

<b>Agenda Item No:</b>	<b>4</b>	
<b>Committee:</b>	<b>Cabinet</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	<b>7 November 2025</b>	
<b>Report Title:</b>	<b>Local Government Reorganisation – Submission to Government</b>	

## **1 Purpose / Summary**

- 1.0 To provide a Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) progress update for the Peterborough and Cambridgeshire area.
- 1.1 For Members to review and agree which of the five options to submit to Government by the deadline of 28 November 2025 to reorganise local government in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough as per the Government's White Paper.

## **2 Key Issues**

- 2.0 On 16 December 2024, the White Paper on English Devolution was published, outlining extensive reforms to the local government framework across England. These changes include increased devolution from central government to strategic authorities and local government reorganisation in two-tier areas, and in some adjoining Unitary Authority areas. The White Paper can be accessed here: [English Devolution White Paper: Power and partnership: Foundations for growth - GOV.UK](#)
- 2.1 As set out in the White Paper, the Government intends to implement local government reorganisation in all two-tier areas and in some adjoining Unitary Authority areas. All Councils in an area have been expected to collaborate on unitary proposals that serve the best interests of the region.
- 2.2 Generally, the Government anticipates new unitary authorities will have populations of 500,000 to 1,000,000, but in exceptional cases the Government is believed to be willing to consider a new unitary authority which has a population as low as 300/350 thousand.
- 2.3 Leaders and Chief Executives of the 7 Councils in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough have been working together on the LGR process. Members will recall meeting in both March and July 2025, to discuss progress on LGR and to give feedback on the emerging proposals.
- 2.4 Various options have been discussed with some excluded in line with the criteria set by the government, either because they were less financially viable or because they did not meet the requirements of our Combined Authority geography (which must include at least two unitaries).

- 2.5 Members should also note that a Cambridgeshire and Peterborough wide engagement process on LGR took place between 19 June and 20 July 2025. The results of which can be found here; [Joint engagement with other local councils - Fenland District Council](#)
- 2.6 5 proposals for unitary government in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough now remain as set out in section 2.1 of the report and business cases have/are being developed to support each proposal; a summary of each business case can be found in 2.2 of the report and Appendix 1. As full business cases become available, these will be shared with Members.
- 2.7 Within the LGR process, the Government have also asked that Councils express a preference for future electoral arrangements within new Unitary Councils that will be created. There is not sufficient time for the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) to establish new electoral arrangements prior to the creation of new unitary Councils in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, therefore the Government is required to put in place arrangements, at least for the first term of the new Councils. These arrangements must be on the current electoral boundaries, for example, current Electoral Divisions or Wards. Parish Boundaries must remain unchanged. This would be with a view that the LGBCE would conduct a review of the new unitary boundaries once they are established and prior to the end of the first term of office for the newly elected Members i.e. first 4 years.
- 2.8 Members are requested to consider and review the information available on each Option and provide feedback on the suitability for the Fenland area, and for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough as a whole. It should be noted that the government requires proposals that provide a solution for the whole geography of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, not just the area that includes our own district.
- 2.9 The Government has set deadlines for the LGR process and there is a draft joint letter at Appendix 2 to be submitted by 28 November 2025 which will state the individual preference of the 7 Councils.
- 2.10 Following the receipt of submissions, it is anticipated in early 2026, the Government will commence a statutory consultation process on the Options for unitarisation in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. This will provide another important opportunity for Members individually and collectively to provide feedback to Government on their favoured outcome for Local Government Reorganisation in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.
- 2.11 Once Central Government have decided on the future of Local Government Reorganisation in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, a Structural Change Order (SCO) will be laid before Parliament to legalise the new arrangements, with Shadow Authority elections expected in May 2027. The new Unitaries will be created on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2028. On this basis, Fenland District Council would cease to exist on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2028.

- 2.12 Cabinet will have heard the feedback from Members at the Full Council meeting immediately preceding this Cabinet meeting, and from Overview and Scrutiny on 3 November 2025, and will be able to take that feedback into account in their deliberations.

### **3 Recommendations**

- 3.0 For Cabinet to review the report and take account of the feedback from Full Council as to which unitarisation option to submit to Government in regards to Local Government Reorganisation in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, by 28 November 2025.
- 3.1 For Cabinet to consider the proposal of the Leader detailed in Appendix 3 to this report.
- 3.2 For Cabinet to delegate to the Leader and Chief Executive the submission on behalf of the Council to MHCLG in regard to electoral arrangements for the new Unitary Authorities, with a view to minimising electoral inequality within each new Unitary Authority.

