshire District Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council	Huntingdonshire District Council, Fenland District Council, Peterborough City Council
C	Huntingdonshire District Council	-
D	Peterborough City Council	-
E	Huntingdonshire District Council	-

4.6 Shared data and analysis was commissioned by all councils, covering the financial implications of LGR proposals, the service impacts (Adult and Children's Social Care, SEND, Housing, Homelessness), and stakeholder feedback. Each lead council has also undertaken further analysis or commissioned research to refine their individual proposals.

- 4.7 On 11 June 2025, council Leaders announced that they had identified three preferred options to establish new unitary councils across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough: Options A, B and C. All three options would create two unitary councils.
- 4.8 Independent financial analysis by Pixel demonstrates that three-unitary options would be more costly to establish, would generate lower savings, and result in longer payback periods. At the point when the Pixel report was issued, the Leaders decided not to take forward three unitary options that were being considered at that time. Subsequently options D and E were brought forward by Peterborough City Council and Huntingdonshire District Council respectively.

5. Options Appraisal

- 5.1 Each proposal contains some form of options appraisal. These all differ, reflecting the different councils' perceptions or judgements about the various criteria set by the government and how each option may meet those criteria.
- 5.2 Cambridge City Council has carried out a full balanced, objective appraisal of all options. The full version of this appraisal is included in the Option B proposal.
- 5.3 As illustrated by the potential scoring of generic one, two and three unitary proposals in the summary table below:
- a single unitary for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough would not be viable.
 - **two unitary councils would meet the Government's criteria.**
 - three unitary councils are likely to only partially meet the Government's criteria, as they would not be financially resilient, or cover sensible economic and housing market areas, and they would be less capable of delivering sustainable public services.

1	Does not meet criteria	
2	Slightly meets criteria	
3	Partially meets criteria	
4	Meets criteria	
5	Exceeds criteria	

Government criteria for reorganisation	One Unitary	Two Unitaries	Three Unitaries
Economy and housing	Not viable. Government has indicated there must be at least two principal authorities in Strategic Mayoral Authority.	4	2
Financial resilience		4	1
Sustainable Public Services		4	2
Collaboration		4	3
Devolution		4	4
Democratic representation and community engagement		4	4
OVERALL (out of 30)	N/A	24	16

5.4 As shown by the summary table below:

- **Option B is the highest scoring of all the proposals and would meet each of the Government's key criteria**
- Options A and C would meet some of the criteria and partially meet others
- Options D and E would meet some of the criteria and not meet others

Government criteria for reorganisation	Option A	Option B	Option C	Option D	Option E
Economy and housing	3	5	3	2	2
Financial resilience	3	4	2	1	1
Sustainable Public Services	4	4	3	2	2
Collaboration	3	4	3	2	3
Devolution	4	5	4	4	4
Democracy & engagement	4	4	4	4	4
OVERALL (out of 30)	21	26	19	15	16

6. Option B proposal

6.1 A working draft of the full Option B proposal is included as a separate attachment. It should be noted that:

- before submission to government the content of the proposal will be subject to minor drafting changes, including addition of a foreword and short conclusion, as well as further formatting and design.
- the names of the two proposed unitary authorities (Greater Cambridge and North Cambridgeshire & Peterborough) are indicative at this stage and have been included to help differentiate Option B from the other proposals. Greater Cambridge was the preferred name suggested by residents in Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire who responded to a joint survey. The North Cambridgeshire and Peterborough name was suggested by officers from existing councils that unitary would replace. If option B is selected, names for the new unitary authorities would need to be agreed with relevant local authorities and included in secondary legislation next summer.
- Decisions about the civic headquarters for a Greater Cambridge unitary would be a matter for shadow members elected to that authority from May 2027 to determine.
 - If options A, B, D or E were selected by government it is very likely that the Guildhall would take on that function. Local government for the Cambridge areas has operated from the Guildhall site for over 800 years.
 - It is reasonable to assume that New Shire Hall could provide a viable alternative to the Guildhall for a southern unitary covering Cambridge City, South Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire¹.

