East Cambridgeshire
District Council

Council

16 July 2026

Agenda
Minutes and Recommendations

GUIDANCE NOTES FOR VISITORS TO THE GRANGE

Parking
Limited visitor parking is available during the daytime at the access area to The Grange, for people making short visits on Council business of up to 30 minutes. Ample free public car parking is available nearby for longer visits and location plans can be forwarded on request. On-site car parking is available for evening meetings after 5.00pm.

Access and Security
If you are visiting The Grange during normal office hours you should report to the main reception desk, where you will be asked to fill in a visitor's pass that must be worn at all times whilst you are in the building. Please remember to return your pass before you leave.
This will not apply if you come to an evening meeting: in this case you will enter via the rear access doors in the glass atrium at the back of the building and a Facilities Assistant will direct you to the room in which the meeting will take place.

Emergencies
In the event of a fire or any other emergency during the day, you will hear a continuous alarm. The designated officer or their deputy as set out in the displayed plans for each floor will take charge of any evacuation and try to ensure that no one is left within the areas for which they are responsible.
You should leave the building by the nearest available exit and go to the assembly point near to the exit barrier in the front car park. **Do not** use the lifts, and **do not** re-enter the building until someone advises that it is safe for you to do so.
If you discover a fire immediately operate the nearest fire alarm call point, inform reception or another member of staff, leave the building and go to the assembly point.
In the event of a fire or another emergency during an evening meeting, a member of staff will direct you to the nearest available exit.

First Aid
If someone feels unwell or needs first aid, please let a member of staff know.

Access for People with Disabilities
The Council Chamber and majority of Committee rooms are accessible to wheelchair users via the lift. There are specially adapted toilets on the ground floor (in main reception) and on the first floor of the building.
In the event of a fire or another emergency, wheelchair users will be guided to an area near to an exit to await the arrival of the emergency services.

Toilets
Public toilets are on the ground floor in the main reception area.
If you are visiting The Grange for an evening meeting, the toilets in close proximity to the Chamber and Committee rooms are all clearly signposted.

Smoking
The Council operates a NO SMOKING policy in all its office buildings, including the car park to The Grange.

East Cambridgeshire District Council

NOTICE OF MEETING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a Meeting of the **EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL** will be held on **THURSDAY 16 JULY 2026** in the **COUNCIL CHAMBER** at **THE GRANGE, NUTHOLT LANE, ELY, CB7 4EE,** commencing at **6:00pm** with up to 15 minutes of Public Question Time, immediately followed by the formal business, and you are summoned to attend for the transaction of the following business

AGENDA

1. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME **[oral]**

The meeting will commence with up to 15 minutes Public Question Time (PQT) – questions/statements can be submitted in advance or placed in the PQT box in the Council Chamber prior to the commencement of the meeting – see Notes below for further information on the PQT scheme.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE **[oral]**

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST **[oral]**

To receive declarations of interest from Members for any items on the Agenda in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct.

4. MINUTES & EXEMPT MINUTES – 21 MAY 2026 **Page 5**

To confirm as a correct record.

5. CHAIR’S ANNOUNCEMENTS **[oral]**

6. TO RECEIVE PETITION(S) **[oral]**

7. NOTICE OF MOTIONS UNDER PROCEDURE RULE 10 **[oral]**

a) <u>Social and Affordable Housing</u>

This Council believes that all residents living in social and affordable housing deserve safe, responsive and high-quality housing services, regardless of their landlord.

Council recognises the important role played by housing associations and community land trusts in meeting local housing need across East Cambridgeshire, values strong partnership working with these organisations, and acknowledges the positive contribution made by community-led housing groups across the district.

32 registered providers own housing in East Cambridgeshire, representing 6,524 homes, both general needs and supported living. Sanctuary Housing is by far the biggest provider, owning 4,260 (65%) of these homes, representing around 10% of the entire housing stock in the district. The next largest provider is CHS (Cambridge Housing Society) Group with 554 homes. Flagship Housing owns 231 homes, Clarion 208, and Accent Group 137, with the remaining smaller providers owning around 100 homes or less.

Council is concerned that inconsistent service levels experienced by some housing association tenants may disproportionately affect older and vulnerable residents and recognises the importance of ensuring that all tenants are able to access responsive services and have their voices heard. Whilst the larger providers are subject to regulatory judgement, this does not provide sufficient transparency or granularity about performance at a local level.

Council resolves, with the aim of improving transparency, accountability and outcomes for tenants across the district, to:

1. Request Officers to work with housing associations above an agreed stock threshold within the district to establish a simple six-monthly performance reporting framework covering key housing management and maintenance measures.
2. Refer this reporting to the Operational Services Committee for regular review, enabling Councillors to monitor trends, identify good practice and understand where improvement may be required.
3. Invite representatives of housing associations to attend meetings with the Council to discuss performance, challenges and improvement activity where appropriate.
4. Request Officers to explore options to strengthen tenant engagement and improve understanding of tenant experience, particularly amongst vulnerable residents and those less likely to raise concerns directly.

PROPOSER: Cllr Lee Denney

SECONDER: Cllr Anna Bailey

8. TO ANSWER QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS [oral]

9. SCHEDULE OF ITEMS RECOMMENDED FROM COMMITTEES AND OTHER MEMBER BODIES:

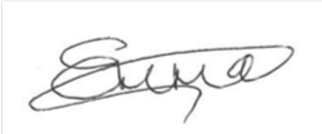
- **Finance & Assets Committee – 25 June 2026** **Page 29**
  Treasury Operations Annual Performance Review

10. CORPORATE PLAN Page 51

11. LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION - ESTABLISHMENT OF VOLUNTARY JOINT COMMITTEE Page 55

12. CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND PETERBOROUGH COMBINED AUTHORITY UPDATE REPORT Page 59

June 2026



E GRIMA
Chief Executive

To: All Members of the Council

NOTES:

Members of the public are welcome to attend this meeting. Admission is on a "first come, first served" basis, and public access will open 30 minutes before the start time of the meeting. Due to room capacity restrictions, members of the public are asked, where possible, to notify Democratic Services (democratic.services@eastcambs.gov.uk or 01353 665555) of their intention to attend the meeting.

The meeting will be webcast, and a live stream will be available. Further details can be found at https://eastcambs.gov.uk/node/3470. Please be aware that all attendees, including those in the public gallery, will be visible on the live stream.

Public Questions/Statements are welcome on any topic related to the Council's functions, provided there is no suspicion of impropriety (e.g. offensive, slanderous, or likely to lead to the disclosure of Exempt or Confidential information). Up to 15 minutes are allocated to this at the start of the meeting. Further details about the Public Question Time scheme are available at: https://www.eastcambs.gov.uk/committees/public-question-time-scheme

The Council has adopted a 'Purge on Plastics' strategy and is working towards the removal of all consumer single-use plastics from our workplace. Therefore, we do not provide disposable cups at our meetings and ask members of the public to bring their own drinks to the meeting, if required.

Fire instructions for the meeting: The instructions in the event of a fire at the venue will be announced at the start of the meeting.

Reports are attached for each agenda item unless marked "oral".

If required, all items on the agenda can be provided in different formats (e.g. large type, Braille or audio tape, or translated into other languages), on request, by calling Main Reception on (01353) 665555 or e-mail: translate@eastcambs.gov.uk

If the Committee wishes to exclude the public and the press from the meeting, a resolution in the following terms will need to be adopted:

"That the press and public be excluded during the consideration of the remaining item no(s). X because it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present during the item(s) there would be disclosure to them of exempt information of Category X of Part I Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended)."

East Cambridgeshire District Council

Minutes of a Meeting of East Cambridgeshire District Council
held at The Grange, Nutholt Lane, Ely, CB7 4EE
on Thursday 21 May 2026 at 6.00 pm

Present

Councillor Chika Akinwale
Councillor Christine Ambrose Smith
Councillor Anna Bailey
Councillor Ian Bovingdon
Councillor David Brown
Councillor Charlotte Cane
Councillor Christine Colbert
Councillor Lee Denney
Councillor Lorna Dupré
Councillor Lavinia Edwards
Councillor Mark Goldsack
Councillor Martin Goodearl
Councillor Kathrin Holtzmann
Councillor Keith Horgan (Vice Chair)
Councillor Julia Huffer
Councillor Bill Hunt
Councillor Mark Inskip
Councillor James Lay
Councillor David Miller
Councillor Kelli Pettitt (Chair)
Councillor Alan Sharp
Councillor John Trapp
Councillor Ross Trent
Councillor Lucius Vellacott
Councillor Mary Wade
Councillor Alison Whelan
Councillor Christine Whelan
Councillor Gareth Wilson

Prior to the commencement of the meeting, Prayers were led by Reverend Eleanor Whalley from Soham Parish Church.

A minute's silence was observed as a mark of respect following the deaths of former Councillor Allen Alderson, District Councillor for the Swaffhams Ward from 2004 to 2019, and former Councillor Brian Hayes, District Councillor for the Littleport Ward from 1999 to 2003.

Cllr Anna Bailey paid tribute to former Councillor Allen Alderson, stating that he was a true working-class Tory who had served on many committees and working parties, including the Section 106 Working Party, which he had chaired. He had been very supportive to new councillors and she would miss his phone calls on the local issues of the day. She thanked him for his service and expressed her sincere condolences to his family and friends.

Cllr Charlotte Cane paid tribute to former Councillor Brian Hayes, who was an old-style Member, who did his best for his community and was a pleasure to work with on cross party issues. She was sorry to hear of his passing and gave her best wishes to his family and friends. Cllr Cane explained that she knew Allen Alderson well, as he was the former member for the Swaffhams Ward and was well known in the local area. She often saw him looking for evidence of fly-tipping and talking with local people. She shared his primary concern of delivering affordable housing to younger people. He was an assiduous attender of parish council meetings, where he would listen to concerns and report these to the district council. Many in the Swaffhams would miss him and her thoughts were with his family and friends.

Cllr Christine Ambrose Smith paid tribute to former Councillor Brian Hayes, who had been an Independent Member for Littleport. He would scrutinise agendas closely, ask serious questions and then reach his own conclusions. He had moved to Littleport from Lincolnshire in the 1980s and became heavily involved in community work, through the Rotary Club and the wool trade charity, which he represented for 30 years. He had died at home, surrounded by his family and Cllr Ambrose Smith had attended his funeral a week ago.

Cllr Alan Sharp paid tribute to former Councillor Allen Alderson, who was dedicated to the villages he represented and their residents. He had fond memories of chance meetings with Allen that would turn into long discussions on the local and national issues of the day. His thoughts were with Allen’s family at this sad time.

1. Public Question Time

There were no public questions.

2. Election of Chair 2026/27

Cllr Kelli Pettitt was nominated as Council Chair by Cllr Anna Bailey and seconded by Cllr Julia Huffer. A vote was taken and Council unanimously agreed

to resolve:

That Cllr Kelli Pettitt be elected as Chair of East Cambridgeshire District Council for the municipal year 2026/27.

Cllr Pettitt then read aloud, and signed, the Declaration of Acceptance of Office for Chair of Council.

3. Apologies for Absence

No apologies for absence were received.

4. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Charlotte Cane declared an interest in motion 9a and the amended motion 9b as the local MP. She took no part in the debates and did not vote.

5. Minutes – 24 February 2026

It was resolved unanimously:

DRAFT

That the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 24 February 2026 be agreed as a correct record, subject to the following amendment:
The end of the penultimate sentence of the second paragraph on page 14 to read: "… affordable housing was being delivered, including an opportunity in the next phase of the Haddenham Land Trust."

6. Election of Vice-Chair 2026/27

Cllr Keith Horgan was nominated as Council Vice-Chair by Cllr Anna Bailey and seconded by Cllr Julia Huffer. A vote was taken and Council unanimously agreed

to resolve:

That Cllr Keith Horgan be elected as Vice Chair of East Cambridgeshire District Council for the municipal year 2026/27.

Cllr Keith Horgan then read aloud, and signed, the Declaration of Acceptance of Office for Vice Chair of Council.

7. Chair's Announcements

The Chair announced that the Knife Angel, made from 100,000 knives confiscated by Police, was on display on Palace Green in Ely until 17 June and she urged Members to go and see it.

8. Petitions

No petitions had been received.

9. Notice of Motions Under Procedure Rule 10

(i) Future of the A10

Cllr Lorna Dupré suggested that Cllr Anna Bailey had an interest in the motion, as it proposed that the Leader should write to the Mayor of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and Cllr Bailey was both the Leader of the Council and the Deputy Mayor. Following a brief adjournment, Cllr Lucius Vellacott announced that the motion would be amended to request that the Chief Executive would write to the Chief Executive of the Combined Authority. Cllr Lucius Vellacott proposed, and Cllr Lee Denney seconded the following motion.