Wards Affected	All Fenland wards
Forward Plan Reference	KEY/02OCT25/01
Portfolio Holder(s)	Cllr Boden – Leader of the Council
Contact Officers	Paul Medd, Chief Executive Carol Pilson, Corporate Director and Monitoring Officer Peter Catchpole, Corporate Director and Section 151 Officer Amy Brown, Assistant Director Anna Goodall, Assistant Director Dan Horn, Assistant Director David Wright, Head of Policy and Communications

Background Papers	<p>White Paper on English Devolution published on 16 December 2024  <a href="#">English Devolution White Paper: Power and partnership: Foundations for growth - GOV.UK</a></p> <p>Council Report: LGR – draft proposals; 14 March 2025  <a href="#">Draft Council report - Local Government Reorganisation - Draft Proposals NA 1.pdf</a></p> <p>Cabinet Report: LGR – draft proposals; 14 March 2025  <a href="#">Draft Cabinet report - Local Government Reorganisation - Draft Proposals 1.pdf</a></p> <p>Council Minutes; 14 March 2025  <a href="#">Agenda for Council on Friday, 14th March, 2025, 5.30 pm - Fenland District Council</a></p> <p>Cabinet Minutes; 14 March 2025  <a href="#">Agenda for Cabinet on Friday, 14th March, 2025, 6.15 pm - Fenland District Council</a></p> <p>Council Report: LGR – draft proposals; 21 July 2025  <a href="#">Draft Council report - Local Government Reorganisation - July 2025.pdf</a></p> <p>Cabinet Report: LGR – draft proposals; 21 July 2025  <a href="#">Draft Cabinet report - Local Government Reorganisation - July 2025 1.pdf</a></p> <p>Council Minutes; 21 July 2025  <a href="#">Agenda for Council on Monday, 21st July, 2025, 4.00 pm - Fenland District Council</a></p> <p>Cabinet Minutes; 21 July 2025  <a href="#">Agenda for Cabinet on Monday, 21st July, 2025, 5.00 pm - Fenland District Council</a></p> <p><a href="#">Joint engagement with other local councils - Fenland District Council</a></p> <p>Overview and Scrutiny; 3 November 2025  <a href="#">Agenda for Overview and Scrutiny Panel on Monday, 3rd November, 2025, 2.30 pm - Fenland District Council</a></p>
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## 1 BACKGROUND AND INTENDED OUTCOMES

- 1.0 On 16 December 2024, the White Paper on English Devolution was published, outlining extensive reforms to the local government framework across England. These changes include increased devolution from central government to strategic authorities and local government reorganisation in two-tier areas. The White Paper can be accessed here: [English Devolution White Paper: Power and partnership: Foundations for growth - GOV.UK](#)
- 1.1 The Government intends to implement local government reorganisation in two-tier areas and in some adjoining Unitary Authority areas. All Councils in an area have been expected to collaborate on unitary proposals that serve the best interests of the region. Generally, the Government anticipates new unitary authorities will have resident populations of 500,000 to 1,000,000, but in exceptional cases the Government is believed to be willing to consider a new unitary authority which has a resident population as low as 300/350 thousand.
- 1.2 Cambridgeshire currently has approximately 700,000 residents, while Peterborough, which already operates as a unitary council, has around 220,000 residents.
- 1.3 The five districts within Cambridgeshire (Fenland, Huntingdonshire, East Cambridgeshire, South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge) have approximate resident populations, respectively, of 104,000, 186,000, 91,000, 169,000 and 150,000.
- 1.4 On 5 February 2025, the Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution invited all seven councils in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to submit their reorganisation proposals by 28 November 2025. Proposals are to be judged on the following six criteria:
1. Forming coherent economic areas and supporting housing.
  2. Ensuring financial resilience and efficiency.
  3. Delivering sustainable, high-quality services.
  4. Demonstrating collaboration and community engagement.
  5. Enabling further devolution.
  6. Strengthening democratic representation and neighbourhood empowerment.
- 1.5 The Council responded to the Government's request for an initial response in regards LGR proposals which was sent following the Council and Cabinet meetings held on 14 March 2025 and can be found here:  
[https://www.fenland.gov.uk/media/21970/FDC-LGR-Letter-21-March-2025/pdf/FDC\\_LGR\\_Letter\\_21.03.25.pdf?m=1742572592553](https://www.fenland.gov.uk/media/21970/FDC-LGR-Letter-21-March-2025/pdf/FDC_LGR_Letter_21.03.25.pdf?m=1742572592553)  
<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/asset-library/210325-response-to-jm-lgr-invitation-to-leaders.pdf>

- 1.6 Council and Cabinet also met on 21 July 2025 and considered and provided feedback on the emerging proposals at that time; minutes below:

