

# County Council – Minutes

Please note a video recording of the meeting can be viewed on the Council's [YouTube channel](#):

Date: 15 July 2025

Time: 10.30 a.m. – 3.47 p.m.

## Present:

### Councillors:

Peter McDonald (Chair)

Tom Sanderson (Vice-Chair)

Henry Batchelor

Alex Beckett

Liam Beckett

Mike Black

Chris Boden

Adam Bostanci

Anna Bradnam

Alex Bulat

Sarah Caine

Rory Clark

Laurence Damary-Homan

Yasmin Deter

Daniel Divine

Lorna Dupré

Jonny Edge

Peter Fane

Michael Fisher

Stefan Fisher

Colin Galbraith

Ian Gardener

Mark Goldsack

Bryony Goodliffe

Darren Green

Ros Hathorn

Tom Hawker-Dawson

Richard Howitt

Samantha Hoy

Ricky Ioannides

David Keane

Julie Kerr

David Levien

Charlotte Lowe

Yannifer Malinowski

Ian Manning

Ross Martin

Elisa Meschini

Christopher Morris

Edna Murphy

Luis Navarro

Lucy Nethsingha

Andy Osborn

Chris Poulton

Peter Rees

Geoffrey Seeff

James Sidlow

James Stuart

Steve Tierney

Elliot Tong

Des Watt

John Wells

Alison Whelan

Christine Whelan

Graham Wilson

Robin Wyatt

Karen Young

## Apologies for Absence:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bywater, George, Morgan, and Thornhill.

## 15. Minutes – 20 May 2025 and Motions Log

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 May 2025 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair. The motions log was noted.

## 16. Chair's Announcements

The Chair made a number of announcements, as set out in Appendix A.

Councillors observed a minute silence in memory of Maureen Byrne, Business Officer, and Sarah Oldfield, Family Worker.

## 17. Declarations of Interests

The Chair reported that the Monitoring Officer had exercised her discretion to grant a dispensation to all elected members of the Council taking part in the debate and vote on Agenda Item 7 (Independent Remuneration Panel – Review of Members' Allowance).

There were no other declarations of interest.

## 18. Public Question Time

The Chair informed Council that he had exercised his discretion to allow five public questions which were submitted before the deadline, as set out in Appendix B.

## 19. Petitions

No petitions had been received in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 9.4

## 20. Item for determination from Strategy, Resources and Performance Committee

### Treasury Management Outturn Update 2024-25

It was moved by the Chair of Strategy, Resources and Performance Committee, Councillor Nethsingha, and seconded by the Vice-Chair, Councillor Dupré, and resolved unanimously by affirmation, that the recommendation from the Strategy, Resources and Performance Committee, as set out in the Council agenda, be approved.

## 21. Independent Remuneration Panel – Review of Members' Allowances

It was moved by the Chair of Council, Councillor McDonald, seconded by the Vice-Chair of Council, Councillor Sanderson, and agreed unanimously by affirmation to formally receive the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel on Members' Allowances. The remaining recommendations, as set out in the report on the Council agenda, were moved by the Chair of Council, seconded by the Vice-Chair of Council, with the following proposals:

(b) to accept the Panel's recommendations as they stand.

(c) the new scheme would come into effect from 15 July 2025.

(d) the existing Members' Allowances Scheme would be revoked from 15 July 2025.

Following discussion, upon being put to the vote, it was resolved to:

(b) accept the Panel's recommendations as they stand.

(c) confirm the date of 15 July 2025 on which the new scheme would come into effect.

(d) formally revoke the existing Members' Allowances Scheme with effect from 15 July 2025.

(e) authorise the Service Director: Legal and Governance to prepare a new scheme to reflect the outcome of the Council's deliberations and to take any consequential action arising therefrom.

- (f) agree that the Chair and Vice-Chair of Council, which were not part of the Members' Allowances Scheme, should receive an allowance of £13,082 and £3,964, respectively.

*[Voting pattern: Liberal Democrats, Labour, Independents, 4 Reform UK, 1 Green in favour; Conservatives, 2 Reform UK, 2 Green against; 2 Reform UK abstained]*

## 22. Constitution and Ethics Committee Recommendations – Proposed Changes to the Constitution

It was moved by the Chair of the Constitution and Ethics Committee, Councillor Sanderson, seconded by the Vice-Chair, Councillor Dupré, that the recommendations from the Constitution and Ethics Committee, as set out in report on the Council agenda, be approved.

It was resolved unanimously by affirmation to:

- a) approve the following changes to the Constitution, as set out in Section 2 of the report:
  - (i) To establish a Health Scrutiny Committee;
  - (ii) To abolish the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee; and
  - (iii) To rename the Staffing and Appeals Committee.
- b) authorise the Monitoring Officer to take all steps necessary or incidental to implement the changes to the Constitution detailed in this report.

## 23. Health Scrutiny Annual Report 2024-25

The previous Chair of the Adults and Health Committee, Councillor Howitt, moved receipt of the Health Scrutiny Annual Report 2024-25.

The Council noted the content of the report.

## 24. Committee – Allocation of Seats and Substitutes to Political Groups in Accordance with the Political Balance Rules

It was moved by the Chair of Council, Councillor McDonald, and seconded by the Vice-Chair, Councillor Sanderson, and resolved unanimously by affirmation that the allocation of seats and substitutes on committees to political groups in accordance with the political balance rules, as set out in the report on the Council agenda, be approved.

## 25. Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair of Health Scrutiny Committee

It was proposed by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Nethsingha, and seconded by the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Dupré, and resolved unanimously by affirmation to elect Councillors Howitt and Bradnam as the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Health Scrutiny Committee respectively for the municipal year 2025-26.

## 26. Appointments to Outside Bodies

It was moved by the Chair of Council, Councillor McDonald, and seconded by the Vice-Chair, Councillor Sanderson, and resolved unanimously by affirmation that the

appointments to outside bodies, as set out in the report on the Council agenda, be approved.

## 27. Motions submitted under Council Procedure Rule 10

### a) Motion from Councillor Lucy Nethsingha

The following motion was proposed by Councillor Nethsingha and seconded by Councillor Navarro.

The Council notes that:

- goals to improve population health across the fast-growing county of Cambridgeshire will be undermined without a well-functioning and properly resourced system of Primary Care, including General Practice.
- while there are some examples of successful planning and delivery of General Practice to meet population growth in Cambridgeshire, too often that planning and delivery is failing to keep pace, firstly with the building block of necessary physical infrastructure, for both large scale and incremental growth.
- unmet need and underfunding of Primary Care infrastructure results in the following:
  - population growth impact on a primary care system that is unable to meet current demand.
  - current National Health Service (NHS) England capital funding to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Integrated Care Board (ICB) does not begin to meet levels of assessed need for a new General Practice infrastructure.
  - local planning authorities working with NHS aim to secure S106 developer contributions to mitigate impacts of new developments, however these efforts rarely yield the level of resource needed.
- an inflexible planning system results in the following:
  - local planning authorities and ICBs do not have the authority to leverage the level of resources and coordination needed to deliver the physical primary care infrastructure.
  - 106 mitigation agreements for developments do not take into account cross border impacts.
  - lack of alignment of local authority and ICB borders and ambitions mean that there can be lack of collaboration in applying for and taking forward 106 agreements.
  - generally securing 106 agreements is a slow process, and the arrangements are out of date and inadequate for a meaningful impact.

