



Shoplifting Deep Dive:

East Cambridgeshire

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1. Executive Summary

The 2024 East Cambridgeshire Strategic Assessment recommended shoplifting as a key community safety issue and an area of focus for the East Cambridgeshire Community Safety Partnership (CSP) (CCC Policy and Insight Team, 2024). The number of shoplifting offences in East Cambridgeshire reached 412 in 2024, up 24% from 2023 (+79 offences). This was higher than the 20% increase in shoplifting offences seen in the UK over the same period (ONS, 2025). The 412 shoplifting offences in East Cambridgeshire in 2024 was also 81% higher than the number recorded in 2021 (+185 offences).

The purpose of this deep dive report is to further explore shoplifting offences in East Cambridgeshire and to identify areas where the East Cambridgeshire CSP can add value to prevent future shoplifting offences. The report seeks to answer the following questions:

- Where are shoplifting offences predominantly occurring?
- What is being taken from shops?
- Who is committing the shoplifting offences?

To answer these questions, the report analyses police data from January 2021 to December 2024 with a focus on 2024 in two ways. First, an extensive dip sample analysis was undertaken on the MOs and incident summaries. This involved analysing a sample of 100 randomly selected shoplifting offences (including attempted shoplifting) out of the total 412 shoplifting offences for a range of key words. Second, suspect data on suspects who were associated with crimes in East Cambridgeshire was analysed with findings of 53 suspects associated with 169 shoplifting offences (41%; 169 of 412).

With all the analysed data, it should be noted that varying shoplifting policies on reporting may have an influence on the number of shoplifting offences reported – some retailers may intentionally report as part of national campaigns while others may under report.

1.1. Key findings

The key findings focus on analysis of shoplifting offences in East Cambridgeshire in 2024 and are organised by the three questions the report seeks to answer:

- Where are shoplifting offences predominantly occurring?
- What is being taken from shops?
- Who is committing the shoplifting offences?

Where are shoplifting offences predominantly occurring?

- Littleport and Ely East consistently have the largest annual counts and highest proportion of shoplifting offences, and both wards stand far above the other East Cambridgeshire.
 - In the 2024, Littleport had 172 shoplifting offences and made up 42% of all shoplifting offences in East Cambridgeshire.
 - Ely East had 119 shoplifting offences and made up 29% of all shoplifting offences in East Cambridgeshire. Littleport and Ely East thus made up 71% of all shoplifting offences in 2024.
- Dip sample analysis for 2024 showed that 61% of shoplifting offences were in supermarkets or convenience stores. The next most common location were petrol stations at 21%.
 - The most common location by shop name was the Co-op, accounting for almost a third of offences (32%). The next most common shop names were BP (20%) and Waitrose (15%). The high numbers of offences recorded in Co-op is due to their campaign to provide evidence for the Home Office as part of their '[Safer Colleagues, Safer Communities](#)' campaign. Shoplifting policies can vary among retailers, and similar reporting campaigns to the Co-op could not be found on BP and Waitrose websites.
 - A key word search on shop names was completed for all shoplifting offences in Littleport and Ely East for 2024.
 - For Littleport, the Co-op on Main Street made up 47% of shoplifting offences and the M&S Simply Food at the BP petrol station on Wisbech Road made up 34% of shoplifting offences.
 - For Ely East, Waitrose made up 34% of shoplifting offences and Sainsburys made up 22% of shoplifting offences.

What is being taken from shops?

- Dip sample analysis for 2024 showed that the most taken types of items were groceries/food (27% of offences) or alcohol (27% of offences).
 - Meat made up 44% (12 out of 27) of food/grocery offences shoplifting offences of the dip sample. A key word search of "meat" on all 412 shoplifting offences also confirmed that meat made up 12% of all shoplifting samples.
 - Except for "Other", Snacks/confectionary/drinks was the next biggest category with 9% of all shoplifting offences.
 - Health products included vitamins/supplements, medicines, and smoking cessation products, and this made up 8% of all shoplifting offences.
- In terms of value, dip sample analysis showed that 14 shoplifting offences cited that £100+ worth of goods had been stolen. All 412 shoplifting offences were subsequently analysed, and 18% of shoplifting offences were found to be worth £100+.

- In terms of volume, dip sample analysis also showed that 39% of shoplifting offences were said to involve a medium-high volume of products (such as a bag full of products, or multiple bags).
 - 23% were said to involve a low to medium volume of products (such as a meal deal, or single bottle).

Who is committing the shoplifting offences?

- Demographics in 2024
 - Dip sample analysis (65%) and suspect analysis (77%) showed that the majority of suspects are male.
 - Suspects analysis also showed that the majority of suspects are White British and that the most common cohort were males between 30 to 34 years old. The ethnicity was not recorded for 17% of suspects.
- Repeat suspects
 - Dip sample analysis showed that a quarter (25%) of offences mentioned that the offenders were known to the person reporting.
 - For suspects analysis for those that were associated with crimes in East Cambridgeshire, approximately half of suspects in the cohort (51%) were associated with more than 1 shoplifting offence, and this accounted for 86% of shoplifting offences.
- Crime type
 - For suspects analysis for those who are associated with crimes in East Cambridgeshire, 96% of suspects linked with shoplifting offences were also linked with other offence types.
 - The most common additional offence type was violence against the person.

1.2. Recommendations

Recommendations can be divided into geographic and system level categories.

Geographic

- It is recommended that resources are focused on two wards - Littleport and Ely East. These wards consistently represent the largest annual counts and highest proportion of shoplifting offences. 71% of all shoplifting offences in 2024 occurred in these two wards.
 - For Littleport, the Co-op on Main Street made up 47% of shoplifting offences and the M&S Simply Food at the BP petrol station on Wisbech Road made up 34% of shoplifting offences.
 - For Ely East, Waitrose made up 34% of shoplifting offences and Sainsburys made up 22% of shoplifting offences.

- It is recommended that the East Cambridgeshire CSP focus attention on these four locations.

