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Parish Council County Report September 2025

Suth Cambs District Council

Local Plan update

On 15 August the Government announced that funding previously promised to relocate Anglian Water's Waste Water Treatment Plant from Cowley Road in Cambridge will no longer be made available. A major consequence of this is that the substantial Hartree development in northeast Cambridge can no longer be built as planned. Hartree has been planned over seven years and would have provided 8,500 homes for the emerging Local Plan. This is an unexpected move from the Government that may require significant revisions to the Local Plan, which was due for consultation by the end of this year. The detailed consequences are still being explored and I will provide more information soon.

Thriplow Proposed Biogas Plant

I am keeping a close eye on this and working with County Highways on transport/access issues. Its clear there is huge concern amongst Thriplow residents and others.
https://applications.greatercambridgeplanning.org/online-applications/simpleSearchResults.do?action=firstPage

Four-day week arrangements permanently adopted

The four-day week working arrangements that have been in place at the council on a trial basis for over two years have been made permanent, following at vote at Full Council on 17 July. The trial was inspired by difficulties experienced by the Planning department in recruiting and retaining staff in the local jobs market under its previous working arrangements. Since the trial began, the council has seen improved performance, recruitment and retention. The Planning department no longer has to rely on expensive agency staff, saving hundreds of thousands of pounds per year for taxpayers. A representative survey of residents showed no statistically significant difference in their experience of nine of the council's services. The council monitors its performance in a number of ways, including measuring Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) on a quarterly basis. Several key services have shown a dramatic improvement during the past 2 years, including the time it takes to process planning applications

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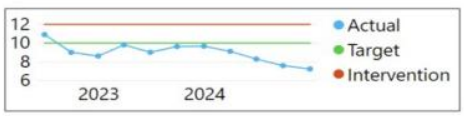
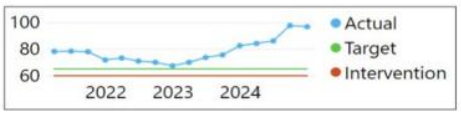
PN519 Average time to determine validated householder Planning applications (weeks)



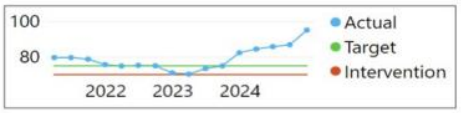
Sep	7.57
Dec	7.22

PN510 % of major applications determined within 13 weeks or agreed timeline (2 year reporting period cumulative - government KPI)



Sep	97.61
Dec	96.72

PN511 % of non-major applications determined within 8 weeks or agreed timeline (2 year reporting period cumulative - government KPI)



Sep	86.87
Dec	95.12

Thriplow and Heathfield Neighbourhood Plan adopted

The Neighbourhood Plan for Thriplow and Heathfield was adopted at the Full Council meeting on 17 July. It sets out planning policies that apply within the parish and covers the period to 2041. The Neighbourhood Plan is used alongside the Local Plan when determining planning applications in the area. Residents of Thriplow and Heathfield voted in favour of the Neighbourhood Plan on 12 June.

PlanAI tool tested in planning consultations

An artificial intelligence (AI) tool called PlanAI, designed to analyse public consultations more efficiently, has been tested by the planning service on three live planning consultations. The AI tool managed to summarise consultation responses around 60 times as quickly as the human team in the trial. The AI-generated reports were assessed and found to provide a high-quality substitute for the human-generated reports. The tool was developed at the University of Liverpool, working in partnership with the Planning Policy and Strategy team at Greater Cambridge Shared Planning. This is one of several initiatives being pursued by the council to use AI and data analytics techniques in innovative ways to improve value for money for taxpayers.

Consultation on Supplementary Planning Document

A second consultation has been launched on the draft Greater Cambridge Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). This follows updates made since the previous consultation in November last year. The SPD provides detailed guidance on how Section 106 contributions will be used. The consultation is open for comments and I would encourage all Parish Councils and interested residents to respond. The consultation period closes at 5pm on Friday 17 October.
https://greatercambridgeplanning.org/spd

Improving the High Street grant

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Telephone 07912 669092

Funding of £90k is available for business and community projects to revitalise high streets across South Cambridgeshire. The grant is aimed at projects that revitalise local shopping areas, increase footfall, encourage residents to shop locally and stimulate economic growth. Grants of between £5k and £20k per project will be available to local businesses, charities, community groups and Parish Councils. The grant money comes from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund with Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) acting as lead authority delivering the fund. South Cambridgeshire District Council is responsible for grant scheme delivery and allocation.
https://www.scambs.gov.uk/business/grants-and-funding-for-businesses/uk-shared-prosperity-fund/improving-the-high-street-grant-open

Cambs County Council
Local Government Re Organisation (LGR)

People in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough are being given a further opportunity to have their say in shaping the future of local government.
The Government wants to change the current structure of local authorities across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough by 2028, through a process known as Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). LGR will replace all seven of the county, city and district councils that currently exist. The new unitary councils that would succeed these current authorities would be responsible for all the local government services in the geographic areas they cover, except for those provided by Town and Parish Councils.