East Cambridgeshire District Council, hereinafter referred to as 'the Council', notes that:

- The A10 corridor between Ely and Cambridge is a strategically important route for commuters, freight, agricultural traffic and local communities across East Cambridgeshire and the wider region

DRAFT

- The road currently carries more than 18,000 vehicles per day and remains largely single carriageway, resulting in congestion, delays, safety concerns and reduced reliability for residents and businesses
- The need to upgrade the A10 corridor has been recognised for decades, with studies dating back to the 1970s examining options to increase capacity and improve connectivity between Ely and Cambridge
- More recently, Cambridgeshire County Council undertook extensive option development work considering highway capacity improvements, junction upgrades, modal shift, and active travel measures, the outcome of which was a recommendation for full dualling of the corridor with a parallel active travel route
- This work was subsequently taken forward by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA), culminating in a Strategic Outline Business Case in 2020, which proposed a range of primarily road-based improvement options, including online and offline dualling of the A10, with associated cycling and walking infrastructure
- Public engagement undertaken in 2020 demonstrated strong local interest in addressing congestion and improving connectivity along the corridor
- The A10 corridor is critical to supporting planned growth across the region, including up to 17,000 new homes and 14,000 new jobs, and is essential to maintaining the economic vitality of East Cambridgeshire and neighbouring areas
- The importance of the A10 upgrade is recognised by Homes England, which is planning a further study of the route through the Strategic Place Partnership, with work having begun in January 2026.

The Council believes that:

- Full dualling of the A10 between Ely and Cambridge is the most effective long-term solution to address congestion, improve safety, and provide the capacity required to support the sustainable growth of the region
- Failure to progress the scheme risks constraining economic development, worsening congestion for residents and businesses and undermining confidence in the delivery of essential regional infrastructure
- Given the public funds spent over decades, the years of technical work already undertaken and the clear strategic importance of the route, the A10 dualling project must remain a priority within regional transport planning.

Therefore, the Council resolves to:

- Reaffirm its strong support for the full dualling of the A10 between Ely and Cambridge, including provision for high-quality active travel infrastructure
- Instruct the Chief Executive of the Council to write to the Chief Executive of the CPCA requesting that the A10 dualling scheme

remains a strategic transport priority and that work to progress the project continues without delay

- Instruct the Chief Executive of the Council to request that the CPCA provide clarity on the programme for further development work, including the study by the Strategic Place Partnership and the pathway towards delivery of the scheme
- Instruct the Director (Community) to share this motion with neighbouring local authorities, Members of Parliament representing communities along the A10 corridor, and relevant regional stakeholders, in order to invite them to demonstrate their support for progressing the scheme on a cross-area basis

Cllr Alison Whelan proposed and Cllr Lorna Dupré seconded the following amendments:

Future of the A10

East Cambridgeshire District Council, hereinafter referred to as 'the Council', notes
that:

- The A10 corridor between Ely and Cambridge is a strategically important route for commuters, freight, agricultural traffic and local communities across East Cambridgeshire and the wider region

- The road currently carries more than 18,000 vehicles per day and remains largely single carriageway, resulting in congestion, delays, safety concerns and reduced reliability for residents and businesses

- The need to upgrade the A10 corridor has been recognised for decades ~~with studies dating back to the 1970s examining options to increase capacity and improve connectivity between Ely and Cambridge~~

- More recently, Cambridgeshire County Council undertook extensive option development work considering highway capacity improvements, junction upgrades, modal shift, and active travel measures, ~~the outcome of which was a recommendation for full dualling of the corridor with a parallel active travel route~~ **which helped inform later proposals for a range of interventions including junction improvements, dualling options and associated active travel measures**

- This work was subsequently taken forward by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA), culminating in a Strategic Outline Business Case in 2020, which proposed a range of primarily road-based improvement options, including online and offline dualling of the A10, with associated cycling and walking infrastructure

- Public engagement undertaken in 2020 demonstrated strong local interest in addressing congestion and improving connectivity along the corridor**, while also highlighting concerns around environmental impact, deliverability and the need for sustainable transport improvements**

- The A10 corridor is critical to supporting planned growth across the region, including up to 17,000 new homes and 14,000 new jobs, and is essential to maintaining the economic vitality of East Cambridgeshire and neighbouring areas

- The importance of the A10 upgrade is recognised by Homes England, which is planning a further study of the route through the Strategic Place Partnership, with work having begun in January 2026.

- **The Council further notes that the Government has indicated that the scheme is not currently a national funding priority, making it difficult to secure funding for full corridor dualling in the near term**

- **The Council further notes that proposed Local Government Reorganisation may result in the southern and northern sections of the route falling under different successor authorities, which could complicate the governance, prioritisation and delivery of any major corridor-wide scheme**

The Council believes that:

- ~~Full dualling of the A10~~ **Improving the A10 by dualling and other measures** between Ely and Cambridge is the most effective long-term solution to address congestion, improve safety, and provide the capacity required to support the sustainable growth of the region

- Failure to progress the ~~scheme~~ **improvements to the corridor** risks constraining economic development, worsening congestion for residents and businesses and undermining confidence in the delivery of essential regional infrastructure

- Given the public funds spent over decades, the years of technical work already undertaken and the clear strategic importance of the route, the A10 ~~dualling project~~ **corridor programme** must remain a priority within regional transport planning.

- **The Council believes that, while partial or full dualling may still form part of the longer-term solution, it may not be achievable in the near future given current funding constraints, delivery uncertainty and wider governance changes**

- **The Council further believes that a phased approach, beginning with urgent junction improvements, safety works, active travel provision and other targeted interventions, is the most responsible and deliverable way to secure progress now while keeping open the option of further capacity enhancements in future**

Therefore, the Council resolves to:

- Reaffirm its strong support for **urgent improvements to the A10 corridor, including** the full dualling of **and other improvements to** the

A10 between Ely and Cambridge, including provision for high-quality active travel infrastructure**, acknowledging the urgent need for deliverable improvements, particularly junction and safety interventions continue without delay**

- Instruct the Chief Executive to write to the Chief Executive of the CPCA requesting that the A10 ~~dualling~~ **improvement** scheme remains a strategic transport priority and that work to progress the project continues without delay
- Instruct the Chief Executive of the Council to request that the CPCA provide clarity on the programme for further development work, including the study by the Strategic Place Partnership and the pathway towards delivery of the scheme
- Instruct the Director (Community) to share this motion with neighbouring local authorities, Members of Parliament representing communities along the A10 corridor, and relevant regional stakeholders, in order to invite them to demonstrate their support for progressing the scheme on a cross-area basis

Cllr Christine Whelan explained that the A10 was of crucial importance to residents as it linked Ely and the surrounding villages to Cambridge. The amendment recognised that dualling of the road would be more difficult in some areas due to the farmland and wildlife it would affect. The proposed amendment recommended improvements where it was most needed and a phased approach, which was more realistic and achievable than the current substantive motion.

Cllr Anna Bailey opposed the motion, as it appeared to accept that dualling could not be delivered. She urged Council to reject the amendment and to unite behind the original motion which argued for meaningful, substantial improvements to the A10.

Cllr Lee Denney stated that the A10 was currently taking 18,000 cars a day and was in dire need of improvements. He understood concerns regarding farmland and biodiversity but considered that all infrastructure improvements could be opposed on those grounds. The proposed dualling would take time to be delivered but this was no reason to oppose it. He hoped that Council would reject the amendment.

Cllr Mark Inskip explained that as a commuter to Cambridge he used the A10 several times a week. He argued that improvements were needed now, and he feared that the motion as it stood could take up to twenty years to be implemented.

Cllr John Trapp asserted that there were a number of pinch points along the A10, particularly the busy roundabouts where the A10 crossed other A roads, that needed to be improved. He did not think that simply dualling the road was the most effective solution.

Cllr Lorna Dupré stated that all councillors agreed that the A10 between Milton and Ely needed to be improved, but fully dualling the road would take many years. It was also possible that the road would be divided into two unitary authorities after the Local Government Review had concluded. Dualling was the most expensive option and the Government expected 15% of any scheme to be funded locally. The purpose of the amendment was to urge for action now and not in many years' time.

Cllr Lucius Vellacott urged Council to reject the amendment, as the motion should be ambitious in what it was asking the Government to do. There was no reason why remedial works could not be carried out alongside the dualling of the A10.

A vote was taken and with 12 votes in favour and 15 votes against, the amendment was rejected.

Cllr Anna Bailey stated that more traffic could not continue to be added to the A10 without major improvements, but more development along the A10 was inevitable, with the new town at Waterbeach and 77,000 homes in the Greater Cambridge Local Plan. She would prefer improvements to continue from Ely to Kings Lynn but this was not realistic. She reported that the Mayor of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough had met with the Minister, who had recognised that the cost of dualling the A10 could not be met locally. She urged Council to unite and support the motion and ask our MP to champion this improvement.

Cllr Martin Goodearl fully supported the motion, which would improve transport between the two great cities of Ely and Cambridge.

Cllr Alan Sharp reported that he had been a member of the Highways and Transport Committee which unfortunately had decided not to go ahead with the A10 upgrade. He was pleased to see that the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Transport Committee had allocated Section 106 funds to this project. It was clear that safety standards on the A10 needed to be improved.

Cllr Bill Hunt explained that four villages in his ward relied on the A10 and the route from Little Thetford to Ely was particularly treacherous. Unfortunately, more development had recently been agreed at Stretham, which would only make the problems worse. He supported the motion as improvements to the A10 were sorely needed.

Cllr Lee Denney stated that the A10 was dangerous and dualling was required to rectify this. A business case had been made in 2020 and there had been overwhelming support for dualling the road. Improvements made to the A11 and A47 in Norfolk and the A130 in Essex showed what could be achieved. The President of the Automobile Association had recently explained that the dualling of roads greatly improved both travel times and safety records. He urged Council to support the motion.

DRAFT

Cllr Lucius Vellacott thanked Cllr Denney for the weeks of work he had put into this motion. He hoped that Council would take a principled stand on this matter and approve the motion that called for the full dualling of the A10, which would benefit residents and businesses and so result in an impressive return on the original investment.

Cllr Lucius Vellacott proposed and Cllr Lee Denney seconded the motion. A vote was taken and with 15 votes in favour, 0 votes against and 12 abstentions the motion detailed above was carried.

(ii) High Street Bank Closures and Financial Inclusion in East Cambridgeshire

Cllr Mark Inskip proposed and Cllr Christine Colbert seconded the following motion:

Council notes that:

- There has been a sustained withdrawal of high street banking services across East Cambridgeshire, leaving many communities without access to in-person financial services.
- Recent and historic bank branch closures in the district include:
  - NatWest – Ely (17 Market Street), closed September 2025
  - Barclays – Ely (28 High Street), closed April 2024
  - HSBC – Ely (11 High Street), closed July 2020
  - Barclays – Burwell (High Street), closed 2016
  - Barclays – Littleport (Main Street), closed 2014/15
- These closures mean that many residents and businesses now have no access to a local bank branch and must travel outside the district.
- While the Post Office network provides “everyday banking” services under the current Banking Framework (2026–2030), including withdrawals, deposits, and balance checks, these services are limited in scope and do not replace full banking provision.
- Post Office services do not provide:
  - Dedicated financial advice,
  - In-depth fraud and safeguarding support,
  - Full business banking services,
  - Reliable capacity for larger or more complex transactions (e.g. cash deposit limits and branch constraints).
- Banking hubs, coordinated by LINK, are expanding nationally but:
  - Are currently limited in number,
  - Are primarily triggered by “access to cash” assessments,
  - Require strict criteria such as population thresholds, business density, and absence of any remaining bank branch.

Council further notes that:

- The current regulatory system places significant weight on access to cash, rather than the full range of banking needs, including advice, support, and relationship banking.
- Digital banking is not a universal solution. Many residents are digitally excluded, including:
    - Older people,
    - Residents with disabilities,
    - Those on low incomes,
    - Rural communities with poor broadband or mobile connectivity.

- The impact of closures is compounded in rural areas, where:
    - Public transport is limited,
    - Distances to alternative branches are greater,
    - Physical barriers further restrict access.

- Small and independent businesses rely on in-person banking for:
    - Cash deposits and coin supply,
    - Relationship banking and lending discussions,
    - Day-to-day financial management.

Council believes that:

- Access to in-person banking is a vital component of financial inclusion, not simply a matter of cash access.
- The current national framework underestimates the importance of:
    - Face-to-face advice,
    - Fraud prevention and safeguarding,
    - Support for digitally excluded residents.