Therefore, this council resolves to:

- ask the Chief Executive to write to Cambridgeshire MPs, and the Secretaries of State for Health and Social Care, and Housing Communities and Local Government, alerting them of these shortcomings and asking that they consider better ways of planning and delivery of General Practice infrastructure, which will be needed for government's accelerated growth plans for Cambridgeshire.

Following discussion, on being put to the vote the motion was carried.

*[Voting pattern: Liberal Democrats, Reform UK, Labour, Green, Independents and 2 Conservatives in favour; 4 Conservatives against; 1 Conservative abstained]*

b) Motion from Councillor Ros Hathorn

The following motion was proposed by Councillor Hathorn and seconded by Councillor Bulat.

This council notes that:

- climate change and flood defences coming to the end of their working lives represent a significant threat to the future of Cambridgeshire as we know it today.
- the Fens make up a large part of Cambridgeshire. There are fens in all district areas of the county; South Cambridgeshire, East Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire and the entirety of Fenland. They stretch across south Lincolnshire and into Norfolk.
- the Fens are a large area of low-lying land. Without 24/7 water management 365 days a year the Fens would revert to marshy fens, liable to frequent flooding from the sea and rivers, potentially within a matter of years. Climate change including increased and different patterns of rainfall and rising sea levels will significantly increase this risk.
- hundreds of thousands of Cambridgeshire residents live in the Fens. Managing water in the Fens across Cambridgeshire, Norfolk and Lincolnshire is estimated to deliver in excess of £58bn worth of benefits through direct protection to people and properties, business, critical infrastructure, agricultural land, and through indirect benefits to the local economy.
- as acknowledged by the National Farmers Union in their 'Delivering for Britain, Food and Farming in the Fens' document, the Fens make a big contribution to England's food security producing one third of fresh vegetables, one fifth of potatoes, more than a fifth of flowers and bulbs, a fifth of our sugar beet and a significant percentage of the England's cereals, oilseed rape and protein crops.
- the Fens 2100+ is an Environment Agency led project tasked with managing today's flood risk and developing a plan for the fens landscape over the next 100 years which is explained further on their webpage - <https://engageenvironmentagency.uk.engagementhq.com/fens2100>. Cambridgeshire County Council are partners in this work alongside Lincolnshire and Norfolk County Council and other agencies.
- the Fens 2100+ identifies that much of our current flood defences were built in the 1960s and will need replacing in the next 20-30 years.
- over the next 100 years investment of £4.5 billion is needed for flood prevention and water management in the Fens. This is at today's prices and does not include the increased costs associated with managing flooding due to climate change. Current flood risk management rules mean that about 50% of this would be funded, the rest is not.
- re-wetting' the Fens has a history of being politically weaponised but in reality without finding a source for that missing £2.25 billion, plus more for climate change impacts, our flood defences will begin to fail in the coming decades.

- national competition for Environment Agency water management funding is at its fiercest. We cannot rely on outside voices advocating for our area. If we want to secure increased investment to prevent permanent inundation of some parts of our county over the next 100 years we must be the ones to raise awareness of this issue and fight for the place many of us call home.

This Council supports the following:

- climate change and flood defence work is not a luxury but a necessity in Cambridgeshire if we are to prevent large parts of our county being permanently lost to flooding.
- increasing understanding by providing clear sources of information helps people direct their efforts to the things they value.
- previous and current governments have so far not committed to fund the required £2.25 billion for Cambridgeshire flood defences. The longer it is left the harder it will be to find that money. We cannot rely on other parts of the country to argue for the importance of the Fens we need to show leadership on this issue. We need to be the ones fighting for the future of the place where we live.

This Council resolves that:

- the Chief Executive will write to the Secretary of State for the Environment to express the importance of Climate Change and flood prevention funding for the Fens across the next 100 years and to communicate the value of the Fens to the nation and the people who live here.
- the Council's leader to write to all political group leaders in Lincolnshire and Norfolk with a copy of this motion informing them about this debate and inviting them to work with us on this issue.
- six monthly updates on the Fens 2100+ be shared with all Councillors.
- an update report on the Environment Agency's Fens 2100+ project will be presented to the Environment and Green Investment Committee as part of the annual update report for the Climate Change and Environment Strategy.
- all parish, community and town councils in Cambridgeshire be contacted to ensure they are aware of the Fens 2100+ work, the importance of climate change and flood prevention work in Cambridgeshire, of the current funding gap for future flood defences and how no one else is going to fight for the future of Cambridgeshire inviting them to come together and work with us on this issue.

Following discussion, on being put to the vote the motion was carried.

*[Voting pattern: Liberal Democrats, Labour, Green, Independents, 5 Reform UK and 4 Conservatives in favour; 2 Conservatives and 1 Reform UK against; 1 Conservative and 3 Reform UK abstained]*

c) Motion from Councillor Edna Murphy

The following motion was proposed by Councillor Murphy and seconded by Councillor Kerr.

The council notes that:

- the District and city councils in Cambridgeshire are responsible for the collection of household waste including fly tipping on the public highway. The County Council is responsible for the disposal of municipal waste in Cambridgeshire. This arrangement is consistent with other county council areas, where a two-tier system operates.
- County councils are responsible for authorising road closures on their own highway network, which excludes major trunk roads (such as the A14 and A11 within Cambridgeshire) which come under the jurisdiction of National Highways where this is National Highways' responsibility.
- In County Council areas, City and District councils are technically responsible for the collection of fly tipping on such trunk roads but have no direct control over the means to close those roads to make the collection of fly tipping or other roadside debris safe for their operatives. They must apply to National Highways and cannot be sure to get timeslots at their preferred times.
- Recently instances have been noted where both sofas and mattresses have been dumped on the A14 alongside an accumulation of road kill and detritus from vehicles including ever growing numbers of exploded tyres. Alongside many other concerns this creates an appalling impression of the state of our county for those using these trunk roads and means that the accumulation of waste matter could potentially create hazards for road users, if the waste is not being collected and disposed of safely.

This council supports action which attempts to resolve this issue and determine a safe and effective mechanism by which fly tipping and other collections of waste will happen in a timely manner on our trunk roads, clearing up our county and allowing the county council to dispose of this waste appropriately and safely.

This council resolves that the Chief Executive write to the Minister of State for Transport (copying in members of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Waste Partnership (RECAP)) to explain the issue and urge the Minister to determine a solution to the problem of not having a safe and timely mechanism for picking up fly tipping from our major roads.

Following discussion, on being put to the vote the motion was carried.

*[Voting pattern: Liberal Democrats, Labour, Green, Independents, 8 Reform UK and 6 Conservatives in favour; 1 Conservative and 1 Reform UK abstained]*

d) Motion from Councillor Elliot Tong

The following motion was proposed by Councillor Tong and was seconded by Councillor Green.

