



# Two councils. One fairer future.

## Option A proposal

Local Government Reorganisation:  
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough

28 November 2025



Supported by

Cambridgeshire  
County Council



# Foreword

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough are places defined by rich histories and ambitious futures. Here, a global reputation for academic and research excellence in groundbreaking fields such as biomedical science and quantum computing, meets the charm of historic market towns and rural villages that have shaped communities for generations. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough are places where ideas flourish and people come together to make things happen through innovation and a spirit of collaboration.



**Cllr Lucy Nethsingha**  
Leader, Cambridgeshire County Council

While we know Cambridgeshire and Peterborough is a fantastic area to live in, work in and visit, and residents consistently report high levels of happiness and quality of life, we also recognise that life remains challenging for some individuals and communities. Persistent poverty in certain areas limits life chances, whilst rural isolation, poor connectivity and high housing costs prevent people from accessing the abundance of opportunities the area has to offer, ultimately hindering inclusive economic growth. All of this is unfolding in a context of rising demand for council services and constrained public finances, placing unsustainable pressure on existing structures and limiting the ability of local government and its partners to respond systematically.

We don't pretend that Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) offers a 'silver bullet' to these challenges.

The need to respond to the criteria set by government means that there are elements within this submission which given more time, or different direction from government we might have chosen to do differently. With more time a review of the boundaries both within our district areas and across existing County borders could have been





explored. With different criteria we might have chosen to put forward different numbers of councillors, reducing the loss of democratic engagement with communities.

Nonetheless, LGR presents an opportunity to build a more efficient, resilient and responsive model of local government in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough that can support inclusive economic growth and improve outcomes for residents. By simplifying how public services are delivered, removing duplication from the existing two-tier system, and by embedding new ways of working with other public sector organisations like the NHS, LGR can create a system that offers better value for money, is easier for residents to navigate, more responsive to local needs, and better equipped to respond to increasingly complex needs.

Our proposal, referred to in this document as Option A, sets out the formation of two new unitary councils for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough – one covering the northwestern area of the existing footprint, and one covering the southeastern area. At its heart our proposal is about fairness and reform. This option provides an equal distribution of resources and inclusive economic growth opportunities across the whole area, giving opportunities for more effective public services for all our communities, and more empowered residents, who have a greater say in local decision making. Option A achieves this by establishing two new unitary councils that will:

- Balance the populations, land mass and base budgets of the existing councils in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, ensuring a fair distribution of existing resources, and taking account of both rural and urban interests (supported by Cambridgeshire ACRE's assessment with their rural toolkit);

- Provide sufficient scale, size and mass to manage financial shocks and deliver efficiencies through economies of scale in service delivery and commissioning;
- Align boundaries with existing healthcare footprints, limiting disruption for residents supported by high cost and complex services, and protecting established structures and relationships that can drive forward radical public service reform;
- Reflect functional economic areas and the distinctive, yet interconnected economies of our area, creating a solid foundation for supporting inclusive growth and the objectives of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA);
- Respect historic identities and the patterns of our residents daily lives, such as their travel to work and travel to learn patterns, allowing for services to be appropriately tailored to the distinctive needs and aspirations of our diverse places.

Our robust, evidence-based options appraisal demonstrates that Option A most effectively meets the Government criteria for LGR. This conclusion is further validated by the [options appraisal](#) completed by Peterborough City Council – which clearly identifies Option A as the option that best meets Government criteria. A further [options appraisal](#) by Huntingdonshire District Council also identifies Option A as the highest ranking of the options submitted to for consideration.

Option A puts forward a new organisational blueprint that will transform the way local services are delivered through a strengthened focus on preventative, place-based, evidence-led and collaborative ways of working. Our submission includes information on how Neighbourhood Area

Committees could be implemented across our area, a forum which would complement our existing town and parish councils and ensuring that all residents in the area have access to strong locally led democratic structures which ensure the voice of every place is heard in the new larger councils.

We envision a future where every community, regardless of size or geography, has the tools and support to thrive. A future where inclusive growth delivers opportunities for young people, supports vulnerable residents to feel secure, and everyone is connected to the decisions that shape their lives.

This neighbourhood focus will be reinforced by place-based service delivery, with the boundaries of our proposed new unitary councils aligning with the existing NHS Integrated Care System (ICS) Care Partnerships and reflecting the hospital flows of our major acute healthcare providers. This alignment establishes a strong structural foundation to advance the ambitions of the Government's English

Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill and 10 Year Health Plan for England, enabling local government and the NHS to rapidly embed new preventative services that will help mitigate future financial pressures across both sectors. This is why Option A is supported by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough ICB, Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, the North West Anglia NHS Foundation Trust (NWAFT) and the ICS North Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Care Partnership – a pilot area for the Government's National Neighbourhood Health Implementation Programme.

We are ready to move forward. The foundations are in place, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough has the talent, vision and capability to deliver a new model of local government. A model that honours our past, reflects our present, and delivers two new councils and one fairer future.

**Cllr Lucy Nethsingha**  
Leader, Cambridgeshire County Council



Lower Valley Farm, Fulbourn

# Government criteria – location in proposal

Broad criteria	Sub-criteria	Location in proposal
1. A proposal should seek to achieve for the whole of the area concerned the establishment of a single tier of local government	a) Proposals should be for sensible economic areas, with an appropriate tax base which does not create an undue advantage or disadvantage for one part of the area	Options Appraisal, p.60-62
	b) Proposals should be for a sensible geography which will help to increase housing supply and meet local needs	Options Appraisal, p.60-62
	c) Proposals should be supported by robust evidence and analysis and include an explanation of the outcomes it is expected to achieve, including evidence of estimated costs/benefits and local engagement	Options Appraisal, p.46-47, 60-64, Financial Analysis, p.82-87, Our Vision, p.108-125
	d) Proposals should describe clearly the single tier local government structures it is putting forward for the whole of the area, and explain how, if implemented, these are expected to achieve the outcomes described	Options Appraisal, p.48, Our Vision, p.130-149
2. Unitary local government must be the right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks.	a) As a guiding principle, new councils should aim for a population of 500,000 or more.	Options Appraisal, p.63-64
	b) There may be certain scenarios in which this 500,000 figure does not make sense for an area, including on devolution, and this rationale should be set out in a proposal.	Options Appraisal, p.63-64
	c) Efficiencies should be identified to help improve councils' finances and make sure that council taxpayers are getting the best possible value for their money.	Financial Analysis, p.82-89, Options Appraisal, p.46-47, 63-64, Our Vision, p.108-121
	d) Proposals should describe clearly the single tier local government structures it is putting forward for the whole of the area, and explain how, if implemented, these are expected to achieve the outcomes described	Options Appraisal, p.48, Our Vision, p.130-149

Broad criteria	Sub-criteria	Location in proposal
	e) For areas covering councils that are in Best Value intervention and/or in receipt of Exceptional Financial Support, proposals must additionally demonstrate how reorganisation may contribute to putting local government in the area as a whole on a firmer footing and what area-specific arrangements may be necessary to make new structures viable.	Not applicable to Cambridgeshire and Peterborough
	f) In general, as with previous restructures, there is no proposal for council debt to be addressed centrally or written off as part of reorganisation. For areas where there are exceptional circumstances where there has been failure linked to capital practices, proposals should reflect the extent to which the implications of this can be managed locally, including as part of efficiencies possible through reorganisation.	Not applicable to Cambridgeshire and Peterborough
3. Unitary structures must prioritise the delivery of high quality and sustainable public services to citizens.	a) Proposals should show how new structures will improve local government and service delivery, and should avoid unnecessary fragmentation of services.	Options Appraisal, p.65-67
	b) Opportunities to deliver public service reform should be identified, including where they will lead to better value for money.	Options Appraisal, p.65-67, Our Vision, p.108-121, 130-149
	c) Consideration should be given to the impacts for crucial services such as social care, children's services, SEND and homelessness, and for wider public services including for public safety.	Options Appraisal, p.65-67, Our Vision, p.108-121, 130-149
4. Proposals should show how councils in the area have sought to work together in coming to a view that meets local needs and is informed by local views	a) It is for councils to decide how best to engage locally in a meaningful and constructive way and this engagement activity should be evidenced in your proposal.	Local Engagement, p.96-105
	b) Proposals should consider issues of local identity and cultural and historic importance	Options Appraisal, p.68-72, Local Engagement, p. 99-102
	c) Proposals should include evidence of local engagement, an explanation of the views that have been put forward and how concerns will be addressed.	Options Appraisal, p.68-72, Local Engagement, p.96-105



Broad criteria	Sub-criteria	Location in proposal
5. New unitary structures must support devolution arrangements.	a) Proposals will need to consider and set out for areas where there is already a Combined Authority (CA) or a Combined County Authority (CCA) established or a decision has been taken by Government to work with the area to establish one, how that institution and its governance arrangements will need to change to continue to function effectively; and set out clearly (where applicable) whether this proposal is supported by the CA/CCA /Mayor	Options Appraisal, p.73-74, Our Vision, p.122-125
	b) Where no CA or CCA is already established or agreed then the proposal should set out how it will help unlock devolution.	Not applicable to Cambridgeshire and Peterborough
	c) Proposals should ensure there are sensible population size ratios between local authorities and any strategic authority, with timelines that work for both priorities.	Not applicable to Cambridgeshire and Peterborough
6. New unitary structures should enable stronger community engagement and deliver genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment.	a) Proposals will need to explain plans to make sure that communities are engaged.	Our Vision, p.126-129
	b) Where there are already arrangements in place it should be explained how these will enable strong community engagement.	Our Vision, p.126-129

All supporting evidence and data is linked in the main body of text or can be found in Appendix A.



Trains near Cambridge Station



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# Introduction

The Option A proposal will offer more equal, more empowered and more effective local government to residents, whilst supporting the ambitious economic growth agenda of the region's Mayoral Strategic Authority.





St Mary's Passage, Cambridge

# Background

Through its landmark [English Devolution White Paper](#) and subsequent [English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill](#), the Government has set out its intention to transform the way local government works in England.

By widening and deepening devolution, the Government intends to shift power to English regions through the creation of Mayoral Strategic Authorities that will cover all areas of the country, giving local places greater control over how to invest their money to address local needs. An ambitious programme of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) accompanies this, and will abolish all county and district councils in the 21 two-tier areas in England, replacing them with new unitary councils. These new unitary councils will act as Principal Authorities, delivering the full range of local government services through a single council, with the aim of creating simpler local government structures, enabling service integration across areas like adult social care and housing, clearer and closer relationships with local communities, and improved collaboration with other public sector bodies like the NHS, police and fire services.

The plans for devolution and LGR come amidst the Government's wider ambitions to reform public services, including the Government's [Plan for Change and Mission Delivery](#), the [10 Year Health Plan for England](#), the [Families First Partnership programme](#) for children's social care and the [Fair Funding Review 2.0](#) arrangements for local government finance. Despite the potential implementation challenges of such wide ranging and simultaneous transformation, there is a once in a generation opportunity to design joined-up public services that are more responsive to community needs. For example, the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill calls for greater alignment of public service boundaries – such as those of NHS Integrated Care Boards, fire and rescue and police services – in a bottom-up approach focused on place, as well as establishing new duties for Mayoral Strategic Authorities to improve health, and wellbeing, and public service reform.





# Two councils. One fairer future.

The existing local government landscape in our area comprises one unitary council that serves the city of Peterborough (Peterborough City Council), and a two-tier system that serves Cambridgeshire, made up of a county council (Cambridgeshire County Council) and five city/district councils (Cambridge City Council, East Cambridgeshire District Council, Fenland District Council, Huntingdonshire District Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council).

There are also town and parish councils serving East Cambridgeshire, Fenland, Huntingdonshire, Peterborough and South Cambridgeshire. Cambridge City has no parish or town councils and is instead served by a federation of residents' associations.

Option A sets out a vision for the reorganisation of the status-quo that will create two new unitary councils for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and deliver a fairer future for the whole area. This is vitally important and is in response to resident engagement that has revealed that certain parts of the county fear being overlooked in the process. Our proposal ensures no place is left behind and instead creates opportunity for all, through a more equal distribution of local government resources, more empowered residents with greater influence over the decisions that affect them, and more effective services that will be delivered closer to communities. A Northwest Unitary Council will encompass Fenland, Huntingdonshire and Peterborough, and a Southeast Unitary Council will encompass Cambridge, East Cambridgeshire and South Cambridgeshire.

Each new council will be anchored by one of our area's major cities – Cambridge and Peterborough – providing a rich blend of rural, urban, and market town character that defines our region, creating the conditions for inclusive growth. These new unitary councils will reflect historic community ties, travel-to-work and leisure patterns, existing public service footprints, transport infrastructure, and distinctive yet interconnected economies. They will have the necessary size and scale to ensure financial resilience, and by aligning with pre-existing partnership structures will create the optimal conditions to move forward quickly with a radical agenda of public service reform. Through a new operating blueprint for local services, these unitary councils will be able to drive improved outcomes for residents, safeguard financial sustainability, and build greater trust in local government.

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough already benefit from a devolution deal that was agreed in 2017, which created the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA). The CPCA holds responsibility for functions including transport infrastructure, planning, economic



growth, business support and skills. In this regard, the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area is in an advantageous position and instead of establishing a new devolved authority, the CPCA can draw on its decade of experience to become the area's Mayoral Strategic Authority. This proposal therefore focuses on how Option A will support the CPCA to achieve Established Mayoral Authority status and help enable it to deliver the new Local Growth Plan, with its ambition to double the size of the economy to £62.3 billion Gross Value Added (GVA) as the core target by 2050, or triple the economy to £97.2 billion GVA as an aspirational 'Mayoral' target.

The unitary councils in Option A will support the growth ambitions of the CPCA through a clear and priority focus on the functional economic sub-areas they map onto. The Northwest Unitary Council will focus on planning and productivity support for logistics and distribution, manufacturing and engineering, enhancing the Greater Peterborough economic area, and on the agriculture and agri-tech industries, food processing and packaging of the Fens economic area. The Southeast Unitary Council will focus on planning and productivity in the knowledge and innovation sector, higher education and research of the Greater Cambridge economic area.

### More equal

- Option A creates two unitary councils with balanced populations, landmass and resources
- Option A creates economic equity with two new unitary councils that reflect the area's functional economic sub-geographies

- Option A balances inclusive economic growth opportunities with an equal distribution of housing need and building targets between the two new unitary councils, limiting development strain
- Option A ensures fairness with two new unitary councils that share similar employment and unemployment rates

### More empowered

- Option A builds two new unitary councils around historical identities, fostering opportunity for meaningful neighbourhood governance
- Option A creates two new unitary councils that have strong ties to their anchor cities but also protect rural interests
- Option A creates two new unitary councils that reflect the patterns of residents' daily lives, such as travel to work, travel to learn and travel to leisure

### More effective

- Option A uses district boundaries as building blocks for its two new unitary councils, creating simple integration of upper and lower-tier services
- Option A creates two new unitary councils that share boundaries with existing ICS Care Partnership footprints, supporting health and social care integration and limiting disruption to services for vulnerable residents
- Option A creates two new unitary councils with the most effective configuration of geography and governance to rapidly deliver public service reform e.g. 10 Year Plan for Health



**"It makes sense to have two well balanced authorities both in terms of population size and geographical footprint"**

**A resident of East Cambridgeshire**



# How we got here

Option A is the result of collaboration across local stakeholders, including all seven existing councils, which have worked together to develop a shared evidence-base to underpin LGR proposals. Following the statutory invitation from the Government, the Leaders and Chief Executives of the seven councils tabled a range of potential options for LGR in our area, including the creation of a single county unitary council option that retained Peterborough City Council on its existing boundaries, and the creation of both two and three new unitary councils to replace the existing arrangements.



Road signs in Huntingdon



### Northwest Unitary Council

Fenland District Council  
Huntingdonshire District Council  
Peterborough City Council

### Southeast Unitary Council

Cambridge City Council  
East Cambridgeshire District Council  
South Cambridgeshire District Council



### North Unitary Council

East Cambridgeshire District Council  
Fenland District Council  
Huntingdonshire District Council  
Peterborough City Council

### South Unitary Council

Cambridge City Council  
South Cambridgeshire District Council



### East Unitary Council

East Cambridgeshire District Council  
Fenland District Council  
Peterborough City Council

### West Unitary Council

Cambridge City Council  
Huntingdonshire District Council  
South Cambridgeshire District Council

Options were reviewed alongside the Government’s criteria and subjected to independent financial analysis. This process showed that several of the initially considered options were not likely to meet the Government’s criteria and were financially unviable. A shortlist of three options was then approved by the Leaders and Chief Executives for further development, locally known as Option A, Option B and Option C. Each of these options create two new unitary councils for the area, using existing district council boundaries as building blocks.

In the months since, two further proposals have emerged, known locally as Option D and Option E. Option D, developed by Peterborough City Council, proposes three new unitary councils; Greater Peterborough Unitary Council, which would include the current administrative area of Peterborough and northwestern areas of Huntingdonshire, Greater Cambridge Unitary Council covering Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire, and Mid Cambridgeshire Unitary Council covering the remaining areas of Huntingdonshire, Fenland and East Cambridgeshire. Option E, being explored

Figure 1. Map overview of two unitary options



by Huntingdonshire District Council, would also create three new unitary councils; Huntingdonshire as a standalone unitary council, an East Unitary Council covering Peterborough, Fenland and East Cambridgeshire, and Greater Cambridge Unitary Council covering Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire. Whilst these two options are being developed, we maintain that, based on the evidence, any option creating three or more unitary councils will

not achieve the size or financial sustainability required to be considered viable. This is explored further in the Options Appraisal and Financial Analysis sections.

To enhance the evidence base for the shortlisted options, a range of analyses were completed, including work from external specialists in people services and local government finance. This provided

**Option D**



**Greater Peterborough Unitary Council**

Huntingdonshire District Council (northwest)  
Peterborough City Council

**Mid Cambridgeshire Unitary Council**

East Cambridgeshire District Council  
Fenland District Council  
Huntingdonshire District Council (southeast)

**Greater Cambridge Unitary Council**

Cambridge City Council  
South Cambridgeshire District Council

**Option E**



**East Unitary Council**

East Cambridgeshire District Council  
Fenland District Council  
Peterborough City Council

**Huntingdonshire Unitary Council**

Huntingdonshire District Council

**Greater Cambridge Unitary Council**

Cambridge City Council  
South Cambridgeshire District Council

**Figure 2.** Map overview of three unitary options

**New development in Barrington**



assurance to the seven existing councils on the accuracy of their in-house analysis and ensured the robustness of the evidence-base included in our proposal. In addition, two phases of extensive public engagement have been completed: a joint engagement, on behalf of all seven existing councils that generated over 3,000 survey responses, and a more bespoke second phase, undertaken by Cambridgeshire County Council, focussed on Option A. These have complemented the existing insights taken from regular resident and stakeholder engagement, such as Cambridgeshire County Council’s annual Quality of Life Survey.

“The proposed [Northwest/Southeast] division between the two unitary councils aligns well with how communities identify with their surrounding towns and areas”

**A resident of South Cambridgeshire**



# The case for change

The proposal for Option A meets the Government's six criteria and has been developed with explicit reference to them, as detailed in the options appraisal provided later in this document.

This conclusion is supported by a separate [options appraisal](#) completed by Peterborough City Council that also identifies Option A as the optimal arrangement for the future of local government in our area. In summary, Option A delivers the fairest balance of benefits for our whole area, creating new unitary councils that will be more equal, more empowered and more effective:

1. **The creation of a single tier of local government for the whole area concerned:** Option A abolishes all existing unitary, district/city and county councils and replaces them with two new unitary councils that reflect functional economic geographies and will support inclusive growth. Option A uses existing district boundaries as its building blocks and, importantly, does not unduly advantage or disadvantage any one part of the area. It achieves this by employing an equitable distribution of the existing population, landmass and council budgets.
2. **New unitary councils that are of the right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks:** Option A creates two new unitary councils that will serve populations of 420,000 and 520,000 residents respectively, reflecting the Government's population guidance as closely as possible, with projected population

growth resulting in both council areas reaching population sizes of 500,000 or more by 2040. By creating councils with these relatively balanced population sizes, Option A will secure economies of scale in service delivery, providing value for money and financial resilience into the future. Prudent financial analysis that does not create expectation of undeliverable savings by the new unitary councils indicates that Option A will provide recurring annual savings of £12.1 million, with transition costs of an estimated £35 million. This will result in a payback period of six years. From year seven onwards, the new unitary councils can expect to be at least £10.7m better off than under existing structures. When transformation benefits are added, Option A could see recurring annual savings of £29.4 million through a low transformation scenario, and up to £35 million in a high transformation scenario.

3. **New unitary councils must prioritise the delivery of high quality and sustainable public services to residents:** Option A is underpinned by a vision for new unitary councils that will ensure a safe and legal transition to new arrangements. Integrating county and district services within each new unitary council will create opportunities to enhance the effectiveness of service delivery – for example, by bringing adult social care and housing together. Aligning new

unitary councils with current NHS Integrated Care System (ICS) Care Partnership boundaries will support ongoing partnership working across the area, with a focus on delivering high-quality, preventative services. Delivering local government and health services along the same boundaries will limit disruption to established arrangements for vulnerable residents. It will also help us to deliver our ambitious transformation agenda to drive cross-organisational benefits through a new operational blueprint for local services. Option A is supported by the Central East ICB, main local NHS acute trusts and the ICS North Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Care Partnership.

4. **Plans for new unitary councils should be developed collaboratively and demonstrate how they meet local needs and are informed by local views:** Councils across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough have worked collaboratively to develop a shared evidence-base to support LGR proposals. Two phases of resident and stakeholder engagement have provided a broad and deep understanding of local views on LGR proposals and future priorities. This complements the significant amount of resident insight generated through Cambridgeshire's annual Quality of Life Survey.
5. **New unitary councils must support devolution arrangements:** Cambridgeshire and Peterborough already benefit from a devolution agreement, with a directly elected Mayor leading the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA). Option A will support the CPCA to achieve Established Mayoral Strategic Authority status and access additional devolution benefits. It will also support

the delivery of the area's ambitious new [Local Growth Plan](#), driving growth through the Greater Peterborough and Fens economic areas in the northwest and the Greater Cambridge economic area in the southeast, alongside the emerging plans to boost growth around Cambridge as part of the Oxford-Cambridge Growth Corridor. Two unitary councils of similar size will provide balanced population size ratios between local authorities and the strategic authority, and will ensure both urban and rural community interests are equally considered.

6. **New unitary councils should enable stronger community engagement and deliver genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment:** Option A places communities and neighbourhoods at its heart. The two new unitary councils for the Northwest and Southeast of our area are grounded in historical identities and reflect the daily routines of residents, such as travel to work patterns. Option A respects the area's important town and parish councils, and our new blueprint for local services means delivering council services closer to communities. The creation of new Neighbourhood Area Committees (NACs) will give residents greater say over what happens where they live and will complement the role of locally elected councillors, who will become accountable for the full range of local government services. This approach will also drive efforts for greater consideration of participatory budgeting, community asset transfers, and deep collaboration at a neighbourhood level, alongside other public service partners who are also striving to embed these approaches.



# Local context

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough is often called an 'area of contrasts', where vibrant urban centres, world-famous universities, historic market towns, charming villages and expansive rural landscapes all exist side-by-side. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough's distinctive identity is formed by its rich history and diversity of people, communities and places.



Abbey–Chesterton bridge, Cambridge



# Our place

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough is often called an ‘area of contrasts’, where vibrant urban centres, world-famous universities, historic market towns, charming villages and expansive rural landscapes exist side by side.

## History

The distinctive identity of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough is formed by its rich history and diversity of people, communities and places.

The historic environment of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough is unique and heavily influenced by geology, topography and water. The ancient cities of Cambridge, Ely and Peterborough are host to markets, historic streets and monumental architecture. The Fens have long supported

human activity for transport, trade and food, whilst the claylands to the west and chalklands to the east preserve evidence of villages and agriculture, clustered around a broad network of historic market towns. Significant sites that have survived the test of time include the Bronze Age remains at Flag Fen; the Norman Castles at Cambridge, Peterborough, Wisbech and Huntingdon; civil war fortifications; the fenland drainage works and the Napoleonic Prisoner of War camp at Norman Cross. The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area has



supported human activity from all periods of the past, and the evidence is preserved and dutifully managed.

## Geography and environment

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough is home to substantial agricultural land, largely due to the draining of the Fen marshlands that started in the 17th Century. Agricultural land now occupies 79% of the total land area of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and includes 19% of England's Grade 1 ('excellent quality') agricultural land. Cambridgeshire County Council holds one of the largest local authority public estates in England and Wales, extending to over 33,000 acres of farmland across the county with more than 160 tenants. Another nationally significant facet of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough's geography is the peatland, as the area is home to 27% of England's total peatland stock. Peatlands are amongst the most valuable ecosystems on Earth, owing to their role in preserving global biodiversity,

providing safe drinking water, minimising flood risks and helping to address climate change. Whilst many peatlands in Cambridgeshire are considered ‘wasted’ due to their poor condition, closer management through peat-sympathetic agricultural practice, new agricultural approaches, and peatland restoration, have the potential to significantly improve the county's peat soil. Some of this work has already begun, including the Wicken Fen Peatland Restoration project, which aims to restore peat, retain rainwater, and manage water tables to maintain healthy and saturated peatlands for carbon storage, flood mitigation and wildlife habitats. It is important to note the vital role that Internal Drainage Boards (IDBs) play within the area. These public bodies reduce flood risk by managing water levels and drainage within defined drainage districts, which are based on water catchment areas rather than local government administrative boundaries. The role of IDBs in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough is crucial to effective water and flood management.



# Our people

Our growing population is a testament to the rural charm and new towns that Cambridgeshire and Peterborough has to offer, as well as the opportunities and prosperity that many of our residents enjoy.

## Demography

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area is growing fast. It is home to two of the most rapidly growing cities in England, Cambridge and Peterborough which have seen a population increase of 11% since 2011. This trend is expected to continue, and the area is forecast to reach 1,088,790 people by 2040. Roughly 10% of the area's population live in East Cambridgeshire, 11% in Fenland, 16% in Cambridge, 19% in South Cambridgeshire, 20% in Huntingdonshire and 24% in Peterborough. Data collected through Census 2021 included self-reporting of ethnic identity and paints a picture of the diversity within Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. This showed that the area is comprised of 85% White ethnicities (above the England average of 82%), with 8% Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh ethnicities, 2% Black, Black British or Black Welsh, Caribbean or African ethnic groups, 3% Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups and 2% Other ethnic groups.

Whilst the overall population is growing, the percentage of 0–17-year-olds will decrease slightly over the next 15 years, the percentage of those aged 65 and over will increase slightly, and the working age population will remain at a relatively stable percentage. There will also be growth in the percentage of those aged 85 and over, as they increase from 2.5% of the population in 2025 to 3.5% of the population in 2040. The rapid population increase that is forecast to continue in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough poses two distinct challenges for the area. The first is the additional pressure on local infrastructure, such as transport networks and natural resources. For example, water

scarcity is a recognised challenge in the area and a major barrier to growth. According to the [Cambridge Water Scarcity Group](#), a combination of low rainfall and high temperatures, population growth, and environmental requirements has increased the strain on groundwater sources – including the area's chalk streams. A [new reservoir located in Fenland](#) is currently in the pre-application design phase and has been classified as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project, allowing the Government to drive the work forward. The reservoir is intended to alleviate pressures and supply the growing demand for water associated with future growth of both housing and industry in the south of Cambridgeshire. As demand continues to grow, new solutions to this complex challenge will need to be found. The second challenge of a growing population is the increased demand on public services, especially in social care, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) provision, and homelessness prevention. Cambridgeshire County Council experienced a 10% increase in new client contacts for adult social care from 2021/22 to 2023/24, alongside 31% increase in Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough

from 2021/22 to 2024/25 . Looking ahead, a [report by Newton](#) forecasts that between 2025 and 2040, spending on adult social care will see growth of 104% per resident for Cambridgeshire County Council and 94% per resident for Peterborough City Council. This growing demand and spending on critical services will place already stretched council finances under greater pressure and means future unitary councils will need to deliver sufficient economies of scale.

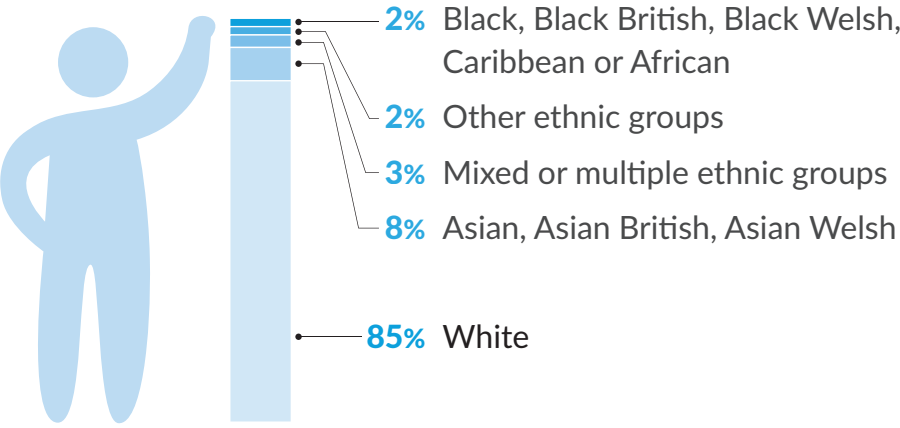


Figure 3. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough population by ethnic groups (Census 2021)

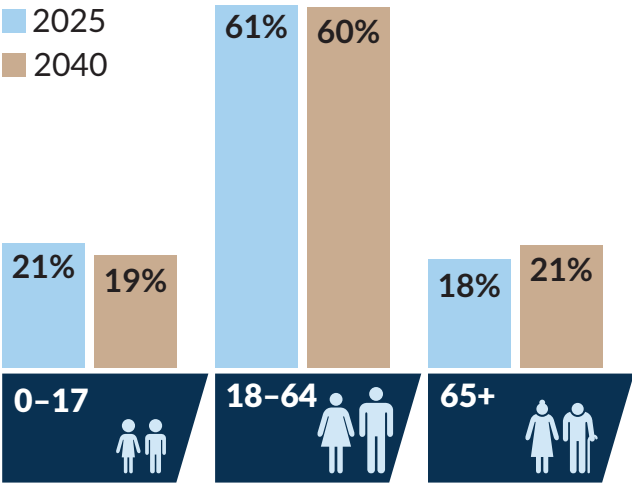


Figure 4. Forecast population by age group

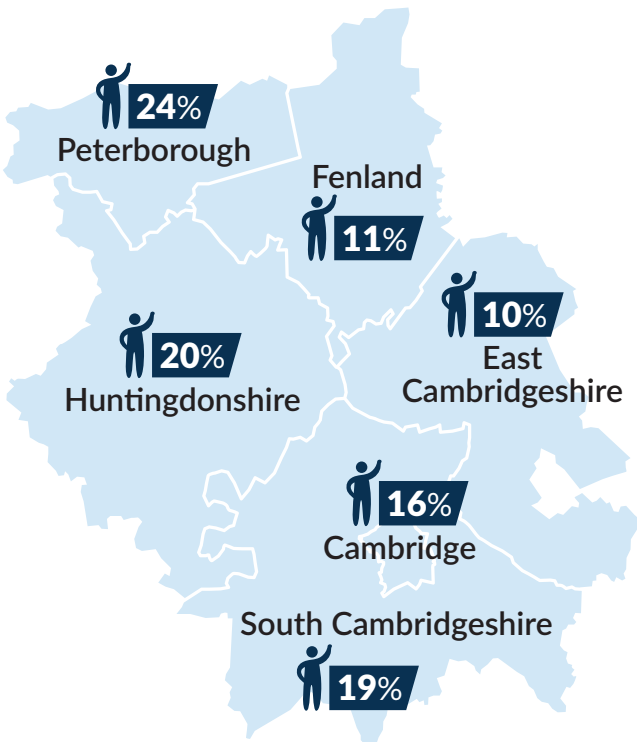


Figure 5. Distribution of population (Census 2021)

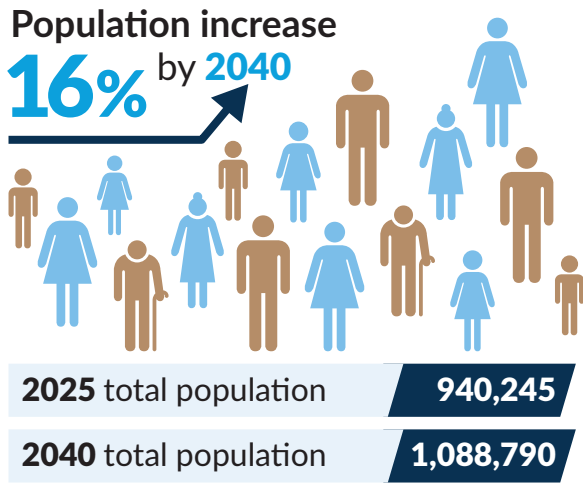


Figure 6. Forecast population increase



Education and employment

Cambridgeshire schools demonstrate a strong academic performance: most primary school pupils meet the national standards, secondary school results are above average with nearly half of secondary school pupils in 2022 achieving Grade 5 or above in English and Maths GCSEs, and post-16 resulting in an average B- in A-levels and a Merit in T-levels. After completing post-16 education, 35% of Cambridgeshire students entered employment and 42% remained in education.

Peterborough schools mostly meet expected standards, with most primary school pupils achieving expected standards or higher overall, but lower than the national average for reading, writing and maths. Peterborough secondary schools' results in 2022 were in line with the national average, with 39.1% of students achieving grade 5 or above in English and Maths GCSEs, and an average of Grade C+ in A-Levels. Peterborough continues its strong history of technical education with an average T-level grade of Distinction in 2022. After completing post-16 education, 34% of students entered employment and 36% remained in education.

Although overall economic performance in the area is strong, unemployment and economic inactivity data reveals notable disparities within Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. High levels of economic inactivity can be found in some areas – 26.6% in Cambridge (due largely to its student population), 25.9% in Fenland and 21% in Peterborough – contrasting with the lower rates of 17.8% in East Cambridgeshire, 15.3% in Huntingdonshire and 12.9% in South Cambridgeshire. Inactivity due to long-term sickness or disability is higher in Fenland and Peterborough, where 4.6% and 4.4% of the population (over 16) were economically inactive due to these reasons, with the lowest levels in South Cambridgeshire at 2.2%

The proportion of economically active residents (aged 16+) claiming Universal Credit (UC) varies significantly between districts, with South Cambridgeshire showing the lowest rates at 2.3% and Peterborough showing the highest rates at 7.8%. While Cambridge had the third highest proportion of UC claimants in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area, the Centre for Cities Outlook report for 2025 found that Cambridge had the second lowest claimant count rate of cities nationally (November 2024).

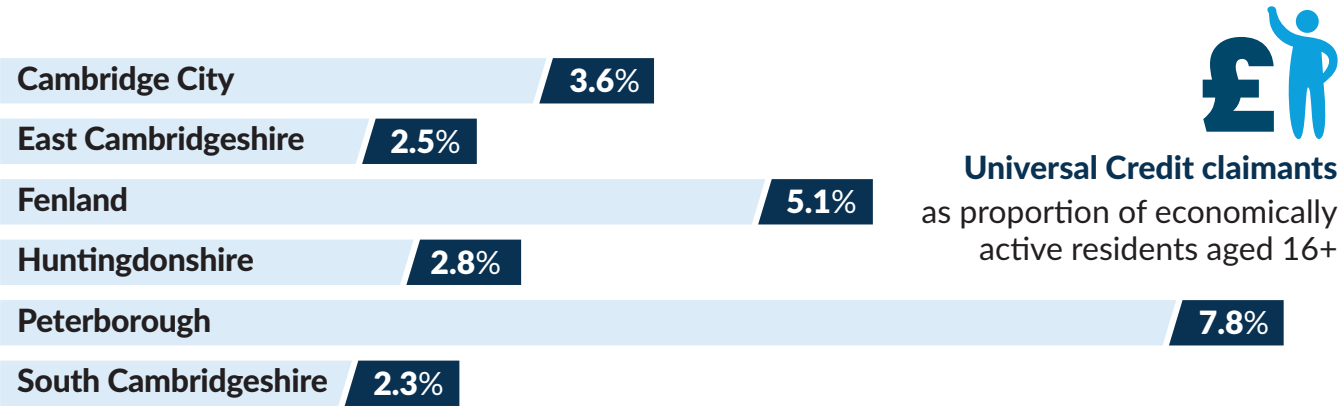


Figure 7. Universal Credit claimants across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough

Health and deprivation

Health and deprivation are intrinsically linked, with each influencing the other. Whilst the overall health of residents in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough is largely in line with England averages, there are variations across the area. South Cambridgeshire has the highest healthy life expectancy and one of the best self-reporting general health patterns. Fenland has both the lowest healthy life expectancy and the lowest levels of self-reported good and very good health, followed closely by Peterborough on both metrics.

