

Cambridge City Council Notice of Council

Date: Thursday, 16 July 2026

Time: 6.00 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, 16 July 2026 at 6.00 pm and I hereby summon you to attend.

Dated 8 July 2026

Yours faithfully

Robert Pollock

Chief Executive

Agenda

- 1 Apologies for absence
- 2 Declarations of Interest
- 3 Minutes of the meeting held on 21 May 2026 and reconvened meeting held on 1 June 2026 (Pages 17 - 42)
- 4 Mayor's announcements
- 5 Public questions time
- 6 Petition

A petition has been received containing over 500 valid signatures stating the following:

Title: Introduce fair limits and control the spread of HMOs in Cambridge

Statement:

We the undersigned petition the council 1. Amend the Local Plan to set a clear '10% HMO threshold within a radius of 100m', across Cambridge, to prevent harmful over-concentration. (So if a property owner wants to convert an existing house into a HMO and at least 10% of the properties within a 100m radius of that house are already HMOs, the planning application is likely to be refused.) 2. Introduce Article 4 Directions in Cambridge requiring property owners to seek planning permission to convert an existing home into a permanent 'small' HMO for three to six people. (At the moment property owners only need to apply for planning permission to convert an existing property into a 'large' HMO for seven occupants or more.)

Justification:

Cambridge is an outlier among major university cities. While places like Oxford, Manchester and Bristol have defined thresholds which limit the percentage of houses of multiple occupation (HMOs) in a neighbourhood as well as Article 4 Directions which enable planners to control their spread, Cambridge has neither.

This lack of safeguards is allowing family homes to be rapidly converted into HMOs without proper oversight, leading to growing concentrations in some neighbourhoods. National planning guidance and councils across the UK recognise around 10% as the tipping point where too many HMOs begin to harm local communities - affecting parking, waste management, housing quality and neighbourhood stability.

In areas like Petersfield and Romsey in central Cambridge, that threshold has already been exceeded, with detrimental impacts on

long-standing residents and HMO tenants alike.

The Cambridge Local Plan recognises the harm to local communities that can be caused by an over-concentration of HMOs in a neighbourhood. But at the moment in Cambridge, property investors do not need to get planning permission to convert a family home into a 'small' HMO - defined as a property for six unrelated people or fewer. There is also no clear numerical definition of what an "over-concentration" actually means.

We are calling for two practical, widely-used planning measures to address this:

1. Amend the Local Plan to set a clear '10% HMO threshold within a radius of 100m', across Cambridge, to prevent harmful over-concentration. (So if a property owner wants to convert an existing house into a HMO and at least 10% of the properties within a 100m radius of that house are already HMOs, the planning application is likely to be refused.)
2. Introduce Article 4 Directions in Cambridge, for example in Petersfield and Romsey, requiring property owners to seek planning permission to convert an existing home into a permanent 'small' HMO for three to six people. (At the moment property owners only need to apply for planning permission to convert an existing property into a 'large' HMO for seven occupants or more.)

Both of these measures are standard tools used by dozens of councils across the UK. They provide clarity for planners, reduce speculative conversions, and protect balanced, sustainable communities - while still allowing HMOs where they are needed.

Cambridge City Council has the power to act. This petition calls on

them to do so.

- 7 To deal with oral questions
- 8 To consider the recommendations of Committees for adoption
- 8a Civic Affairs & Audit Committee - Constitution Updates (Pages 43 - 50)
- 9 Reports to Note
- 9a Update report on the Development Corporation (Pages 51 - 58)
- 9b Local Government Review (Pages 59 - 68)
- 10 To consider the following notices of motion, notice of which has been given by:
- 10a Councillor Hauk: Improving Accountability and Transparency on Unadopted Residential Developments

Council notes:

That many residents move into new developments expecting to become part of established communities yet can spend many years living with unresolved issues such as roads awaiting new markings or safety features, waiting for adequate street lighting, lack of facilities and upkeep of open spaces, play areas, drainage, signage and other community infrastructure such as health provision, community spaces and libraries.

That responsibility for such infrastructure is often divided between developers, management companies, Cambridge City Council, Cambridgeshire County Council and other public bodies. As a result, residents can face considerable difficulty in identifying who owns or maintains particular assets, who is responsible for resolving issues, whether infrastructure is intended for adoption, and what barriers remain to adoption.

Council recognises that adoption of highways, open spaces and other infrastructure can only occur where the relevant standards have been met and the responsible authority is satisfied that legal and technical requirements have been fulfilled.