The council notes:

- in the wake of the debate surrounding the Universal Credit and Personal Independence Payment Bill, Bill 267 2024-25, our current Labour government has recently backtracked on its proposed cuts to disability benefits that would have harmed residents across Cambridgeshire and put extra pressure on county council services.
- similar cuts are likely to return in some form following a review.
- Universal Credit and Personal Independence Payments are benefits considered in a financial assessment to determine what a person should contribute toward the cost of their social care. Reductions in these benefits mean that for some people their contribution toward the cost of their care is reduced, which reduces income to the council to support services.
- the disability cuts previously proposed would likely have had an adverse impact on vulnerable and disabled residents and their families, and likely to have had wider adverse impacts on our county. These include increased pressure on adult social care services, which are chargeable and based on a means-tested assessment. The county council has the same statutory responsibilities under the Care Act 2014 and funding toward adult social care must be prioritised by law, so a reduction in residents' ability to contribute to care costs means funds are reduced from other council services toward adult social care.
- the previously proposed cuts would not have saved money, but instead would have transferred costs to hard-pressed county council services.

The council resolves to ask the Chief Executive to write to:

- the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Liz Kendall) and Chancellor of the Exchequer (Rachel Reeves):
  - asking for any plans to cut access to Universal Credit and Personal Independence Payments to be abandoned;
  - to reference the potential impact of proposed cuts and implications it has on the local authority; and
  - asking if any future cuts will result in savings or transfer costs from central government budgets to those of the NHS and local authorities.
- local MPs to send their own letters of support to this motion, following on from the Chief Executive's letter, reflecting the council's position as a result of this motion.

Councillor Black moved an amendment, seconded by Councillor Meschini, as set out in Appendix C.

Following discussion, on being put to the vote, the amendment was lost.

*[Voting pattern: Labour, 1 Conservative and 1 Reform UK in favour; Liberal Democrats, 6 Conservatives, 5 Reform UK and Green against; 3 Reform UK and Independents abstained]*

Following further discussion, on being put to the vote, the motion was carried.

*[Voting pattern: Liberal Democrats, Green, Independents, 5 Reform UK and 1 Conservative in favour; Labour, 4 Conservatives and 4 Reform UK against; 2 Conservatives abstained]*

e) Motion from Councillor Alison Whelan

The following motion was proposed by Councillor Whelan and seconded by Councillor Malinowski. The motion included alterations from the version included on the agenda, which were proposed by Councillor Whelan, and agreed by the meeting without discussion.

Additions in bold and deletion shown in strikethrough.

Council notes:

- The recent Supreme Court ruling in *For Women Scotland v The Scottish Ministers* has **reached a unanimous decision that, only for the purposes of the Equality Act 2010, the terms ‘man’, ‘woman’ and ‘sex’ refer to biological sex.** This has significantly impacted the legal recognition of trans and non-binary individuals, restricting their rights and exacerbating discrimination.
- This ruling undermines the precedent set by *Goodwin v United Kingdom* (2002), which established trans individuals’ rights to legal gender recognition under the European Convention on Human Rights.
- Women and girls continue to face disproportionate levels of violence, particularly gender-based violence, including domestic abuse, sexual violence, and harassment.
- Trans women experience violence and discrimination at levels far exceeding their representation in the population, with evidence showing they are particularly vulnerable to hate crimes, physical assault, and systemic exclusion.
- Trans men and non-binary individuals face unique challenges, including discrimination in healthcare, barriers to legal recognition, and exclusion from gender-specific spaces and services.
- Many trans men and non-binary people struggle to access appropriate reproductive and sexual health services, due to systemic gaps in healthcare provision that fail to account for their needs.
- Schools, workplaces, and public services often fail to accommodate and support trans men and non-binary individuals, leading to increased mental health challenges and social isolation.
- Young LGBTQ+ people, particularly trans and non-binary youth, face significant barriers in education, healthcare, and social inclusion, leading to increased mental health challenges and social isolation.

- The Kite Trust, based in Cambridgeshire, provides essential support for LGBTQ+ young people, offering youth groups, one-to-one support, and advocacy to ensure they can thrive in safe and inclusive environments.
- Intersectionality must be recognised when addressing discrimination, as trans and non-binary individuals may also face additional barriers related to disability, race, socioeconomic status, or immigration status.

Council believes:

- Women and girls, including trans women, must be protected from gender-based violence, with appropriate support structures in place.
- Trans men and non-binary individuals face unique challenges that must be addressed in all council policies, services, and initiatives.
- Trans and non-binary people must be able to access services safely and equitably, without fear of discrimination or exclusion.
- The loss of rights conferred by *Goodwin v United Kingdom* represents a regressive step, and the council must act to uphold protections at the local level to the extent permitted by law.
- **The laws to protect trans people from discrimination and harassment remain in place, and trans people are still protected under the Equality Act 2010.**
- Schools must be safe spaces for all students, with policies ensuring trans and non-binary young people can access facilities, participate fully in education, and receive appropriate support.
- The Kite Trust plays a crucial role in supporting LGBTQ+ youth, and the council should work closely with them to strengthen local services.
- Healthcare services must be accessible and affirming, ensuring trans men and non-binary adults receive appropriate reproductive, sexual health, and general medical care.
- All people across Cambridgeshire, regardless of their protected characteristics, are valued and are supported by this Council.

Council resolves to:

- publicly reaffirm its commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion, ensuring that women and girls, trans men, trans women, and non-binary individuals are protected from gender-based violence and systemic discrimination.
- ensure that the strong specialist services for survivors of gender-based violence, are available to women, including trans women and that all women, including trans women receive appropriate care and safeguarding.
- ensure that all policy decisions are fully inclusive for all people irrespective of their protected characteristics.

- instruct the Adults and Health Committee to work with healthcare providers to seek to ensure trans men and non-binary adults have access to appropriate medical care, including gender-affirming reproductive and sexual health services.
- **instruct the Communities, Social Mobility and Inclusion Committee to receive a report on its ongoing equity, diversity, and inclusion work, including a review of partnership opportunities** work with The Kite Trust and other LGBTQ+ organisations to **strengthen our offer to seek to ensure young LGBTQ+ people have access to safe spaces and mental health support for young LGBTQ+ people**, and to put in place education policies for the protection of LGBTQ+ people.
- ensure that all County Council buildings and facilities are open to all without discrimination and that single-sex spaces, where required, remain available while protecting the dignity and rights of all individuals.
- work with suppliers to ensure that they have appropriate EDI policies and that single-sex spaces, where required, remain available while protecting the dignity and rights of all individuals.
- write to the health minister and the minister for women to advocate nationally for stronger protections for women, girls, trans men, trans women, and non-binary individuals, ensuring their rights to education, healthcare, and social support are safeguarded and for their assurance that they will oppose any further legislative or policy changes that seek to erode the rights of trans and non-binary individuals, particularly those affecting education, healthcare, and access to gender-affirming spaces.

Following discussion, on being put to the vote, the motion was carried.

*[Voting pattern: Liberal Democrats, Labour, Green and Independents in favour; Conservatives and Reform UK against]*

## 28. Questions

- a) Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority and Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Council Procedure Rule 10.1)

Two questions were received, as set out in Appendix D.

- b) Written Questions (Council Procedure Rule 10.4)

Three questions were received, as set out in Appendix E.