6.2 Changes to the working draft prior to submission will include the following proposals:

- **Joint Implementation Committees:** Following the Government's decision in 2026 on which LGR proposal should be implemented, Joint Implementation Committees (JICs) will be established for each new unitary council. The JIC for Greater Cambridge should be made up of an equal number of Councillor representatives from Cambridge City Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council; and all JIC member representatives should represent Greater Cambridge wards/divisions.
- **Mayoralty and City Status:** the Mayoralty and city status for Cambridge will not automatically transfer from Cambridge City Council to a Greater Cambridge unitary

¹ The County Council has had a peripatetic existence since it was established in 1889, when it operated from various offices in Cambridge including holding its meetings at the Guildhall. Most recently it moved its civic HQ from Cambridge to a purpose-built building on a business park in Alconbury Weald at a cost of nearly £20m in 2021.

council. The LGR proposal will recommend that the Mayoralty is transferred to the Greater Cambridge successor authority via the Structural Change Order (SCO) creating that new council. With support from the Crown and Government, Cambridge's city status can be transferred to the new council through issuance of fresh Royal Letters Patent, which could be resolved as part of the SCO process.

7. Consultation, engagement and communication

- 7.1 A joint survey of 2,407 residents by all Cambridgeshire and Peterborough councils was carried out from 19 June to 20 July 2025. This was complemented by focus groups in each council area and a separate survey of 231 stakeholders. The surveys asked for views on the future of local government for the whole area, but they did not ask for views on the different options. Feedback from this survey is summarised in Proposal B.
- 7.2 Subsequently, Cambridge City, South Cambridgeshire and East Cambridgeshire Councils carried out further surveys to collect more information about our specific proposal:
- 69% of 890 respondents in Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire either 'Agreed' or 'Strongly Agreed' with Option B, while 24% either 'Disagreed' or 'Strongly Disagreed'
 - 52% of 249 respondents in East Cambridgeshire expressed support for Option B, while 48% did not support Option B.
 - Across all three local authority areas 63.5% of residents that responded agreed or strongly agreed with Option B, and 29% did not.

8. Implications

Financial implications

- 8.1 There will be significant financial implications associated with the implementation of all the local government reorganisation options. These are set out in more detail in each proposal.

Legal implications

- 8.2 Any proposal that is submitted must comply with requirements set out in the Government's White Paper on English Devolution and subsequent guidance. The Secretary of State retains ultimate decision-making authority on which proposals to implement, with implementation requiring parliamentary orders.
- 8.3 Detailed legal due diligence on contracts, assets, liabilities, and staff transfers will be required during shadow authority periods. All new authorities must be 'safe and legal'

from vesting day on 1 April 2028.

Staffing implications

- 8.4 Local Government Reorganisation will affect all local government employees in Cambridgeshire in Peterborough if it goes ahead. With any of the options (A-E), 2 or 3 new unitary councils would be created, and employees would transfer from their existing employer (in our case Cambridge City Council) to a new employer. TUPE legislation would apply.

Equalities and socio-economic impacts

- 8.5 It is expected that all proposals (A-E) will have equalities impacts, as they will involve transferring people services (including social care services providing support for children, older people and disabled people) from existing councils in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to new unitary councils. The final proposal for Option B will include an Equality Impact Assessment setting out the potential impacts of these changes.
- 8.6 Equality impacts will be assessed in more depth as part of the implementation process, as the councils design new services. If Option B is selected by Government, we will involve service users in co-designing individual services so that they take into account equalities impacts.

9. Background documents

- 9.1
- [English Devolution White Paper](#), HM Government, 16 December 2024
 - [Letter to Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Council leaders from Minister of State, Jim McMahon MP](#), 5 February 2025 (including criteria for LGR proposals; Annex C)

10. Attachments

- 10.1 The following papers are available online as separate documents alongside the agenda:
- Option B - Draft LGR Proposal
 - Option A - Cambridgeshire County Council report
 - Option C – Huntingdonshire District Council proposal
 - Option D – Peterborough City Council proposal
 - Option E – Huntingdonshire District Council proposal
 - Pixel – Cambridgeshire LGR balance sheet analysis
 - Pixel - Cambridgeshire LGR funding disaggregation
 - Newton – LGR people services report

Annex A: Council Motion, 24 July 2025

Resolved (by 33 votes to 0, with 3 Abstentions) to approve the motion

Local Government Reorganisation

Councillor Holloway proposed and Councillor Bick seconded the following motion:

This Council notes:

Cambridge is served by two tiers of local government – Cambridge City Council and Cambridgeshire County Council. Each provides different services over different geographies, with some overlapping responsibilities. The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority also serves this area, as does the Greater Cambridge Partnership.