System Level

- It is difficult to determine clear cut motivations and causes of people who shoplift from the analysed data.
 - Littleport has consistently had the highest count of shoplifting offences and based on the IMD 2025 is the most relatively deprived ward in East Cambridgeshire. It is recommended that the CSP engage with food banks to assess local need.
 - A key word analysis of all 412 shoplifting offences showed that “meat” came up 12% and that items of more than £100+ came up 18%. Dip sample analysis also showed that 39% of shoplifting offences were said to involve a medium-high volume of products. It is recommended that the CSP continue to support the Cambridgeshire Constabulary in its efforts against organised crime.
- There is a need for the Cambridgeshire Constabulary and shops to continue to work together in a virtuous cycle where shops feel action will be taken, shops share information, and then the police act to encourage further information sharing.
 - It is recommended that shops take advantage of the Government’s recent Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee to build strong communication links between the Cambridgeshire Constabulary and shops (Cambridgeshire Constabulary, 2025).
 - It is recommended that Cambridgeshire Constabulary and shops continue to work together on consistent and informative data gathering approach for recording shoplifting offences.
 - It is recommended that shops collaborate with other neighbouring shops that experience shoplifting to share information on suspects and repeat suspects.
 - The Operation Elegance pilot in nearby Northamptonshire (rebranded as the Northamptonshire Police Retail Crime Team) provides a possible case study for building the virtuous cycle. A dedicated team was created, and it implemented a standardised evidence gathering approach that cut down on time and provided effective evidence for prosecutions. Through these efforts and the building of strong partnerships among retailers, there was greater confidence from victim retail stores to continue with reporting (College of Policing, 2024).

2. Geographical Context

2.1. National

The recent increase in shoplifting in East Cambridgeshire is part of a national trend. Between year ending (YE) December 2021 and YE December 2024, shoplifting offences in the UK increased 102% from 256,004 to 516,971 (ONS, 2022).

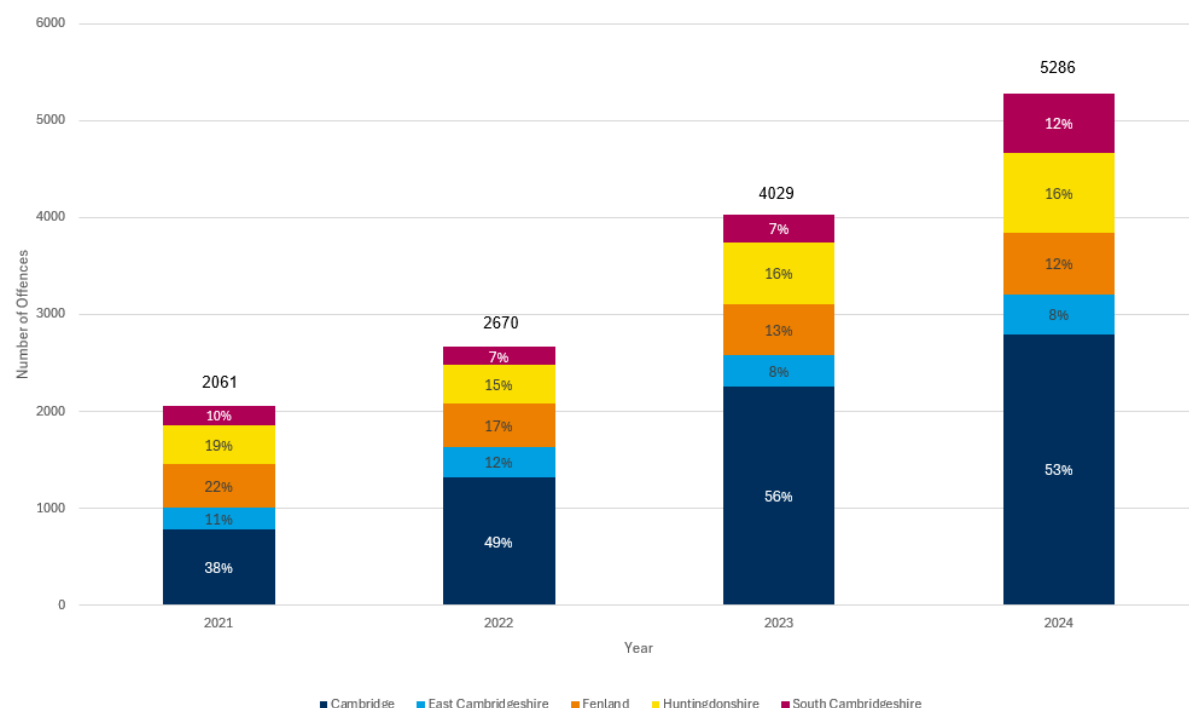
Between YE December 2023 to YE December 2024, shoplifting offences in the UK increased by 20% from 429,873 offences to 516,971 offences. This is the highest level of shoplifting offences since police recording practices began in YE March 2003 (ONS, 2025).

2.2. Cambridgeshire

Cambridgeshire has also had increases in shoplifting. Figure 1 below shows that between YE December 2021 and YE December 2024, shoplifting offences in Cambridgeshire increased 156% from 2,061 offences to 5,286 offences.

In the last calendar year, shoplifting offences increased 31% from 4,029 offences to 5,286 offences. It should be noted that East Cambridgeshire has had either the smallest (fifth) or second smallest (fourth) proportion of shoplifting offences over the last four years, ranging from 8% in the last year to 12% in 2022.

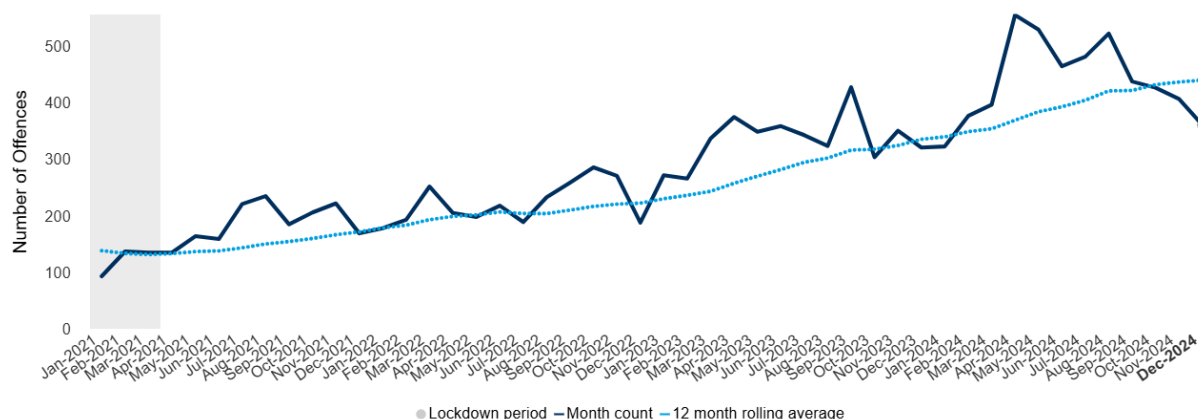
Figure 1: Annual trend of shoplifting offences in Cambridgeshire by district, 2021 to 2024



Note: Chart produced by Cambridgeshire County Council Policy and Insight Team, using data provided by Cambridgeshire Constabulary.

Figure 2 below shows the monthly counts of shoplifting offences in Cambridgeshire over the last four years, and there is a steady increase with the 12-month rolling count. Peaks over the period are approximately in the March/April periods and August/September periods of each year.

