

Cambridgeshire County Council

MONTHLY REPORT JANUARY 2026

FULL COUNCIL

The Full Council met on Tuesday 16 December, to receive annual reports from the Health & Wellbeing Board and Integrated Care Partnership; the Audit & Accounts Committee; and the Pension Fund Board and Committee.

The council also agreed to

1. Appoint a Councillor 'member champion' to advocate for local care-leavers.
2. Work with district and parish councils and the Combined Authority to determine overall management and delivery arrangements for all bus infrastructure, including clarifying responsibility for the management and commissioning of advertising on bus infrastructure assets (bus shelters).
3. Ask Cambridgeshire Culture (a delegated Board of the council's Children & Young People Committee) to develop a culture and arts strategy for the County Council, serving children as well as adults.
4. Support the UK rejoining the European Single Market at the earliest practical opportunity; and ask the Combined Authority to assess the ongoing impacts of Brexit on the Cambridgeshire economy, develop a local action plan to seize opportunities from re-engagement with Europe, and explore ways the Council can support those most affected by the challenges arising from Brexit.
5. Bring to Highways & Transport Committee a policy for design of new busways which allows for immediate modification during the delivery stage if safety requirements alter during dialogue with the regulator.

STRATEGY, RESOURCES & PERFORMANCE

Business plan and budget

The Strategy, Resources & Performance Committee met in December to consider the development of the Council's business plan and budget for 2026/27.

The County Council must set a legal budget to deliver public services for Cambridgeshire, including social care, highways, education, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), waste disposal, public health, child protection, libraries and community services.

The draft business plan and budget discussed at committee sets out the latest financial position for the year ahead (2026/27). Demand for council services is growing as people live longer, often with multiple long-term conditions that need support from health and social care, and more children and young people are being identified with special educational needs and mental health needs.

Nearly two thirds of the County Council's spending goes toward social care, while other major areas of spending include Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND),

home to school transport, and highways maintenance.

Since 2019, the council has experienced

- 122 per cent increase in the costs of providing home to school transport
- 76 per cent increase in learning disability related care costs
- 50 per cent increase in the costs of providing care for older people
- 42 per cent increase in the costs of supporting children with SEND
- 99 per cent increase in the costs of supporting children in care.

For the current financial year (2025/26) these pressures are resulting in a forecast overspend of about £10M and a deficit for SEND costs of nearly £100M.

For 2026/27 insufficient Government funding means that once again difficult decisions will be needed. The Council has had to identify £40M in savings or extra income for the year ahead. At the time the committee met, £6.4M of this gap remained to be found. The gap must be closed completely by the time the Council sets its final business plan and budget in February.

Budget timetable

The draft business plan and budget proposals for 2026-27 will be scrutinised by the council's committees at their meetings in January. Any feedback will be presented to the Strategy, Resources & Performance Committee on 29 January. At that meeting councillors will also consider the results of the second phase of the council's budget consultation survey and the detail of the Local Government Finance Settlement from Government announced in December, before making final recommendations to the Full Council on 10 February.

ADULTS & HEALTH

Public health strategic plan

The council's Adults and Health Committee has endorsed the key areas of work the council's Public Health team will focus on over the next five years to deliver the priorities set out in the Public Health Strategic Plan 2025-30.

The plan outlines how the council will help to improve the health and wellbeing of residents and ensure people receive the support they need—including offering the best start in life, making Cambridgeshire a healthy place to live and work, addressing complex needs, and prioritising the prevention of ill-health.

Some of the key areas of work led by Public Health will include:

1. Mobilising the Healthy Schools service to deliver health improvement education and interventions for school-aged children and young people.
2. Working with partners and planners to improve road safety, increase active travel, and improve access to services for rural communities.
3. Equipping professionals and the public with the skills and knowledge to prevent suicide and improve suicide bereavement support services.

4. Addressing barriers to employment and developing workplace programmes to engage employers and increase access to work across the county, targeting areas with high levels of low pay and low skilled jobs.
5. Developing an alcohol harm prevention strategy and strengthening prevention and early support.

