



# **CAMBRIDGE** CITY COUNCIL

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## **INFORMATION PACK**

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## Question 1

During the consultation on the North Cambridge Framework for Change, while discussing the planned redevelopment of Arbury Court, many residents and locals, including me, have expressed that we would like to see the current park retained, rather than built over and replaced. The council has made clear that the previous plans were not final, and that a new plan, or plans, will be published some time this year.

I would like to ask about these updated plans in three regards:

-Has the council assessed the likely impact on traffic along Arbury Road and the surrounding roads from the redevelopment, and are there any plans in place to mitigate this impact?

-When will these plans be made available, and does the council know if these plans will continue to propose building on top of the current park?

-Has the council assessed the costs and risks of trying to lay down new green space on a currently paved area, in particular in terms of drainage capacity, given that the clay-rich soil in Cambridge is well known to drain poorly, leading to waterlogging and flooding even in well-established green space (e.g., in Logan's Meadow), let alone newly introduced green space?"

## Question 2

Since 2021, the Cambridge City Council has been one of the directing board members of Visit Cambridge, Cambridge's Destination Management Organisation (DMO), which was approved by the Council to be incorporated into a Community Interest Company (CIC).

As stated in publicly available Council documents, this was supposed to:

- support the recovery and development of a sustainable visitor economy
- Support the redesign of the [Visitor Centre], and any future agreements on funding or other relationships with stakeholders
- Protect the DMO assets for the benefit of the community
- Fulfill the role of DMO for Cambridge city
- Represent the city's tourism sector locally
- Provide a report each year detailing how its activities have benefited the community for which it was set up and continue to meet the test throughout its life.

Following the publication of these documents, these ambitions have not been fulfilled, there is no evidence that they were attempted, and there has never been a Community Interest Company set up along these lines. If these records exist, can they please be brought out?

In the past two years, I have asked multiple times, through formal and informal channels, to be heard and allowed to present the Tourist Information Centre which we set up in the absence of any viable alternative, which has been successful and in need of formal recognition. During this time, I have been ignored by the Council, apart from a few insubstantial informal meetings with officers, which only took place after all the plans had been finished and the process fully underway, in which I was told that there was nothing the Council could do for us.

I would like the Full Council to bear witness to the fact that I invited all the members of the Cabinet to come and visit us, and it was made to look as though they were going to be finding some time in their diaries to do this and get in touch with me, but none of them have.

Considering the non-existent document records of the DMO, and the lack of engagement and seeming refusal to acknowledge the importance of the Tourist Information Centre, would it be fair to say that there has been a conflict of interest between the Council's role as a directing partner of the DMO, and its more recent overriding ambition to force this civic quarter development through planning?

After so many expressions of interest and more than two years of work, investment and professional service provision on behalf of the city, I have a just expectation to be met. When am I going to be given my fair hearing?

### **Question 3**

Could you please provide information as to where the previous residents of Fanshawe Road and the residents who have recently moved out of Davy Road have gone?

### **Question 4**

Great Eastern Street Car Park, we have a problem with drivers abandoning their cars there. Would the council be prepared to change this to a metered car park to allow shoppers using Mill Road to park there?

## Question 5

Darwin Green is a new community still finding its feet, and our tennis courts are one of the few free recreational facilities available to residents. The tennis courts are used by families, young people learning the game, and residents who want to stay active. These tennis courts will shortly transfer from the developer to the City Council, and there is a concern that as other tennis courts in the city have seen charges introduced, the same could happen to our tennis courts in Darwin Green.

Will the Council prioritise accessible community sports facilities and commit to keeping Darwin Green's tennis courts free to use when they are transferred to the City Council?'

## Question 6

Research<sup>1</sup> confirms that 85 per cent of women do not feel safe walking alone at night, and women's lived experience confirms that women's concerns are not fanciful. Design, planning, servicing and governance of public space does not, or not systematically, take women's everyday features of life into proper account.

In her book *Women After Dark*, world-leading architect and urbanist Dr Nourhan Bassam observes that women are reliant on moving in public space 'in the dark' whether as 'workers, performers, patrons, caretakers, and spectators'.<sup>2</sup> To that list can be added women as shoppers, caregivers moving from elderly parents' homes to their own homes, friends visiting friends, walkers and joggers keen on preserving their health and wellbeing. Indeed, myriad aspects of daily life are lived outside during evening or night hours, or in the dark winter mornings and afternoons. Bassam proposes that women's safety, security and right to enjoyment of life to the full must be 'inscribed into urban design', focusing on 'width of sidewalks, placement of lights, safety of underpasses, and accessibility of public transport'.

1. Transport is the responsibility of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, and is key to many women's safety of travel at night. The previous mayoral transport lead, Labour's Anna Smith, proposed increasing transport safety, including a safer bus stop proposal and a last bus guarantee.
2. Lighting is the responsibility of Cambridgeshire County Council, yet residents express concern about lack or dimness of lighting, particularly during these winter months.

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<sup>1</sup> DemosAu, [Trusted Market Research and Polling Insights](#) (accessed 23 February 2026).

<sup>2</sup> [Women After Dark: How Cities Keep Failing Women After Dark eBook : Bassam, Nourhan: Amazon.co.uk: Kindle Store](#) (accessed 23 February 2026); [Women After Dark - by Nourhan Bassam - Nourhan's Substack](#) (accessed 23 February 2026).

3. Housing development in Cambridge is the responsibility of Cambridge City Council, and moving about in late evenings or nighttime is essential for many women residents.

Could the Council:

1. Take whatever steps are within its power to ensure that the Cambridgeshire Peterborough Combined Authority incorporates into transport planning the importance of public transport accessibility to women's safety, security and wellbeing, starting by implementing Cllr Smith's proposals.
2. Undertake to implement whatever steps within its power to ensure that Cambridgeshire County Council increases the wattage of City lighting so that residents throughout Cambridge and particularly north of the river where Arbury residents have expressed concerns to me can be secure whether on foot, cycle, or going to and from their cars, so that they can see where they are going and not be subjected to the dangers of dim lighting or darkness.
3. Affirm that in its house building plans it recognises the dangers and apprehensions facing women during non-daylight hours, and will incorporate into all housing plans and designs the features referenced by Dr Bassam, including footpath or pavement width, lights placement, underpass safety and associated matters.
4. Prioritise in relation to the Nth Cambridge Development including Brackley Close, Kingsway Flats and Arbury Court, the issue of women's safety, security and wellbeing so that they are incorporated into planning, plans and designs, to address the issues raised by Dr Bassam.

### **Question 7**

As a teacher, I am very concerned for the safety of young people in Cambridge, especially girls and young women. One of the issues most often raised with me is a desire for better street lighting at night. Why is the County Council not doing more to provide more effective street lighting at night and help people to stay safe, and what can the City Council do about it?

### **Question 8**

Cambridge City Council referred Council Tax debts to bailiffs over 2800 times between 2023 and 2025, averaging almost 4 referrals per day. What was the cost to the council for these enforcement agencies in that period for the collection of council tax arrears?

## **1. From Cllr Glasberg to The Cabinet Member for Nature, Open Space and City Services**

Residents are raising concerns about planting on verges being cut back in a way that makes it unlikely that the plants will recover, for example, the mature Cistus bushes planted as part of the landscaping scheme for Hills Road.

Planting on verges is important in the city for amenity and biodiversity as well as reducing air pollution from traffic, and it is hard to see how planting that is less than a metre high impairs visibility for cyclists, pedestrians or vehicles.

While highway safety needs to be considered there is a balance to be struck - these are residential streets not merely transport corridors.

Could Councillors be informed of pending work on verges in their ward that involves cutting back planting?

## **2. From Cllr Dalzell to the Cabinet Member for Planning and Transport**

Could the Cabinet Member please confirm which councillors were consulted about the Milton Road Library public art project before the artist was commissioned in April 2025 by the Public Art Advisory Service? Was this in accordance with Council protocols and the Public Art Strategy?

## **3. From Cllr Porrer to the Cabinet Member for Safety, Wellbeing and Tackling Homelessness**

The Willow Walk homeless hostel accommodated individuals with the highest and most complex needs on the city's supported pathway from rough sleeping towards sustainable housing. It closed in June 2022, as a result of its ongoing funding being stopped with the support of the City Council, offering the explanation that it was no longer needed as capacity existed elsewhere. The charity who owned the building sold it and it is now being converted to private apartments. How is it that the council's consultants have now assessed that there is a shortage of high needs hostel accommodation in the city, which is hampering our ability to get people back into regular housing, and could the Cabinet Member explain what happened?

#### **4. From Cllr Blackburn-Horgan to the Cabinet Member for Planning and Transport**

It was agreed at Council on 28th November 2024 that a report would be prepared on the case for and feasibility of one or more Article 4 directions within the city boundaries further to motion 6e Improving Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) in Cambridge. This would consider the implications of removing Permitted Development rights for smaller HMOs (currently Use Class C4) and instead require planning permission for all new builds and for change of use for existing housing stock to be used as HMOs for more than two people, including a register of all HMOs from more than 2 people and report back to a suitable member meeting by the summer of 2025. Can the Cabinet Member for Planning and Transport please direct Council to this report and its recommendations.

