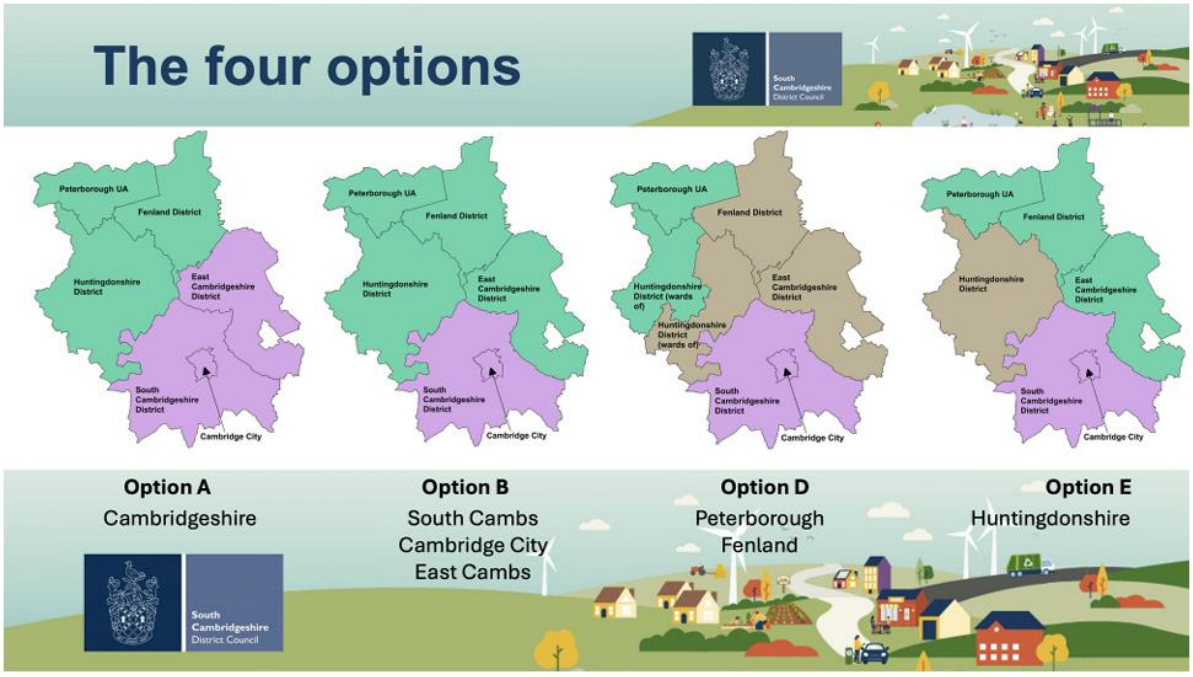
Councillor Peter McDonald
District Councillor for Parishes of Duxford, Hinxton, Ickleton, Babraham, Pampisford.
County Councillor for Foxton, Fowlmere, Shepreth, Thriplow & Heathfield, Heydon, Chishills, Whittlesford

Parish Council Report June 2026

South Cambs Council

Local Government Reorganisation

Four options for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) were submitted to the government in November. The Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government consulted on these in March. The options are shown below, with the list of authorities that supported each option. We are expecting a decision from the government on which option will be chosen in July. Once this is known, joint committees will be formed between the existing councils to lead the transition process. The Structural Changes Order (the parliamentary legislation that enables the reorganisation process) is expected to be published in the autumn. Elections to the shadow authority are likely to be held in May 2027 with the new unitary authority taking control on 1 April 2028. It is expected that the 2027 elections will take place on current ward boundaries, with a boundary review taking place before the following set of elections in 2032. Parish Councils will not be affected directly by the legislation, although the election cycle is likely to change and parishes will only be served by one councillor where today they are served by two.



Energy Efficiency Award

The District Council was Highly Commended in the East of England 2026 Regional Energy Efficiency Awards, based on significant energy efficiency improvements at South Cambs Hall, in our social housing stock, and at the Waterbeach Renewable Energy Network.