Smoking cessation

In 2024/25, Cambridgeshire met the national ambition to treat five per cent of smokers annually, with 5.02 per cent of smokers setting a quit date in 2024/25. This compares to 4.18 per cent in 2023/24 and 3.38 per cent in 2022/23.

ENVIRONMENT & GREEN INVESTMENT

Park & Ride solar panels to help power Addenbrooke's

Solar panels at Babraham Road Park & Ride have been connected to the grid and are creating green electricity to power electric vehicles and Addenbrooke's Hospital. The panels are linked to the hospital through a private wire, allowing the two sites to mutually supply electricity to each other.

The scheme powers 35 new EV charging points at the Park & Ride, plus lighting and CCTV at the site. Surplus energy is sent to the hospital; or if the panels are not generating enough energy for the Park & Ride, it is supplied by the hospital.

Cambridgeshire Digital Inclusion Directory

The Cambridgeshire Digital Inclusion Directory is a practical guide designed to help residents get online, access devices, and build essential digital skills.

Developed by Cambridge Online, Connecting Cambridgeshire, and Cambridge City Council, the directory features trusted local organisations offering free support with digital access, equipment, and training. Residents are encouraged to pick up a printed copy from libraries or community hubs, or download it at

<https://www.connectingcambridgeshire.co.uk/about/help-to-get-online/digital-inclusion-directory-2025/>

HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORT

Local Highways Improvements

Please note that applications for the 2026/2027 LHI round close at 5:00PM on Friday 16 January. See the [Applying for a Local Highway Improvement \(LHI\)](#) web page.

Winter gritting

The winter service has been in operation since 1 November 2025 and will continue until 15 April. Several days of continuous low temperatures triggered treatment of secondary gritting routes on Friday 2 January.

Gritting information including maps of primary and secondary gritting routes at <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/travel-roads-and-parking/roads-and-pathways/gritting-roads-cycleways-and-paths>

Busway safety measures

Works are ongoing between Orchard Park and Histon & Impington to put in place fencing between the Guided Busway and the maintenance track. This section of the Busway is closed while these safety works take place. The maintenance track will remain open to pedestrians and cyclists though the path will be narrower than usual. Works are expected to take around 12 weeks.

- A route buses are being diverted along Cambridge Road, Impington and on to Histon Road into Cambridge city centre.
- B route buses will also use Cambridge Road and then re-join the Busway at Orchard Park.
- The St Ives-bound Histon & Impington stop remains open but please use the city-bound Pepys Terrace bus stop.
- Those travelling on B route buses from or to Orchard Park need to use the opposite stops to usual.

National Active Travel Conference

Cambridgeshire County Council will host the National Active Travel Conference in 2026, on 13-14 July. The Conference was first established in 2015.

The key themes of the conference will be:

- Rural connectivity and integrated networks
- How active travel boosts local businesses
- Public health and well-being
- Supporting new housing and development
- Integrated land use and transport planning
- School journeys
- Enhancing commuter and leisure access
- Communicating the real value of active travel to society

COMBINED AUTHORITY UPDATE

Tiger Pass

The Combined Authority has had to turn to Cambridgeshire County Council to secure the future of the Tiger Pass until the end of March 2027. The pass is of huge benefit to many families, enabling young people to travel by bus for £1 per journey. The Mayor is calling on cash-strapped Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council to fund the shortfall.

The future of the Tiger Pass beyond March 2027 remains uncertain, however. The Government's intention is to remove the national fare cap from April 2027, which will increase the cost of the subsidy for each Tiger Pass ticket sold.

Stagecoach industrial action

Several days of strike action by Unite the Union took place in December, with further dates announced for January:

- Monday 5 January
- Saturday 10 January
- Monday 19 January
- Saturday 24 January

On strike days, affected services will operate on a reduced timetable, and a simplified ticket range will be available on board. The full ticket range remains available via the Stagecoach App.

Services affected include the Park & Ride buses from Madingley, Newmarket Road, Trumpington, Babraham, and Milton. A full list and real-time updates are available online at

<https://www.stagecoachbus.com/promos-and-offers/east/industrial-action>

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