#### **5. From Cllr Hauk to the Cabinet Member for Nature, Open Spaces and City Services**

What steps can the City Council take to facilitate and accelerate the adoption of open spaces and roads that are currently under the control of developers?

# Liberal Democrat Group amendment to the Budget Setting Report 2026/27

## Foreword by the Liberal Democrat Shadow Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources

Last year, Labour made jobs redundant and cut street cleaning, closed public toilets, and reduced enforcement across our city. At the same time, they voted themselves a 55% increase in their Leader's allowance, overriding independent advice. That is who is running Cambridge.

This budget amendment is our answer to that. It starts to reverse the damage done.

The message from residents in this council's own public consultation could not have been clearer: basic council services are the priority and more should be spent on them. Labour heard that message last year. They ignored it. They heard it the year before. They ignored it then too. Their budget this year is nothing so heroic as a U-turn – it is tokenism. The mismatch between what residents want and what Labour delivers remains stubbornly in place.

Street cleaning, anti-social behaviour enforcement, and public toilets are not aspirational luxuries. They are what residents believe they pay their council tax to receive. They are central to a civilised city of which its people can feel proud. Labour cut all three. We are building back all three.

We propose to reopen the Parker's Piece public toilets closed last year – but not simply to turn the clock back. By introducing contactless card payment alongside Radar Key access for disabled people, we address the primary reason their usage and income had been declining in the first place: that in an increasingly cashless city, people couldn't use them unless they happened to have the right change. We propose to apply the same technology to the Quayside toilets, making both financially sustainable for the long term, as the council already plans to do at Silver Street. There is no good reason it has not already been applied here.

We propose to add a new two-person afternoon shift to a street cleaning team that Labour cut by over 20% last year, with entirely predictable consequences. Our amendment enables an additional daily cleaning round after 4pm in the busy city centre – where service currently stops – and increases capacity for non-routine work across the city: fly-tip clearances, graffiti and gum removal, street bin cleaning and jet spraying. This will be further supported by the ongoing bin round optimisation exercise.

We propose to restore two Public Realm Enforcement positions made redundant last year. These officers

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enforce regulations including those on littering, abuse of open spaces, fly-tipping, dog control, obstructive A-boards, moorings, and punt touting. Their loss has reduced the service to a primarily reactive, request-driven operation with programmed patrols across the city largely abandoned. The visible deterrent effect has gone. The potential for preventative action has gone. The council's eyes and ears on the streets have gone. The costs of that – in anti-social behaviour and in the quality of life of Cambridge residents – are already being felt.

Without these changes, the council is accepting lower standards and storing up greater problems.

The improvements we propose will be funded through the simple mechanism of returning councillor allowances to what the Independent Remuneration Panel actually recommended last year – indexed for inflation – and by ensuring car parking charges keep pace with the retail prices index rather than rising by less.

Our amendment proves that even in genuinely challenging times, a council does not have to break the bank to respect its residents' priorities. It simply has to listen to them – and to order its affairs with their interests, rather than its own, coming first.

**Councillor Jamie Dalzell, Liberal Democrat Shadow Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources**

## **Foreword by the Liberal Democrat Shadow Cabinet Member for Housing**

The administration's management of the council housing it provides has shown for many years the same disregard for the basic expectations of its tenants that the General Fund does to the wider public.

We will support the Housing Revenue Account budget for 2026/27 because the proposed investments in building safety, stock condition, and damp remediation are not optional: they are critical to the health and safety of our tenants. However, this budget is a stark admission that previous financial plans were detached from operational reality. It serves as an emergency rescue package to fix a structural deficit that has been allowed to drift for a decade.

For years, we have proposed proactive investments in responsive repairs, void management, and dedicated staff to tackle damp, mould, and condensation. These proposals were consistently rejected under the premise that existing resources were sufficient. Now, driven by the force of new national legislation, regulatory pressure, and spiralling void costs, the council is forced to budget an additional £750,000 annually to manage damp and mould, alongside further substantial sums for disrepair compensation. This short-sighted approach has cost the council heavily in financial terms and failed tenants who have had to endure poor living conditions in the interim.

We welcome that the administration's capital programme matches the scale of ambition we tabled as far back as 2019, when we proposed dedicated resources to accelerate the delivery of 1,000 new council homes beyond the initial devolution grant. We remain fully committed to expanding the city's housing supply and support the capital provisions in this budget, but maintain that new development cannot come at the expense of letting existing stock deteriorate.

We must also highlight the underlying financial fragility of the HRA. The capital programme is reliant on the receipt of unconfirmed government grants, and the government's delay of rent convergence until April 2027 creates a significant, unexpected pressure on the coming year's finances. The HRA's Interest Cover Ratio is projected to drop dangerously close to the minimum prudent level in the mid-2030s, leaving the housing budget with virtually no margin for error.

Finally, while we support the necessary financial appropriations in this budget, we must also reform the operational culture. From within existing budget lines, we would immediately overhaul how the housing service interacts with residents. We urgently need an effective, respectful access policy to ensure property assessment and maintenance can be delivered efficiently. Crucially, we would implement more flexible working hours for the repairs service, ensuring that appointments fit around tenants' lives and working hours, rather than dictating to them. It is time for a housing service that is genuinely responsive to the people it

serves.

**Councillor Anthony Martinelli, Liberal Democrat Shadow Cabinet Member for Housing**

## Background

The council's draft Budget Setting Report 2026/27 was published on 18 February 2026. In line with the council's constitution this sets out the recommendations of the Cabinet, and will be subject to consideration by Full Council at its meeting on 26 February 2026.

The Liberal Democrat Group wish to add several budget proposals as set out within this amendment paper. The detailed proposals can be seen at Annexe A.

In order to enact these additional proposals, the Liberal Democrat Group propose a number of amendments to the Cabinet recommendations in respect of the Budget Setting Report 2026/27, as set out at Annexe C.

## Impact of Liberal Democrat Group proposals

The table below sets out the impact on the council's five-year savings requirement in the General Fund should the Liberal Democrat Group proposals be accepted in full:-

General Fund savings requirements (£m)	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31
<b>Net savings requirement – new each year (draft Budget Setting Report)</b>	-	<b>0.375</b>	<b>0.375</b>	<b>0.375</b>	<b>0.248</b>
<b>Net savings requirement – cumulative (draft Budget Setting Report)</b>	-	<b>0.375</b>	<b>0.750</b>	<b>1.125</b>	<b>1.373</b>
New revenue bids	0.276	0.276	0.251	0.251	0.251
New savings and increased income	(0.199)	(0.199)	(0.199)	(0.199)	(0.199)
New capital bids funded from revenue resources	0.025	-	-	-	-
<b>Total net pressure/(savings)</b>	<b>0.102</b>	<b>0.077</b>	<b>0.052</b>	<b>0.052</b>	<b>0.052</b>
Use of General Fund reserves to fund proposals	(0.050)	(0.025)	-	-	-
Contributions to / (from) reserves to smooth current savings target	(0.052)	(0.052)	(0.052)	(0.052)	-
<b>Total changes to savings requirements</b>	-	-	-	-	<b>0.052</b>
<b>Revised net savings requirement – cumulative</b>	-	<b>0.375</b>	<b>0.750</b>	<b>1.125</b>	<b>1.425</b>
<b>Revised net savings requirement – new each year</b>	-	<b>0.375</b>	<b>0.375</b>	<b>0.375</b>	<b>0.300</b>

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As shown above, the proposals would result in a slight increase to the council's five-year savings target of £52,000, to £1.425 million. The proposals would also result in an additional use of General Fund reserves totalling £283,000 over the next four years.

The impact of the proposals on General Fund reserve levels over the next five years is set out in the table below:-

<b>General Fund reserve projection (£m)</b>	<b>2025/26</b>	<b>2026/27</b>	<b>2027/28</b>	<b>2028/29</b>	<b>2029/30</b>	<b>2030/31</b>
<b>Balance at 1 April</b>	<b>18.863</b>	<b>14.381</b>	<b>12.379</b>	<b>11.605</b>	<b>11.964</b>	<b>11.980</b>
Net transfer to Transformation and Reinvestment Fund	(1.754)	-	-	-	-	-
Transfer to Greater Cambridge Impact Fund Reserve	(0.800)	-	-	-	-	-
Planned use of reserve to fund one-off Folk Festival proposal	(0.075)	-	-	-	-	-
Forecast use of reserve to balance budget in-year – draft Budget Setting Report	(5.531)	1.600	(0.697)	0.411	0.068	-
Use of reserve to finance historic capital expenditure	(5.837)	-	-	-	-	-
Transfer to Local Government Reorganisation Reserve	-	(2.500)	-	-	-	-
Transfer to Civic Quarter Development Reserve	-	(1.000)	-	-	-	-
Current year business rates growth	9.515	-	-	-	-	-
Additional use of reserves in respect of Liberal Democrat Group amendments	-	(0.102)	(0.077)	(0.052)	(0.052)	-
<b>Balance at 31 March before future business rates growth</b>	<b>14.381</b>	<b>12.379</b>	<b>11.605</b>	<b>11.964</b>	<b>11.980</b>	<b>11.980</b>
Indicative future business rates growth (at risk)	-	0.217	1.160	1.999	0.230	1.223
<b>Balance at 31 March including future business rates growth</b>	<b>14.381</b>	<b>12.596</b>	<b>12.982</b>	<b>15.340</b>	<b>15.586</b>	<b>16.809</b>

The target level for General Fund reserves as advised by the council's Section 151 Officer is currently £9.671

million. Allowing for future inflation, the target level is anticipated to be around £10.530 million by 2030/31. The table above demonstrates that, should the Liberal Democrat Group proposals be adopted in full, reserves would remain above this projected target level in each of the next five years.