That lengthy periods of uncertainty and unclear accountability can delay the resolution of problems, reduce confidence in the stewardship of developments and undermine trust in the planning and delivery of new communities.

Council believes:

That residents should be able to understand who is responsible for the places in which they live, how issues can be reported, and what progress is being made towards long-term management and adoption arrangements.

That improving transparency, accountability and communication on existing developments will help build public confidence in the delivery and stewardship of future developments and demonstrate that growth is accompanied by clear responsibilities and effective community engagement.

That Cambridge is a growing city that will continue to see significant housing and infrastructure development in the coming years, and in future that this is proposed to be the responsibility of a Development Corporation.

Council therefore requests that the Leader works with relevant officers to make clear and timely representations to the Development Corporation on behalf of the council, as the Dev Co establishes itself and its role in larger developments, to ensure that any proposals include:

1. Working with developers, management companies, Cambridgeshire County Council, and the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service to improve, for residents, transparency, accountability and coordination between the relevant responsible organisations.
2. Exploring the establishment of a code of engagement for developers and management companies operating occupied developments within the city;
3. Considering mechanisms to ensure residents have access to clear and publicly accessible information on:
 - ownership and maintenance responsibilities for community infrastructure;
 - adoption intentions and adoption status;
 - clear signposting to routes for addressing issues;
 - barriers preventing adoption or transfer to public or private bodies; and
 - expected timescales for resolution where known.
4. Exploring mechanisms to improve visibility of progress on issues, including response and progress monitoring, making use of existing reporting systems wherever possible.
5. Considering how successful elements of any code could be incorporated into future planning policy, planning conditions, management arrangements or Local Plan policies for major developments.

In addition, in the near term, Council requests that the Leader works with planning officers, and with relevant cross party ward and planning members to:

1. Identify opportunities to reduce unnecessary delays in the current adoption of infrastructure by the relevant public and private bodies and to highlight any barriers that may require further action by local government, developers or management companies;
2. To remind developers of their responsibilities to maintain positive engagement throughout the development of new sites and once these are established;
3. To consider planning guidance and conditions to bring this forward;
4. To report back to Council within six months with an update on progress on all of the above.

10b Councillor Toye Scott: Rights of the River Cam 2026

1 Introduction (not part of active motion)

The Green Group proposes the following motion to address resident concerns over the state of our rivers and chalk stream. We regard the river as an integral part of the life of our city. Threats to our rivers are threats to us all.

The purpose of this motion is to:

- *state our city's aspirations for our river and chalk streams ("the declaration of the Rights of the River Cam")*
- *petition the organisations responsible for our river to improve their performance to help save our river and its tributaries.*

- *recognise the limits placed by the critically depleted state of our river on future growth in buildings and infrastructure.*
- *publicise the immediacy of the water crisis, creating awareness of the need to reduce water use.*

Active Motion

1 Declaration of the Rights of the River Cam

This Council declares that the River Cam and its tributaries should have the following rights arising from their existence in nature:

- The right to flow and be free from over-abstraction
- The right to perform essential functions of flooding, moving sediment, recharging groundwater and sustaining biodiversity
- The right to be free from pollution
- The right to feed and be fed by sustainable aquifers
- The right to native biodiversity
- The right to restoration
- The right to maintain connections with other streams and rivers

This Council undertakes to assess the impact of all its decisions on the health of the river and ensure that all its decisions support these rights.

This Council calls on all residents and organisations to act as guardians of the River Cam and engage with the river in a relationship of respect and stewardship.

2 Responsibility

This Council notes that the responsible bodies are:

- Environment Agency – general oversight, including preventing environmental damage to water and associated biodiversity
- Cambridge Water – ensuring adequate water supply
- Anglian Water – management and treatment of sewage

The Council proposes to write to all three bodies to share its concerns over the state of the river and call upon them for their assistance.

The Council further notes that there are other bodies and institutions whose actions have significant impacts on the health of the river, and particularly highlights the importance of:

- The University of Cambridge and its associated colleges, through the maintenance of their assets and the management of their activities

The Cambridge Development Corporation –

The Council proposes to write to the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cambridge and the Chief Executive and Chair of the Cambridge Development Corporation to share its concerns over the state of the river and call upon them for their assistance.

3. Interaction with the Council's own actions and the growth of the city

The Council proposes to set up a small cross-party group to draw up a plan for the actions that it can specifically undertake to contribute to protection of the river. This will include:

- considering the impact of future growth in buildings and infrastructure in the city on the depleted state of our river
- recognising the limits that may be necessary to respect the

rights of the river

- reporting back to full Council preferably prior to updating the Local Plan.