- Rural districts such as East Cambridgeshire face structural disadvantages under current banking hub criteria, including population thresholds and reliance on standardised metrics.
- Post Offices play an important role but are not a substitute for full banking services and are themselves under threat.

Council resolves to:

1. Call for Government Action

- Write to HM Government, including the Chancellor of the Exchequer, calling for:
    - A broader definition of banking access beyond “cash access”,
    - Reform of banking hub criteria to include:

        - Digital exclusion,
        - Rurality and transport limitations,
        - Wider service needs such as advice and business banking,

    - Stronger regulatory protections to prevent the loss of the last bank branch in a community.

2. Engage with the Banking Sector

- Write to major banks operating in the UK to:
  - Highlight the cumulative impact of closures in East Cambridgeshire,
  - Request consideration of:
    - Shared banking facilities,
    - Mobile banking services,
    - Increased outreach and community banker provision.

3. Tackle Digital Exclusion Locally

- Expand council and partner initiatives to:
  - Improve digital skills and confidence,
  - Increase access to devices and connectivity,
  - Provide assisted digital support through council facilities such as libraries and community hubs.

4. Support Residents, Local Businesses and Charities

- Work with local business groups to:
  - Assess the economic impact of closures,
  - Identify specific banking needs of SMEs.
- Work with local charities to:
  - Identify specific banking needs of charities,
- Provide clear guidance to residents on available services, including Post Office provision, while acknowledging their limitations.

5. Monitor and Report

- Request a report to Full Council within 6 months setting out:
  - Progress on engagement with Government and banks,
  - Opportunities for banking hubs or alternative provision,
  - Further recommendations to improve financial inclusion.

Cllr Lucius Vellacott proposed and Cllr Anna Bailey seconded the following amended motion:

Council notes that:

- There has been a sustained withdrawal of high street banking services across East Cambridgeshire, leaving communities such as Soham, Littleport and Burwell without access to in-person bank branches, and Ely with reduced access.
- Barclays operates a banking hub from the Lighthouse Centre in Ely on Tuesdays to Fridays, which offers:
  - Power of attorney assistance
  - Fraud and scams advice
  - Payments and transfers
  - Digital banking help
  - Bereavement assistance

DRAFT

    - Money management
- While the Post Office network provides “everyday banking” services under the current Banking Framework (2026–2030), including cash withdrawals, deposits, and balance checks, these services are limited in scope and do not replace full banking provision, such as advice, support and relationship banking, which are particularly needed by small businesses and charities
- Digital banking is not a universal solution. Many residents are at risk of digital exclusion, especially older people, those with disabilities, those on low incomes or those living in rural areas.
- Over the past two years, the Council has delivered a digital inclusion programme aimed at digitally isolated residents, providing them with the skills, confidence, and access to use digital devices and online services safely and effectively.

Council believes that access to in-person banking is a vital component of financial inclusion.

Therefore, Council resolves to:
- Instruct the Leader of the Council to write to our MP to ask what more can be done nationally to support the continuation and improvement of the work carried out by LINK, who assess local need for in-person banking hubs, and Cash Access UK Ltd., who are responsible for providing the current banking hubs, including how access to hubs can be widened to communities that have already lost banking services.
- Continue to support digital inclusion through the Council’s activities and resident advice services.
- Encourage and support community hubs in the district to apply for Connecting Cambridgeshire’s Digital Hub grant scheme
- Request that the Council’s economic development service communicates with local businesses, business groups and charities to assess the impact of closures, and encourage the relevant private sector bodies to continue in-person banking provision in East Cambridgeshire.

Cllr Charlotte Cane declared an interest in this amendment, as it involved writing a letter to her as the local MP. She did not participate in the debate or vote.

Cllr Lucius Vellacott agreed with the principle of the original motion but felt that it was too long and included measures that would waste officer time. He recognised that residents needed the choice to bank in person. He questioned the point of writing to banks, who could freely ignore pleas from the public sector. He supported the proposal to set up banking hubs in the district.

Cllr Mary Wade suggested that the amendment reduced the ambition of the motion, which ran contrary to arguments expressed in the debate on the previous motion.

Cllr Gareth Wilson explained that charities needed to use banks and many of their representatives in the district were required to travel a long distance in order to access this service. Cllr Lucuis Vellacott replied that the amendment made no mention of charities, which he supported.

Cllr John Trapp explained that he opposed the amendment, which appeared to be amending the original motion like an arbitrary censor.

Cllr Martin Goodearl stated that as an organiser of the Poppy Appeal he recognised the challenge that many charities were having due to the closure of banks in the district. These actions were determined by the banks' business cases and only action by parliament could have any impact on it. He therefore supported the amendment.

Cllr Bill Hunt expressed disappointment that the original motion did not include the town of Soham in the list of places affected. Cllr Christine Colbert replied that only those places where a bank had recently closed had been included in the motion. She added that public opinion mattered to banks and so she disagreed with those who thought that liaising with the private sector on matters such as this was pointless.

Cllr Anna Bailey sympathised with charities affected by the closure of local banks. There was a clear movement in the banking sector to close their branches and only legislation could arrest this. She expressed concern about the amount of officer time the motion could take up if it were agreed to, unamended. The Government had a digital inclusion programme and the amended motion complemented this. The amendment also called for the establishment of community hubs, which would make a big difference for residents.

Cllr Mark Inskip declared that he could not support the amendment, which weakened the original motion. The amendment removed the requirement for a six-month update and the action to contact the banks in question. The problem was not just access but also providing safeguards for isolated residents, and the motion covered this, whilst the amendment did not. The amendment also removed references to the lack of rural transport. He urged Council to reject the amendment.

DRAFT

A vote was taken and with 15 votes in favour, 12 against and no abstentions the amendment was carried.

Cllr Lucius Vellacott stated that it was not the Council's responsibility to challenge the banks and he hoped that the amended motion would now be agreed. Cllr Mark Inskip stated that he was disappointed that the amendment had been agreed, which weakened the motion, however he would support it.

A vote was taken and Council unanimously agreed the amended motion.

(iii) Fair Access to Employment for Care-Experienced and Disabled Applicants

Cllr Charlotte Cane proposed and Cllr Alison Whelan seconded the following motion:

Council notes that:

1. Employment is one of the most important routes to independence, dignity and opportunity.
2. Care-experienced people often face significant barriers in education, employment and wider life chances as a result of the disadvantage that can arise from time spent in care.
3. Disabled people also continue to face barriers in recruitment and employment, despite the skills, experience and value they bring to the workplace.
4. A guaranteed interview scheme is a practical and proportionate way to reduce unfair barriers at the first stage of recruitment, while maintaining proper standards.
5. Such a scheme does not guarantee a job offer; it guarantees an interview where an applicant meets the essential criteria for the role.
6. As a local authority, East Cambridgeshire District Council should seek to be a fair, inclusive and exemplary employer.

Council believes that:

1. Recruitment should be fair, open and based on merit.
2. Fairness does not mean pretending that everyone starts from the same position; it means recognising structural disadvantage and ensuring people are not unfairly excluded.
3. A guaranteed interview scheme for care-experienced applicants and disabled applicants who meet the essential criteria for a post is a reasonable and achievable step that supports equality of opportunity without lowering standards.
4. East Cambridgeshire District Council should lead by example in promoting inclusive employment practices across the district.

Council resolves to:

1. Introduce a Guaranteed Interview Scheme for:
    - applicants who declare themselves to be disabled, and

   - applicants who declare themselves to be care-experienced.
2. Ask officers to prepare a report for member consideration, setting out:
   - how such a scheme would operate in practice
   - the proposed definition of care experienced for recruitment purposes
   - how applicants would be able to declare disability or care experience confidentially
   - how the Council would ensure that applicants must still meet the essential criteria for the role
   - any relevant legal, equality, HR and administrative implications
3. That, once developed, the scheme be clearly published on the Council's website, recruitment materials and job advertisements.
4. Encourage the Council also to consider wider steps to support the recruitment, retention and progression of disabled and care-experienced employees.

Cllr Charlotte Cane explained that care leavers and disabled people faced additional challenges when applying for jobs and the Council should recognise this by ensuring that, provided they met the essential criteria, they would be guaranteed an interview where they could try and convince a panel that they were the best candidate for the job. She added that the County Council were looking for care-givers and she urged anyone who was able to, to give a secure home for care leavers to live in.

Cllr Martin Goodearl recognised the heartfelt sincerity of the motion, but he asserted that there were already laws in place to ensure that disabled candidates were not discriminated against in the recruitment process. He believed that the best candidates could already secure positions at the Council, regardless of a disability. He was concerned that what was proposed could discriminate against able-bodied applicants.

Cllr Lucius Vellacott suggested that the challenge was to ensure that disabled and disadvantaged residents received training to equip them with the right skills to apply successfully for jobs. Simply ensuring that they had an interview would not necessarily lead to employment. Cllr Mark Goldsack agreed. He asserted that children who were in care needed to be encouraged to learn skills that employers wanted.

Cllr David Miller stated that he was registered disabled, and he asked whether that would ensure he would get an interview and, if so, whether it should.

Cllr Mary Wade explained that those who had been in care often lacked the emotional support that others received when learning. She disagreed with those who thought that positive discrimination was discriminatory, as this was inflammatory.

Cllr Christine Colbert was surprised by the opposition to a motion that merely ensured that candidates who met the criteria would be guaranteed an interview.

Cllr Lee Denney suggested that the motion could lead to candidates wrongly claiming to be disabled and he wanted to know how this would be monitored. He stated that as a disabled person he opposed positive discrimination as he did not want special treatment and instead wanted to achieve employment on merit alone. Being treated differently because of a disability could distress a candidate. He agreed with those who had already argued that what was required was training to ensure that people developed the right skills to gain employment.

Cllr Julia Huffer stated that many people, who were not care leavers, grew up in challenging circumstances and so it was unfair to provide care leavers with an advantage when applying for jobs.

Cllr Alison Whelan stated that the motion proposed removing barriers to employment for disabled people and care leavers. It would not give them an unfair advantage, as the best candidate would still get the job. She explained that she had met care leavers who had struggled to write a CV or complete an application form and this motion would give them a fair chance to get employment and ensure the Council would get the best person for the job, irrespective of the characteristics that they had.

Cllr Charlotte Cane assured Council that candidates would be under no obligation to declare a disability or that they were a care leaver and only those who met the criteria would be guaranteed an interview. The Local Government Association and the Department of Education recommend that care leavers who meet the criteria should be interviewed. Other authorities, including the County Council, had adopted these measures. It was a real problem, with 40% of care leavers aged 19-21 not in education, employment or training. Only 22% of care leavers aged 27 were in employment, compared to 57% of others and those in employment were earning £6,000 less than average. This was unfair. The purpose of the motion was to allow those who struggled to complete application forms an opportunity to convince an interview panel that they were the best candidate for the job. She asked for a recorded vote.

A recorded vote was taken, and these were cast as follows:

For (13): Cllrs Chika Akinwale, Charlotte Cane, Christine Colbert, Lorna Dupré, Kathrin Holtzmann, Mark Inskip, James Lay, John Trapp, Ross Trent, Mary Wade, Alison Whelan, Christine Whelan and Gareth Wilson.

Against (15): Cllrs Christine Ambrose Smith, Anna Bailey, Ian Bovingdon, David Brown, Lee Denney, Lavinia Edwards, Mark Goldsack, Martin Goodearl, Keith Horgan, Julia Huffer, Bill Hunt, David Miller, Kelli Pettitt, Alan Sharp and Lucius Vellacott.

Abstain (0)

The motion was rejected.

10. To Answer Questions from Members

Question from Cllr Mary Wade to the Chair of Operational Services Committee

“I, along with fellow residents, have received my new bins, which came with clear instructions and spare bags included. The rollout of the new system seems to be a large-scale change programme that is being delivered well. Would you be able to update us on progress and how ready we are for the June kick-off, and you may also welcome the opportunity to thank the team involved and all members of the operational services committee for planning and the work done so far?

What are the advantages of the new approach to waste?”

Response from Cllr Julia Huffer, Chair of Operational Services Committee

“Firstly, thank you for your kind words regarding the project team, and everyone else involved. They have been working tirelessly to ensure the new waste collection service gets off to a good start. This has been a real team effort.

“Yes, we are ready for the 1st of June, we have the vehicles. There are five food collection vehicles which are being test-driven. The crew are busy familiarising themselves with the new rounds and final tweaks are being made to smooth out any anomalies.

“All customers will receive another reminder leaflet regarding the new service next week.