Council:

<https://moderngov.fenland.gov.uk/documents/g3064/Printed%20minutes%2021st-Jul-2025%2016.00%20Council.pdf?T=1>

Cabinet:

<https://moderngov.fenland.gov.uk/documents/g3072/Printed%20minutes%2021st-Jul-2025%2014.00%20Cabinet.pdf?T=1>

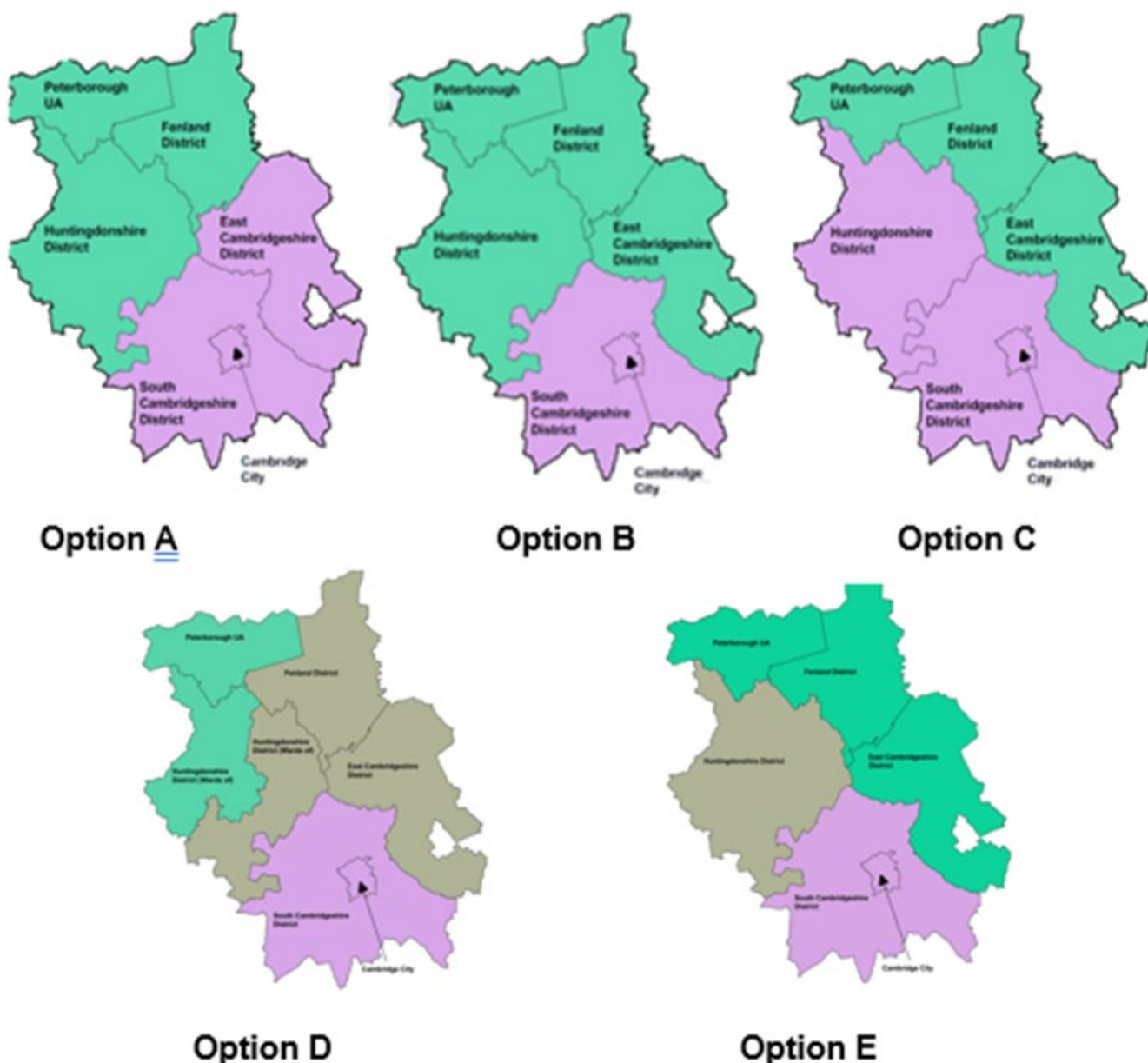
- 1.7 Overview and Scrutiny Committee received an update on LGR at its meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2025 and were able to provide comments on the information presented.
- 1.8 The next Government deadline in relation to LGR is the submission of a proposal(s) for unitary government across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough which is to be sent by the deadline of 28 November 2025. Each constituent Council, through their own democratic processes, are independently considering their favoured proposal to Government and a joint letter will be sent by the deadline. A draft of the letter that will be submitted to Government is shown in Appendix 2.