Figure 2: Monthly count and 12-month rolling count of shoplifting offences for Cambridgeshire, 2021 to 2024



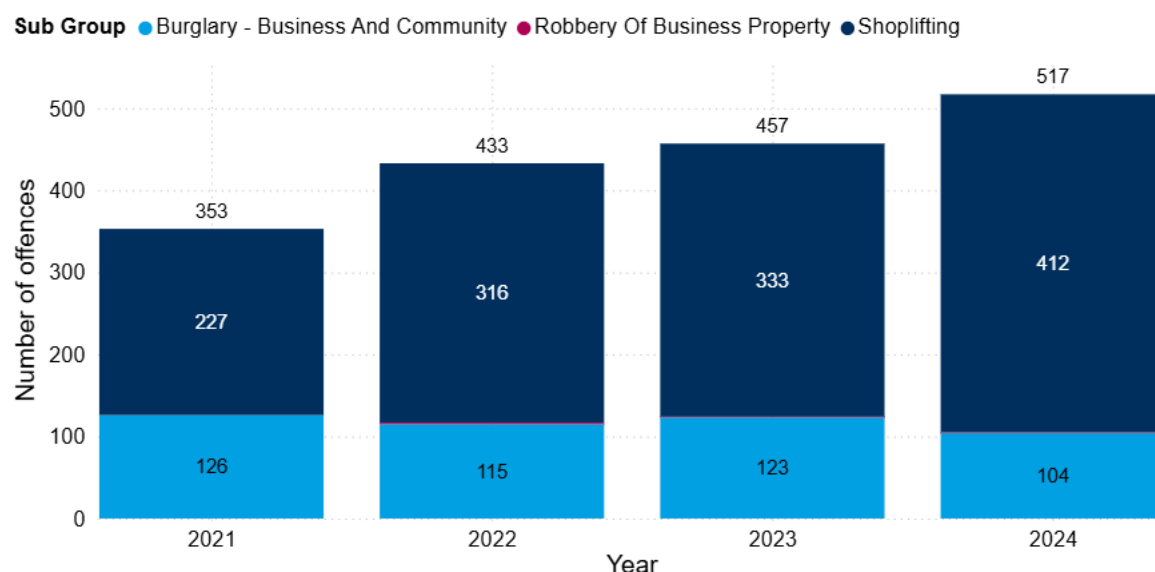
Note: Chart produced by Cambridgeshire County Council Policy and Insight Team, using data provided by Cambridgeshire Constabulary.

2.3. East Cambridgeshire

East Cambridgeshire has experienced increases in shoplifting offences over the last four years but at a lower level than Cambridgeshire. Figure 3 below shows that between YE December 2021 and YE December 2024, shoplifting offences in East Cambridgeshire increased 81% from 227 offences to 412 offences. This is in comparison to the 156% increase in Cambridgeshire and a 102% increase in the UK over the same period.

In the last year, shoplifting offences in East Cambridgeshire increased by 24% from 333 offences to 412 offences. This is lower than the 31% increase in Cambridgeshire but concerningly higher than the 20% increase in the UK over the same period.

Figure 3: Annual trend in offences related to commercial loss in East Cambridgeshire, 2021 to 2024



Note: Chart produced by Cambridgeshire County Council Policy and Insight Team, using data provided by Cambridgeshire Constabulary.

Table 1 below shows shoplifting offences for 2024 in East Cambridgeshire in the context of the district population. East Cambridgeshire has the third highest rate of 4.5 shoplifting offences per 1000 population and close to Huntingdonshire in fourth with a rate of 4.4. This slightly differs from Figure 1 in the previous section where East Cambridgeshire had the fourth or fifth highest proportion of shoplifting offences in Cambridgeshire among districts.

Table 1 also provides context for the business retail shop density in East Cambridgeshire, and East Cambridgeshire has the fourth highest rate of 3.1 business retail local units per 1000 population and is close to South Cambridgeshire in first with a rate of 3.0. East Cambridgeshire has a higher shoplifting rate (4.5) than South Cambridgeshire (3.7) given a comparable business retail density (3.1 vs 3.0).

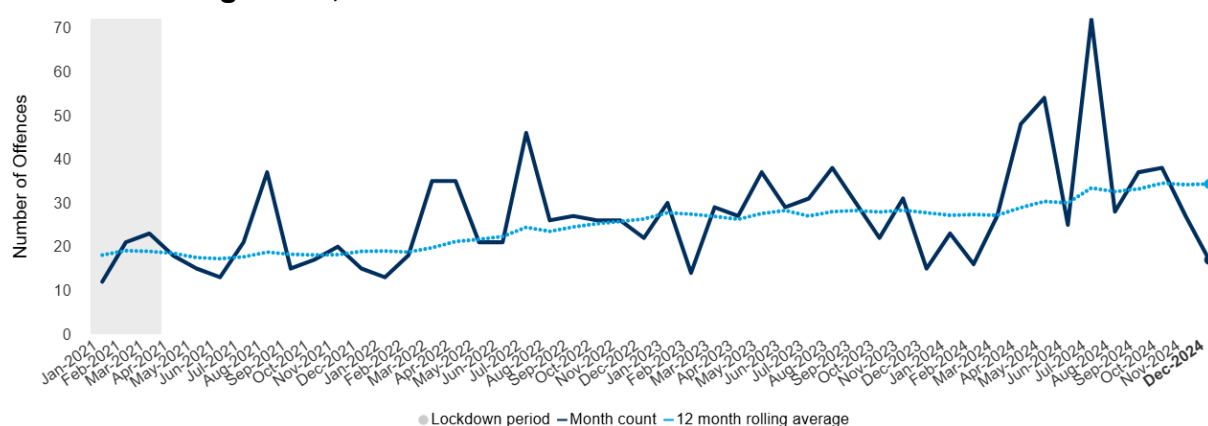
Table 1: Rate per 1000 population for shoplifting offences (YE December 2024) and business retail local units (YE March 2024) by local authority

Local authority	Rate per 1000 population of shoplifting offences	Rank	Rate per 1000 population of business retail local units	Rank
Cambridgeshire	7.5	N/A	3.5	N/A
Cambridge	18.6	1	4.5	1
East Cambridgeshire	4.5	3	3.1	4
Fenland	6.1	2	3.4	3
Huntingdonshire	4.4	4	3.6	2
South Cambridgeshire	3.7	5	3.0	5

Note: Table produced by Cambridgeshire County Council Policy and Insight Team, using data provided by Cambridgeshire Constabulary and ONS (ONS, 2024). Rates have been calculated using CCC mid-2023 local population estimates. Darker shades of pink-red indicate higher rates.