“The advantages of our new approach to waste include:

“More opportunities to recycle more effectively:

- Weekly collection of separated food waste – to produce energy and fertiliser
- Cleaner garden waste, as a result of taking food out of it – enabling cheaper recycling through less treatment
- Collection of excess recycling when placed next to the blue bin – making it easier for residents (don’t forget you can get additional blue and green bins at no extra cost)

“Better collection of rubbish through the provision of wheeled bins:

- Less mess, ripped bags and pests
- Safer for our collection crews

“We will be compliant with the new, national legislation.”

11. Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council, Group Leaders and Deputy Group Leaders

Council considered a report (AB1, previously circulated) containing details of the Leader and Deputy Leader of Council and Group Leaders and Deputies for the forthcoming year.

Council

resolved:

That the names of the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council and the names of the Political Group Leaders and Deputies for the forthcoming municipal year, as detailed in paragraph 3.0 of the Officer's report, be noted.

12. Political Proportionality

Council considered a report (AB2, previously circulated) on the allocation of seats to Political Groups on Committees following formal notification received by the Democratic Services and Elections Manager of a change in the membership of Political Groups.

Cllr Anna Bailey proposed and Cllr Julia Huffer seconded the recommendations in the report. A vote was taken and it was unanimously agreed

to resolve:

That Council

(a) Noted the revised political balance of the Council as follows:
- Conservative and Independent Group: 15
- Liberal Democrat and Independent Group: 13
- Total: 28

(b) Approved the revised sizes of the Committees, Sub-Committee and as detailed in Table 1 of this report and authorises the Monitoring Officer to make the consequential amendments to the Council's Constitution.

(c) Approved the allocation of seats to Political Groups as set out in Table 1 of this report.

13. Membership of Committees and Sub-Committees (including Substitutes) 2026/27

Council considered a report (AB3, previously circulated) which invited Council to consider the appointment of Members and substitutes to Committees and Sub-Committees for 2026/27.

Cllr Anna Bailey proposed and Cllr Julia Huffer seconded the recommendations in the report. A vote was taken and unanimously agreed

A vote was taken and it was unanimously agreed

to resolve that:

a) Council approved the appointment of Lay Member, Stephen Joyce, to the Audit Committee.
b) Council approved the appointment of
    - Two Independent Persons (Gilian Holmes and Stuart Webster)
    - Two Co-Opted Town/Parish Councillor Members (Cllr Rosemary Aitchson, Soham TC/ Vacancy) on the Finance & Assets (Ethical Governance) Sub-Committee
c) Council delegated authority to the Democratic Services and Elections Manager to populate the membership of committees and sub-committees, upon receipt of formal notification from the respective Political Group Leaders as soon as practically possible.

14. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair for all Committees and Sub-Committees 2026/27

Council considered an oral update, recommending the Chairs and Vice-Chairs for the Committees and Sub-Committees of the Council for the municipal year 2026/27.

Finance and Assets Committee Chair
Cllr Anna Bailey nominated and Cllr Julia Huffer seconded Cllr Alan Sharp to the position of Chair of the Finance and Assets Committee. A vote was taken and with 15 votes in favour, 0 against and 6 abstentions

It was resolved to:
Elect Cllr Alan Sharp as Chair of the Finance and Assets Committee.

Finance and Assets Committee Vice-Chair
Cllr Alan Sharp nominated and Cllr Keith Horgan seconded Cllr Mark Goldsack to the position of Vice Chair of the Finance and Assets Committee. Cllr Lorna

Dupré and Christine Whelan proposed Cllr Alison Whelan for the position of Vice Chair of the Finance and Assets Committee. A vote was taken and with Cllr Mark Goldsack receiving 15 votes and Cllr Alison Whelan receiving 13 votes.

It was resolved to:
Elect Cllr Mark Goldsack as Vice Chair of the Finance and Assets Committee.

Operational Services Committee Chair
Cllr Anna Bailey nominated and Cllr Lucius Vellacott seconded Cllr Julia Huffer to the position of Chair of the Operational Services Committee. Cllr Lorna Dupré nominated and Cllr Christine Whelan seconded Cllr Mark Inskip to the position of Chair of the Operational Services Committee. A vote was taken and Cllr Huffer received 15 votes, and Cllr Inskip received 13 votes.

It was resolved to:
Elect Cllr Julia Huffer as the Chair of the Operational Services Committee.

Operational Services Committee Vice-Chair
Cllr Julia Huffer nominated and Cllr Martin Goodearl seconded Cllr Lucius Vellacott to the position of Vice-Chair of the Operational Services Committee. Cllr Lorna Dupré nominated and Cllr Christine Whelan seconded Cllr Mark Inskip to the position of Vice-Chair of the Operational Services Committee. A vote was taken and Cllr Vellacott received 15 votes, and Cllr Inskip received 13 votes.

It was resolved to:
Elect Cllr Lucius Vellacott as the Vice-Chair of the Operational Services Committee.

Audit Committee Chair
Cllr Anna Bailey nominated and Cllr David Brown seconded Cllr Lucius Vellacott to the position of Chair of the Audit Committee. A vote was taken and with 19 votes in favour, 0 votes against and 8 abstentions

It was resolved to:
Elect Cllr Lucius Vellacott as the Chair of the Audit Committee.

Audit Committee Vice-Chair
Cllr Lucius Vellacott nominated and Cllr Keith Horgan seconded Cllr David Brown to the position of Vice-Chair of the Audit Committee. Cllr Christine Whelan nominated and Cllr Christine Colbert seconded Cllr Lorna Dupré to the position of Vice-Chair of the Audit Committee. A vote was taken and Cllr Brown received 15 votes and Cllr Dupré received 13 votes.

It was resolved to:
Elect Cllr David Brown as the Vice-Chair of the Audit Committee.

Licensing Committee Chair
Cllr Anna Bailey nominated and Cllr Julia Huffer seconded Cllr Martin Goodearl to the position of Chair of the Licensing Committee. A vote was taken and with 21 votes in favour, 0 votes against and 6 abstentions.

It was resolved to:
Elect Cllr Martin Goodearl as the Chair of the Licensing Committee.

Licensing Committee Vice-Chair
Cllr Martin Goodearl nominated and Cllr Christine Ambrose Smith seconded Cllr Julia Huffer to the position of Vice-Chair of the Licensing Committee. Cllr Lorna Dupré nominated and Cllr Christine Whelan seconded Cllr John Trapp to the position of Vice-Chair of the Licensing Committee. A vote was taken and Cllr Huffer received 15 votes and Cllr Trapp received 13 votes.

It was resolved to:
Elect Cllr Julia Huffer as the Vice-Chair of the Licensing Committee.

Planning Committee Chair
Cllr Anna Bailey nominated and Cllr Mark Goldsack seconded Cllr Bill Hunt to the position of Chair of the Planning Committee. A vote was taken with 20 votes in favour, 0 votes against and 5 abstentions

It was resolved to:
Elect Cllr Bill Hunt as the Chair of the Planning Committee.

Planning Committee Vice-Chair
Cllr Bill Hunt nominated and Cllr Martin Goodearl seconded Cllr Mark Goldsack to the position of Vice-Chair of the Planning Committee. Cllr Lorna Dupré nominated and Cllr Christine Colbert seconded Cllr Christine Whelan to the position of Vice-Chair of the Planning Committee. A vote was taken and Cllr Goldsack received 15 votes and Cllr Christine Whelan received 13 votes.

It was resolved to:
Elect Cllr Mark Goldsack as the Vice-Chair of the Planning Committee.

Personnel Appeals Sub-Committee Chair
Cllr Anna Bailey nominated and Cllr Ian Bovingdon seconded Cllr Alan Sharp to the position of Chair of the Personnel Appeals Sub-Committee. A vote was taken and with 19 votes in favour, 0 votes against and 5 abstentions

It was resolved to:
Elect Cllr Alan Sharp as the Chair of the Personnel Appeals Sub-Committee.

Personnel Appeals Sub-Committee Vice-Chair
Cllr Alan Sharp nominated and Cllr Anna Bailey seconded Cllr Ian Bovingdon to the position of Vice-Chair of the Personnel Appeals Sub-Committee. A vote

was taken and Cllr Bovingdon received 19 votes in favour, 0 against and 6 abstentions.

> It was resolved to:
> Elect Cllr Ian Bovingdon as the Vice-Chair of the Personnel Appeals Sub-Committee.

Finance & Assets (Ethical Governance) Sub-Committee Chair
Cllr Anna Bailey nominated and Cllr Ian Bovingdon seconded Cllr Alan Sharp to the position of Chair of the Finance & Assets (Ethical Governance) Sub-Committee. A vote was taken and Cllr Sharp received 20 votes in favour, 0 votes against and 3 abstentions.

> It was resolved to:
> Elect Cllr Alan Sharp as the Chair of the Finance & Assets (Ethical Governance) Sub-Committee.

Finance & Assets (Ethical Governance) Sub-Committee Vice-Chair
Cllr Alan Sharp nominated and Cllr Lucius Vellacott seconded Cllr Ian Bovingdon to the position of Vice-Chair of the Finance & Assets (Ethical Governance) Sub-Committee. A vote was taken and Cllr Bovingdon received 20 votes in favour, 0 votes against and 4 abstentions.

> It was resolved to:
> Elect Cllr Ian Bovingdon as the Vice Chair of the Finance & Assets (Ethical Governance) Sub-Committee.

Licensing (Statutory) Sub-Committee Chair
Cllr Anna Bailey nominated and Cllr Lavinia Edwards seconded Cllr Keith Horgan to the position of Chair of the Licensing (Statutory) Sub-Committee. A vote was taken and Cllr Horgan received 21 votes in favour, 0 votes against and 4 abstentions.

> It was resolved to:
> Elect Cllr Keith Horgan as Chair of the Licensing (Statutory) Sub-Committee.

Licensing (Statutory) Sub-Committee Vice-Chair
Cllr Keith Horgan nominated and Cllr Ian Bovingdon seconded Cllr Lavinia Edwards to the position of Vice-Chair of the Licensing (Statutory) Sub-Committee. Cllr Lorna Dupré nominated and Cllr Christine Whelan seconded Cllr John Trapp to the position of Vice-Chair of the Licensing (Statutory) Sub-Committee. A vote was taken and Cllr Edwards received 15 votes and Cllr Trapp received 13 votes.

> It was resolved to:
> Elect Cllr Lavinia Edwards as Vice-Chair of the Licensing Sub-Committee (Statutory) Vice-Chair.

Licensing (Non-Statutory) Sub-Committee Chair
Cllr Anna Bailey nominated and Cllr Julia Huffer seconded Cllr Martin Goodearl to the position of Chair of the Licensing (Non-Statutory) Sub-Committee. A vote was taken and Cllr Goodearl received 20 votes in favour, 0 against and 4 abstentions.

It was resolved to:
Elect Cllr Martin Goodearl as the Chair of the Licensing (Non-Statutory) Sub-Committee.

Licensing (Non-Statutory) Sub-Committee Vice-Chair
Cllr Martin Goodearl nominated and Cllr Keith Horgan seconded Cllr Julia Huffer to the position of Vice-Chair of the Licensing (Non-Statutory) Sub-Committee. A vote was taken and Cllr Huffer received 21 votes in favour, 0 against and 5 abstentions.

It was resolved to:
Elect Cllr Julia Huffer as the Vice-Chair of the Licensing (Non-Statutory) Sub-Committee.

15. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority

Council considered a report (AB4, previously circulated), which provided details of the update reports for February and March 2026 and made appointments to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Board and Committees.

The Chair proposed and the Vice Chair seconded the recommendations in the report. A vote was taken and it was unanimously agreed

to resolve:

a) To appoint Cllr Anna Bailey as the Council's appointee to the Combined Authority Board with Cllr Julia Huffer as the substitute member.
b) That Cllr Lucius Vellacott and Cllr Christine Whelan be nominated as Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cllr David Brown and Cllr Mark Inskip as substitute members.
c) That Cllr Mark Inskip be nominate to the Audit and Governance Committee and Cllr Christine Whelan be nominated as substitute member.
d) That the Chief Executive be authorised to make any amendments to the appointments to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Audit and Governance Committee in consultation with the Political Group Leaders, if the political balance is amended by the Combined Authority between now and the next Council meeting.
e) To note the update report for February and March 2026.