Contact Details: E mail: peter.mcdonald@cambridgeshire.gov.uk Telephone 07912 669092

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New Cabinet appointed

The Cabinet for the new District Council administration has been confirmed as:

https://www.scambs.gov.uk/councillors-and-committees/our-cabinet-members

Zero Carbon Grants

The eighth round of the Council's Zero Carbon Communities Grant is now open, offering a share of £152,000 to projects across the district that will reduce carbon emissions and foster community engagement around climate change. The scheme is open to Parish Councils and a wide range of community groups, offering grants of between £2,000 and £19,500. The web site includes detailed guidance on how to apply and examples of previous successful projects. The closing date for applications is 24 July. I encourage all Parish Councils and community groups to consider applying for funds to help develop sustainable facilities in our villages. Since its launch in 2019, the grant scheme has funded 82 different projects, awarding over £855,000 to initiatives across the district.

https://www.scambs.gov.uk/news/council-pledges-more-money-for-zero-carbon-communities-grants

East West Rail consultation

The East West Rail company's final consultation is still open until 9 June. This will be the last opportunity for our communities to have their say on the plans and help shape the final design. https://eastwestrail.co.uk/news/latest-stories/east-west-rail-announces-details-of-final-consultation

Cambs County Council

Woodland Initiative

Cambridgeshire County Council is inviting communities, landowners and farmers to come forward if they have land suitable for new woodland, hedgerow creation, and nature recovery, as part of a campaign to rebuild the county's depleted tree cover.

Cambridgeshire is one of the most tree-depleted counties in England, with intensive agriculture and the loss of traditional hedgerows leaving habitats fragmented and wildlife increasingly isolated.

The Woodland Creation project, led by Cambridgeshire County Council and funded by the Forestry Commission, aims to reverse this trend by increasing tree and woodland canopy cover and expanding hedgerows across the county, to open up potential opportunities, such as agroforestry.

The project delivers a wide range of benefits including climate resilience, carbon storage, flood management, improved biodiversity, cleaner air and better public health.

The initiative directly aligns with the council's ambition for a green and sustainable Cambridgeshire, helping to expand and better connect woodland and hedgerow networks across the county and to restore nature.

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Woodland creation will ensure new planting strengthens ecological networks and delivers maximum benefit for both wildlife and people. By creating new woodland and hedgerow corridors, the project aims to support thriving nature, manage flooding more effectively, store carbon and create healthier, more resilient landscapes.

This campaign also links closely with Cambridgeshire County Council's 'Nature Recovery – From the Ground Up' project, which supports local communities to develop their own Community Nature Recovery Plans, helping people identify and deliver nature recovery projects that matter most to them while informed by the Local Nature Recovery Strategy. The Council is now inviting expressions of interest from community and parish groups, landowners and farmers with land of 0.5 hectares or more that may be suitable for tree planting, woodland creation, hedgerow improvement or wider nature recovery initiatives. Priority will be given to:

- Lower-grade agricultural land
- Sites next to existing habitats such as woodland, wetlands or meadows
- Land that can help connect ecological networks across Cambridgeshire.

Those interested are encouraged to complete the secure online form by 30 June 2026 for the 2026/27 planting season. Further information about the offers to support the delivery of these woodlands will be available over the next couple of months: Woodland Creation | Cambridgeshire County Council

Quality of Life Survey

Cambridgeshire County Council has launched its annual Quality of Life survey, inviting residents to share their views on life in Cambridgeshire and the issues that matter most to them and their communities.

The survey supports the council's vision of a healthy, fair and sustainable Cambridgeshire, where everyone can thrive now and in the future.

The survey helps the council and its partners understand residents' experiences and priorities across the county.

By gathering feedback from a large and representative cross-section of communities, the findings provide valuable insight to support business planning, policy development, and decision-making, as well as helping to understand how changes to public services are affecting people's lives.

This insight is used to help shape the council's Business Plan and Budget, tracking progress against the council's Strategic Framework ambitions over time.

The online and telephone survey will capture the views of around 5,500 residents and is being delivered in partnership with Cambridge Ahead and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority.

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The 20-minute survey is being carried out by independent market research company Thinks Insight, which aims to speak to a representative sample of approximately 1,100 residents aged 18 and over in each of Cambridgeshire's five district areas, ensuring a broad and balanced range of perspectives.

Residents will be asked about a range of topics, including life and community, transport, health and wellbeing, children and young people, and perceptions of the council and its services.

Previous survey findings have shown that many residents feel happy, safe and have a strong sense of belonging, with Cambridgeshire widely seen as a good place to raise children.

They have also highlighted areas where residents would like to see improvement, such as road and pavement maintenance, the cost of living, and mental health and loneliness.

Alongside the random sample, all residents are encouraged to take part via the council's website at: **www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/quality-of-life-survey**

The survey will remain open into the summer and close on 5 August 2026, after which responses will be analysed and shared with councillors and the public in the autumn.

The results will help inform council discussions and priorities for the years ahead.

Residents who are contacted directly will be approached by the council's commissioned research service, Field Locker, who will identify themselves as working on behalf of Cambridgeshire County Council and provide contact details for verification.

Participants will not be asked for identifying personal details or any financial information.

Peter McDonald June 5th 2026

Contact Details: E mail: peter.mcdonald@cambridgeshire.gov.uk Telephone 07912 669092