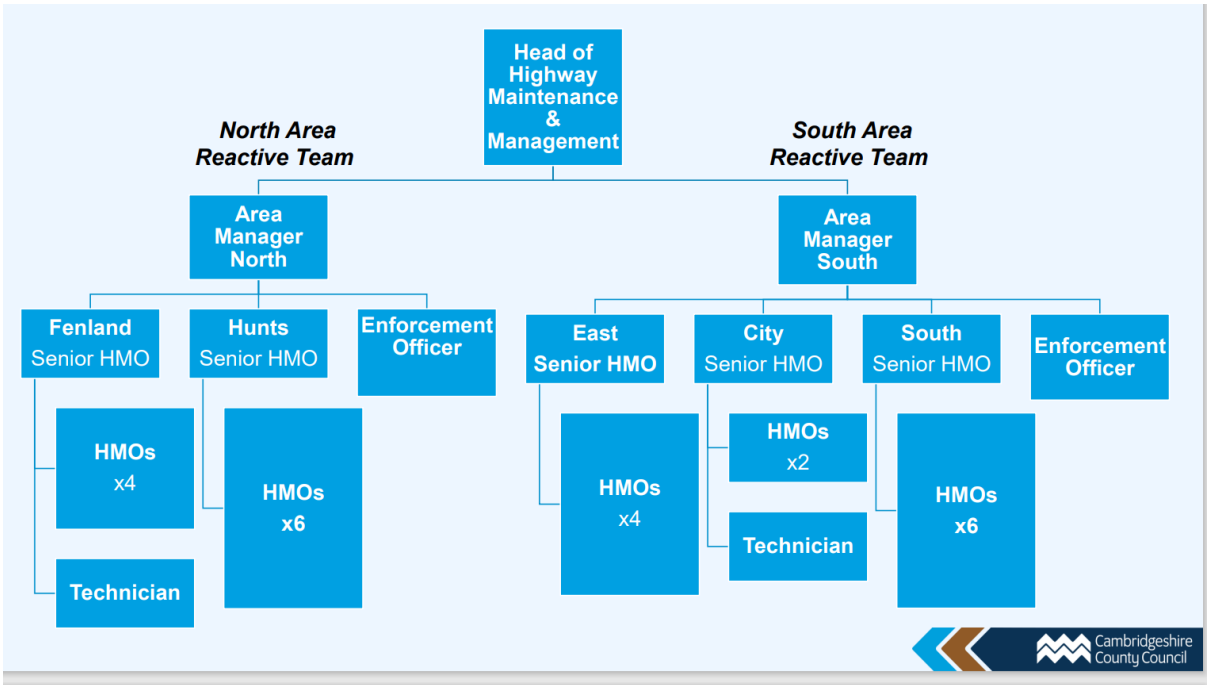
The County Council's recent annual Quality of Life survey highlighted that just under two thirds (63%) of those residents who took part knew nothing about Local Government Reorganisation, with just under half (46%) having never heard of LGR.

An information campaign about Local Government Reorganisation launches with a second phase of engagement running until Friday 3 October, which invites views on the preferred option being developed by Cambridgeshire County Council – known as 'Option A'.
Option A shares Cambridgeshire and Peterborough between two new council areas – one in the North, building upon areas currently covered by Peterborough City Council, Huntingdonshire and Fenland District Councils, and one in the South, which builds upon the areas currently covered by Cambridge City Council, East Cambridgeshire and South Cambridgeshire District Councils.
These new authorities would also incorporate the responsibilities and resources for their areas currently held by the County Council.
Of the three preferred options being developed by local councils in response to the Government, Cambridgeshire County Council's leadership believes that Option A best meets the Government's criteria. It balances the needs and services for both urban and rural communities, whilst delivering reduced duplication, greater accountability and financial sustainability. It would also support devolution and economic growth across Cambridgeshire

and Peterborough, by creating two strong and equal partners in the devolution arrangements led by the Mayoral Combined Authority.
Following this second and more detailed stage of engagement, a preferred option will be discussed by the Full Council on Tuesday 21 October, prior to a submission being made to the Government in November.
For more information on LGR and to complete the survey, head to Cambridgeshire County Council's website: Your Future Councils - Your Voice.