Figure 4 below shows the monthly counts of shoplifting offences in East Cambridgeshire, and there is a similar steady increase with the 12-month rolling count. Although the peaks are more pronounced than the peaks for Cambridgeshire, the peaks are approximately in similar months of March/April and July/August compared to Figure 2 in the previous section.

Figure 4: Monthly count and 12-month rolling count of shoplifting offences for East Cambridgeshire, 2021 to 2024



Note: Chart produced by Cambridgeshire County Council Policy and Insight Team, using data provided by Cambridgeshire Constabulary.

2.4. Ward Level

Table 2 below shows the rank of East Cambridgeshire wards by annual count, and overall, the top 6 over the last four years have included Littleport, Ely East, Ely West, Burwell, Fordham & Isleham, and Soham South.

Littleport and Ely East consistently have the largest annual counts and highest proportion of shoplifting offences, and both wards stand far above the other East Cambridgeshire. In the 2024, Littleport had 172 shoplifting offences and made up 42% of all shoplifting offences in East Cambridgeshire, and Ely East had 119 shoplifting offences and made up 29% of all shoplifting offences in East Cambridgeshire. Ely West is ranked third in annual counts after Ely East with 48 shoplifting offences in 2024, and there is a staggering 71 count difference between Ely East and Ely West.

Littleport has experienced a 330% increase in shoplifting counts between 2021 and 2024. This is far higher than the 156% increase in Cambridgeshire and 102% increase in the UK over the same period.

Table 2: Number of shoplifting offences in East Cambridgeshire wards, 2021 to 2024

Ward	2021 Count	2021 % of total	2021 Rank	2022 Count	2022 % of total	2022 Rank	2023 Count	2023 % of total	2023 Rank	2024 Count	2024 % of total	2024 Rank	% change 2021-2024	% change 2023-2024
Littleport	40	18%	2	164	52%	1	130	39%	1	172	42%	1	330%	32%
Ely East	55	24%	1	92	29%	2	110	33%	2	119	29%	2	116%	8%
Ely West	31	14%	4	19	6%	3	39	12%	3	48	12%	3	55%	23%
Burwell	20	9%	6	11	3%	5	18	5%	4	23	6%	4	15%	28%
Fordham & Isleham	34	15%	3	14	4%	4	11	3%	6	15	4%	5	-56%	36%
Soham South	5	2%	8	<5	<2%	N/A	13	4%	5	15	4%	5	200%	15%
Bottisham	<5	<2%	N/A	<5	<2%	N/A	<5	<2%	N/A	6	1%	7	N/A	N/A
Soham North	8	4%	7	7	2%	6	7	2%	7	6	1%	7	-25%	-14%
Sutton	<5	<2%	N/A	<5	<2%	N/A	<5	<2%	N/A	6	1%	7	N/A	N/A
Ely North	0	0%	12	0	0%	12	0	0%	11	<5	<1%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Woodditton	<5	<2%	N/A	<5	<2%	N/A	0	0%	11	<5	<1%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Downham Villages	25	11%	5	0	0%	12	0	0%	11	0	0%	12	-100%	N/A
Haddenham	0	0%	12	0	0%	12	0	0%	11	0	0%	12	N/A	N/A
Stretham	0	0%	12	<5	<2%	N/A	<5	<2%	N/A	0	0%	12	N/A	N/A
Total	227	100%	N/A	316	100%	N/A	333	100%	N/A	412	100%	N/A	81%	24%

Note: Table produced by Cambridgeshire County Council Policy and Insight Team, using data provided by Cambridgeshire Constabulary. Darker shades of pink-red indicate higher percentage changes; orange shades indicate a top 5 ranking for shoplifting offences; grey shades indicate counts under 5 that have been suppressed.

2.4.1. Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2025

The IMD 2025 was recently released in October 2025, and Table 3 below shows wards ranked by relative deprivation with a score of 1 being more deprived and score of 10 being less deprived. Littleport ranks as more relatively deprived than other wards in East Cambridgeshire, and the neighbourhood LSOAs within the Littleport ward range from 3 to 7.

A table of individual neighbourhood LSOAs by overall IMD 2025 decile (Table 8) and a table of individual neighbourhood LSOAs by the IMD income domain decile (Table 8) are found in Appendix B.

Table 3: IMD 2025 Average Decile for Wards and Decile Range for LSOAs within wards in East Cambridgeshire

Ward	Average Decile for wards (1 is more deprived and 10 is less deprived)	Decile range for LSOAs within wards (1 is more deprived and 10 is less deprived)
Littleport	6	3 - 7
Soham South	6	5 - 7
Haddenham	7	5 - 8
Stretham	7	4 - 8
Sutton	7	5 - 9
Downham Villages	7	7 - 7
Ely East	7	4 - 9
Fordham & Isleham	7	5 - 9
Soham North	7	6 - 8
Bottisham	8	7 - 8
Woodditton	8	6 - 10
Burwell	9	6 - 10
Ely West	9	6 - 10
Ely North	9	6 - 10

Note: Table produced by Cambridgeshire County Council Policy and Insight Team, using data from MHCLG.

3. Dip sample analysis

An analysis on the MOs and incident summaries was carried out on a dip sample of 100 randomly selected shoplifting offences (including attempted shoplifting) between January 2024 and December 2024 of the total 412 shoplifting offences. This represents 24% of the sample (100 out of 412) and gives an approximate indication of the make up of shoplifting offences. In certain cases, key word searches and analysis have been conducted for all 412 shoplifting offences to confirm or further understand what is going on.

This dip sample analysis includes analysis on the location of the offence, types of items taken, and the value and volume of the items where indicated.

3.1. Locations

Table 4 below shows that 61% of shoplifting offences were in supermarkets or convenience stores. The next most common location were petrol stations at 21%.

The most common location by shop name was the Co-op, accounting for almost a third of offences (32%). The next most common were BP (20%) and Waitrose (15%).

It cannot be determined whether this reflects higher numbers of offences in supermarkets and convenience shops, or higher levels of reporting. In the context of the Co-op, the high numbers of offences recorded in Co-op is due to their campaign to provide evidence for the Home Office as part of their '[Safer Colleagues, Safer Communities](#)' campaign, which is focused on tackling crime and violence and protecting colleagues. This involves a comprehensive crime reporting platform; improving surveillance and communication between colleagues, employing uniformed guards; and hosting store detectives (Central Co-Op, 2024). More information can be found through the PDF, [Stealing with Impunity – 2024 retail crime report](#).

Table 4: Percentage/number of offences by location of offence, in a dip sample of 100 shoplifting in East Cambridgeshire recorded in 2024

Business type	Percentage/number of offences
Supermarket/convenience shop	61
Petrol station	21
Discount shop	5
Health	<5
Builders' merchants	<5
Recreation shop	<5
Pharmacy	<5
Post Office	<5
Not specified	<5
Total	100

Source: Table created by CCC PIT using offence data provided by Cambridgeshire Constabulary.