## **Equalities Impact Assessment**

Where relevant, the equalities impacts of the Liberal Democrat Group proposals have been considered and are set out at Annexe B.

## **Report by the Section 151 Officer**

Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 requires the council's Section 151 Officer to report to the council when it is considering its budget requirement and consequent Council Tax setting. The report must deal with the robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the calculations and the adequacy of the reserves allowed for in the budget proposals. The Section 25 report is included at section 11 of the Budget Setting Report 2026/27.

I confirm that the amendments proposed by the Liberal Democrat Group, as set out within this amendment paper, would not require any changes to my section 25 report.

**Jody Etherington, Section 151 Officer**

# Annexe A – Liberal Democrat General Fund proposals

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## 2026/27 Budget – GF Proposals – by Type

Reference	Item Description	2026/27 Budget £	2027/28 Budget £	2028/29 Budget £	2029/30 Budget £	2030/31 Budget £	Climate Rating	Contact
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### Revenue bids

#### City Services

LDG2601	Reopening of Parker's Piece public toilets	25,000	25,000	-	-	-	Negative / Low impact	Don Blair
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Having been closed based on usage data which was heavily impacted by availability of access only by coins, prior to COVID-19 these public toilets were heavily used and clearly provided an important service. They will be reopened immediately, incurring the full cost of cleaning and maintenance which will be initially budgeted for two years. During this time, reader access for bank cards will be installed with the intention of defraying these costs partly or completely (see separate capital proposal LDG2602). A report to members will then be brought forward after a short bedding-in period to allow a decision on the future of the toilets from 2028-29 onwards.

LDG2603	Improvement of street cleaning services	150,000	150,000	150,000	150,000	150,000	Nil	Don Blair
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Following the recent restructuring, gaps have emerged both in routine attention to the city centre after 4pm and the achievement of programmed periodic work across the city. Subject to further experimentation and refinement by operational management, a new two-person shift working 12.00-19.00 within the existing 7 day week shift rota will be added, involving the appointment of 4 additional staff. Staff will be deployed across the city from 12.00-16.00 to support programmed bin cleaning, jet spraying, removal of fly tips and graffiti; and from 16.00-19.00 to provide an additional bin and cleaning round, leaving the city clear before the night economy begins.

#### Communities

LDG2604	Reorientation of Public Realm Enforcement	101,000	101,000	101,000	101,000	101,000	Nil	Yvonne O'Donnell
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Since the recent restructuring the reduced number of Public Realm Enforcement Officers have become a primarily reactive resource with field visits mainly being driven by service requests from colleagues and the public. The appointment of two additional officers will reinforce their collective capacity for a programmed preventative mode of operation across the city, including a strengthened presence at the pressure points of the city centre and seasonal weekends. This will enable the council's agreed policies across a wide range of environmental anti-social behaviour to be more systematically monitored and deterred.

<b>Total revenue bids</b>	<b>276,000</b>	<b>276,000</b>	<b>251,000</b>	<b>251,000</b>	<b>251,000</b>
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<b>Total pressures and bids</b>	<b>276,000</b>	<b>276,000</b>	<b>251,000</b>	<b>251,000</b>	<b>251,000</b>
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<b>2026/27 Budget – GF Proposals – by Type</b>
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Reference	Item Description	2026/27 Budget £	2027/28 Budget £	2028/29 Budget £	2029/30 Budget £	2030/31 Budget £	Climate Rating	Contact
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## Savings

### Chief Executive Office

<b>LDG2605</b>	<b>Members' allowances</b>	(46,000)	(46,000)	(46,000)	(46,000)	(46,000)	Nil	Dan Kalley
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The members' allowances scheme will be aligned with the 2025 recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel. This will result in ongoing savings from a reduction in the Leader's allowance, and a limit of one internal and one external special responsibility allowance per member.

<b>Total savings</b>		<b>(46,000)</b>	<b>(46,000)</b>	<b>(46,000)</b>	<b>(46,000)</b>	<b>(46,000)</b>		
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<b>2026/27 Budget – GF Proposals – by Type</b>
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Reference	Item Description	2026/27 Budget £	2027/28 Budget £	2028/29 Budget £	2029/30 Budget £	2030/31 Budget £	Climate Rating	Contact
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**Increased income****City Services**

LDG2606	Car park income	(153,000)	(153,000)	(153,000)	(153,000)	(153,000)	Nil	Daniel Morgan
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The proposals set out in the Budget Setting Report 2026/27 would see daytime car parking charges at the Grand Arcade, Park Street and Grafton Centre car parks increase by between 1.0% and 3.3%, with most increases below the current annual rate of inflation. This bid would see these charges increased instead by an average of 4.5%, representing the September 2025 Retail Price Index (RPI).

<b>Total increased income</b>	<b>(153,000)</b>	<b>(153,000)</b>	<b>(153,000)</b>	<b>(153,000)</b>	<b>(153,000)</b>	<b>(153,000)</b>		
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<b>Total savings and increased income</b>	<b>(199,000)</b>	<b>(199,000)</b>	<b>(199,000)</b>	<b>(199,000)</b>	<b>(199,000)</b>	<b>(199,000)</b>		
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<b>Total revenue proposals</b>	<b>77,000</b>	<b>77,000</b>	<b>52,000</b>	<b>52,000</b>	<b>52,000</b>	<b>52,000</b>		
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<b>2026/27 Budget – GF Proposals – by Type</b>
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Reference	Item Description	2026/27 Budget £	2027/28 Budget £	2028/29 Budget £	2029/30 Budget £	2030/31 Budget £	Climate Rating	Contact
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**Capital bids****City Services**

LDG2602	Bank card readers at public toilets	25,000	-	-	-	-	Nil	Don Blair
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Cashless access is recognised as essential to the long-term viability of pay-to-enter public toilets in high footfall locations. This bid will provide for installation of bank card readers at Parker’s Piece and Quayside public toilets to enable access and support continued operation beyond 2027/28 on a financially sustainable basis. This is linked to revenue bids B5479 and LDG2601, and would be funded from revenue reserves.

<b>Total capital bids</b>	<b>25,000</b>	-	-	-	-	-		
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# Annexe B – Equality impacts

## Reopening of Parker's Piece public toilets

This would have a positive impact for residents and visitors to Cambridge utilising Parker's Piece, either at an organised event (such as the Country Fair or Winter Wonderland) or using the space generally. Whilst there are public houses, hotels and shops close by that have toilets, these tend to just be available for their customers. By carrying out regular maintenance and cleaning it would ensure that the facilities meet the public's expectations of public toilets and comply with health and safety standards.

The re-opening of the toilets on Parkers Piece would especially have a positive impact on:-

- People with disabilities who might have conditions that cause incontinence and require them to need to use the toilet more often, or who have mobility disabilities and are unable to get to alternative toilet provision.
- Older people as aging can bring about physical changes like reduced bladder capacity and conditions like incontinence. These factors make the availability of public toilets critical for older adults.
- Pregnant women who often need to go to the toilet more frequently as a result of hormonal changes and physical changes, such as the growing uterus putting pressure on the bladder.
- Parents of babies and toddlers who may need access to baby changing facilities.

## Improvement of street cleaning services

This would have a positive impact for residents and visitors to Cambridge by removing litter, rubbish, fly tipping etc. This would improve accessibility of the street scene in the evenings, especially having a positive impact on:-

- People with disabilities who may have mobility impairments or visual impairments so be at risk of trip hazards or need a space clear of rubbish and so on for access via wheelchairs or mobility scooters.
- Older people who might be more likely to have mobility or sight impairments, as likelihood increases with age.
- Pregnant women and parents of babies, toddlers, and young children pushing prams who may

be at risk of trip hazards or need a space clear of rubbish and so on for access.

## Reorientation of public realm enforcement

This would have a positive impact for residents and visitors to Cambridge through reinforcing the team's collective capacity for a programmed preventative mode of operation across the city, including a strengthened presence at the pressure points of the city centre and seasonal weekends with activities including enforcement of regulations regarding A-boards and external cafe seating. The increased visibility would also have an impact on tackling issues such as pickpocketing, fake charity fundraisers and street vendors, having a positive impact on:-

- All communities, especially those who experience hate crime and/or harassment due to their protected characteristics including women, people with disabilities, members of the lesbian, gay, and bisexual communities, people who are transgender and non-binary people, people of faith (Jewish, Muslim, Sikh etc), and people from ethnic communities including the Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller community.
- Disabled people by improving enforcement that makes spaces more accessible. This would especially be of benefit to people needing to use wheelchairs and mobility scooters, and people who generally have mobility impairments and/or visual impairments. Improving ability to enforce regulations on A-boards and café seating will also improve accessibility for people needing to use pushchairs or prams.