16. Exclusion of the press and public

The Chair proposed and the Vice Chair seconded that Council go into confidential session. A vote was taken and it was unanimously agreed

To resolve:

That the press and public be excluded during the consideration of the following item because it was likely, in the view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present during the items there would be disclosure to them of exempt information of Categories 1 and 3 of Part I Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

17. Section 113 Business Case – Fraud Services Anglia Revenues Partnership (ARP)

Council considered a report (AB5, previously circulated) that recommended that Anglia Revenues Partnership (ARP) should enter into a Section 113 agreement with Maldon District Council to provide Fraud Services.

to resolve:

To approve the amendment of the Terms of Reference for the Operational Services Committee to include two additional services – Digital Services and Bereavement Services.

The meeting concluded at 8 45 pm

Chair……………………………………

Date…………………………………………

SCHEDULE OF ITEMS RECOMMENDED FROM COMMITTEES AND OTHER MEMBER BODIES

Committee: Council

Date: 16 July 2026

Author: Democratic Services and Elections Manager & Deputy Monitoring Officer

Report No: AB48

Contact Officer: Jane Webb - Democratic Services and Elections Manager & Deputy Monitoring Officer, jane.webb@eastcambs.gov.uk, 01353 616278, Room 214B, The Grange, Ely

FINANCE & ASSETS COMMITTEE – 25 JUNE 2026

Treasury Operations Annual Performance Review

1. The Committee received a report **(AB33, attached in Appendix A)** containing the annual performance review of the Council's Treasury operations during the 2025/26 financial year.

   The recommendations in the report were proposed by Cllr Sharp and seconded by Cllr Huffer.

   Members unanimously **RECOMMENDED TO FULL COUNCIL:**

   That the contents of the Annual Review of the Council's Treasury operations during 2025/26, including the prudential and treasury indicators, as set out in the Annual Treasury Management Review (Appendix 1), be approved.

TITLE: **2025/26 TREASURY OPERATIONS ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REVIEW**

Committee: Finance and Assets Committee

Date: 25 June 2026

Author: Director, Finance

Report No: AB33

Contact Officer: Jude Antony, Director, Finance
jude.antony@eastcambs.gov.uk; 01353 616470

1.0 Issue

To report on the Council's treasury operations during the 2025/26 financial year.

This report reviews the Treasury Management activity during the financial year 2025/26 and reports on the prudential indicators as required by CIPFA's Treasury Management Code of Practice.

2.0 Recommendation

Members are asked to recommend to Full Council that they approve this report detailing the Council's treasury operations during 2025/26, including the prudential and treasury indicators, as set out in the Annual Treasury Management Review (Appendix 1).

3.0 Background / Options

This Council is required by regulations issued under the Local Government Act 2003 to produce an annual treasury management review of activities and the actual prudential and treasury indicators each year; this is the report for 2025/26. This report meets the requirements of both the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management (the Code) and the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (the Prudential Code).

During 2025/26, the minimum reporting requirements were that

Full Council received the following reports:

- an annual treasury strategy in advance of the year (approved by Full Council on 25 February 2025);
- a mid-year treasury update report (this was reviewed by Finance and Assets Committee on 27 November 2025 and approved by Full Council on 25 February 2026);
- an annual review following the end of the year, describing the activity compared to the strategy (this report).

A further Committee received

- reports at the end of quarters one and three (these were incorporated into the Finance Reports presented to Finance and Assets Committee on the 25 September 2025 and 29 January 2026).

4.0 Results

Cash investments totalled £30.131 million as of 31 March 2026, a decrease of £2.157 million on the previous year. The Council's cash investments were all for periods of less than one year.

The overall reduction in balances from £32.3 million on 31 March 2025 to £30.1 million at 31 March 2026 is primarily driven by planned use of earmarked reserves and S106/CIL balances during the year.

The Council's loan to ECTC increased from £5.825 million on 31 March 2025 to £5.850 million on 31 March 2026.

Interest received during the financial year was £1,838,370, which was £707,210 above the budget of £1,131,160. This figure comprised £1,585,630 from investments in money markets and short, fixed-term investments, and £252,740 from the loan to ECTC.

There are two main reasons for this overachievement in interest receipts:

- While interest rates reduced during the year, they reduced at a slower rate than the prudent estimate built into the budget, which has resulted in greater interest receipts and
- Higher investment balances were maintained during the year as a result of the reprofiling of capital expenditure and some delays in the delivery of capital schemes. Consequently, cash resources remained available for investment for longer than originally forecast, generating additional investment income.

The weighted-average rate of return on cash investments held during the year (excluding the loan to ECTC) was 3.75%.

5.0 Conclusions

The size of the Council's investment portfolio has historically been relatively small, meaning that investment decisions have had to be made primarily to meet cash flow requirements rather than to optimise investment returns. While the portfolio's value is now higher than in previous years, these disciplines have been retained. However, opportunities for proactive investment decisions were taken during the year, with funds moved to longer-term investments (three-month) and away from overnight accounts.

During the financial year, the Council operated within its approved treasury limits and prudential indicators.

6.0 Additional Implications Assessment

Financial Implications Yes	Legal Implications No	Human Resources (HR) Implications No
Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) No	**Carbon Impact Assessment (CIA) No**	**Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) No**

Financial Implications

The additional income gained from interest receipts has contributed to the Council's net underspend in 2025/26, as detailed in the Year-end Finance Report also on this meeting's agenda.

7.0 Appendices

Annual Treasury Management Review 2025/26

8.0 Background Documents:

Treasury Management Strategy as approved by Full Council on 25 February 2025.

Quarterly and half-year update reports as detailed in 3 above.

Classification: Public

Annual Treasury Management Review 2025/26

East Cambridgeshire District Council

DATE 31 MARCH 2026

Contents

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS REPORT

This is an optional area which clients may wish to include in their report if they feel that members would appreciate having this list of abbreviations and definitions.

CE: Capital Economics - is the economics consultancy that provides MUFG Corporate Markets Treasury Limited, with independent economic forecasts, briefings and research.

CFR: capital financing requirement - the Council's annual underlying borrowing need to finance capital expenditure and a measure of the Council's total outstanding indebtedness.

CIPFA: Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy – the professional accounting body that oversees and sets standards in local Council finance and treasury management.

CPI: consumer price index – the official measure of inflation adopted as a common standard by the UK and countries in the EU. It is a measure that examines the weighted average of prices of a basket of consumer goods and services, such as transportation, food and medical care. It is calculated by taking price changes for each item in the predetermined basket of goods and averaging them.

MHCLG: the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government - the Government department that directs local authorities in England.

ECB: European Central Bank - the central bank for the Eurozone

EU: European Union

EZ: Eurozone - those countries in the EU which use the euro as their currency

Fed: the Federal Reserve System, often referred to simply as "the Fed," is the central bank of the United States. It was created by the Congress to provide the nation with a stable monetary and financial system.

FOMC: the Federal Open Market Committee – this is the branch of the Federal Reserve Board which determines monetary policy in the USA by setting interest rates and determining quantitative easing/tightening policy. It is composed of 12 members - the seven members of the Board of Governors and five of the 12 Reserve Bank presidents.

GDP: gross domestic product – a measure of the growth and total size of the economy.

G7: the group of seven countries that form an informal bloc of industrialised democracies - the United States, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, and the United Kingdom - that meets annually to discuss issues such as global economic governance, international security, and energy policy.

Gilts: gilts are bonds issued by the UK Government to borrow money on the financial markets. Interest paid by the Government on gilts is called a coupon and is at a rate that is fixed for the duration until maturity of the gilt, (unless a gilt is index linked to inflation); while the coupon rate is fixed, the yields will change inversely to the price of gilts i.e., a rise in the price of a gilt will mean that its yield will fall.

HRA: housing revenue account.

IMF: International Monetary Fund - the lender of last resort for national governments which get into financial difficulties.

MPC: the Monetary Policy Committee is a committee of the Bank of England, which meets for one and a half days, eight times a year, to determine monetary policy by setting the official interest rate in the United Kingdom, (the Bank of England Base Rate, commonly called Bank Rate), and by making decisions on quantitative easing/tightening.

MRP: minimum revenue provision - a statutory annual minimum revenue charge to reduce the total outstanding CFR, (the total indebtedness of a local Council).

PFI: Private Finance Initiative – capital expenditure financed by the private sector i.e., not by direct borrowing by a local Council.

PWLB: Public Works Loan Board – this is the part of H.M. Treasury which provides loans to local authorities to finance capital expenditure.

QE/QT: quantitative easing – is an unconventional form of monetary policy where a central bank creates new money electronically to buy financial assets, such as government bonds, (but may also include corporate bonds). This process aims to stimulate economic growth through increased private sector spending in the economy and also aims to return inflation to target. These purchases increase the supply of liquidity to the economy; this policy is employed when lowering interest rates has failed to stimulate economic growth to an acceptable level and to lift inflation to target. Once QE has achieved its objectives of stimulating growth and inflation, QE will be reversed by selling the bonds the central bank had previously purchased, or by not replacing debt that it held which matures. This is called quantitative tightening. The aim of this reversal is to ensure that inflation does not exceed its target once the economy recovers from a sustained period of depressed growth and inflation. Economic growth, and increases in inflation, may threaten to gather too much momentum if action is not taken to ‘cool’ the economy.

RPI: the Retail Price Index is a measure of inflation that measures the change in the cost of a representative sample of retail goods and services. It was the UK standard for measurement of inflation until the UK changed to using the EU standard measure of inflation – Consumer Price Index. The main differences between RPI and CPI is in the way that housing costs are treated and that the former is an arithmetical mean whereas the latter is a geometric mean. RPI is often higher than CPI for these reasons.

SONIA: the Sterling Overnight Index Average. Generally, a set of indices for those benchmarking their investments. The benchmarking options include using a forward-looking (term) set of reference rates and/or a backward-looking set of reference rates that reflect the investment yield curve at the time an investment decision was taken.

TMSS: the annual treasury management strategy statement reports that all local authorities are required to submit for approval by the Full Council before the start of each financial year.

VRP: a voluntary revenue provision to repay debt, in the annual budget, which is additional to the annual MRP charge, (see above definition).

Annual Treasury Management Review 2025/26

Purpose

This Council is required by regulations issued under the Local Government Act 2003 to produce an annual treasury management review of activities and the actual prudential and treasury indicators for 2025/26. This report meets the requirements of both the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management, (the Code), and the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities, (the Prudential Code).

During 2025/26 the minimum reporting requirements were that the Full Council should receive the following reports:

- an annual treasury strategy in advance of the year (Council 25th February 2025)
- a mid-year, (minimum), treasury update report (Council 24th February 2026)
- an annual review following the end of the year describing the activity compared to the strategy, (this report)

In addition, this Finance and Assets Committee has also received quarterly treasury management update reports on the following dates 25th September 2026 and 29th January 2026.

The regulatory environment places responsibility on members for the review and scrutiny of treasury management policy and activities. This report is, therefore, important in that respect, as it provides details of the outturn position for treasury activities and highlights compliance with the Council's policies previously approved by members.

This Council confirms that it has complied with the requirement under the Code to give prior scrutiny to all of the above treasury management reports by the Finance and Assets Committee before they were reported to the Full Council.

Member training on treasury management issues was last undertaken on 5th October 2023 as part of the training for all members following the District Council elections earlier in that year.

Executive Summary

During 2025/26, the Council complied with its legislative and regulatory requirements. The key actual prudential and treasury indicators detailing the impact of capital expenditure activities during the year, with comparators, are as follows:

Prudential and Treasury Indicators	31.3.25 Actual £0	2025/26 Original £0	31.3.26 Actual £0
Capital expenditure	3,200	13,216	12,519
Capital Financing Requirement:	988	3,350	4,059
Gross borrowing	10,197	11,041	10,820
External debt	0	0	0
Investments (all under 1 year)	32,288	0	30,131
Net borrowing	32,288	0	30,131

Other prudential and treasury indicators are to be found in the main body of this report. The Director of Finance also confirms that no external borrowing was undertaken and the statutory borrowing limit, (the authorised limit), was not breached.

Introduction and Background

This report summarises the following:-

- Capital activity during the year;
- Impact of this activity on the Council's underlying indebtedness, (the Capital Financing Requirement);
- The actual prudential and treasury indicators;
- Overall treasury position identifying how the Council has borrowed in relation to this indebtedness, and the impact on investment balances;
- Summary of interest rate movements in the year;
- Detailed debt activity; and
- Detailed investment activity.

1. The Council's Capital Expenditure and Financing

The Council undertakes capital expenditure on long-term assets. These activities may either be:

- Financed immediately through the application of capital or revenue resources (capital receipts, capital grants, revenue contributions etc.), which has no resultant impact on the Council's borrowing need; or
- If insufficient financing is available, or a decision is taken not to apply resources, the capital expenditure will give rise to a borrowing need.

The actual capital expenditure forms one of the required prudential indicators. The table below shows the actual capital expenditure and how this was financed.