## **2 PROPOSALS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION IN CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND PETERBOROUGH**

- 2.0 The Council, through the Leader and Chief Executive, have been working with the other constituent Councils to develop proposals. Leaders across Cambridgeshire & Peterborough have met on several occasions and have worked productively together to consider different proposals for unitary government.
- 2.1 This process has concluded with 5 proposals for unitary government having emerged across the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area. Some Councils have publicly stated which option they are minded to support, subject to the democratic process. The 5 proposals are:

<b>Proposal</b>	<b>Unitary 1</b>	<b>Unitary 2</b>	<b>Unitary 3</b>
<b>Proposal A: North-West / South-East</b>	Peterborough City, Fenland District, Huntingdonshire District and County Council functions	Cambridge City, East Cambridgeshire District, South Cambridgeshire District and County Council functions	N/A

<b>Proposal B: North / South</b>	Peterborough City, East Cambridgeshire District, Fenland District, Huntingdonshire District and County Council functions	Cambridge City, South Cambridgeshire District and County Council functions	N/A
<b>Proposal C: East / West</b>	Peterborough City, East Cambridgeshire District, Fenland District and County Council functions	Cambridge City, Huntingdonshire District, South Cambridgeshire District and County Council functions	N/A
<b>Proposal D: Greater Peterborough / Mid Cambridgeshire / Greater Cambridge</b>	Peterborough City, West Huntingdonshire District and County Council functions	East Cambridgeshire District, Fenland District, East Huntingdonshire District and County Council functions	Cambridge City, South Cambridgeshire District and County Council functions
<b>Proposal E: Huntingdonshire Unitary</b>	Huntingdonshire District and County Council functions	Peterborough City, East Cambridgeshire District, Fenland District and County Council functions	Cambridge City, South Cambridgeshire District and County Council functions



- 2.2 Business cases for all five proposals are being drafted and final proposals will be shared with Members as they become available. A summary of each proposal with business cases can be found at Appendix 1. Links to each business case are as follows:

Option A Business Case:

<https://scambs.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s141205/Appendix%20C1%20-%20Option%20A%20Cambs%20County%20Council%20Report%20Addendum.pdf>

<https://scambs.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s141206/Appendix%20C1%20-%20Option%20A%20Cambs%20County%20Council%20Report.pdf>

Option B Business Case:

[NORTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE & PETERBOROUGH AND GREATER CAMBRIDGE](#)



Option C Business Case:

<https://scambbs.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s141207/Appendix%20C2%20-%20Option%20C%20Huntingdonshire%20District%20Council%20Business%20Case.pdf>

Option D Business Case:

<https://scambbs.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s141208/Appendix%20C3%20-%20Option%20D%20Peterborough%20City%20Council%20Business%20Case.pdf>

Option E Business Case:

<https://scambbs.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s141209/Appendix%20C4%20-%20Option%20E%20Huntingdonshire%20District%20Council%20Business%20Case.pdf>

- 2.3 It is unlikely that a unified agreement across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough on the future of Local Government will be reached and each Council is meeting to endorse their favoured proposal. More than one proposal may be submitted by any area. The Government retains the authority to proceed with reorganisation on the basis they see fit following the statutory consultation. Active participation in this process ensures the Council has a say in shaping the future outlook for unitary government within our area.

### **3 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT**

- 3.0 Between 19 June and 20 July 2025, a survey asking for views on the future of local government in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough was live. The engagement focused on the connections people have to different areas; where they work, socialise or receive healthcare, for example. It also covered what priorities they think new unitary Councils should have and what is important to them when it comes to interacting with local government.
- 3.1 3,406 people from across the area responded and a summary of the feedback from the survey can be found here [Joint engagement with other local councils - Fenland District Council](#)

### **4 Electoral Arrangements**

- 4.1 As well as expressing a preference for the geographical boundaries of future Unitary Councils within Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, Government have also asked that constituent Councils express a view on how electoral arrangements should be implemented from 2027.
- 4.2 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England has no role in LGR as the Councils do not yet exist.
- 4.3 Any new electoral arrangements must be based on current City/District Wards or County Electoral Divisions.

