

East Cambridgeshire District Council

NOTICE OF MEETING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Council Meeting of the **EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL** will be held on **THURSDAY 15 OCTOBER 2026** in the **COUNCIL CHAMBER** at **THE GRANGE, NUTHOLT LANE, ELY, CB7 4EE**, commencing at **6:00 pm** 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 of 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 Interests** **[oral]**
To receive declarations of interests from Members for any items on the agenda in accordance with the Members Code of Conduct.
- 4. Minutes – 16 July 2026** **Page 1**
To confirm as a correct record.
- 5. Chair's Announcements** **[oral]**
- 6. To receive Petition(s) (If any)** **[oral]**
- 7. Notice of Motions under Procedure Rule 10** **[oral]**

A. Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)

This Council notes that:

- East Cambridgeshire District Council has consistently opposed the imposition of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), believing residents are best served by strong local councils that know their communities.
- Despite this, the Council engaged fully and in good faith, contributing significant officer time, evidence and expertise to the LGR process.
- East Cambridgeshire has a proud record as a small council that delivers high-quality services, remains financially resilient and continues to innovate. It is one of only two councils nationally with no external borrowing, has frozen its share of Council Tax for 13 years, and has protected services without making cuts.

- The Council continues to provide free car parking, free garden waste collections, and comprehensive face-to-face customer services that include practical, in-person support around the prevention of homelessness, debt advice, and help for vulnerable residents.
- The Council has used its highly successful trading company innovatively to deliver housing, including affordable housing, and to support community-led schemes such as Community Land Trusts. Since its inception, the company has returned £6.2million to the Council, showing that East Cambridgeshire can be both commercially minded and rooted in local need. Our mantra of being “Commercial with Community” is at its heart.
- The LGR regional survey evidence found East Cambridgeshire consistently had the highest service satisfaction, strongest sense of community belonging and highest perceived value for Council Tax among the authorities compared in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

This Council believes that:

- The LGR process has been rushed and poorly managed, creating unnecessary uncertainty for residents, businesses, organisations, staff and councils. This reinforces the need for the Government to explain and evidence why reorganisation is necessary before proceeding.
- There is little evidence that larger authorities automatically deliver better services, lower costs or stronger accountability. The Government should therefore consider whether collaboration, service-level devolution and district-led delivery could achieve its objectives without the disruption of structural reorganisation.
- East Cambridgeshire District Council’s record demonstrates that a smaller authority can deliver services at low cost, maintain financial discipline, innovate, achieve high resident satisfaction and keep services close to local people. This provides a strong basis for testing whether appropriate upper-tier responsibilities could also be delivered through a locally based model.
- Developments elsewhere show that LGR is not a necessary building block for devolution. Norfolk and Suffolk are continuing towards mayoral strategic arrangements and mayoral elections even though LGR in those areas has been withdrawn and is under review. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough already has a strategic mayoral authority, so the Government should explain why disruptive structural reorganisation is still considered necessary here.
- For these reasons, the Council remains opposed to the abolition of East Cambridgeshire District Council and believes the Government should justify its preferred approach, publish the evidence behind it and properly consider less disruptive alternatives.

This Council resolves to:

Instruct the Leader to write to the Secretary of State to:

1. Express the Council’s disappointment with the conduct and outcome of the LGR process, and reaffirm that East Cambridgeshire District Council does not support LGR;
2. Make clear that, although opposed to LGR, the Council engaged properly and in good faith to protect the interests of its residents and backed Option B;
3. Ask the Secretary of State to explain why LGR is still considered necessary in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough when the area already has a strategic mayoral authority;
4. Ask the Government to consider alternatives to structural reorganisation, including stronger collaboration, service-level devolution and district-led delivery partnerships;

5. Request that East Cambridgeshire be considered as a pilot area for the devolution of appropriate upper-tier responsibilities, including adult services delivered through a locally based, patch-level model;
6. Ask that the financial and service assumptions behind any preferred model are published so that residents and councils can properly scrutinise them; and
7. Invite the Secretary of State and the Minister for Local Government to visit East Cambridgeshire to see how strong, cost-effective local government can be delivered close to the people it serves.

