

# Annual Report 2026



## CLLR YASMIN DETER

County Councillor for Cottenham, Rampton & Willingham

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## Introduction

Local elections took place for all 61 seats on Cambridgeshire County Council on Thursday 1 May 2025. The table above shows the current composition of the Council, compared with the May 2021 election results and this time last year.

	2021	2025	Now
Conservatives	28	10	10
Liberal Democrats	20	31	31
Labour	9	5	5
Independents	4	2	2
Reform UK	0	10	9
Non-aligned	0	0	1

Since the election, the Liberal Democrats and Independents have formed a joint Liberal Democrat and Independent Group.

### 1 The Council

The Liberal Democrat and Independent Group now run the Council, with a vision to create a healthy, fair, and sustainable Cambridgeshire.

Drawing on my background in the charity sector and experience working with young people, I serve on the Children and Young People Committee, the Communities, Social Mobility and Inclusion (COSMIC) Committee, and the Fire Authority.

The Council has considered a range of issues brought forward for debate, including opposition to proposals to merge our local police force into a larger, more remote organisation, improving support for people in mental health crisis or at risk of suicide, strengthening GP services in growing communities, and the importance of flood prevention across the Fens. Most notably, I seconded a motion to develop a culture and arts strategy for Cambridgeshire County Council, which has now been agreed and is currently being implemented.

### 2 Strategy Resources & Performance

In February 2026, the Council agreed its budget, which prioritises record investment in roads, thousands of new school places, and ongoing support for vulnerable residents.

This includes an additional £20 million for highways maintenance, funding for the Council's climate change and environment strategy, and £11 million to improve household recycling centres at Milton and March.

Adult social care providers will receive a further £14.7 million to help manage rising costs and ensure care workers are paid the Real Living Wage, supporting greater stability and improved quality of care for those who rely on these services.

Support for children and families is also maintained, with holiday meal vouchers extended through to the end of summer 2026 for children most in need. This comes despite the Government replacing the Household Support Fund with the less generous Crisis and Resilience Fund, intended to cover a broader range of anti-poverty measures alongside support for children in struggling households.

In education, the budget provides for 3,500 new primary school places and £72 million over five years to expand secondary school capacity. It also continues investment in the Families First early intervention programme and allocates more than £1.2 million to libraries and archives over the next two years.

Separately, the Council's third annual Quality of Life survey was carried out in 2025, gathering views from 5,500 residents (1,100 in each district), alongside a wider open survey available to all residents during the summer. Like most county and unitary councils, council tax was increased by 4.99 per cent overall, comprising a 2 per cent adult social care precept and a 2.99 per cent general increase.

### 3 Adults and Health

The Adults and Health Committee play an important role in reducing health inequalities and supporting people to live healthy, safe, and independent lives, with timely care tailored to individual needs.

One of the first decisions of the new 2025 administration was to reorganise the committee into two separate bodies: one focused on public health, adult social care, and procurement responsibilities, and the other dedicated to scrutinising local NHS services.

It is encouraging that the Council's adult social care services were rated 'Good' by the Care Quality Commission last summer, reflecting the hard work of staff across the system.

However, this has been a period of considerable turbulence for Integrated Care Boards (ICBs), which plan and commission healthcare services for local populations. Established in 2022, they replaced Clinical Commissioning Groups.

Last year, the Government imposed significant in-year and ongoing savings requirements on ICBs, leading to a series of mergers aimed at reducing costs and staffing levels. As a result, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough no longer has its own ICB and is now part of NHS Central and East, alongside Bedfordshire, Luton, Milton Keynes and Hertfordshire.

Looking ahead, there remains uncertainty over the future of the Arthur Rank Hospice in Cambridge, following the withdrawal of over £800,000 in NHS funding. A private donation has secured operations for a further year, but longer-term stability remains unclear.

## 4 Assets and Procurement

The County Council's Assets and Procurement Committee has agreed a partnership with developer Prologis to support the continued expansion of the Cambridge Biomedical Campus.

The Council's Shareholder Sub-Committee has also approved an updated business plan for This Land, the Council's wholly owned company. The current administration has worked to stabilise the organisation, addressing legacy issues from its original establishment over a decade ago. The revised plan is designed to strengthen the company's financial position, enabling it to repay interest, reduce outstanding debt owed to the Council, and limit ongoing financial exposure and risk.

## 5 Children and Young People

Like other county councils, Cambridgeshire continues to face significant financial pressures, particularly in relation to Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and rising home-to-school transport costs.

The number of children in Cambridgeshire with an Education, Health and Care Plan has increased by 71% between 2020 and 2025. In response, the Council invested an additional £780,000 last autumn to expand capacity for processing assessments and plans. The Government is also supporting the delivery of two new special schools in Cambridgeshire, providing around 270 additional places.

Cambridgeshire County Council's services for care leavers were found to have improved following an Ofsted visit in July 2025, although the inspection also identified four areas requiring further development.

A new community outreach service has also been introduced to support families and young children from birth to age five, as well as community groups working with this age range.