A key word search on shop names was completed for all shoplifting offences in Littleport and Ely East for 2024. For Littleport, Table 5 below shows that the Co-op on Main Street made up 47% of shoplifting offences and the M&S Simply Food at the BP petrol station on Wisbech Road made up 34% of shoplifting offences. It is recommended that the East Cambridgeshire CSP focus attention on these two locations.

Table 5: Shop Names in Littleport with the highest proportion of shoplifting offences, 2024

Shop Name	Address	% of 2024 Littleport Shoplifting Offences
The Co-operative Food	30, Main Street, CB6 1PJ	47%
M&S Simply Food at BP Petrol Station	152, Wisbech Road, CB6 1FY	34%
The Co-operative Food	40-42, Wisbech Road, CB6 1JH	11%
One Stop	1-3 Wisbech Rd CB6 1PR	7%
Other	N/A	1%

Source: Table created by CCC PIT using offence data provided by Cambridgeshire Constabulary.

For Ely East, Table 6 below shows that the Waitrose made up 34% of shoplifting offences and Sainsburys made up 22% of shoplifting offences. It is recommended that the East Cambridgeshire CSP also focus attention on these two locations.

Table 6: Shop Names in Ely East with the highest proportion of shoplifting offences, 2024

Shop Name	Address	% of 2024 Ely East Shoplifting Offences
Waitrose	Brays Lane, CB7 4QJ	34%
Sainsburys	Lisle Lane, CB7 4AS	22%
B&M	7, Newnham Street, CB7 4ZH	12%
Aldi	41, Lisle Lane, CB7 4AS	8%
Other	N/A	24%

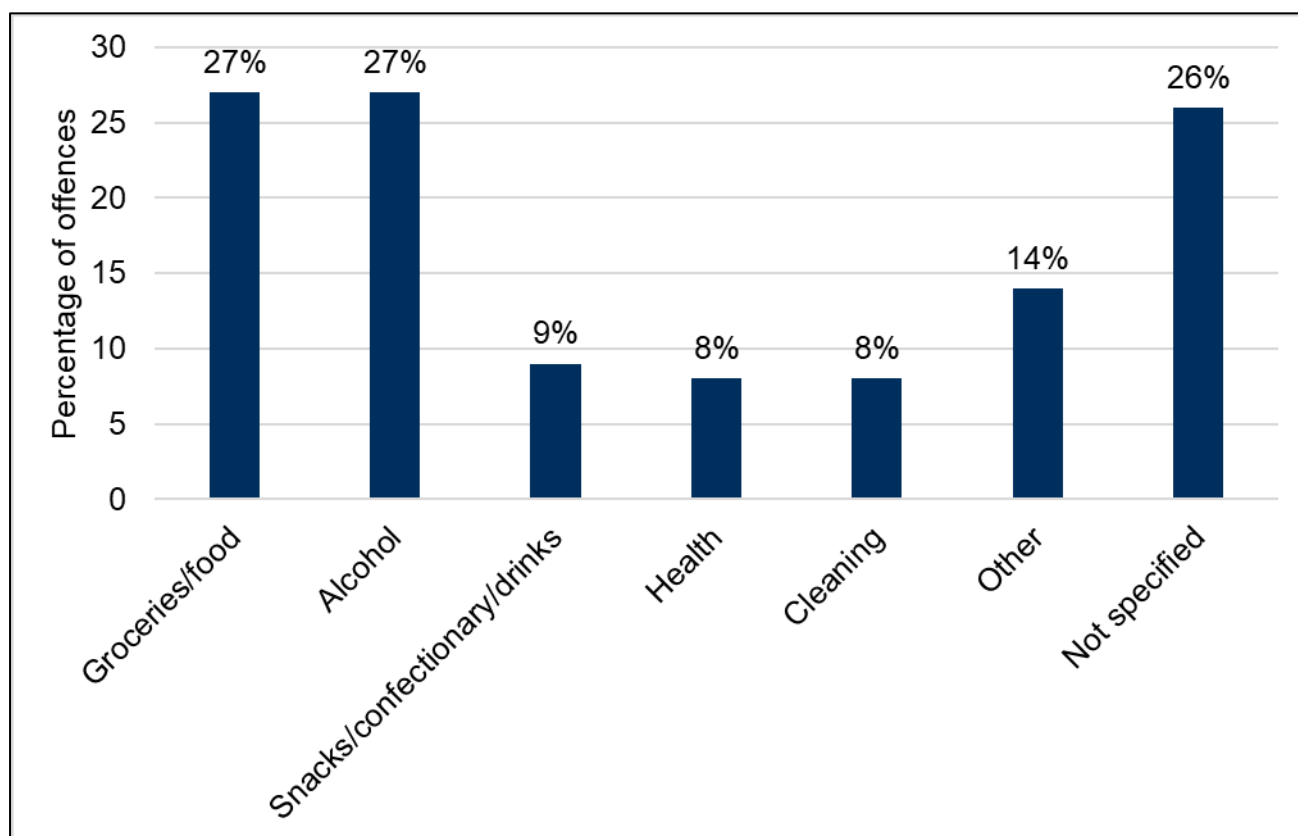
Source: Table created by CCC PIT using offence data provided by Cambridgeshire Constabulary.

3.2. Types of items

Figure 5 shows the types of items most taken by offenders. Most offences involved groceries/food (27% of offences) or alcohol (27% of offences).

A key word search indicated that 12 of the 27 offences involving groceries/food mentioned meat being stolen in the incident summary. This made up 44% (12 out of 27) of food/grocery offences shoplifting offences of the dip sample. When compared to all shoplifting offences of the dip sample, meat made up 12% (12 out of 100). A key word search of “meat” was then conducted on all 412 shoplifting offences, and meat also made up 12% of all shoplifting samples.

Figure 5: Percentage/number of offences by type of item, in a dip sample of 100 shoplifting in East Cambridgeshire recorded in 2024



Note: Offences can involve multiple types of items, so the sum of all offences by item type, will exceed 100%.

Source: Chart created by CCC PIT using offence data provided by Cambridgeshire Constabulary.

“Other” was the next biggest category at 14%, and this included items such as personal hygiene, skincare and cosmetics, electrical items, pet food and medicines, toys, hardware and building materials, and automotive products such as engine oil. Snacks/confectionary/drinks followed after “Other” with 9% of all shoplifting offences. Health products included vitamins/supplements, medicines, and smoking cessation products, and this made up 8% of all shoplifting offences.