£000 General Fund	31.3.25 Actual	2025/26 Budget	31.3.26 Actual
Capital expenditure	**3,654**	**13,216**	**12,519**
Financed in year	2,666	9,866	8,460
Unfinanced capital expenditure	**988**	**3,350**	**4,059**

Capital expenditure in year was lower than the published budget due to a number of schemes progressing slower than originally anticipated, with expenditure reprofiled into future years in line with revised delivery timelines. The main variances were:

Bereavement Centre expenditure was lower than budget as works and associated costs have been reprofiled into 2026/27 in line with the updated project timetable.

Refuse and Cleansing Vehicles expenditure was lower than budget due to delays in vehicle deliveries, with costs now expected in the 2026/27 financial year.

Waste Wheelie Bins and Food Waste Caddies expenditure was lower than budget due to delayed procurement and implementation, with expenditure slipping into 2026/27.

Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants expenditure was higher than budget following additional grant approvals and slippage from 2024/25.

Vehicle replacement expenditure was higher than budget as replacement works were brought forward during the year.

2. The Council's Overall Borrowing Need

The Council's underlying need to borrow for capital expenditure is termed the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR). This figure is a gauge of the Council's indebtedness. The CFR results from the capital activity of the Council and resources used to pay for the capital spend. It represents the 2025/26 unfinanced capital expenditure (see above table), and prior years' net or unfinanced capital expenditure which has not yet been paid for by revenue or other resources.

Part of the Council's treasury activities is to address the funding requirements for this borrowing need. Depending on the capital expenditure programme, the treasury service organises the Council's cash position to ensure that sufficient cash is available to meet the capital plans and cash flow requirements. This may be sourced through borrowing from external bodies, (such as the Government, through the Public Works Loan Board [PWLB], or the money markets), or utilising temporary cash resources within the Council.

Reducing the CFR – the Council's underlying borrowing need (CFR) is not allowed to rise indefinitely. Statutory controls are in place to ensure that capital assets are broadly charged to revenue over the life of the asset. The Council is required to make an annual revenue charge, called the Minimum Revenue Provision – MRP, to reduce the CFR. This is effectively a repayment of the non-Housing Revenue Account (HRA) borrowing need, (there is no statutory requirement to reduce the HRA CFR). This differs from the treasury management arrangements which ensure that cash is available to meet capital commitments. External debt can also be borrowed or repaid at any time, but this does not change the CFR.

The total CFR can also be reduced by:

- the application of additional capital financing resources, (such as unapplied capital receipts); or
- charging more than the statutory revenue charge (MRP) each year through a Voluntary Revenue Provision (VRP).

The Council's 2025/26 MRP Policy, (as required by MHCLG Guidance), was approved as part of the Treasury Management Strategy Report for 2025/26 on 25th February 2025.

The Council's CFR for the year is shown below, and represents a key prudential indicator.

CFR (£000): General Fund	31.3.25 Actual	2025/26 Budget	31.3.25 Actual
Opening balance	10,652	10,277	10,197
Add unfinanced capital expenditure (as above)	988	3,350	4,059
Less MRP	-593	-686	-585
Less ECTC Loan Repayments	-850	-1,900	-2,850
Closing balance	10,197	11,041	10,821

Borrowing activity is constrained by prudential indicators for gross borrowing and the CFR, and by the authorised limit.

Gross borrowing and the CFR - in order to ensure that borrowing levels are prudent over the medium term and only for a capital purpose, the Council should ensure that its gross external borrowing does not, except in the short term, exceed the total of the capital financing requirement in the preceding year (2024/25) plus the estimates of any additional capital financing requirement for the current (2025/26) and next two financial years. This essentially means that the Council is not borrowing to support revenue expenditure. This indicator allowed the Council some flexibility to borrow in advance of its immediate capital needs. The table below highlights the Council's gross borrowing position against the CFR. The Council has complied with this prudential indicator.

£'000	31.3.25 Actual	2025/26 Budget	31.3.26 Actual
Gross external borrowing position	0	0	0
Capital Financing Requirement	10,197	11,041	10,821
Under Funding of CFR	10,197	11,041	10,821

The authorised limit - the authorised limit is the "affordable borrowing limit" required by s3 of the Local Government Act 2003. Once this has been set, the Council does not have the power to borrow above this level. The table below demonstrates that during 2025/26 the Council has maintained gross borrowing within its authorised limit.

The operational boundary – the operational boundary is the expected borrowing position of the Council during the year. Periods where the actual position is either below or over the boundary are acceptable subject to the authorised limit not being breached.

Actual financing costs as a proportion of net revenue stream - this indicator identifies the trend in the cost of capital, (borrowing and other long term obligation costs net of investment income), against the net revenue stream.

£'000	2025/26
Authorised limit	10,000
Maximum gross borrowing position during the year	0
Operational boundary	0
Average gross borrowing position	0
Financing costs as a proportion of net revenue stream	N/A

3. Treasury Position as of 31st March 2026

The Council's treasury management debt and investment position is organised by the treasury management service to ensure adequate liquidity for revenue and capital activities, security for investments and to manage risks within all treasury management activities. Procedures and controls to achieve these objectives are well established both through member reporting detailed in the summary, and through officer activity detailed in the Council's Treasury Management Practices.

At the end of 2025/26 the Council's treasury position, was as follows:-

The Council had no external debt.

The Council's Investment portfolio was as per the table below
All Money Market investments and the amount held in the Council's main bank account with the NatWest are in cash and as such, can be recalled immediately.

The amounts held in fixed deposit accounts have different maturity dates, with the last date being 05th June 2026.

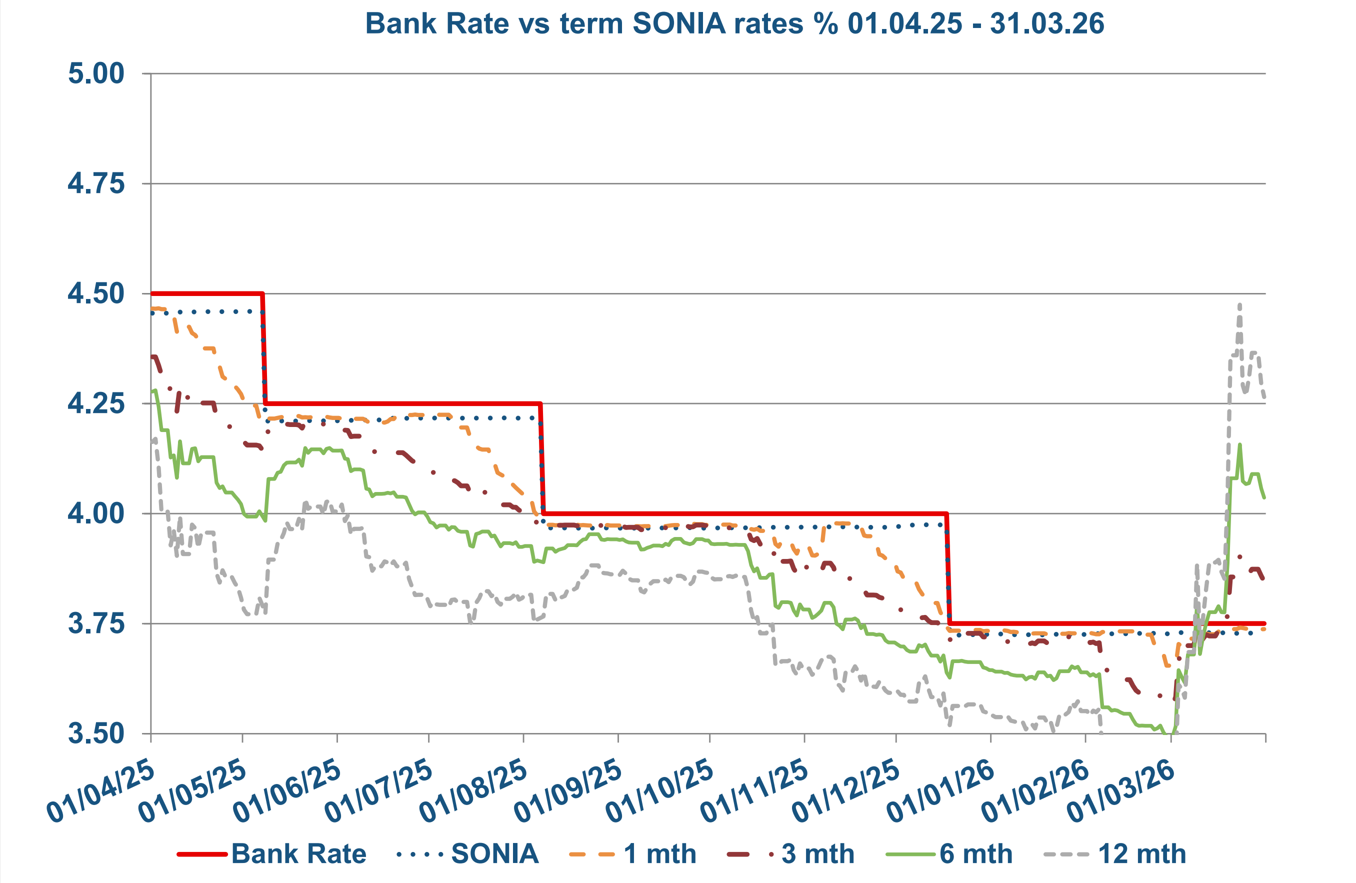
The loan facility to East Cambridgeshire trading Company runs until March 2027. However, the nature of the loan facility allows the Company to borrow and repay funding as their cashflow allows within the maximum facility of £7,500,000.

INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO	31.3.25 Actual £'000	31.3.24 Actual %	31.3.26 Actual £000	31.3.26 Actual %
Treasury investments				
Banks – main bank account	187	0.6%	261	0.9%
Banks – call accounts	22,101	68.4%	23,000	76.3%
Money Market Funds	10,000	31.0%	6,870	22.8%
TOTAL TREASURY INVESTMENTS	32,288	100%	30,131	100%
Non-Treasury investments				
Third party loans - ECTC	5,825	95.5%	5,850	95.5%
Third party loans – EC CLT	277	4.5%	247	4.5%
TOTAL NON-TREASURY INVESTMENTS	6,102	100%	6,097	100%
Treasury investments	32,288	84.1%	30,131	84.10%
Non-Treasury Investments	6,102	15.9%	6,097	15.9%
TOTAL OF ALL INVESTMENTS	38,390	100.00%	36,228	100.00%

4. The Strategy for 2025/26

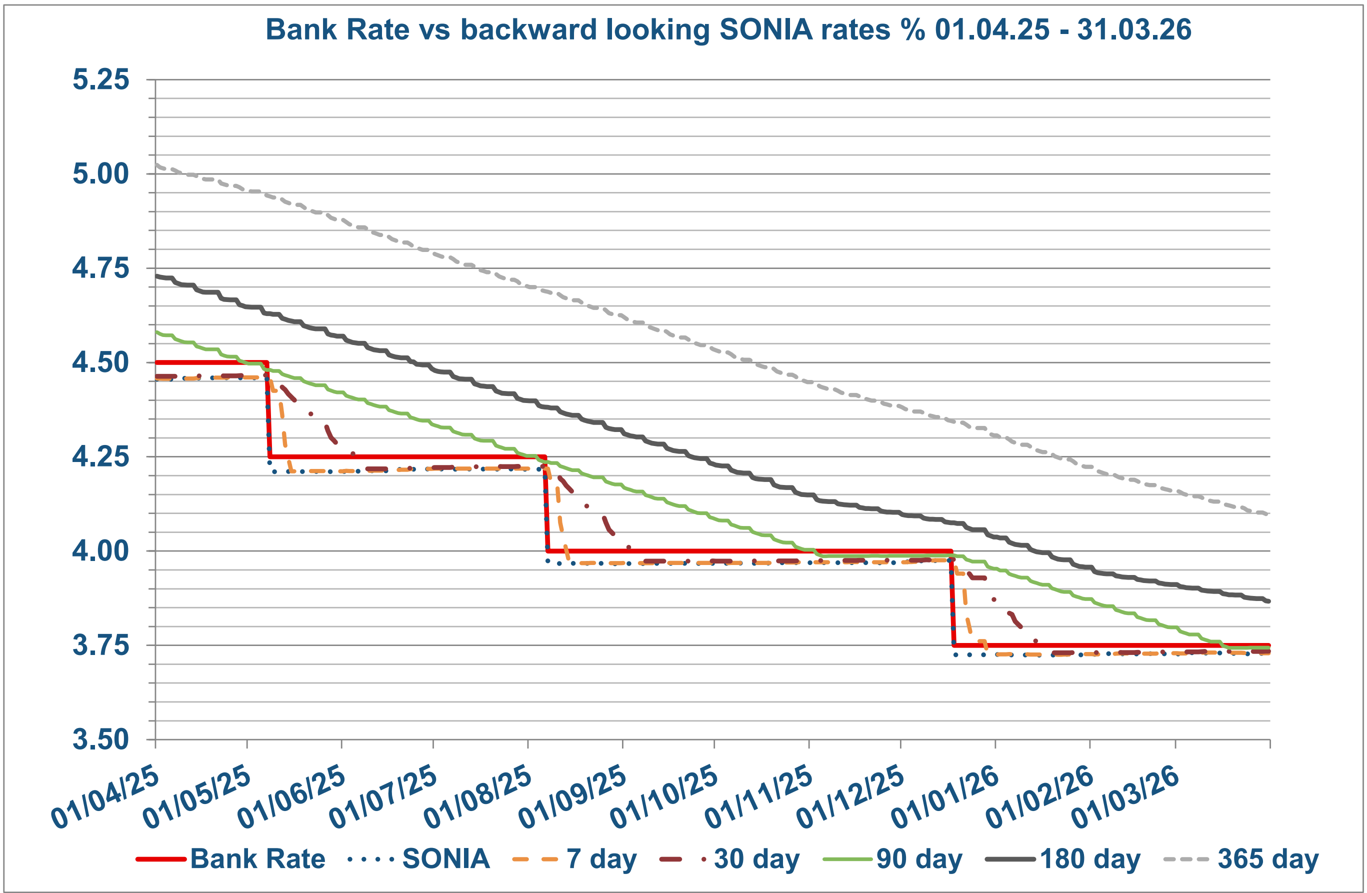
4.1 Investment strategy and control of interest rate risk