Unitary authorities combine the functions currently carried out by county councils and district-level councils.

On 19 October 2023, Cambridge City Council passed a motion on ‘A Unitary Council’¹, asking the Leader and Chief Executive of the Council to:

“... initiate discussions... to identify options for a less fragmented and more cohesive model of Government for Cambridge, that best serves the needs of its residents. These discussions should involve and engage with the people of the city in a meaningful way, thereby recognising the need for our governance structures to reflect the wishes of the people we serve.”

In summer 2024, Cambridge City Council carried out an initial engagement exercise on the ‘Future of Local Government for Cambridge’^[1]. Around 60 people attended in-person workshops and over 500 people responded to the online survey. Nearly 83% of respondents thought that a unitary authority for the Cambridge area should be explored.

A report on this engagement exercise was considered at Full Council on 28 November 2024^[2]. Councillors agreed that the Leader should report back about next steps in summer 2025, following discussions with other local leaders and ministers.

In December 2024, the Government announced that local government in England would be reorganised, inviting proposals for new unitary councils from all two-tier areas^[3]. On the current timetable, new unitary councils for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough would come into being in 2028.

Since the Government's announcement, all seven existing councils in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough have engaged in a collaborative process to explore options for local government reorganisation.

Leaders have set out three geographical options for proposals to be worked up.

A public survey on issues relating to local government reorganisation, agreed by all councils in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, is running for just over one month, closing on 20 July[4].

The Local Government Reorganisation item in these meeting papers sets out the current situation, including relevant data and context for deciding which geographical configuration of unitary councils might be most appropriate for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

This Council believes:

- That a unitary authority based on the current boundaries of Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council, alongside viable arrangements for the rest of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, is likely to be the best option for the residents of Cambridge.

This Council resolves:

- To work with other local authorities in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough on a proposal for the whole area that can be submitted to the Government by 28 November 2025.
- To continue to collaborate with all councils across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, including providing information to support proposals that are not its preferred option.
- To launch a further engagement exercise to better understand Cambridge residents' views on their preferred geography for local government reorganisation.

[1] ¹ <https://engage.cambridge.gov.uk/en-GB/projects/cambridge-local-government>

[2] <https://democracy.cambridge.gov.uk/documents/s67343/241119%20Council%20report%20on%20Future%20of%20Local%20Government.pdf>

[3] <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-devolution-white-paper-power-and-partnership-foundations-for-growth/english-devolution-white-paper>

[4] <https://can-campaigns.co.uk/local-councils-in-cambridgeshire-and-peterborough-are-changing/>

Annex B: Council Motion, 19 October 2023

Resolved (by 34 votes to 0) that:

A Unitary Council

Council notes that:

1. There is renewed public interest in how Cambridge is governed.
2. Although many important partnership relationships are in place between this and other councils, that the current fragmentation of responsibilities and decision-making presents an unhelpful hurdle to strategic focus on the big range of issues which bind the city of Cambridge, affecting lives and livelihoods of all our residents.
3. This fragmentation frequently leaves many of our residents confused about the location of responsibilities and accountability.
4. Past doubts about the critical mass required to justify unitary status are being questioned again, as they were in the 1890s, after both World Wars, in the 1950s and again in the 1960s.

Council affirms that:

1. Power should reside as close to people as is possible.
2. For purposeful, democratic government, we should therefore consider whether a single tier council, amongst other options, framed around the urban geography of the city, is the most appropriate model of Government for our city.
3. We support the calls currently being made for deeper devolution of powers from central government and are committed to working with the Mayor to progress those discussions, for the benefit of both Cambridge and the wider region, to ensure we can best support our communities through the cost of living, climate and biodiversity emergencies. Specifically we believe devolution in relation to single funding settlements and fiscal powers, devolved skills and adult education budgets and clearer, transport responsibilities would give power back to local communities.

In addition Council affirms:

1. Its continued commitment to the many, complex partnership arrangements of which it is a part as the best available current means of pursuing joined-up decision-making so long as local government structure remains as it is.
2. Its awareness that whatever model of Governance might emerge, working co-operatively and supportively with our partners and communities is essential to deliver better outcomes for our residents.
3. That the increasing expectations of change and economic growth that face us in this area make it no longer optimal that we have less dedicated local self-government than city areas such as Peterborough, Luton, York, Bedford, Reading or Bath. In particular reference should be made to the structures in Manchester given that this city sits within a Combined Authority.
4. Its belief that an alternative model of local government could better connect our residents to their representatives and local service providers, and facilitate joined-up decision-making, and strengthen our voice in dialogue with central government and improve the life chances, health and wellbeing, and opportunities for our residents.