## Bank card readers at public toilets

Cashless access to toilets may have a negative impact on people who experience digital inclusion and/or bank accounts, which especially impacts on people experiencing poverty. Moreover, older people may be more likely to experience digital exclusion so not have access to smartphones.

The accessible toilet will continue to be free as it is accessed via a Radar Key.

## Car park income

This would have negative impacts on groups such as:

- Older people who might rely on car parks for access to services because likelihood of disability increases with age so they might be more likely to have mobility issues. Those above retirement age though do have the benefit of a subsidised public transport scheme which could help mitigate the impact.

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- Families with children who may require convenient parking close to the city to access schools. An increase in fees might encourage people to use alternative modes of transport, which may be less convenient for them.
- Disabled people. Those who are blue badge holders have access to accessible parking, and increased costs associated with the rise in car park charges are mitigated by the 3 hours of free parking offer. However, not all disabled people are eligible for a blue badge and disabled people are more likely to experience poverty (in part due to increased general living costs associated with having a disability). This means disabled people might be disproportionately impacted by the increase in charges.
- Unpaid carers, 59% of whom are women. People with caring responsibilities make a higher number of trips making car travel more convenient, which might mean that increasing charges might disproportionately impact on this group. Whilst the person they care for may have a blue badge, this can only be used when the person is with them.
- People experiencing poverty who are less likely to own cars. Those on lower incomes who own cars and who have to use car parks might have disproportionate negative impacts.

## Annexe C – Proposed amendments to recommendations

It is proposed that the recommendations to Full Council in respect of the Budget Setting Report 2026/27 are amended as follows:-

- h) Approve the General Fund revenue proposals shown at Appendix E, together with the additional proposals LDG2601, LDG2603, LDG2604, LDG2605 and LDG2606 set out in the Liberal Democrat Group Amendment.
- j) Approve the General Fund capital proposals set out at Appendix F(a), together with additional proposal LDG2602 set out in the Liberal Democrat Group Amendment, and the revised General Fund capital plan set out at Appendix F(c) as amended by proposal LDG2602.
- l) Approve the proposed capital financing plans set out at section 5 (General Fund) and section 7 (Housing Revenue Account) of the Budget Setting Report 2026/27, as amended by proposal LDG2602, whilst noting that the constitution delegates all executive decisions on borrowing, investment or financing to the Chief Finance Officer, who is required to act in accordance with CIPFA's Code of Practice for Treasury Management in Local Authorities.
- o) Note the impact of the Budget Setting Report 2026/27 on General Fund and Housing Revenue Account reserves, as set out at section 8 of the Report and amended by the additional proposals set out in the Liberal Democrat Group Amendment.
- r) Approve the council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy for the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account as set out at section 9 of the Budget Setting Report 2026/27 and amended by the additional proposals set out in the Liberal Democrat Group Amendment.
- t) Approve the Capital Strategy attached at Appendix O as amended by the additional proposals set out in the Liberal Democrat Group Amendment.
- u) Approve the Treasury Management Strategy 2026/27 at Appendix P, including the prudential and treasury management indicators set out at Annexe C, as amended by the additional proposals set out in the Liberal Democrat Group Amendment.
- aa) Note the Equality Impact Assessments undertaken in respect of budget proposals in the General Fund (Appendix S(a)) and Housing Revenue Account (Appendix S(b)), together with the equality impacts of the additional proposals as set out in the Liberal Democrat Group Amendment.
- bb) Approve the schedule of proposed fees and charges for 2026/27 set out at Appendix T(a) and

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confidential Appendix T(b), and delegate authority to the Director of City Services to amend car parking charges in respect of the Grand Arcade, Park Street and Grafton Centre car parks in order to achieve the additional income set out at proposal LDG2606.

# Green Group amendment to the Budget Setting Report 2026/27

## Foreword by the Leader of the Green Group

### Introduction

Our focus this year continues to be on safe and warm homes.

### A budget for council tenants

Last year, we predicted that the cost for responsive repairs for condensation, damp and mould would exceed the budget and we were right. We welcome the increase in the budget this year. However, this budget only covers some types of treatment for condensation, damp and mould. There is a small hard core of city homes coming back again and again with complaints of damp and mould. Some of these cases require works that would normally be budgeted as capital improvements, such as internal and/or external insulation. The type of works depends on the existing build.

Awaab's Law takes effect from October 2026. Our bid is for £400,000 for capital improvements to city homes with hard to eradicate damp and mould that does not qualify for other government grants. Cost per home will depend on the size of the home and the amount and type of work required. We anticipate that this might cover up to 12 city homes.

### A budget for the homeless – Overview

At the time of writing, 22 Cambridge households have had to be placed in hotels because no better accommodation is available. We don't believe that any council should have to put its residents in hotel or B&B accommodation. It is expensive and unsuitable.

Bristol City Council has successfully used its funds to provide new temporary accommodation to cut the numbers of residents placed in hotels and are working to eliminate the need to use hotels for temporary accommodation altogether. Should we not do the same in Cambridge?

Our proposal is for a pilot scheme to purchase a 4-bedroom home in Cambridge to use as temporary accommodation. We would hope to use this as a model on which to base a further scheme next year so we can end the unsatisfactory practice of using hotels for homes altogether.

## A budget for the homeless – Technical note

Our proposal is a conditional one. Councillors will be well aware that Thatcher's government made it as difficult as possible for councils to invest in new homes. That government may be long gone but the damage that they did lives on. The restrictive and over complex local government housing rules are just one part of that. Our privatised water companies are another.

We know that the Bristol City Council scheme has been approved by their Section 151 Officer and is supported by a specialist barrister's opinion in favour. We have also seen an outline of the technical argument which is contained in the published papers. **While this is encouraging, the council would need to obtain its own legal opinion and prepare a full business case model that reflects any restrictions outlined in that opinion. For that reason, we cannot model any savings from the proposal at this stage. For that reason, our proposal is a conditional one only.**

For the avoidance of doubt, we have not seen the full barrister's opinion or the instructions on which it is based because these are confidential documents.

## A budget for private renters

Over 40% of Cambridge residents live in private rental accommodation. Some Cambridge wages may be higher than the national average, but so are Cambridge rents. If too much of your wages end up in your landlord's pockets, job loss, relationship breakdown or even an unexpected bill can start the spiral down into financial insecurity, sofa surfing and homelessness.

The HRA financial inclusion team has built up formidable expertise in halting that spiral for council tenants. But they don't have the bandwidth to share their services with private tenants. Our proposal is that some of that expertise could be shared through social media, podcasts and videos so that all residents can benefit from it.

Shame at not coping often holds residents back from seeking advice at an early stage. If advice is available online, residents can get help without having to tell a stranger about their problem. That advice is also more accessible to shift workers and the housebound, to those juggling family and jobs and to zero hours workers afraid to take time off for fear of losing their shifts.

It's universally recognised that the earlier that help is obtained, the more likely it is that homelessness can be avoided and the significant problems and costs for resident and council alike can be avoided or at least kept to a minimum.

By helping residents in this way, the council can also save higher homelessness costs that might otherwise

be incurred.

### **A budget for all of us**

Our proposals help to future proof the city council by helping it to avoid potential future costs from non-compliance with Awaab's Law, helping to prevent homelessness and keeping the costs of providing temporary accommodation under control. The financial benefits of our proposals are not estimated within the amendments at this stage but we would expect them to be evident within a relatively short period. These savings will help safeguard other council services that residents value such as public toilets, parks and play spaces.

However, financial benefits are not our main inspiration for these proposals. We know that although few of our residents will end up homeless, that the fear of homelessness casts a long shadow. We have heard the voices of parents who feel they have failed because they cannot provide safe, warm, mould-free homes for their families. This is their budget.

We hope that our colleagues from other parties can support these proposals.

Finally, I would like to thank the officers, councillors and residents who helped shape this amendment. It is the people who work within it who make an organisation great, not the buildings it operates from.

### **Councillor Naomi Bennett, Leader of the Green Group**

## Background

The council's draft Budget Setting Report 2026/27 was published on 18 February 2026. In line with the council's constitution this sets out the recommendations of the Cabinet, and will be subject to consideration by Full Council at its meeting on 26 February 2026.

The Green Group wish to add several budget proposals as set out within this amendment paper. The detailed proposals can be seen at Annexe A (General Fund) and Annexe B (Housing Revenue Account).

In order to enact these additional proposals, the Green Group propose a number of amendments to the Cabinet recommendations in respect of the Budget Setting Report 2026/27, as set out at Annexe D.