It is difficult to ascertain the motivations and possible cohorts of people who are associated with shoplifting offences. Theft of essential items may be indicative of survival shoplifting, but in the case of higher value items, such as meat and expensive pharmaceutical products, this could also be reflective of stealing to re-sell. This extends to other high value items, and is a strategy employed by organised criminal gangs (OCGs), as well as those struggling with polyaddiction.

3.3. Value and volume of products

In terms of the value of products taken, 26 shoplifting offences from the dip sample noted an exact or estimated value of the goods stolen. Of these 26 shoplifting offences, 14 shoplifting offences cited that £100+ worth of goods had been stolen. Of these 14 shoplifting offences, 6 cited values ranging between £300 and £600.

All 412 shoplifting offences were subsequently analysed, and 18% were worth £100+.

In terms of volume, 39% of shoplifting offences from the dip sample were said to involve a medium-high volume of products (such as a bag full of products, or multiple bags).

- 23% were said to involve a low to medium volume of products (such as a meal deal, or single bottle).
- A small number of offences involved a small number of very large items (<5%).
- The volume was unspecified for 6% of offences in the dip sample.

Again, it is difficult to ascertain the motivations and possible cohorts of people who are associated with shoplifting offences. Low value or low volume goods taken may indicate survival or opportunistic shoplifting. High value or high volume goods taken may indicate stealing to re-sell for those employed by organised criminal gangs (OCGs) or those struggling with polyaddiction.

3.4. Other things to note

The dip sample analysis also found the following:

- The majority of offences involved single offenders (65%).
 - About a quarter involved 2 offenders (25%)
 - A small number of offences involved groups of offenders (4 to 7 offenders).
 - Further investigation of crime descriptions indicated that there are offenders who repeatedly work together.
- 1 offence mentioned suspected links to an OCG targeting builders' merchants across the country.
- 7 offences involved some level of aggression, including verbal aggression or threats, or physical aggression such as pushing/pulling, biting, or pinching.
- A quarter (25%) of offences mentioned that the offenders were known to the person reporting. 13% specified that the offenders were unknown.
- 65% of shoplifting offences involved only males.

4. Suspects analysis

Like dip sample analysis, there are limitations with suspect analysis because it covers only a partial amount of the total 412 shoplifting offences. The following analysis only involves those shoplifting offences which had an associated suspect record; therefore, it does not include crimes where no suspect was associated. However, suspect analysis is useful because it can provide an indication of the demographics, repeat offences, and crime types of those who are associated with shoplifting offences. The suspects analysis focuses on suspects who were associated with crimes in East Cambridgeshire.

4.1. Suspects who were associated with crimes in East Cambridgeshire

An analysis was completed of suspects who were associated with shoplifting offences in East Cambridgeshire, which were recorded in 2024. Within this period, 185 suspect records in total were geocoded to East Cambridgeshire, and this covered 58 people and 170 offences.

As individuals can be associated with multiple records, the latest record was used for each suspect for demographic analysis.

Of the 170 offences associated with these 58 suspects, 1 was linked to 5 suspects. An investigation of the MO indicated this crime was not a shoplifting offence and so was excluded from the analysis. This left a total of 180 records for 53 suspects, and 169 offences, which were used in the following analysis. The 169 offences represent 41% of all shoplifting offences for 2024 (169 out of 412).

Just 9 (5%) of the 169 offences were linked to 2 suspects in the dataset (with none associated with more than 2 suspects).

Demographics

Of these 53 suspect records, more than three quarters were male (41 suspects, 77%). All suspects were aged between 15 and 59, with the largest cohort being males aged 30 to 34 (9 suspects, accounting for 17%). The majority (60%) were White British. The ethnicity was not recorded for 17% of suspects.

Where shoplifting suspects are coming from

The home address was unknown for 20 suspects. This accounted for 38% (20 out of 53) of the suspects linked to shoplifting offences in East Cambridgeshire in 2024.

Approximately a third of suspects were recorded to be residing in East Cambridgeshire (30%, 16 suspects). However, when only looking at the 33 suspects with a recorded home address, this increased to 48% (16 suspects).

Fewer than 5 suspects were from other Cambridgeshire districts, and 5 were Peterborough residents. Most of the suspects who came from elsewhere in England were from the East of England. East of England residents accounted for 18% of suspects with known home addresses.

Repeat offenders, and crime types

Approximately half of suspects in the cohort (51%, 27 suspects) were associated with more than 1 shoplifting offence, accounting for 87% of shoplifting offences (which had associated suspect records) in 2024.

Almost a quarter of suspects (23%, 12 suspects) were associated with 5 or more offences each, accounting for 66% of shoplifting offences.

Just 3 suspects were associated with 13 or more offences each, accounting for a quarter (27%, 45 offences) of all shoplifting offences in 2024.

Approximately half (49%) of suspects (26 people) linked with shoplifting offences, were also linked with other offence types. The most common additional offence type was violence against the person (VAP). This was an offence type linked with a quarter of shoplifting suspects (25%, 13 suspects) with 38 VAP offences. Of these, 3 were suspects of violence with injury offences (the higher harm category of VAP offences, after homicide).

The shoplifting suspect cohort were also linked with 16 burglary offences, and 12 public order offences. 15% of shoplifting suspects were linked with public order offences (8 suspects), and 13% were linked with burglary offences (7 suspects).

Other offence types in East Cambridgeshire linked with the shoplifting suspect cohort included arson & criminal damage, miscellaneous crimes against society, drug offences, robbery, theft, possession of weapons offences, and sexual offences.

It should be noted that this is only inclusive of crimes that had been geocoded to East Cambridgeshire, and so further crimes could be linked with these suspects in other areas.

5. 2025 so far

Table 7 below shows the current state of shoplifting offences between January and October 2025. The top six wards from Table 2 continue to be in the top six in Table 7.

As of the end of October 2025 (83% of calendar year), Burwell, Littleport, and Ely East are at 57%, 63%, and 70% respectively of last year's respective shoplifting offences. However, Fordham & Isleham and Ely West are at 100% and 96% respectively of last year's respective shoplifting offences with two more months to go in the calendar year, and this is concerning.