Although Cambridgeshire is often associated with affluence, there are considerable pockets of deprivation and inequality. Between October 2024 and May 2025, the Cambridgeshire Poverty Strategy Commission investigated the complex reality of poverty throughout the county, publishing a series of recommendations for the public sector and Voluntary, Community & Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisations on how they could work more effectively together to prevent and alleviate poverty. Similarly, from January 2023 to February

2025, Peterborough Council for Voluntary Service (PCVS) ran the Peterborough Poverty Truth Commission, working closely with those with lived experience of poverty to understand and begin taking steps to improve the outcomes and experiences of those struggling in Peterborough. These two initiatives examined the wide-ranging factors interconnected with poverty and deprivation, from digital isolation to mental health, and housing to social connection.

Over the last year both the Cambridgeshire Poverty Strategy Commission and Peterborough Poverty Truth Commission concluded their work and identified further action needed to reduce poverty and improve the quality of life for those struggling. For example, they highlighted the need to address limited access to public transport and inconsistent broadband connectivity, especially in rural areas. These barriers restrict residents' access to local government services, education, employment and social activities and can directly affect mental health. Building on this work will be crucial for new councils to ensure that the work to alleviate poverty continues.

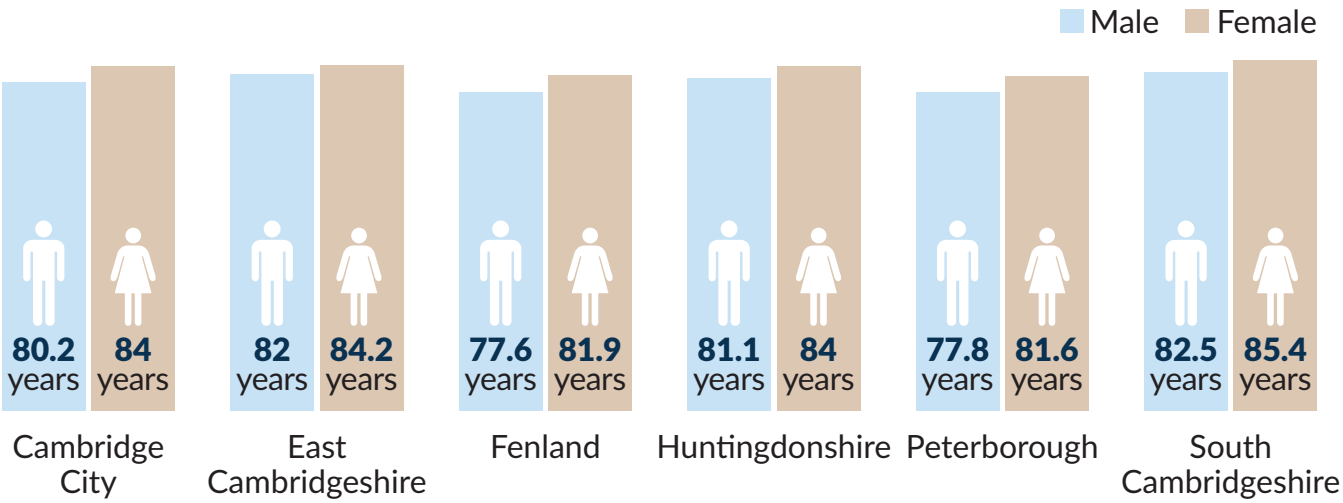


Figure 8. Healthy life expectancy across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough



# Our economy

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area incorporates diverse economies, expanding cities, and is rated highly as a place for national investment.

## Diverse economies

There are three functional economic areas in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough:

- **Greater Peterborough** – focusing on logistics, distribution, manufacturing and engineering sectors.
- **The Fens** – centred around the agriculture, agri-tech, food processing and packaging sectors.
- **Greater Cambridge** – concentrated in the knowledge and innovation, higher education and research sectors.

In 2023, the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area generated £34 billion in Gross Value Added (GVA), whilst the total turnover for 2023-24 was £59 billion. The largest sectors by turnover for 2023-24 were:

- Manufacturing at £12.6 billion (mostly generated across Peterborough, Huntingdonshire and South Cambridgeshire).
- Life Sciences and Healthcare at £10 billion (concentrated within Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire).
- Wholesale and Retail Distribution at £9.4 billion.

The agriculture sector remains a vital component of regional and national assets, comprising around 5% of the total economy of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough in 2024, generating £1.4 billion GVA and

employing 5% of the country's agricultural workforce in 2023.

The National Farmers Union report 'Delivering for Britain' notes that The Fens, which cover large portions of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and extend into Lincolnshire and Norfolk, account for around 7% of the country's total agricultural production, employing 80,000 people, and the whole 'farm to fork' supply chain (including agriculture, professional services, food retail and catering) contributes £3.1 billion to the East Anglian regional economy.

Supporting these economies is the transport infrastructure across the area, which is predominantly characterised by:

- Relatively strong road and rail networks connecting market towns and rural areas.
- Robust public and active travel transport connections in Cambridge.
- Strong road network connections in Peterborough.

Soil affected roads across Fenland, East Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire and Peterborough create significant challenges and associated costs for road networks.

The County Council is working with CPCA to further improve public transport through proposed Bus Franchising or Enhanced Partnerships, and the further expansion of the Guided Busway coverage through the City Region Deal.



## Growing cities

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough is home to two anchor cities noted for their growth, innovation and entrepreneurship.

- Peterborough was among the top five fastest-growing cities by population, and among the top 10 cities with highest start-up rates in 2023.
- The Global Innovation Index 2024 ranked Cambridge as the world's leading science and technological cluster by intensity, relative to population density, for the third consecutive year.
- The Centre for Cities Outlook for 2025 report, placed Cambridge within the top 10 UK cities for the highest GVA per hour, within the top five UK cities for the highest average weekly workplace

earnings, and within the top three for UK cities with the highest percentage of people with high-level qualifications.

However in the 2025 Good Growth for Cities Index report, Cambridge fell 10 places compared to the previous Index.

## National investment

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough is home to world-leading innovation, research and entrepreneurship that attracts international interest and investment, driving economic growth regionally and nationally.

- The area is a vital component of the UK Innovation Corridor, connecting Peterborough, Cambridge and London, hosting world-leading hi-tech hubs, and supported by a consortium of public and private organisations.





# Our public service landscape

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough's public sector system is complex, with multiple tiers of local government, joint committees, a City Region Deal for Greater Cambridge, and Government-supported bodies such as the Cambridge Growth Company, alongside other statutory partners like the NHS, police, and fire and rescue services.

Cambridgeshire operates under a two-tier local government system, consisting of Cambridgeshire County Council (upper-tier authority) and five district councils (lower-tier authorities): Cambridge City, East Cambridgeshire, Fenland, Huntingdonshire and South Cambridgeshire. Peterborough City Council, which formed part of Cambridgeshire County Council until 1998, operates independently as a unitary authority, delivering both upper and lower-tier services. In addition, the CPCA oversees the delivery of the area's devolution deal. The

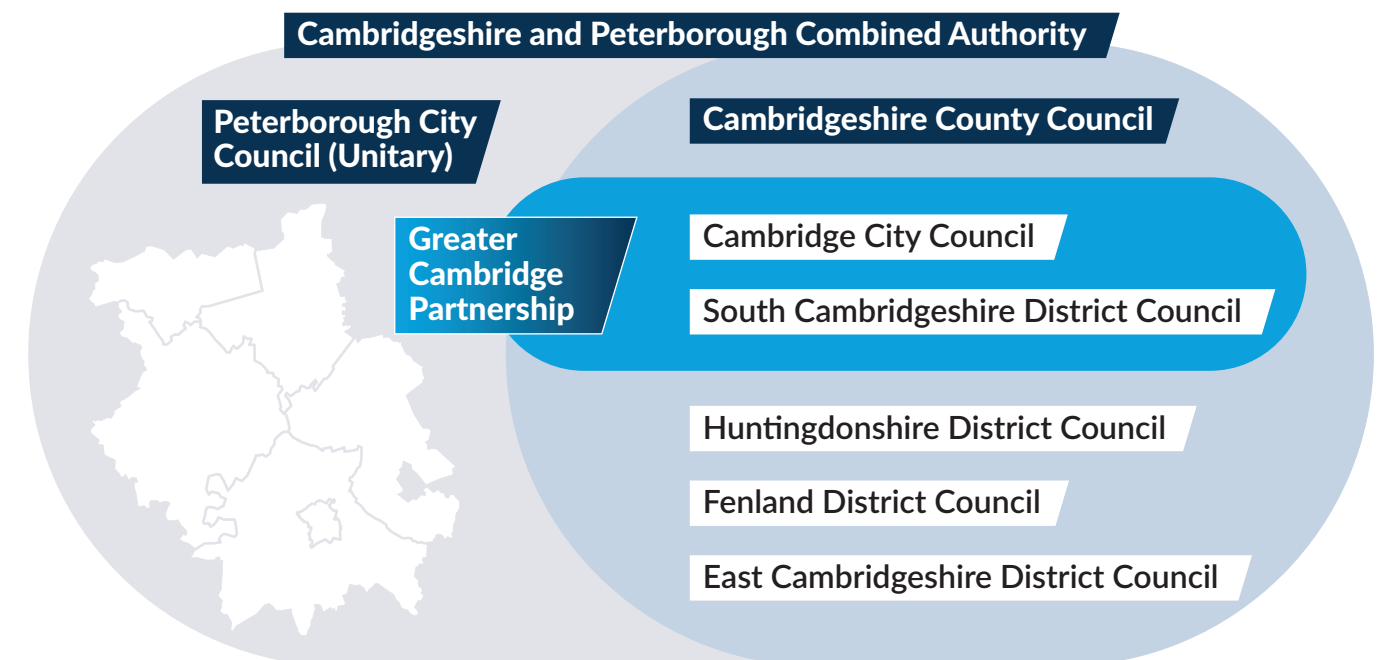
CPCA covers the footprints of both Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council, and is led by the directly elected Mayor, Paul Bristow.

The area covered by Cambridgeshire Constabulary, Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service, and Probation Trust are all coterminous with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough boundary, delivering their services for all existing local authority areas. The Greater Cambridge Partnership, covering the geographical districts of Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire, is

- Its prominence is also evident in the area's integral role in unlocking the Oxford-Cambridge Growth Corridor that connects Cambridge, Milton Keynes and Oxford as an area of national interest for commercial, housing and infrastructural development.
- East West Rail connecting Oxford with Cambridge by train will be important for facilitating greater collaboration and connection.
- Alongside national developments, regional change such as the development of the Universal Studios in

neighbouring Bedfordshire, the Government's commitment to a new national forest in the Oxford-Cambridge Corridor, and its investment in the Cambridge Growth Company, present further opportunities to grow the local economy.

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough will continue to be an area that helps lead the UK and the wider world into the future. The CPCA's recently approved Local Growth Plan defines clear economic goals and growth ambitions to sustain the area's success.



**Figure 9.** Local Government structure in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough





**Cambourne Child and Family Centre**

responsible for the current City Region Deal that is due to expire in 2029.

NHS services for the area are currently overseen by NHS Cambridgeshire and Peterborough – our local Integrated Care Board (ICB). It is responsible for planning, commissioning and governance of most of the NHS services in the area to meet the needs of local people now and in the future. It works as part of our Integrated Care System, which includes six NHS trusts delivering health services, and operates through four partnerships:

- North Cambridgeshire and Peterborough (covering Fenland, Huntingdonshire and Peterborough).
- Cambridgeshire South (covering Cambridge, East Cambridgeshire and South Cambridgeshire).

- Children's and Maternity (covering the whole Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area).
- Mental Health, Learning Disabilities and Autism (covering the whole Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area).

In 2025, plans for clustering of ICBs were announced, which come into effect on 1 April 2026. The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough ICB has become part of the Central East ICB cluster, with Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes. Whilst recognising that clustering indicates upcoming change for ICBs, at the operational level, the ICS Partnerships (including the North Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, and Cambridgeshire South Care Partnerships) will continue to function in a similar manner, maintaining their

connection with local communities. In a statement on 7 September 2025, the Minister of State for Health indicated that the Central East cluster has the potential to be reviewed following LGR and Devolution, to allow alignment with strategic authorities and newly established unitary councils.

Education provision in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough is diverse. State funded and private education settings include 13 nursery settings (maintained or academy within, or as separate nursery schools), 273 primary schools, 47 secondary schools and 18 SEND schools. Specialist settings include two hospital schools, two pupil referral units/alternative provisions, and two university technical colleges. Further education opportunities are provided through 32 mainstream schools that provide post-16 education opportunities, one standalone sixth form school, and six further education sixth form / colleges. In addition to the existing provision, there are a number of new schools proposed under the County Council's Capital Programme, including seven new primary schools and two new secondary schools. Separate to the Capital Programme, additional SEND provision will be delivered by the Department of Education through new special schools in March and Gamlingay. In Peterborough, it is expected that further school developments will be delivered, with a new primary school in Great Haddon

expected in 2026, and a secondary school to follow. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough benefit from world class higher education institutions that support high quality education and economic growth in the area. With the University of Cambridge and Anglia Ruskin University based in Cambridge and an Anglia Ruskin University Centre in Peterborough, there are a wide range of opportunities for further education in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

The scale of public sector change presents local government with a complex mix of competing priorities to be navigated at the same time as LGR. For example, local government in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough must continue to deliver key changes driven by Government, both at an operational level (such as Families First and Family Hubs) and a strategic level (such as the 10 Year Health Plan for England and ICB clustering), whilst also responding to global challenges and their local impacts, such as climate change and the associated increase in local flood risks. The collation of global, national, regional and local priorities presents a challenging set of demands on Cambridgeshire and Peterborough local government resources and finances, which need to be met with courage and determination to deliver better outcomes for residents.

**“[Option A provides] aligned working and thinking, maximising resources in a collaborative approach”**

**A local VCSE partner**



# Options appraisal





# Identifying the number of unitaries

To assess the different options for LGR in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, a comprehensive evidence base has been developed and reviewed. This includes commissioned reports from specialist consultancies, including PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), Newton, and Pixel Financial Management, alongside Office for National Statistics (ONS) and Census data, local engagement outcomes, and firsthand evidence from operational staff. The evidence was reviewed and the various options compared to ascertain which best met the Government’s criteria.

The first stage of the options appraisal approach was to consider the evidence for the creation of one, two and three new unitary councils covering the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough geography, alongside a baseline option that would retain Peterborough City Council in its current form and create a single county unitary council for Cambridgeshire. For consistency, and to ensure a robust process, all options were assessed against the Government’s six criteria as set out in the [letter of invitation](#), with equal weighting. Each option was scored against individual criterion using a scale of one to three, where:

- 1** is the proposal does not meet the criteria,
- 2** is the proposal meets some of the criteria,
- 3** is the proposal meets all the criteria.

The total score for each of the three options is indicated at the end of the table, with a simple ranking of lowest, middle and highest scoring, where the highest ranking option best meets the Government’s criteria and the lowest ranking option does not meet the Government’s criteria well.

The outcome of this appraisal clearly highlighted that options which created two new unitary councils for the area had the strongest alignment to the Government’s criteria.

Criteria	One Unitary	PCC and CCC Unitaries	Two Unitaries	Three Unitaries
1. A proposal should seek to achieve for the whole of the area concerned the establishment of a single tier of local government	The Government has indicated there must be at least two principal authorities under each Mayoral Strategic Authority. As this would not be possible under a single unitary model, this model is not viable.	2	3	1
2. Unitary local government must be the right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks		2	2	1
3. Unitary structures must prioritise the delivery of high quality and sustainable public services to citizens		3	3	1
4. Proposals should show how councils in the area have sought to work together in coming to a view that meets local needs and is informed by local views		2	3	2
5. New unitary structures must support devolution arrangements		3	3	2
6. New unitary structures should enable stronger community engagement and deliver genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment		3	3	3
Total	Not viable	15 Middle ranked	17 Highest ranked	10 Lowest ranked

Figure 10. Overview of first phase of options appraisal





## Size of new unitaries

The initial options appraisal highlighted a number of concerns regarding the option that proposed three unitary councils for the area, and the option that retained the existing Peterborough City Council and created a single county unitary. With just under one million residents across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, reorganising the area into three unitary councils would result in populations far below the guideline figure of 500,000. This would create significant risks regarding the economies of scale and financial viability of delivering essential services such as children's social care, with potential risks to some of the area's most vulnerable residents. The [Newton report](#), looking at LGR across England, shows that smaller unitary councils with a population of under 500,000, would be exposed to extremes in demand variation and could be overwhelmed by demand for services, which would not be sustainable in the long term. In addition, smaller unitary councils would have less purchasing power, which would result in a significant material impact on the unit cost of care across all services (adult social care, children's services, SEND), with a 1% increase in unit cost per 200k reduction in population. This would place crucial services for vulnerable residents on an unsustainable footing.

The creation of a single county unitary would fail to consider the impact of LGR across the whole area, resulting in a vast size imbalance between the two unitary councils. If Peterborough City Council remained within its existing boundaries it would have a population less than half the size of the 500,000 guideline figure, leading to a significantly disproportionate representation on the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority.

## Costs and benefits of unitarisation

Through work with [PwC](#), the financial impacts of moving to new unitary councils have been modelled. PwC's analysis draws on publicly available information about spending patterns in the existing councils as well as locally collected data and applies assumptions drawing on experience across England. This provides a standardised methodology that has been iterated in response to local testing and feedback, and considers the financial benefits of LGR, costs of transition, costs of aggregation and disaggregation and potential benefits of transformation.

Through the transition to two new unitary councils, cost savings are achieved by reducing duplication across the existing district councils as well as third party spend, as overlapping contracts and activities are removed and economies of scale are realised. Property costs will also be reduced through rationalising the shared estate across the existing councils. More detail on these savings can be found in Appendix A, section 22.

Creating a whole county unitary covering the current county and district boundaries, and retaining Peterborough City Council (referred to as the baseline) would deliver the highest level of savings, owing to the simplicity achieved by not disaggregating County Council services. The PwC report modelled that the one-off transition costs of this option would be £25.3m, with a recurring net annual benefit of £16.7m, resulting in a payback period of 2.7 years.

Under a two unitary model the recurring net annual benefit of LGR is calculated as £12.1m, meaning that there is a projected payback period of just over six years. This modelling suggests that by the seventh year following LGR implementation, collectively two new unitary councils should



expect to be at least £10.7m better off than under existing structures.

By contrast, the creation of three unitary councils in the area would significantly increase both the costs of transition and the recurrent running costs. The modelling sets out the projected annual benefit of creating three new unitary councils at only £1.4m per year cheaper than existing arrangements. Set against the very substantial change and setup costs for new unitary councils, more than £40m in this scenario, the payback period exceeds 20 years and there is a net deficit after seven years exceeding £66m.

Transformation benefits

The disparity in potential cost savings in retaining current boundaries, moving to a new two unitary model and moving to a three unitary model, is also revealed in the analysis of the ‘cross-cutting’ transformation opportunities that could be pursued alongside LGR. The modelling undertaken by PwC indicates it would be realistic to expect a two unitary council model to deliver transformation savings in addition to the benefits of transition.

Option £000	Gross annual benefit	Additional Annual Costs	Recurring net annual benefit	One-off transition costs	Payback period	Net benefit after one year	Net benefit after seven years
Baseline	£22,100	£5,500	£16,700	£25,300	2.8 years	-£18,300	£69,200
Two unitaries	£26,200	£14,100	£12,100	£34,400	6.1 years	-£35,100	£10,700
Three unitaries	£23,500	£22,100	£1,400	£40,700	20+ years	-£48,800	-£66,300

Figure 11. Projected financials for two and three unitary options

The table in Figure 12 sets out three scenarios, a safe and legal transition which has the closest continuity to existing services on vesting day, alongside scenarios assuming low and high levels of transformation. A more detailed breakdown of the costs and savings associated with transformation can be found in Appendix A, section 22.

The two unitary model indicates that recurrent net benefits would grow from £12.1m under a transition scenario to between £29.4m and £35.0m in the transformation scenarios. When the transformation scenarios are considered, the difference in recurring net benefit between the two unitaries and the baseline shrinks. In a low transformation scenario, there is only a £0.2m benefit of the baseline over two unitaries, and in a high transformation scenario there is a £1.3m benefit of two unitaries over the baseline. This is in sharp contrast to three unitary models where the more certain transition benefits are limited to £1.4m annually and transformation potential is around 50% lower at between £13.1m – £18.2m. The table also sets out the elevated implementation costs associated with three unitary scenarios.

Scenario	Baseline		Two Unitaries		Three Unitaries	
£000	Costs*	Recurring Net Benefit	Costs*	Recurring Net Benefit	Costs*	Recurring Net Benefit
Transition	£25,300	£16,700	£34,400	£12,100	£40,700	£1,400
Transformation (Low)	£34,000	£29,600	£46,200	£29,400	£48,500	£13,100
Transformation (High)	£37,200	£33,700	£50,400	£35,000	£52,500	£18,200

\* Costs of implementation

Figure 12. Transformation potential





Exploring two unitary options

Given the clear disbenefits of creating three unitary councils for the area, and the lack of alignment between the Government criteria and maintaining existing upper tier boundaries by establishing a county unitary, in June 2025, council leaders agreed on three proposals that create two new unitary councils to be explored in more detail – Option A (this proposal), Option B and Option C. In the months since, two further proposals have emerged, known locally as Option D and Option E.

Option A



Northwest Unitary Council

- Fenland District Council
- Huntingdonshire District Council
- Peterborough City Council

Southeast Unitary Council

- Cambridge City Council
- East Cambridgeshire District Council
- South Cambridgeshire District Council

Option B



North Unitary Council

- East Cambridgeshire District Council
- Fenland District Council
- Huntingdonshire District Council
- Peterborough City Council

South Unitary Council

- Cambridge City Council
- South Cambridgeshire District Council

“In the longer term I think it will save money and resource, ensure rural communities are not forgotten, share local funding more evenly, provide local people with better services from two authorities rather than seven.”

A local VCSE partner

Option C



East Unitary Council

- East Cambridgeshire District Council
- Fenland District Council
- Peterborough City Council

West Unitary Council

- Cambridge City Council
- Huntingdonshire District Council
- South Cambridgeshire District Council

Figure 13. Overview maps of two unitary options

Huntingdon Town Hall





## Option D



### Greater Peterborough Unitary Council

Huntingdonshire District Council (northwest)  
Peterborough City Council

### Mid Cambridgeshire Unitary Council

East Cambridgeshire District Council  
Fenland District Council  
Huntingdonshire District Council (southeast)

### Greater Cambridge Unitary Council

Cambridge City Council  
South Cambridgeshire District Council

## Option E



### East Unitary Council

East Cambridgeshire District Council  
Fenland District Council  
Peterborough City Council

### Huntingdonshire Unitary Council

Huntingdonshire District Council

### Greater Cambridge Unitary Council

Cambridge City Council  
South Cambridgeshire District Council

**Figure 14.** Overview maps of three unitary options

Whilst these two options are being developed – Option D by Peterborough City Council and Option E by Huntingdonshire District Council – it remains our view that based on the evidence reviewed in the first phase of the options appraisal, that any model which results in the creation of three or more unitary councils does not provide the size or financial sustainability to be considered viable.

## Witcham bus stop and book exchange







Cambridgeshire County Council employee

# Appraising two unitary options

To assess the three options that create two unitary councils for the area (Option A, Option B and Option C), the evidence was further reviewed, with the addition of insights from two phases of local engagement.

Each criterion is explored in detail, and the relevant data is presented alongside a narrative for each of the options and their scores. As above, each criterion has been scored on a scale of one to three, where:

- 1 is the proposal does not meet the criteria,
- 2 is the proposal meets some of the criteria,
- 3 is the proposal meets all the criteria.

The total score for each of the three options is indicated at the end of the table, with a simple ranking of lowest, middle and highest scoring, where the highest-ranking option best meets the Government's criteria and the lowest ranking option does not meet the Government's criteria well.

Within the narrative below, the main criteria and the sub criteria are explored for each of the options. However, there are a number of sub criteria that have not been addressed. Where this is the case, the sub criteria will be addressed in the relevant section of this proposal. For example sub criterion 4a – “It is for councils to decide how best to engage locally in a meaningful and constructive way and this engagement activity should be evidenced in your proposal” – could not be fully demonstrated through the options appraisal, however it has been addressed in detail in the local engagement chapter.

“Option A appears to be a sensible fit as it balances local needs, reduces duplication, and strengthens financial resilience”

A resident of Huntingdonshire



	Option A	Option B	Option C
<b>Proposals should seek to achieve for the whole of the area concerned the establishment of a single tier of local government.</b>	<b>Sensible economic areas</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate tax bases (both economies are of a sustainable size and productivity)</li> <li>• Balanced employment and unemployment rates</li> </ul> <b>Sensible geographic areas</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equal distribution of landmass and minimum annual housing need – supports housing growth</li> </ul>	<b>Not sensible economic areas</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Southern unitary is too small to support ongoing economic growth</li> <li>• Southern unitary likely to have limited purchasing power due to its small size</li> </ul> <b>Not sensible geographic areas</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unbalanced landmass and minimum annual housing need, likely to constrain housing growth</li> </ul>	<b>Sensible economic areas</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate tax bases (both economies are of a sustainable size and productivity)</li> </ul> <b>Sensible geographic areas</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relatively equal distribution of land mass and minimum annual housing need – supports housing growth</li> </ul>
Meets criteria?	3	1	3
<b>Councils must be the right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks.</b>	<b>Meets guiding principle of 500,000+</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Population of 420,100 in the southeast raising to 507,680 by 2040</li> <li>• Population of 520,140 in the northwest raising to 581,110 by 2040</li> </ul> <b>Improved council finances</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Both councils projected to be financially viable</li> <li>• Balanced resources per head</li> </ul> <b>Transition costs</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• £34.4m transition costs – higher than the baseline projections</li> </ul>	<b>Does not meet guiding principle of 500,000+</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Population of 326,670 in the south raising to 401,530 by 2040</li> <li>• Population of 613,570 in the north raising to 687,260 by 2040</li> </ul> <b>Improved council finances</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• North projected to be financially viable, south potentially unviable</li> <li>• Balanced resources per head</li> </ul> <b>Transition costs</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• £34.4m transition costs – higher than the baseline projections</li> </ul>	<b>Nearly meets guiding principle of 500,000+</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Population of 423,800 in the east raising to 474,830 by 2040</li> <li>• Population of 516,440 in the west raising to 613,960 by 2040</li> </ul> <b>Improved council finances</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Both councils projected to be financially viable</li> <li>• Balanced resources per head</li> </ul> <b>Transition costs</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• £34.4m transition costs – higher than the baseline projections</li> </ul>
Meets criteria?	2	2	2

Continues >

“[Option A has] potential for greater funding opportunities for deprived areas in the north. Matches integrated neighbourhoods therefore better opportunities for collaborative working / joint vision. More opportunities to address particular demographic concerns.”

A local VCSE partner



	Option A	Option B	Option C
<b>Councils must prioritise the delivery of high quality and sustainable public services to citizens.</b>	<b>Does support improved local government services and public service reform</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does align to existing public service footprints such as ICS Care Partnerships</li> </ul> <b>Considers impact on crucial services</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does create two adult and children's social care services that are big enough to be sustainable, with relatively balanced levels of spend per resident</li> <li>Does provide opportunity for partnership working with health to improve SEND and homelessness services</li> <li>Does align with regarding hospital flow data</li> </ul>	<b>Does not support improved local government services or public service reform</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does not align to existing public service footprints such as ICS Care Partnerships</li> </ul> <b>Does not consider impact on crucial services</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does not create a sustainable adult's social care service in the northern unitary (challenging geography)</li> <li>Does not create a sustainable children's service in the southern unitary (too small)</li> <li>Does not support increased supply of housing to support homelessness services in the south</li> <li>Does not align with hospital flow data</li> </ul>	<b>Does not support improved local government services or public service reform</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does not align to existing public service footprints such as ICS Care Partnerships</li> </ul> <b>Somewhat considers impact on crucial services</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does create two adult and children's social care services that are big enough to be sustainable</li> <li>Does create concern regarding homelessness services, as local identity is not respected</li> <li>Does not align with hospital flow data</li> </ul>
Meets criteria?	3	1	2
<b>Proposals should show how councils in the area have sought to work together in coming to a view that meets local needs and is informed by local views.</b>	<b>Does respect culture and history</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does respect local identity</li> <li>Does respect historical boundaries and connections to anchor cities</li> </ul> <b>Does respect everyday patterns</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does respect shopping and socialising patterns, accessing healthcare patterns, and travel to work patterns</li> </ul>	<b>Somewhat respects culture and history</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protects an established 'Greater Cambridge' identity</li> <li>Somewhat respects historical boundaries and the connection between Fenland and East Cambridgeshire</li> <li>Does not respect historical boundaries connecting Cambridge and East Cambridgeshire</li> </ul> <b>Somewhat respects everyday patterns</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Somewhat respects travel to work and shopping and socialising patterns</li> <li>Does not respect accessing healthcare patterns</li> </ul>	<b>Does not respect culture and history</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Somewhat respects historical boundaries and the connection between Fenland and East Cambridgeshire</li> <li>Does not respect historical boundaries connecting Cambridge and East Cambridgeshire</li> <li>Does not make sense for local residents</li> </ul> <b>Does not respect everyday patterns</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does not respect travel to work, shopping and socialising patterns, or healthcare patterns</li> </ul>
Meets criteria?	3	2	1

Continues >

“Peterborough and Huntingdonshire have a history of working together. It is the best historic and practical fit”

A resident of Peterborough



	Option A	Option B	Option C
<b>Proposals must support devolution arrangements.</b>	<b>Does support devolution arrangements</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does create balanced unitaries for the CPCA to work with</li> <li>Does create unitary councils on already established footprints, making sense to partners such as the CPCA</li> <li>Does have sensible economic geographies to support the CPCA's growth ambitions</li> <li>Does align with ICS Care Partnerships, assisting CPCA's future responsibilities around health and public service reform</li> </ul>	<b>Does not support devolution arrangements</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does not create balanced unitaries for the CPCA to work with</li> <li>Does not create unitaries with sensible economic geographies, potentially hindering the CPCA's growth ambitions</li> <li>Does not align with ICS Care Partnerships, creating a disconnect between principal authorities and health that the CPCA will have to overcome</li> </ul>	<b>Somewhat supports devolution arrangements</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does create balanced unitaries for the CPCA to work with</li> <li>Does have sensible economic geographies to support the CPCA's growth ambitions</li> <li>Does not align with ICS Care Partnerships, creating a disconnect between principal authorities and health that the CPCA will have to overcome</li> </ul>
Meets criteria?	3	1	2
<b>Proposals should enable stronger community engagement and deliver genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment.</b>	<b>Neighbourhood governance</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does provide opportunities to implement neighbourhood governance that will bring local decision making closer to communities, empowering neighbourhoods, and strengthening local accountability</li> </ul>	<b>Neighbourhood governance</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does provide opportunities to implement neighbourhood governance that will bring local decision making closer to communities, empowering neighbourhoods, and strengthening local accountability</li> </ul>	<b>Neighbourhood governance</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does provide opportunities to implement neighbourhood governance that will bring local decision making closer to communities, empowering neighbourhoods, and strengthening local accountability</li> </ul>
Meets criteria?	3	3	3
Totals	17 (highest ranked)	10 (lowest ranked)	13 (middle ranked)

**Figure 15.** Summary of appraisal of two unitary options

Based on the evidence reviewed in this appraisal, Option A would deliver two new unitary councils that would best meet the Government’s criteria and create the most advantageous conditions to sustain what residents like about our area, whilst addressing its most persistent issues. Option A would provide Cambridgeshire and Peterborough with local government arrangements that offer a balance of

benefits across the whole area and would not unduly advantage or disadvantage any part of it. Option A would deliver two unitary councils with one fairer future for both, with a more equal distribution of baseline resources, more empowered local communities that have influence over decisions that affect them, and more effective service provision across the entire area.

“[Option A is] built around the natural local economies and culture of the wider county, [it] would also create larger, well-connected areas that can boost housing growth, jobs and regeneration”

Anglia Ruskin University



# Criterion 1

## A proposal should seek to achieve for the whole of the area concerned the establishment of a single tier of local government

- a) Proposals should be for sensible economic areas, with an appropriate tax base which does not create an undue advantage or disadvantage for one part of the area
- b) Proposals should be for a sensible geography which will help to increase housing supply and meet local needs
- c) Proposals should be supported by robust evidence and analysis and include an explanation of the outcomes it is expected to achieve, including evidence of estimated costs/benefits and local engagement
- d) Proposals should describe clearly the single tier local government structures it is putting forward for the whole of the area, and explain how, if implemented, these are expected to achieve the outcomes described

This section focuses on criteria 1a, 1b, and 1c. Criteria 1c and 1d are addressed in more detail in the financial analysis and vision chapters of this proposal.

Southeast Unitary Council, and 3% unemployment rates in the Northwest Unitary Council and 2% in the Southeast Unitary Council. This provides further evidence that Option A can deliver two unitary councils with sensible and strong economic areas. Option A also largely reflects the three functional economic areas within Cambridgeshire Peterborough, with the Northwest Unitary Council covering the majority of the Greater Peterborough and Fens economic areas, and the Southeast Unitary Council covering the majority of the Greater Cambridge economic area. This would support inclusive and sustainable economic growth, allowing for more focused planning within unitary councils, and more effective partnership working with businesses and other public service organisations.

the higher number of properties required to provide sufficient geographic presence. The delivery of vital services (such as adult social care) across the length of the Peterborough and North Cambridgeshire Unitary Council could pose further challenges, with the same team delivering services in the northern parts of Peterborough and the most southern parts of East Cambridgeshire. The long distances that would be travelled by teams in the proposed Peterborough and North Cambridgeshire Unitary Council further confirms that the geographies in Option B are not sensible. The distribution of landmass and minimum annual housing need in the Option B unitary councils is the most imbalanced of all three options considered. The Peterborough and North Cambridgeshire Unitary Council would have 72% of the land mass and the Greater Cambridge Unitary Council would have 28% of the landmass, whilst the minimum annual housing need is slightly more balanced at 61% in the Peterborough and North Cambridgeshire Unitary Council, compared to 39% in the Greater Cambridge Unitary Council. This imbalance between housing need and land mass would likely hinder future growth, restricting the potential of the 'Greater Cambridge' economy. To prosper, Greater Cambridge requires a bigger footprint and therefore would be best equipped for future growth if it is subsumed by a unitary council that brings together the existing areas of Cambridge, South Cambridgeshire and at least one additional area. This suggests that the Option B proposal would struggle to deliver sensible or sustainable economies for the whole area.

