

Cllr Jonny Edge

MONTHLY REPORT – OCTOBER 2026

STRATEGY RESOURCES & PERFORMANCE

Quality of life and happiness remain high across Cambridgeshire, residents continue to experience high levels of happiness, with fewer people suffering from loneliness or mental health challenges, according to the results of Cambridgeshire County Council's fourth Quality of Life survey.

This year, 6,912 residents split across all areas shared their views on living in the county. The responses received provide valuable insights into residents' wellbeing, how they feel about the communities they live in, and the public services around them, including those provided by the County Council. Although concerns around the cost of living, climate change, and access to jobs remain high, many residents were more satisfied with services and reported feeling better informed by the County Council.

Key findings

- 84% of residents say they feel happy; this figure has remained consistent over four years.
- 24% say they often feel lonely, and 26% reported struggling with their mental health; this is lower than last year but still having the greatest impact on younger residents.
- 87% of residents reported they personally feel concerned about the cost of living; the same as last year.
- 60% of residents say that the council keeps them well informed about the services it provides, representing a significant increase from 50% in 2025.
- Residents continue to be very satisfied with registration and library services (both 87%), followed by waste management (81%), park and ride and guided busway services (80%), and street lighting (78%).
- 55% of residents trust the council to make decisions about local services; higher than the national benchmark of 49%.
- 49% believe the council provides value for money; up from 47% last year and 41% in 2024.
- Satisfaction with roads and pavements has risen for a second consecutive year to 32%, up from 21% in 2024.

The County Council's upcoming #BeWinterWise campaign for 2026 will help raise awareness around issues of isolation, mental health and wellbeing, loneliness and the cost of living; all of which can worsen during the darker months. The campaign will also signpost people to support available across Cambridgeshire.

The County Council carried out the survey in partnership with Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority and Cambridge Ahead. The results provide valuable insight and evidence to support the council's business planning processes.

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/council/quality-of-life-survey>

Council budget

Every year, the council must set a legal budget which balances spending needs against income from council tax and other sources. With a growing population and rising demand for services, particularly in children's social care and special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), the council continues to face difficult decisions about how to balance priorities at a time when costs continue to rise.

The majority of day-to-day spending is required to support children's and adult social care, education and SEND, and with the remainder the council has to maintain the highways network

and deliver valued community-based services including libraries and registration services. Ongoing uncertainty about the Government's plans for local government reorganisation has also had an impact more recently.

The council's budget proposals for 2027/28 will be debated at the full council meeting in February. Ahead of this, it has launched a public engagement survey to ask for residents' opinions on where it should prioritise spending and savings in the years ahead. The recent Quality of Life Survey will also provide helpful insights into residents' views.

The survey closes on Sunday 15 November, and can be found at

<https://yourvoice.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/business-planning/27-28-phase-1-engagement/>

ADULTS & HEALTH

Tackling obesity

The County Council's Adults and Health Committee heard last month that although obesity rates in Cambridgeshire are below the national average for both children and adults, they are still too high, particularly in children and young people, and in groups with lower income.

Obesity rates remain higher in some communities across Cambridgeshire, particularly in Fenland, where higher rates of obesity are found amongst both children and adults. There continues to be a strong link between obesity and deprivation. Figures show that 28% of Year 6 children in the most deprived areas of Cambridgeshire are living with obesity, compared to just 13.2% in the least deprived areas.

Councils, the NHS, schools, community groups and other partners are working together to tackling obesity. This work recognises that maintaining a healthy weight is influenced by a wide range of factors, including access to healthy food, opportunities for physical activity, education, employment, the built environment and wider social and economic circumstances.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Urgent campaign to find more adoptive families

35 children across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough are waiting to be adopted. Of these, 22 are boys, 13 are girls, 16 are under two years old and 14 are part of a sibling group; children waiting with their brothers and sisters can often wait longer to find the right family.

Over the past twelve months, the average age of a child placed for adoption through Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Adoption Service was two years and six months. These children waited an average of 17 months before finding their adoptive family; meaning that they had spent more than half their lives waiting for a permanent home.

Fewer people nationally and locally are putting themselves forward to adopt than there are children waiting to be adopted. The average age of people approved as adopters in the past year was 41, 10% over 50.

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Adoption Service provides expert guidance from initial enquiry through to approval, matching and placement. Support continues long after a child joins their adoptive family, ensuring parents and children can access the help they need as their family grows.

