Business Planning 2027-28:

Engagement and Consultation surveys supporting information

Cambridgeshire County Council

As we develop our plan for our future spending and savings, we want to hear your views on:

How we could increase our income to make further savings

Reductions in spending across our service areas

Council Tax

Therefore, we are engaging you in two phases between September 2026 and January 2027 so your views can help inform decision-making about our next Business Plan, which sets out our budget decisions for the next three financial years.

Phase one	Phase two
Engagement survey: Seeking your views on our priorities and approaches to spending and savings	**Consultation survey:** Seeking your views on spending and savings options within our 2027-28 to 2029-30 draft Business Plan and Budget

Cambridgeshire County Council

Engagement and Consultation Timeline

The timeline below sets out the dates of these two surveys as well as the dates for reports on survey results and our Business Plan going to Strategy, Resources and Performance Committee and Full Council for formal approval.

28 September 2026
Phase One Engagement Survey launches

15 November 2026
Phase One Engagement Survey closes

9 December 2026
Phase Two Consultation Survey opens

17 December 2026
Draft Business Plan and Phase One Engagement results go to Strategy, Resources and Performance Committee

12 January 2027
Phase Two Consultation Survey close

28 January 2027
Business Plan and Phase Two Consultation Survey results go to Strategy, Resources and Performance Committee

9 February 2027
Business Plan goes to Full Council

The information that follows is provided to help you consider your responses to our surveys and explains the wider context and constraints we must consider when setting our budget.

Cambridgeshire County Council

Cambridgeshire's population

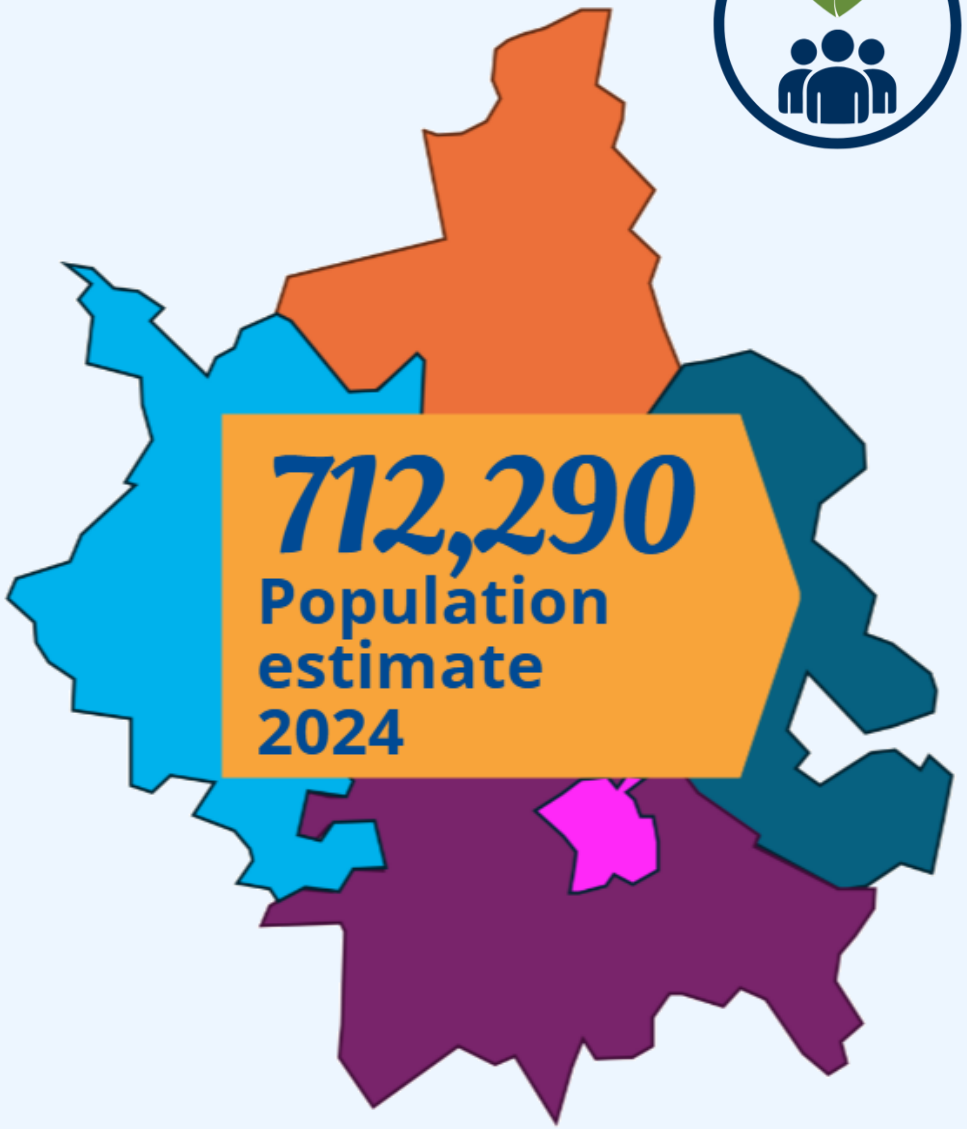
Cambridgeshire is one of the fastest growing counties in the country, with an increasingly diverse population.