### Option B Score 1

Option B establishes a single tier of local government across the whole of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, but it does not create unitary councils with sensible economies or geographies. Instead, it concentrates the stronger taxbase in the smaller Greater Cambridge Unitary Council and restricts a large proportion of expected growth to this smaller geographic area. Whilst Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire are in themselves a productive and recognisable economy, it could not be considered viable or sensible for these two areas to be developed as a singular economy due to the housing and growth constraints this economy would face. In contrast, the Peterborough and North Cambridgeshire Unitary Council would be much larger and would face challenges owing to the additional management resources, additional costs associated with highways depots and waste facilities, and less opportunity to reduce property costs due to

### Option C Score 3

Option C establishes a single tier of local government across the whole of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough that

### Option A Score 3

Option A establishes a single tier of government across the whole of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough with sensible economies and geographies that can support local need. Option A offers equal distribution of land mass (47% in the Southeast Unitary Council and 53% in the Northwest Unitary Council) coupled with the equal distribution of minimum annual housing need (49% in the Northwest Unitary Council and 51% in the Southeast Unitary Council). The balance offered by Option A ensures the benefits of LGR will be felt equally across the area and avoids the creation of undue disadvantages for any one area. Another way in which Option A provides an equal balance in the economies of the new unitary councils is in the employment and unemployment rates, with 74% employment rates in the Northwest Unitary Council and 75% in the

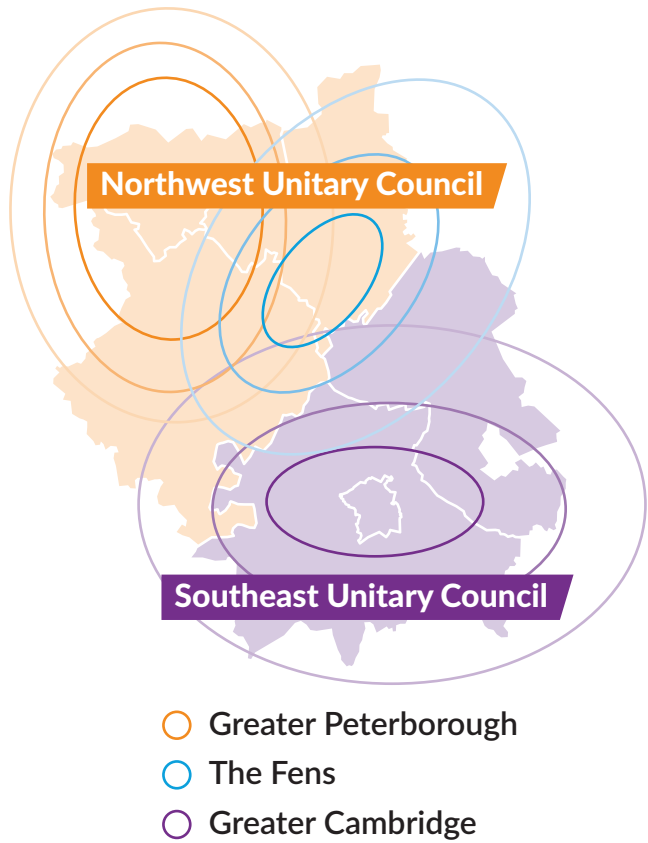


Figure 16. Illustration of functional economies and proposed unitaries (Option A)



creates sensible geographies and balance in size. The land mass and minimum annual housing need figures for each proposed unitary council are relatively balanced, with the East Unitary Council holding 45% of the landmass and 40% of the annual housing need, and the West Unitary Council holding 55% of the landmass and 60% of the annual housing need. Regarding the economies that would be created by Option C, the East Unitary Council would have an employment rate of 73%, and an unemployment rate of 4%, while the West Unitary Council would have an employment rate of 75% and an unemployment rate of 2%. The relative balance of these figures suggests Option C would lead to sensible

geographies capable of enabling the necessary housing growth in the area, with balanced levels of employment and unemployment rates, without placing a significant burden on one unitary over the other. However, the delivery of vital services (such as adult social care) across the length of the East Unitary Council could pose a challenge, with the same team delivering services in the northern parts of Peterborough and the most southern parts of East Cambridgeshire. The long distances that would be travelled by teams in the proposed East Unitary Council brings into question how sensible the geographies are in Option C.

## Criterion 2

### Unitary local government must be the right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks

- a) As a guiding principle, new councils should aim for a population of 500,000 or more.
- b) There may be certain scenarios in which this 500,000 figure does not make sense for an area, including on devolution, and this rationale should be set out in a proposal.
- c) Efficiencies should be identified to help improve councils' finances and make sure that council taxpayers are getting the best possible value for their money.
- d) Proposals should set out how an area will seek to manage transition costs, including planning for future service transformation opportunities from existing budgets, forward transformation and invest-to-save projects.
- e) For areas covering councils that are in Best Value intervention and/or in receipt of Exceptional Financial Support, proposals must additionally demonstrate how reorganisation may contribute to putting local government in the area as a whole on a firmer footing and what area-specific arrangements may be necessary to make new structures viable.
- f) In general, as with previous restructures, there is no proposal for council debt to be addressed centrally or written off as part of reorganisation. For areas where there are exceptional circumstances where there has been failure linked to capital practices, proposals should reflect the extent to which the implications of this can be managed locally, including as part of efficiencies possible through reorganisation.

This section focuses on criteria 2a, 2b, and 2c. Criteria 2c and 2d are addressed in more detail in the financial analysis, implementation and vision chapters of this proposal. Criteria 2e and 2f do not apply in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

### Option A Score 2

Population estimates indicate the Southeast Unitary Council in Option A currently has a population of 420,100 rising to 507,680 by 2040, and the Northwest Unitary Council area currently has a population of 520,140 rising to 581,110 by 2040. The two unitary councils proposed in Option A provide the most balance in regard to size, with the smallest population variance of the three options being explored by 2040, at just 6.8%, as well as the smallest variance in land acreage at 6%, and the smallest

variance in population density with a density of 318.5 per sq. km in the Southeast Unitary Council and 322.2 per sq. km in the Northwest Unitary Council. The [Pixel Financial Management report](#) suggests the two unitary councils proposed in Option A would be financially viable, and therefore able to withstand financial shocks, with a relatively balanced level of resources per head (£1,023.04 in the Southeast unitary and £1,100.10 in the Northwest unitary). Whilst the unitary councils will be financially



viable, the transition costs associated with disaggregating current County Council services reduce the overall financial benefits achieved, although this is a factor in all the options that create two or more new unitary councils.

### Option B **Score 2**

Option B produces the largest imbalance of size of any of the options. The Peterborough and North Cambridgeshire Unitary Council would initially comprise a population of 613,570, rising to an estimated 687,260 in 2040, whilst the Greater Cambridge Unitary Council would initially comprise a population of 326,670, rising to an estimated 401,530 in 2040. This creates a population variance of 26.2% by 2040 for Option B and a unitary that still falls well below the Government's guideline figure of 500,000 in 15 years time. The report by Pixel Financial Management indicates that Option B may face financial challenges regarding its purchasing power, owing to the significant difference in the size of the two proposed councils. Pixel Financial Management has taken the view that any council with above-average Relative Needs Formula (RNF), compared to other single-tier authorities, will have sufficient financial scale to be viable. This would suggest that the Peterborough and North Cambridgeshire Unitary Council in Option B would have sufficient scale. On the other hand, any single authority with a below-average RNF could be reasonably challenged over their financial viability. The Greater Cambridge Unitary Council proposed in Option B would be smaller than the average unitary authority and is specifically highlighted by Pixel Financial Management as having a risk of insufficient financial scale. Even with the projected

population growth, these services would remain so small that their costs would be driven up through the inability to achieve economies of scale. Further to this, the Newton report on LGR across England identifies a statistically significant correlation between smaller authority population sizes and higher unit costs. This is an additional risk facing the Greater Cambridge Unitary Council in Option B which can be avoided in the other options with more balanced unitary council sizes.

### Option C **Score 2**

Whilst the unitary councils proposed in Option C currently offer the most equal distribution of the existing area population at 423,800 in the East Unitary Council and 516,400 in the West Unitary Council (population variance of 9.8%), the forecasted population growth sees a much higher concentration of growth in the West Unitary Council, with forecast growth almost double that of the East Unitary Council by 2040 (leading to a population variance of 12.8%). Despite the differences in growth in the two proposed unitary councils, both are of a size close to the guideline figure of 500,000 by 2040, and both therefore are of the right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks. The Pixel Financial Management report indicated no concerns regarding the financial viability of the unitary councils in Option C, with a variance of around £99 of resources per head between the two new unitaries. Whilst the unitary councils will be financially viable, the transition costs associated with disaggregating current County Council services reduce the overall financial benefits achieved through Option C.

## Criterion 3

### Unitary structures must prioritise the delivery of high quality and sustainable public services to citizens

- a) Proposals should show how new structures will improve local government and service delivery, and should avoid unnecessary fragmentation of services.
- b) Opportunities to deliver public service reform should be identified, including where they will lead to better value for money.
- c) Consideration should be given to the impacts for crucial services such as social care, children's services, SEND and homelessness, and for wider public services including for public safety.

This section begins to address criteria 3a, 3b, and 3c. All three sub criteria are addressed in more detail in the Our Vision chapter of this proposal.

### Option A **Score 3**

Option A provides the optimal geography to progress recent developments in public service reform, such as the Government's 10 Year Health Plan for England, and the move towards neighbourhood delivery. The boundaries of the proposed Northwest and Southeast Unitary Councils would be coterminous with the existing boundaries of the local Integrated Care System (ICS) Care Partnerships. This means the structure for cross-sector collaboration between health and local government in areas such as prevention, adult social care and housing, would already be in place. The existing ICS footprint and the local identity it reflects are already established with the wider local public sector and its partners. This would enable a smoother transition to new unitary councils and allow new partnerships to 'hit the ground running', without establishing new geographies within which partnership working would need to take place.

There are inherent risks associated with the disaggregation of crucial services, such as adults' and childrens' social care.

The alignment with ICS Care Partnerships only achieved through Option A significantly reduces these risks, strengthening these services and reducing the risk of service failure for vulnerable people as local government transitions.

Whilst the Government's 10 Year Health Plan for England prioritises a shift from hospital to neighbourhood health care, hospitals will still have a vital role to play for residents accessing specialist, emergency care and discharge. Option A further supports stronger collaboration with health services as the only option that aligns with hospital flow data. Residents from Huntingdonshire, Fenland and Peterborough are most likely to access hospital care in the proposed Northwest Unitary Council area (Hinchingbrooke in Huntingdon, Peterborough City, Doddington in March and North Cambridgeshire hospital in Wisbech), whilst residents in Cambridge, East Cambridgeshire and South Cambridgeshire are most likely to access hospital care in the Southeast Unitary Council area (in the Cambridge



University Hospitals – Princess of Wales in Ely and Addenbrookes in Cambridge). This is a significant advantage in relation to the delivery of effective discharge services with adult social care, which is important for relieving pressure on acute care settings.

Further to this, the Newton report highlights a number of service areas where demand forecasts are well balanced, for example in adult social care there is a perceived balance between these two unitary councils in expected working-age adult supported living demand, and domiciliary care demand over time, expected older age contacts demand over time, and expected older age supported living demand over time. The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough report from Newton forecasts the levels of demand for Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). Option A would see a variance of 13% in demand for EHCPs by 2040 between the new unitaries. This is the smallest variance between any option considered, illustrating how Option A would create the most balanced circumstances regarding SEND pressures faced by the new unitaries. The same modelling pointed to a similar balance between the two unitary council's levels of adult social care spend and spend per resident.

Homelessness in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough is a complex issue, and it is important to note that homelessness is not just about housing – it links to poverty and deprivation, health, social care, skills and employment, amongst other areas. LGR presents a novel opportunity to reframe the way local government housing services operate. Integrating homelessness services with social care, health, and deprivation interventions will allow for more holistic, effective services for residents most in need of support. The alignment of Option A with the ICS Care Partnerships will facilitate this

integrated way of working, allowing the best outcomes to be achieved.

### Option B **Score 1**

There are inherent risks associated with the disaggregation of crucial services such as adults' social care and children's social care, and Option B will not mitigate these due to the misalignment with established partnership boundaries in health, and the imbalanced size of Option B's unitaries.

There are significant challenges to sustainable service delivery presented by the Greater Cambridge Unitary Council. For example, Option B would create a notably small children's social care department in the Greater Cambridge Unitary Council (smaller than the existing Peterborough Children's Social Care department), with one of the lowest levels of need in the country. This is significant as children's services are one of the highest spend, highest risk, and highest regulated services in local government. The lower economies of scale, management resilience, and limited specialist expertise in a small department, will cause a disproportionate impact on a smaller budget, presenting severe risks to the overall sustainability and safety of service delivery in the Greater Cambridge Unitary Council. Engagement with the Cambridgeshire County Council Adult Social Care leadership team has also raised concerns around the delivery of adult social care across the Peterborough and North Cambridgeshire Unitary Council. Whilst there is currently one team serving the whole of Cambridgeshire, the large geography of the proposed unitary council would reduce the potential to improve the efficiency and savings potential of adult social care here, due to the costs associated with covering the larger geography with a disaggregated workforce.

Similarly, the Newton report for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough forecasts that Option B would create the largest disparity between unitaries in the demand for EHCPs, with a difference of 148 per 10,000 residents under 25 years old by 2040. The imbalance would add to the potential vulnerability of the smaller unitary in the ability to respond to fluctuations in demands for EHCPs.

Overall, the unitary councils proposed in Option B will not allow for the delivery of sustainable crucial services, and the insufficient size of the Greater Cambridge Unitary Council would pose a risk to the safety of residents accessing these.

### Option C **Score 2**

There are inherent risks associated with the disaggregation of crucial services such as adults social care and children's social care, and Option C will not mitigate these due to the misalignment with established partnership boundaries in health, and the inefficient size of Option C's East Unitary. There are a number of challenges to high quality service delivery and public service reform presented by Option C. Engagement with stakeholders in Cambridgeshire County Council has raised concerns around the delivery of adult social care across the length of the East Unitary Council, with the same team delivering services in the northern parts of Peterborough and the most southern parts of East Cambridgeshire. Whilst there is currently

one team serving the whole of Cambridgeshire, the long distances that would be travelled by teams in the proposed East Unitary Council would reduce the potential to improve efficiency and savings, due to the costs associated with covering the larger geography. Analysis of travel distances within the proposed unitary councils shows that the East Unitary Council has the largest average distance between the anchor city, Peterborough, and its other largest settlements.

There are further concerns regarding collaboration between health and local government posed by the geographies of Option C. Not only does the lack of alignment between ICS Care Partnerships and the proposed unitary councils create a barrier for collaboration, but hospital flow data indicates the majority of those in East Cambridgeshire access hospital care within East Cambridgeshire (Princess of Wales) or Cambridge (Addenbrookes), whilst the majority of those in Huntingdonshire access hospital care from Huntingdonshire (Hinchingbrooke) or Peterborough (Peterborough City). To disconnect Huntingdonshire from Peterborough, and East Cambridgeshire from Cambridge would cause additional barriers to supporting residents to access holistic services, especially in areas such as adult social care, housing and discharge. Whilst there is potential for high quality and sustainable services through Option C, the aforementioned barriers create substantial risk to service delivery.



## Criterion 4

### Proposals should show how councils in the area have sought to work together in coming to a view that meets local needs and is informed by local views

- a) It is for councils to decide how best to engage locally in a meaningful and constructive way and this engagement activity should be evidenced in your proposal.
- b) Proposals should consider issues of local identity and cultural and historic importance.
- c) Proposals should include evidence of local engagement, an explanation of the views that have been put forward and how concerns will be addressed.

This section focuses on criteria 4a and begins to address criterion 4c. All three sub-criteria are addressed in more detail in the Local Engagement chapter of this proposal.

### Option A Score 3

Through a review of historic maps of local government boundaries (see Figure 17), it has become clear that there is a great deal of shared history between Huntingdonshire and Peterborough, and East Cambridgeshire and Cambridge:

- Between 1889-1974 Huntingdonshire and Cambridge were not under the same authority, and neither were East Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.
- From 1889-1974 at least parts of East Cambridgeshire have consistently been under the same authority as Cambridge.
- From 1965-1974 Huntingdonshire and Peterborough were under the same authority and Cambridge and East Cambridgeshire were under the same authority.

This provides historical grounding to support the notion that Huntingdonshire and Peterborough on the one hand, and Cambridge and East Cambridgeshire on the other, are connected by local identity. This local identity is further reinforced through the local engagement undertaken for LGR,

where East Cambridgeshire residents were more likely than Huntingdonshire residents to shop and socialise in Cambridge as their anchor city (33% and 28% respectively). Similarly, in the Phase One Engagement Survey Huntingdonshire residents were four times more likely to shop and socialise in Peterborough than residents in East Cambridgeshire (8% and 2% respectively). This connection to anchor cities is important in ensuring the new unitary councils make sense and maintain a feeling of local identity for their residents, and this is achieved most effectively through Option A.

The results from our engagement further demonstrate a strong link between Cambridge, South Cambridgeshire and East Cambridgeshire. 83% of respondents from South Cambridgeshire remain within the proposed Southeast Unitary Council boundary in Option A for their shopping and socialising, for East Cambridgeshire this figure was 89%, and for Cambridge it was 94%. This exemplifies the strong identity within the proposed southern unitary in Option A.

There is a slightly different story to be told in the proposed Northwest Unitary Council in Option A. Within Fenland, 73% of respondents remained in the proposed Northwest Unitary boundaries for socialising and shopping, as did 75% of respondents from Peterborough. Whilst these figures are lower than those for the Southeast Unitary Council, it is interesting to note that a further 13% of respondents from Fenland regularly go to East Cambridgeshire for leisure purposes, a local connection explored more below. A further 12% of respondents from Peterborough regularly go outside of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area for shopping and socialising. However, for Huntingdonshire respondents this figure was much lower at 56%. This begins to unveil the complexity of Huntingdonshire as a district. In the north of Huntingdonshire around Yaxley, Farcet, Stilton and Stibbington, there are strong connections to Peterborough due to their proximity to the city. In the south of the district however, around areas such as St Neots, St Ives and Fenstanton, the connection to Cambridge is much more prominent. This was highlighted as a concern within the engagement survey responses and presents an interesting challenge. On one hand this is a great strength of Huntingdonshire and allows residents multiple options for socialising, shopping and employment. On the other hand, it creates complications regarding the unitary in which Huntingdonshire residents will feel most connected. This is likely to be a complexity found in all LGR options being explored, as none of the three options assessed here create a unitary that contains all three areas of Cambridge, Huntingdonshire and Peterborough, and any unitary that divides the current boundaries of Huntingdonshire in half has been strongly discouraged in the Government criteria. Therefore, it is

believed that the Northwest Unitary Council in Option A would create the most appropriate place for Huntingdonshire residents.

Option A presents the most balanced distance between the five largest settlements in each district and the anchor city in the proposed unitary councils. The average distance for the Southeast Unitary Council is 12.3 miles, whilst the average distance for the Northwest Unitary Council is 19.7 miles, a variance of only 6.4 miles (a variance that is almost two times smaller than Option C and three times smaller than Option B). The average distance between settlements and anchor cities across both unitary councils is also smallest in Option A at just 15.5 miles. Finally, travel to work data indicates Option A would yield the highest percentages of people living and working within the same unitary boundaries, with 77% living and working in the Northwest Unitary Council and 81% living and working in the Southeast Unitary Council. This data builds a strong picture of two unitary councils that respect historical local identity, and current leisure and travel to work patterns.

It is important to recognise that there are complexities regarding East Cambridgeshire's history, with historical ties between the northern parts of East Cambridgeshire and Fenland dating back to 1889, and ties between the southern parts of East Cambridgeshire and Cambridge dating back to the same year. Whilst redrawing district boundaries could potentially honour these connections, the Government's criteria for LGR strongly discourages this, owing to the time and complexity of the boundary review process. With regard to the longstanding connection to Cambridge, and the strong current ties between residents of East Cambridgeshire and Cambridge, especially around access



to healthcare, transport connections, work and leisure, creating a new unitary council of Cambridge, East Cambridgeshire and South Cambridgeshire appears to be the most logical and respectful outcome. These strong ties between East Cambridgeshire, Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire are recognised as a key strength of this option in the letters and emails of support from ten East Cambridgeshire parish councils .

## Option B Score 2

The unitary councils proposed in Option B go some way to respecting local identity, with Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire already an established ‘place’, making up the Greater Cambridge Unitary Council. This can be seen through the Greater Cambridge Partnership, one of the largest city deals in the UK, and the Cambridge Growth Company, both of which are focused on Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire. Furthermore, keeping East Cambridgeshire and Fenland within the same council area respects the aforementioned historic ties between these two largely rural areas.

However, placing East Cambridgeshire in a unitary with Peterborough as its anchor city does not make sense in relation to service delivery or local identity. The [results from local engagement on LGR](#) showed that only 2% of respondents in East Cambridgeshire went to Peterborough for shopping or socialising, whereas 33% of respondents in East Cambridgeshire went to Cambridge for this, highlighting a significant preference of Cambridge as an anchor city for East Cambridgeshire residents.

Building on the connection to anchor cities, historical maps further highlight the strong connection between Cambridge and East Cambridgeshire, particularly the southern

half of East Cambridgeshire, which has been in the same local government boundary as Cambridge City for over 100 years (see Figure 17). Looking at the distance between the five largest settlements and the anchor cities in the unitary councils proposed in Option B, there is a vast imbalance between the two councils. With the Greater Cambridge Unitary Council having the lowest average distance at eight miles, but the Peterborough and North Cambridgeshire Unitary Council having the highest average distance at 23.8 miles. The variance in these two distances, 17.2 miles, is nearly three times higher than that in Option A, presenting a significant disadvantage for those in the Peterborough and North Cambridgeshire Unitary Council. This combination of data and public opinion points to a unitary configuration that would not respect current or historical notions of local identity and would not make sense to residents.

## Option C Score 1

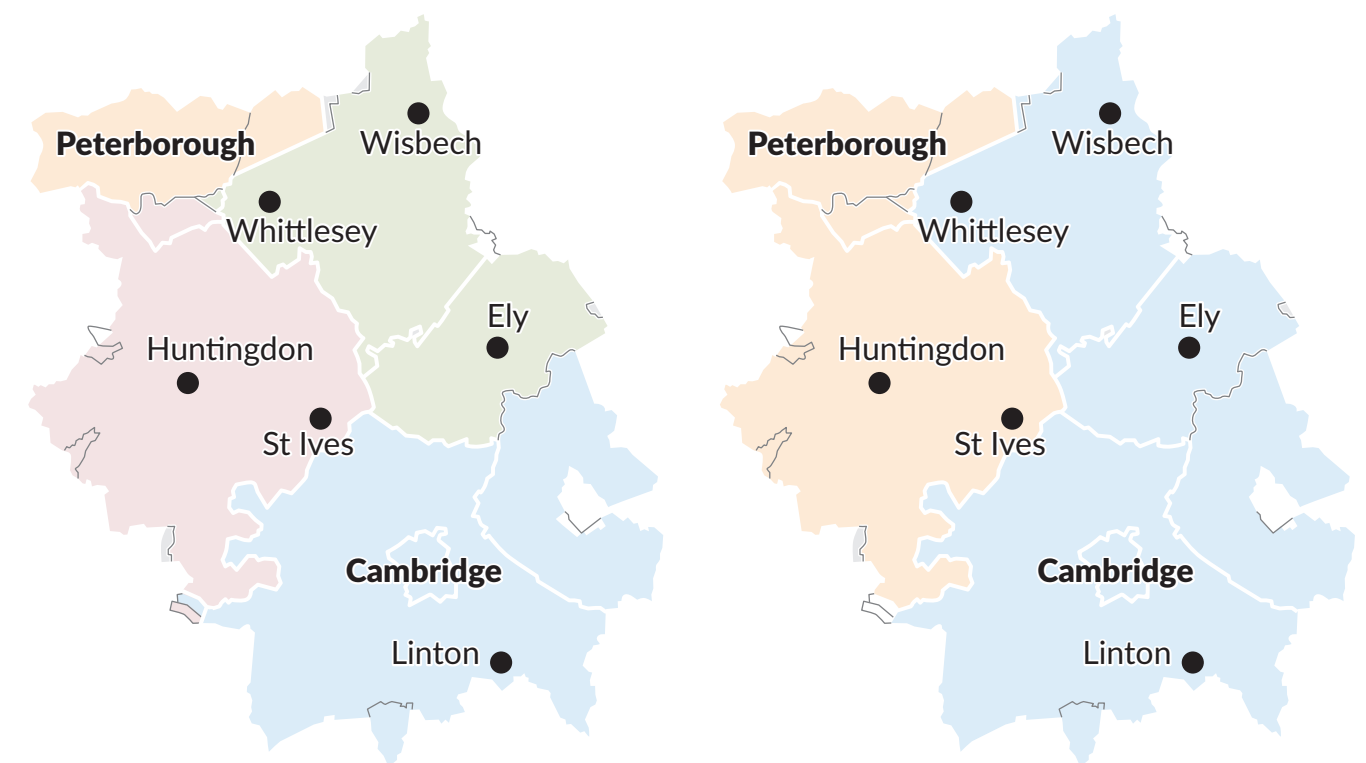
One of the biggest limitations of Option C is its connection to local identity. Splitting East Cambridgeshire from Cambridge City and placing it into a unitary council where Peterborough would be the anchor city does not make sense to local residents. This disconnect is vitally important, as local engagement for LGR in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough revealed that only 2% of respondents from East Cambridgeshire visit Peterborough for shopping or socialising, and 81% of respondents from East Cambridgeshire were concerned about being overlooked in the LGR process. Ignoring the strong sense of connection between East Cambridgeshire and the anchor city of Cambridge (33% of respondents from East Cambridgeshire

reported going to Cambridge for socialising or shopping), risks confirming the fears of respondents and overlooking this important facet of local identity. Furthermore, Option C would see Huntingdonshire split from Peterborough and placed in a unitary with Cambridge as its anchor city. The historic maps show that Huntingdonshire and Cambridge have not been in the same local authority area for over 100 years (see Figure 17). One positive connection that can be seen in the historic maps of the area is the historical alignment of Fenland with the northern half of East Cambridgeshire.

Preserving historical links to anchor cities for both Huntingdonshire and East Cambridgeshire, whilst also preserving the

link between northern parts of East Cambridgeshire and Fenland, would require a unitary covering Cambridge, East Cambridgeshire, Fenland and South Cambridgeshire. A split of unitaries covering these two geographies would not meet the Government’s criteria for LGR, would not achieve balance between the two new unitaries, and would be unlikely to make sense regarding the local identity for the whole area.

Whilst the [phase one results](#) showed that the East Unitary Council in Option C does not protect local identity, the same cannot be said for the West Unitary Council. Within Option C, the West Unitary Council has the second highest percentage of people remaining within the area for socialising and



The County Councils of Cambridgeshire (blue), Huntingdonshire (pink), the Isle of Ely (green) and the Soke of Peterborough (orange) 1889–1965

The County Council of Cambridgeshire and the Isle of Ely (blue) and the County Council of Huntingdon and Peterborough (orange) 1965–1974

**Figure 17.** Maps of historic district boundaries



shopping (of all six proposed unitaries) at 86%, but the East Unitary Council has the lowest percentage of people remaining in the area at 67%. This is also reflected in travel to work patterns. Within the West Unitary Council, 79% of people live and work in the area, compared to 71% of those in the East Unitary Council, leaving the average for Option C at 75%. Option C has the lowest combination of people living and working in its proposed unitary councils of all three options.

One final piece of analysis for this criterion indicates another weakness in Option C – the distance between the five largest

settlements in each district and the proposed unitary council’s anchor city. The East Unitary Council holds one of the largest distances travelled (Burwell to Peterborough – 39.6 miles) and the second highest average of distance travelled at 23.3 miles, whilst the average across both unitary councils is highest in Option C at 18 miles. This data reveals a distinct lack of recognition for local identity in the unitary councils proposed in Option C, with an especially negative impact on residents in East Cambridgeshire and reinforces the challenges regarding the practicalities of service delivery over this geography.

## Criterion 5

### New unitary structures must support devolution arrangements

- a) Proposals will need to consider and set out for areas where there is already a Combined Authority (CA) or a Combined County Authority (CCA) established or a decision has been taken by Government to work with the area to establish one, how that institution and its governance arrangements will need to change to continue to function effectively; and set out clearly (where applicable) whether this proposal is supported by the CA/CCA/Mayor
- b) Where no CA or CCA is already established or agreed then the proposal should set out how it will help unlock devolution.
- c) Proposals should ensure there are sensible population size ratios between local authorities and any strategic authority, with timelines that work for both priorities

This section focuses on criteria 5a, as 5b and 5c are less relevant as the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) is long-established. However, this section does pick up on how proposals will help to unlock further devolution and support the ambitions of the CPCA and the new Local Growth Plan due to be published in December 2025.

### Option A Score 3

The two unitary councils proposed in Option A have the right size, scale, and alignment with other public services and local identity to enable the deepest benefits of devolution to be felt across the area. Option A would provide the optimal conditions for both unitary councils to have resilient and strong economies, capable of delivering economic and housing growth to support the CPCA in achieving its ambitions for the area. Of the area’s three functional economic areas, Greater Peterborough and the Fens map to the Northwest Unitary Council, whilst the Greater Cambridge economic area maps to the Southeast Unitary Council. This alignment between unitary councils and functional economic areas will allow councils to focus their efforts on the industries and priorities of their corresponding economic areas, supporting the CPCA’s pursuit of inclusive

growth across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

Option A also provides the most balance in terms of population size, and combination of rural and urban areas, allowing for equal representation of rural and urban voices within the Mayoral Strategic Authority. Furthermore, the alignment of the proposed unitary councils to well-established geographies covering the northwest and southeast of the area will allow for simpler working with the NHS, as the ICS Care Partnerships also work to these geographies. This simplicity will greatly benefit the CPCA, allowing discussions and efforts to drive economic growth, improve health outcomes, and enable skills development to happen across coterminous boundaries, rather than having these conversations across conflicting boundaries.



## Option B Score 1

To support devolution arrangements and ambitions, the new unitary structures must enable strong economic and housing growth. The Greater Cambridge Unitary Council in Option B is not of sufficient scale to support future economic or housing growth. The small size and rapid recent growth in the area have created a current scenario in which Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire risk limiting future prosperity and competitiveness, as indicated by the city falling 10 places in the [2025 Good Growth for Cities Index report](#) by PwC. To allow the Greater Cambridge area to prosper, the new unitary council must be established on a larger footprint. Without this, the new Greater Cambridge Unitary Council is likely to hinder the CPCA's growth ambitions, rather than support them.

Furthermore, the misalignment of the proposed unitary councils with ICS Care Partnership boundaries has the potential to create further barriers to CPCA delivering on the proposed new health-related duties set out in the [English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill](#). Building on the existing devolution framework, the Bill would strengthen the remit of the CPCA to support improved health outcomes in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and set a mandate for the Mayor to sit on the local ICB. Attempting to improve health outcomes for residents whilst working to conflicting geographies of ICS Care Partnerships and unitary councils is likely to lead to unnecessary confusion and complications for all involved public sector partners, hindering the success of any interventions and reporting on performance metrics.

## Option C Score 2

Option C does create sensible economies with the potential to support ambitious economic growth in collaboration with the CPCA. However, whilst high concentrations of growth would occur in the West Unitary Council owing to the high levels of growth in Huntingdonshire, South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge City, in the East Unitary Council almost all large-scale growth would be driven by Peterborough. This imbalance would be unsustainable and would pose a threat to the economic ambitions of the CPCA.

Furthermore, the misalignment of the proposed unitaries with ICS Care Partnership boundaries and the lack of a strong sense of local identity has the potential to create significant barriers to CPCA achieving its health-related ambitions for the area. Through the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill, the CPCA has a strong remit to support improved health outcomes in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, and a mandate for the Mayor to sit on the local ICB. Attempting to improve health outcomes for residents whilst working to conflicting geographies of ICS Care Partnerships and unitary councils is likely to lead to unnecessary confusion for all involved public sector partners, hindering the success of any interventions and complicating the reporting of performance metrics.

## Criterion 6

### New unitary structures should enable stronger community engagement and deliver genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment

- a) Proposals will need to explain plans to make sure that communities are engaged.
- b) Where there are already arrangements in place it should be explained how these will enable strong community engagement.

This section will briefly start to review how all three options meet criteria 6a and 6b, but more detail is provided in the Vision chapter of this proposal.

## Option A Score 3

Effective neighbourhood governance, in the form of Neighbourhood Area Committees, has the potential to improve neighbourhood empowerment by bringing residents closer to decision making and improving accountability of public services locally. The respect for and protection of local identity that is only achieved through Option A will further enhance the potential for genuine engagement and opportunity at a neighbourhood level. This is expanded upon in the 'Vision' chapter of this proposal.

## Option B Score 3

Effective neighbourhood governance, in the form of Neighbourhood Area Committees, has the potential to improve neighbourhood empowerment by bringing residents closer to decision making and improving accountability of public services locally. This is expanded upon in the 'Vision' chapter of this proposal.

## Option C Score 3

Effective neighbourhood governance, in the form of Neighbourhood Area Committees, has the potential to improve neighbourhood empowerment by bringing residents closer to decision making and improving accountability of public services locally. This is expanded upon in the 'Vision' chapter of this proposal.





Cambridge City

## Options appraisal:

# Conclusions

Option A creates two unitary councils that meet the Government's criteria and will deliver one fairer future for the whole area.

The Northwest Unitary Council and the Southeast Unitary Council in Option A:

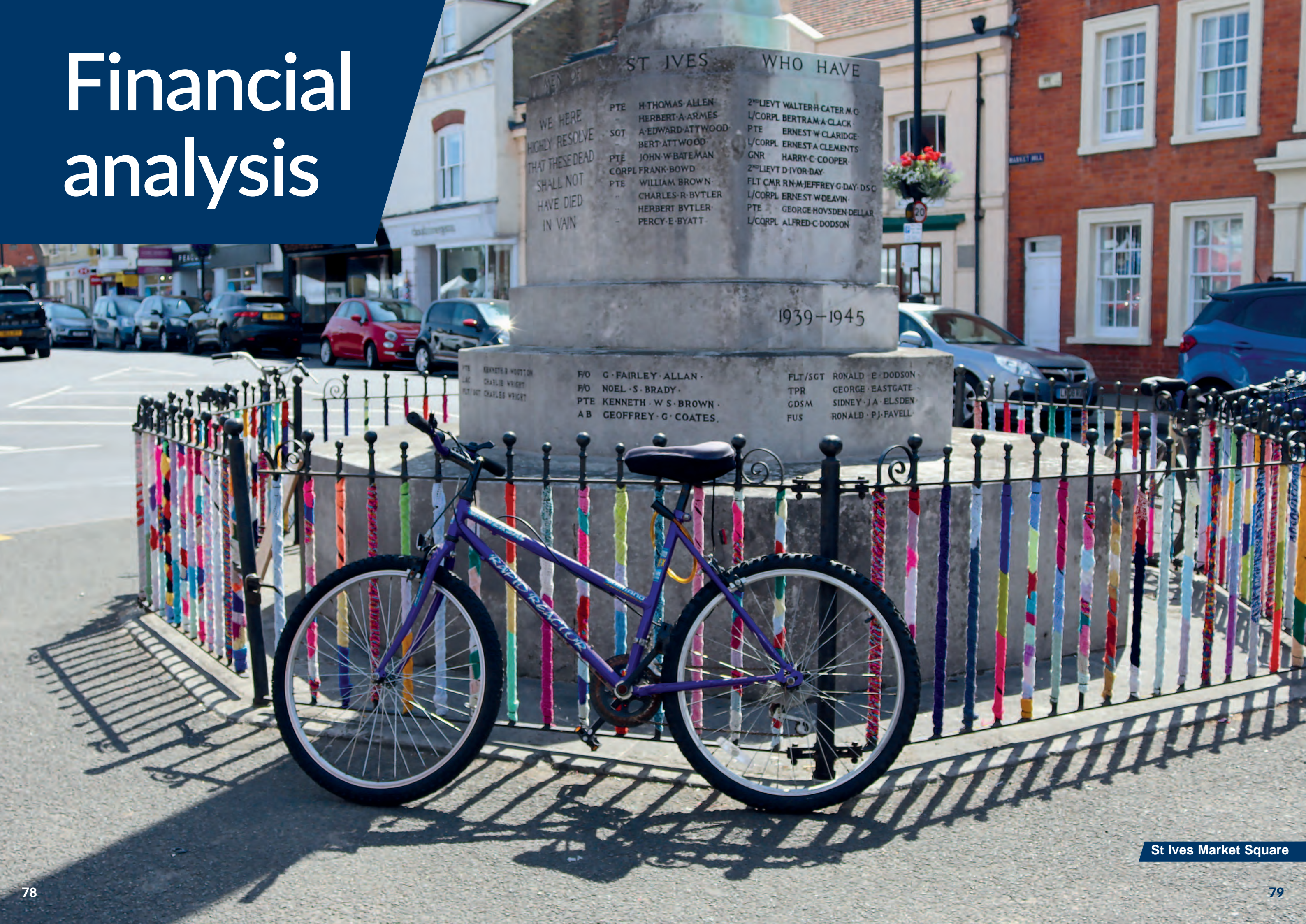
- Balance the populations, land mass and base budgets of the existing councils in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, ensuring a fair distribution of existing resources.
- Provide sufficient scale, size and mass to manage financial shocks and deliver value for money through economies of scale in service delivery and commissioning.
- Align boundaries with existing healthcare footprints to limit disruption for residents, support high-cost and complex services, and protect established structures and relationships that can drive radical public service reform.

- Reflect functional economic areas and the distinctive, yet interconnected economies of our area, creating a solid foundation for supporting inclusive growth and the objectives of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority.
- Respect historic identities and the patterns of our residents' daily lives, such as their travel to work and travel to learn patterns, allowing for services to be appropriately tailored to the distinctive needs and aspirations of our diverse places.