- 4.4 These initial electoral arrangements will be temporary as the LGBCE will review the electoral arrangements of the new unitary Councils after the initial elections in 2027.
- 4.5 There are currently 331 Councillors across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough – 61 County Councillors and 270 District and City Councillors. The LGBCE expects 30-100 Councillors per new unitary and Government have indicated 50-80 Councillors dependent on population size.
- 4.6 Sufficient Councillor numbers are needed for effective governance, scrutiny and community representation with the new Unitary Councils.
- 4.7 There are 2 options:

#### **Option 1. Use current City/District Boundaries**

**Advantages:** May be more familiar to residents, ore representative of historic city and rural parishes, LGBCE ward review implemented in PCC 2015, HDC 2017, FDC 2023, ECDC 2016.

**Disadvantages:** Not designed for electoral equality between Council areas, could lead to uneven representation between new Councils. more complex 'mix and match'

#### **Option 2. Use current County Electoral Division Boundaries**

**Advantages:** Better electoral equality, LGBCE consulted across the whole county area, coming into effect in 2017, more often used in LGR transition as 2 Councillor divisions.

**Disadvantages:** No Peterborough Electoral Divisions, 2 problematic two-Member Electoral Divisions (one being in Fenland - March North and Waldersey)

#### **4.8 Current Arrangements based on Proposal B:**

Council	Population	Electorate	% of electorate to population	Council wards	No of Cllrs	Average Electorate / Cllrs
East Cambs	93,575	68,825	74%	14	28	2,458:1
Fenland	105,965	76,695	72%	18	43	1,784:1
Huntingdon-shire	188,515	140,201	74%	26	52	2,696:1
Peterborough	223,420	147,183	66%	22	60	2,453:1

<b>Totals</b>	<b>611,475</b>	<b>432,904</b>	<b>72% (average)</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>2,348 :1 (average)</b>
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#### 4.9 County Electoral Division – Example Scenario

<b>Option</b>	<b>Councils</b>	<b>Divisions</b>	<b>2 x Cllrs</b>	<b>3 x Cllrs</b>
A NW/SE	Council 1 Fenland + Huntingdonshire + Peterborough	47	92	141
	Council 2 Cambridge + South Cambs + East Cambs	34	68	102
B 4:2	Council 1 East Cambs + Fenland + Huntingdonshire + Peterborough	55	109	165
	Council 2 Cambridge + South Cambs	26	52	78
C E/W	Council 1 East Cambs + Fenland + Peterborough	38	76	114
	Council 2 Cambridge + South Cambs + Huntingdonshire	43	86	129

#### 4.10 City/District Ward – Example Scenario

<b>Option</b>	<b>Councils</b>	<b>No Wards</b>	<b>No Cllrs</b>
A NW/SE	Council 1 Fenland + Huntingdonshire + Peterborough	66	155
	Council 2 Cambridge + South Cambs + Huntingdonshire	54	115
B 4:2	Council 1 East Cambs + Fenland + Huntingdonshire + Peterborough	80	183
	Council 2 Cambridge + South Cambs	40	87

C E/W	Council 1 East Cambs + Fenland + Peterborough	54	131
	Council 2 Cambridge + South Cambs + Huntingdonshire	66	139

#### 4.11 Proportionality based on Divisions and Wards

	Divisions	Cllrs	% of Cllrs across combined area	Total electorate/ Cllr numbers = Cllr : electorate ratio (average 1; 3,785)
East Cambs	8	16	12.5%	1: 4,302
Fenland	9	18	14%	1: 4,261
Huntingdonshire	17	34	26.5%	1: 4,124
Peterborough	22 (wards)	60	47%	1: 2,453

	Wards	Cllrs	% of Cllrs across combined area	Total electorate / Cllr numbers = Cllr: Electorate ratio (average 1: 2,348)
East Cambs	14	28	15%	1: 2,458
Fenland	18	43	24%	1: 1,784
Huntingdonshire	26	52	28%	1: 2,696
Peterborough	22	60	33%	1: 2,453

#### 4.12 Any proposal sent to government in regards future electoral arrangements should consider:

- **Electoral equality:** each councillor should represent approx. same number of electors: Variances should in an ideal world be no more than 10% from

mean, but this is very challenging for interim arrangements using existing boundaries

- **Local community identities and interests:** Wards that keep communities together, e.g. shared facilities, shops, leisure, places of worship.
- **Effective and convenient local government:** identifiable boundaries and names that mean something to local people

- 4.13 If the Council does not express a preference for future electoral arrangements, Government will decide in isolation what future Councillor numbers should be within the new Unitary Councils, and which current electoral boundaries to use.