Highways Structure

A revised Highways structure is announced with new HMO's (Highways Maintenance Officers).



There will also be a new reporting system entitled Aurora.

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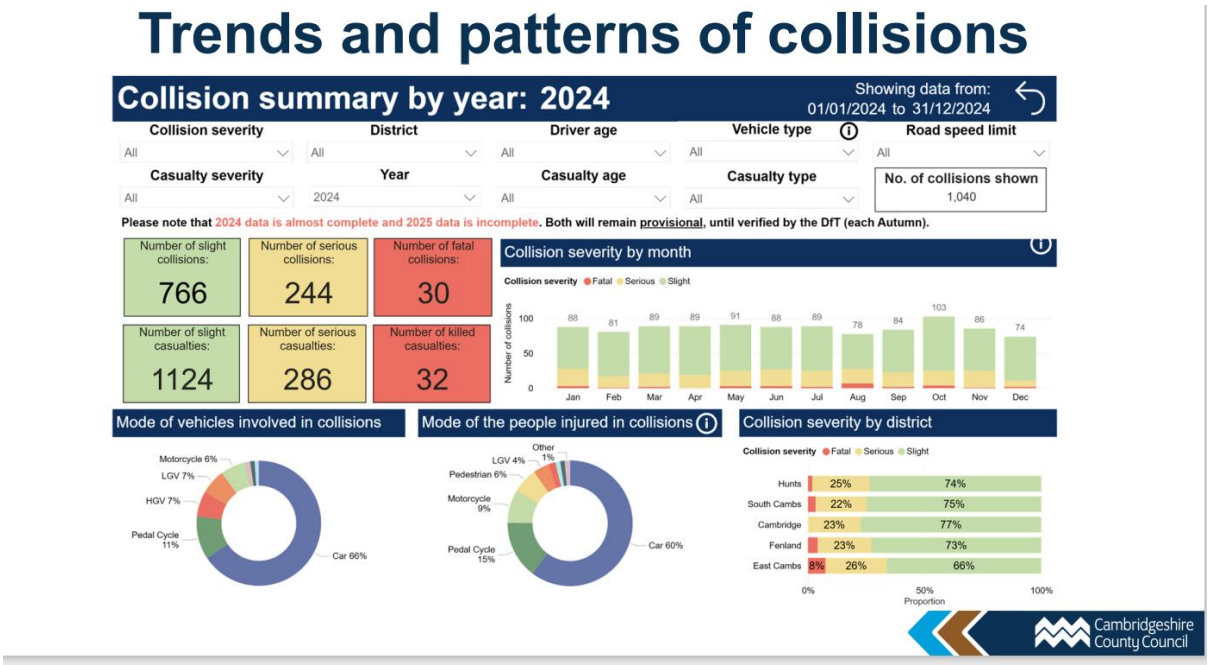
The new 'Aurora' System

- Transition 18 September – 22 September 2025
  - Member & parish introduction to the aurora system planned for 12 September as highlighted in our monthly newsletter.
  - Only CRNs from April 2025 will remain in ReportIT
  - Live Dashboards will be shared
  - Mobile working

Road Safety

An updated report has been issued on road safety. Here are some snapshots . I will issue the full set of slides.