## County Council – 15 July 2025

### Chair's Announcements

#### People

##### Maureen Byrne and Sarah Oldfield

It is with deep regret that the Chair reports the recent deaths of Maureen Byrne, Business Officer, and Sarah Oldfield, Family Worker, in the Children, Education and Families Directorate. The Council's thoughts are with their family, friends and colleagues at this very sad time.

##### Service Director: Adult Social Care

Amy Brock has been appointed as Cambridgeshire County Council's new Service Director: Adult Social Care. Amy joined Cambridgeshire in June 2025 from West Northamptonshire Council where she was an Assistant Director Adults Services.

##### Service Director: Adult Social Care

Akua Agyepong has been appointed as Cambridgeshire County Council's new Service Director: Adult Social Care. Akua will be joining Cambridgeshire on 12th August from Kent County Council, where she is the Assistant Director Adult Social Care Countywide Services. Akua is currently on Secondment to the Care Quality Commission, supporting their Local Authority Adult Social Care assessment programme.

##### Service Director: Strategy and Commissioning

Chris Bush has been appointed as Cambridgeshire County Council's new Service Director: Strategy and Commissioning. Chris will be joining Cambridgeshire on 18th August from the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham Council, where he is the Commissioning Director: Children's and Adults Care and Support.

##### Chief Constable for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough

Police and Crime Commissioner, Darryl Preston has announced Simon Megicks as his preferred candidate to take up the role of Chief Constable for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. Mr Megicks, who was born in Cambridgeshire, spent the majority of his policing career with the Constabulary before moving on to becoming Deputy Chief Constable for Norfolk Constabulary. A start date will be agreed with Mr Megicks should the Police and Crime Panel recommend that he is appointed.

#### Awards

##### 'Outstanding Contribution to Emerging Technologies' award

The Cambridgeshire Open RAN Ecosystem (CORE) project, led by Connecting Cambridgeshire on behalf of Cambridgeshire County Council, won the "Outstanding Contribution to Emerging Technologies" award at the [Small Cell Forum Mobile Network Awards 2025](#) on 3 June 2025.

This award recognises the successful deployment of the UK's first city-centre Open RAN 5G network - trialled earlier this year in Cambridge through a series of exciting public events at the Corn Exchange, including Augmented Reality experiences and live music streamed over 5G.

## Libraries Connected Awards

Mary Burgess, Cambridgeshire Libraries' Local Studies Librarian was awarded first runner up in the Information and Digital category at this year's Libraries Connected Awards. The Libraries Connected Awards celebrate the achievements of public library staff who have had an exceptional impact on their library service, users or their local communities. A passionate advocate for libraries and local history information, Mary was awarded first runner up for creating new ways to make Cambridgeshire's collections accessible to the public.

## Local Government Chronicle Awards

The council was shortlisted as a finalist in four categories of the Local Government Chronicle (LGC) Awards. The LGC Awards celebrate the very best in local government, highlighting councils across the country that demonstrate outstanding leadership, creativity, and impact in serving their communities. Connecting Cambridgeshire reached the final in two categories, Innovation and Future Places and the Domestic Abuse Service in the category of Health and Social Care. The Communities Service won the category of Community Involvement for the Fenland Youth Network, bringing services closer to communities.

## Outstanding Achievement Award

Cambridgeshire County Council's High Impact Use team (HIU) has won the Partnership Award at the North West Anglia NHS Foundation Trust Outstanding Achievement Awards. The Partnership Award celebrates a team or individual that demonstrates outstanding collaboration skills. The HIU team was praised for its innovative, approachable, and collaborative approach.

## Service Developments

### Cambridgeshire Skills and Learning and Development Ofsted inspection

The council's adult learning services, delivered by Cambridgeshire Skills and Learning and Development, received a full inspection from Ofsted at the end of April 2025. The service was awarded an overall judgement of Good, with one area deemed to be Outstanding by the inspectors who noted that learners and apprentices thrive due to the warm, nurturing and inclusive learning environment and substantial new knowledge and skills they learn.

### Learning disabilities week 2025

16 to 22 June was Learning Disability Week, a national campaign which takes place each year and shines a light on the experiences, challenges and contributions of people with learning disabilities. The theme for 2025 was "Do you see me?" which aimed to ensure people with a learning disability are seen, heard, included, and valued in all aspects of life. To celebrate, the Council shared some of the ways it is supporting adults with learning disabilities across Cambridgeshire.

### Coproduction week 2025

The Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE)'s Co-production Week took place from 30 June – 4 July, a celebration of the power of co-production to design and develop better ways of doing things

in social care. This year's theme is 'Innovation through co-production' and will be showcasing innovative projects supporting unpaid carers, including projects supported by the Department of Health and Social Care's Accelerating Reform Fund (ARF).

## Messages

### The Mott Sermon at Holy Trinity Church

The Chair attended the Mott Sermon, one of Cambridge City's four annual civic church services at the Holy Trinity Church, Market St, Cambridge.

### Memorial Day Ceremony at Cambridge American Cemetery

The Chair attended and laid a wreath at Cambridge American Cemetery to commemorate the memory of the men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice for freedom.

### Pride Month Flag Raising at New Shire Hall

The Chair raised the flag at New Shire Hall for Pride Month alongside Councillor Sarah Caine and Councillor Luis Navarro.

### Refugee Flag Raising at New Shire Hall

The Chair raised the flag at New Shire Hall for Refugee week alongside Chief Executive Dr Stephen Moir, Councillor Alex Bulat, Councillor Lorna Dupré, Councillor Peter Fane and Councillor Geoffrey Seeff. The theme for this year is 'Community as a Superpower'. Refugee Week is the world's largest arts and culture festival celebrating the contributions, creativity and resilience of refugees and people seeking sanctuary.

### Proclamation of Midsummer Fair

The Chair attended the traditional proclamation of Midsummer Fair which dates back to a Royal Charter granted by King John in 1211.

### The Right Reverend Dr Dagmar Winter, The Acting Bishop of Ely's Garden Party

The Chair attended a garden party hosted by the Acting Bishop of Ely, The Right Reverend Dr Dagmar Winter.

### Honorary Fellowship for alumna the Right Honourable Diane Abbott MP at Newnham College

The Chair attended Newnham College for their celebratory event as they conferred an Honorary Fellowship on alumna the Right Honourable Diane Abbott MP.

### Armed Forces Day Flag Raising at New Shire Hall

The Chair raised the flag at New Shire Hall for Armed Forces Day alongside invited dignitaries - Deputy Lieutenant Mr Jeremy Newsum DL, Station Warrant Officer WO Mark Hooper representing RAF Wyton, three representatives from the Royal British Legion Brampton branch, including Clive Wood, the Chairman of Brampton branch. Chief Executive Stephen Moir was also in attendance with many Councillors.

## Conferment of Honorary Degrees at the Senate-House

The Chair attended the congregation in the Senate-House for the Conferment of Honorary Degrees.

## Cambridgeshire Armed Forces Dinner

The Chair attended a Cambridgeshire Armed Forces Dinner held in Queen's College to say 'Thank You' to our wider Armed Forces family in Cambridgeshire and also to strengthen the connection between employers and Defence.

## Independence Day at RAF Alconbury

The Chair attended an Independence Day event at RAF Alconbury which resembled a family event with a carnival and fireworks.