This provides the foundation for the delivery of a new organisational blueprint for the unitary councils that will allow a focus on prevention, place-based, evidence-led and collaborative ways of working.



# Financial analysis



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IN VAIN

PTE H THOMAS ALLEN  
HERBERT A ARMES  
SGT A EDWARD ATTWOOD  
BERT ATTWOOD  
PTE JOHN W BATEMAN  
CORPL FRANK BOWD  
PTE WILLIAM BROWN  
CHARLES R BYTLER  
HERBERT BYTLER  
PERCY E BYATT

2ND LIEVT WALTER H CATER M O  
L/CORPL BERTRAM A CLACK  
PTE ERNEST W CLARIDGE  
L/CORPL ERNEST A CLEMENTS  
GNR HARRY C COOPER  
2ND LIEVT D IVOR DAY  
FLT CMR RN M JEFFREY G DAY DSC  
L/CORPL ERNEST W DEAVIN  
PTE GEORGE HOVSDEN DELLAR  
L/CORPL ALFRED C DODSON

1939-1945

PTE KENNETH B HUTTON  
LAC CHARLIE WRIGHT  
PVT/SGT CHARLES WRIGHT

F/O G FAIRLEY ALLAN  
F/O NOEL S BRADY  
PTE KENNETH W S BROWN  
AB GEOFFREY G COATES

FLT/SGT RONALD E DODSON  
TPR GEORGE EASTGATE  
GDSM SIDNEY J A ELSDEN  
FUS RONALD P J FAVELL





Community cookery class

# Financial context

LGR will take place in a wider financial context, with existing councils in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough already facing a strained financial position – owing to a decade of austerity for local government, major increases in demand, cost pressures for services, and wider drivers of financial pressure and uncertainty, including increasing complexity in residents’ needs, low economic growth and stubbornly high rates of inflation.

Alongside LGR, there are also plans for major funding reform for the local government sector, with the final outcomes of the Fair Funding Review 2.0 expected to be implemented in 2026-27. Proposals made in the Fair Funding 2.0 consultation may be relatively favourable for this area. Public bodies in Cambridgeshire have long called for a fairer distribution of funding across the country and, in particular, appropriate and regular recognition of growing populations, an improved methodology for calculating adult social care and healthcare needs, and a specific funding factor for home-to-school transport.

The existing councils in the area have medium-term financial plans that project budget deficits into future years and regardless of the shape of future arrangements, local government in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough will need to continue to find further savings and ways to boost income to bridge this budget

gap. Public estimates of the combined budget deficit up to March 2028 forecast a £45.5m gap in 2027-28, of which £37m (81%) is attributable to the upper-tier councils. These figures highlight the central importance of LGR establishing new unitary councils that have the necessary scale to withstand the pressures of a difficult financial operating environment.

Option A stands best placed to secure this financial stability by providing a firm foundation to the proposed Northwest and Southeast Unitary Councils that will enable them to manage financial risk and shock. This is achieved through a more equal distribution of base funding across these councils and reinforced by the greater balance of financial scale and geographic spread through the division of the existing councils in a 3:3 rather than a 4:2 configuration, facilitating a lower cost of service delivery.



# A more equal financial baseline

In Option A, a prudent and balanced approach has been taken in developing a robust and realistic financial model. Option A provides the most equitable balance for both forms of local taxation – Council Tax and Business Rates – with both Option B and Option C showing a starker difference between the revenue-raising powers of their proposed new unitary councils.

In all three options, Council Tax cover is very high in any proposed unitary council encompassing Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire, and relatively weaker in any unitary council encompassing Peterborough and Fenland. Option C would leave the proposed East Unitary Council unduly reliant on Government grant funding

to make up for the weaker Council Tax base, relative to the proposed West Unitary Council. In terms of Option B, the table below shows a large differential in overall financial scale between the two unitary councils, as the budget of the Peterborough and North Cambridgeshire Unitary Council is more than twice as large

		Business Rates Total Income (£000)	Council Tax Total Income (£000)	Total Resources Requirement (£000)	Council Tax as % of Total Resources	Children's Social Care Spend (£000)	Environmental and Planning Spend (£000)
A	Northwest	327,918	342,353	548,401	62.4%	116,298	60,155
	Southeast	310,607	327,238	392,093	83.5%	49,324	74,512
B	P'bro and North Cambs	397,253	414,374	645,615	64.2%	128,224	78,834
	Greater Cambridge	241,272	255,217	294,879	86.5%	37,398	55,833
C	East	255,753	264,591	465,782	56.8%	101,459	52,994
	West	382,772	405,000	474,712	85.3%	64,163	81,583

**Note:** Areas with a closer or more equitable balance between the new unitaries are marked in green, whereas characteristics that appear more unbalanced are flagged in red.

Figure 18. Forecast budget of two unitary options



as the budget for the proposed Greater Cambridge Unitary Council.

This inequitable distribution of base funding is particularly evident in children's social care, which is usually a high spending service that faces significant pressures, and is closely regulated. Whilst all three options show a significant differential in budgets for children's social care between unitary councils, it is particularly stark in Option B where the proposed Greater Cambridge Unitary Council would have a children's social care budget of just £37.4m (based on 2025 budget), markedly smaller than the current Peterborough City Council budget. The small size and scale of children's social care in Option B is concerning, and could hinder the provision of safe, high quality children's services.

Amongst the options for the creation of two unitary councils, financial modelling has drawn attention to risks of additional costs and reduced benefits in Option B, which arise from the unequal split in geography and population size it proposes, and the negative impact on established health and social care partnerships. The County Council's Section 151 officer has highlighted the following areas that are likely to favour Option A over Option B:

- **Management Overheads:** The relative imbalance in geography and population created through Option B may require additional management and supervision resources compared to the other two options, without a corresponding reduction in the smaller unitary.



- **Geographical spread of operational assets:** The size and breadth of the geography of new councils impacts on the requirements around operational assets, such as highway depots and waste facilities. Option B results in a significantly larger geography in the Peterborough and North Cambridgeshire Unitary Council than the Greater Cambridge Unitary Council, which may result in additional costs to facilitate operations in this area.
- **Geographical costs of service delivery:** The significantly larger geography of the Peterborough and North Cambridgeshire Unitary Council in Option B will likely increase its service delivery costs, as provision in rural settings is more expensive to provide. The distance between the anchor city, Peterborough, and communities in East Cambridgeshire is significant, which could increase costs relating to travel time, especially in social care. Option A provides a greater balance of geography across rural and urban settings and creates council footprints that are more coherent.
- **Maintaining partnerships for complex people services:** Option B would require the restructuring of NHS services to align with a different set of local government boundaries, avoided under Option A which maintains coterminosity with ICS Care Partnerships and hospital flows. Option B would risk undermining these established working relationships with health partners and likely increase transition costs for residents with

complex needs, who access jointly funded and provided health and social care.

- **Third Party Spend:** Third party spend benefits are partly driven by economies of scale and the opportunity to reduce spend through, for example, consolidation of contracts. The composition of the new unitary councils is likely to impact on any third party spend related savings. These are estimated to be in the region of £3.5m per annum, so any impact could be significant.
- **Commissioning:** The creation of two comparably sized unitary councils with larger geographies will facilitate multi-area purchasing and protect purchasing power, which would be more difficult to achieve in the (smaller) Greater Cambridge Unitary Council proposed in Option B.
- **Property Costs:** Option B results in a large geography in the Peterborough and North Cambridgeshire Unitary Council, which could result in reduced opportunities to reduce property costs, as more properties would be required to provide sufficient geographic presence.
- **Corporate/Enabling Services:** Each new unitary council would require similar back-office functions. The disparity in the sizes of the two unitary councils may lead to inefficiencies with the relative overhead of support services being fairly high in the Greater Cambridge Unitary Council.

# Council Tax harmonisation

For residents, changes to Council Tax bills will be a visible impact of LGR. For the new councils, understanding Council Tax harmonisation is a key consideration for ensuring financial sustainability. Currently Council Tax bills differ between Cambridgeshire's district councils, and particularly in comparison to Peterborough City Council.

On vesting day, households will pay different amounts of Council Tax depending on the predecessor district area they are located in, but the new unitary councils must harmonise bills within seven years, with options for the new councils to consider as to how quickly this occurs and how these single rates are calculated. Modelling has been undertaken to illustrate the options open to the new councils.

The table in Figure 19 shows three scenarios for increase or reduction required in a Band D Council Tax bill for each area – harmonising to the lowest, median or highest level of current Council Tax. These figures represent the total impact of Council Tax harmonisation for each area (for Band D Council Tax) and can be phased in over time (up to seven years).

	Northwest / Southeast			Peterborough and North Cambridgeshire / Greater Cambridge			East / West		
	Option A / change			Option B / change			Option C / change		
Band D Bills impact	LOW	MED	HIGH	LOW	MED	HIGH	LOW	MED	HIGH
Cambridge	-£94	-£60	£0	-£60	-£34	£0	-£70	-£60	£0
South Cambridgeshire	-£35	£0	£60	£0	£25	£60	-£10	£0	£60
East Cambridgeshire	£0	£35	£94	-£98	£11	£118	-£98	£0	£118
Huntingdonshire	-£123	£0	£93	-£123	-£14	£93	£0	£10	£70
Fenland	-£216	-£93	£0	-£216	-£107	£0	-£216	-£118	£0
Peterborough	£0	£123	£216	£0	£109	£216	£0	£98	£216

**Note:** Shading indicates the areas that would see the largest increase/decrease under each scenario.

**Figure 19.** Impact on Band D Council Tax



In all scenarios the council taxpayers in both Cambridge and Fenland will see no increase driven by Council Tax harmonisation, and depending on the option selected could see a decrease. In Peterborough, by contrast, Council Tax harmonisation will see bills either remain unchanged, or increase.

In Option A, the Southeast Unitary Council would inherit relatively similar levels of Council Tax. The table in Figure 19 shows that council taxpayers in East Cambridgeshire face a lower maximum increase under Option A than in either Option B or Option C. Adjusting the Cambridge City amount for the notional amount attributable to parish functions narrows the range further to just £51 between the lowest (Cambridge) and highest (South Cambridgeshire) areas.

Across Options A, B and C, the new unitary councils which contain Fenland and Peterborough show the highest range of potential tax outcomes, reflecting that fact that these areas are currently the highest and lowest billing councils respectively. The Peterborough and North Cambridgeshire

Unitary Council in Option B presents the highest levels of volatility for council taxpayers, with the current East Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire potentially seeing larger increases or decreases depending on the harmonisation approach selected.

The table in Figure 21 shows the impact of harmonising Council Tax by the low, median and high methodologies across a three-year timeline (alongside the impact of this in the first year). Under Option A, harmonising Council Tax using the high methodology generates a modest uplift in funds available for local services, approximately equivalent to a 0.25% increase in the Council Tax for the new Southeast Unitary Council and a 0.89% increase for the new Northwest Unitary Council. New unitary councils will need to consider the right balance between phasing in increases in areas where current Council Tax bands are lower, and allowing an extended transition period, which could potentially disadvantage higher-paying areas or reduce the income available to fund local services.

Expected Council Tax Amount Band D in 2026-27		
Northwest Unitary Council	Fenland	£2,053
	Huntingdonshire	£1,960
	Peterborough	£1,837
Southeast Unitary Council	Cambridge	£2,029
	East Cambridgeshire	£1,935
	South Cambridgeshire	£1,970

**Note:** The figures in this table are the combined district and county council tax amounts (and the unitary authority amount for Peterborough City Council) and exclude town and parish council precepts. The city of Cambridge is unparished and therefore part of the current Council tax bill may be excluded if this area becomes parished following Local Government Reform. The average parish council tax precept in South and East Cambridgeshire is £110.

Figure 20. Table of expected Council Tax

Increase (Reduction) in funding under 3-year harmonisation		After 1 year (£000)			Accumulated 3 years (£000)		
		Low	Median	High	Low	Median	High
Option A	Northwest	-£863	£174	£1,018	-£5,463	£1,153	£6,676
	Southeast	-£438	-£128	£474	-£1,796	-£522	£1,956
Option B	Peterborough and North Cambridgeshire	-£1,107	£112	£1,307	-£7,024	£752	£8,567
	Greater Cambridge	-£201	£31	£261	-£1,285	£207	£1,694
Option C	West	-£276	-£160	£543	-£1,772	-£1,025	£3,524
	East	-£603	£84	£895	-£3,813	£574	£5,884

Figure 21. Impact of harmonising Council Tax (three years)





# Future trajectories of demand

Long-term sustainable financial planning for the new unitary councils relies on understanding patterns of demand and forecast trajectories for key public services.

For the high-spending demand-led activity areas of adult social care, children’s social care, homelessness, special educational needs and disabilities, and home-to-school transport, the councils providing these services have commissioned specialist analysis of the impact of LGR from Newton.

The analysis shows that in general, spending aligns with the spread of demand across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

This is because there is greater variation in demand levels by district area than there is in unit cost. In all three options for two unitary councils, Fenland and Peterborough are in the same unitary council. These districts tend to have the highest prevalence of need across services, meaning the unitary councils containing Peterborough and Fenland will have higher demand for people-based services, and higher spend per resident.

## Children and education



		2025 (£)	2040 (£)	
		Spend per resident	Spend per resident	Growth (2025 – 2040)
Baseline	CCC	722	1422	97.0%
	PCC	954	1990	108.6%
	Ratio	1.32	1.40	–
Option A	Northwest	857	1741	103.2%
	Southeast	677	1337	97.5%
	Ratio	1.27	1.30	–
Option B	Peterborough and North Cambridgeshire	840	1703	102.7%
	Greater Cambridge	656	1292	97.0%
	Ratio	1.28	1.32	–
Option C	East	916	1867	103.8%
	West	661	1307	97.7%
	Ratio	1.39	1.43	–

Figure 22. Table of forecast spend per resident (adult and children’s social care and SEND)

Through this modelling, Newton identified a statistically significant correlation between smaller authority population sizes and higher unit costs. A multivariable regression model has been used to isolate the impact of population size and buying power,

adjusting for the impact of deprivation and median incomes. This is an additional risk facing the proposed Greater Cambridge Unitary Council in Option B, which can be avoided in Option A owing to its greater balance of size.

“[Option A delivers] greater alignment between geography and current council services especially around health and SEN which would impact the efficiency of education services”

A local education partner



# Debt

There are higher than average levels of debt (prudential borrowing) in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough councils. At the end of 2024-25 overall external borrowing for the councils was in excess of £1.8b. Ensuring that debt financing is affordable for the new councils created through LGR is an essential component of their long-term financial sustainability.

Both Peterborough City Council and Cambridgeshire County Council have higher levels of debt than the average for their comparator class of upper-tier authority across England. Like many local authorities, both councils have also seen levels of external borrowing increase as internal borrowing (debt funded from internal resources and/or working capital) has reduced over the last two years. So far this has resulted in additional budget pressures and greater exposure to changes

in interest rates and this trend is unlikely to reverse ahead of vesting day. Amongst district councils, East Cambridgeshire, Fenland and Huntingdonshire District Councils have lower levels of debt compared to the district average, with no Housing Revenue Account (HRA), whereas Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council have higher levels of debt than district councils with HRAs.

£000	Capital Financing Requirement	Borrowing Debt Total	of which Housing Revenue Account	of which GF commercial / income generating	of which other General Fund
Upper-tier Council					
Cambridgeshire	1,074,600	824,324	0	245,136	579,188
Unitary Council					
Peterborough	638,328	487,959	0	131,00	356,959
Lower-tier Councils					
Cambridge	288,271	243,572	213,572	0	30,000
East Cambs	10,571	0	0	0	0
Fenland	13,471	7,800	0	0	7,800
Huntingdonshire	72,341	34,268	0	24,255	10,013
South Cambs	384,844	280,123	225,123	0	55,000

Figure 23. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough councils’ debt overview

£000	Interest Payable	Minimum Revenue Provision	Total Debt Financing Costs	Debt Financing as a % of core spending power	HRA Dwelling Rents	Inv. Property Rental Income
Upper-tier Council						
Cambridgeshire	34,690	25,774	60,464	12%		8,678
Unitary Council						
Peterborough	18,788	18,693	37,481	20%		
Lower-tier Councils						
Cambridge	7,494	314	7,808	41%	44,460	10,547
East Cambs	91	319	410	4%		
Fenland	683	383	1,066	8%		90
Huntingdonshire	394	2,660	3,054	16%		3,922
South Cambs	8,553	1,147	9,680	55%	34,162	2,079

Figure 24. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough councils debt financing overview

There are stable levels of borrowing in all councils, and the upper-tier councils have seen their level of debt as a proportion of core spending power reduce in successive recent years. Considering the wider balance sheet and capital health is also helpful in this context. For the councils with above average levels of debt in their category, in Cambridgeshire there is broader strength in the balance sheet and borrowing levels underpinned by assets. Cambridgeshire County Council as well as South Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire District Councils have ‘debt gearing’ (a

measure of relationship between debt and balance sheet equity) which is moderately above the average of their comparators, but this position is stable.

The Peterborough City Council position appears more stretched, with a weaker assets and reserves position on the balance sheet, meaning it has debt gearing significantly above the unitary average. This further illustrates the financial vulnerability that Peterborough City Council is exposed to in the current formation and ahead of funding reform nationally.



# High Needs Block

There are well known national funding challenges facing many local authorities with responsibilities for funding Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). Both existing upper-tier councils have deficits for the High Needs Block (HNB) of their Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). At the end of 2024-25 the cumulative deficit in Cambridgeshire was £62.9m and £3.4m in Peterborough. These amounts are currently ringfenced and handled as a “negative reserve” in each council’s balance sheet following special temporary accountancy rules, known as a statutory override, which is in place until March 2028.

Due to the severity of the situation in Cambridgeshire, the County Council has participated in the Department for Education’s Safety Valve programme, which has seen the council receive £21m of additional Government funding to date. Increasing demand for Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), including educational placements funded through the High Needs Block, has meant that Cambridgeshire has seen growth above the trajectory in the Safety Valve agreement. Liaison is ongoing with the Department for Education (DfE) to agree a revised Safety Valve plan.

On the assumption that a Safety Valve agreement is revised, support payments will resume, and the County Council’s mitigation plans for the growth in demand

progress as forecast, the expected HNB deficit by 1 April 2028 is £126m. The unmitigated position with resumption of additional funding and improvements in trajectory is £198m. Cambridgeshire County Council expects that the HNB deficit will prevent the Council from utilising any internal borrowing (because of the depletion of working capital by 2026-27). By April 2028, the HNB deficit will be greater than the County Council’s revenue reserves under current forecasts. At this stage it appears likely that following LGR, the HNB deficits and any agreed funding with DfE will need to be transferred to the successor authorities. We will work with the DfE to ensure that this is done on an equitable basis in line with the split of SEND expenditure.

# Reserves

The level of usable reserves reported by each of the existing Councils in their draft 2024/25 statement of accounts are set out in the table.

In terms of the proposed new councils, usable revenue reserves will be higher at the councils which include the successor(s) to Cambridge City Council, East Cambridgeshire District Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council. Peterborough has lower than average levels of usable revenue reserves. Options which locate Peterborough within a smaller footprint

would continue to see levels of reserves in the lowest quartile. For Option A, the Northwest Unitary Council including Peterborough moves much closer to the average level of usable reserves compared to existing unitary councils unitary councils, whilst the Southeast Unitary Council would be in the highest quartile.

Council	Usable Revenue Reserves as at 31 March 2025 (£000)	Usable Reserves as % of Core Spending Power
Upper-tier Council		
Cambridgeshire County Council	175,707	32%
Unitary Council		
Peterborough City Council	24,915	12%
Lower-tier Councils		
Cambridge City Council	71,153	350%
East Cambridgeshire District Council	30,289	316%
Fenland District Council	13,186	92%
Huntingdonshire District Council	39,086	200%
South Cambridgeshire District Council	56,196	303%

Figure 25. Useable reserves of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough councils



# Local engagement





# Listening to our residents and stakeholders

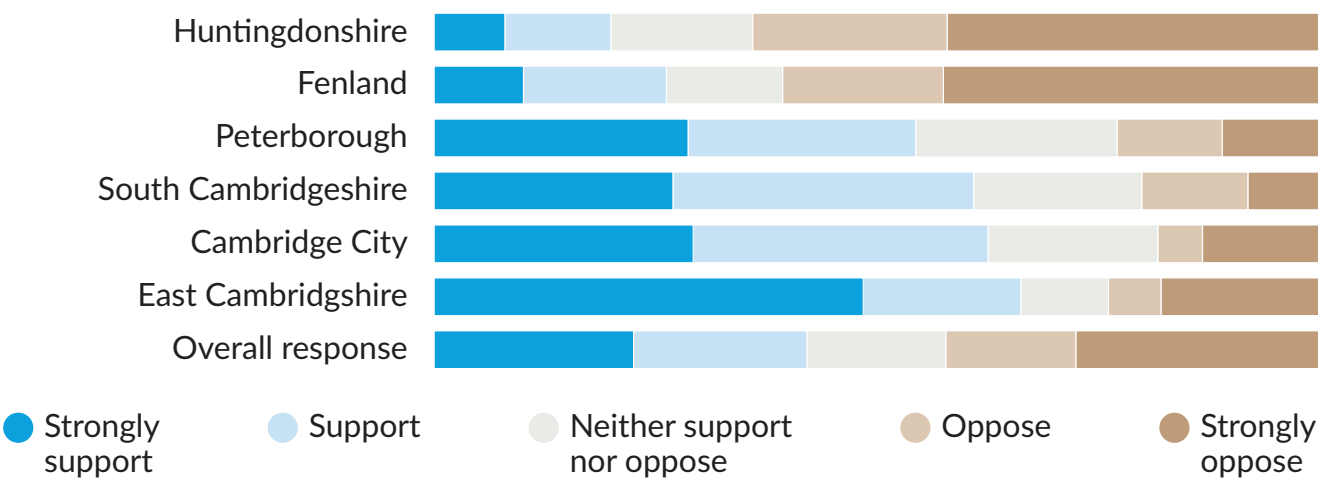
Central to the development of Option A has been the voices of residents and stakeholders, including parish councils, businesses, the voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector, and other public sector partners.

These voices from across the whole of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough have been invaluable and played a central role in shaping our vision for the future of local government in the area.

Over the course of June and July 2025, the seven existing councils across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough collaborated on phase one of engagement, gathering the views of residents and stakeholders about what mattered most to them when considering the creation of new unitary councils. Over 3,000 residents and 231 stakeholders (including 83 town and parish councils and 76 businesses)

responded to the survey. Phase one helped clarify what was most important to residents and where people considered their local area to be, which was crucial to ensuring that proposals respected local identity and made sense to communities and stakeholders.

The County Council then carried out a second phase of engagement focused on Option A to deepen our understanding of residents’ views on the option and to identify how LGR could most benefit local people and organisations. The online survey received a total of 1,912 responses, from residents, local council employees, elected representatives, and other



**Figure 26.** Response to “How much do you support or oppose Option A for reorganising councils in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough?”



Primary aged children

stakeholders. The results from the survey show clear patterns of support for Option A, with East Cambridgeshire recording strong support (67%), followed by Cambridge City (62%), South Cambridgeshire (61%) and Peterborough (55%). The lowest levels of support for this option were from Fenland (26%) and Huntingdonshire (20%) – often linked to concerns about their own local identity in a new council area.

Key themes from both phases of engagement are summarised below, alongside initial mitigations to the most commonly expressed concerns where possible.

### Improving services and reducing complexity

Many of those in favour of Option A expressed confidence in the potential for the two unitary councils to improve service delivery and accessibility by reducing duplication, increasing local control and knowledge, and enabling closer collaboration between service areas.

Overall, respondents supported structural changes, provided it led to service improvements (84% of residents that responded to the survey agreed or strongly agreed with this statement). This emphasis on service improvement was echoed in residents’ priorities for new councils, with ‘investing in council services’ and ‘improving response capabilities’ among the top answers. Stakeholders also prioritised service improvement but focused more on operational efficiencies, cost savings, and coordination as specific ways of improving service delivery. Some respondents also noted that Option A would align well with the NHS, particularly the current ICS Care Partnership footprints, and support the ambitions of the 10 Year Health Plan for England. However, there were also concerns raised regarding service quality and complexity:

- Respondents generally felt that local government does not perform well at reducing complexity or simplifying access to services. 49% of residents felt



local councils did not perform well in this area, compared to 19% who said they did.

- A frequent concern about LGR was the perceived threat to local services, the ability to tackle local issues, and concerns about (current district) services delivered on a larger footprint. Specific concerns included the potential for rural areas to be overlooked, with urban areas prioritised.

**Response:** LGR presents an opportunity to improve public opinion, with the inherent simplification of having a single tier of local government. Careful consideration will be given to ensure that new unitary councils prioritise simplicity for residents when accessing services. In preparation for the launch of the new unitary councils (vesting day), significant preparatory work will be undertaken to ensure residents’ experience of local services is not disrupted, whilst a safe and legal transition of powers takes place. Once established, the new unitary councils are expected to undertake an ambitious transformation programme to improve service delivery. Option A is best placed to capitalise on this opportunity for change.

“In the longer term... it will save money and resource, ensure rural communities are not forgotten, share out local funding more evenly, provide local people with better services from two authorities rather than seven”

A local VCSE partner

It is important to note residents’ concerns around rural communities being overlooked. One of the stakeholders engaged on Option A was Cambridgeshire ACRE, a VCSE organisation dedicated to working with rural communities across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. Cambridgeshire ACRE undertook a high-level analysis of Option A using their rural proofing toolkit. This identified that Option A recognises rural identity and the different service flows across the county and shows a strong understanding of the need to balance local distinctiveness with effective governance.

		Health services		
	Living in...	Northwest Unitary Council	Southeast Unitary Council	Outside of C&P
Southeast Unitary Council	Cambridge	1%	98%	0%
	East Cambs	2%	95%	3%
	South Cambs	4%	91%	5%
Northwest Unitary Council	Fenland	88%	10%	3%
	Huntingdonshire	78%	18%	4%
	Peterborough	88%	6%	6%

**Figure 27.** Where do residents mainly access health services? (analysed against Option A unitary councils)

Building a picture of local identity

Some responses to the second phase of engagement noted that Option A aligns with where people work, shop and socialise, and the unitary councils in Option A make the most sense for maintaining community ties and identity. To build a stronger picture of local identity, residents were asked about their everyday patterns.

Health-related services were identified by residents as a top area for future investment, with 22% of respondents selecting health (such as hospitals, social care, doctor or dentist surgeries) as a priority. When asked where they most frequently access health services, responses closely aligned to the established geographies of the ICS Care Partnerships (and due to the coterminosity, the unitary councils of Option A), with the majority of respondents accessing their healthcare within these boundaries. With the public desire for improved health services, the Government’s 10-Year Plan for Health, and the introduction of new health and wellbeing duties for the CPCA as the area’s Strategic Authority, aligning new unitary councils with the existing ICS Care Partnerships and residents’ patterns for

accessing healthcare will reduce complexities and enable optimal optimal conditions for public service reform.

In addition to asking residents where they accessed their healthcare, residents were asked where they go for shopping and socialising. Whilst there were some minor variations between patterns in socialising and shopping and accessing healthcare, the majority of these behaviours were very similar. These patterns were analysed to assess which proposed unitary councils would best respect local identity.


Most residents stayed within their district/city area for shopping and socialising, with the highest percentages in the urban centres of Cambridge and Peterborough. There was a clear relationship between Fenland and Peterborough, and Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire (as can be seen in Appendix A, section 21), however the responses from East Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire require careful analysis.

In East Cambridgeshire, 33% of respondents travel to Cambridge for their socialising and shopping, making Cambridge the top destination for East

		Shopping and socialising		
	Living in...	Northwest Unitary Council	Southeast Unitary Council	Outside of C&P
Southeast Unitary Council	Cambridge	6%	94%	0%
	East Cambs	7%	89%	4%
	South Cambs	12%	83%	5%
Northwest Unitary Council	Fenland	73%	24%	3%
	Huntingdonshire	56%	42%	2%
	Peterborough	75%	13%	12%

**Figure 28.** Where do residents go for shopping and socialising? (analysed against Option A unitary councils)





“Option A most effectively reflects existing transport links and infrastructure; the way people travel to work; and the NHS infrastructure and the way people access health services. It makes sense to align the authorities in this way”

A resident of East Cambridgeshire

A community cookery class in Cambridge City

Cambridgeshire residents outside of their own district and signalling a strong connection. Within the proposed Southeast Unitary Council of Option A (the only option considered in which East Cambridgeshire and Cambridge are in the same unitary), 89% of East Cambridgeshire residents would remain in the unitary for socialising and shopping, whilst 95% would remain in the unitary for healthcare. Huntingdonshire also shows a notable connection to Cambridge, with 28% of respondents doing their shopping and socialising there. Within the West Unitary Council of Option C (the only option considered in which Huntingdonshire and Cambridge are within the same unitary), 84% of Huntingdonshire respondents would remain in the unitary for shopping and socialising, whilst 81% would remain in the unitary for healthcare. This would suggest that whilst both districts have strong connections to Cambridge, East Cambridgeshire resident's connection is slightly stronger.

In contrast, only 4% of respondents from East Cambridgeshire visited Fenland and Peterborough for shopping or socialising, and just 2% travelled to Fenland or Peterborough for healthcare. Connections between Huntingdonshire and Peterborough or Fenland for socialising and shopping were also limited (10% of respondents from Huntingdonshire travelled to Peterborough or Fenland for this reason). Residents noted a lack of shared identity between southern parts of Huntingdonshire (such as St Neots and St Ives) and the rest of the proposed Northwest Unitary Council, suggesting stronger ties between the southern areas of Huntingdonshire and Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire. There is, however, a strong connection between Huntingdonshire, Fenland and Peterborough regarding health services, with 28% of Huntingdonshire respondents travelling to Peterborough and Fenland for

healthcare. Within the Northwest Unitary Council of Option A, only 56% of Huntingdonshire respondents would stay in the unitary for shopping and socialising, whilst 78% would stay in the unitary for healthcare. This suggests that although there is limited connection for both Huntingdonshire and East Cambridgeshire with Peterborough and Fenland for leisure purposes, there is a much stronger connection between Huntingdonshire, Peterborough and Fenland regarding healthcare.

Although complex, these insights are vitally important, as one of the key findings from local engagement was residents' concern about local identities being respected. Furthermore, 71% of respondents were concerned about being overlooked in the LGR process. Concern was strongest in rural districts including Fenland and East Cambridgeshire, where 81% of respondents reported this concern. These findings highlight the importance of ensuring that the option put forward for the new unitaries not only considers the data, but ensures balance of local identity, local needs and local history.

**Response:** This analysis highlights the strong connections between East Cambridgeshire and Cambridge, and the limited connection between East Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, suggesting Option A would best respect the local identity in East Cambridgeshire. The data also shows Huntingdonshire's tangible healthcare connection with Fenland and Peterborough and indicates that whilst not ideal, the majority of Huntingdonshire residents stay within the areas comprising the Northwest Unitary Council in Option A for their shopping and socialising. On balance, Option A creates the unitary councils that best align with the local identity of residents.



The concerns raised about local identity have been essential in shaping the direction of our vision for the future of local government, influencing the principles of the blueprint for local services and solidifying proposals for Neighbourhood Area Committees, both of which are explored in detail in the next chapter. Through targeted engagement with residents and stakeholders in Huntingdonshire in the lead up to vesting day, place-based working, and new neighbourhood governance arrangements, Option A can address the specific concerns for this district. Our vision will see the new unitary councils not just protect local identity but enhance it through their ways of working.

Financial pressures and value for money

While some saw LGR as an opportunity to reduce duplication and improve value for money, there were concerns about carry-over of debt from Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council, alongside the transition costs for reorganisation, creating additional challenges for new unitary councils to overcome, which could negatively impact service delivery. Residents also noted that Option A concentrated the majority of the area’s deprivation in the Northwest Unitary

Council, and raised concerns about the impact this could have on the Northwest Unitary Council’s ability to raise income and deliver effective, high-quality services.

**Response:** In proposing new unitaries of a viable economic size, Option A places the new councils in the best possible position to withstand financial shocks and manage legacy debts. As set out in the Financial Analysis chapter of this proposal, Option A ensures the most equitable balance of base budget funding, putting the proposed Northwest and Southeast Unitary Councils on a strong financial footing. There is currently a lack of certainty about how legacy debts will be addressed, but it is envisaged that the new unitary councils will need to agree on the appropriate split of existing debt, taking account of a range of factors including population, location of assets and financial capacity. Regarding the concentration of deprivation in the Northwest Unitary Council, this should be seen as an opportunity to focus in on the root causes and work with residents to address local issues. Potential increases in Government funding through the focus on deprivation in the Fair Funding Review 2.0, and the prioritising of health funding to areas with lower health outcomes in the 10 Year Health Plan for England, will also help to address these challenges.

“I think this is a much needed re-think of the pointless and confusing multiplicity of layers when most people just want a service they can access”

A resident of South Cambridgeshire

Stakeholder sector	Feedback	Benefits of Option A
Health	Support from health organisations highlight that alignment between Option A's boundaries and existing ways of working, partnerships, patient flows and NHS neighbourhood models, would support continuity of health and care services, alongside the potential for stronger integration and collaboration across health and local government.	The coterminosity of the Northwest Unitary Council and the North Cambridgeshire and Peterborough ICS Care Partnership, and the Southeast Unitary Council and the Cambridgeshire South ICS Care Partnership will create a simple transition into place-based partnership working, supporting greater collaboration and an improved outcomes for residents.
Town and Parish Council	A number of parish and town councils expressed their support for Option A as the proposed unitary councils align with how people travel for work, education and leisure, respect the ties between towns and villages, and support existing partnerships. Other benefits identified include clearer accountability and better strategic resilience owing to the appropriate size of the unitaries. One of the concerns raised by parish and town councils relate to the complexity of local identity in Huntingdonshire and the strong connections between southern Huntingdonshire and Cambridge.	The Northwest and Southeast Unitary Councils align closely with residents' patterns of socialising, shopping and accessing healthcare, as well as respecting historic local government boundaries. Ongoing engagement with Huntingdonshire residents, and collaboration between the new unitaries, will be key to overcoming complex local identity concerns for the district. Electing councillors for one local council rather than two and implementing a network of neighbourhood area committees will improve accountability for residents. The equity in size of the new councils will allow balanced representation of local voices, and equal representation at the CPCA.
Education and Academia	Academic support focused on the opportunity for stronger partnership working in the future that the Option A proposal presented, whilst feedback from the education sector suggesting the alignment of the unitaries in Option A would allow for greater efficiency in education services.	The Northwest and Southeast Unitary Councils will foster effective partnerships with academic institutions, whilst the new boundaries will create efficiencies in place planning. The alignment of new unitary councils with the ICS Care Partnerships creates opportunities for improved outcomes in SEND services.

Continues >



Stakeholder sector	Feedback	Benefits of Option A
Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE)	Cost saving and improved service quality were highlighted as benefits of Option A by VCSE organisations. They noted Option A aligns areas with similar demographics and needs, alongside potential for more focused funding opportunities to tackle deprivation in the Northwest Unitary. Benefits also included alignment with health partnerships allowing greater collaboration, and better opportunities for addressing local concerns. Cambridgeshire ACRE's assessment with their rural toolkit, found that Option A would provide the best opportunities for the area's rural communities.	Two councils delivering all local government services, aligned with established ICS Care Partnership boundaries will reduce duplication and enable high-quality, integrated services, small enough to focus on local issues but big enough to maintain financial scale and sustainability. The deprivation in the Northwest unitary is likely to draw in higher levels of funding through Fair Funding 2.0 and will allow a greater focus on the root causes of the problem.
Businesses	The Cambridgeshire Chambers of Commerce have highlighted the importance of new unitary councils providing high quality and cost-effective services, with limited disruption to growth related services such as planning. They also note the necessity of working with key bodies in the area such as the CPCA and Cambridge Growth Company.	One of the key elements of implementation will be the safe and legal transition of services to new unitary councils, this will be done in a way that minimises disruption as much as possible. Collaboration is one of four principles in our blueprint for local services, building partnership working into the foundations of local government in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.
Trade Unions	Trade Unions have been engaged through regular discussion and were invited to respond to the Phase 2 engagement survey. Concerns were raised about the impact on workforce culture and terms and conditions during reorganisation.	One of the key elements of implementation will be the safe and legal transition of services to new unitary councils, this will be done in a way that minimises disruption as much as possible to staff. Disaggregation of County Council services and staff to two new unitary councils will be simpler than splitting into more than two new unitary councils.