## Impact of Green Group proposals

### General Fund

The table below sets out the impact on the council's five-year savings requirement in the General Fund should the Green Group proposals be accepted in full:-

General Fund savings requirements (£m)	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31
<b>Net savings requirement – new each year (draft Budget Setting Report)</b>	-	0.375	0.375	0.375	0.248
<b>Net savings requirement – cumulative (draft Budget Setting Report)</b>	-	0.375	0.750	1.125	1.373
New revenue bids	0.075	-	-	-	-
New capital bids funded from revenue resources	0.650	-	-	-	-
<b>Total net pressure/(savings)</b>	<b>0.725</b>	-	-	-	-
Use of General Fund reserves to fund proposals	(0.725)	-	-	-	-
<b>Total changes to savings requirements</b>	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Revised net savings requirement – cumulative</b>	-	0.375	0.750	1.125	1.373
<b>Revised net savings requirement – new each year</b>	-	0.375	0.375	0.375	0.248

As shown above, since the proposals relate to one-off spend to be funded from reserves, there is no impact on the council's savings targets. The proposals would, however, result in an additional use of General Fund

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reserves totalling £725,000 in 2026/27.

The impact of the proposals on General Fund reserve levels over the next five years is set out in the table below:-

<b>General Fund reserve projection (£m)</b>	<b>2025/26</b>	<b>2026/27</b>	<b>2027/28</b>	<b>2028/29</b>	<b>2029/30</b>	<b>2030/31</b>
<b>Balance at 1 April</b>	<b>18.863</b>	<b>14.381</b>	<b>11.756</b>	<b>11.059</b>	<b>11.470</b>	<b>11.538</b>
Net transfer to Transformation and Reinvestment Fund	(1.754)	-	-	-	-	-
Transfer to Greater Cambridge Impact Fund Reserve	(0.800)	-	-	-	-	-
Planned use of reserve to fund one-off Folk Festival proposal	(0.075)	-	-	-	-	-
Forecast use of reserve to balance budget in-year – draft Budget Setting Report	(5.531)	1.600	(0.697)	0.411	0.068	-
Use of reserve to finance historic capital expenditure	(5.837)	-	-	-	-	-
Transfer to Local Government Reorganisation Reserve	-	(2.500)	-	-	-	-
Transfer to Civic Quarter Development Reserve	-	(1.000)	-	-	-	-
Current year business rates growth	9.515	-	-	-	-	-
Additional use of reserves in respect of Green Group amendments	-	(0.725)	-	-	-	-
<b>Balance at 31 March before future business rates growth</b>	<b>14.381</b>	<b>11.756</b>	<b>11.059</b>	<b>11.470</b>	<b>11.538</b>	<b>11.538</b>
Indicative future business rates growth (at risk)	-	0.217	1.160	1.999	0.230	1.223
<b>Balance at 31 March including future business rates growth</b>	<b>14.381</b>	<b>11.973</b>	<b>12.436</b>	<b>14.846</b>	<b>15.144</b>	<b>16.367</b>

The target level for General Fund reserves as advised by the council’s Section 151 Officer is currently £9.671 million. Allowing for future inflation, the target level is anticipated to be around £10.530 million by 2030/31. The table above demonstrates that, should the Green Group proposals be adopted in full, reserves would

remain above this projected target level in each of the next five years.

## Housing Revenue Account

The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is managed such that any operating surplus after interest costs is used to finance capital expenditure, thus minimising the need to borrow and therefore future interest costs.

The Green proposal to invest an additional £400,000 in capital expenditure in 2026/27 will therefore increase the borrowing need, and therefore slightly increase future interest payments. The impact on this on the HRA over the next five years is set out in the table below:-

HRA revenue budget (£m)	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31
<b>HRA (surplus) / deficit (draft Budget Setting Report)</b>	<b>0.131</b>	<b>(0.251)</b>	<b>(0.358)</b>	<b>(0.197)</b>	<b>(0.183)</b>
Increase in net interest cost	0.011	0.022	0.023	0.024	0.025
Reduction in revenue contribution available for capital financing	(0.011)	(0.022)	(0.023)	(0.024)	(0.025)
<b>Revised HRA (surplus) / deficit</b>	<b>0.131</b>	<b>(0.251)</b>	<b>(0.358)</b>	<b>(0.197)</b>	<b>(0.183)</b>

Over the life of the 30-Year Business Plan, the proposal would increase total interest payable by £1.318 million, and would increase total outstanding borrowing at the end of the 30-year period by £1.689 million, from £798.544 million to £800.233 million.

The long-term financial sustainability of the HRA is assessed by reference to its interest cover ratio (ICR), as explained more fully at section 7 of the Budget Setting Report 2026/27. The council has set a prudent minimum ICR target level of 1.25. The Green Group proposal can be accommodated within this ICR target, albeit with slightly reduced headroom. The draft Budget Setting Report 2026/27 forecasts a minimum debt headroom of £1.402 million in 2033/34 – the Green Group proposal would reduce this headroom to £837,000.

## Equalities Impact Assessment and climate ratings

Where relevant, the equalities and climate impacts of the Green Group proposals have been considered and are set out at Annexe C.

## Report by the Section 151 Officer

Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 requires the council’s Section 151 Officer to report to the council when it is considering its budget requirement and consequent Council Tax setting. The report must deal with the robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the calculations and the adequacy of the reserves

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allowed for in the budget proposals. The Section 25 report is included at section 11 of the Budget Setting Report 2026/27.

I confirm that the amendments proposed by the Green Group, as set out within this amendment paper, would not require any changes to my section 25 report.

**Jody Etherington, Section 151 Officer**

# Annexe A – Green General Fund proposals

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## 2026/27 Budget – GF Proposals – by Type

Reference	Item Description	2026/27 Budget £	2027/28 Budget £	2028/29 Budget £	2029/30 Budget £	2030/31 Budget £	Climate Rating	Contact
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### Revenue bids

#### Communities

GRG2609	Financial advice and inclusion resources	75,000	-	-	-	-	Nil	Simon Hunt
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This bid is for a one-off piece of work to create podcasts and social media content around financial advice and inclusion for tenants of all types (council, housing association and private). The cost of living crisis continues to impact all residents, including the 40% who are in private rented accommodation. Creation of these resources could help to share the benefits of the council's existing financial advice and inclusion service more widely, help to better inform private tenants on topical issues such as damp, condensation and mould, and help to prevent residents from falling into debt and homelessness, which ultimately impacts upon demand for statutory council services and the associated costs.

<b>Total revenue bids</b>	<b>75,000</b>	-	-	-	-
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<b>Total pressures and bids</b>	<b>75,000</b>	-	-	-	-
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<b>Total revenue proposals</b>	<b>75,000</b>	-	-	-	-
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<b>2026/27 Budget – GF Proposals – by Type</b>
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Reference	Item Description	2026/27 Budget £	2027/28 Budget £	2028/29 Budget £	2029/30 Budget £	2030/31 Budget £	Climate Rating	Contact
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**Capital bids****City Services**

<b>GRG2608</b>	<b>Purchase of temporary accommodation</b>	650,000	-	-	-	-	Nil	Simon Hunt
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This bid is for a pilot project to purchase an existing property to provide new council-owned temporary accommodation for residents currently accommodated in hotels, B&Bs or full market rate private temporary accommodation. The bid is to purchase and refurbish a 4-bedroom home for temporary accommodation use as an HMO. This would likely be an ex-council or ex-private rental home in Arbury, Abbey or Kings Hedges. These wards have been identified as being close to existing support networks for residents who are homeless and/or in need of additional support.

This bid would be subject to legal advice and a full business case to ensure the financial viability of the project prior to purchase.

The bid would be funded from General Fund revenue reserves.

<b>Total capital bids</b>	<b>650,000</b>	-	-	-	-	-		
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# Annexe B – Green Housing Revenue Account proposals

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## 2026/27 Budget – HRA Proposals – by Type

Reference	Item Description	2026/27 Budget £	2027/28 Budget £	2028/29 Budget £	2029/30 Budget £	2030/31 Budget £	Climate Rating	Contact
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### Capital bids

#### Economy and Place

GRH2607	Capital works on damp, condensation and mould	400,000	-	-	-	-	Nil	Steph Salmon
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This bid is for capital works to properties suffering from recurring damp, condensation and mould (DCM) issues. Many properties can be treated successfully using the treatments available under the existing responsive repairs budgets or the ongoing programme to bring all properties up to EPC 'C' rating. However, some homes need different treatments or may fail to be treated under the EPC 'C' treatment programme before Awaab's Law comes into force in October 2026. Required improvements might include external or internal wall insulation depending upon whether there is cavity wall insulation, roof insulation above the standard amount provided, and/or improvements to ventilation. The bid is anticipated to be sufficient to cover up to 12 city homes, depending on size and type of work required, to be selected from homes where conventional damp treatment and lifestyle advice has failed to resolve the problems.

<b>Total capital bids</b>	<b>400,000</b>	-	-	-	-	-		
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# Annexe C – Equality impacts

## **Purchase of temporary accommodation**

22 households are temporarily accommodated in hotels and B&Bs. This capital bid is for a pilot project to purchase an existing property to provide new temporary homes. The proposal is to purchase homes that are close to existing support networks for residents who are homeless and or in need of additional support.

This proposal would have positive impacts for people who are more likely to experience homelessness such as:-

- refugees and asylum seekers;
- people on low incomes or living in poverty;
- care experienced individuals; and
- veterans.