## Visit to Great Fen

The Chair formed part of a line up to welcome His Royal Highness The Duke of Gloucester visiting Great Fen Reserve and Rothchild Bungalow in Woodwalton Fen.

## Afternoon Tea at Wisbech Castle

The Chair attended The Mayor of Wisbech, Councillor Janet Tanfield's Afternoon Tea at Wisbech Castle.

## 80th Anniversary of VJ DAY at Ely Cathedral

The Chair attended Ely Cathedral to commemorate the 80th Anniversary of VJ day at Ely Cathedral. The Chair joined the parade and attended the refreshments after the service in the Lady Chapel. Mrs Julie Spence OBE CStJ QPM His Majesty's Lord Lieutenant of Cambridgeshire was in attendance alongside Military and Civic Dignitaries, Royal British Legion, Families of FEPOW's and Youth Organisations.

## Citizenship Ceremonies

The Chair attended three Citizenship Ceremonies at New Shire Hall.

## The British Racing School Showcase

The Vice-Chair attended a morning with the Newmarket Pony Academy and Riding a Dream Academy to showcase the charitable work of the British Racing School supporting children and young people aged 8 – 24.

## Public Question Time

## 1. Question from Dr David Landon Cole to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Lucy Nethsingha:

Good morning, thank you. Although Cambridgeshire County Council is not directly responsible for licensing gambling establishments, it does have to deal with the results of both problem gambling on individuals and the economic and social impact on towns. With that in mind, and as the Council speaks with moral weight, can I ask if the Council will join the letter to the Culture Secretary, Lisa Nandy, already signed by thirty-six local authority leaders, asking for changes to the Gambling Act 2005 to make it easier for local authorities, of all kinds, to turn down applications for gambling establishments. Thank you.

## Response from the Leader of the Council, Councillor Lucy Nethsingha:

Thank you very much for your question, Dr Cole, and for raising this important issue with us. As you rightly acknowledge, Cambridgeshire County Council is not the licencing authority for gambling, but it does have statutory duties around public health.

Gambling is increasingly being recognised as a public health issue, with wide reaching consequences beyond financial loss. While available data seems to indicate that Cambridgeshire has a similar prevalence of gambling to the national average, we appreciate that even at that level it has a significant detrimental impact on our residents, families and communities, and specifically it has well evidenced impact on health inequalities. Reducing health inequalities is one of the seven strategic ambitions for Cambridgeshire County Council.

There is limited data on the prevalence of gambling locally and who is specifically impacted, but we are pleased that the NHS is now offering intensive support services in the East of England via NHS services in Milton Keynes and Thurrock, and our public health services are now specifically making sure that all our relevant services are aware that those exist and know how to make referrals.

Given the harms caused by gambling to residents, families and communities, and particularly its impact on health inequalities, I'm very pleased to support the call led by Brent Council for Lisa Nandy to reform the Gambling Act. While we wait for central government action within Cambridgeshire County Council, we are pleased that our advertising and sponsorship policy has already restricted advertising for providers of gambling and betting services, and our Director of Public Health will look at whether there is more we should be doing on a public health approach towards gambling across Cambridgeshire. Thank you.

## Supplementary question from Dr David Landon Cole:

Thank you very much and thank you for the answer. I do appreciate the work that's going on and I'm glad you signed the letter. Can I ask that, that be done, if you'd like, with dispatch so that that is all in place ahead of local government reform, so that the successor councils have that in place. Thank you.

## Response from the Leader of the Council, Councillor Lucy Nethsingha:

I think it's possible it's already done, but it will certainly be done with dispatch. Thank you.

2. Written question from Dr Haq Nawaz to the Chair of the Highways and Transport Committee, Councillor Alex Beckett:

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. 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. 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?

Written response from Chair of the Highways and Transport Committee, Councillor Alex Beckett:

Since 13 June 2024, the Ralph Butcher Causeway has been subject to one-lane running, due to the cracking, movement and settlement issues. The embankment has been monitored twice weekly and, since further cracking was identified in May this year, has been the subject of additional daily monitoring. Remedial work to provide further stability to the embankment is underway, having started on Monday 7 July. This involves installing soil nails and laying a concrete surface to the embankment. The work is expected to take 22 weeks and is due to complete in early December following which both lanes will reopen.

The council has committed to provide fortnightly updates on the progress throughout the works. These are being published on the County Council website, [King's Dyke remedial works continue | Cambridgeshire County Council](#). The date for the start of the remedial work was published by the Council on 18 June, and the latest update was provided on 16 July.

We recognise the disruption that the lane closure has had and continue to work with the contractor to resolve the issue and ensure the road can safely be fully reopened. The responsibility for remediation work and associated cost rests with the contractor, Jones Brothers, as part of the construction contract.

3. Question from Ms Kerrie Portman to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Lucy Nethsingha:

Thank you. 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 life endangerment. Thank you.

Response from the Leader of the Council, Councillor Lucy Nethsingha:

Thank you very much. Thank you for your question and for sharing your experience. Cambridgeshire County Council is deeply committed to supporting our children in care and care leavers alongside addressing systemic discrimination towards care experienced individuals.

We recognise the significant challenges that many care experienced people face, which can lead to poorer life outcomes and to additional vulnerability. To help us to be better corporate parents, and to address these issues, we provide training for all of our elected Members regarding their role as corporate parents. The training includes information about our children in care and about care leavers experiences of accommodation, care, education and health, and on the outcomes that we have supported our care leavers to achieve. It highlights how we should be aspirational

for the children in our care and that those aspirations should lead to plans that support children and young people to thrive.

Additionally, we are reviewing and revising all our policies and procedures to ensure that they are inclusive and supportive to care leavers. We are establishing dedicated support services to provide tailored assistance and advocacy for care experienced individuals.

We are committed to creating a more equitable and supportive environment for all care experienced people in Cambridgeshire and have made being care experienced a protected characteristic. This means that all new policies, spending plans and services must explicitly consider and seek to eliminate discrimination against care experienced individuals.

In addition to this, Cambridgeshire County Council has taken several practical steps to address systemic discrimination against people with care experience. We always want to hear from children in care and care leavers about their experiences, and we are keen to be responsive so that we are able to support them better. Your feedback is really helpful in helping us to achieve this goal. Thank you.

Supplementary question from Ms Kerrie Portman:

Thank you. What specific plans do you have to support care experienced people moving forward? Personally, I've not seen a significant improvement in the eight years since I was in a children's home in Cambridgeshire.

Response from the Leader of the Council, Councillor Lucy Nethsingha:

So, I think on the specific plans, it might be more helpful if I were able to provide that in a written answer. I do know that we have done a great deal over the last four years that I've *[pause due to a technology issue]* Thank you. I think that's now working. We are certainly doing a great deal to try and improve, particularly accommodation for our children in care across Cambridgeshire and we will continue to work on that, but I'm happy to try and provide a longer answer in writing after the meeting.

#### 4. Question from Mr Guy Lachlan to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Lucy Nethsingha:

Thank you, Chair.