Accordingly, Council asks the Leader and Chief Executive to initiate discussions with other Authorities in the region and then central Government to identify options for a less fragmented and more cohesive model of Government for Cambridge, that best serves the needs of its residents. These discussions should involve and engage with the people of the city in a meaningful way, thereby recognising the need for our governance structures to reflect the wishes of the people we serve.

Annex C: Detailed criteria set out by the government in 5 February 2025 letter to all leaders in Cambridgeshire & Peterborough

Guidance from the Secretary of State for proposals for unitary local government.

[Letter: Cambridgeshire and Peterborough - GOV.UK](#)

Criteria for unitary local government

1. A proposal should seek to achieve for the whole of the area concerned the establishment of a single tier of local government.

a) Proposals should be for sensible economic areas, with an appropriate tax base which does not create an undue advantage or disadvantage for one part of the area.

b) Proposals should be for a sensible geography which will help to increase housing supply and meet local needs.

c) Proposals should be supported by robust evidence and analysis and include an explanation of the outcomes it is expected to achieve, including evidence of estimated costs/benefits and local engagement.

d) Proposals should describe clearly the single tier local government structures it is putting forward for the whole of the area, and explain how, if implemented, these are expected to achieve the outcomes described.

2. Unitary local government must be the right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks.

a) As a guiding principle, new councils should aim for a population of 500,000 or more.

b) There may be certain scenarios in which this 500,000 figure does not make sense for an area, including on devolution, and this rationale should be set out in a proposal.

c) Efficiencies should be identified to help improve councils' finances and make sure that council taxpayers are getting the best possible value for their money.

d) Proposals should set out how an area will seek to manage transition costs, including planning for future service transformation opportunities from existing budgets, including from the flexible use of capital receipts that can support authorities in taking forward transformation and invest-to-save projects.

e) For areas covering councils that are in Best Value intervention and/or in receipt of Exceptional Financial Support, proposals must additionally demonstrate how reorganisation may contribute to putting local government in the area as a whole on a firmer footing and what area-specific arrangements may be necessary to make new structures viable.

f) In general, as with previous restructures, there is no proposal for council debt to be addressed centrally or written off as part of reorganisation. For areas where there are exceptional circumstances where there has been failure linked to capital practices,

proposals should reflect the extent to which the implications of this can be managed locally, including as part of efficiencies possible through reorganisation.

3. Unitary structures must prioritise the delivery of high quality and sustainable public services to citizens.

a) Proposals should show how new structures will improve local government and service delivery, and should avoid unnecessary fragmentation of services.

b) Opportunities to deliver public service reform should be identified, including where they will lead to better value for money.

c) Consideration should be given to the impacts for crucial services such as social care, children's services, SEND and homelessness, and for wider public services including for public safety.

4. Proposals should show how councils in the area have sought to work together in coming to a view that meets local needs and is informed by local views.

a) It is for councils to decide how best to engage locally in a meaningful and constructive way and this engagement activity should be evidenced in your proposal.

b) Proposals should consider issues of local identity and cultural and historic importance.

c) Proposals should include evidence of local engagement, an explanation of the views that have been put forward and how concerns will be addressed.

5. New unitary structures must support devolution arrangements.

a) Proposals will need to consider and set out for areas where there is already a Combined Authority (CA) or a Combined County Authority (CCA) established or a decision has been taken by Government to work with the area to establish one, how that institution and its governance arrangements will need to change to continue to function effectively; and set out clearly (where applicable) whether this proposal is supported by the CA/CCA /Mayor.

b) Where no CA or CCA is already established or agreed then the proposal should set out how it will help unlock devolution.

c) Proposals should ensure there are sensible population size ratios between local authorities and any strategic authority, with timelines that work for both priorities.

6. New unitary structures should enable stronger community engagement and deliver genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment.

a) Proposals will need to explain plans to make sure that communities are engaged.

b) Where there are already arrangements in place it should be explained how these will enable strong community engagement.