## **Financial advice and inclusion resources**

Cambridge City Council to share more case studies of topical issues such as its damp, condensation and mould work through social media. This proposal would have a positive impact for private tenants in understanding their rights, especially people who are:

- disabled;
- low income or living in poverty;
- refugees and asylum seekers; or
- care experienced individuals.

As mentioned, people from these groups may not know their rights in terms of their accommodation or solutions to the problems that they may be experiencing. They may also have worries about impact on their tenancy if they raise concerns.

## **Capital works on damp, condensation and mould**

There have been reports of damp, condensation and mould cases coming back after treatment. This is a capital bid for improvements and related repairs. Improvements might include external or internal insulation.

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By carrying out improvements on council housing, this would have a positive impact on groups who are especially likely to be vulnerable to health issues associated with damp and mould including:-

- People with some pre-existing long-term disabilities/health conditions like COPD, cystic fibrosis, other lung diseases and cardiovascular disease who are at risk of their condition worsening. Also, people with disabilities and illnesses that mean they have a weakened immune system.
- People with mental health conditions, which can be worsened by living in poor conditions.
- Pregnant women, their unborn babies and women who have recently given birth, who may have weakened immune systems.
- Children and young people whose organs are still developing and are therefore more likely to suffer from physical conditions such as respiratory problems.
- Older people who may be more likely to have long-term health conditions and disabilities that damp and mould can worsen.
- People who have mobility problems making it more difficult for them to get out of their home with damp and mould and into fresh air.

Source: [Understanding and addressing the health risks of damp and mould in the home - GOV.UK](#)

## Annexe D – Proposed amendments to recommendations

It is proposed that the recommendations to Full Council in respect of the Budget Setting Report 2026/27 are amended as follows:-

- h) Approve the General Fund revenue proposals shown at Appendix E, **together with the additional proposal GRG2609 set out in the Green Group amendment.**
- j) Approve the General Fund capital proposals set out at Appendix F(a), **together with additional proposal GRG2608 set out in the Green Group amendment,** and the revised General Fund capital plan set out at Appendix F(c) **as amended by proposal GRG2608.**
- k) Approve the Housing Revenue Account capital proposals set out at Appendix I(a), **together with additional proposal GRH2607 set out in the Green Group amendment,** and the revised capital plan set out at Appendix I(b) **as amended by proposal GRH2607.**
- l) Approve the proposed capital financing plans set out at section 5 (General Fund) and section 7 (Housing Revenue Account) of the Budget Setting Report 2026/27, **as amended by proposals GRG2608 and GRH2607,** whilst noting that the constitution delegates all executive decisions on borrowing, investment or financing to the Chief Finance Officer, who is required to act in accordance with CIPFA's Code of Practice for Treasury Management in Local Authorities.
- o) Note the impact of the Budget Setting Report 2026/27 on General Fund and Housing Revenue Account reserves, **as set out at section 8 of the Report and amended by the additional proposals set out in the Green Group amendment.**
- r) Approve the council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy for the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account as set out at section 9 of the Budget Setting Report 2026/27 **and amended by the additional proposals set out in the Green Group amendment.**
- t) Approve the Capital Strategy attached at Appendix O **as amended by the additional proposals set out in the Green Group amendment.**
- u) Approve the Treasury Management Strategy 2026/27 at Appendix P, including the prudential and treasury management indicators set out at Annexe C, **as amended by the additional proposals set out in the Green Group amendment.**
- aa) Note the Equality Impact Assessments undertaken in respect of budget proposals in the General Fund (Appendix S(a)) and Housing Revenue Account (Appendix S(b)), **together with the equality**

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impacts of the additional proposals as set out in the Green Group amendment.

Proposed by Councillor Holloway, seconded by Councillor Wade

Existing text ~~struck through~~, additional text underlined

## 1 City of sanctuary

This council ~~asserts~~ welcomes that it ~~wishes~~ is to be a city of sanctuary in both name and deed and commits to continue to do all that it can to support and welcome asylum seekers and refugees.

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

In recent years, Cambridge City Council has successfully supported over 1,000 newly arrived refugees to resettle in Cambridge and the surrounding areas, from places such as Ukraine and Afghanistan.

The resettlement team provides a wide range of support for refugees resettling in Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire, including with housing, healthcare, education, benefits and employment.

The council's resettlement community grant fund provides funding to community groups supporting people displaced by war, persecution and natural disaster.

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

This council resolves to continue to work towards accredited Council of Sanctuary status.

## 2 Pension scheme divestment

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

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

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

This council resolves to write to its pension fund manager, emphasising that it does not wish for employee or City Council pension contributions to be invested in ways that directly finance aggressive acts of war or war crimes and to ask for detailed information as to whether any of its funds are currently invested in this way.

This council notes that Cambridge City Council is not the administering authority for the Local Government Pension Scheme. Decisions on investments in LGPS funds are taken by the relevant pension fund administering authority and any pooled fund arrangements, in line with their fiduciary duties. The Council must act within its statutory powers and does not have the authority to lawfully commit itself, in advance and in the abstract, to exclude or divest from particular companies or foreign states purely on political grounds.

### **3 Barclays Bank**

The council reaffirms its commitment made in a motion passed on 23 May 2024 (<https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/news/2024/05/23/motion-on-palestine-israel>) to investigate the implications of stopping banking with to withdraw its accounts from Barclays Bank plc, whilst recognising the risks of legal challenge to any future re-procurement of banking services following a public statement on this matter. at the earliest date that the contract can be terminated without penalty and find a more ethical banking partner. This is on the grounds that this bank has loaned over £2 billion to companies providing arms to Israel alone.

### **4 Flag policy**

The council commits to reviewing its flag protocol at the next Civic Affairs & Audit meeting and including the flag of the newly recognised state of Palestine in the list of national flags to be flown on appropriate occasions. It also commits to illuminating the Guildhall in the colours of the Palestinian flag on 28 November, the UN's International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. The council reviewed its flag protocol at the Civic Affairs and Audit committee meeting of 23 February 2026. The Council commits to continuing to fly the Flag for Human Rights on 10 December for UN Human Rights Day and the UN flag on 24 October for United Nations Day, to support and commemorate all those suffering from human rights abuses and to hope for a better world.

Labour Amendment to Agenda Item 9b

Proposed by Councillor Simon Smith, seconded by Councillor Antoinette Nestor

Existing text ~~struck through~~, additional text underlined

## ~~UNFAIR BUSINESS RATES INCREASES THREATENING~~ RELIEFS FOR NEIGHBOURHOOD SHOPS, HOSPITALITY AND LEISURE SECTORS

This Council notes:

- ~~1. That neighbourhood shopping areas across Cambridge are facing dramatic business rates increases from April 2026, with Valuation Office Agency (VOA) data showing particularly severe impacts in areas outside the city centre including Milton Road (25% increases), Chesterton Road (43-46%), Cherry Hinton High Street (19-25%), Queen Edith's, and Arbury (approximately 20%).~~
- ~~2. That business rates are a nationally controlled tax, the proceeds of which are controlled by central government, with local councils only collecting them on Government's behalf and receiving a small incentive for increases in the total raised in their areas.~~
- ~~3. That these increases coincide with the removal of 40% Retail, Hospitality and Leisure (RHL) relief affecting 230,000 small firms across England, meaning actual bills for neighbourhood shops will increase by several hundred percent over the next three years despite so-called 'transitional protections'.~~
- ~~4. That the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) has warned of 'three years of business rates misery' with an average 52% hike in bills for small businesses such as cafés, shops and hairdressers, describing this as a 'tax timebomb' that threatens high streets and the jobs and services they provide.~~
- ~~5. That the Government has raised new funds from a high-value multiplier which it has the power to use to support retail, hospitality and leisure sectors but has chosen not to, leaving most of the high street without adequate support.~~
- ~~6. That the VOA operates geographical 'valuation schemes' grouping streets together, with neighbourhood shopping areas serving less affluent communities systematically facing higher increases than city centre areas.~~
- ~~7. That businesses in these neighbourhood areas provide essential local services, affordable goods, and employment to Cambridge's less affluent communities.~~

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**~~This Council believes:-~~**

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- ~~8. That forcing neighbourhood shops to raise prices or close makes the cost of living crisis worse for families across Cambridge who can least afford it.~~
- ~~9. That viable local shopping areas are essential for community cohesion and supporting residents who cannot easily travel to city centre retail.~~
- ~~10. That there is no rational justification for neighbourhood shopping areas serving deprived communities to face massive increases of 20-46%.~~
- ~~11. That the Government has raised new revenue from high-value properties which could be used to support small businesses but has chosen to provide only limited relief to pubs and music venues while leaving most of the high street without adequate support.~~
- ~~12. That the removal of meaningful RHL relief, combined with aggressive revaluation, threatens the survival of neighbourhood shops across Cambridge.~~
- ~~13. That the Government's transitional protections are wholly inadequate – allowing bills to increase by £800 per year or 15-25% over three years amounts to managed decline of our local high streets.~~
- ~~14. That businesses facing these increases will be forced to raise prices (increasing the cost of living for residents across Cambridge who can least afford it), reduce services, or close entirely.~~
- ~~15. That Labour's handling of business rates reform has been chaotic and poorly communicated, with the Government's own calculator withdrawn after providing incorrect figures, leaving businesses unable to plan with certainty.~~

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**~~This Council resolves:-~~**

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- ~~16. To write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and Cambridge's Members of Parliament calling on the Labour Government to provide meaningful relief for retail, hospitality and leisure businesses equivalent to the previous 40% support levels, using the new revenue raised from high-value properties, and urging Government to enact meaningful long-term reform by replacing business rates with a Commercial Landowner Levy (CLL) paid by property owners instead of tenants.~~

~~17. To write to the VOA demanding an explanation for the geographical disparities in rateable value increases across Cambridge, particularly why neighbourhood shopping areas are facing massive increases of 20-46%, and requesting an urgent review of the methodology used.~~

1. In April 2026, the Government introduced three changes to business rates. A revaluation based on market rents as of April 2024, five new multipliers and targeted reliefs. Taking each change in turn:

2. Rateable Value: This is the annual rent a property could fetch on the open market as estimated every three years by the Valuation Office Agency. The revaluations can therefore lead to increases and decreases according to market trends by location and sector. Businesses can challenge a new rateable value if they believe it is not justified.