## **5 Next Steps**

- 5.1 Further to the debate at Full Council and Cabinet, Cabinet are required to review the report and make a decision in regard to the recommendations set out within the report and submit this to Government by the deadline of 28 November 2025.
- 5.2 Await the commencement of the statutory consultation in early 2026 and make a further response to Government setting out the Council's preferred position on LGR in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

## **6 CONSULTATION**

- 6.1 Between 19 June and 20<sup>th</sup> July 2025, a survey asking for views on the future of local government in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough was live. 3,406 people from across the area responded and a summary of the feedback from the survey can be found here [Joint engagement with other local councils - Fenland District Council](#)
- 6.2 Government have indicated a statutory consultation on future arrangements for local government in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough will commence in early 2026.

## **7 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 7.0 Government have invited Councils to make proposals for the future of local government in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. In order to ensure FDC Members are able to influence this process, a submission to government in regards a preferred proposal for Unitary Councils in the area is advised. Therefore, alternative options are not available.

## **8 IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.0 **Legal Implications**

- 8.1 Local government reorganisation is governed by the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. The Secretary of State has the authority to invite or direct proposals and make final decisions.
- 8.2 The law says that Local Authority boundaries may not cross police force boundaries but can otherwise be whatever best meets criteria. The invitations issued under previous governments often say that existing districts must be used as the 'building blocks' from which new authorities are to be constructed, and whilst this is not required by Government, it is expected, unless there are compelling reasons to split an existing district between more than one new unitary authority.
- 8.3 Although Government encourages local authorities to work together there is nothing to stop competing proposals being submitted and in that case the Secretary of State can select one proposal for consultation or may consult on competing proposals before making a decision as to which is to be taken forward, or Government may decide upon an entirely different arrangement.
- 8.4 Existing Councils in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough are unlikely to continue in their current form, with new Unitary Councils expected to operate in a shadow capacity from May 2027 before full implementation in April 2028.
- 8.5 **Financial Implications**
- 8.6 At this stage, direct financial implications are minimal. However, extensive partnership working will be essential within any transitional arrangements to form new Unitary Councils.
- 8.7 Financial information is contained within each business case, which is inevitably complicated as it requires both disaggregation of upper tier functions and aggregation of district functions into the proposed unitary councils.
- 8.8 A crucial factor is the current level of debt across Cambridgeshire's local government. Any reorganisation proposal must adequately address financial liabilities to ensure sustainability.
- 8.9 There are many factors to consider when thinking about the creation of new, financially sustainable organisations. All Councils are struggling with forecast budget gaps in future years due to national pressures being experienced in demand for services and huge uncertainty around future government funding levels.
- 8.10 **Equality Implications**
- 8.11 Not applicable.

## **9 SCHEDULES**

**Appendix 1: Summary of Business Cases**

**Appendix 2: Joint Draft Letter to Government**

**Appendix 3: Draft Proposal from the Leader**

## Appendix 1

### Option A

- Cambridgeshire County Council at its meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> October 2025 agreed to support and submit to government **Option A**.
- The papers for this meeting which includes a business case and options appraisal for Options A, B and C are at the link below:
- [Document.ashx](#)
- Fact files for Option A have been extracted below:

### Unitary 1 North Council Fact File – Fenland/Peterborough/Huntingdonshire

Current population	520,140
2040 population estimate	581,110
Working age people	59%
Young people	20%
Older people	20%
Geographical area	179,468 hectares
Population density (2025), per square kilometre (sq km)	263.5 per sq km
Forecast dwelling growth rate (2023-2041)	19%
Anchor city	Peterborough
% of travel to work within the Unitary area	77% within the North Unitary Authority area 8% travel to work in South Unitary Authority area 15% outside Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area
GVA per population	£80,716
Number of new councillors	92
Number of parish councils	121 (16 in Fenland, 79 in Huntingdonshire, 26 in Peterborough)
Number of businesses per 10,000 population (2022)	399
Average Employment rate (based on 2022 data)	77.43%
Housing need	2,936
Number of education settings	7 Nurseries 157 Primary 26 Secondary 10 Special Educational Needs and Disabilities 3 Further Education

Highest level of Qualification	27% Level 4 16% Level 3 6% Apprenticeship 15% Level 2 12% Level 1
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North Cambridgeshire is characterised by vast agricultural beauty, rural villages and historic market towns, rich English history and growing manufacturing prominence.

## **HISTORY**

North Cambridgeshire is an area with a rich and diverse history. One of the most impressive markers of the area's past is the Norman architecture of Peterborough Cathedral. Standing for over 900 years, the Cathedral is the final resting place of Katharine of Aragon (first wife of King Henry VIII) and was the original burial site for Mary Queen of Scots. North Cambridgeshire has hosted prominent historical figures, such as Oliver Cromwell, who was born and began his political career in Huntingdon. Outside of historical figures, North Cambridgeshire also has a long history in agriculture. When the Fens were drained in the 17th Century, they fast became a centre of agricultural production, and in the 19th Century, the Fens (including much of Fenland) had earned the nickname 'the breadbasket of England'.