Stakeholder sector	Feedback	Benefits of Option A
MPs	Local Members of Parliament have been briefed on LGR regularly and have been offered the opportunity to engage on Option A.	
Drainage Board	Stakeholders highlighted that Option A was the best option for water management, enabling more efficient and effective relationships and collaboration, particularly between Middle Level Commissioners, Internal Drainage Boards and the new unitary councils with their Local Planning and Lead Local Flood responsibilities. This should bring financial benefits to drainage ratepayers and council taxpayers.	Will enable more efficient and effective relationships and collaboration with MLC/Internal Drainage Boards and the new unitary councils with their Local Planning and Lead Local Flood responsibilities.

Figure 29. Stakeholder feedback





# Our vision

Two councils.  
One fairer future.

Child exploring South Cambridgeshire



# A new blueprint for local services

We believe LGR will act as a catalyst for transforming and improving the way local public services are delivered. Option A provides the template for fundamentally reshaping the way local government serves our area's residents and businesses and puts it in the optimal position to support the CPCA in unlocking the potential that further devolution has to offer.

Our new blueprint for local services offers strategic alignment with other public service organisations, and is responsive to the ambition of the Government's English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill to establish coterminous public service boundaries.

This blueprint will allow us to build on what already works well locally so that we can maintain and transform crucial services, for example, the established relationships with ICS Care Partnerships and the County Council's 'good' and 'improving' services for people, whilst also providing a foundation to work with the CPCA to drive public service reform harder and faster. There are two key elements for achieving our vision of two councils with one fairer future.

The **first element** is a framework for delivering services so they become more proactive and holistic, tailored to the diverse needs of individual residents and local communities, and can support the devolution ambitions of the CPCA. This framework is grounded on four key principles:

- **Prevention** – the new unitary councils will act early to positively support good health and wellbeing throughout the life course, creating opportunities for children and young people and limiting the escalation of complex needs for those who require support.
- **Place-based** – new unitary councils will work closer to communities in designing and delivering services across cities, towns, villages, and rural areas, aligning with ICS Care Partnerships to provide more neighborhood-focused health and care services, as outlined in England's 10-Year Health Plan.
- **Collaboration** – the new unitary councils will work with partners like health, the police, education and the VCSE to break down silos and deliver tailored services that are built around the needs of individual residents not organisations.
- **Evidence-led** – the new unitary councils will put evidence at the heart of decision making, using data and insight to support a more effective targeting of resource to ensure it reaches those most in need and delivers the most effective impact.

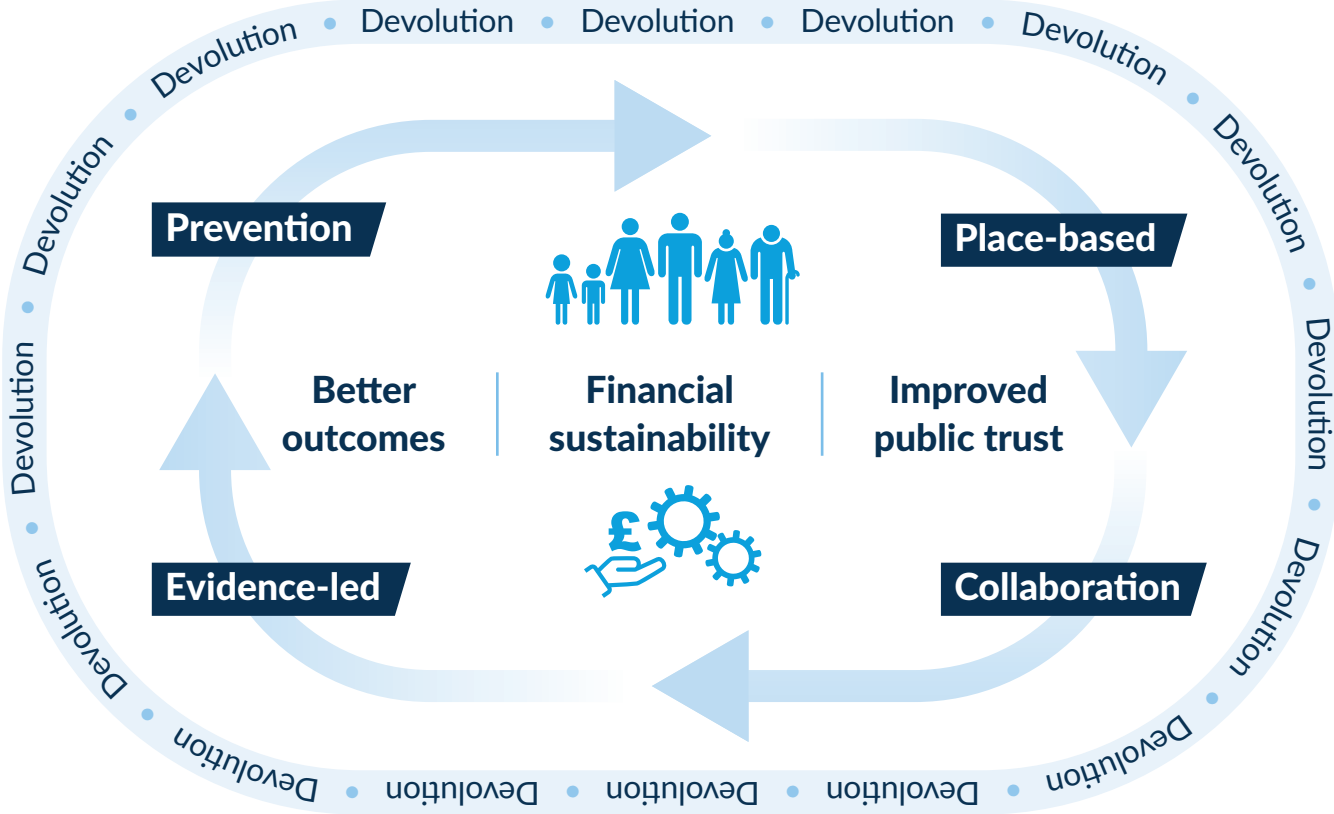


Figure 30. Illustration of a new blueprint for local services





The **second element** involves the creation of robust local governance that provides clearer democratic accountability to residents whilst also providing new and meaningful opportunities for them to influence local matters.

1. A single set of councillors will be responsible for the full range of local government services, removing the current arrangements whereby multiple councillors represent the same electorate but for different purposes. Providing clearer accountability is one of the Government's key ambitions with LGR, and is particularly important locally with only 24% of respondents in our engagement feeling that councils performed very well or fairly well in regard to accountability and transparency.
2. A potential network of Neighbourhood Area Committees (NACs) could embed the importance of place-based working

and local engagement at the heart of the new unitary council's decision making, and deliver on the Government's intention, as set out in the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill, for all local authorities to make appropriate arrangements for effective governance of any neighbourhood area.

The vision set out here does not presume to agree the strategies, structures or precise arrangements of the new councils, as this will be a matter for the elected members of these new organisations. However, it does provide a blueprint for a future in which services become more sophisticated, and residents are more empowered. Through this blueprint for local services the new unitary councils will deliver improved outcomes for residents, greater financial stability and improved public trust in local institutions.

**“Option A offers the strongest and most practical framework for the future of local government in Cambridgeshire. We consider this option will align better with local identities and people’s daily lives including areas such as work, travel, NHS and education”**

**A local parish council**



**The Fitzwilliam Museum Founder's entrance hall and staircase**  
Photograph © The Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge



## Prevention

**We will act early to positively support good health and wellbeing throughout the life course, with council services prioritising prevention to empower local people to stay healthier and independent for longer, limiting escalations of need and reducing future costs.**

Through the lens of LGR, prevention aligns closely with the Government's ambitions for wider public sector reform and the shift from sickness to prevention detailed in the [10 Year Health Plan for England](#), recognising the role of local government in supporting the NHS to achieve this. Working coterminously will ensure that preventative services are delivered as effectively as possible with new unitary councils operating on the same boundaries



Health check

as operational teams within the NHS. ICS Care Partnerships will be an important enabler of this way of working.

Joining up lower-tier services with upper-tier services will allow more holistic, person-centred service planning. One area where this will have high impact is adult social care. Connecting adult social care services with services such as leisure and housing, accompanied by close partnership working with the ICS Care Partnerships, will allow for an enhanced service. A holistic approach that aims to build healthy lives through targeted access to specialist exercise provision such as fall prevention, commissioned by public health and delivered by leisure teams such as the active lifestyle coordinators that currently work in the district/city councils, will transform adult social care, focusing on prevention and facilitating independent living. The shift to prevention can be further exploited through the integration of housing and adult social care services, as the opportunity to develop alternative models that support people to live in their own home for longer are explored, moving away from residential and bed-based care. This transformative approach to adult social care provision will champion prevention and improve outcomes for residents.

This can be applied across the broad spectrum of services delivered by local government. Other key areas that will benefit from this model include early help and children's services. Implementing programmes such as Families First Partnership (FFP) will transform the whole system of help, support and protection, to ensure that every family can access the right help and support when they need it, with a strong emphasis on early intervention to prevent crisis.

## Case study

### High Impact Users Service

Working in partnership with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Integrated Care Board (ICB), Cambridgeshire County Council has hosted the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough [High Impact Use Service](#) (HIU) since launching in 2024. The service aims to prevent individuals over 18 years old needing repeat admissions to Addenbrooke's, Peterborough City and Hinchingsbrooke Hospital Emergency Departments, by addressing underlying social and environmental reasons rather than, or as well as, health reasons. Whilst HIU services are usually placed within NHS services, the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough service is uniquely hosted by a local authority and funded by the ICB. This positioning allows the service to make best use of well-established relationships with partner organisations across health, care and community services to support residents. The service eligibility threshold is individuals who have visited Emergency Departments 10 times in 12 months.

An [article in the British Medical Journal](#) highlighted the positive impact the service has already delivered. The article noted that HIU services nationally generate a [return on investment of 250-400%](#) alongside the more meaningful return on restored human connections. The article highlights how HIU services 'exemplify the best of integrated neighbourhood working' but also deliver on the three shifts intended by the 10 Year Health Plan for England by focusing primarily on prevention, community based, and digital system enhanced health care. Option A presents valuable opportunities to develop innovative services, such as the HIU, to prevent the escalation of issues faced by residents with complex needs. By drawing together multiple public services across the new unitary areas, supported by the resources and responsibilities of new unitary councils, Option A supports earlier intervention and a preventative approach.



## Place-based

**We will operate closer to communities in the design and delivery of services, ensuring they are organised around the appropriate geography or community of need, whether in our cities, market towns, villages or rural areas.**

The creation of two new unitary councils will give renewed emphasis to place-based delivery, with the area and neighbourhood focus becoming standard for planning, organising and delivering services within these organisations. There is a significant opportunity to align local government services with the NHS at this level, expanding the potential to use resources more creatively in responding to specific area or neighbourhood needs. As the [10 Year Health Plan for England](#) aims to shift healthcare from hospitals to communities through the creation of Neighbourhood Health Services delivered within communities and based at Neighbourhood Health Centres, there is a unique opportunity to align service provision at a place-level. Working in a place-based way, neighbourhood teams will be able to unlock new opportunities for co-production with communities, whilst co-locating services with NHS and VCSE partners will further enable holistic care through the development of micro-care ecosystems. This would support the Government's ambition for closer collaboration and integration of public services, aligning public sector services around neighbourhoods.

This way of working is due to be implemented through the National Neighbourhood Health Implementation Programme, the first wave of which has already begun, and includes Fenland and Peterborough thanks to the successful bid of the ICS North Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Care Partnership. The application to take part in the first wave was selected because it showed strong collaboration between local health and care partners, which improved services and strengthened links with local communities. This demonstrates the vast potential for the application of place-based working in a public service setting.

Making full use of communities services will be crucial to unlocking effective place-based delivery. As the councils' centre for expertise around youth work, community development, community safety and participation and engagement, they are best placed to progress work based on local footprints. Utilising local assets such as libraries and community centres will be important in delivering place-based services, acting as hubs of community activity. This focus will be further strengthened through new Neighbourhood Area Committees (explored more in the Democracy and Governance section above), which will embed place-based values into the constitutional fabric of new councils, and empower local democratic and resident voice in the delivery of services.

## Case study

### Fenland Youth Work Network and Fenland Youth Tribe

Local councils including Cambridge City Council, Huntingdonshire District Council, and Cambridgeshire County Council have been working with the ICS North Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Care Partnership, the Office of Police and Crime Commissioner and a number of Voluntary and Community organisations to deliver a series of pilot projects, entitled 'Closer to Communities'. These unique pilots were designed to test how formal council decision making could be improved by giving residents more opportunities to influence decisions that affect them, and to see how services could be more embedded in 'places'.

The Fenland Youth Work Network and Fenland Youth Tribe has helped tackle high levels of poverty and educational needs in Fenland, with a network of voluntary, community and statutory youth work providers collaborating with wider community partners and statutory services. In 2024, the network ran the Fenland Youth Survey to gather the views of over 1,000 young people throughout Fenland to inform the network's priorities, keeping their activities aligned with the voices of young people. The survey led to the innovative Fenland Youth Tribe – an approach to empowering young people to voice their concerns and drive change in their communities, through detached outreach

and savvy use of social media. The advocacy from the Youth Tribe led to improved lighting at skate parks and the installation of a tool repair station. The projects of Fenland Youth Work Network and Youth Tribe have engaged over 200 young people, many of whom are at risk of exploitation or serious violence. These activities include weekly sessions with over 30 participants, creating vital links between vulnerable or disadvantaged young people and the services they need – from food and clothing to referrals and club sponsorships.

The project won the 2025 Local Government Chronicle (LGC) [Award for Community Involvement](#). As the LGC review of the projects noted: "Fenland's story is a powerful reminder that when communities are trusted and heard, they can achieve extraordinary things. FYWN isn't just a network, it's a movement." The Fenland Youth Work Network and Youth Tribe demonstrates the potential positive impact on communities and residents available through creating focus points of service design and decision-making around community 'places'. Option A would create unitary councils connecting existing strong local identities with the right configuration of services and geographic areas that could empower communities and services to deliver improved outcomes for residents.



## Collaboration (multi-disciplinary)

**We will work with partners like health, the police, education, the VCSE and local communities to break down silos and deliver tailored services that are built around the needs of individual residents not organisations.**

When considered in the context of LGR, this will ensure the potential benefits of bringing together lower-tier and upper-tier services are realised. Taking a person-centred approach to service planning will require collaboration between services such as revenues and benefits, housing, and adult social care. For the most effective person-centred services, new unitary councils will need to work together with other public sector partners such as the NHS and the police. If implemented effectively, collaborative working with partners should have the potential to not only enhance the work of the unitary councils, but to support our partners to make progress towards their own priorities.

Collaboration with local communities and residents who access council services will further improve service delivery, enhanced by collaboration between the town and parish councils and new Neighbourhood Area Committees. Working collaboratively in a place-based way, neighbourhood level teams will be able to unlock new opportunities for co-production with communities, through which the co-location of services with NHS and VCSE partners will further enable holistic care.

Alongside collaboration within the new unitary councils and with partners, an important manifestation of this principle will be in the collaboration between the Northwest and Southeast Unitary Councils. Prioritising the establishment of collaborative relationships between the two unitary council's people services, including children's services, will provide the opportunity to develop continuous learning within the teams, sharing good practice and lessons learned from difficult cases.

## Case study

### Neighbourhood working across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough

As part of the ICS Cambridgeshire South Care Partnership, 15 colleagues from across health services, the voluntary sector, and county and district councils, sit on the East Cambridgeshire Integrated Neighbourhood Board. The board has a 'Whole Community' philosophy to tackling health and social inequalities, which ensures people from across the local system (known as the East Cambridgeshire 'Underground System') support one another to test, learn and build new approaches to addressing the wider determinants of health. As the Integrated Neighbourhood has matured, this 'one team' collaboration has delivered:

- Annual joint priority planning across the Integrated Neighbourhood Board, Primary Care Network (PCN) Board and Community Safety Partnership
- A Community Diagnostics Centre provided by Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust for people living in East Cambridgeshire, enabling people to access more timely, clinical pathways closer to where they live
- A Neighbourhood Carers Lead role was developed and jointly funded by the County Council and the PCN to respond in a place-based way to local challenges, with over 1,105 carers identified and supported since November 2023
- The Integrated Neighbourhood team are progressively growing their shared Workforce Development Programme. For example, the County Council have led on Appreciative Enquiry – a listening

technique which is used by the team to deepen understanding of important issues and inform how they approach them.

In parallel to these developments, in September 2025, the ICS North Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Care Partnership was one of only 43 areas in England to be awarded funding and support to establish the first wave of Neighbourhood Healthcare Services. The ICS North Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Care Partnership was successful in their bid to have Neighbourhood Health Teams, led by local GP Practices working closely with key community partners, including social workers, dentists, mental health support, volunteers and other health and social care practitioners to offer patients bespoke care plans. The initial focus of these teams will be on improving services and support for residents with multiple conditions and those living with frailty. A key strength of the proposal was the established neighbourhood working across Fenland, Peterborough and Huntingdonshire in the areas of cancer screening, supporting people quitting smoking and supporting vulnerable people through holistic care planning.

These developments across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough demonstrate that there is already a bedrock of collaborative working between services that support some of the most vulnerable residents. By aligning the new unitary councils with the ICS Care Partnerships, Option A will provide a strong starting position to further collaborate and improve the support and outcomes for residents.

Employees at New Shire Hall





## Evidence-led

**We will put evidence at the heart of our decision making, using data and insight to support a more effective targeting of resource to ensure it reaches those most in need and delivers the most effective impact.**

Council services will make the best use of available data and evidence to innovate, improve peoples' experience, and drive efficiencies in delivery. Through the [English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill](#), the Government committed to improving data access and use in local government, whilst the publication of a draft [Local Government Outcomes Framework](#) provides a glimpse at what this might look like in practice. Utilising available data and engaging with local communities and residents who access council services will be critical in ensuring new unitary councils are implementing effective policies and

delivering impactful services. Embedding an evidence-based value to underpin the ways of working in new councils will help to take full advantage of the opportunities created by structural change to local government.

Utilising the available advances in technology and AI, the new unitary councils will be able to streamline administrative functions relating to service delivery. Maximising the integration of data and analysis will allow for responsive people, place and community services, that can adapt effectively to meet local needs. Through enhanced evidence-based decision making, informing commissioning, service planning and delivery, there is great potential for both the Northwest and Southeast Unitary Councils to facilitate improved outcomes for residents.

## Case study

### Cambridgeshire Poverty Strategy Commission

The [Cambridgeshire Poverty Strategy Commission](#) was a collaboration between Cambridgeshire County Council, the CPCA, the county's five district councils, the ICS and local VCSE partners to test a new way of coproducing evidence-based policy. This was based on a recognition that poverty is a complex issue that is not in the gift of any single organisation to 'fix', and that effective interventions must be informed by those with 'lived experience'.

The Commission appointed 11 independent Commissioners to undertake six months of intensive evidence gathering, reviewing data and engaging with professionals, residents and communities affected by poverty, to develop a set of recommendations across seven areas of focus that would create lasting change, published in their [final report](#) in May 2025.

The Commission analysed both lived experiences and data from services and organisations to create a deeper understanding of the complexity and interconnectedness of poverty across Cambridgeshire. The lived experiences of residents were gathered through a combination of independent research carried out by Resolve Poverty, the work of the Cambridgeshire Appreciative Enquiry Learning Network, and direct engagement with voluntary groups and organisations across the county.

The breadth of evidence and experiences gathered, matched by the insight of Commissioners was essential in creating the robust and deep understanding of the impact, causes and challenges of poverty across the county. Only with this understanding could the Commission set out a series of tenacious recommendations that were not only deliverable and realistic, but would deliver essential positive impact in unpicking and reducing poverty for residents across the county.

The approach taken to deliver the Cambridgeshire Poverty Strategy Commission demonstrates the high value that creating a strong evidence base can bring to decision making, by drawing together stakeholders, ensuring there is a breadth of sources (data, lived experiences, informed insight).

The configuration of Option A would create two unitaries with distinct geographic areas with their own identities, unique resources and challenges. The Northwest and Southeast Unitary Councils would be best positioned (compared to other options) to draw together data, experiences and insight from services, VCSE organisations and communities to inform decision making that will drive growth and quality of life improvements for their residents and communities.

## Care Together community exercise class



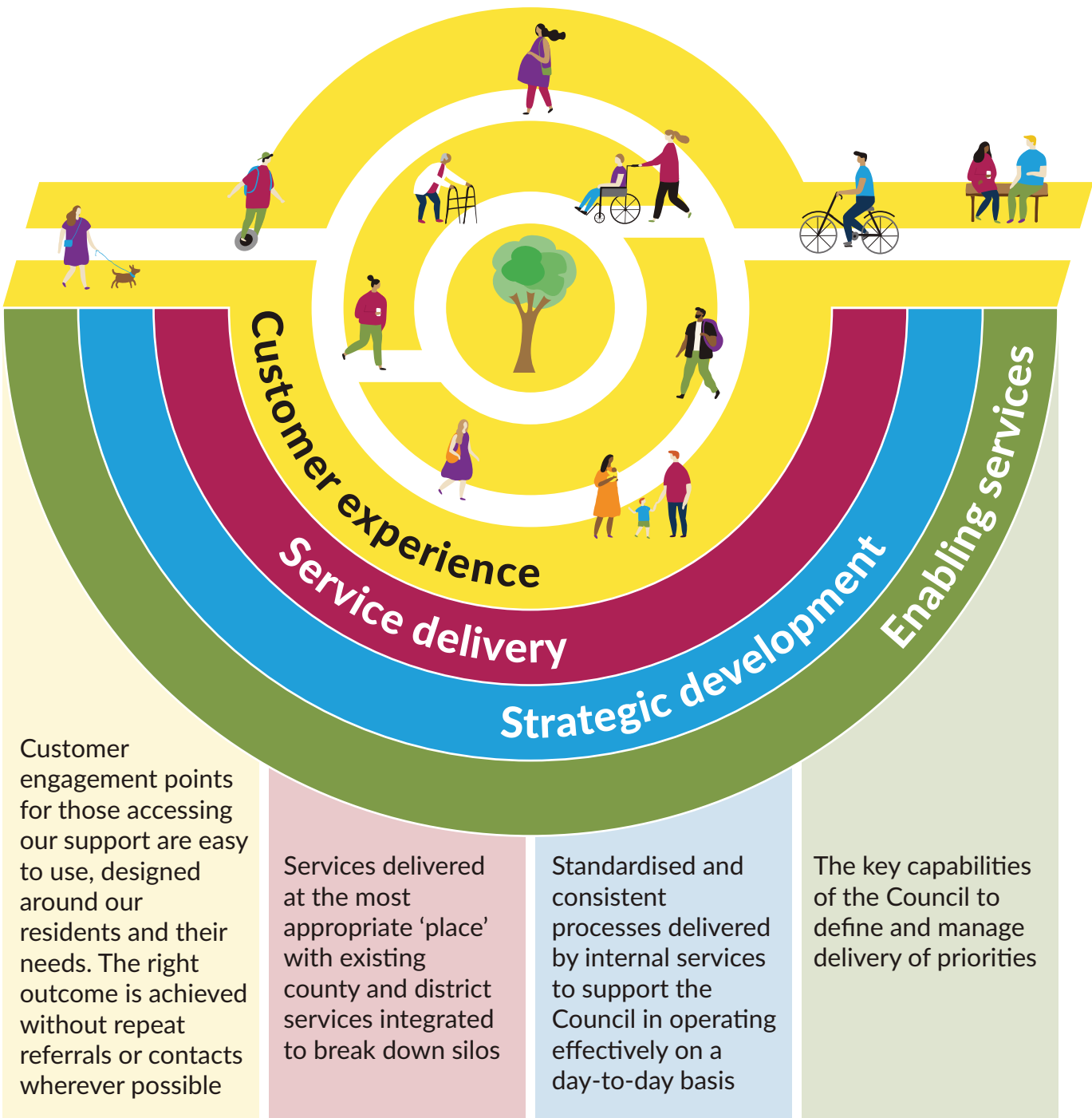


Implementing the blueprint for local services will involve shaping the way that new unitary councils' function so they can put the four domains into practice, with services clustered across four layers that emphasise resident-centricity and place delivery.

- 1. Customer Services** will provide engagement points designed around their needs (rather than organisational structures), to achieve the right outcomes without repeat referrals or contacts wherever possible, and residents' experience of interacting with services will be improved through better engagement with, and feedback from, customers. By taking a co-ordinated approach to customer contacts, the new unitary councils will be able to make better use of more coordinated customer data.
- 2. Service Delivery** will be facilitated in the most appropriate 'place' with delivery at a place-based or

neighbourhood level integrating various functions and disciplines from across the council. Working with partners like schools and the NHS will improve 'join-up' across public service silos and strengthen the experience of residents, creating the potential to drive sustained improvement in outcomes.

- 3. Strategic Development** will be focused on bringing together the key capabilities of the new unitary councils to define and manage delivery of their strategic vision, ambitions and priorities. It will embed an evidence-based approach to policy development and service design, and use this to inform strategic commissioning, business planning decisions, and maintain focus on performance intelligence.
- 4. Enabling Services** ('back-office') will ensure the new unitary councils have the right people, tools and capabilities to make their ambitions a reality and do so in a way that is safe and legal.



**Figure 31.** Illustration of implementing the new blueprint for local services



# Devolution

The new unitary councils working alongside a more empowered Mayoral Strategic Authority will be pivotal for the future prosperity of our area. The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) will become a Mayoral Strategic Authority and has the ambition to achieve Established Mayoral Authority status as early as possible.

The CPCA works with local councils, the Local Enterprise Partnership, universities, businesses and Government departments and agencies to enable regional economic growth. Through the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill, CPCA will gain additional responsibilities in the areas of environment and net zero, public safety, health, wellbeing and public service reform. The Bill will introduce new powers of competence to enable Mayors to convene local partners to address specific local challenges, and a formal duty to collaborate with neighbouring Mayors on joint projects and strategies.

The CPCA’s draft Corporate Plan 2025-2029, coupled with the approved CPCA

Local Growth Plan, builds a picture of a Mayoral Strategic Authority that is deeply committed to delivering inclusive growth across the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area. Together, the documents outline the ambition to have the fastest growing economy outside London. Achieving the priorities in the Local Growth Plan and the draft Corporate Plan will enable the CPCA to boost growth, increase connectivity, get people into jobs, deliver homes, and strengthen local resilience.

Option A creates two unitary councils with sensible, strong economies, that will collaborate closely with the CPCA to ensure that inclusive economic growth is felt equally across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough,

“We believe Cambridgeshire County Council’s two unitaries model will maximise Greater Camb’s potential and help drive more quickly and effectively economic growth throughout the county”

Anglia Ruskin University

## Growth

Building on the area’s international significance, the CPCA intends to deliver the conditions for growth through infrastructure led developments, which will draw in further investment and open opportunities to enhance our GVA. This will be achieved by supporting the redevelopment of key infrastructure in Peterborough, working with the Cambridge Growth Company to maximise the economic potential of Cambridge, and drawing on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund to improve our heritage and tourism offers across our historic market towns and rural spaces.

## Connectivity

By focusing investment on high impact schemes for active travel, drawing investment to improve key roads, using new powers to secure faster more frequent rail services and bus franchising, the CPCA will enable greater connectivity across the area on more modes of transport, further enhancing the conditions for growth.

## Jobs

Through plans to match skills funding to roles needed by local employers with more direct placements, the CPCA intends to enable more residents to secure a job, or a better job, particularly in growth sectors. Initiatives include the Youth Trailblazer scheme, ensuring every young person has access to opportunities, protecting English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses and working with the Chamber of Commerce to develop a Local Skills Improvement Plan to meet employer demands.

## Homes

Use of the Strategic Place Partnership with Homes England will enable housing delivery and regeneration to be prioritised where it will be most effective. There will be a focus on efforts to deliver the Spatial Development Strategy to shape future growth and ensure development is led by infrastructure and appropriate design principles to meet local needs alongside, for example, future climate change related risks.

## Resilience

To ensure sustained growth is achievable, the CPCA recognises that action is needed to mitigate risks against our energy and water supply, flooding and drought protection and other strategic risks to our farmland. These actions will include prioritising delivery of the Fens Reservoir and networks of mini-reservoirs to address water scarcity, improve local pumping station capacity, protect prime farmland and ensure clear Local Area Energy Plans and resilience plans are developed and implemented.





“Our excellent local partnership on employment and health, through WorkWell and Get Britain Working, and our track record of supporting prosperity in North Cambridgeshire and Peterborough is well suited to this option.”

NHS North West Anglia Foundation Trust

supporting the ambitions of the Mayoral Strategic Authority and the Government.

One of the aspirations of the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill is coterminous public sector boundaries, and LGR proposals should seek to align the boundaries of new unitary councils with other public services like the NHS and police. This is not an end in itself, but a pre-condition to enhancing partnership working and service integration so that residents can benefit from the improved outcomes often delivered by more joined-up public services. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough is in an advantageous position, as at a high level the footprints of the Police, Fire and ICB already align to the Mayoral Strategic Authority (Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority) boundary. Whilst the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough ICB has recently become part of the Central East ICB cluster with Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes, the Minister of State for Health has indicated that this could be reviewed following LGR, to facilitate realignment with the Mayoral Strategic Authority boundaries. This allows for greater collaboration in public service planning and alignment of strategic ambitions.

Option A best creates the conditions to progress, at pace, new powers for the Mayoral Strategic Authority. The coterminous boundaries between the unitary councils and ICS Care Partnerships open further opportunities for cross-organisational working with a greater focus on place. Local partnerships that tap into place-based working across health and social care would provide the optimal conditions for delivering impactful, holistic, preventative services to communities.

With greater strategic and operational synchronicity, LGR could strengthen ties between the Mayoral Strategic Authority and unitary councils. With additional Mayoral powers around community safety and health, the expectation that Mayors will sit on the ICB and absorb the functions of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, having unitary councils that align operationally with health, police and fire boundaries will allow for smoother partnership working between all public sector organisations in the area. This coterminosity will support the CPCA to provide strategic leadership on matters affecting the whole area.

The CPCA has shown it can facilitate collaboration between public bodies that is effective in creating conditions for unlocking growth, transformation and significant investment. To achieve further growth, the CPCA will need well-resourced, financially sustainable unitary councils to deliver local public infrastructure such as school places, health facilities and highways. Option A will create two unitary councils designed to enable growth by capitalising on their distinct economic, geographic and social identities.

Alongside their unique identities, the new councils will have differing needs and priorities, such as research and development infrastructure in the Southeast Unitary Council and targeted skills training and direct placement initiatives in the Northwest Unitary Council. Building on their successful history of collaboration with public bodies, the CPCA will be able to leverage strategic partnerships and lobby Government to meet the needs and progress the priorities of each council, unlocking wider growth.



# Democracy and governance

## Councillors

Central to the effective delivery of LGR is the importance of establishing new unitary councils that will provide democratic legitimacy and meaningful representative government to the people of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. Local councillors are central to achieving this through their role in representing the views of residents, providing community leadership, developing council policy, and regulating key issues such as planning and licensing. Our proposals for the democratic governance arrangements for Option A will be enhanced by the Neighbourhood Area Committees set out below and will complement the town and parish councils that will remain intact and are unaffected by LGR.

In developing plans for the democratic structures of future unitary councils, we have been mindful to reflect the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) expectations that such arrangements ensure a sufficient number councillors to effectively manage the business and decision making of the council, support the representational role of councillors in the community and their ability to conduct casework and support residents, and facilitate the scrutiny arrangements of the council to hold decision makers to account. It is expected that following the creation of new unitary councils for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, the LGBCE will review the warding arrangements to determine whether they deliver appropriate electoral equality and reflect local community identities and interests.

At present the electoral arrangements across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough are made up of:

- 59 County Divisions
- 61 County Councillors
- 98 District Council Wards
- 210 District Councillors
- 22 Peterborough City Council Wards
- 60 Peterborough City Council Councillors

A working group comprising Monitoring Officers and Democratic Services Officers from across all seven existing councils have considered the LGBCE guidance concerning council size, and the expectation that these would usually fall within a range between 30 and 100 councillors. The group also considered the merits of using existing electoral boundaries as the basis for future representation, recognising that the timeframes available did not permit a full programme to create new wards. The working group concluded that existing County Council electoral

divisions and Peterborough City Council wards provide the most robust starting point, as these offer better levels of electoral equality when compared with district and city wards. Using county divisions as the building blocks of new unitary wards would therefore lead to fairer and more consistent levels of representation on the new unitary councils, recognising that some minor revision is needed to the wards/division referenced in the table.

Whilst these arrangements would provide appropriate electoral equality to support rapid implementation of LGR proposals, these should be considered transitional arrangements, and a comprehensive review of ward boundaries should be undertaken by LGCBE at an early stage of the life of the new unitary councils to ensure elector to member ratios reflect current population data and address any outstanding anomalies. In line with the ambition of the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill, both new unitary councils will be created with a Leader and Cabinet model to provide strategic leadership and executive decision making.



	Number of wards	Number of councillors	Number of electorates	Range of electorates per member	Minor revisions needed
Northwest Unitary Council	47	92	364,079	2,546 – 5,203	Proposed that March North & Waldersey is split into two two-councillor divisions. Four small PCC wards have one councillor.
Southeast Unitary Council	34	68	283,655	3,040 – 4,916	Proposed that Sawston & Shelford is split into two two-councillor divisions. Two small Cambridge City division retains one councillor.

Figure 32. Proposed arrangements for electoral representation



Neighbourhood Area Committees

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough’s identities are deeply rooted in the diverse places of our area, from the big skies of our Fen villages to quaint market towns and cosmopolitan cities. These places provide a crucially important sense of identity to residents with results from the last three years of the Quality of Life Survey finding an average of 75% of people report a sense of belonging to their local community. This is mirrored in the responses to the phase two survey, where some residents asked questions about how local community identities would be respected, and how rural and urban issues would be addressed. Whilst many residents feel a sense of connection to where they live, there are increasing levels of social isolation, loneliness and mental health challenges.

We view LGR as an opportunity to build on this sense of connection and alleviate

concerns around potential loss of local identity, by developing new forms of democratic participation that will be rooted in local areas and neighbourhoods. This approach will allow the new unitary councils to make real the Government’s ambition set out in the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill to return power to communities and support residents to play a more active role in shaping the area where they live. Through the creation of Neighbourhood Areas Committees (NACs) covering population sizes of around 30,000 people, our proposal ensures community voices will be heard, and more decision-making will be anchored at place level. We envisage these committees being led by new ward councillors, bringing together residents, council officers and representatives from partner organisations.

They would provide a forum for discussion but would also act as a formal council



Figure 33. Map outline of proposed Neighbourhood Area Committees

committee where ward councillors have decision making power over specific local issues (such as grant allocations, some aspects of local planning, local highways, and local assets such as the Community Right to Buy) and have control over a dedicated budget to invest in local

community priorities. These NACs will complement the already significant role of town and parish councils by giving ‘place’ a constitutional basis in the formal governance arrangements of new unitary councils. It is suggested that the geographies of NACs align to the Neighbourhood Services vision set out in the 10 Year Health Plan for England. Doing this would create the possibility of NACs becoming a locus for building rich data insights about need and service performance in their place (for example through the creation of NAC Power BI Dashboards) but also offer a platform for the development and delivery of asset-based approaches to public service reform, such as coproduction and Participatory Action Research (PAR).

Previous partnership working between councils and community groups across Cambridgeshire created ‘Public Service Delivery Areas’ based around groups of parishes and wards that created places comprising between 20,000 and 30,000 residents. These offer a potential template for embedding suitable arrangements for effective governance of neighbourhood area.

Ramsey Mereside





# Northwest Unitary Council Profile

Northwest Cambridgeshire is characterised by vast agricultural beauty, rural villages and historic market towns, rich English history and growing manufacturing prominence.

One of the most impressive markers of the area's past is the Norman architecture of Peterborough Cathedral. Standing for over 900 years, the Cathedral is the final resting place of Katharine of Aragon (first wife of King Henry VIII) and was the original burial site for Mary Queen of Scots. Northwest Cambridgeshire has hosted prominent historical figures, such as Oliver Cromwell,

who was born in Huntingdon and began his political career there. Northwest Cambridgeshire also has a long history in agriculture, when the Fens were first drained in the 17th Century, they fast became a centre of agricultural production, and in the 19th Century, the Fens (including much of Fenland) had earned the nickname 'the breadbasket of England'.

## People

The current population of Northwest Cambridgeshire is 520,140 and is expected to rise to 581,110 by 2040, with roughly 59% of residents working age, 20% over 65 and 20% under 18. Ensuring that residents have access to high-quality, effective, people-centred support through every stage of life is one of the primary ambitions of the Northwest Unitary Council, as they look to provide vital services for those residents who need it most.