3. Multipliers: Business rates are determined by a property's rateable value x national multiplier (poundage) set by the Government.

4. From 2026, the Government moved from a two-tier multiplier system (of 49.9p and 55.5p for properties with rateable values of less and more than £55k) to a five-tier system shown below.

5. This includes two permanently lower multipliers for the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors which are part of a £4.3bn support package to manage changes in rateable values and loss of the Retail, Hospitality, Leisure relief. However, the revaluation changes and new lower multipliers may not necessarily result in higher business rates for businesses in this sector.

<u>Category</u>	<u>Property Type Rateable Value</u>	<u>2026/27 Multiplier</u>
<u>Small RHL</u>	<u>Retail, Hospitality, Leisure &lt;£51k</u>	<u>38.2p</u>
<u>Standard RHL</u>	<u>Retail, Hospitality, Leisure £51-£499k</u>	<u>43p</u>
<u>Small Non-RTL</u>	<u>Other Sectors &lt; £51k</u>	<u>43.2p</u>
<u>Standard Non-RTL</u>	<u>Other Sectors £51-£499k</u>	<u>48p</u>
<u>High-Value</u>	<u>All Properties &gt; £500k</u>	<u>50.8p</u>

6. Targeted support: In addition to the lower multipliers, there are three main relief schemes:

7. Supporting Small Business Scheme 2026-29. This applies when a business has, due to the 2026 revaluation lost some or part of either their Small Business Rates relief, or Retail, Hospitality and Leisure relief, or 2023 Supporting Small Business relief.

8. If eligible, an increase in business rates would go up by the greater of either £800 or the following transitional relief percentage caps: 5% for properties with rateable

values of up to £20,000, 15% for rateable values £20k to £100k and 30% for rateable values of more than £100k.

9. It is important to translate revaluation increases of 25% into the payable business rates bills and review what has happened since 2019.

For example, in 2019 a shop in the City was the subject of a rateable value of £19,500 and a business rates bill of £6,383. In 2026, the same property has a rateable value of £28,750 and a business rate bill of £7,919, after applying the new multiplier and Supporting Small Business Cap worth £287.50. This amounts to an increase of 24% over seven years against an increase in the Consumer Prices Index of 27.5%.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Rateable Value £</u>	<u>Multiplier</u>	<u>Retail Hospitality Leisure Relief</u>	<u>Business Rates £</u>
<u>2019</u>	<u>19,500</u>	<u>0.49</u>	<u>33%</u>	<u>6,383</u>
<u>2020</u>	<u>19,500</u>	<u>0.499</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>0.00</u>
<u>2021</u>	<u>19,500</u>	<u>0.499</u>	<u>100% Q1 66% Q2,3,4</u>	<u>2,483.54</u>
<u>2022</u>	<u>19,500</u>	<u>0.499</u>	<u>50%</u>	<u>4,865.25</u>
<u>2023</u>	<u>23,000</u>	<u>0.499</u>	<u>75%</u>	<u>2,797.52</u>
<u>2024</u>	<u>23,000</u>	<u>0.499</u>	<u>75%</u>	<u>2,869.25</u>
<u>2025</u>	<u>23,000</u>	<u>0.499</u>	<u>50%</u>	<u>6,886.20</u>
<u>2026</u>	<u>28,750</u>	<u>0.38</u>	<u>0%</u>	<u>7,919.13</u>

In the intervening years, the shop has benefited from a rates free year, and temporary Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Relief rates from 100% to 50%, and from 2026/27 a new lower and permanent multiplier of 38p in every £ in rateable value.

ii) Transitional relief: This caps business rate increases for properties over the three years 2026/27 – 2028/29 as follows:

<u>Ratable value</u>	<u>2026/27</u>	<u>2027/28</u>	<u>2028/29</u>
<u>Less than £20k</u>	<u>5%</u>	<u>10% + inflation</u>	<u>25% + inflation</u>
<u>£20k to £100k</u>	<u>15%</u>	<u>25% + inflation</u>	<u>40% + inflation</u>
<u>More than £100k</u>	<u>30%</u>	<u>25% + inflation</u>	<u>25% + inflation</u>

11. iii) Pubs and Live Music Venues Relief. For 2026/27 eligible pubs and live music venues will receive after deducting other eligible reliefs a 15% business rates relief. Business rates will be frozen in real terms for two years from April 2027. This additional relief will benefit 89 pubs in the City.

12. The Council serves as the business rates collections authority on behalf of the Government. In the context of the various changes, the Council Collections team has been:

i) Providing reassurance to businesses concerned about how much their business rates bills will be by signposting them to online calculators and providing estimates and information on the support measures and how to appeal, and

ii) Working to ensure all applicable reliefs and adjustments are applied to the 2026/27 business rates bills which will be issued in March 2026. This will enable all businesses to see how their charge has been calculated and make informed decisions about whether to appeal. However, there may be cases where the exact nature of the business is unknown. Charge payers are encouraged to contact the Council if they believe a relief has not been applied.

13. The Treasury has stated restructuring of business rates for 2026/27 is designed to be revenue neutral overall but shifts the burden from smaller, in-person retail, hospitality and leisure properties to properties with rateable values over £500k, for example distribution warehouses. The British Property Federation claims the overall tax burden will increase by £1.7bn and complained about the burden on big businesses.

This Council believes:

14. Neighbourhood shops and local shopping areas provide residents with convenient access to goods and services, are vital for those with mobility issues and without access to a car and contribute to community cohesion and sense of place and belonging.

15. It has a significant responsibility to maintain the viability of its portfolio of local shops and shopping parades, redevelop them as required and secure provision in new developments through planning policies and development management practices.

16. Businesses whose premises are the subject of hard-to-justify increases in rateable values be encouraged to appeal,

17. Businesses with concerns about their eligibility for the various reliefs be encouraged to seek advice from the Council's collections team.

18. It would be misleading to make claims about 'massive increases' in business rates and consequential increases in retail prices, reductions in services and closures in advance of comprehensive evidence of the impacts in monetary terms.

19. It would be prudent to request and review such evidence before any resolution could be justified to make representations to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Cambridge's MP's and Valuation Office Agency.

This Council resolves:

20. The Council will use its discretionary relief powers under Section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act (as amended) to grant the Pubs and Live Music Venues

Relief and claim full reimbursement from the Government in accordance with its expanded guidance (Business Rates Information Letters 1/2026 and 3/2026).

21. Request officers to provide further information – in monetary terms – on the financial impacts of the new rateable valuations, multipliers and relief schemes on neighbourhood shops, hospitality and leisure sectors.