## **ECONOMY**

This agricultural prominence has continued into modern day, with North Cambridgeshire still home to extensive, productive farmland. An average of 76.9% of land use across the area is agricultural land (85.2% in Fenland, 79.6% in Huntingdonshire and 65.8% in Peterborough), higher than both the England and East of England averages of 63.1% and 72.3% respectively. Alongside agriculture, the area has become renowned for its manufacturing sector, with manufacturing (including High-tech manufacturing) accounting for the largest sector by employees in all three constituent areas within North Cambridgeshire.

## **CONNECTIVITY**

Rail networks across North Cambridgeshire provide excellent connection between Peterborough and other key cities, with direct lines to London (in as little as 50 minutes), Birmingham (1hr 45 minutes) and Edinburgh (in just over 3hr 30 minutes). Market towns such as Huntingdon and St Neots also benefit from rail networks, providing direct links into London. Further to this, Peterborough train station is well connected to South Cambridgeshire, with direct trains from Peterborough to Ely (approx. 30 minutes) and Cambridge (approx. 50 minutes). Road networks are also essential for connecting North Cambridgeshire, with the M11, A1(M), A14 and A47 all providing crucial transport links in the area.

## **LIKELY CHALLENGES**

- Tackling high levels of health challenges and inequalities within this area, to increase male and female life expectancies and reduce prevalence of chronic conditions such as obesity, chronic heart disease, and diabetes.
- Increasing the employment rate towards the Government's intended 80%, given the area had - in the year to March 2025- the largest cohort of people not in employment, education or training, excluding students (approximately 72%) of the



Cambridgeshire and Peterborough region, alongside 64% of 16-64 year olds with a disability / work limiting illness who were unemployed or economically inactive.

- With greater levels of population and areas of entrenched multi-vector deprivation, this area will see an increasingly high level of complex demand placed on public services, particularly social care (children's and adults) and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. Due to the increasingly complex nature of the deprivation, addressing these demands will require more joined-up, collaborative and innovative approaches.

## Unitary 2 – South Council Fact File

Current population	420,100
2040 population estimate	507,680
Working age people	63%
Young people	19%
Older people	18%
Geographical area	159,284 hectares
Population density (2025), per square kilometre (sq km)	288.4 per sq km
Forecast dwelling growth rate (2023-2041)	26%
Anchor city	Cambridge
% of travel to work within the Unitary area	81% within the South Unitary Authority area 5% travel to work in North Unitary Authority area 15% outside Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area
GVA per population	£117,850
Number of new councillors	68
Number of parish councils	141 (0 in Cambridge City, 35 in East Cambridgeshire, 106 in South Cambridgeshire)
Number of businesses per 10,000 population (2022)	421
Average Employment rate (based on 2022 data)	80.73%
Housing need	3,055
Number of education settings	6 Nurseries 116 Primary 21 Secondary 8 Special Educational Needs and Disabilities 3 Further Education
Highest level of Qualification	48% Level 4 16% Level 3 4% Apprenticeship 10% Level 2 7% Level 1

South Cambridgeshire is characterised by innovative and world-leading research, against a backdrop of new towns, historic villages, and rolling agricultural landscapes.

## **HISTORY**

Despite its status as a modern and innovative area, South Cambridgeshire has a diverse and interesting history. Whether it's the 900-year-old Ely Cathedral, home to one of the earliest and most popular (at the time) English Saints, St Etheldreda, or one of the oldest universities in the world, the University of Cambridge, established in 1209 as a base for academics fleeing hostile townsmen in Oxford. The history of South Cambridgeshire has played a significant role in the area's global recognition, since 1901 there have been 125 Nobel Prizes awarded to affiliates of the University, including for the discovery of the structure of DNA, and the discovery of penicillin.

## **ECONOMY**

This rich history in education has provided a springboard for the extensive research and development sector that now covers much of Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire. With strengths in life sciences, biotechnology, and ICT, the national significance of the region's economy and its role in the Oxford-Cambridge Growth Corridor is well recognised by central government. In addition to the strong knowledge-intensive sector, South Cambridgeshire has a prominent agricultural sector, with 84.1% of land use in East Cambridgeshire and 79.6% of land use in South Cambridgeshire dedicated to agriculture.

## **CONNECTIVITY**

Due to the national significance of the region's economy and its role in the Oxford - Cambridge Growth Corridor, the modest rail links from Cambridge (able to travel to London in 50 minutes, Norwich in 70 minutes and Birmingham in 2 hrs 40 minutes) will be enhanced through infrastructure projects such as East West Rail and Ely Junction. Road networks in the area are also crucial for connectivity, with numerous major roads such as the M11, A14, A428, A11 and A10 providing significant transport links throughout the area.