Table 7: Number of shoplifting offences in East Cambridgeshire wards, January to December 2024 and January to October 2025

Ward	2024 Count	2024 % of total	2024 Rank	% change 2021-2024	% change 2023-2024	Up to Oct 2025 Count	2025 % of total	2025 Rank	% 2025 count divided by 2024 count
Littleport	172	42%	1	330%	32%	109	38%	1	63%
Ely East	119	29%	2	116%	8%	83	29%	2	70%
Ely West	48	12%	3	55%	23%	46	16%	3	96%
Burwell	23	6%	4	15%	28%	13	5%	5	57%
Fordham & Isleham	15	4%	5	-56%	36%	15	5%	4	100%
Soham South	15	4%	5	200%	15%	12	4%	6	80%
Bottisham	6	1%	7	N/A	N/A	<5	<2%	N/A	N/A
Soham North	6	1%	7	-25%	-14%	<5	<2%	N/A	N/A
Sutton	6	1%	7	N/A	N/A	<5	<2%	N/A	N/A
Ely North	<5	<1%	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	0%	11	N/A
Woodditton	<5	<1%	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	0%	11	N/A
Downham Villages	0	0%	12	-100%	N/A	0	0%	11	N/A
Haddenham	0	0%	12	N/A	N/A	0	0%	11	N/A
Stretham	0	0%	12	N/A	N/A	<5	<2%	N/A	N/A
Total	412	100%	N/A	81%	24%	288	100%	N/A	70%

Note: Chart produced by Cambridgeshire County Council Policy and Insight Team, using data provided by Cambridgeshire Constabulary. Darker shades of pink-red indicate higher percentage changes; orange shades indicate a top 5 ranking for shoplifting offences; grey shades indicate counts under 5 that have been suppressed.

6. Glossary

Term/abbreviation	Definition
CCC	Cambridgeshire County Council
CSP	Community Safety Partnership
IMD	Indices of Multiple Deprivation
LSOA	Lower layer Super Output Areas
MHCLG	Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

Term/abbreviation	Definition
MO	Modus operandi
ONS	Office for National Statistics
PIT (or CCC PIT)	Policy and Insight Team (part of Cambridgeshire County Council)
PSG	Problem Solving Group
YE	Year ending
YJS	Youth Justice Service

Appendix A: Technical Notes

6.1. Suspect analysis methodology

Suspects residing in East Cambridgeshire

This analysis for suspect demographics was completed on suspect records for shoplifting offences which had a recorded date between 1st January 2024 and 31st December 2024. Suspects homes were matched to a district using easting and northing information where available. Of the 3256 suspect records recorded in 2024 provided by the police, 58% (1888 records) had eastings and northings. A further 794 records could not be geocoded to any district. In total 66% of suspect records could not be geocoded to a district; this includes both those with missing geographic information, as well as those for which the suspects home address was outside of Cambridgeshire.

96 records in total were geocoded to East Cambridgeshire, covering 93 crimes.

Individuals can be associated with multiple records, and so the latest record was used for each suspect for demographic analysis. This reduced the number of records to 37 for the demographic analysis. A further 4 records were removed due to an incident description which was inconsistent with a shoplifting offence. This left a total of 33 suspect records for the demographic analysis.

Suspects linked to shoplifting offences in East Cambridgeshire

Suspect records can be linked with crimes via a common incident number. Suspects can be linked to multiple incident numbers, and incident numbers can be linked to multiple suspects.

2286 suspect records were linked to an offence that had taken place in East Cambridgeshire. 185 of these were linked to a shoplifting offence.

An analysis of offences linked with multiple suspects found an offence linked with 5 suspects. An investigation of the offence description indicated that this was not associated with a shoplifting offence, and so suspect records linked to that crime were excluded from the analysis. This deducted all 5 suspects from the analysis.

As individuals can be associated with multiple records, the latest record was used for each suspect for demographic analysis. This left a total of 53 suspects.

Appendix B: IMD Tables

For Table 8 and Table 9 below, the wards of Littleport, Ely East, and Ely West are highlighted. These wards have had the highest annual count of shoplifting offences since 2022.

Table 8: Overall IMD 2025 Decile for Wards LSOAs in East Cambridgeshire

LSOA (2021) name	LSOA Local Name	Ward	2025 Decile (1 is more deprived and 10 is less deprived)
East Cambridgeshire 001F	Littleport Youth and Community Centre	Littleport	3
East Cambridgeshire 003G	High Barns	Ely East	4
East Cambridgeshire 005E	Wilburton	Stretham	4
East Cambridgeshire 007D	Isleham Cemetery	Fordham & Isleham	5
East Cambridgeshire 005A	Hill Row to Haddenham High Street	Haddenham	5
East Cambridgeshire 001A	Littleport Village Hall	Littleport	5
East Cambridgeshire 001C	Littleport Station	Littleport	5
East Cambridgeshire 006F	Soham High Street	Soham South	5
East Cambridgeshire 002E	Sutton Community Fire & Rescue Station	Sutton	5
East Cambridgeshire 008D	Burwell Cemetery	Burwell	6
East Cambridgeshire 004A	Queen Adelaide and Prickwillow	Ely North	6
East Cambridgeshire 003E	West Fen Road to Fieldside	Ely West	6
East Cambridgeshire 007B	Fordham South, Chippenham and Kennett	Fordham & Isleham	6
East Cambridgeshire 001D	Wisbech Road	Littleport	6

LSOA (2021) name	LSOA Local Name	Ward	2025 Decile (1 is more deprived and 10 is less deprived)
East Cambridgeshire 006A	Townsend Road	Soham North	6
East Cambridgeshire 006D	Staploe Medical Centre	Soham South	6
East Cambridgeshire 002C	Mepal & Witcham	Sutton	6
East Cambridgeshire 011A	Cheveley, Ashley High Street and Kirtling	Woodditton	6
East Cambridgeshire 009C	Swaffham Prior Village Hall	Bottisham	7
East Cambridgeshire 002B	Main Street	Downham Villages	7
East Cambridgeshire 002A	Pymoor and Coveney	Downham Villages	7
East Cambridgeshire 004B	Ely City Centre	Ely East	7
East Cambridgeshire 001G	Woodfen Road	Littleport	7
East Cambridgeshire 001B	Ely Road	Littleport	7
East Cambridgeshire 006C	Upware and Wicken	Soham South	7
East Cambridgeshire 006E	Fordham Road	Soham South	7
East Cambridgeshire 005F	Little Thetford & Stretham	Stretham	7
East Cambridgeshire 005D	Main Street to Common Road	Stretham	7
East Cambridgeshire 011C	Dullingham, Strechworth and Woodditton	Woodditton	7
East Cambridgeshire 009A	Anglesey Abbey National Trust to Brinkley	Bottisham	8
East Cambridgeshire 009B	Bottisham Centre	Bottisham	8