Proposed by Councillor Martinelli, seconded by Councillor Payne

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## **Holiday Voucher Scheme**

~~This Council notes:-~~

- ~~• The Cambridgeshire Holiday Voucher Scheme was championed by Labour and introduced in 2023 by the Joint Administration at Cambridgeshire County Council.~~
- ~~• The scheme provides over 20,000 thousand school-aged children with access to nutritious meals during school holidays.~~
- ~~• The scheme makes a very real and practical difference to struggling families — the equivalent of £15 per week per child during the 12 weeks of school holidays for the worst-off households in our county.~~
- ~~• The Liberal Democrat administration at Cambridgeshire County Council proposed and voted through a County Council budget for 2026-27 that scraps this vital lifeline for vulnerable children and their families from September 2026.~~
- ~~○ The cuts came just a month after the UK government confirmed it was increasing direct funding to Cambridgeshire County Council by 28.8%.~~
- ~~○ The cuts are in marked contrast to the food justice work being supported by Cambridge City Council, which includes support for holiday activity and lunch clubs across the city.~~
- ~~• The Liberal Democrat county councillors sided with Conservative and Reform UK councillors to vote down the Labour group's fully costed amendment, which would have ensured vulnerable families received this vital support until 2029.~~

~~This council resolves to:-~~

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

### **Council Notes:**

Cambridgeshire County Council has provided holiday meal vouchers since 2021, becoming one of the first councils to top up Government funding to ensure no child goes hungry during school holidays

The scheme previously cost approximately £5 million per year: £1.5 million from the County Council and £3.5 million from the Government's Household Support Fund

In January 2026, the Labour Government ended the Household Support Fund and replaced it with the Crisis and Resilience Fund

The Labour Government's statutory framework for the Crisis and Resilience Fund (paragraph 44) explicitly states: "This may not be through the blanket provision of vouchers to those on free-school meals"

The County Council's Section 151 Officer confirmed this was also the case

Without additional County Council funding, thousands of vulnerable children would have gone without food support during school holidays in 2026

Cambridgeshire County Council has provided £2.7 million to continue supporting families with holiday meal costs, adding an extra £1 million to bridge the gap left by the Labour Government ending the Household Support Fund

This funding will ensure vulnerable children continue to receive support with food during school holidays whilst the County Council implements the Labour Government's new statutory framework for needs-based crisis support

The Labour Government increased general funding to Cambridgeshire County Council, but simultaneously cut the specific £3.5 million that funded holiday meal vouchers

Cambridge City Council supports food justice work across the city and recognises the vital importance of ensuring no child goes hungry

### **This Council Resolves to:**

Call on the Labour Government to restore the £3.5 million annual funding for holiday meal support that they cut when ending the Household Support Fund

Call on the Labour Government to amend paragraph 44 of the Crisis and Resilience Fund statutory framework guidance to permit councils to provide blanket holiday meal vouchers if they choose to do so

Thank Cambridgeshire County Council for providing £2.7 million to ensure vulnerable children continue to receive food support during school holidays

Thank the many voluntary and community groups who work alongside Cambridge City Council for food justice in Cambridge

Call on all Cambridge MPs to lobby the Labour Government to restore full funding for holiday meal support across the country

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Proposed by Councillor Young, seconded by Councillor Martinelli

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This Council calls on:

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

~~This Council notes:~~

~~According to the County Council's own figures, there are currently 5600 potholes needing repair<sup>[1]</sup>. They state that they are fixing over 1000 per week. This would mean we should expect the residents of Cambridge to see an end to the current holes in 6 weeks' time.~~

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

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

~~This Council resolves:~~

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

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

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

~~<sup>[1]</sup> <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/news/more-highways-officers-for-pothole-season>~~

This Council notes with concern the ongoing challenge of road maintenance across Cambridge, while recognising that the root causes of this crisis demand honest acknowledgement rather than political point-scoring.

This Council further notes:

That Cambridgeshire County Council inherited from the previous Conservative administration a highways department in a state of managed decline, with a maintenance backlog of £800 million, no adequate asset management systems, no leadership, and a highways maintenance contract described by council officers themselves as unfit for purpose.

That the Liberal Democrat-led Cambridgeshire County Council has more than doubled the capital maintenance programme from £24 million in 2023/24 to £59 million per annum, and has instigated a root and branch highways change programme with 55 different projects across 3 phases.

That the total capital highways maintenance funding for Cambridgeshire in 2025/26 amounts to £58.3 million, comprising £31.7 million from the Department for Transport, £20 million of additional funding sourced by the Liberal Democrat-led County Council, £3.5 million of additional County Council maintenance funding, and £3.1 million from the A14 grant — meaning that £23.1 million of the total represents funding the Liberal Democrat County Council has found itself, over and above central government provision.

That the Labour Group at Cambridgeshire County Council voted against this additional funding from 2027, a decision that would have returned the county's highways to a state of managed decline.

That the Labour Government's additional contribution to Cambridgeshire road repairs this financial year was £5.8 million in practice — not the £8.1 million billed publicly, as £2.3 million of existing grant was simultaneously removed.

That Cambridgeshire County Council requires approximately £59 million per year simply to maintain its road network at a steady state — a figure consistent with the Government's own funding formula, which indicates Cambridgeshire alone requires £230 million over four years — leaving an annual funding gap of £27 million. The £188 million referenced in national and local Labour communications covers the entire Cambridgeshire and Peterborough region over four years, not Cambridgeshire alone, and is wholly inadequate to address either the steady state requirement or the £800 million inherited backlog.

That whilst the Labour Government's 2024 general election manifesto pledged to fill one million additional potholes per year, the capital maintenance funding subsequently provided to local authorities cannot be used for pothole filling — meaning the Government has broken its own manifesto commitment, as confirmed by independent national analysis.

That certain roads in Cambridgeshire, particularly those crossing peat fenland, cost up to four times more to repair than standard roads and deteriorate significantly faster due to geological conditions, yet the Government's highways maintenance funding formula makes no provision whatsoever for geological variation — a fact raised in the House of Commons by the Liberal Democrat Member of Parliament for St Neots and Mid Cambridgeshire, who called on the Secretary of State for Transport to either create a dedicated budget for peat-affected roads or adjust the formula accordingly.

That the Secretary of State for Transport, in response to that Parliamentary question, confirmed only that she would raise the matter with the Roads Minister — and that no substantive response has since been received.

That ring-fenced funding from central government cannot be redirected between purposes: Active Travel England cycling funds cannot be used for pothole repairs, and pothole-filling revenue budgets are a separate and highly constrained stream. Conflating these figures to mislead residents is not acceptable.

That the Government's own assessment of Cambridgeshire County Council's highways performance has awarded a green rating for spend, confirming that the Liberal Democrat administration is investing appropriately, and that the road maintenance crisis is a consequence of historic underfunding rather than current council decisions.

This Council believes:

That the £188 million referenced in the original motion as a Labour Government investment represents a four-year Cambridgeshire and Peterborough-wide commitment that, while welcome, is insufficient to maintain the current state, let alone to address an £800 million backlog in Cambridgeshire.

That a Government which pledges to fill one million potholes in its manifesto, then provides funding that cannot legally be spent on filling potholes, owes Cambridge residents an explanation.

That Cambridge residents deserve an MP who raises their concerns about roads in Parliament, rather than one who limits their contribution to social media announcements of funding that was already committed.

That Cambridge residents deserve honesty about who is responsible for decades of road neglect, and that blaming those now working hard to repair the damage does a disservice to residents — particularly when the Government responsible for decades of underfunding sits in Westminster.

This Council resolves:

To write to the Secretary of State for Transport calling for a multi-year, ring-fence-free road maintenance settlement that properly reflects the scale of the inherited backlog

in Cambridgeshire, and for an urgent review of the highways funding formula to account for geological conditions including peat fenland roads.

To call on Cambridge's Labour MP to raise in the House of Commons the specific funding crisis facing Cambridgeshire's roads, including the inadequacy of the current funding formula and the £27 million annual funding gap.

To call on Cambridge's Labour MP to seek an urgent substantive response from the Roads Minister following the Secretary of State's commitment to raise the issue of peat-affected road funding, made in response to a Parliamentary question from the Liberal Democrat Member for St Neots and Mid Cambridgeshire.

To note the significant and measurable progress being made by the Liberal Democrat-led Cambridgeshire County Council in reversing years of Conservative neglect, including the Government's own green rating for highways spend, and to encourage continued close working between the City and County Councils to prioritise road safety for Cambridge residents.

## 1. Councillor Hossain

### To the Leader:

As I have previously raised to Labour group leader, I believe the council should return to holding its meetings during standard daytime office hours, rather than the current evening format. Evening meetings often run past 9 or 11pm, placing undue pressure on officers who work late, and on councillors with full-time jobs who must attend after a full day. This leads to fatigue, less preparation, and weaker scrutiny. As a result, motions are often passed with minimal debate, along party lines, without the considered discussion residents expect. We should ensure council business allows time for thorough debate, proper questioning of officers, and full engagement from all members. If a councillor cannot attend at least six meetings a year, they should reflect on whether they can meet their responsibilities. I would like to ask, what steps must we take to formally change council meetings to daytime office hours, so that we can prioritise officer well-being, better democratic scrutiny, and meaningful public participation?

### Leader's Response

In the early 20th Century, most meetings were held during the day (often 10:00 am or 2:00 pm). In this era, being a councillor was often a role for those with independent means or a flexible professional schedule.

Following the Local Government Act 1972, which restructured local authorities in England and Wales, there was a national trend toward evening meetings to enable people with working responsibilities to become councillors, and to encourage public attendance more generally. Cambridge shifted its Full Council meetings to 6pm around this period.

The City Council holds most meetings in the evening, to encourage greater participation from the public and to enable people with full-time jobs to stand as councillors, rather than relying on people being available during the day.

Following recent constitutional changes, Council meetings that start at 6pm must end by 9pm unless the chair allows a 30 minute extension. The latest a council meeting can finish under the current constitution is 9.30pm.

There are exceptions for the Council AGM, which remains a daytime ceremonial event typically held at 11:00 am, and regulatory committees like Planning and Licensing, which generally take place in the daytime to accommodate the attendance of professional and legal advisors.

The City Council does not intend to change the timing of most council meetings to daytime hours. The Council is committed to making participation in local democracy accessible to as wide a demographic as possible.

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