Investment Benchmarking Data – Sterling Overnight Index Averages (Term) 2025/26



FINANCIAL YEAR TO QUARTER ENDED 31/03/2026						
	Bank Rate	**SONIA**	**1 mth**	**3 mth**	**6 mth**	**12 mth**
High	4.50	4.46	4.47	4.36	4.28	4.47
High Date	01/04/2025	07/05/2025	03/04/2025	02/04/2025	02/04/2025	23/03/2026
Low	3.75	3.72	3.65	3.57	3.49	3.40
Low Date	18/12/2025	22/12/2025	27/02/2026	27/02/2026	27/02/2026	27/02/2026
Average	4.04	4.01	3.98	3.94	3.87	3.77
Spread	0.75	0.74	0.81	0.79	0.79	1.08

Investment Benchmarking Data – Sterling Overnight Index Averages (Backward-looking) 2025/26



FINANCIAL YEAR TO QUARTER ENDED 31/03/2026							
	Bank Rate	SONIA	7 day	30 day	90 day	180 day	365 day
High	4.50	4.46	4.46	4.47	4.58	4.73	5.02
High Date	01/04/2025	07/05/2025	28/04/2025	06/05/2025	01/04/2025	01/04/2025	01/04/2025
Low	3.75	3.72	3.73	3.73	3.74	3.87	4.09
Low Date	18/12/2025	22/12/2025	22/01/2026	21/01/2026	18/03/2026	31/03/2026	31/03/2026
Average	4.04	4.01	4.02	4.05	4.13	4.26	4.55
Spread	0.75	0.74	0.74	0.74	0.84	0.86	0.93

Investment returns remained robust throughout 2025/26 despite Bank Rate reducing steadily through the course of the financial year (three 0.25% rate cuts in total), and at the end of March the yield curve had turned positive, reflecting inflation concerns emanating from the on-going conflict in the Middle East.

Bank Rate reductions of 0.25% occurred in May, August and December, bringing the headline rate down from 4.50% to 3.75%. Two of the Bank Rate cuts occurred in the same month as the Bank of England publishes its Quarterly Monetary Policy Report, therein providing a clarity over the timing of potential future rate cuts.

As of early April 2026, market sentiment has been heavily influenced by the Middle East conflict. Commentators anticipate a growing risk of inflation, meaning interest rates will not be cut for some time, and may increase to counteract inflationary pressures arising from steepening energy costs. Growth will also be impacted in many regions of the world. UK GDP is projected by the Office for Budget Responsibility (3 March 2026) to be 1.1% in 2026 before picking up to 1.6% in 2027 and 2028. But the likelihood is that there is downside risk to this forecast given events in the Middle East through March and still on-going.

Looking back through 2025/26, investors were able to achieve returns generally in a range of 4.5% - 5% for periods ranging from 1 month to 12 months in the spring of 2025. By the end of March 2026 deposit rates were somewhat volatile, regaining some traction as the Middle East conflict suggested energy driven inflation may lead to higher interest rates than would otherwise have been the case. Where liquidity requirements were not a drain on day-to-day investment choices, extending duration through the use of "laddered investments" paid off.

Heading into 2026/27, UK inflation is likely to increase to over 4% in the coming months as oil prices, for example, remain close to $100 per barrel, over 50% higher than before the Middle East conflict started.

4.2 Borrowing strategy and control of interest rate risk

During 2025/26, the Council maintained an under-borrowed position. This meant that the capital borrowing need, (the Capital Financing Requirement), was not fully funded with loan debt as cash supporting the Council's reserves, balances and cash flow was used as an interim measure. This strategy was prudent as near-term investment rates have generally been lower than medium to long-term borrowing costs. The latter are expected to fall a little through 2026 and 2027 in the light of economic growth concerns and the eventual dampening of inflation.

The policy of avoiding new borrowing by running down spare cash balances has served well over the past few years. However, this kept under review to avoid incurring higher borrowing costs in the future when the Council may not be able to avoid new borrowing to finance capital expenditure.

Against this background and the risks within the economic forecast, caution was adopted with the treasury operations. The Director of Finance therefore monitored interest rates in financial markets and adopted a pragmatic strategy.

Interest rate forecasts initially suggested gradual reductions in short, medium and longer-term fixed borrowing rates during 2025/26. Bank Rate did reduce to 3.75% as anticipated, but the initial expectation of significant rate reductions across the whole curve did not transpire, primarily because inflation concerns were very elevated in March 2026.
At the start of April 2026, the market expected Bank Rate to increase over the coming months to 4% or 4.25%, from 3.75%, whilst all parts of the curve have also risen substantially through March. A significant fall in inflation will be required to underpin any material movement lower in the longer part of the curve.

5. Investment Outturn

Investment Policy – the Council's investment policy is governed by MHCLG investment guidance, which has been implemented in the annual investment strategy approved by the Council on 25th February 2025. This policy sets out the approach for choosing investment counterparties and is based on credit ratings provided by the three main credit rating agencies, supplemented by additional market data, (such as rating outlooks, credit default swaps, bank share prices etc.).

The investment activity during the year conformed to the approved strategy, and the Council had no liquidity difficulties.

Resources – the Council's cash balances comprise revenue and capital resources and cash flow monies. The Council's core cash resources comprised as follows:

Balance Sheet Resources (£000)	31st March 2025	31st March 2026
Balances		
Earmarked reserves	17,632	17,975
S106 / CIL	17,669	15,131
Capital Receipts	1,759	1,789
Council Tax / Business Rates	1,425	4,499
cProvisions	1,227	356
Cash (Debtors / Creditors)	2,773	1,202
Internal Borrowing	-10,197	-10,821
Total	**32,288**	**30,131**

Investments held by the Council

- The Council maintained an average balance of £35,620 of internally managed funds.
- The internally managed funds earned an average rate of return of 4.8%.
- The comparable performance indicator is the average SONIA rate, which was 3.5%.
- Total investment income (including from ECTC) was £1,838,370 compared to a budget of £1,131,160

There are two main reasons for this over achievement in interest receipts:

- While interest rates reduced during the year, they reduced at a slower rate than the prudent estimate built into the budget, which has resulted in greater interest receipts and
- As a result of underspends on both the revenue and capital budget, cash holdings have been higher than assumed in the budget.

6. The Economy and Interest Rates

UK Economy

As with 2024/25, UK inflation has proved somewhat stubborn throughout 2025/26. Having started the financial year at 3.5% y/y (April), the CPI measure of inflation peaked at 3.8% from July to September, before dipping to 3% in January and February. Core inflation picked up to 3.2% in February, from 3.1%, and the recent upward pressure on energy costs could see CPI inflation breach 4.5% later this year.

Against this backdrop, the continued lack of progress in ending the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and the potentially negative implications for global growth as a consequence of the implementation of US tariff policies, Bank Rate reductions look limited for the remainder of 2026 (as they do in the euro-zone). Bank Rate currently stands at 3.75%.

Moreover, borrowing has becoming more expensive in 2025/26. Gilt yields have risen materially in March 2026, more than reversing the falls earlier in the financial year. Additionally, the public finances have remained under pressure. The higher-than-expected public net sector borrowing of £14.3bn in February was £2.2bn above last February's outturn. But that borrowing overshoot was mainly due to timing effects relating to the £13.0bn government debt interest payment. That came in as the highest payment since June 2025, causing a 12.3% y/y jump in spending. On the flip side, sitting at £8.1bn, tax revenues were also higher than last February, largely on the back of solid growth in self-employment incomes in 2024/25, boosting self-assessment income tax receipts and stronger capital gains tax receipts.

However, the combination of some energy price support and pressures from higher inflation amid the ongoing energy price shock, higher interest rates and a weaker economy will ultimately put borrowing on an upward trend. With the rise in energy prices possibly pushing the Retail Prices Index inflation up to a peak of 5.7%, debt interest repayments will increase by about £10bn. A weaker growth profile, higher inflation, higher interest rates and gilt yields could erode about £11bn of the Chancellor's £23.6bn headroom.

The loosening in the labour market continues to bear down on wage growth. The 3myy growth rate of average earnings including bonuses slowed from 4.2% in December to 3.9% in January. Meanwhile, excluding bonuses, private earnings growth continued to fall from 3.4% to 3.3%.

The table below provides a snapshot of the conundrum facing central banks: inflation pressures remain, labour markets are still relatively tight by historical comparisons, and central banks are also having to react to a fundamental re-ordering of economic and defence policies driven largely by the US administration.

	UK	**Eurozone**	**US**
Bank Rate	3.75%	2.0%	3.5%-3.75%
GDP	0.1%q/q Q4 (1.0%y/y)	+0.2%q/q Q4 (1.2%y/y)	0.7% Q4 Annualised
Inflation	3.0%y/y (Feb)	1.9%y/y (Feb)	2.4%y/y (Feb)
Unemployment Rate	5.2% (Jan)	6.2% (Jan)	4.4% (Feb)

The Bank of England sprung no surprises in their March meeting, leaving Bank Rate unchanged at 3.75% by a vote of 9-0, but suggesting rates may need to rise if inflation picks up markedly. The vote could best be described as moderately hawkish. The MPC stated it "stands ready to act as necessary" and "is alert to the increased risk of domestic inflationary pressures through second-round effects in wage and price-setting". Even so, we suspect the committee is likely to put equal weight on higher inflation and weaker growth, particularly the poor macroeconomic backdrop prior to the energy shock, keeping interest rates at 3.75% this year.

10-year Gilt yields have been exceptionally volatile in the final weeks of 2025/26, troughing at around 4.23% in late February before shooting up to 5.00% (and well through that on an intraday basis). That spike was driven by the outbreak of war in the Middle East, which prompted a dramatic reassessment of investors' Bank of England policy rate expectations. Having been pricing in rate cuts in late-February, as many as four rate *hikes* were discounted by late-March. The 10-year yield ended the quarter at 4.92% with around 65bp of rate hikes priced in over the coming year. In addition to more hawkish monetary policy expectations, part of this increase in yields probably reflected an increase in term premia amid concerns that the government may react by loosening the fiscal purse strings.

As for equity markets, the FTSE 100 experienced another volatile quarter, surging to an all-time high of around 10,900 in late February, leaving it up 10% from the start of 2026, before giving back most of those gains in March after the outbreak of the Middle East conflict. That pullback leaves the index at around 10,176 at the end of the quarter. For context it was at 8,582 at the start of April. The £ has stayed relatively resilient also at $1.33, strengthening from $1.29 back in April.

US Economy

Despite a weak finish to 2025, the US economy has generally been the strongest among the developed economies, but with uncertainties growing surrounding President Trump's central economic tenet of being able to apply tariffs on an ad-hoc basis, and bend the FOMC Fed Funds rate decision-making to his will, there is something of a stalemate in place at present over when, and if, rates will be cut further in 2026.

Inflation is currently stuck at around 2.5%, unemployment is only a little above 4%, and tax refunds are in the process of being facilitated for many households. But will those refunds be – at least partially – offset by higher gasoline prices?