LSOA (2021) name	LSOA Local Name	Ward	2025 Decile (1 is more deprived and 10 is less deprived)
East Cambridgeshire 003I	Ely Cemetery	Ely East	8
East Cambridgeshire 007A	Fordham North	Fordham & Isleham	8
East Cambridgeshire 005B	Station Road to Aldreth High Street	Haddenham	8
East Cambridgeshire 006H	Northfield Road to Hall Street	Soham North	8
East Cambridgeshire 006G	Broad Piece	Soham North	8
East Cambridgeshire 005C	Wentworth	Stretham	8
East Cambridgeshire 008A	Burwell High Street and Weirs Drove	Burwell	9
East Cambridgeshire 008B	The Causeway to Mill Lane	Burwell	9
East Cambridgeshire 004C	Ely Station and Stuntney	Ely East	9
East Cambridgeshire 004H	Witchford Services	Ely West	9
East Cambridgeshire 007C	Isleham North	Fordham & Isleham	9
East Cambridgeshire 002D	Sutton High Street	Sutton	9
East Cambridgeshire 008C	North Street	Burwell	10
East Cambridgeshire 003A	Chettisham and Princess of Wales Hospital	Ely North	10
East Cambridgeshire 003H	Longchamp Drive to Allen Road	Ely North	10
East Cambridgeshire 003F	Cam Drive	Ely North	10
East Cambridgeshire 004F	Beresford Road	Ely West	10

LSOA (2021) name	LSOA Local Name	Ward	2025 Decile (1 is more deprived and 10 is less deprived)
East Cambridgeshire 003D	Ely Fire Station	Ely West	10
East Cambridgeshire 011D	B1063 from Newmarket to Ashley	Woodditton	10
East Cambridgeshire 011B	Ditton Lodge Primary School	Woodditton	10

Table 9: IMD 2025 and IMD 2026 Income Domain Decile for LSOAs within wards in East Cambridgeshire

LSOA (2021) name	LSOA Local Name	Ward	2025 Decile (1 is more deprived and 10 is less deprived)	2019 Decile (1 is more deprived and 10 is less deprived)	Change
East Cambridgeshire 001F	Littleport Youth and Community Center	Littleport	3	4	-1
East Cambridgeshire 003G	High Barns	Ely East	3	4	-1
East Cambridgeshire 008D	Burwell Cemetery	Burwell	4	5	-1
East Cambridgeshire 001A	Littleport Village Hall	Littleport	4	6	-2
East Cambridgeshire 003E	West Fen Road to Fieldside	Ely West	5	4	1
East Cambridgeshire 007D	Isleham Cemetery	Fordham & Isleham	5	4	1
East Cambridgeshire 006E	Fordham Road	Soham South	5	5	0
East Cambridgeshire 002E	Sutton Community Fire & Rescue Station	Sutton	5	6	-1
East Cambridgeshire 005E	Wilburton	Stretham	5	6	-1
East Cambridgeshire 006F	Soham High Street	Soham South	5	6	-1

LSOA (2021) name	LSOA Local Name	Ward	2025 Decile (1 is more deprived and 10 is less deprived)	2019 Decile (1 is more deprived and 10 is less deprived)	Change
East Cambridgeshire 007B	Fordham South, Chippenham and Kennett	Fordham & Isleham	5	7	-2
East Cambridgeshire 001G	Woodfen Road	Littleport	6	4	2
East Cambridgeshire 001C	Littleport Station	Littleport	6	6	0
East Cambridgeshire 002B	Main Street	Downham Villages	6	7	-1
East Cambridgeshire 004A	Queen Adelaide and Prickwillow	Ely North	6	7	-1
East Cambridgeshire 004B	Ely City Centre	Ely East	6	7	-1
East Cambridgeshire 005D	Main Street to Common Road	Stretham	6	7	-1
East Cambridgeshire 006D	Staploe Medical Centre	Soham South	6	7	-1
East Cambridgeshire 003I	Ely Cemetery	Ely East	6	8	-2
East Cambridgeshire 005C	Wentworth	Stretham	6	9	-3
East Cambridgeshire 001D	Wisbech Road	Littleport	7	6	1
East Cambridgeshire 005A	Hill Row to Haddenham High Street	Haddenham	7	6	1
East Cambridgeshire 006C	Upware and Wicken	Soham South	7	6	1
East Cambridgeshire 011A	Cheveley, Ashley High Street and Kirtling	Woodditton	7	6	1
East Cambridgeshire 001B	Ely Road	Littleport	7	7	0
East Cambridgeshire 006A	Townsend Road	Soham North	7	7	0

LSOA (2021) name	LSOA Local Name	Ward	2025 Decile (1 is more deprived and 10 is less deprived)	2019 Decile (1 is more deprived and 10 is less deprived)	Change
East Cambridgeshire 006G	Broad Piece	Soham North	7	7	0
East Cambridgeshire 009C	Swaffham Prior Village Hall	Bottisham	7	7	0
East Cambridgeshire 006H	Northfield Road to Hall Street	Soham North	7	8	-1
East Cambridgeshire 007A	Fordham North	Fordham & Isleham	7	9	-2
East Cambridgeshire 004H	Witchford Services	Ely West	7	N/A	N/A
East Cambridgeshire 002C	Mepal & Witcham	Sutton	8	7	1
East Cambridgeshire 009B	Bottisham Centre	Bottisham	8	7	1
East Cambridgeshire 003H	Longchamp Drive to Allen Road	Ely North	8	8	0
East Cambridgeshire 005F	Little Thetford & Stretham	Stretham	8	8	0
East Cambridgeshire 008B	The Causeway to Mill Lane	Burwell	8	8	0
East Cambridgeshire 003A	Chettisham and Princess of Wales Hospital	Ely North	8	9	-1
East Cambridgeshire 005B	Station Road to Aldreth High Street	Haddenham	8	9	-1
East Cambridgeshire 011C	Dullingham, Strechworth and Woodditon	Woodditon	8	9	-1
East Cambridgeshire 003F	Cam Drive	Ely North	8	10	-2
East Cambridgeshire 002A	Pymoor and Coveney	Downham Villages	9	8	1
East Cambridgeshire 003D	Ely Fire Station	Ely West	9	8	1

LSOA (2021) name	LSOA Local Name	Ward	2025 Decile (1 is more deprived and 10 is less deprived)	2019 Decile (1 is more deprived and 10 is less deprived)	Change
East Cambridgeshire 009A	Anglesey Abbey National Trust to Brinkley	Bottisham	9	8	1
East Cambridgeshire 004C	Ely Station and Stuntney	Ely East	9	9	0
East Cambridgeshire 008A	Burwell High Street and Weirs Drove	Burwell	9	9	0
East Cambridgeshire 007C	Isleham North	Fordham & Isleham	9	10	-1
East Cambridgeshire 008C	North Street	Burwell	10	9	1
East Cambridgeshire 002D	Sutton High Street	Sutton	10	10	0
East Cambridgeshire 004F	Beresford Road	Ely West	10	10	0
East Cambridgeshire 011B	Ditton Lodge Primary School	Woodditton	10	10	0
East Cambridgeshire 011D	B1063 from Newmarket to Ashley	Woodditton	10	10	0

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