With an expected increase in funding through the Fair Funding Review 2.0, the Northwest Unitary Council will be well placed to address the relatively high levels of deprivation in the area. The new blueprint for local services will enable collaborative and innovative approaches to service delivery, which will address the high level of complex demand placed on public services, particularly social care and SEND.



**Figure 34.** Outline of the Northwest Unitary Council and proposed NAC boundaries

A view past an ornate tower in Wisbech





Whilst residents have raised concerns through the second phase of engagement about the level of deprivation in the Northwest Unitary, this should be approached as an opportunity to focus on the root of the problem, working with residents to address local issues.

The Northwest Unitary Council will also be well equipped to tackle high levels of poor health outcomes and inequalities, with the aim of increasing life expectancies and reducing the prevalence of chronic conditions such as obesity, chronic heart disease, and diabetes. The Unitary Council’s coterminosity with the ICS North Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Care Partnership will facilitate effective collaboration, building on the Partnership’s role as a pilot for the National Neighbourhood Health Implementation Programme through enhanced place-based decision making and service delivery, supporting the deeper integration of health and care services. This will play a significant role in informing future public health commissioning and support the delivery of improved health outcomes for residents in the Northwest Unitary area.

**Children’s social care**

Within the Northwest Unitary Council, the number of children in care is expected to remain relatively steady over the next 15 years at just over 700, a prevalence of around 63 per 10,000 under 18-year-olds. Demand for early help is forecast to decrease slightly over the same time period, at just over 6000, or 553 per 10,000 under 18-year-olds.

The most recent OFSTED ratings for the existing upper-tier councils have been ‘inadequate’ or ‘requires improvement’, however in both councils’ monitoring visits throughout 2025 have shown considerable and continuing improvement. It will be vital

that the new Northwest Unitary Council builds on this progress and continues to drive children’s services in a positive direction to ensure that the most vulnerable children in Peterborough and the north of Cambridgeshire are protected. The aggregation of current children’s services from Peterborough and Cambridgeshire will create a unique opportunity to combine good practice, learning from the two already established teams, keeping the best elements of each. Prioritising the establishment of collaborative relationships with the Southeast Unitary Council’s children’s services will enable an extension of this continuous learning. The expansion of the children’s services from Peterborough should allow for a more financially sustainable service, whilst the focus on the northwestern geography should allow for services to be more focused on local needs and challenges. This will remain one of the highest cost areas for the unitary council, and will need sensitive, evidence-based management.

**Education and SEND**

The Northwest Unitary Council will need to navigate the forecast deficit in school capacity of around 17% by 2040. However, one of the core benefits that the creation of the Northwest Unitary Council will realise is the increased ease of school place planning with the borders of Fenland, Huntingdonshire and Peterborough no longer a barrier to school placements.

In addition, the Northwest Unitary Council will be responsible for a SEND service, working with schools and early years settings to support children and young people with SEND, and their parents/carers. These services will provide targeted support and training for practitioners. SEND spending in the Northwest Unitary Council is forecast to increase 265% between 2025 and 2040, with SEND mainstream demand

**Northwest Cambridgeshire Unitary Council facts**

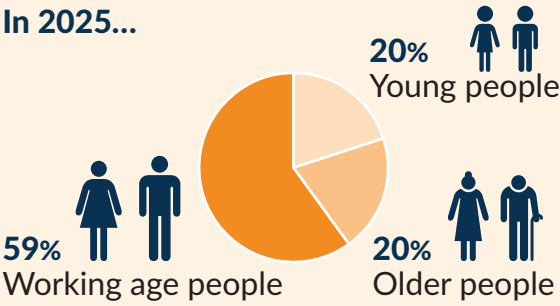
**Current population**  
**520,140**

**2040 population estimate**  
**581,110**






**Population density (2025), per square kilometre (sq km)**  
**263.5 per sq km**

**In 2025...**



**Number of education settings**

7	Nurseries	
157	Primary	
26	Secondary	
10	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities	
3	Further Education	





“Coterminous with existing health and care partnership in North Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to support alignment of planning and service delivery for specific population groups (e.g. those with learning disabilities, carers, older people, SEND). Future safeguarding teams and governance aligned to NHS-led place configuration. Increasingly integrated discharge functions, rehabilitation and reablement aligned to hospital catchment areas”

ICS North Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Care Partnership

more than doubling by 2040 and SEND maintained special school demand more than doubling by 2040. Working closely with the ICS North Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Care Partnership whilst navigating national SEND reform will be vital for the Northwest Unitary Council to deliver effective and inclusive SEND support for residents.

Adult social care

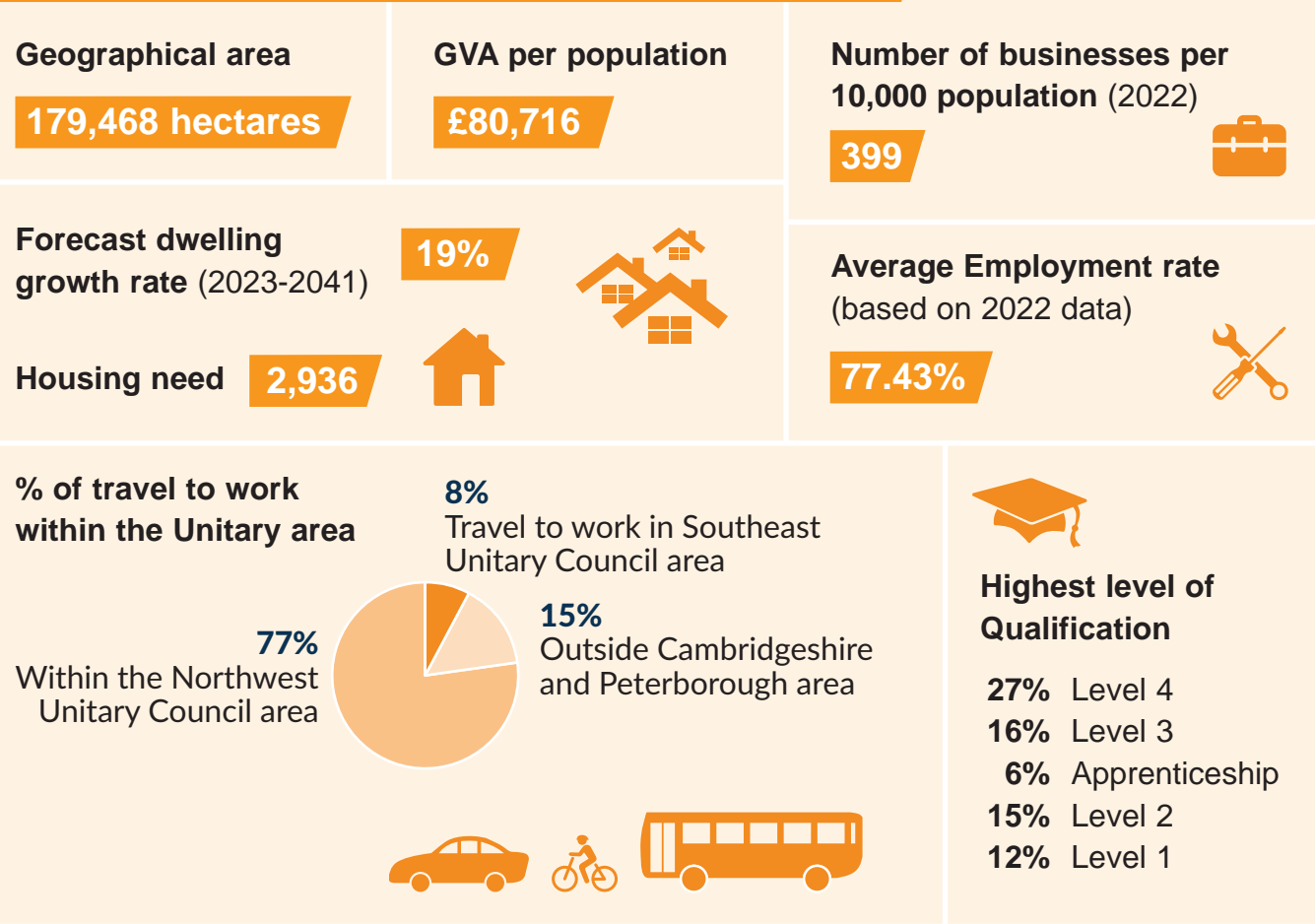
2023-based population forecasts suggest that by 2040 there will be around 20,250 people aged 85 and over living in the Northwest Unitary Council, with 125,720 people aged 65 and over, equating to around 22% of the population. Older age nursing care demand, residential care demand and supported living demand are all forecast to increase in the Northwest Unitary Council, however their prevalence (per 10,000 older adults) is forecast to remain relatively static. The appropriate economies of scale will support the Northwest Unitary Council to deliver value for money as they increase service delivery to keep up with growing demand. Connecting adult social care services with lower-tier services such as leisure and housing, as well as close partnership working with the ICS North Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Care Partnership will allow for an enhanced service, focused on prevention

and extending how long people are able to live happy, healthy and independent lives. Building on the shift to neighbourhood service delivery set out in the 10 Year Health Plan for England, the Northwest Unitary Council will look to deliver its adults social care services in a place-based way. This will be supported by the alignment to NWAFT hospital flows which will allow effective discharge from hospital and will ensure that the council is responsive to local needs and challenges. Adults social care teams will need to work within the context of national adult social care reforms, the first phase of which will be published in 2026, and the second phase of which is expected to be published in 2028, the same year as the expected vesting day for the Northwest Unitary Council.

Place

Bringing together responsibilities of former district councils and the County Council – such as waste management, highways, environmental services and planning – will enable the Northwest Unitary Council to more effectively plan and coordinate efforts, alongside partner organisations, to improve the efficiency of key front-line services for residents as well as enabling a more strategic approach to the development and delivery of infrastructure.

Northwest Cambridgeshire Unitary Council facts





Soil-affected roads are likely to be a challenge facing the Northwest Unitary Council, with 93% of Fenland’s roads affected. This will be an additional cost that the unitary council will need to account for, with soil-affected roads designed to last only 10 years compared to 25 years for non-soil affected roads, and costing up to £100 more per square mile to repair. Whilst an unavoidable cost, it is essential that the Northwest Unitary Council considers this in its planning for the future of the area, collaborating with the CPCA and Government wherever possible.

Economy

The Northwest Unitary Council will focus on driving inclusive economic growth that ensures prosperity and opportunity is available for all residents and stakeholders. The council will map to an economic area that has a diversity of needs, strengths and opportunities. It will be well positioned to leverage the economic strengths of Huntingdonshire, Peterborough and Fenland, particularly in relation to logistics, advanced manufacturing, and agri-tech, which will enhance growth opportunities for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). Meanwhile, combining Huntingdonshire and Peterborough will enable the manufacturing and digital services sectors to capitalise on opportunities presented by the Alconbury Enterprise Zone and the onward connections with Milton Keynes and London. The agricultural prominence of the Northwest Unitary area is widely recognised, as it is home to extensive, productive farmland. An average of 76.9% of land use across the area is agricultural land (85.2% in Fenland, 79.6% in Huntingdonshire and 65.8% in Peterborough), higher than both the England and East of England averages of 63.1% and 72.3% respectively.

The Northwest Unitary Council, working in close collaboration with the CPCA, will be

well positioned to address economic challenges around employment rates, driving inclusive growth to progress towards the Government’s goal of 80%. The area had the largest cohort of people not in employment, education or training, excluding students (approximately 72%) of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area in the year to March 2025, alongside 64% of 16-64 year olds with a disability or work-limiting illness who were unemployed or economically inactive . The key to unlocking the skills provision and opportunities required to overcoming this challenge will be effective collaboration, both with external partners and across internal teams, utilising the expertise that already exists from libraries, communities’ and skills teams.

Housing and homelessness

The Northwest Unitary Council will face increasing demand for housing, with specific need for affordable housing. The minimum annual housing need for the Northwest Unitary Council is likely to be around 2,936 (49% of the total housing need across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough). It is forecast that in 2025 around 3,650 households would be assessed as owed a duty relating to homelessness in the Northwest Unitary Council, with nearly 2,000 of those being a prevention duty. Whilst the Northwest Unitary Council will need to overcome the challenge of aggregating social housing provision, it will be well positioned to plan and support the housing market to build a diversity of housing that will begin to address the need for affordability, timeliness of availability and regeneration to improve energy efficiency. At present, none of the three existing councils own or manage their own housing stock, and social housing is provided entirely through housing associations. The breadth of housing associations supplying affordable housing



Mobile library service, in Foxton

in the area may make the management of the housing register and the oversight of social housing more complicated for the council. Work to review the various providers in the area will be essential to ensuring the provision of social housing continues in an efficient manner.

Communities

Communities’ services act as a bridge between local government and residents. They play a crucial role in supporting and strengthening communities, keeping people happy and healthy, building partnerships with the VCSE Sector, and tackling inequalities. Some of the vital teams that could be housed within the community service include community safety teams, leisure and parks teams, libraries and skills, emergency planning, and registrations and coroner’s services. The Northwest Unitary Council will also have a dedicated

Community Safety Partnership, replacing the existing partnerships in Fenland, Huntingdonshire and Peterborough, that will work closely with partners to deliver strategic direction to keep the community safe, responding to local risks and issues.

Anchor city	Peterborough
Number of new councillors	92

Libraries and skills

With over 20 libraries in the Northwest Unitary Council, there are plenty of opportunities for residents to access the range of services that they offer, from borrowing books to wellbeing cafes, exhibitions or sensory sessions. The Northwest Unitary Council will be responsible for maintaining and developing these services, ensuring that these community hubs continue to operate efficiently for



residents. The new council will collaborate with the CPCA to navigate changes to adult skills provision, as Cambridgeshire Skills (the current adult skills service for Cambridgeshire) changes and adapts through LGR. The libraries and skills teams will play a vital role in building a strong workforce in the Northwest Unitary Council, supporting a rise in employment levels and ensuring that residents have access to high-quality employment opportunities.

### Leisure and parks

The Northwest Unitary Council is home to high-quality, well-loved parks and open spaces, such as Hinchbrook Park, Peterborough Embankment and Manor Field. These kinds of facilities are vital to the community, providing spaces for everything from park runs to music festivals, educational visits and wellbeing walks. Alongside community centres, libraries and village halls, they can become hubs for signposting and delivering other crucial services, allowing the council to bring support to local areas, rather than requiring residents to seek them out.

Leisure centres are central to the wellbeing and health of residents, and at present there are three different operating models in the

Northwest Unitary area. In Fenland, the council own the leisure centre assets and contract the management and operation of these sites to Freedom Leisure, Huntingdonshire District Council own and manage their own leisure services under the One Leisure branding, and Peterborough manage their leisure services through Vivacity, a branch of Peterborough Limited, a company owned by Peterborough City Council. Managing the continuation of these operating models or harmonising them into a more standard offer across the whole area will be important for the new unitary to consider. Bringing together leisure services and public health will create new opportunities for joined-up working, bridging the gap between public health commissioning and the delivery of related services such as active lifestyles, fall prevention, weight management and improving mental health and wellbeing. Coupled with close working with the ICS North Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Care Partnership, collaboration between these services has the potential to create large-scale positive impact, particularly in relation to the health challenges noted above around obesity, chronic heart disease and diabetes.

**“Fenland already has close links to Huntingdon and Peterborough through health, employment and transport links”**

**A resident of Fenland**



**Outdoor Child and Family Centre session**



# Southeast Unitary Council Profile

Southeast Cambridgeshire is characterised by innovative and world-leading research, set against a backdrop of new towns, historic villages, and rolling agricultural landscapes.

Despite its status as a modern and innovative area, Southeast Cambridgeshire has a diverse and interesting history. The 900-year-old Ely Cathedral, is home to one of the earliest and most popular English Saints of the time, St Etheldreda, whilst Cambridge is home to one of the oldest universities in the world, the University of Cambridge, established in 1209 as a base for academics fleeing hostile townsmen in Oxford. The history of Southeast

Cambridgeshire has played a significant role in the area's global recognition; since 1901 there have been 125 Nobel Prizes awarded to affiliates of the University, including the prize for the discovery of the structure of DNA, and the discovery of penicillin.

## People

The current population of Southeast Cambridgeshire is 420,100 and is expected to rise to 507,680 by 2040, with roughly 63% of residents working age, 18% over 65 and 19% under 18. Ensuring that residents have access to high-quality, effective, people-centred support through every stage of life is one of the primary ambitions of local government, as they look to provide vital services for those residents who need it most. Utilising the principles set out in the operational blueprint will equip the Southeast Unitary with the foundations for delivering on this ambition.

With the Government's ambitions for growth in the Greater Cambridge area, the Southeast Unitary is due to see population growth of around 20%. The council will be well positioned to navigate the impact of a rapidly growing population on service demand on delivery, owing to the geographic size of the unitary council, and the resultant strong economies of scale.



**Figure 35.** Outline of the Southeast Unitary Council and proposed NAC boundaries





This will allow growth that can spread across the entirety of the council area, instead of trying to deliver large scale growth within a tightly bound footprint.

Children’s social care

Within the Southeast Unitary Council the number of children in care is expected to increase slightly over the next 15 years from around 330 to 375, with a prevalence of around 42 per 10,000 under 18-year-olds. Demand for early help is forecast to increase marginally over the same time period, at just over 2,000, or 241 per 10,000 under 18-year-olds.

The disaggregation of people’s services will result in a smaller children’s service in the Southeast Unitary Council than is currently delivered by the County Council. This will allow for real focus on local challenges and needs, whilst remaining large enough to be financially sustainable. This will continue to be a high-cost area for the unitary council, and will need sensitive, evidence-based management from the new Director of Children’s Services and their team. The last OFSTED inspection for children’s services in Cambridgeshire found that services required improvement to be good, however subsequent visits in July 2025 found considerable improvement. It will be vital for the team in the Southeast Unitary Council to continue the positive progress that has been made in the last year to ensure that children’s services continue to improve, and can support the most vulnerable children in the southeast of Cambridgeshire.

Education and SEND

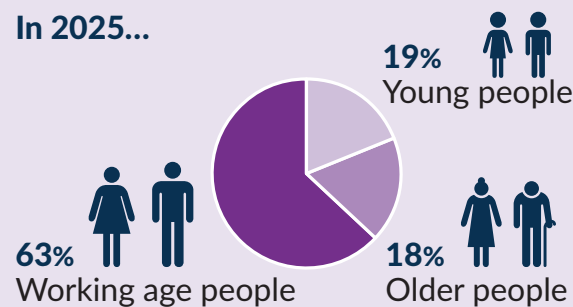
The Southeast Unitary Council will be responsible for ensuring suitable education for all children in the area, managing school places and home-to-school transport, supporting vulnerable pupils and promoting high standards – it will play a crucial role in

improving underperforming schools and providing support and building maintenance for maintained schools. One of the key challenges that the Southeast Unitary Council will need to navigate is the growing demand for direct home-to-school transport between 2025 and 2040, with a forecast growth in demand of around 5,000, and an increase in prevalence from 1,402 per 10,000 school aged population in 2025 to 2,233 per 10,000 school aged population in 2040. In addition, the unitary council will be responsible for a SEND service, working with schools and early years settings to support children and young people with SEND, and their parents/carers. These services will provide targeted support and training for practitioners. SEND spending in the Southeast Unitary Council is forecast to increase 239% between 2025 and 2040, with SEND mainstream demand doubling by 2040 and SEND maintained special school demand more than doubling by 2040. Working closely with the ICS Cambridgeshire South Care Partnership whilst navigating national SEND reform will be vital for the Southeast unitary to deliver inclusive, safe and effective SEND support for residents.




Adult Social Care

2023-based population forecasts suggest that by 2040 there will be around 17,745 people aged 85 and over living in the Southeast Unitary Council, with 99,085 people aged 65 and over, equating to around 20% of the population. Older age nursing care demand, residential care demand and supported living demand are all forecast to increase in the Southeast Unitary Council, however their prevalence (per 10,000 older adults) is forecast to remain relatively static. The appropriate economies of scale will support the Southeast Unitary Council to deliver value for money as they increase service delivery

Southeast Cambridgeshire Unitary Council facts



**Number of education settings**

<b>6</b>	Nurseries			
<b>116</b>	Primary			
<b>21</b>	Secondary			
<b>8</b>	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities			
<b>3</b>	Further Education			





“Maintaining these [coterminous] boundaries is important for supporting the continuity of patient care – ensuring that transitions between hospital, community and social care remain efficient and effective”

Cambridge University Hospitals  
NHS Foundation Trust

to keep up with growing demand. Adults social care teams will need to work within the context of social care reforms, the first phase of which will have been published in 2026, and the second phase of which is expected to be published in the same year as the expected vesting day for the Southeast Unitary Council.

Connecting adult social care services with lower-tier services such as leisure and housing, as well as close partnership working with the ICS Cambridgeshire South Care Partnership, will allow for an enhanced service, focused on prevention and extending the time people are able to live happy, healthy and independent lives. With the ICS Cambridgeshire South Care Partnership also focused on transfer of care and ensuring people coming out of hospital have everything they need at home to support them, the integration of housing and social care coupled with collaboration between public services, will provide ample opportunity to facilitate improved health outcomes for residents. The Southeast Unitary Council will work to deliver social care at a place-based level, mirroring the ambitions of the 10 Year Health Plan for England. The sensible geography created in the Southeast Unitary and its alignment with hospital flows will facilitate this,

ensuring that everything from hospital discharge processes to preventative active lifestyles services, are responsive to local needs and challenges.

Place

Bringing together responsibilities of former district councils and the County Council – such as waste management, highways, environmental services and planning – will enable the Southeast Unitary Council to more effectively plan and coordinate efforts, alongside partner organisations, to improve the efficiency of key front-line services for residents as well as enabling a more strategic approach to the development and delivery of infrastructure.

Economy

The economy that maps to the Southeast Unitary area will be a key driving force for growth and productivity for the UK and the Eastern region, with a depth of global innovation in life sciences, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and clean tech from the research and development hubs of Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire, paralleled with the strong heritage, tourism and market town economies within East Cambridgeshire.

This council will be in a unique position, with the support of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority and Government (through the Cambridge Growth Company) to deliver the infrastructure needed to support inclusive economic growth, including improved water supply, housing, and transport such as East West Rail.

The unitary council will create a single Local Plan, facilitating improved and streamlined partnership working as previously disaggregated responsibilities such as planning and highways will be better integrated with the strategic

Southeast Cambridgeshire Unitary Council facts

Geographical area

159.284 hectares

GVA per population

£117,850

Number of businesses per 10,000 population (2022)

421



Forecast dwelling growth rate (2023-2041)

26%



Housing need

3,055



Average Employment rate (based on 2022 data)

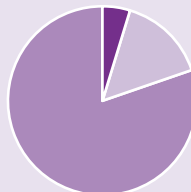
80.73%



% of travel to work within the Unitary area

5% Travel to work in Northwest Unitary Council area

81% Within the Southeast Unitary Council area



15% Outside Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area



Highest level of Qualification

- 48% Level 4
- 16% Level 3
- 4% Apprenticeship
- 10% Level 2
- 7% Level 1



Kings College, Cambridge



responsibilities of the Combined Authority. This will enable a synchronicity of strategic planning and investment to better address water and flood risks across the area, as part of housing developments. These will be essential to ensure the unitary council meets the needs of the whole area, particularly East Cambridgeshire, whilst capitalising on interest and resources invested by Government and other bodies in the Oxford-Cambridge Growth Corridor. These investment and growth opportunities will in part be stimulated by the activities of the universities within the Southeast Unitary Council, recognised internationally and locally as key assets to the local area. A letter of support from Anglia Ruskin University noted that Option A will enable them to further progress the skills and regeneration agenda, whilst the recent Civic Engagement report from the University of Cambridge suggested they would be focusing on increasing strategic engagement and support in the local area. These academic institutions will be central to economic development in the Southeast Unitary Council.

**Housing and homelessness**

The Southeast Unitary area will face increasing demand for housing with specific need for affordable housing. The minimum annual housing need for the Southeast Unitary Council is likely to be around 3,055 (51% of the total housing need across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough). The unitary council will be well positioned to plan and support the housing market to build a diversity of housing that will begin to address the need for affordability, timeliness of availability and regeneration to improve energy efficiency.

It is forecast that in 2025 around 1,976 households will be assessed as owed a duty relating to homelessness in the Southern Unitary, with 845 of those being a prevention duty. One of the challenges that the Southeast Unitary Council is likely to face regarding housing and homelessness is the aggregation of social housing provision. At present, Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council own and manage their own housing stock, whilst in East Cambridgeshire social housing is provided entirely through housing associations. The integration of these two operating models will need careful planning and monitoring to ensure the provision of social housing social housing provides stability and high quality customer service to existing and new tenants.

**Communities**

Communities’ services act as a bridge between local government and residents. They play a crucial role in supporting and strengthening communities, keeping people happy and healthy, building partnerships with the VCSE Sector, and tackling inequalities. Some of the vital teams that could be housed within the community service include community safety teams, leisure and parks teams, libraries and skills, emergency planning, and registrations and coroner’s services. The Southeast Unitary Council will also have a dedicated Community Safety Partnership, replacing the existing partnerships in Cambridge, East Cambridgeshire and South Cambridgeshire, that will work closely with partners to deliver strategic direction to keep the community safe, responding to local risks and issues.

Anchor city	Cambridge
Number of new councillors	68

**Ely Marina**

“The economy of East Cambridgeshire is closely tied to that of Cambridge. Business in our district benefit directly from Cambridge’s international profile, innovation led economy and already connected to the Chamber of Commerce. Aligning Ely, East Cambridgeshire with Cambridge will strengthen this synergy and provide greater opportunities for growth”

City of Ely Council







Trumpington skate park

**Libraries and skills**

With over 20 libraries in the Southeast Unitary Council, there are plenty of opportunities for residents to access the range of services that they offer, from borrowing books to wellbeing cafés, exhibitions or sensory sessions. The Southeast Unitary Council would be responsible for maintaining and developing these services, ensuring that these community hubs continue to operate efficiently for residents. The new council will need to work the CPCA to navigate changes to adult skills provision, as Cambridgeshire Skills (the current adult skills service for Cambridgeshire) changes and adapts through LGR.

**Leisure and parks**

The Southeast of Cambridgeshire is home to high-quality, well-loved parks and open spaces, such as Milton Country Park, Ely Country Park, Midsummer Common and Parker’s Piece. These kinds of facilities are vital to the community, providing spaces for everything from water sports to Christmas markets, school performances and wellbeing walks. Alongside libraries, community centres and village halls, they can become hubs for signposting and delivering other crucial services, allowing the council to bring support to local areas,

rather than requiring residents to seek them out.

Leisure centres are central to the wellbeing and health of residents, and at present there are various operating models in the Southeast Unitary Council area. Cambridge City Council currently own a number of leisure facilities and largely works in partnership with Greenwich Leisure Ltd (GLL) to manage the sites. In East Cambridgeshire, the council work in partnership with leisure centres and sport facilities to provide sport, health and physical activity services with all leisure centres and sport facilities operated by independent community leisure trusts. The Hive leisure centre in Ely is also operated by GLL. In South Cambridgeshire, most leisure facilities are embedded in schools and education settings, with a Physical Activity Coordinator supporting communities to live a more active lifestyle. To provide a standard and fair leisure offer across the whole area, the Southeast Unitary Council will need to carefully consider how it develops its leisure services. The council will capitalise on the opportunity to integrate leisure services with public health and neighbourhood health, using the new blueprint of service delivery to support better health outcomes for residents, focused on prevention, collaboration and place-based service delivery.

“It aligns with how young people live, those in East Cambs gravitate towards Cambridge for 16+ education, remaining in the same authority will help ensure that is a smooth transition with public services planned accordingly”

A resident of Cambridge



# Delivery

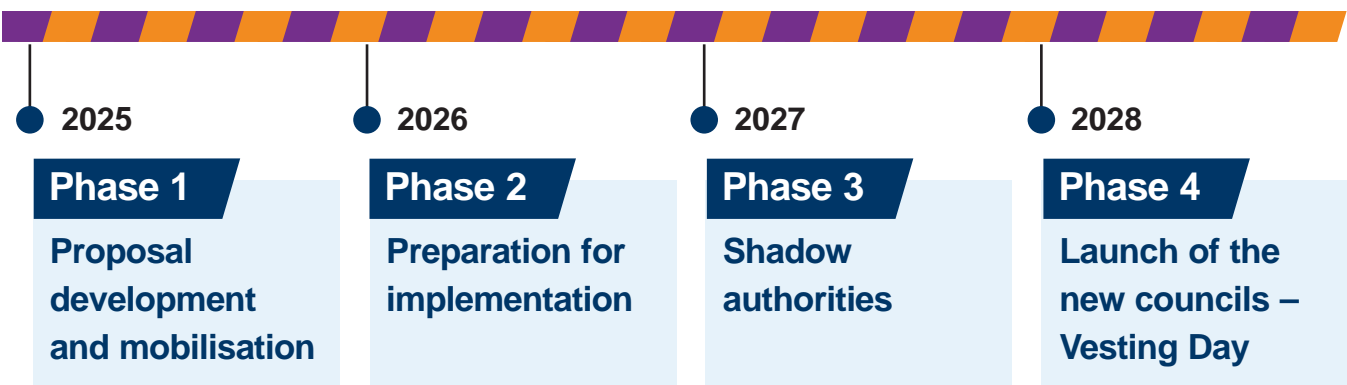




# Transition and implementation

The initial focus of LGR implementation must be ensuring that new unitary councils are “safe and legal” from day one. We plan to meet statutory obligations and protect public interests without any immediate major changes to service delivery, although the process of combining councils should deliver some benefits. Where feasible, we will pursue minor improvements within council service areas to boost efficiency and effectiveness as early as possible.

Implementation of LGR within Cambridgeshire and Peterborough will be delivered from a foundation of change established within existing councils. Utilising the strength of collaboration and robust governance, transition to two unitary councils will happen through a phased approach.



St Ives waterfront





## Phase 1

### Proposal development and mobilisation

During this phase:

- This proposal will be submitted to Government by the 28 November 2025 deadline.
- Government will consider all proposals received from the area before taking decisions on how to proceed. This will likely involve Government running a consultation early in 2026 on this proposal and any alternative proposals put forward.
- The LGR delivery structure and Programme Management Office will be established to manage and oversee implementation across the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area. This will include scoping resource requirements and development opportunities.
- Information and intelligence gathering on key data will progress on areas such as budgets, staffing numbers, contracts, assets, enterprise architecture and IT systems.
- Discovery undertaken to confirm minimum requirements to meet “safe and legal” on day one.
- Engagement with stakeholders on an ongoing basis to raise awareness of the coming change, and to build system-wide understanding and capacity.

## Phase 2

### Preparation for implementation

Once the Government reaches a decision regarding the future structure of local government in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, which is expected in summer 2026, detailed planning work will begin. The initial focus will be to ensure the new unitary councils are “safe and legal” from day one, able to meet statutory obligations and protect public interests. Activities will focus on setting up the new councils, with coordination and delivery across all seven existing councils.

This will include:

- Embedding governance throughout the programme to provide robust decision making, challenge and oversight, aided by additional expertise as needed.
- Reviewing future service needs, developing design and disaggregation principles and outlining initial blueprints.
- Understanding implications on current and planned change activity across existing local authorities and aligning or pausing where necessary.
- Reviewing existing IT architecture and undertaking required planning for transition.
- Baselining property portfolios across authorities and commencing transition planning.
- Agreeing a communication and engagement strategy for all key stakeholders including residents, staff and trade unions.
- Agreeing high level HR transition plans.

## Phase 3

### Shadow authorities

Shadow authorities will be set up to support a smooth transition and will be responsible for preparing for the new unitary councils for vesting day in April 2028. It is expected that shadow authorities will be in place by May 2027 following elections to shadow councils. The shadow authorities will oversee key activities, such as:

- High level organisation and operating model design, refining initial structures for the new councils set out in the previous phase.
- Appointing to the top tiers of leadership within new councils to ensure strategic oversight and continuity.
- Collaboratively defining the culture, values and identity of the new councils.
- Agreeing a detailed implementation plan. This will include planning for the management of essential and statutory services through the transition.
- Planning staff transition processes including Transfer of Undertakings – Protection of Employment (TUPE), focused on retaining a skilled workforce.
- Ongoing communication and engagement with all key stakeholders including staff, trade unions and partners.
- Budget setting for the new councils, including consolidation of funding arrangements such as Council Tax harmonisation and business rates collection.

## Phase 4

### Launch of the new councils – Vesting Day

The new councils will assume full responsibility for all local government functions across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough from 1 April 2028. The priority will be to ensure that council services transition and continue to operate safely and that statutory responsibilities are met. Following this, more focus will be given to long-term strategy and transformation prioritising opportunities with the highest potential benefit.



Implementation programme and workstreams

A programme will manage changes across current councils to support efficient use of resources and minimise additional costs. Opportunities to prioritise, pause or stop existing work within current councils will be reviewed to reallocate resources, although additional capacity may be needed at certain stages. Subject Matter Experts will be integrated into Programme Teams to support the design, planning, and implementation. This approach ensures appropriate expertise is available, acknowledging that individuals with the highest level of knowledge and experience are best equipped to contribute to the development of the future operating model.

A joint Programme Management Office (PMO) will coordinate the transition, together with a core delivery team including a Programme Director, Programme Managers, Analysts, PMO specialists, and Change Managers. Subject matter experts will join specific workstreams when necessary.



As part of the initial planning, various workstreams have been identified to facilitate preparation. During phases one and two, current councils will deliver activities; at phase three, upon formation of shadow authorities, programme delivery and governance arrangements will be revised as appropriate.



Council employee charging an electric car

Proposed implementation workstreams

- People and culture:** Develop the vision, delivery model and cultural values for the future councils. Onboard strong leadership teams that can balance priorities and take a structured approach to change and delivery. Manage staff transition into the new councils.
- Service delivery:** Manage transition of services ensuring continuity on day one. Integrate services within each of the new councils, ensuring all existing services are aligned to new policies and processes.
- Assets:** Analyse the estate portfolio of the constituent councils and determine the appropriate operational estate and estate strategy for each of the new councils.
- Customer experience:** Plan, design and deliver the new approach to customer experience in each council across all services, ensuring engagement points are designed around residents' needs rather than organisational structures, and allow for two-way communication to resolve issues and continue to deliver vital services from day one. Plan for meaningful engagement with residents from day one.
- Digital, data and technology:** Ensure data is transferred and managed effectively during the transition, so new unitary councils are ready to function from day one, setting the councils up to become data driven organisations.
- Commissioning and commercial:** Manage contractual arrangements and ensure the new councils are set up to take advantage of commercial opportunities.
- Finance:** Manage the financial transition to the new unitary councils, including setting the first budget for each of the new unitary councils. Plan for financial transactions from day one to ensure service continuity, including revenue and benefits systems. Develop and deliver a financial strategy for each of the new councils.
- Governance:** Establish the constitutions of the new unitary councils and integrate into new legal entities. Manage all changes required to deliver elections under the new structure. This will include ensuring strong Overview and Scrutiny functions are developed.
- Civil contingencies:** Establish structures and measures to prepare and respond to civil emergencies.



## Managing the transition of services

The transition of services will require careful handling to minimise any disruption for residents, enable service quality to be maintained and ensure the continued delivery of statutory responsibilities. In a two unitary model, the County Council's services will need to be disaggregated, including complex resident-facing services such as adult and children's social care. District services such as housing, leisure and revenue and benefits will need to be aggregated across new unitary footprints. It is vital that the transition is undertaken effectively and with positive resident outcomes at the forefront of the changes.

Key activities for managing the transition of services will include:

- Reviewing the current place-based structures, population growth, demand for services and workforce to identify appropriate allocation to future councils.
- Refining functional operating models and services, aligned to new geographies. Agreeing future service blueprints with shadow authorities.

- Reviewing and refining service policies, systems, processes and procedures.
- Restructuring membership of boards and reviewing local representation structures.
- Detailed transition planning development to ensure continuity of services, delivery of statutory responsibilities and emergency arrangements.
- Where shared arrangements are currently in place, such as Emergency Duty Teams and Approved Mental Health Professional Service, agree core principles for disaggregation.

### Key risks

We will use effective risk management principles to support the transition to the new unitary councils, assessing and addressing risks at all levels while ensuring cross-cutting risks are managed appropriately.