PROPOSER: Cllr Anna Bailey

SECONDER: Cllr Julia Huffer

B. Vattenfall Proposals: Chatteris Wind Farm at Mepal and Redmere Wind Farm at Shippea Hill

This Council notes that:

1. East Cambridgeshire District Council supports the generation of renewable and low-carbon energy and recognises the importance of renewables to energy security.
2. East Cambridgeshire is already making a very substantial contribution to renewable energy generation. The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough State of the Region Report records that East Cambridgeshire generated approximately 508,000 MWh of renewable energy in 2022, representing 32% of all renewable energy generation across the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority area – the largest contribution from any district.
3. East Cambridgeshire hosts numerous operational solar farms and other renewable energy infrastructure and has already made a significant contribution of land to the generation of renewable electricity.
4. The Sunnica Energy Farm, a nationally significant solar and battery storage development of up to 500MW, has been granted Development Consent, and the Kingsway Solar Farm developer has indicated its intention to bring forward a revised application following the withdrawal of its previous application.
5. Vattenfall is now proposing two further nationally significant onshore wind farms in East Cambridgeshire:
 - Chatteris Wind Farm at Mepal, a proposed development of approximately 2,471 acres (1,000 hectares), including up to 15 turbines with a maximum tip height of 220 metres and generating capacity of up to 126MW; and
 - Redmere Wind Farm at Shippea Hill, a proposed development of approximately 5,881 acres (2,380 hectares), including up to 32 turbines with a maximum tip height of 220 metres and generating capacity of up to 303MW
6. Taken together, the two proposed wind farms cover site areas of approximately 8,352 acres (3,380 hectares), much of which comprises highly productive agricultural land, including Grade 1 agricultural land - the highest classification of agricultural land and a finite national resource.
7. The proposed turbines, at up to 220 metres high, would be more than three times the height of Ely Cathedral and would represent a substantial and permanent change to the landscape of the Fens.
8. Both developments include proposals for Battery Energy Storage Systems and are proposed to connect to the National Grid at Burwell, with associated grid infrastructure and underground cabling.
9. The proposed Chatteris development is located at Mepal close to the internationally important Ouse Washes, which is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest, Ramsar site, Special Protection Area and Special Area of Conservation. The Ouse Washes is one of the largest remaining areas of lowland wet grassland and

- frequently flooded grazing marsh in Britain and supports internationally important populations of wintering waterfowl and rare breeding waders.
10. The Redmere proposal is located to the north-east of Littleport at Shippea Hill and Redmere, in close proximity to RAF Lakenheath and RAF Mildenhall, raising the need for full assessment of potential impacts on aviation, radar and defence interests.
 11. Vattenfall proposes community benefits including construction employment, local contracts and annual community benefit payments, but such benefits do not in themselves address the fundamental question of whether these are appropriate locations for developments of this scale.
 12. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) gives substantial weight to renewable and low-carbon energy development, while the national consenting process means that small rural communities facing large-scale infrastructure projects do not have the final decision-making role over whether such developments proceed.
 13. As Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects, the applications will ultimately be determined by the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero through the Development Consent Order process, rather than by East Cambridgeshire District Council as the Local Planning Authority.

This Council believes that:

14. East Cambridgeshire is already contributing significantly to the UK's renewable energy provision and should not be regarded as an unlimited location for further large-scale energy infrastructure.
15. Tackling climate change and protecting food security are not mutually exclusive objectives. The growth of renewable energy must take account of the importance of protecting the country's most productive agricultural land.
16. The concentration of further major energy infrastructure on Grade 1 agricultural land in East Cambridgeshire raises serious concerns about food security, landscape character, biodiversity, cumulative environmental impacts and the long-term sustainability of land use.
17. The scale of the two proposed wind farms, their proximity to internationally and nationally protected sites and habitats, their cumulative impact with existing and consented energy developments, and the proposed 220-metre turbine heights require particularly rigorous scrutiny.
18. Community benefits and financial payments should not be allowed to determine the acceptability of developments which may have significant and long-lasting impacts on agriculture, landscape, biodiversity and local communities.

This Council resolves to:

19. Oppose the proposals for Chatteris and Redmere Wind Farms, on the information available, on the grounds that the scale and concentration of development would place an unacceptable additional burden on Grade 1 agricultural land and the communities and environment of East Cambridgeshire.
20. Instruct the Leader to write to Vattenfall to ask them to reconsider their proposals and to investigate alternative locations and configurations which would eliminate the impact on Grade 1 agricultural land.
21. Ensure that East Cambridgeshire District Council makes robust and evidence-based representations throughout the Development Consent Order process, including on:
 - the loss and impact on Grade 1 agricultural land and food production
 - the cumulative impact of renewable energy developments already operating, consented or proposed in East Cambridgeshire