The S&P500 started April 2025 at 5,633 and finished March 2026 at 6,528 having peaked at just over 7,000. The 10-year Treasury yield finished March at 4.30% having been 4.17% back at the start of April, and during the year has been both above 4.50% and below 4.00%.

EZ Economy

The Eurozone economy has run pretty much in parallel with that of the UK. A slightly stronger finish to 2025 (GDP of 0.2% q/q) than that of the UK cannot hide the fact that the economy has been negatively impacted by German economic stagnation until late in 2025. France has also struggled against a difficult political backdrop, but managed to post GDP growth of 0.3% q/q for October to December.

With Eurozone headline inflation close to 2%, the ECB has been able to reduce its Deposit Rate to 2%. Whether it rises from that low point will very much be driven by how energy prices trend over the coming months. The Euro has appreciated against the dollar from 1.08 at the start of April 2025 to 1.16 at the end of March.

TITLE: Corporate Plan

Committee: Council

Date: 16 July 2026

Author: Chief Executive

Report number: AB47

Contact officer: Emma Grima, Chief Executive, emma.grima@eastcambs.gov.uk, 01353 665555, Room 103, The Grange, Ely

Issue

1. The updated Action Plan for 2026-27 to support the implementation of the 2023-27 Corporate Plan.

Recommendations

2. Members are requested to approve the updated Action Plan for 2026-27 at Appendix 1, and
3. Note the completed actions and progress made during 2025-26.

Background/Options

4. The Corporate Plan 2023-27 was agreed by Council on 13 July 2023 (ref agenda item 9) together with an action plan for 2023-24. The Action Plan to support the implementation of the Corporate Plan is updated annually.

Arguments/Conclusions

5. The proposed Action Plan for 2026-27 is attached in Appendix 1. Paragraph 6 outlines the achievements of the Council in meeting the 2025-26 commitments agreed by Council in September 2025.
6. Significant progress has been made in 2025-26, specifically:
   - A council Tax freeze for a 13th consecutive year.
   - The new waste collection service was successfully rolled out.
   - A Pathway to Net Zero report was approved by the Council in November 2025, providing a detailed action plan of how we will aim to meet our emission target.
   - The Council's business grant schemes supported 51 businesses, delivering 19 jobs, 5 apprenticeships, and wider gains in skills, innovation and productivity.
   - 987 individuals accessed Health & Wellbeing physical activity programmes delivered or supported by the Council.

- The Council introduced a bespoke CIL grant scheme for Inclusive Play & Open Spaces to provide match funding to assist with the delivery of inclusive play and open spaces.

- A scheme to provide match funding to parishes producing Neighbourhood Plans was set up, and to date, 2 Parish Councils have been awarded £5,000.

- Three £100k Homes have been allocated; a further six will be made available during 2026/27.

7. Some actions will need to be carried over, specifically, development of an Inclusive Play Strategy, the opening of the Bereavement Centre, and completion of the development at Arbour Square, Ely.

   - Develop an Inclusive Play Strategy - the findings of the District Council audits will be incorporated into the Strategy to be considered by Members in September 2026.

   - Open the Bereavement Centre – the project is on track, and the Bereavement Centre is due to open in Summer 2026.

   - East Cambs Trading Company will complete the development at Arbour Square, Ely, which will deliver 27 homes (100%) affordable housing as social rent properties - 7 of the properties at Arbour Square, Ely were completed and sold to Havebury for Social Rent between February and March 2026. The remaining 20 will be completed and sold to Havebury for Social Rent between June and August 2026.

8. The key issue affecting the delivery of the Action Plan and wider Corporate Plan will be delivering Local Government Reorganisation alongside business as usual.

Additional Implications Assessment

9.

Financial Implications **No**	**Legal Implications** **No**	**Human Resources (HR) Implications** **No**
Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) **No**	**Carbon Impact Assessment (CIA)** **No**	**Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)** **No**

Appendices

Appendix 1: Updated Action Plan 2026-27.

Background documents

[Council 13 July 2023 - Agenda Item 9]

East Cambridgeshire District Council

APPENDIX 1

Corporate actions

2026 to 2027

Sound financial management

Priorities	Actions
Ensure the council is financially sustainable. Minimise the financial (cost) impact of the council on its residents. Be more commercial, but within reason - 'commercial for community'.	Council to approve the 2027/2028 budget and Medium Term Financial Plan in February 2027 only increasing Council Tax as a last resort. Work with other councils and agencies in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough region to ensure the transition to any new local government structures delivers the most financially sustainable outcomes for East Cambridgeshire's residents possible.

Cleaner, greener East Cambridgeshire

Priorities	Actions
Improve the public realm. Reduce environmental crime across the district. Enhance the natural environment and build on our sustainability goals. Design a resilient waste and street cleansing service fit for the future.	Increase recycling rates to 65% (by 2030) under the new Simpler Recycling regime, building on our enhanced waste collection service. Deliver the Climate and Nature Top 20 actions for 2026/2027 including a focus on nature improvements, reducing our carbon emissions, and adapting to a changing climate. Support the development of a network of Agricultural Reservoirs across East Cambridgeshire. Improve the look and feel of the city and town centres, including replacement street furniture and graffiti removal. Secure funding for PV panels and install at the Bereavement Centre. Renew the Environmental Crime Enforcement Policy.

Sustainable communities

Priorities	Actions
Support our residents to live happy and healthy lives. Support our businesses to thrive in East Cambridgeshire. Improve our roads and local transport. Deliver genuinely affordable housing that enables people to live and work locally. Invest in community infrastructure.	Support local businesses via our Business Grant Fund. Work with Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority and partners to deliver improvements to active travel, road and rail infrastructure, including bus franchising, the BP Witchford Road Non-Motorised User (NMU) crossing, A10 Ely to A14 improvements scheme, support local rail improvements including Soham Railway Station phase 2. Continue to support existing Community Land Trusts (CLTs) across the district and work with communities to establish and develop new CLTs. Open the Bereavement Centre in line with the business plan, delivering compassionate support to our communities. Adopt the Inclusive Play Strategy and deliver actions. Implement the districtwide anti-social driving Public Spaces Protection Order. Use the LIFT and CRF funds to enable our residents to maximise their income and become more financially resilient. East Cambs Trading Company will work with Haddenham CLT to submit a planning application for phase 2. Facilitate the delivery of an amphitheatre in Ely. Encourage housing providers to improve maintenance standards in affordable housing stock in East Cambridgeshire.

TITLE: Local Government Reorganisation – Establishment of Voluntary Joint Committee

Committee: Council

Date: 16 July 2026

Author: Director Operations

Report number: AB49

Contact officer: Isabel Edgar, Director Operations
Isabel.edgar@eadstcambs.gov.uk – 01353 616498 – Room 101B, The Grange, Ely

Issue

1. To consider, before the publication of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structural Changes Order (SCO), a proposal to establish voluntary Joint Committees with the Councils in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to oversee transitional and implementation activity ahead of vesting day for the new Shadow Authorities. These committees will then become the statutory joint committee for the new unitary.

Recommendations

2. Council is recommended to:

   (a) Approve the establishment of a voluntary Joint Committee for each Unitary Authority area, which will then become the statutory joint committee for the new unitary set out in the Structural Changes Order.

   (b) Delegate authority to the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Leader of Council, to:

      (i) Approve the agreed Terms of Reference of the voluntary Joint Committee prior to the Structural Changes Order being made; and

      (ii) Approve any amendments to the Terms of Reference required to ensure consistency with the Structural Changes Order once made by the Secretary of State.

   (c) Authorise the Monitoring Officer to make changes to the Council's Constitution to effect (b)(i) and (ii) above.

   (d) Delegate authority to the Director Operations, in consultation with the Leader of Council, to appoint members as the Council's representatives to the voluntary and statutory Joint Committees in accordance with the respective Terms of Reference.

Background/Options

3. The Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government is expected to announce the Government's indicative decision on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough shortly.

4. The Secretary of State has indicated that a Structural Changes Order (SCO) will then be laid before Parliament. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) is currently discussing the proposed SCO with the constituent councils, who will continue to work collaboratively with MHCLG on the process of transition to the new authorities. The SCO will set out the arrangements for the transfer of the functions, property, assets, rights, liabilities and investments of the constituent councils to the unitary councils, while also setting out the governance arrangements for the transitional period until vesting day for the unitary councils on 1 April 2028.

5. Prior to the making of the SCO, there are a number of actions and decisions that will need to be taken by the Councils before the establishment of the Shadow Authorities, in order to provide collaborative oversight of the transition and implementation.

6. The establishment of joint committees, based on the local government arrangements currently in place across the footprints of the new unitary authorities, will provide collaborative democratic oversight and transparency for such actions and decisions. Such actions and decisions could include providing direction and oversight to the Officer Implementation Team and developing proposals for consideration by the Shadow Authority.

Arguments/Conclusions

7. The proposed joint committees will provide a formal governance mechanism to:

    - Coordinate work across the councils;
    - Oversee and steer the development of an implementation plan:
    - Support effective decision-making during the transition to new unitary authorities.

8. At this stage, the joint committees will operate on a voluntary basis, exercising only those functions delegated to them by the Councils. Once the SCO is made, the role and powers of the joint committees may be placed on a statutory footing or replaced by shadow authorities or other implementation bodies, in line with the SCO.

9. Terms of Reference are being developed jointly across the Councils, drawn on statutory requirements, Government guidance and learning from other areas that have already undertaken the earlier stages of LGR.

10. The Terms of Reference of the joint committees will set out:

    - Purpose and scope;
    - Functions and responsibilities;

- Membership, substitution and appointment arrangements;
- Chairing arrangements;
- Meeting arrangements;
- Decision-making arrangements;
- Sub-committee arrangements;
- Administration arrangements; and
- Arrangements for review and amendment.

11. The joint committees will not:
    - Set budgets or council tax;
    - Exercise planning, licensing, regulatory or quasi-judicial functions;
    - Fetter the sovereign decision-making powers of individual councils, except where lawfully delegated.

12. Decisions of the joint committees will be made in accordance with the Terms of Reference and relevant delegations, with each Council retaining responsibility for its own governance, scrutiny and accountability arrangements. Further proposals on scrutiny and transparency arrangements may be brought forward once the SCO is published and the governance framework for the shadow authorities becomes clearer.

13. The joint committees will not have separate legal personalities or independent budgets. Costs associated with their operation will be managed in accordance with agreed officer arrangements and reported to constituent councils as appropriate. Day-to-day administrative support will be provided through officer collaboration across the councils.

14. Subject to the approval of their establishment and Terms of Reference by all Councils, this Council is required to appoint Members to each joint committee. The number of members is still to be agreed as part of the Terms of Reference.

Additional Implications Assessment

15.

Financial Implications No	**Legal Implications** Identified in the body of the report	**Human Resources (HR) Implications** No
Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Not required	**Carbon Impact Assessment (CIA)** Not required	**Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)** Not required

Appendices

None.

Background documents

None.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE & PETERBOROUGH COMBINED AUTHORITY

PAUL BRISTOW MAYOR OF CAMBRIDGESHIRE & PETERBOROUGH

Reports from Constituent Council Representatives on the Combined Authority

The following meetings have taken place in June 2026

Combined Authority Board, AGM, 3 June 2026
Councillor: Cllr Anna Bailey
Decision Summary Link: Combined Authority Board, AGM (June)

Combined Authority Board, Ordinary, 3 June 2026
Councillor: Cllr Anna Bailey
Decision Summary Link: Combined Authority Board, Ordinary (June)

Skills Committee, 15 June 2026
Councillor: Cllr Mark Goldsack
Decision Summary Link: Skills Committee (June)

Staffing Committee, 15 June 2026
Councillor: Cllr Anna Bailey
Decision Summary Link: Staffing Committee (June)

Transport Committee, 17 June 2026
Councillor: Cllr Alan Sharp
Decision Summary Link: Transport Committee (June)

Funding Committee, 22 June 2026
Councillor: Cllr Keith Horgan
Decision Summary Link: Funding Committee (June)

Growth Committee, 23 June 2026
Councillor: Cllr Martin Goodearl
Decision Summary Link: Growth Committee (June)

Staffing Committee, 24 June 2026
Councillor: Cllr Anna Bailey
Decision Summary Link: Staffing Committee (June)

Audit and Governance Committee, 25 June 2026
Councillor: Cllr Christine Whelan
Decision Summary Link: Audit and Governance Committee (June)

Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 30 June 2026
Councillor: Cllr Lucius Vellacott
Decision Summary Link: Overview and Scrutiny Committee (June)