

Public Question Time

No.	Question from:	Question to:	Question:
1.	Dr David Landon Cole	Councillor Nethsingha, Leader of the Council	“Although Cambridgeshire County Council is not responsible for licensing gambling establishments, it does have to deal with the results of both problem gambling on individuals and the economic and social impacts on towns. With that in mind, and as the Council speaks with moral weight, will you consider joining the letter to the culture secretary, Lisa Nandy, signed by 36 local authority leaders asking for changes to the Gambling Act 2005 to make it easier for local authorities to turn down applications for gambling establishments?”
	Response from:	Response to:	Response:
	Councillor Nethsingha, Leader of the Council	Dr David Landon Cole	To be provided at the meeting.
No.	Question from:	Question to:	Question:
2.	Dr Haq Nawaz	Councillor Beckett, Chair of Highways and Transport Committee	<p>“The Ralph Butcher Causeway Bridge has been with structural problems almost from when it was built. Traffic on it has been reduced to single lane resulting in delays more than before it was built.</p> <p>There is uncertainty about what is happening in the long term and what different scenarios are envisaged or any contingency plans. I believe the construction company has accepted to pay the extra costs incurred, and hope that they are able to. This is the main route into Peterborough for residents of Whittlesey and the villages and for traffic further afield in the east. People are getting very frustrated and even expect compensation for suffering the seemingly never ending delays.</p>

			My question is: Will the County council keep the residents informed of developments regularly through weekly updates, and if not why not and will they be compensated?"
	Response from:	Response to:	Response:
	Councillor Beckett, Chair of Highways and Transport Committee	Dr Haq Nawaz	To be provided at the meeting.
No.	Question from:	Question to:	Question:
3.	Ms Kerrie Portman	Councillor Lucy Nethsingha, Leader of the Council	"How does the council plan to address the systemic discrimination towards Care Experienced people, embedded in statutory services throughout Cambridgeshire and in this very council? As a Care Experienced person, I have personally experienced repeated significant discrimination resulting in poorer life outcomes and even endangerment"
	Response from:	Response to:	Response:
	Councillor Lucy Nethsingha, Leader of the Council	Ms Kerrie Portman	To be provided at the meeting.
No.	Question from:	Question to:	Question:
4.	Mr Guy Lachlan	Councillor Karen Young, Chair of Shareholder Sub- Committee	"The Council's draft accounts published at 6pm on the deadline date of June 30th 2025, reveal to the public for the first time that Council has decided to write off £60M of their loans to This Land Ltd, plus an unquantified 'impairment' of some or all of the £5.8M equity holding in the company. These decisions were made on 11th March 2025 by the Executive Director of Finance and Resources, under delegated authority of the Strategy, Resources and Performance Committee.

			<p>In addition, This Land's outstanding overdue interest payments of £6.8M for 2024/25 are now shown in the draft accounts as 'Long Term Debtors' instead of current debts where they should be.</p> <p>The council's decision to write off the loans and impair the value of their equity appears to constitute an illegal subsidy under the UK Subsidy Control Act 2022, as it involves public resources, benefits an undertaking, provides a selective advantage, and has the potential to distort competition in the housing market. The ongoing secrecy around decisions, the lack of a transparent business case or restructuring plan, and the history of governance failures suggest that the council may not have conducted a proper Market Economy Operator Principle (MEOP) assessment or followed subsidy control procedures, and that successive decisions are being driven by non-commercial motives (e.g., avoiding political embarrassment), rather than market-based reasoning. Previous reasoning to keep information confidential on the basis of 'Commercial Sensitivity' clearly do not now apply, as no competitor has access to the bottomless largesse of the Council.</p> <p>Please could the council commit to publishing a detailed justification of its March 2025 decisions, including a financial analysis showing that the write-off and impairment reflect market conditions, and thereby demonstrate to Cambridgeshire residents that there is evidence of compliance with legally-binding subsidy control notification requirements.”</p>
	Response from:	Response to:	Response:
	Councillor Karen Young, Chair of Shareholder Sub-Committee	Mr Guy Lachlan	To be provided at the meeting.

No.	Question from:	Question to:	Question:
5.	Mr Simon Payne	Councillor Beckett, Chair of Highways and Transport Committee	<p>“Proposed Safety Fencing to the Guided Busway at Histon and Impington</p> <p>I would like to ask the Leader for an assurance that the proposed busway fencing will not close off existing well used footpaths that allow residents to cross the busway to access nature and that the fencing will not be a barrier to wildlife.”</p>
	Response from:	Response to:	Response:
	Councillor Beckett, Chair of Highways and Transport Committee	Mr Simon Payne	To be provided at the meeting.