The Council's draft accounts published at 6 p.m. on the deadline date of 30th June 2025, reveal to the public for the first time that Council has decided to write off £60 million of their loans to This Land Limited, plus an unquantified impairment of some or all of the £5.8 million equity holding in the company. These decisions were made, it turns out, on 11th March 2025 by the Executive Director of Finance and Resources, under delegated authority of the Strategy, Resources and Performance Committee. In addition, This Land's outstanding overdue interest payments of £6.8 million for 2024/25 are now shown in the draft accounts as 'Long Term Debtors' instead of current debts where they should be.

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 the 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 assessment or followed subsidy control procedures, and that successive decisions are being

driven by non-commercial motives, 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.

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.

Response from the Leader of the Council, Councillor Lucy Nethsingha:

Thank you. I would like to start by assuring our council taxpayers that over the lifetime of the loans to the company, the County Council will have received more money back than it loaned. I would also like to clarify that this is a restructuring of the current funding package rather than a loan write off. Although I can say that we do not expect all of the converted £59 million to be repaid, we are working hard to explore ways to reduce the impact and to make sure that the maximum amount is repaid. The issue lies with the way in which the original loans were structured, which was unusual for the local government sector and would be unheard of for any other company. The significant interest was charged from day one on all of the assets instead of on a plot by plot and delivery of planning and infrastructure and it means that the Council has received significantly more interest upfront, disadvantaging the cash flow of the company. It benefited the Council through providing income that it was losing following sustained government cuts to our funding.

Then came the pandemic and the economic crisis, which meant that site progression was delayed and sales and costs rose, and that is what has caused the company's cash flow risk. There has been a set of 42% increase in similar companies in the UK, going into administration since 2022, so the fact that we have today a wholly owned company that is still working, tirelessly, to bring high quality homes including affordable homes forward is encouraging. Turning to your specific points, firstly we have been transparent in our reporting at various stages in 2024-25 about the delays and the risks to interest payments from the company in that year. The updated loan and funding structure means that this interest foregone in that year will be recovered in later years, and under accounting rules, we are correct to class that as a long term *[Chair: Councillor Nethsingha, we are on time but I know it is an important topic] Do you want me to pause? [Chair: Please wrap up as soon as you could. Thank you, but please continue.]*

I just will cover the subsidy point. Secondly, I can confirm that advice on subsidy control was a factor that was considered by the S,R and Committee in its consideration of the restructuring and it properly reached its decision and I'll pause there.

Supplementary question from Mr Guy Lachlan:

Thanks, Chair. It's becoming increasingly clear that This Land Limited is a giant ponzi scheme. Borrowed money was lent to This Land on which the company could only afford interest payments, firstly, by increasing their loan, and then when that was made unlawful by selling off assets over which the Council held a charge in order just to pay the interest. The right off, decided in secret, at the Strategy and Resources meeting, appears to have been deliberately withheld from the public before the election, lest it revealed the level of disaster facing the Council.

The way the loan has been converted to a grant does not align with accounting practises and has not been scrutinised by councillors, nor shared with your shareholders, the electorate of Cambridgeshire. Councillors you're being kept in the dark on the severity of this issue. Your Leader has delegated all decisions on this matter to officers who are acting as if they have the authority to make multimillion decisions unilaterally and in secret. I urge councillors of all

parties to wake up and realise that your personal reputations are on the line. Make yourselves expert on what is going on in your name and get involved please.

The Shareholder Sub-Committee must vote down [*Chair: thank you*] this fraudulent business plan.

Response from the Leader of the Council, Councillor Lucy Nethsingha:

Yes, I will respond. Thank you. And I'll respond by saying firstly that I would never have set up the company in the way it was set up in the first place and it is certainly the case that opposition parties did not agree with the way this company was set up. But since taking control of this Council, it is absolutely untrue to say that we have handed everything over to officers. That is not the case. There has been scrutiny by councillors from across this Council and across party over the last four years of the way in which the company was being managed. The company has always been managed, however dubiously it may have been originally set up, in order to provide the maximum benefit for the residents of Cambridgeshire, that may not always have been in the best interest of the company itself as a separate organisation, but it has always been managed in order to provide income to residents of Cambridgeshire, which has been spent providing services for residents of Cambridgeshire. I would echo your call, actually, for councillors across this organisation to understand what the company does and how its accounting works, because I think there is a responsibility on every Member in this room to understand that and I would completely encourage them to do so and when they do so, they will understand how the company works and what it has been doing. Thank you.

5. Question from Mr Simon Payne to the Chair of the Highways and Transport Committee, Councillor Alex Beckett:

Thank you Chair for this opportunity to express the widespread concern of residents in Histon and Impington about how proposed busway safety fencing is designed.

The busway corridor is an important heavily used village route, with amenities and homes on both sides. It's a fundamental part of how we travel locally and how wildlife moves around and across the villages.

Residents are concerned by the lack of detail provided in the proposals to fence the busway. This has been exacerbated by suggestions coming directly from the Council that many of the commonly used crossing places local people use to move around the community and to engage with nature will be permanently closed off. Some of these paths have been in use for over 140 years.

A petition will shortly be submitted formally to the County Council entitled 'Save Access across the Busway for People and Nature'. Within the first 10 days of the petition being launched we had over 1,700 signatures. This demonstrates the importance of these crossing points to the whole community. We have heard directly from locals with mobility issues, mental health concerns, young families and people whose physical health would be put at risk without this access.

I, therefore, request that the Chair of the Highways and Transport Committee give an assurance that the proposed busway fencing in Histon and Impington will not close off existing well used footpaths that allow residents to cross the busway to access nature and also that the fencing will not be a barrier to wildlife.

Response from the Chair of the Highways and Transport Committee, Councillor Alex Beckett:

Thank you Simon firstly, thank you for coming along and thank you for taking the time to come and raise your question.

I am pleased to say that working with officers, while safety is the overriding purpose of the fencing, officers will seek to incorporate crossing points for any well used footpaths wherever possible and they will make sure the fencing is designed to facilitate wildlife crossing as appropriate.

Supplementary question from Mr Simon Payne:

Thank you for the answer. Formal applications with extensive evidence have been made to the County Council to recognise that three existing paths that cross the busway at Manor Park, Histon, qualify as public rights of way. Officers have yet to give a commitment to process these applications quickly so that the results can inform the design of the busway fencing. Will the Chair of the Committee ensure these applications are prioritised so that the outcome can be taken into account?

Response from the Chair of the Highways and Transport Committee, Councillor Alex Beckett:

Yes. I am very happy to take that away and I will get back to you on the results of those crossing points. Very happy to take that away.

## Agenda Item No. 13d) – Motion from Councillor Tong

Proposed by Councillor Mike Black

Seconded by Councillor Meschini

Additions in bold and deletions shown in strikethrough

The council notes:

- in the wake of the debate surrounding the Universal Credit and Personal Independence Payment Bill, Bill 267 2024-25, our current Labour government has ~~recently backtracked on its~~ **listened and responded to representations from Labour MPs and removed from the Bill** proposed cuts to disability benefits that would have harmed residents across Cambridgeshire and put extra pressure on county council services.
- ~~— similar cuts are likely to return in some form following a review.~~
- Universal Credit and Personal Independence Payments are benefits considered in a financial assessment to determine what a person should contribute toward the cost of their social care. Reductions in these benefits mean that for some people their contribution toward the cost of their care is reduced, which reduces income to the council to support services.
- the disability cuts previously proposed would likely have had an adverse impact on vulnerable and disabled residents and their families, and likely to have had wider adverse impacts on our county. These include increased pressure on adult social care services, which are chargeable and based on a means-tested assessment. The county council has the same statutory responsibilities under the Care Act 2014 and funding toward adult social care must be prioritised by law, so a reduction in residents' ability to contribute to care costs means funds are reduced from other council services toward adult social care.
- the previously proposed cuts would not have saved money, but instead would have transferred costs to hard-pressed county council services.