## 6 COSMIC

COSMIC continues to provide oversight of support for people facing immediate financial hardship, with growing numbers of families under pressure.

One pressing issue has been the sharp rise in the cost of domestic heating oil, linked to global instability including conflict involving Iran during the previous US administration. In response, the Council has received £708,000 from Government, ring-fenced to support affected households. This funding has been added to the Crisis and Resilience Fund, with applications of up to £400 per household administered by the Cambridgeshire Community Foundation. Eligibility is currently limited to households in receipt of specific means-tested benefits.

If distributed evenly across all oil-heated households in the county, the funding would amount to less than £27.50 per household, highlighting the importance of targeted support.

The Committee has also procured a new IT system designed to improve early identification of low-income households who may benefit from support. South Cambridgeshire District Council has already been using this system successfully.

Alongside this, work continues to implement the recommendations of Cambridgeshire's Poverty Strategy Commission, structured around six themes: income maximisation, digital inclusion, rural poverty, housing and homelessness, support for children and families, and mental health.

Cambridgeshire's adult learning services were rated 'Good' by Ofsted in spring 2025, with learners' behaviour and attitudes judged to be 'Outstanding'.

## 7 Environment

Water scarcity and wider water management remain key issues for Cambridgeshire. Water Resources East is developing a regional water resources plan for Eastern England, combining infrastructure investment with measures to manage demand more effectively.

Alongside this, the Fens2100+ programme has published a series of reports, including a Case for Change, a Partnership Action Plan, and a baseline summary report, bringing together partners to plan long-term flood resilience across the Fens.

Proposals to relocate Anglian Water's wastewater treatment works from north-east Cambridge to Horningsea were ultimately halted after Government funding was withdrawn.

The Council continues to offer community watercourse grants to help local groups manage and maintain watercourses where deterioration is increasing flood risk.

Cambridgeshire County Council is also encouraging residents to take an active role in restoring nature through the 'Nature Recovery – From the Ground Up' project. This supports parish councils and community groups to develop Community Nature Recovery Plans. The first phase runs from July 2025 to March 2027, focusing on Cambridge and 20 parishes across East Cambridgeshire, Fenland, Huntingdonshire and South Cambridgeshire.

The county has also been recognised by Climate Emergency UK as one of the highest-performing councils nationally for action towards Net Zero.

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Waste Partnership (RECAP) continue to encourage safe recycling of batteries and electrical items, following a rise in fires linked to lithium-ion batteries.

The Cambridgeshire Digital Inclusion Directory continues to provide practical support for residents to get online, access devices, and build essential digital skills, with printed copies available in libraries and community hubs.

## 8 Highways and Transport

The condition of roads and pavements deteriorated significantly over the winter, reflecting increased usage and ongoing pressure on maintenance budgets. While the Council continues to invest additional funding into highway repairs, Government funding via the Combined Authority remains insufficient to meet demand.

Highways and Transport Committee Chair, Cllr Alex Beckett, has written an informative explainer article available at: <https://notesfromalex.substack.com/p/why-are-the-roads-so-bad-right-now>

Promoted by Josie Ratcliffe on behalf of Yasmin Deter (Liberal Democrat) all at 15 Ronald Rolph Court, Cambridge, CB5 8PX

A particular challenge locally is the impact of peat soil roads, which can cost four to five times more to repair than standard roads. Targeted investment has continued, with further priority schemes identified for 2026/27.

In January 2026, Cambridgeshire County Council approved a 20mph scheme for Cottenham. Work is now progressing towards implementation from April 2026. I would like to thank residents and the Parish Council for their strong support in helping bring this forward. The scheme will play an important role in making Cottenham's streets safer for everyone.

The Council is rolling out new LED street lighting across the county at a rate of around 2,000 units per month, with over 47,000 lights to be upgraded in total.

In 2024/25, fines totalling £483,000 were issued to utilities and developers who overstayed permits or failed to meet required standards.

Further information is available at: <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/travel-roads-and-parking/transport-plans-and-policies/how-we-are-improving-highways-maintenance>

## 9 Council reorganisation

A significant amount of this year has been taken up with Government proposals to reorganise local government and replace district and county councils with unitary authorities.

Local councils have submitted four options for how the area could be reorganised, with a Government decision expected this summer. The County Council's preferred option ('Option A') would see East Cambridgeshire, Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire brought together in one authority, with Peterborough, Fenland and Huntingdonshire forming another.

I support this option as it best aligns with the Government's criteria and reflects how residents in East Cambridgeshire live their daily lives.

## 10 Finally

Finally, my sincere thanks go to the Clerks and Parish Councillors of Cottenham, Rampton, and Willingham, along with the many community organisations whose dedication and hard work help keep our communities strong, connected, and thriving. Over the past year, as I have settled into my role as a councillor, I have been continually encouraged and supported by your commitment, and I am truly grateful to be working alongside you all.

As always, please feel free to contact me by email at [yasmindetercrw@gmail.com](mailto:yasmindetercrw@gmail.com) or by phone on 07585 363535. I'm happy to help and to continue working together to make our community a thriving place to live.