**“The proposed Option A is coterminous with these place-based partnerships for the North and South of the area and would, we feel, best enable further joint planning and integration of health and care services at place and neighbourhood levels”**

**NHS Cambridgeshire and  
Peterborough Integrated Care Board**

## Adult social care





Risk theme	Risk	Proposed mitigation
<b>Procurement and partnerships</b>	Failure to effectively manage procurement, contracts and partnerships during and prior to transition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthen capacity and capability: targeted training and capacity-building initiatives will be implemented to enhance commercial, legal, and procurement expertise across directorates.</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhance governance and oversight: governance mechanisms will be reinforced through regular reporting.</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve contract and pipeline management: a comprehensive contract review exercise and procurement pipeline will be maintained and updated.</li> </ul>
<b>Financial uncertainty</b>	Financial instability due to poor integration and/or oversight of budgets, liabilities and funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthen financial planning and forecasting: develop consolidated financial models that enable scenario-based forecasting, improve visibility of financial exposures, and support timely decision-making throughout the transition period.</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhance oversight and coordination mechanisms: establishing a dedicated financial integration working group to monitor financials. Regular reporting will ensure early detection of variances and enable corrective action before affecting overall financial stability.</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build resilience in financial systems: implement clear transition plans for finance sub-teams to safeguard continuity in financial management and ensure accountability during disaggregation.</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct early audits, embed proactive oversight and provide strategic direction in relation to LGR.</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthen information governance and compliance: regular review of governance frameworks to help identify gaps early and maintain consistent information management.</li> </ul>

Risk theme	Risk	Proposed mitigation
<b>Data and systems</b>	Inadequate consolidation of digital systems, data and information governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dedicated governance transition workstream: coordinating changes to structures and key constitutional documents to maintain clarity of roles and accountability during and after transition.</li> </ul>
<b>Governance</b>	Governance, legal and democratic reorganisation fails to support effective leadership and accountability prior to and/or during transition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing reporting to Councils: ensures that all required decisions are made transparently and in accordance with statutory and governance frameworks.</li> </ul>
<b>Workforce</b>	Workforce disengagement and cultural misalignment impacting transition and subsequent transformation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthen engagement and communication: implement a structured engagement plan featuring two-way communication channels.</li> </ul>
<b>Assets</b>	Management of assets and property prior to and during transition impacts service delivery and financial sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain clear visibility of asset performance, utilisation and disposal: regularly review assets to support informed decisions on maintenance priorities and ensure continued service delivery during transition.</li> </ul>
<b>The loss of service continuity</b>	Lack of service continuity leading to a decline in service quality or availability prior to and during the transition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain oversight of critical services and dependencies: regularly review and monitor key services, processes and suppliers to identify potential risks to continuity.</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthen coordination and communication: ensure proactive communication between service leads, programme teams and stakeholders to align planning and manage change impacts effectively. This will help maintain service quality and minimise disruption.</li> </ul>

**Figure 36.** Table of key risks and proposed mitigations



# Transformation

To deliver on the opportunity for public service reform available through LGR, transformation within the new unitary councils needs to go beyond an initial reduction of senior management costs and removal of duplication across district services.

## Beyond combining services

Establishing the new unitary councils will entail integrating services previously separated between upper and lower-tier councils to create more holistic provision, for example linking adult social care with housing services. There will be several high impact ‘cross-cutting’ areas of the new unitary councils, such as their workforce, technology and how they contribute to devolution across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, that would greatly benefit from transformation to drive comprehensive efficiency and productivity improvement across the entire organisations.

## Workforce and people

LGR presents an opportunity to harness the best of existing practice from current councils and build a skilled, agile, and value-driven workforce for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough supported by strong leadership and a culture of empowerment. By embedding clear management structures, digital skills and technology enabled working, Option A will create responsive, customer-focused teams who are able to resolve most issues at first contact. A focus on developing an adaptable workforce that is responsive to change will create opportunities to shape new career pathways to attract and retain talent. The approach will align workforce

planning with strategic goals, fostering adaptability, proactive demand management, and efficient service delivery across the organisation.

Transformation opportunities include:

- **Consolidation of structures:** There is significant duplication of roles and responsibilities at executive levels across the current councils in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. We will enable delivery of financial efficiencies through streamlined staffing arrangements, while building strategic capacity for managing services across the geographies of the two unitaries, aligned to the four principles of our proposed blueprint for local services.
- **Utilising experience:** Following initial consolidation of executive roles, services will be well positioned to be collaboratively redesigned, informed by staff expertise, local communities and performance and delivery data. This combination of lived experience and data will enable lessons to be learned from previous practice, and inform service designs rooted in local communities, to meet residents’ needs early and prevent needs from escalating.
- **Centred on Communities:** Redesigning the council to operate in more place-

## Comberton Village College





based ways will include focusing on building connections with various communities across the unitary areas. These could form hubs where various services work from the same location, to build more collaborative patterns of work and enable multiple residents to recognise their new unitary council within their communities.

### Service delivery and quality

LGR provides an opportunity to build collaborative, digitally enabled councils that align responsive services with holistic community needs. Services will be driven by outcomes, with a focus on transparency, accountability and improvement. Option A will leverage predictive analytics to drive decision making and embed continuous improvement into the future councils. By emphasising partnership working with public, voluntary, and community sectors, Option A will design integrated, place-based services, underpinned by strong leadership, clear communication, and measurable outcomes.

Transformation opportunities include:

- **Connecting services:** By establishing or improving collaborations between services, for example housing and/or leisure with social care, we will create opportunities for services to work collaboratively to meet residents' care and support needs early, improve local community resilience, thereby preventing needs from escalating.
- **Service delivery models:** Services will embed the four principles of our proposed blueprint for local services, breaking down professional silos both within local government and across other public service organisations.

- **Leveraging technology in service delivery:** There are opportunities to increase the use of technology in service delivery – this includes predictive analytics, AI and self-service portals that will empower more place-based services to tailor their responses to the needs of their populations, alongside identifying early warning signs that additional support might be needed.
- **Data Sharing:** Unitary councils will incorporate data sharing agreements in their partnership approach, providing the appropriate legal basis for services to act in a more joined-up way. This will also support the broader set of public service reforms, such as the 10 Year Health Plan for England.

### Enabling functions and architecture

LGR offers the opportunity to review how services are supported, ensuring robust data quality, advanced technology, and efficient governance are maximised to drive organisational transformation. Option A will embed modern platforms with real-time data sharing to enhance productivity and streamline processes. Governance structures will be focused on risk management and strategic alignment, while property and infrastructure strategies will prioritise rationalising assets for maximum service effectiveness.

Transformation opportunities include:

- **Establishment of 'golden data record' for customers:** Opportunity to create a single, comprehensive view across council services to understand customers more effectively and drive more preventative interventions that stop escalations of need.

- **AI, Technology and Automation:** Leveraging technologies to enhance productivity, streamline operations and reduce bureaucracy. A dedicated plan will be embedded for enterprise architecture which will enable the new unitary councils to establish strong foundations from which future developments can be built.
- **Rationalisation of property and infrastructure:** Ensuring we are optimising use of physical assets and infrastructure to enhance service delivery, effectiveness and efficiency.

### Supporting devolution

LGR provides the opportunity to target support for socioeconomic improvement, both directly for vulnerable groups and indirectly through long-term projects, using a coordinated baseline across the authority. Option A will facilitate collaboration with key regional stakeholders – such as the CPCA,

other local councils, and emergency and health services – with a strong focus on data sharing and joint working. Central to this vision is clear strategic communication, ensuring that future goals and strategies are embedded within all service operating models.

Transformation opportunities include:

- **Increasing collaboration:** Opportunity to continue to embed collaboration between unitary councils and partners such as the CPCA, and health services.
- **Rooted in local communities:** Redesigning services to centre on local communities and building collaborative connections with services and stakeholders, will enable local partnership working to address specific local needs or risks such as flooding and water management, at the same time as working towards meeting needs that affect whole unitary council areas.

**“Option A is also the best option in our view from a water management context. MLC and IDB infrastructure and operations is crucial to keeping communities and land dry, and therefore underpins all the functions of Local Authorities and successful, resilient communities”**

**Middle Level Commissioners**



# Conclusion





# Two councils, one fairer future for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough

Through robust analysis of a comprehensive evidence base, including two phases of engagement with residents and stakeholders, our proposal sets out a clear case that shows how Option A best meets the Government's criteria and provides the foundations for more equal, more empowered and more effective local government in our area.

The proposed unitary councils provide sufficient size and scale for financial sustainability and create the best conditions for supporting inclusive economic growth. This will enable them to prioritise high quality service delivery, that strengthens partner relationships and supports the devolution ambitions of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority. Through enhanced local leadership, the proposed new structures for neighbourhood governance will empower residents and bring decision making closer to communities.

With a Northwest Unitary Council covering Fenland, Huntingdonshire and Peterborough, and a Southeast Unitary Council covering Cambridge, East Cambridgeshire and South Cambridgeshire, Option A is the only proposal that provides alignment to the Integrated Care System's Care Partnerships, which will support a smooth transition by maintaining existing structures and relationships, and allow for more rapid public service reform. It is only through this configuration of existing council footprints

that we can attain the balance required for successful LGR and respect residents' connection to local areas and anchor cities, whilst providing sensible geographies that can achieve both economies of scale and support inclusive economic growth.

Our proposal for LGR in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough represents an ambitious vision built on firm foundations for our area, which is grounded in historic local identity and well-prepared to capitalise on local and national opportunities. Once established, the new unitary councils will be well positioned to undertake transformation that delivers greater efficiency, removing duplication, strengthening representation and enhancing both service performance and financial sustainability. Option A will create the strongest start possible for the new unitary councils to work collaboratively with partners to embed place-based service delivery that prioritises prevention and evidence-led decision making. This will deliver better experiences and outcomes for residents, greater financial sustainability for the local system and improved public trust in local government.

Sunflowers in South Cambridgeshire

**Option A**

**Two councils.  
One fairer future.**



# Appendices





# Supporting data

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1. Dataset: Cambridgeshire County Council's 2023-based forecasts

(a) Cambridgeshire and Peterborough population forecasts by age and LGR option

CCC 2023-based forecasts	Population			
Total Cambridgeshire and Peterborough population	2023	2025	2030	2040
Total		940,240	1,000,050	1,088,790
Option A, Southeast Unitary Council	2023	2025	2030	2040
Total	411,110	420,100	453,430	507,680
0-17s	79,985	81,345	83,415	89,570
18-64s	260,950	265,815	287,410	319,025
65 and over	70,175	72,940	82,605	99,085
Option A, Northwest Unitary Council	2023	2025	2030	2040
Total	510,580	520,140	546,620	581,110
0-17s	113,825	115,185	115,745	116,015
18-64s	302,210	307,000	321,535	339,370
65 and over	94,545	97,955	109,340	125,725
Option B, Greater Cambridge Unitary Council	2023	2025	2030	2040
Total	319,810	326,670	352,990	401,530
0-17s	61,370	62,655	64,610	70,640
18-64s	207,630	211,360	229,070	259,200
65 and over	50,810	52,655	59,310	71,690
Option B, Peterborough and North Cambridgeshire Unitary Council	2023	2025	2030	2040
Total	601,880	613,570	647,060	687,260
0-17s	132,440	133,875	134,550	134,945
18-64s	355,530	361,455	379,875	399,195
65 and over	113,910	118,240	132,635	153,120
Option C, East Unitary Council	2023	2025	2030	2040
Total	416,130	423,800	448,840	474,830
0-17s	94,825	95,550	95,725	94,935
18-64s	245,535	249,735	264,590	277,025
65 and over	75,770	78,515	88,525	102,870

Option C, West Unitary Council	2023	2025	2030	2040
Total	505,560	516,440	551,210	613,960
0-17s	98,985	100,980	103,435	110,650
18-64s	317,625	323,080	344,355	381,370
65 and over	88,950	92,380	103,420	121,940
Baseline, CCC	2023	2025	2030	2040
Total	701,450	716,240	764,960	840,090
0-17s	138,010	140,305	143,465	150,930
18-64s	430,590	437,965	466,200	506,925
65 and over	132,850	137,970	155,295	182,235
Baseline, PCC	2023	2025	2030	2040
Total	220,240	224,000	235,090	248,700
0-17s	55,800	56,225	55,695	54,655
18-64s	132,570	134,850	142,745	151,470
65 and over	31,870	32,925	36,650	42,575

(b) Cambridgeshire and Peterborough population forecasts as percentage of total population with population variances

Percentage of total population, 2023-based forecasts	2025	2040
Option A, Southeast Unitary Council	44.7%	46.6%
Option A, Northwest Unitary Council	55.3%	53.4%
Option A, Population Variance	10.6%	6.8%
Option B, Greater Cambridge Unitary Council	34.7%	36.9%
Option B, Peterborough and North Cambridgeshire Unitary Council	65.3%	63.1%
Option B, Population Variance	30.6%	26.2%
Option C, East Unitary Council	45.1%	43.6%
Option C, West Unitary Council	54.9%	56.4%
Option C, Population Variance	9.8%	12.8%
Baseline, CCC	76.2%	77.2%
Baseline, PCC	23.8%	22.8%
Baseline, Population Variance	52.4%	54.4%



(c) Population density per square km

	Population density (per sq. km)			
	2023	2025	2030	2040
Option A, Southeast Unitary Council	257.9	263.5	284.4	318.5
Option A, Northwest Unitary Council	283.1	288.4	303.1	322.2
Option B, Greater Cambridge Unitary Council	339.4	346.6	374.6	426.1
Option B, Peterborough and North Cambridgeshire Unitary Council	245.2	249.9	263.6	279.9
Option C, East Unitary Council	269.8	274.7	291.0	307.8
Option C, West Unitary Council	272.5	278.4	297.2	331.0
Baseline, CCC	229.7	234.5	250.5	275.1
Baseline, PCC	641.3	652.2	684.5	724.1

2. Dataset: Census 2021 (ONS)

(a) Ethnic groups: Cambridgeshire and Peterborough

Ethnic group	Count	Percentage of total
Total: All usual residents	894,517	100.0
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh:	70,491	7.9
Bangladeshi	4,343	0.5
Chinese	10,584	1.2
Indian	19,993	2.2
Pakistani	20,822	2.3
Other Asian	14,749	1.6
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African:	18,496	2.1
African	12,856	1.4
Caribbean	3,224	0.4
Other Black	2,416	0.3
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups:	26,970	3.0
White and Asian	9,060	1.0
White and Black African	4,405	0.5
White and Black Caribbean	5,683	0.6
Other Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups	7,822	0.9
White:	763,744	85.4
English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British	652,547	72.9
Gypsy or Irish Traveller	2,269	0.3
Irish	6,862	0.8
Roma	2,411	0.3
Other White	99,655	11.1
Other ethnic group:	14,816	1.7
Arab	2,753	0.3
Any other ethnic group	12,063	1.3



(b) Ethnic groups: Cambridge	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Total: All usual residents</b>	<b>145,674</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh	21,626	14.8
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African	3,561	2.4
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups	7,410	5.1
White	108,570	74.5
Other ethnic group	4,507	3.1

(c) Ethnic groups: East Cambridgeshire	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Total: All usual residents</b>	<b>87,763</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh	1,688	1.9
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African	705	0.8
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups	1,883	2.1
White	82,912	94.5
Other ethnic group	575	0.7

(d) Ethnic groups: Fenland	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Total: All usual residents</b>	<b>102,461</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh	1,232	1.2
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African	814	0.8
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups	1,412	1.4
White	98,280	95.9
Other ethnic group	723	0.7

(e) Ethnic groups: Huntingdonshire	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Total: All usual residents</b>	<b>180,832</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh	5,745	3.2
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African	2,646	1.5
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups	4,057	2.2
White	167,116	92.4
Other ethnic group	1,268	0.7

(f) Ethnic groups: Peterborough	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Total: All usual residents</b>	<b>215,670</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh	30,801	14.3
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African	8,751	4.1
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups	7,617	3.5
White	162,581	75.4
Other ethnic group	5,920	2.7

(g) Ethnic groups: South Cambridgeshire	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Total: All usual residents</b>	<b>162,117</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh	9,399	5.8
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African	2,019	1.2
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups	4,591	2.8
White	144,285	89.0
Other ethnic group	1,823	1.1

(h) Religion by local authority area

Religion	Cambridge	East Cambs	Fenland	Hunts	Peterborough	South Cambs
No religion	44.7%	42.9%	39.9%	43.8%	32.5%	43.3%
Christian	35.2%	48.5%	52.1%	47.3%	46.3%	45.3%
Buddhist	1.1%	0.4%	0.2%	0.4%	0.3%	0.5%
Hindu	2.3%	0.4%	0.2%	0.5%	1.8%	1.5%
Jewish	0.7%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.3%
Muslim	5.1%	0.6%	0.7%	1.4%	12.2%	1.7%
Sikh	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%	0.6%	0.2%
Other religion	0.8%	0.6%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%
Not answered	9.8%	6.3%	6.2%	5.8%	5.8%	6.7%



(i) Economic inactivity due to long-term sickness or disability

Local authority area	Number	%
Cambridge	3,144	2.5
East Cambridgeshire	1,857	2.6
Fenland	3,932	4.6
Huntingdonshire	4,104	2.8
Peterborough	7,453	4.4
South Cambridgeshire	2,873	2.2

(j) Highest level of qualification by local authority area (percentages)

Highest level of qualification	Cambridge	East Cambs	Fenland	Hunts	P'boro	South Cambs	England
No qualifications	9.6	16.6	25.8	15.6	22.4	11.8	18.1
Level 1 and entry level qualifications	4.8	9.8	12.9	10.7	12.3	7.7	9.7
Level 2 qualifications	6.9	13.5	15.7	14.6	14.4	11.7	13.3
Apprenticeship	2.6	6.1	6.8	5.5	5.5	4.6	5.3
Level 3 qualifications	18.2	16.4	16.3	17.6	15.4	14.2	16.9
Level 4 qualifications or above	55.8	35	19	33.4	26.2	47.8	33.9
Other qualifications	2.1	2.6	3.4	2.6	3.7	2.1	2.8

(k) Travel to work patterns – Option A

Option A	Workplace			
Home	Unitary council	Northwest	Southeast	Outside Cambs
	Northwest	77%	8%	15%
	Southeast	5%	81%	15%
	Outside Cambs	51%	49%	

(l) Travel to work patterns – Option B

Option B	Workplace			
Home	Unitary council	Peterborough and North Cambridgeshire	Greater Cambridge	Outside Cambs
	Peterborough and North Cambridgeshire	75%	10%	15%
	Greater Cambridge	7%	80%	13%
	Outside Cambs	60%	40%	

(m) Travel to work patterns – Option C

Option C	Workplace			
Home	Unitary councils	East	West	Outside Cambs
	East	71%	14%	15%
	West	6%	79%	14%
	Outside Cambs	46%	54%	



3. Dataset: ONS 2022 land use stock

2022 land use stock by local authority area in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough

Local authority area	Agricultural use (hectares)	Total land (hectares)	Percentage
Cambridge	654	4,070	16%
East Cambridgeshire	54,768	65,129	84%
Fenland	46,579	54,645	85%
Huntingdonshire	72,642	91,246	80%
Peterborough	22,583	34,338	66%
South Cambridgeshire	71,805	90,162	80%
Total	269,032	339,589	79%

4. Dataset: Centre for Cities 10 fastest-growing cities by population

(a) Top 10 fastest-growing cities by population highlighting Cambridge and Peterborough

Rank	City	Population % change, 2013-2023	Population, 2013	Population, 2023
1	Cambridge	17.3	127,819	149,963
2	Exeter	15.2	118,994	137,050
3	Milton Keynes	14.9	259,672	298,270
4	Peterborough	14.0	192,488	219,509
5	Telford	13.5	169,014	191,915
6	Reading	12.6	321,461	362,066
7	Northampton	12.6	385,699	434,349
8	Coventry	12.0	322,146	360,702
9	Leicester	11.2	489,957	544,681
10	Slough	10.9	144,880	160,713

5. Dataset: Department for Education – education setting results

(a) Overall percentages of primary school pupils meeting expected standard and achieving at higher standards (2024)

Maintained and Academies, not specialist or independent	% pupils meeting expected standard	% pupils achieving at higher standard
Cambridgeshire Primary Schools	58%	7%
Peterborough Primary Schools	55%	4%
England state funded schools	61%	8%

(b) Percentages of primary school pupils meeting expected standards in reading, writing and maths (2024)

Key Stage 2 2022	% meeting expected standards		
Maintained and Academies, not specialist or independent	Reading	Writing	Maths
Cambridgeshire Primary Schools	75%	68%	72%
Peterborough Primary Schools	68%	66%	69%
England state funded schools	74%	72%	73%

(c) Percentages of primary school pupils achieving at a higher standard in reading, writing and maths (2024)

Key Stage 2 2022	% at higher standard		
Maintained and Academies, not specialist or independent	Reading	Writing	Maths
Cambridgeshire Primary Schools	31%	10%	24%
Peterborough Primary Schools	23%	6%	20%
England state funded schools	29%	13%	24%



(d) Secondary school results (2024)

Maintained and academies, not including special or independent settings	Progress 8	Progress 8 score	Grade 5 or above in English and Maths GCSEs	Attainment 8
Cambridgeshire Secondary Schools	Above average	0.17	49.4%	48.0
Peterborough Secondary Schools	Average	0	37.6%	42.6
England State funded schools		-0.03	45.9%	45.9

(e) Secondary school-leaver destinations (2023)

Maintained and academies, not including special or independent settings	Education	Employment	Apprenticeships	Not in education or employment	Unknown
Cambridgeshire Secondary Schools	87%	3%	3%	5%	2%
Peterborough Secondary Schools	88%	3%	2%	5%	2%
England State funded schools	Not available				

(f) 16-18 results (2024)

Maintained schools, academies, attached sixth forms and colleges	Average A-level grade	Achieving AAB or higher, including at least 2 facilitating subjects	T-level average grade
Cambridgeshire	B-	22.3%	Merit
Peterborough	C+	13.0%	Distinction
England average	C+	17.1%	Merit+

(g) 16-18 leaver destinations (2023)

Maintained schools, academies, attached sixth forms and colleges	Staying in education	Entering apprenticeships	Entering employment
Cambridgeshire	42%	6%	35%
Peterborough	36%	7%	34%
England average	45%	7%	28%

6. Dataset: Labour Market Profiles (ONS)

(a) Economic inactivity rates across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough (April 2024-March 2025)

Local authority area	Percentage economically inactive
Cambridge	26.60%
Fenland	25.90%
Peterborough	21.00%
East Cambridgeshire	17.80%
Huntingdonshire	15.30%
South Cambridgeshire	12.90%

7. Dataset: Healthy life expectancy at birth 2021-2023 (ONS)

(a) Healthy life expectancy by local authority area

Local authority area	Male	Female
Cambridge City	80.2	84
East Cambridgeshire	82.0	84.2
Fenland	77.6	81.9
Huntingdonshire	81.1	84
Peterborough	77.8	81.6
South Cambridgeshire	82.5	85.4

8. Dataset: Gross Value Added 2023 (ONS)

(a) GVA by local authority area 2023

Local authority area	Gross value added (million)
Cambridge	£7,957
East Cambridgeshire	£8,900
Fenland	£2,345
Huntingdonshire	£2,267
Peterborough	£5,548
South Cambridgeshire	£7,068
Total	£34,085



9. Dataset: Cambridge Cluster Insights  
(University of Cambridge’s Centre for Business Research)

(a) Turnover for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough by sector

Sector	Turnover (million)
Manufacturing	£12,577
Life science and healthcare	£10,000
Wholesale and retail distribution	£9,352
Information technology and telecoms	£6,485
Construction and utilities	£5,035
Other business services	£3,956
Property and finance	£2,860
Other services	£1,971
Education, arts, charities, social care	£1,951
Primary	£1,902
Knowledge intensive services	£31,747
Transport and travel	£1,302

10. Dataset: Source: National Street Gazetteer Ordinance Survey  
and Cambridgeshire County Council data

(a) Maintained road length and soil affected roads

Maintainable road length	Kilometres	Percentage of soil affected road
Cambridge	301	0%
East Cambridgeshire	863	28%
Fenland	837	93%
Huntingdonshire	1,336	15%
South Cambridgeshire	1,244	0%
Peterborough	995	–
Total	5576	–

11. Dataset: Education settings (data provided by CCC Education Place  
Planning Team, combined with information on the [PCC website](#))

(a) Count of different types of education settings by local authority area

Type	P’boro	Cambridge City	East Cambs	Fenland	Hunts	South Cambs	Total
All through				1		1	2
Hospital	1					1	2
Nursery	6	5			1	1	13
Primary	63	28	29	32	62	59	273
PRU		1		1			2
Secondary	15	7	5	4	7	9	47
Sixth Form		1					1
Special	5	1	3	1	4	4	18
UTC	1	1					2
FE	3	3					6
Grand total	94	44	37	39	74	75	363

12. Dataset: Total number of Education, Health and Care (EHC)  
plans at January each year in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough  
(Department for Education)

(a) EHCP plans in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough (2021-2025)

Upper-tier authority area	2024/25	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Cambridgeshire	8,007	7,318	6,972	6,100
Peterborough	2,908	2,625	2,357	2,207
Total	10,915	9,943	9,329	8,307



13. Dataset: Landmass by Square km using Census 2021 ward boundaries

(a) Landmass by square km, calculated for the LGR options in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough (Census 2021 boundaries)

Option A	Sq. kms	% of total	% variance
Southeast Unitary Council	1,594.11	46.9	6.2
Northwest Unitary Council	1,803.35	53.1	
Total	3,397.46	100.0	–
Option B	Sq. kms	% of total	% variance
Greater Cambridge Unitary Council	942.39	27.7	44.6
Peterborough and North Cambridgeshire Unitary Council	2,455.07	72.3	
Total	3,397.46	100.0	–
Option C	Sq. kms	% of total	% variance
East Unitary Council	1,542.52	45.4	9.2
West Unitary Council	1,854.94	54.6	
Total	3,397.46	100.0	–
Baseline	Sq. kms	% of total	% variance
CCC	3,054.02	89.9	79.8
PCC	343.44	10.1	
Total	3,397.46	100.0	–

14. Dataset: Minimum annual housing need figures (calculated July 2025 using methods set out in the National Planning Policy Framework)

(a) Minimum annual housing need by local authority area

Local authority	Minimum annual local housing need figure
Cambridge	1,124
East Cambridgeshire	709
Fenland	610
Huntingdonshire	1,266
Peterborough	1,060
South Cambridgeshire	1,222

(b) Minimum annual housing need by proposed unitary authority

Proposal		Figure	Percentage of minimum annual local housing need
Option A	Northwest	2,936	49%
	Southeast	3,055	51%
Option B	Peterborough and North Cambridgeshire	3,645	61%
	Greater Cambridge	2,346	39%
Option C	East	2,379	40%
	West	3,612	60%



### 15. Dataset: Employment and unemployment rates (ONS) January 2024-December 2024

(a) Projected employment and unemployment rates for proposed unitaries, calculated using ONS data for January 2024-December 2024

Proposal		Employment rate	Unemployment rate
Option A	Northwest	74%	3%
	Southeast	75%	2%
Option B	Peterborough and North Cambridgeshire	76%	3%
	Greater Cambridge	71%	2%
Option C	East	73%	4%
	West	75%	2%

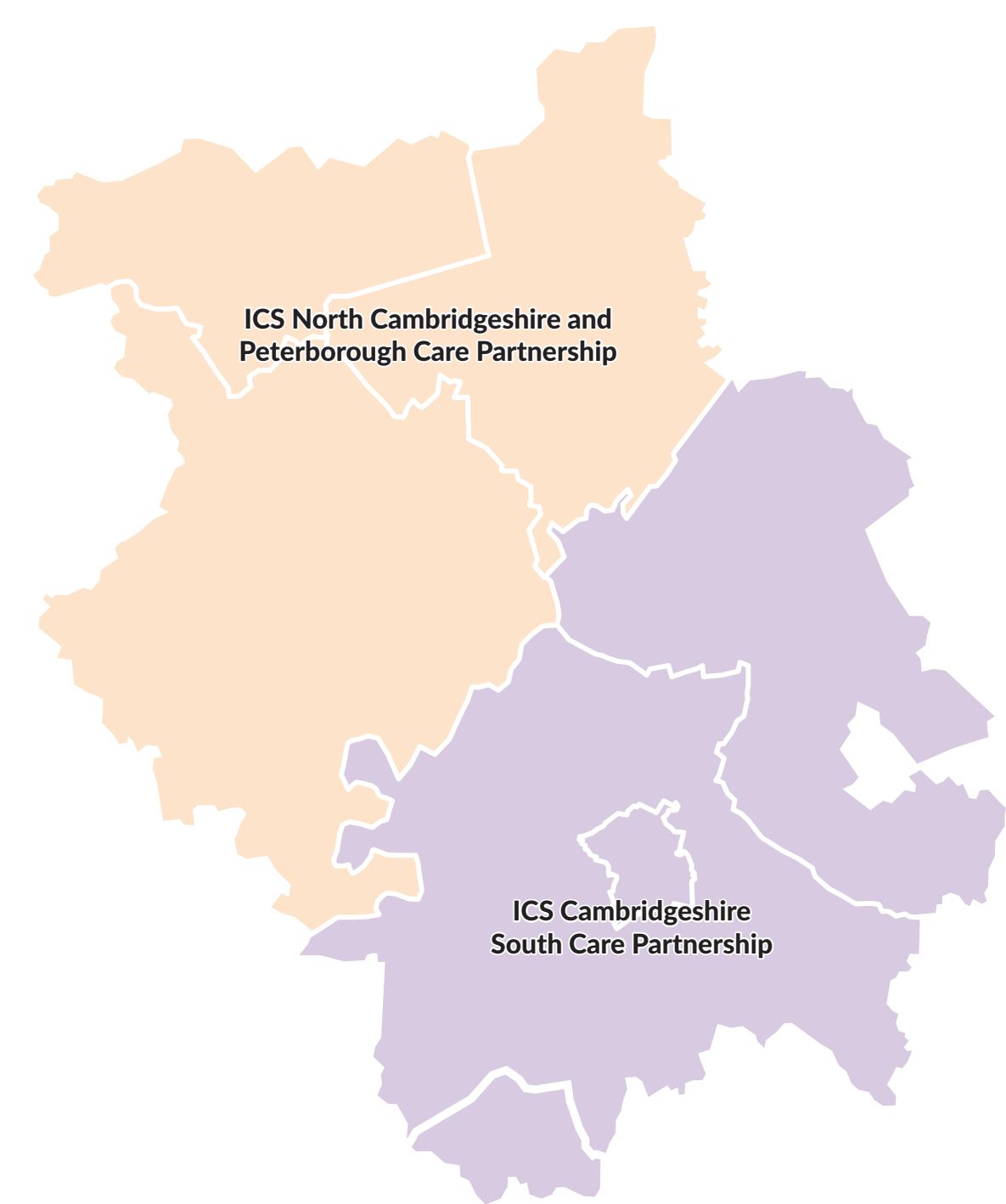
### 16. Dataset: Housing affordability (ONS)

(a) Median house price affordability ratio by local authority area

Local authority area	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	5-year average
Cambridge	12.34	12.63	12.90	11.94	11.31	12.22
East Cambridgeshire	11.41	10.98	11.16	10.78	10.09	10.88
Fenland	7.43	8.95	8.00	7.72	7.34	7.89
Huntingdonshire	9.39	9.97	10.03	9.17	8.73	9.46
South Cambridgeshire	10.31	10.83	10.67	10.72	9.54	10.41
Peterborough	7.03	7.42	7.49	7.29	6.92	7.23

### 17. Map: Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Integrated Care System

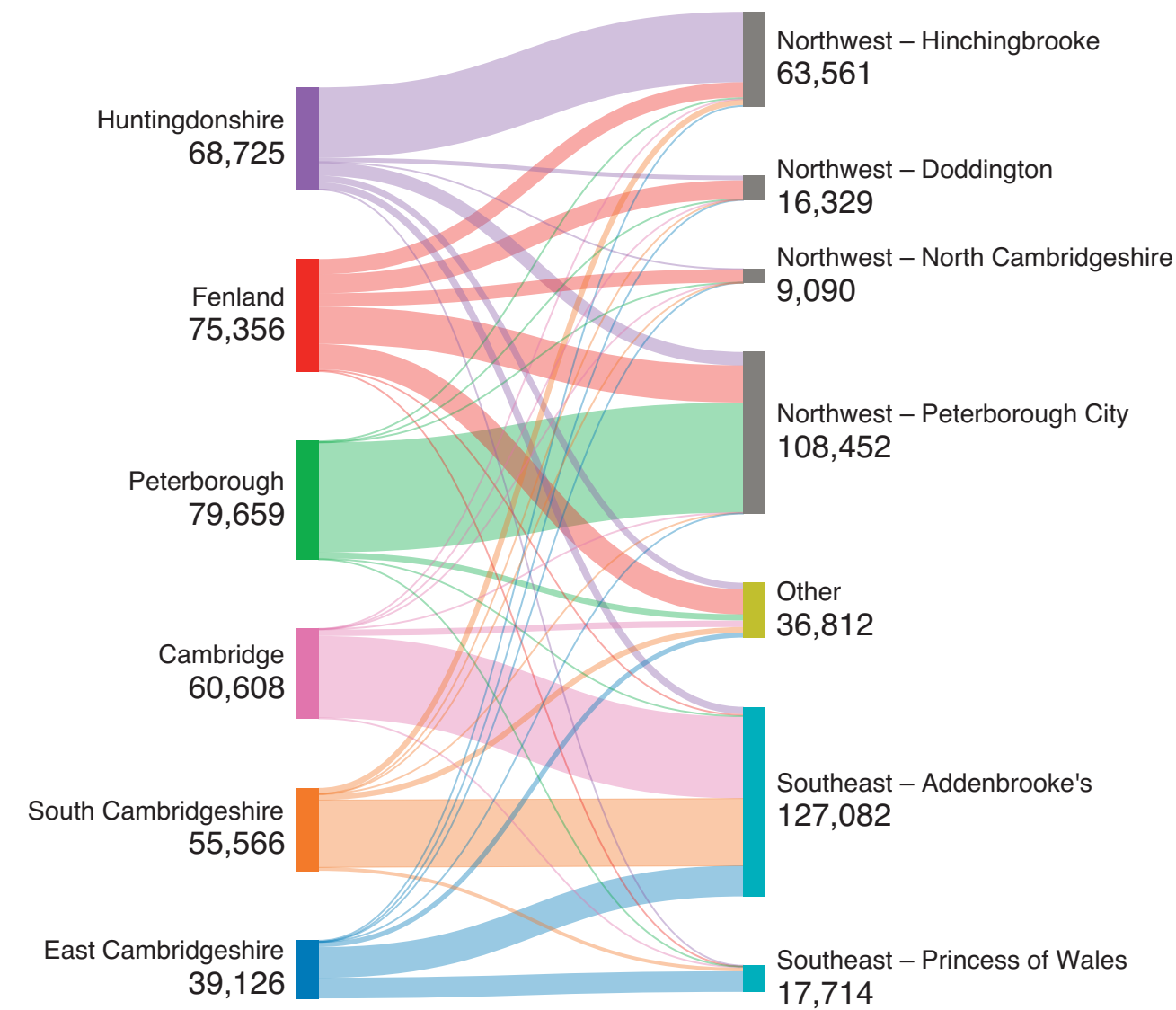
(a) Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Integrated Care System Place Partnership Boundaries





18. Diagram: CCC Public Health hospital flow data

(a) Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Accident and Emergency hospital flows, from local authority area to proposed unitary area in Option A



19. Dataset: OS Open Road

(a) Distances between the five settlements with the largest population in each district and the anchor city in the proposed unitary authority (Option A)

Option A

District	Settlement	Distance to anchor city (miles)
Northwest Unitary Council		
Fenland	Leverington	20.37
Fenland	March	19.10
Fenland	Chatteris	19.33
Fenland	Whittlesey	8.00
Fenland	Wisbech	20.15
Huntingdonshire	Yaxley	6.53
Huntingdonshire	St Neots	27.76
Huntingdonshire	Brampton	20.73
Huntingdonshire	St Ives	24.05
Huntingdonshire	Huntingdon	21.15
Average		17.02
Southeast Unitary Council		
East Cambridgeshire	Soham	16.82
East Cambridgeshire	Ely	16.44
East Cambridgeshire	Burwell	11.40
East Cambridgeshire	Littleport	20.83
East Cambridgeshire	Sutton	16.87
South Cambridgeshire	Cottenham	6.74
South Cambridgeshire	Waterbeach	6.13
South Cambridgeshire	Sawston	7.11
South Cambridgeshire	Melbourn	10.49
South Cambridgeshire	Cambourne	9.70
Average		11.14