The council resolves to ask the Chief Executive to ~~write to~~:

- **write to** the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Liz Kendall) and Chancellor of the Exchequer (Rachel Reeves):
  - **welcoming proposals to help disabled people find work and welcoming the abandonment of** ~~asking for~~ any plans to cut access to Universal Credit and Personal Independence Payments ~~to be abandoned~~;
  - to reference the potential impact of proposed cuts and implications it has on the local authority; and
  - asking if any future cuts will result in savings or transfer costs from central government budgets to those of the NHS and local authorities.
- **send copies of the letter to local MPs, asking for copies of any letters they have already sent to ministers opposing the bill, and asking for clarification as to whether their party can commit to opposing any cuts to benefits** ~~local MPs to send their own letters of support to this motion, following on from the Chief Executive's letter, reflecting the council's position as a result of this motion.~~

## Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority and Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Council Procedure Rule 9.1)

Questions to the Council's Appointee on the Combined Authority Board, Councillor Nethsingha, and the Council's Appointees on the Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Bradnam and Councillor Meschini.

### Question from Councillor Hathorn to the Council's Appointee on the Combined Authority Board, Councillor Nethsingha:

So, I see that at the first Board meeting under the new Mayor, there was a recommendation proposed to the Board that the £2.50 bus fare reduction be removed, meaning that the fare cap for a single bus fare would rise to the national £3, which does represent a significant increase to the cost of travelling by bus. I understand that this, when it was brought, was linked to the continuation of the Tiger Pass, which is very worrying as the Tiger Pass has made travel affordable for thousands of young people across the county, both those in work and those going to school. Do you have any updates on the future of the Tiger Pass since the Board meeting on 4th June, please?

### Response from the Council's Appointee on the Combined Authority Board, Councillor Nethsingha:

Thank you very much. There has indeed been a great deal of discussion and complicated discussion going on about the continuation of the fare cap, the continuation of the Tiger Pass. So, the Board meeting was slightly extraordinary, in that there was an amendment to the bus update that came to the Board meeting, that was brought without any prior notice, which is a very unusual thing to happen at a meeting like that, that was not passed, for which I'm delighted that it wasn't. There was then quite a lot of discussion at the Transport Committee following that, which was where some new potential reductions in the extent of the Tiger Pass were brought forward and again those were brought forward to the Transport Committee without any discussion with previous Board Members or without any discussion with Transport Committee Members prior to that.

And I think there is a worrying pattern that seems to be emerging, particularly around bus services, at the Combined Authority, which is that at every possible opportunity, it appears that the Mayor's new approach is to try and reduce the amount of funding that's going into bus services or to make shortfalls in the budget for almost always on bus services rather than looking for any other part of the budget. At the same time as constantly trying to reduce the amount of money that's going into bus services, the Mayor has been on Facebook and other places talking about how much money he's willing to offer for free parking, and I think we absolutely need to call out that actually, there are political choices being made here about where, I mean, there is no question that the Combined Authority's budget is tight, and that commitments were made, which perhaps are not all going to be sustainable in the long term, particularly given them as commitment not to raise the precept any further, but there are always *[Chair: Thank you Councillor Nethsingha, sorry you are at two minutes. I realise it is a very big topic.]* difficult decisions to be made. *[Councillor Hathorn, maybe she will have an opportunity if you have a supplementary but I don't want to tempt providence.]*

### Supplementary question from Councillor Hathorn to the Council's Appointee on the Combined Authority Board, Councillor Nethsingha:

Well, I'd just like to ask, I mean this must relate to the Mayor's remit for prioritising work for under 25s, so how does that, what work is tying that together? Is there anything taking, or if you're losing bus fares and transport for young people, what is the alternative?

Response from the Council's Appointee on the Combined Authority Board, Councillor Nethsingha:

So, I think that the Mayor does want to continue with the Tiger Pass, and I think that at least some of the Tiger Pass will continue and I will certainly fight as hard as I can for it to continue in its current form without any changes. The question really is about whether, if there are tight places in the bus budget, whether there are other parts of the budget that can be looked at rather than always looking to cut bus services and at the moment it feels as if at every opportunity the Mayor is trying to cut bus services, and I think that needs to stop.

Question from Councillor Martin to the Council's Appointee on the Combined Authority Board, Councillor Nethsingha:

Thank you very much, Chair. Just a point in regards to audit and governance and just something that you hopefully you can do, Council Nethsingha. We've see today that the Audit and Governance Committee meets on the same day and time as this Full Council meeting, which isn't ideal for our Members, but also other Members that represent their District Councils. As the only authority, as Cambridgeshire being the only authority that has our Full Council meetings during the day, what work is she doing to ensure that all of the CPCA meetings don't clash with our Full Council meetings here so that we in Cambridgeshire are fully represented on those committees?

Response from the Council's Appointee on the Combined Authority Board, Councillor Nethsingha:

I can see Michelle making faces at me. We put our Council dates in very early. I mean, our Council dates have been published well in advance. It is deeply disappointing that the Combined Authority have chosen to put an Audit and Governance meeting in on the same day as a Council meeting and I'm sure we will ask them again whether it would be possible to move it. But it is the way we try and prevent those clashes from happening is by having our meetings card published early, which then gives other organisations the opportunity to try and avoid having clashes with our meetings and some meetings, it might be possible to change, but it is absolutely not possible for us to change the Full Council meeting. We will see if we can persuade them to change the Audit and Governance meeting, which has a smaller number of people involved. Thank you.

## Written Question under Council Procedure Rule 10.4 1.

## Question from Councillor Elliot Tong:

Last year, Cllr Alex Beckett, Chair of Highways and Transport, stated that Cambridgeshire County Council was approximately £600 million behind in highways repairs. Following further work, has this figure changed?

## Response from Councillor Alex Beckett, Chair of Highways and Transport Committee:

In March 2025, the Highways and Transport Committee considered and approved a report regarding the Capital Maintenance and Improvement Programme under Item 2.3. Within this report a revised estimate for the cost to address the condition of roads is included Capital Highways Maintenance and Improvements Programme. This highlights a figure of £410m to address the core condition of all roads and a further £530m to address, long term, the soil affected road issue affecting 40% of our road network. This does not, however, include our other highway assets such as footpaths and structures.

Importantly, the rise in the backlog figure does not mean the network is deteriorating more rapidly, but reflects this administration's continued push for better data and a fuller understanding of the condition and scale of the challenge. Improved surveying, data integration, and modelling have allowed us to take a more accurate and comprehensive view than ever before.