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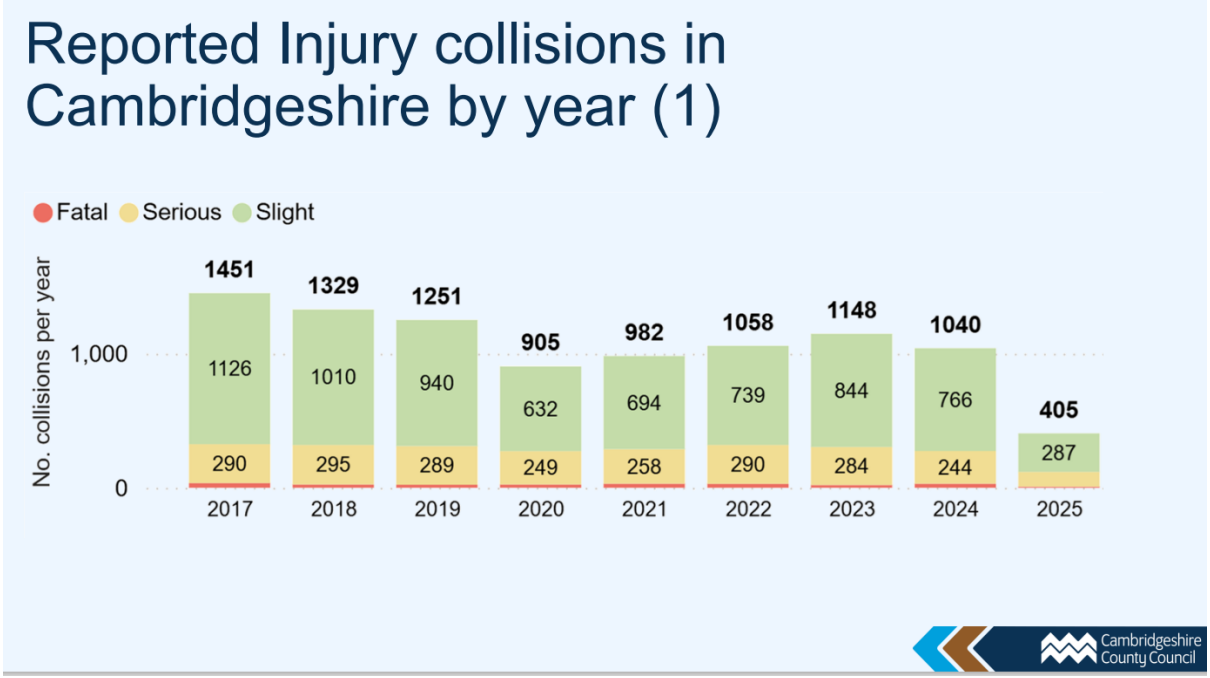

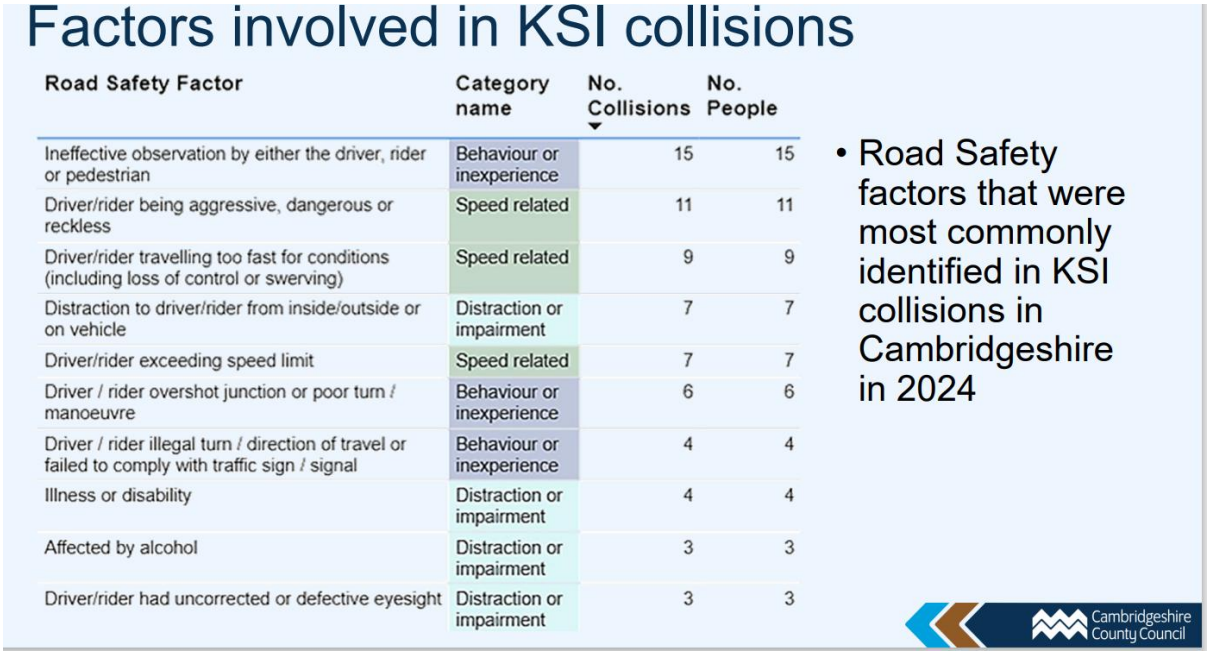

Next steps are that I will follow upon cluster sites.

Peter McDonald Sep 6th 2025

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