- landscape and visual impact, including the scale of 220-metre turbines
 - impacts on the Ouse Washes and other protected habitats and species
 - flood risk, drainage and water management
 - biodiversity and the effectiveness of proposed mitigation
 - construction traffic and impacts on local roads
 - the proposed grid connection and associated infrastructure
 - Battery Energy Storage System technology and safety
 - aviation, radar and defence considerations, particularly in relation to RAF Lakenheath and RAF Mildenhall, and
 - impacts on local communities and the cumulative effects of the developments taken together with other major infrastructure proposals
22. Work with affected Parish and Town Councils and relevant neighbouring authorities to ensure that local concerns and cumulative impacts are fully represented during the DCO process.
 23. Instruct the Leader to write to the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero setting out this Council's opposition to the proposals on the information available and requesting that the concerns of East Cambridgeshire regarding Grade 1 agricultural land, food security, cumulative development and environmental impact are fully considered when the applications are determined.
 24. Instruct the Leader to write to the Shadow Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero setting out the Council's position and requesting support for the protection of Grade 1 agricultural land when determining the appropriate locations for major renewable energy infrastructure.
 25. Instruct the Leader to write to Charlotte Cane MP, Member of Parliament for Ely and East Cambridgeshire, asking her to raise these concerns directly with Ministers, to raise questions on the floor of the House of Commons concerning the proposed developments and their impact on Grade 1 agricultural land and food security, and to oppose the Chatteris (Mepal) and Redmere (Shippea Hill) proposals.
 26. Request that officers prepare an East Cambridgeshire position statement on each proposed development, informed by the evidence submitted through the DCO process, and bring this to Members as appropriate so that the Council's position can be maintained and strengthened as the proposals develop.
 27. Make clear that East Cambridgeshire has already done its part, and continues to do so, in supporting the generation of renewable energy, and that the Council's objection is based on the principle that renewable energy schemes must only be delivered in a way which also protects food security, the environment and the communities which host that infrastructure.

PROPOSER: Cllr Anna Bailey

SECONDER: Cllr Julia Huffer

C. Discontinue Use of Pesticides on ECDC playgrounds

Proposer: Kathrin Holtzmann

Secunder: Lorna Dupre

Council Notes:

1. That ECDC, through its trading company ECTC, uses herbicide and germination retarding chemicals on its own playgrounds for chemical weed control. In comparison to sidewalks and marketplaces, playgrounds are areas where children will be in close contact to the ground and touch the floor. Especially smaller children will touch faces and put hands in the mouth.

2. That children are particularly vulnerable to chemical exposure due to their developing physiology and lower body weight, and herbicide and pesticide exposure can cause serious health issues.
3. That many playground surfaces are hardstanding — tarmac, concrete, or rubber — on which herbicides such as glyphosates cannot break down biologically through soil microorganisms, causing them to persist or wash directly into surface drains untreated.
4. That several UK local authorities, such as Hackney, Lambeth, Southward and Guildford have already adopted pesticide-free policies for public spaces frequented by children, using integrated pest management and non-chemical alternatives.

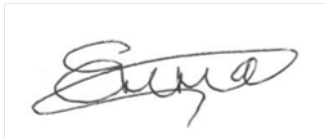
Council Believes:

1. That the Council has a duty of care to protect the health and safety of children using its own managed playgrounds.
2. That the precautionary principle should apply where credible evidence links a practice to potential harm to children.
3. That effective and affordable non-chemical alternatives to pest and weed control exist and are in use by other local authorities.
4. That the use of herbicides on hardstanding playground surfaces presents an unnecessary and avoidable risk.

Council Resolves:

1. To request ECTC to discontinue the use of synthetic chemical pesticides, herbicides, and insecticides on or within 10 metres of all playground facilities that it maintains on behalf of the Council within the district and consider adoption of integrated pest management or non-chemical alternatives in playground areas.
2. To commission a review of the current grounds maintenance contract to ensure compliance with this policy by the next contract renewal date.
3. To report annually to the relevant committee on compliance and the alternatives in use.

8. **To answer questions from Members** **[oral]**
9. **Schedule of items recommended from Committees and other Member bodies:**
 - Finance & Assets Committee – 24 September 2026
 - Local Tax Reduction Scheme Proposal 2027-28
 - Audit Committee – 14 July 2026 **Page 15**
 - Audit Committee Annual Report 2025/26
10. **Appointment of Lay Member to Audit Committee** **Page 37**
11. **Planning – Implementing the National Scheme of Delegation** **Page 39**
12. **Constitutional Update – Amendment** **Page 93**
13. **Parks & Open Spaces and Ely Markets Service Delivery Model** **Page 95**
14. **Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority:** **Page 139**
 - (a) Update report – July 2026
 - (b) Update report – August 2026



E Grima
Chief Executive

To: All Members of the Council

NOTES:

Members of the public are welcome to attend this meeting. Admittance is on a "first come, first served" basis and public access will be from 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 will be webcast, and a live stream will be available. Further details are available at <https://eastcambs.gov.uk/node/3471>. Please be aware that all attendees, including those in the public gallery, will be visible on the livestream.

Public Questions/Statements are welcomed on any topic related to the Council's functions as long as there is no suspicion that it is improper (e.g. offensive, slanderous or might lead to disclosures of Exempt or Confidential information). Up to 15 minutes is allocated for 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 in our workplace. Therefore, we do not provide disposable cups at our meetings and would ask members of the public to bring their own drink to the meeting, if required.

Fire instructions for meeting: The instructions in the event of a fire at the venue will be announced at the commencement 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 press from the meeting, a resolution in the following terms will need to be passed:

"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)."