A new whole network road condition survey is currently underway; this is due to conclude by the end of August. This will enable officers to prepare detailed lifecycle planning costs linked to the total investment required to repair our road network, and a recommended minimum investment threshold. This will cover all our assets and give members a clearer picture of the level of investment required in our highway network which will inform a report that will be presented to the Highways and Transport Committee in October 2025.

## Question from Councillor Elliot Tong:

In Cambridgeshire County Council's Draft Statement of Accounts for 2024-2025, it is noted that '[i]n 2024-25 the company [This Land] entered a challenging financial period linked to national economic stresses on the house-building sector as well as a local site specific issue, that meant the company struggled to meet interest payments to the council as they fell due, and was not able to present a future business plan to the council that realistically showed loan repayments being made in full. Consequently, in March 2025, the council exercised strong and sound judgement by agreeing a restructuring of the loan portfolio to convert around half to capital contributions which are non-interest bearing and will be repaid contingent on performance.' As the nature of these arrangements was confidential, as set out in the meeting's minutes, a £60 million loan has been effectively written off in secret from the general public.

Residents' trust in Cambridgeshire County Council is being lowered by the covertness surrounding its relationship with This Land. It is essential that more is done to improve transparency and accountability.

Section 26 of the Local Audit & Accountability Act 2014 (1) notes:

*At each audit of accounts under this Act, other than an audit of accounts of a health service body, any persons interested [F1 or any journalist] may—*

- (a) inspect the accounting records for the financial year to which the audit relates and all books, deeds, contracts, bills, vouchers, receipts and other documents relating to those records, and*
- (b) make copies of all or any part of those records or documents.*

The external auditor (KPMG) audits Cambridgeshire County Council's single entity accounts AND the consolidated group accounts, which together form the annual statement of accounts. On p.137 of this year's draft accounts, Cambridgeshire County Council explicitly states that these include This Land (*'[a]s the council has control of the entity and there are material transactions with the company, the This Land Group is consolidated in the Group Accounts'*).

As such, will Cambridgeshire County Council now provide me, as a member of the public, with an unredacted copy of This Land's draft accounts for 2024/25 with immediate effect, something that a member of the general public should not be denied as they form part of the consolidated accounts and therefore come within scope of (S26A)?

**Response from Councillor Karen Young, Chair of Shareholder Sub-Committee:**

Can I start by clarifying that the loans were restructured and not written off, in fact the £59.85m converted is contingent on performance and as such an element may be repaid. This Land themselves will continue accounting for the full repayment of the amounts lent by the Council. It is also worth noting that when this Company and the loans were set up rather unusually the transactions and obligations between the Council and This Land not only did not provide an economic advantage to the company but put it in a disadvantaged commercial position: with full interest payments across an early stage and wide portfolio and extensive overage arrangements to capture future profits. Aside from the pandemic and global and national economic crises it is the interest payments back to the Council that has largely driven the reporting losses of the Company. Since 2021 the Council has enabled the company to remain operating, unlike so many other similar businesses locally and nationally, and that has protected and retained jobs in the Company and many local sub-contractors, as well as creating nearly 1000 homes, a third of which are affordable for first time buyers.

Whilst we appreciate the need to discuss this and I understand that the entirely necessary confidential sessions may have frustrated some, we have a responsibility to protect the commercial interests of the Company. However, next week I will chair the Council's Shareholder Sub-Committee to assess the Company's Business Plan and that will be in the public domain. That will contain some commercially sensitive and confidential appendices and as you will see from our accounts and other reports dating back to the Avison Young report in January 2022, we are being transparent and we are holding the Company to account.

On the matter of the accounts, the Council needs to produce Group Accounts relating to This Land as a wholly owned company: these are now available on the Council's website and are on the agenda for this month's Audit and Accounts Committee. To consolidate in accordance with the accounting code certain items are extracted to present a clear and accurate picture of the group's overall financial position. This includes stripping out intra-group transactions and balances. The company is subject to a completely separate accounting and audit regime, and This Land's detailed balances (other than intra-group balances) do not form part of the council's accounting records. Together with the timing requirements for the Council's production of the draft accounts, this means the group accounts are produced using abbreviated and unaudited financial accounts from This Land. The Council complies fully with the public inspection requirements and has given statutory notice earlier this month about how any interested person can request documents under this procedure. As with previous years, the Council would expect to make available the This Land accounts and transactions that it has relied on in producing group accounts, in the event these are requested through the inspection process.

In addition to the requirements referenced in the question, the This Land Company Accounts are subject to a separate audit in accordance with the Companies Act and will be filed with Companies House no later than 31 December 2025 and will (as with previous years) be publicly available.

Question from Councillor Dr Peter Rees:

Why is Cambridgeshire County Council keeping Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders secret? A spurious GDPR argument is being used to prevent residents knowing what is being planned for their area. Councillors are being blocked from sharing notices with residents on the basis that TTRO notices are GDPR-sensitive, but in my experience I could not find anything substantially sensitive and when I requested redacted versions, none were provided. It's not good enough that decisions are made in secret and then residents only find out what is going on in their road after it has been approved, this is against the Gunning principles of meaningful consultation. The Essex Highways text on TTROs stipulates that 'Before an application, consultation must take place', but in Cambridgeshire, the three words 'Before an application' are omitted. Other authorities are committed to transparency and meaningful consultation, why not Cambridgeshire? Will the Council now commit to consulting stakeholders before an application is made instead of only informing them afterwards?

Response from Councillor Alex Beckett, Chair of Highways and Transport Committee:

Cambridgeshire County Council is committed to transparency and early engagement in the delivery of Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) and Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders (TTROs) and continues to make improvements to the way these are communicated and managed. Examples of recent improvements include the introduction of a bus route impact question on TTRO applications, following a member request, to better assess public transport disruption.

All confirmed TTROs are published publicly via the One.Network platform, where they are accessible to residents and stakeholders. In addition, statutory consultees (including emergency services and bus operators) are notified in accordance with the legal process.

Elected Members are also consulted on TTRO applications during a standard 10-working-day window.

A new process is being introduced in July 2025 to improve transparency and address GDPR-related concerns. Instead of circulating the original application form (which may include contact details or other sensitive information), a new Intends notice will be issued to local members and parish councils. This will include a clear summary of the proposed works and a diversion route plan, and can be freely shared and displayed publicly, including on parish notice boards.

It is to be noted that There is no statutory requirement to consult before a TTRO application is submitted. The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and associated 1992 regulations do not mandate pre-application consultation. However, the Council's current approach, where elected members are invited to comment before an order is confirmed, meets both legal requirements and best-practice expectations.

The reference to Essex County Council's process reflects local interpretation and policy rather than national legal obligation. Cambridgeshire's process remains aligned with statutory requirements and is designed to balance operational delivery with democratic input. While pre-application consultation is not a legal requirement and cannot be enforced, the Council encourages promoters of significant works to engage early with local members and communities. This helps improve scheme design and supports greater transparency without introducing legal risk – based on the concerns raised we will see if this can be strengthened further.

Emergency TTROs, made by notice under section 14(2) of the Act, are used where urgent action is needed to protect public safety, prevent damage to the highway, or restore essential services. These are issued immediately and are exempt from consultation due to the urgent nature of the works