Link up with Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Adoption Service:

- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/candpadoptionsservice>
- Instagram: www.instagram.com/candpadoptionsservice/

- YouTube [@cambridgeshirepeterborough2747](#)
- Email adoptionenquiries@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
- Call 0300 123 1093
- Visit www.cpadoption.co.uk

COMMUNITIES, SOCIAL MOBILITY AND INCLUSION (COSMIC)

Unclaimed pension credit cashback campaign

Cambridgeshire County Council is working with district and city councils to contact families identified as eligible to receive currently unclaimed Pension Credit, aiming to put up to £2M per year back into residents' pockets.

Over 700 households across Cambridgeshire will be contacted by letter, email and phone. Each household will be advised of their eligibility and provided with support to help them apply for their unclaimed benefit.

This is the county council's first targeted campaign to increase residents' income since approval of the procurement of the Low-Income Family Tracker (LIFT) software platform was approved at a meeting of the County Council's COSMIC Committee in February.

LIFT has been purchased for district and city councils in Cambridgeshire by the County Council, using funding from the UK Government's Crisis and Resilience Fund, as part of a campaign of income maximisation, intended to help build financial security for low-income families.

Identified residents will be contacted directly by their District Council. The campaign targets households eligible for the two elements of Pension Credit; Guarantee Credit and Savings Credit. Some households may be eligible for both.

Based on an average Pension Credit claim of £4,300 a year, the five hundred households identified as eligible for Pension Credit Guarantee would have a total income gain of over £2M per year, ongoing, and should all apply.

Mobile Library

Many people think of the mobile library just offering books. As with many fixed libraries, it offers so much more. Our libraries are a connection to our communities and to the help and support that is available. To find out where and when the mobile library gets close to you, visit this link <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/libraries-leisure-culture/libraries/visit-a-library/mobile-libraries/find-a-mobile-library-stop>

HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORT

Bus Services Reimagined

Several routes across the county are being axed by the Combined Authority. This is an obvious outcome of the Mayor's policy that he will not increase his 'precept' or share of the council tax, not even in line with inflation. This resulting in more and more bus services across Cambridgeshire being scrapped in the years to come. The Mayor's Combined Authority predicts a cut of 38 per cent in bus services by 2035 unless he changes his mind.

The report announcing all these cuts was titled Bus Services Reimagined. This appears to be a plan whereby the Mayor takes away your real bus and replaces it with an imaginary one. Well, that is certainly how it is playing out for some areas of Woodditton.

Current proposals set out that to the north of A14, Bottisham, Lode and Swaffham Bulbeck will see further improvements to their popular T4 and T5 services. With a later service being introduced to the T5.

Some of Newmarket all existing services are proposed to be removed, with a few new routes introduced resulting in some seeing a more frequent services to Newmarket; every 2 hours, but others will lose their services altogether. In addition, the new frequent route is set to be between Newmarket and Haverhill.

There really is little reimagination going on, but I put in a public question to the Combined Authority board and have had reassurance that officers will continue to work with me and others in the community to assess alternatives before the new routes are commissioned. My vision is for the frequent service to run from Newmarket to Cambridge as it does north of A14, giving students and workers direct options and connections to rail links. Many are crying out for more affordable travel that truly meets their needs.

Highways Improvements bids

The Highways and Transport Committee meet on 6th October, if the papers are approved as I expect them to be, 6 of the 8 non-complex applications meeting the cut in East Cambridgeshire are in the Woodditton division, with Ashley; Bottisham; Burrough Green; Swaffham Bulbeck; Westley Waterless and Woodditton all looking to have schemes moving to the design and consultation stage. Unfortunately, the complex cases this year were very competitive, only 2 of 11 applications making the cut. Cheveley unfortunately look like they will miss out this time.

It will be important for us all to learn from this process. The scoring system for the complex cases certainly works better for smaller villages with strong applications and suggests that others may need to weigh up offering larger contributions or even fully funding their applications to meet the needs of the local community.

Electric Vehicle Cable Channel Trial

The EV Pavement Channel Grant Funding Agreement has now been approved, and a trial will launch from 5th October 2026.

Interested residents will need to apply directly to the approved cable channel supplier, Kerbo Charge, who will manage the application process. Applications will be assessed on a first come first serviced basis until phase one allocations are filled. There are 50 installations available for phase one, 10 per district.

If there are no issues with this 'soft launch' the council will look to swiftly move to phase two at the earliest opportunity. Phase two will deliver up to 200 additional channel installs across the county.

For information about the approved cable channel supplier, please visit <https://www.kerbocharge.com/> for details.

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