(b) Distances between the five settlements with the largest population in each district and the anchor city in the proposed unitary authority (Option A)

Option B

District	Settlement	Distance to anchor city (miles)
Peterborough and North Cambridgeshire Unitary Council		
East Cambridgeshire	Soham	36.56
East Cambridgeshire	Ely	31.50
East Cambridgeshire	Burwell	39.64
East Cambridgeshire	Littleport	35.70
East Cambridgeshire	Sutton	25.77
Fenland	Leverington	20.37
Fenland	March	19.10
Fenland	Chatteris	19.33
Fenland	Whittlesey	8.00
Fenland	Wisbech	20.15
Huntingdonshire	Yaxley	6.53
Huntingdonshire	St Neots	27.76
Huntingdonshire	Brampton	20.73
Huntingdonshire	St Ives	24.05
Huntingdonshire	Huntingdon	21.15
Average		23.88
Greater Cambridge Unitary Council		
South Cambridgeshire	Cottenham	6.74
South Cambridgeshire	Waterbeach	6.13
South Cambridgeshire	Sawston	7.11
South Cambridgeshire	Melbourn	10.49
South Cambridgeshire	Cambourne	9.70
Average		6.69

(c) Distances between the five settlements with the largest population in each district and the anchor city in the proposed unitary authority (Option A)

Option C

District	Settlement	Distance to anchor city (miles)
East Unitary Council		
East Cambridgeshire	Soham	36.56
East Cambridgeshire	Ely	31.50
East Cambridgeshire	Burwell	39.64
East Cambridgeshire	Littleport	35.70
East Cambridgeshire	Sutton	25.77
Fenland	Leverington	20.37
Fenland	March	19.10
Fenland	Chatteris	19.33
Fenland	Whittlesey	8.00
Fenland	Wisbech	20.15
Average		23.28
West Unitary Council		
Huntingdonshire	Yaxley	31.87
Huntingdonshire	St Neots	17.73
Huntingdonshire	Brampton	18.59
Huntingdonshire	St Ives	13.95
Huntingdonshire	Huntingdon	17.23
South Cambridgeshire	Cottenham	6.74
South Cambridgeshire	Waterbeach	6.13
South Cambridgeshire	Sawston	7.11
South Cambridgeshire	Melbourn	10.49
South Cambridgeshire	Cambourne	9.70
Average		12.69



20. Proposal: Electoral arrangements for Option A

(a) Northwest Unitary Council proposed arrangements (modelled below with 2 Councillors per new unitary division, with the exceptions of March North & Waldersey and four smaller PCC wards)

Council	Current Division	Electorate	Potential Councillors	Per Councillor
FDC	Chatteris	8335	2	4168
FDC	March North & Waldersey	18145	4	4536
FDC	March South & Rural	8636	2	4318
FDC	Roman Bank & Peckover	9239	2	4620
FDC	Whittlesey North	8644	2	4322
FDC	Whittlesey South	8939	2	4470
FDC	Wisbech East	7544	2	3772
FDC	Wisbech West	7213	2	3607
HDC	Alconbury & Kimbolton	8202	2	4101
HDC	Brampton & Buckden	9580	2	4790
HDC	Godmanchester & Huntingdon South	8172	2	4086
HDC	Huntingdon North & Hartford	8344	2	4172
HDC	Huntingdon West	7619	2	3810
HDC	Ramsey & Bury	8825	2	4413
HDC	Sawtry & Stilton	9681	2	4841
HDC	Somersham & Earith	7743	2	3872
HDC	St Ives North & Wyton	7972	2	3986
HDC	St Ives South & Needingworth	8142	2	4071
HDC	St Neots East & Gransden	6230	2	3115
HDC	St Neots Eynesbury	7856	2	3928
HDC	St Neots Priory Park & Little Paxton	8250	2	4125
HDC	St Neots The Eatons	9464	2	4732
HDC	The Hemingfords & Fenstanton	8022	2	4011
HDC	Warboys & The Stukeleys	7802	2	3901
HDC	Yaxley & Farcet	8297	2	4149
PCC	Barnack	2793	1	2793
PCC	Bretton	6743	2	3372
PCC	Central	9151	2	4576
PCC	Dogsthorpe	6913	2	3457
PCC	East	7602	2	3801
PCC	Eye, Thorney & Newborough	7475	2	3738

Council	Current Division	Electorate	Potential Councillors	Per Councillor
PCC	Fletton & Stanground	7407	2	3704
PCC	Fletton & Woodston	7688	2	3844
PCC	Glington & Castor	5203	1	5203
PCC	Gunthorpe	6804	2	3402
PCC	Hampton Vale	5704	2	2852
PCC	Hargate & Hempsted	7402	2	3701
PCC	North	7221	2	3611
PCC	Orton Longueville	7559	2	3780
PCC	Orton Waterville	7257	2	3629
PCC	Park	7143	2	3572
PCC	Paston & Walton	7349	2	3675
PCC	Ravensthorpe	7524	2	3762
PCC	Stanground South	7745	2	3873
PCC	Werrington	7712	2	3856
PCC	West	4242	1	4242
PCC	Wittering	2546	1	2546



(b) Southeast Unitary Council proposed arrangements (modelled below with two Councillors per new unitary division, with the exceptions of Sawston & Shelford and small Cambridge City divisions)

Council	Current Division	Electorate	Proposed Councillors	Per Member
CCC	Abbey	6846	2	3423
CCC	Arbury	6990	2	3495
CCC	Castle	6080	2	3040
CCC	Cherry Hinton	8336	2	4168
CCC	Chesterton	7925	2	3963
CCC	Kings Hedges	8518	2	4259
CCC	Market	4149	1	4149
CCC	Newnham	4113	1	4113
CCC	Petersfield	7982	2	3991
CCC	Queen Edith's	7702	2	3851
CCC	Romsey	9031	2	4516
CCC	Trumpington	8563	2	4282
ECDC	Burwell	9327	2	4664
ECDC	Ely North	7908	2	3954
ECDC	Ely South	8094	2	4047
ECDC	Littleport	7534	2	3767
ECDC	Soham North & Isleham	8490	2	4245
ECDC	Soham South & Haddenham	9422	2	4711
ECDC	Sutton	9399	2	4700
ECDC	Woodditton	8651	2	4326
SCDC	Bar Hill	7169	2	3585
SCDC	Cambourne	9832	2	4916
SCDC	Cottenham & Willingham	9093	2	4547
SCDC	Duxford	8418	2	4209
SCDC	Fulbourn	7599	2	3800
SCDC	Gamlingay	8785	2	4393
SCDC	Hardwick	9484	2	4742
SCDC	Histon & Impington	8551	2	4276

Council	Current Division	Electorate	Proposed Councillors	Per Member
SCDC	Linton	8875	2	4438
SCDC	Longstanton, Northstowe & Over	8657	2	4329
SCDC	Melbourn & Bassingbourn	8457	2	4229
SCDC	Papworth & Swavesey	7899	2	3950
SCDC	Sawston & Shelford	16488	4	4122
SCDC	Waterbeach	9288	2	4644



21. Dataset: Cambridgeshire and Peterborough LGR Engagement Phase One

(a) Where do people access health services?

	Health services						
Living in...	Cambridge City	East Cambs	South Cambs	Fenland	Hunts	P'bro	Outside C&P
Cambridge City	88%	2%	8%	0%	1%	0%	0%
East Cambs	34%	58%	3%	1%	0%	1%	3%
South Cambs	37%	4%	50%	0%	4%	0%	5%
Fenland	7%	3%	0%	53%	11%	24%	3%
Huntingdonshire	15%	1%	2%	2%	64%	12%	4%
Peterborough	6%	0%	0%	1%	5%	82%	6%

(b) Where do people go for socialising and shopping?

	Shopping and socialising					
Living in...	Cambridge City	East Cambs	South Cambs	Fenland	Hunts	Peterborough
Cambridge City	71%	9%	14%	1%	4%	1%
East Cambs	33%	50%	6%	2%	3%	2%
South Cambs	40%	8%	35%	1%	10%	1%
Fenland	11%	13%	0%	42%	8%	23%
Huntingdonshire	28%	4%	10%	2%	46%	8%
Peterborough	12%	1%	0%	4%	8%	63%

22. Dataset: PwC Financial Analysis

Under the categories senior management and democracy costs (member allowances and democratic governance functions) all costs in the current councils are removed in the first table and added back in to the second table as the typical running cost of unitary councils, overall resulting in a decrease in costs.

(a) Financial benefits of reorganisation

Financial benefits of reorganisation (£000)	Baseline Gross Benefits (recurring)	2UA Gross Benefits (recurring)	3UA Gross Benefits (recurring)
Front Office	£1,355	£1,455	£1,092
District Service Delivery	£290	£411	£274
Back Office	£1,626	£1,637	£1,092
Senior management	£9,620	£12,455	£12,455
Third party spend	£4,450	£3,576	£2,384
Property	£1,661	£1,987	£1,590
Democracy	£3,125	£4,655	£4,608
Total	£22,127	£26,177	£23,494

(b) Financial costs of reorganisation

Costs of aggregation and disaggregation (£000)	Baseline Gross Costs (recurring)	2UA Gross Costs (recurring)	3UA Gross Costs (recurring)
Senior management	£3,685	£7,371	£11,056
Democracy	£1,781	£2,724	£3,169
Additional costs in service delivery teams	£0	£4,030	£7,890
Total	£5,466	£14,124	£22,116

The above tables show the recurring impacts on the cost base as a result of LGR. There are financial implications for workforce and staffing structures as a result of re-organisation, and the first table shows cost savings across back office services and removal of service delivery costs that are currently duplicated across districts. Savings would also be expected from third party spend (spend on supplies and services) as overlapping contracts and activities are removed and economies of scale are realised.

The model assumes that property costs can be reduced by £1.987m in the two unitary authority model and £1.590m in the three unitary model. All the existing local councils have collated their current property costs and premises floor areas for operational assets illustrating the tangible opportunities in this category.



Under the categories senior management and democracy costs (member allowances and democratic governance functions) all costs in the current existing councils are removed in the first table and added back in to the second table as the typical running cost of unitary councils. The tables show net savings in senior management costs of £5.1m and £1.9m for democracy costs in the two unitary model. In the three unitary model, the senior management costs decrease by £1.4m and the saving on democracy cost I are forecast to be £1.4m.

(c) Net savings by category

Summary of savings by category (£000)	Baseline Net savings (recurring)	2UA Net savings (recurring)	3UA Net savings (recurring)
Employees	£9,206	£4,557	-£4,033
Third party spend	£4,450	£3,576	£2,384
Democracy	£1,344	£1,931	£1,439
Property	£1,661	£1,987	£1,590

(d) One-off costs of transition

Costs of transition (£000)	Baseline one-off transition costs	2UA one-off transition costs	3UA one-off transition costs
Programme transition costs	£17,549	£24,874	£31,740
Redundancy costs	£7,735	£9,575	£8,947
<b>Total</b>	<b>£25,284</b>	<b>£34,449</b>	<b>£40,688</b>

In the table above, programme transition costs include ICT costs (one-off costs arising from data cleansing, migration and security, and infrastructure setup for the new councils); shadow chief executive and member costs (during the transitional period where this is in place alongside existing authorities ahead of vesting day); external change support for transition, rebranding and implementation as well as internal programme management. Redundancy costs have been calculated using assumptions around level of savings achievable in senior management, front office, service delivery and back-office functions.

# Letters of Support for Option A



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James Rolfe  
Chief Operating Officer



03 October 2025

Dear Stephen,

I am writing on behalf of Anglia Ruskin University to express support for Cambridgeshire County Council's proposal for Local Government Reform in Greater Cambridgeshire.

Anglia Ruskin is an award-winning university, with 2 campuses in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough (Greater Cambridgeshire) – at Cambridge and Peterborough – and in Chelmsford and Writtle. We employ c3500 staff, and provide education for c40,000 students, with c13,800 of those in Cambridgeshire. We are also one of the largest providers of degree apprenticeships in the country and, notably for Cambs, we are the training partner for all new police recruits in the county. Our mission is to transform lives through innovative, inclusive and entrepreneurial education and research, and we are delighted to be part of the Greater Cambridgeshire ecosystem of organisations which seeks to improve lives, address inequalities and enable our economy to thrive at a local, regional, national and international level.

We believe Cambridgeshire County Council's two unitaries model will maximise Greater Cambs' potential and help to drive more quickly and effectively economic growth throughout the county.

Fewer councils mean less duplication of services and associated savings, so making the most of finite public funding. But the 2 unitary model, built around the natural local economies and culture of the wider county, would also create larger, well-connected areas that can boost housing, jobs and regeneration. Larger authorities with greater resilience and more extensive and broader expertise, all within the same organisational unit, will make it easier to attract inward investment, make those bold decisions needed to create the step change in our economy, and bring new players to the table which smaller, less impactful authorities often cannot.

For ARU specifically, these changes will enable us to progress the skills and regeneration agenda more evenly and quickly, and to work as a strategic partner for those 2 organisations (which simply isn't possible for all the local authorities currently in the county, much as we would like to). Similarly, our research is groundbreaking, looking at real issues of relevance to our communities and businesses. The two unitary model will enable that place-based focus to be sharpened and efficiently and democratically managed.



26 September 2025

Dear Mr Moir,

Ashley Parish Council

I would like to express the strongly held unanimous view of Ashley Parish Council that Option A is the preferred choice.

Local people look to Cambridge for work, education and recreation. Local people have little if any connection with Peterborough, and given the distance from us, to manage “local” services from there is not something that would be welcomed.

Regards

Kevin Dadds

Clerk to Ashley PC

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Anglia Ruskin University is supportive of Cambridgeshire County Council's proposal for Local Government Reorganisation in Greater Cambridgeshire

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'James Rolfe', is written over a faint, light blue circular stamp.

James Rolfe  
Chief Operating Officer





Bottisham Parish Council  
The Clerk  
41 Stow Road  
Stow-cum-Quy  
Cambridge, CB25 9AD

9th September 2025

Dr Stephen S. Moir  
Chief Executive  
New Shire Hall,  
Emery Crescent, Enterprise Campus,  
Alconbury Weald, Huntingdon, PE28 4YE

cc Paul Bristow, Mayor of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough  
cc Jonny Edge, County Councillor for Woodditton and Bottisham

Dear Colleagues

**Subject:** Response to Proposed Local Government Reorganisation – Bottisham Support for Alignment with Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire (Proposal A)

We write in response to your email dated 4th September 2025 regarding the second phase of the engagement survey on Local Government Reorganisation, and your stated alignment with Option A.

Bottisham Parish Council formally communicated its position to East Cambridgeshire District Council on 11th March 2025. In that correspondence, we strongly urged that Bottisham be considered for inclusion within a unitary authority comprising Cambridge City, South Cambridgeshire, and the wider East Cambridgeshire area. We believe this alignment better reflects our community’s social, economic, and infrastructural ties, rather than grouping us with Peterborough, Fenland, or Huntingdonshire.

This position has been discussed and endorsed at Full Council, with the full support of our District and County Councillors. We are committed to ensuring our residents are informed and engaged throughout this process. Accordingly, we will be sharing the current engagement survey with our community and encouraging active participation and dialogue.

We felt it important to reiterate our reasoning for seeking alignment with Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire, and we welcome the opportunity to contribute to this significant decision-making process. Accordingly our letter stated the following:

We respectfully urge Council leaders to recognise Bottisham’s intrinsic connection to Cambridge and support **Proposal A**—a unitary authority combining Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire. This alignment offers the best opportunity for effective governance, community representation, sustainable growth, and service delivery reflective of our needs and aspirations.

Bottisham represents an exceptional case. While East Cambridgeshire generally looks east and north (Ely, Soham, Littleport), Bottisham’s social, economic, and infrastructural connections are overwhelmingly with Cambridge to the west. Bottisham sits on the far western edge of East

Cambridgeshire. This boundary position makes it a logical candidate for realignment during local government restructuring.

Our preference is based on clear and compelling reasons of geographic, socio-economic, and infrastructural alignment, as well as the potential for more effective and responsive governance. We raise the following key points in support of this position:

1. Socio-Economic and Geographic Affinity

Bottisham is deeply **connected to Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire**, forming part of the Greater Cambridge area. This region is defined by a **strong focus on innovation, research, higher education, and high-skilled employment**—a reality reflected in the daily lives of Bottisham residents.

Many residents commute into Cambridge for work, attend Cambridge schools and colleges, access healthcare at Addenbrooke’s Hospital, and rely on the city’s transport links and services. These **connections are not shared with Peterborough, Fenland, or Huntingdonshire**, which have distinct economic drivers, often far more rural or agricultural in nature.

Bottisham is approximately 7 miles (11 km) east of Cambridge, placing it within Cambridge’s immediate commuter belt. By contrast, Ely (14 miles away), Peterborough (35 miles away), and Huntingdon (25 miles away) serve very different communities with divergent economic profiles. Cambridge is the natural catchment area—Bottisham gravitates westward towards Cambridge, not northwards towards Ely or Peterborough.

This is a logical boundary realignment based on functional geography, not opportunism. It is not about affluence, but about service efficiency, identity, and practical daily life. Inclusion with Peterborough, Fenland, or Huntingdonshire risks Bottisham’s needs being sidelined in favour of more rural or agricultural priorities.

2. Active Travel Infrastructure – Greater Cambridge Partnership

The **Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP)** is actively investing in improving sustainable **transport links between Bottisham and Cambridge**. A major initiative is underway to develop dedicated cycleways and active travel routes, connecting Bottisham directly to Cambridge via the Bottisham Greenway.

This infrastructure reflects the reality that Bottisham is part of Cambridge’s commuter and economic network. It reinforces our belief that Bottisham should be aligned within a unitary authority that shares and supports these sustainable development goals—goals not reflected in other parts of the county.

3. Transport and Commuting Patterns

Our village is fundamentally part of Cambridge’s commuter belt, with frequent public transport connections and easy access to key employment hubs such as the Cambridge Science Park, Business Park, and Granta Park. Aligning us administratively with Cambridge reflects this lived experience.

- **Rail Connectivity:** Bottisham residents overwhelmingly access rail services via Cambridge Station, including for travel north to Ely, Peterborough, or beyond. Cambridge is the central gateway for work, education, and broader regional and national travel.



- **Bus Services:** All regular bus routes from Bottisham go directly to Cambridge, with high-frequency services such as the T4, which specifically connects residents to Addenbrooke’s NHS Trust Hospital and Royal Papworth Hospital, and educational institutions including Hills Road and Long Road Sixth Form College.
- There are no direct public transport links to Huntingdon or Peterborough, nor significant demand for them.
- **Private Educational Transport:** Private school and college buses also run daily into Cambridge.

Bottisham’s transport connections overwhelmingly link it to Cambridge, making Cambridge not only the practical centre of daily life, but the de facto transport hub for Bottisham residents.

4. Education Catchment

Educational pathways for Bottisham residents flow towards Cambridge. Students from Bottisham Village College frequently continue into sixth form colleges or Cambridge Regional College, utilising well-established transport links. These strong educational ties reinforce the case for governance alignment with Cambridge.

5. Improved Service Delivery

A unitary authority combining Cambridge and South Cambs would offer more efficient and coherent service delivery across planning, housing, education, transport, and infrastructure. Bottisham would benefit from governance alongside areas with similar needs and development patterns, reducing fragmentation and duplication of services.

6. Coordinated Growth and Strategic Planning

Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire sit at the centre of the **Oxford-Cambridge Arc**, a nationally significant economic growth corridor alongside the Cambridge Green Belt. Bottisham shares development pressures such as high housing demand and the need for sustainable growth. Bottisham, as a village connected to this dynamic area, would be best placed within a unitary authority capable of supporting and managing coordinated growth.

7. Avoidance of Regional Imbalance

Merging economically divergent areas—such as Cambridge with Peterborough or Fenland—risks creating regional imbalances where resources and policy priorities are likely to be pulled in conflicting directions. Bottisham aligns far more closely with Cambridge’s economic ecosystem, and inclusion here ensures our needs are addressed rather than overshadowed.

8. Community Identity and Local Feedback

Bottisham residents live, work, study, shop, and access healthcare in Cambridge. Community consultation shows strong opposition to inclusion with northern Cambridgeshire authorities, where there is little day-to-day connection. Any proposal which places Bottisham with Fenland or Peterborough would undermine community identity and cohesion.

The bottom line is Bottisham’s voice needs to be aligned with communities we share values, lifestyles, and infrastructure with. Placing us with Cambridge and South Cambs will also help protect our village identity and ensure we are part of a compatible, responsive governance structure.

9. Policy Alignment and Practical Governance

Bottisham’s planning, housing, and infrastructure challenges closely mirror those in South Cambridgeshire, making for logical governance alignment. We already engage in transport projects such as the GCP Greenways, and a Cambridge-led unitary would enable continued local input and effective collaboration.

10. Relevance to Emerging Local Proposals

We are aware of discussions, such as Cllr Bridget Smith’s proposal for a Greater Cambridge Unitary Council. There is a huge, evidence-backed case for Bottisham to be included in any such arrangement. Bottisham residents enjoy significant social, economic, and educational benefits from proximity to Cambridge, and any governance reorganisation must reflect these lived realities. Our lives are very much connected to the city and travel there for education, training, health and jobs. We enjoy huge benefits” of being so close to the city, highlighting facilities people may use, which he said are funded by taxpayers in the city.

Conclusion

In light of these points, we respectfully urge you to include / advocate for Bottisham’s inclusion in **Proposal A – Unitary 2**, alongside Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire.

We are not seeking change out of preference but a necessary correction to reflect where Bottisham’s community, economy, and daily life already sit—firmly within Greater Cambridge.

The lived experience of our residents, access to essential services, alignment with strategic growth, and the preservation of our local identity all point in one clear direction.

Bottisham’s transport, education, healthcare, and economic ties are entirely focused on Cambridge. Aligning us elsewhere would lead to misrepresentation and weaker service outcomes. Inclusion within a Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire unitary will ensure responsive governance, efficient service delivery, and sustainable growth aligned with our community’s real needs.

A unitary authority encompassing Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire offers the best route to integrated, cost-effective public services—including healthcare, education, and social services—supporting the Government’s objectives of efficiency and fiscal responsibility. Retaining Bottisham’s Parish Council within this structure will also ensure continued strong local representation and decision-making.

**The case is clear: Bottisham belongs with Cambridge.**

We thank you for your consideration and would welcome the opportunity to discuss this matter further.

Yours faithfully

*Sam Chambers-Turner*  
Clerk to the Council





28 September 2025

Dear Stephen

I have been asked by Cllr Jonny Edge to confirm to you that Brinkley Parish Council support option A in the proposals for Local government reorganisation. We have also completed the survey.

Best wishes

Hayley

6 October 2025

Dear Stephen

I am contacting you on behalf of Burrough Green Parish Council.

The Council has discussed the Options available and they unanimously support Option A

Unitary 1	Peterborough City Council, Huntingdonshire and Fenland District Councils along with County Council functions
Unitary 2	Cambridge City Council, East Cambridgeshire and South Cambridgeshire District Councils along with County Council functions

Best wishes

Karen Peck PSLCC

Clerk & RFO

Burrough Green Parish Council





**BURWELL PARISH COUNCIL**  
The Jubilee Reading Room  
99, The Causeway, Burwell Cambridge. CB25 0DU  
Telephone 01638 743142  
E-mail [burwellpc@burwellparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:burwellpc@burwellparishcouncil.gov.uk)

Clerk: Miss K Hyett

29 September 2025

Dr Stephen S. Moir  
Cambridgeshire County Council  
New Shire Hall,  
Emery Crescent,  
Enterprise Campus,  
Alconbury Weald,  
Huntingdon, PE28 4YE

Dear Dr Moir,

### Formal Consultation Response – Proposal A

Burwell Parish Council welcomes the opportunity to respond formally to Cambridgeshire County Council's consultation on local government reorganisation. Having reviewed the consultation documents and considered the potential implications for our community, Burwell Parish Council has resolved to support Proposal A, the County Council's favoured option.

We believe Proposal A offers the strongest and most practical framework for the future of local government in Cambridgeshire. We consider that this option will align better with local identities and people's daily lives including areas such as work, travel, NHS, and education.

Burwell Parish Council recognises the importance of maintaining close engagement with communities throughout this process. We therefore urge Cambridgeshire County Council to continue to work with parish and town councils as key delivery partners, ensuring that residents' voices remain central to the design and implementation of the new arrangements.

Yours sincerely

Wahpet

Katherine Hyett  
Clerk, Burwell Parish Council

Executive Management  
Office

Addenbrooke's Hospital  
Executive Management Office  
Box 146, Hospital  
Cambridge Biomedical Campus  
Hills Road, Cambridge, CB2 0QQ

**W** [www.cuh.nhs.uk](http://www.cuh.nhs.uk)



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Safe  
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SMRS/GB/042  
10 October 2025

Cambridgeshire County Council  
Cambridge City Council  
East Cambridgeshire  
South Cambridgeshire

Dear colleagues,

We are writing to you to share the perspective of Cambridge University Hospitals (CUH) on the topic of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). As you know, any decision on new unitary authorities will have significant implications for the delivery of health services for our local population, and there are a few key considerations we would request are considered in putting forward your proposals – whilst recognising of course that there are many other factors to be taken into account.

Firstly, we would ask that any new structure aligns as closely as possible to existing patient flows. CUH provides its core services to a population largely drawn from Cambridge City, South Cambridgeshire and East Cambridgeshire. By contrast, most patients living in Peterborough, Fenland and Huntingdonshire access services delivered by North West Anglia Foundation Trust. Maintaining these boundaries is important for supporting the continuity of patient care – ensuring that transitions between hospital, community, and social care remain efficient and effective.

Secondly, proposals should consider existing local partnerships, and how to build on these. Cambridgeshire South Care Partnership brings together partners from across Cambridge City, South Cambridgeshire and East Cambridgeshire, including both NHS and local government, to deliver on the 10 Year Health Plan vision of a neighbourhood health service.

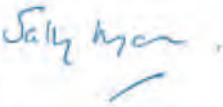
We have established nine integrated neighbourhood teams across this area. Our ambition is for a genuinely integrated model of care that provides proactive, preventative care delivered as close to home as possible. We are accelerating activity in this space, because it is so fundamental for sustainable health and care services that meet the needs of the local population. We need local government, all NHS organisations, and the VCSE sector to work jointly across coherent boundaries to deliver on the Government's three shifts.



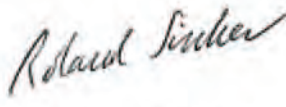
Finally, existing health infrastructure across the local area should be considered. Notably, CUH runs a number of services at the Princess of Wales Hospital in Ely, including a Community Diagnostics Centre, which completes approximately 1,500 procedures every month, and a day surgery unit, performing over 3,000 operations annually. These are situated alongside a range of other NHS services, including a minor injuries unit, outpatient services, and a rehabilitation ward. We are working with partners in Ely, including the local Primary Care Networks, to build on this success and deliver an improved interface between specialists and primary care for patients living in East Cambridgeshire. We believe this would be more challenging to progress if East Cambridgeshire becomes part of a different unitary authority.

We are committed to working collaboratively with all partners to ensure local government reorganisation delivers for our local population, and we stand ready to discuss this in more detail.

Yours sincerely



**Baroness Sally Morgan**  
Chair



**Roland Sinker CBE**  
Chief Executive



**Dr Stephen S. Moir**  
**Chief Executive, Cambridgeshire County Council**  
New Shire Hall, Emery Crescent  
Enterprise Campus, Alconbury Weald,  
Huntingdon,  
PE28 4YE  
*Delivered by Email*

**Robin Porter**  
Chair  
Bedfordshire, Luton & Milton Keynes ICB  
Hertfordshire & West Essex ICB  
Cambridgeshire & Peterborough ICB  
*Working together as Central East*

**18 November 2025**

Dear Stephen,

In line with the government's 10 Year Plan for Health, we are committed to achieving three radical shifts in how care is delivered: moving from hospital to community, analogue to digital, and sickness to prevention. This means bringing more care into local communities, convening professionals into person-centred teams, and ending fragmentation of services. As you know, a multi-agency approach is driving the agenda for both our organisations, underscoring the continued need to work in partnership to align the services we provide.

How local government is configured is a crucial factor in how we deliver for our residents together. As an ICB, we are keen to see the local government footprint in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough reflect the existing place-based partnerships within our Integrated Care System. These have been designed around the differing needs of our population and their health utilisation flows. The proposed Option A is coterminous with these place-based partnerships for the North and South of the area and would, we feel, best enable further joint planning and integration of health and care services at place and neighbourhood levels.

We look forward to continuing to work together with you to improve health outcomes and reduce health inequalities.

With best wishes,



**Robin Porter**  
Chair

*Bedfordshire, Luton & Milton Keynes ICB, Hertfordshire & West Essex ICB, Cambridgeshire & Peterborough ICB  
Working together as Central East*



CITY OF ELY COUNCIL  
SESSIONS HOUSE  
LYNN ROAD  
ELY  
CAMBS CB7 4EG  
Telephone 01353 661016

Email: [REDACTED]

Open to the public Monday to Friday from 9.30 am to 2.30 pm

10 October 2025

To: Charlotte Cane MP, Cambridgeshire County Council Councillors, East  
Cambridgeshire District Council Councillors

**An Open Letter on the Future Governance of the city of Ely**

Dear Colleagues,

As elected and co-opted representatives for City of Council, we write to you regarding the ongoing consultation process of Local Government Reorganisation in Cambridgeshire and the creation of unitary authorities. These are important decisions that will shape the delivery of services and the democratic accountability of local government for decades to come.

It is the clear view of City of Ely Council that, in any future reorganisation, Ely and East Cambridgeshire should be aligned with Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire. We are therefore unanimously in clear support of Option A, as we are confident that this outcome will best serve the residents of our city.

Our reasoning is straightforward:

- **Geography and Community Links** – Ely and East Cambridgeshire have longstanding and natural connections with Cambridge. A significant number of residents travel daily to Cambridge for work, education, healthcare, and cultural life. The shared transport links, including rail, bus services and the A10, further reinforce this connection. As the A10 corridor and rail services are upgraded there will be a natural increase in that linkage.
- **Economic Cohesion** – The economy of East Cambridgeshire is closely tied to that of Cambridge. Businesses in our district benefit directly from Cambridge's international profile, innovation-led economy and are already connected to the Chamber of Commerce. Aligning Ely and East Cambridgeshire with Cambridge will strengthen this synergy and provide greater opportunities for growth.
- **Shared Services and Planning** – Many of the services on which our residents depend – particularly health, education, and transport – are already structured around a Cambridge-centred geography. To diverge from this in future governance arrangements would risk inefficiency and disconnection. This is particularly significant in terms of health provision, namely Addenbrookes

Hospital and the public transport services available for residents to access this vital facility.

- **Identity and Representation** – Residents of Ely and East Cambridgeshire identify more naturally with Cambridge as our county city and historic neighbour. Our shared heritage and civic identity would be best served by aligning our governance accordingly. Ely, particularly, has a growing, diverse population which identifies more closely with the profile of Cambridge.

We recognise that Peterborough plays a vital role in the wider region. However, the differences in geography, transport links, service arrangements, and local identity make it clear that Ely and East Cambridgeshire's future is best secured in partnership with Cambridge. We also note that Option A would ensure both new authorities would have their own cathedral.

We therefore urge East Cambridgeshire District Council, Cambridgeshire County Council, and our Member of Parliament to support this position in forthcoming discussions. It is crucial that the voice of Ely is heard clearly, and that future governance arrangements reflect the lived realities of our communities.

Yours sincerely

Michael Banyard, Mayor of Ely  
On behalf of all Councillors of the City of Ely Council



3 October 2025

Dear Mr Moir,

I trust this email finds you well

With regard to the proposals for new ‘unitary’ councils to replace our county and district councils, the Parish of Kirtling and Upend feel it is important that we share our view to align our Parish with Option A - East Cambridgeshire, Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire

Kirtling and Upend is a village southeast of Cambridge city where many residents work, send their children to school and is the nearest principle shopping/entertainment hub.

We do acknowledge that as a small village we may not be able to influence the overall decision as much as the big cities etc however, I am sure you will note and record our preference

Good luck with the project, it sounds like a beast of a task

And, have a good weekend


Kind regards,

Richard Staunton

Chair, Kirtling and Upend Parish Council

**Professor Steve Barnett**  
**Trust Chair**  
Email: [redacted]

**Ms Hannah Coffey**  
**Chief Executive**  
Email: [redacted]



Peterborough City Hospital  
Bretton Gate  
Peterborough  
PE3 9GZ

**Executive Assistant: Sylvia Zuidhoorn**  
Direct Dial: [redacted]  
Email: [redacted]

6 October 2025

Sent via email [redacted]

**PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL**  
Stephen Moir  
Chief Executive  
Cambridgeshire County Council

Dear Stephen

**Local Government Reorganisation Engagement**

We welcome the opportunity to contribute to the shape of future Local Government in Cambridgeshire through the engagement exercises that you are conducting in the Council.

Following consideration of the options, North West Anglia NHS Foundation Trust is supportive of option A, as outlined in your recent communications.

Option A presents an equal distribution of the population across Cambridgeshire, which is important for balancing local engagement with economy of scale for the sustainability of future unitary authorities.

For the Trust, this option presents clear geographical alignment with our catchment area in Cambridgeshire and has benefits including:

- enabling the delivery of our new clinical strategy including the delivery of more services in the community and the development of a new Hinchingbrooke Hospital;
- simplifying safeguarding arrangements and governance;
- operational integration including developing a model of neighbourhood health (with multidisciplinary teams for vulnerable people) and accelerating integrated discharge functions, rehabilitation and reablement;
- further exploring our role as an anchor in the community we serve; and
- aligning public health and emergency planning duties.



The alignment of a unitary authority to be coterminous with the footprint of our mutual partnership in North Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Care Partnership would be highly beneficial. The opportunity to further align and integrate the planning and service delivery for specific population groups (e.g. those with learning disabilities, carers, older people) alongside the general health and wellbeing of the public is significant.

The expectations of future local government arrangements in driving economic prosperity are considerable and our Trust has a significant role to play. Option A includes a higher percentage of people who live and work in their local authority area - 77% in North Cambridgeshire. Our excellent local partnership on employment and health, through WorkWell and Get Britain Working, and our track record of supporting prosperity in North Cambridgeshire and Peterborough is well suited to this option.

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the future of local government in our area and offer our full support for the next stages of development.

Yours sincerely

Professor Steve Barnett OBE  
Trust Chair

Hannah Coffey  
Chief Executive



29 Great Lane  
Reach  
Cambridgeshire  
CB25 0JF  
9<sup>th</sup> October 2025

Dear Mr. Moir,

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION  
SUPPORT FOR OPTION A**

Reach Parish Council has carefully examined the options to reorganise local government in Cambridgeshire. It has also consulted residents of the village. There is very strong consensus here in favour of Option A. Furthermore, there is consistency in the reasons people give for supporting Option A.

Reach PC firmly believes that Option A best serves the needs of the community we represent. Our village is a satellite of Cambridge, and the great majority of our residents work in the city and/or frequently and regularly visit for leisure and shopping. Of those residents in education, virtually all attend sixth form education and beyond there. Others in our community depend on services provided by Addenbrookes hospital and on specialist health and social care from other bodies based in Cambridge. Only Option A reflects these economic and social realities and can maintain and improve on existing local government provision to our community.

In business process terms, it also makes sense that the entire commuter belt around Cambridge is incorporated into a unitary authority with the city at its heart. This is beneficial to the city as well as outlying communities.

Residents of Reach see significant opportunities in the creation of an Option A unitary authority. We consider that there would be enhanced scope for improving public transport - the current two tier system of local government has not worked to our benefit. We also believe that an Option A authority would be best placed to deliver environmental improvements, for example the creation of traffic free routes and green corridors from communities such as Reach into the centre of Cambridge.

Yours sincerely,

Susan Bailey  
Clerk to Reach Parish Council



25 September 2025

Dear Mr Moir

Swaffham Prior Parish Council back Option A for the Local Government reorganisation – merging East Cambs with South Cambs and Cambridge.

Yours sincerely

Jude Griffiths  
Clerk to Swaffham Prior Parish Council

24 September 2025

Dear Mr Moir,

Woodditton Parish Council has been asked by Cllr Jonny Edge to contact you directly by email if backing Option A (putting East Cambs with South Cambs and Cambs City) in LGR.

This email confirms that Woodditton PC's preference is indeed Option A.

Yours sincerely,

Sara Hewitt  
Clerk



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Front cover photos (l to r): Peterborough, Grantchester, Ely  
Back cover photos (l to r): Barrington, Wisbech, St Ives