Cambridgeshire's population was estimated[1] to be 712,290 in 2024. Cambridgeshire's population is forecast[1] to increase by 17% between mid-2024 and mid-2041. The 65+ age group is forecast to grow by 36.5% (an additional 49,475 residents aged 65 years and over), and the 85+ age group to grow by 70.7%, in this period.

The Centre for Cities identified Cambridge as one of the fastest growing UK cities (by population)[2]. Between 2014 and 2024, the population of the city is estimated[3] to have grown by 16.3%, rising to 151,666 residents.

The forecast population growth[1] in Cambridgeshire districts between 2024-2041 ranges from:

- 12.0% (Huntingdonshire),
- 13.2% (Cambridge City),
- 13.4% (Fenland),
- 15.9% (East Cambridgeshire) to
- 28.9% (South Cambridgeshire).



[1] Cambridgeshire County Council's 2024-based population forecasts. Further information can be found at Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Insight
[2] Cities Outlook 2026 (2026) Centre for Cities
[3] Mid-2024 population estimates (2026) Office for National Statistics

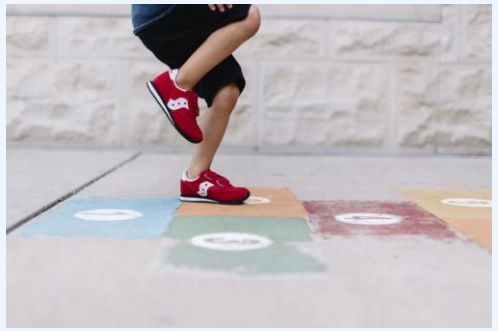
Our vision, ambitions and priorities for Cambridgeshire

Our Strategic Framework sets out our commitment to Cambridgeshire, ambitions and priorities that will help achieve our vision of a healthy, fair and sustainable Cambridgeshire:

Commitment to Cambridgeshire	Underpinning our vision, ambitions and priorities is our commitment to do our core business well, by delivering high-quality and cost-effective services.

Cambridgeshire County Council

Key achievements in 2025-26
Contributing to our vision, ambitions and priorities



- **Enabling full and healthy lives for all:** We have continued to invest in the health and wellbeing of our residents, including the launch of a new Adults, Health and Commissioning Strategy which sets out a clear three-year plan to improve outcomes, reduce inequalities and support people to live healthy, safe and independent lives. Alongside this, we have continued to reform and work to improve services for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) through our Inclusion for All programme, supporting better outcomes across the system, by working with the NHS, schools and the Cambridgeshire parent carer forum, Pinpoint.

- **Ensuring fairness and opportunity wherever we can:** We have maintained our commitment to paying the Real Living Wage for county council employees and those delivering services on our behalf, alongside providing targeted support to families most affected by the cost of living. We have also continued to invest in education provision through new and expanded school places, improving access to high-quality schools and aiming to provide the best possible start in life for children and young people across Cambridgeshire.

- **Supporting a green and sustainable county:** We have continued to focus on the council's infrastructure, including major investment in our highways network and enhancements to footways and cycleways to support safer and more sustainable travel, and to reduce carbon emissions from the council's buildings. Alongside this, the council has maintained a prudent approach to financial management in a challenging environment, ensuring continued investment in priority services while working towards a sustainable medium-term financial position.

Cambridgeshire Quality of Life Survey

The findings of our annual Quality of Life survey continue to evidence that residents experience Cambridgeshire as a place where many feel happy, safe and connected to their communities, while also highlighting ongoing challenges, including the cost of living and aspects of wellbeing, particularly for younger people or people with disabilities. By embedding these insights into our work, we can ensure that the voices and experiences of residents remain at the heart of the decisions we take.

Wellbeing and belonging remain strong among residents

Happiness in Cambridgeshire is at its highest level since research began in 2023 and remains above the UK average.

Loneliness and reported mental health struggles have also fallen, although young people remain more likely to experience these challenges.

Most residents also continue to feel a strong sense of belonging and safety in their local area.