The group will consult with the various environmental organisations currently actively involved in working for the improved health of the river. For the avoidance of doubt, it is intended that this group will supplement rather than displace the work of existing scrutiny committees.

The Council proposes to initiate a publicity campaign to create wide awareness of the current water crisis and the urgent need to address both the increasing over-abstraction of water and the decreasing quality of water.

The Council will actively publicise the Environment Agency's recommendations to take early action (e.g, water companies to reduce leakage as a priority, and initiate actions required under their drought plans), and encourage the public to do all it can to use water wisely.

End of Active Motion

Background Notes (not part of active motion):

- 1 In late 2025 the Environment Agency announced (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/drought-prospects-for-spring-2026/executive-summary-and-acknowledgements-drought-prospects-for-spring-2026>) that, unless we have average rainfall or more this winter, there will again be drought this year, with the area including Cambridge highlighted as being particularly vulnerable.*

- 2 On 22 June 2026, the Environment Agency announced that the Cam and Ely Ouse catchment has been declared in an area of Prolonged Dry Weather, after East Anglia received only 37% of the long-term average rainfall over the past three months.
- 3 On Midsummer's Day in 2021, Friends of the River Cam made the first public declaration in the UK of the rights of the River at Jesus Green, linked to the Universal Declaration of River Rights: <https://www.rightsofrivers.org>
- 4 The declaration is repeated on Midsummer's Day each year and is repeated in the text of this motion.
- 5 The declaration of rights is supported by many of our local environmental and community groups including CPRE, FeCRA, Cambridge Friends of the Earth, Save Honey Hill, Keep Waterbeach Rural, Friends of Logan's Meadow, Friends of Cherry Hinton and Coldhams Brooks, and many others.
- 6 In 2023 Lewes District Council passed a Rights of Rivers Motion to protect the River Ouse in East Sussex. Momentum has been growing globally to extend legal rights to nature and in some cases specifically to rivers.

<https://democracy.leweseastbourne.gov.uk/documents/s27490/Motion%20-%20Rights%20of%20the%20River.pdf>
- 6 Councillors Toye-Scott and Nicmanis wish to thank the Friends of the River Cam and representatives from a number of local environmental groups for their help in putting this motion together. Any errors or omissions are of course our own.

10c Councillor Ashton: Darwin Nurseries and Farm Shop

This Council would like to express its dismay at the announcement made by Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Foundation Trust that it will stop providing services at the site in April 2028.

This Council notes:

- For over 27 years this 7.5-acre site has been providing training, therapeutic horticulture, animal husbandry and retail work for adults with learning disabilities and mental health challenges who are known as co-workers.
- There are currently 50 co-workers and 12 staff.
- Cambridgeshire County Council currently contract the service to the Trust and in April 2028 the Trust will no longer run the contract.
- The County Council will then have to be responsible for the well-being of the co-workers who love working at the site.
- The 2025, 10 Year NHS Health Plan (Fit for the Future) aims to shift from a system focused on treating sickness to one that prioritises prevention, encouraging healthier lifestyles and early intervention.

This Council calls:

- Cambridgeshire County Council to do all it can to keep the service on the current site.
- Request that the Council Leader write to the Chief Executive of

the Trust Steve Grange to raise our concerns.

- Write to the MPs for Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire to see what can be done to keep the service on the current site.
- The support from the local community for this much-loved service has been an encouragement to its staff, co-workers and volunteers. The Council now adds its voice to the campaign and doing what it can to secure the services future.

10d Councillor Baigent: Planning Arrangements

This Council resolves that in line with its aspirations to achieve the highest quality and most affordable homes in Cambridge, from the date of this resolution being agreed that no residential development in which the Council has an ownership interest, financial interest or development role shall proceed unless it achieves the following standards

- on all sites of 10 or more dwellings that at least 40% of the homes shall be affordable homes, with rents set as follows:
 - social rent: 40% of the median market rent
 - affordable rent: 60% of the median market rent

Furthermore, this Council resolves that on any development that this council has an ownership interest, financial interest or development role:

1. All homes shall be developed to the highest recognised sustainability standard at the time that they are built.
2. No single aspect homes shall be built.

3. All sites shall have disabled parking, by right.

4. Subject to the provision of disabled parking, all developments shall be designed as car free by default. Where car parking is considered necessary, it shall be provided in a separate stand-alone car park (so that in due course this can gradually be used for building more homes).

5. No council land, or property, shall be sold without the approval of the full Council.

11 Written questions

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

Emergency Evacuation Procedure

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

Information for the public

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

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

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

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

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

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

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