Physical health remains stable, though some positive behaviours have declined

In line with 2025, 30% say their physical health has been a concern for them over the last year.

Reporting of unhealthy behaviours remains at a similar level to previous years, except vaping among 18-24s which has increased.

There has been a consecutive drop in levels of physical activity; more than half feel that more affordable fitness options would help them to stay healthy.

Residents want affordable, accessible support to stay healthy

Residents want it to be easier to access support early, stay active, eat healthily and connect with others.

Demand for better GP access, affordable fitness and healthy food options, and more local social opportunities suggests that cost and accessibility remain barriers to maintaining health and wellbeing.

These barriers are particularly prevalent for groups already experiencing greater financial, physical or social challenges.

The cost of living continues to put residents under pressure

In line with 2025, the majority feel concerned about cost of living increases and just over half have taken some kind of action to cut back in response to this.

Around 1 in 5 (18%) have used loans, and around 1 in 10 (12%) have received financial support from companies to pay bills.

Renters, lower socio-economic groups, disabled people, ethnic minorities and those with children continue to show most signs of struggling.

Concerns about climate change are lower, but this hasn't impacted action

Concern about climate change has fallen for a second consecutive year, though 3 in 4 still express concern.

Most are still taking some action to tackle climate change (86%) with increased recycling the most common behaviour.

There have been significant changes in weather-related housing problems, with homes being too hot in summer now a concern for 1 in 3 residents.

Perceptions of CCC tend to remain more positive vs LGA data

Value for money perceptions have significantly improved, with Cambridge City residents showing most positivity.

The proportion feeling informed by CCC has also significantly increased, with all districts showing an uplift.

Trust in CCC decision-making has significantly decreased this year but remains above that of 2023 and 2024 and scores reported by LGA.

Cambridgeshire County Council

The services we deliver

Services for vulnerable adults
We deliver and commission services that help people stay independent, safe and well, enabling them to live as they choose. It supports adults needing assistance with daily living due to age, disability, or illness, by offering personal care, practical help, and activities that promote their wellbeing and independence. We work closely with health services from the public, independent and Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sectors.

Education services
We provide support for schools and education settings to deliver high-quality education for children and young people across Cambridgeshire. This includes supporting schools by providing specialist services that enable improvement in specific areas such as inclusion of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and planning for future school places to meet the local population growth.

Services for vulnerable children and families
We support children and families through various services and networks to provide early help, to protect children and young people from harm and enable them to have safe, secure and loving homes. We work to provide information, advice, care and support as well as connecting with other services to deliver appropriate support at the right time.

The services we deliver

Roads, infrastructure, waste and other place-based services
We are responsible for enhancing the county's infrastructure, stewarding the environment and sustainable development. This includes maintaining over 4,500km of roads, nearly 3,000km of footways, 550km of cycleways and 4,000km of public rights of way. We also deliver the guided busways and school street schemes, alongside supporting planning for housing, infrastructure and community safety.

Public Health
We are responsible for understanding the health, wellbeing and care needs of our local communities, commission preventative public health programmes and other actions to ensure health inequalities are tackled so we can help improve residents' health.

Community services (including registration, domestic abuse and sexual violence services, Changing Futures and libraries)
To support our communities, we provide libraries across the county. Our communities services support various community groups such as young people, Armed Forces, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities and a unique High Impact User service.

Corporate services (including customer services, HR, IT, finance, council committees and property)
These services enable us to carefully manage public funds, employ a skilled workforce and ensure there is effective democratic oversight and leadership by elected officials.

Looking ahead

The council continues to experience increasing demand for our support from our growing population as residents and business continue to tackle increasing costs of living, entrenched poverty and inequalities, alongside significant change across the public sector with limited resources. Within this context, we are legally obliged to set a balanced budget each year.

Local Government Reorganisation

The Government announced a pause and review of its plans for Local Government Reorganisation in early September 2026. In the absence of an outcome from this review, there is uncertainty about how many Business Plans for Cambridgeshire County Council will be required over the coming years. Whatever may happen it is important we continue to plan into the future to ensure the financial sustainability of the County Council or any successor unitary councils.

Over the last few years, we have done a lot to become a more efficient organisation and make sure our services are reaching those who need them the most. However, we still need to do more.

Our options for balancing our budget are a balance between:

Increasing our income through Council Tax or charging more for certain services

Decreasing our spending through efficiencies or reducing services

For every 1% that we increase Council Tax, we can increase our income by £4 million.

By completing our survey and sharing your views on raising council tax, fees and charges, and funding services, you will support us to plan for the future, close our budget gap, and create a healthy, fair and sustainable Cambridgeshire.

Cambridgeshire County Council