## **LIKELY CHALLENGES**

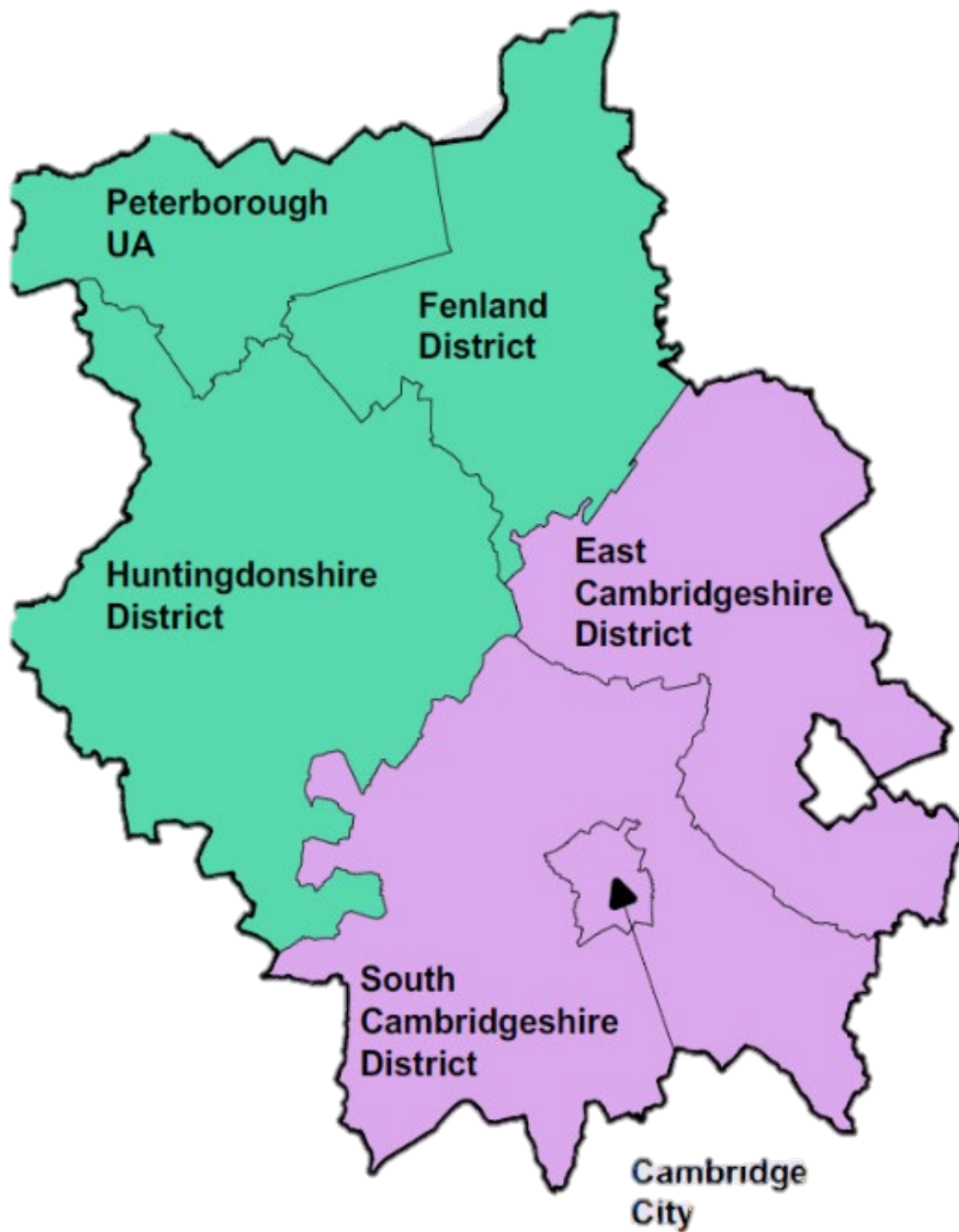
- The area has a broad range of health outcomes to either maintain (those residents experiencing better than average outcomes) or work to improve (residents experiencing significant health inequalities).

- Population is forecast to increase at a high growth rate, placing demands on expanding the infrastructure of public services, utilities, and community facilities.

Between 2025-2040, spend on children's social care is forecast to increase by 61%, SEND by 149%, and demand on home-to-school transport by 31%

- Negotiating the ambitions of central government for the growth of the Greater Cambridge area, against available resources and deliverability.

Map of Option A



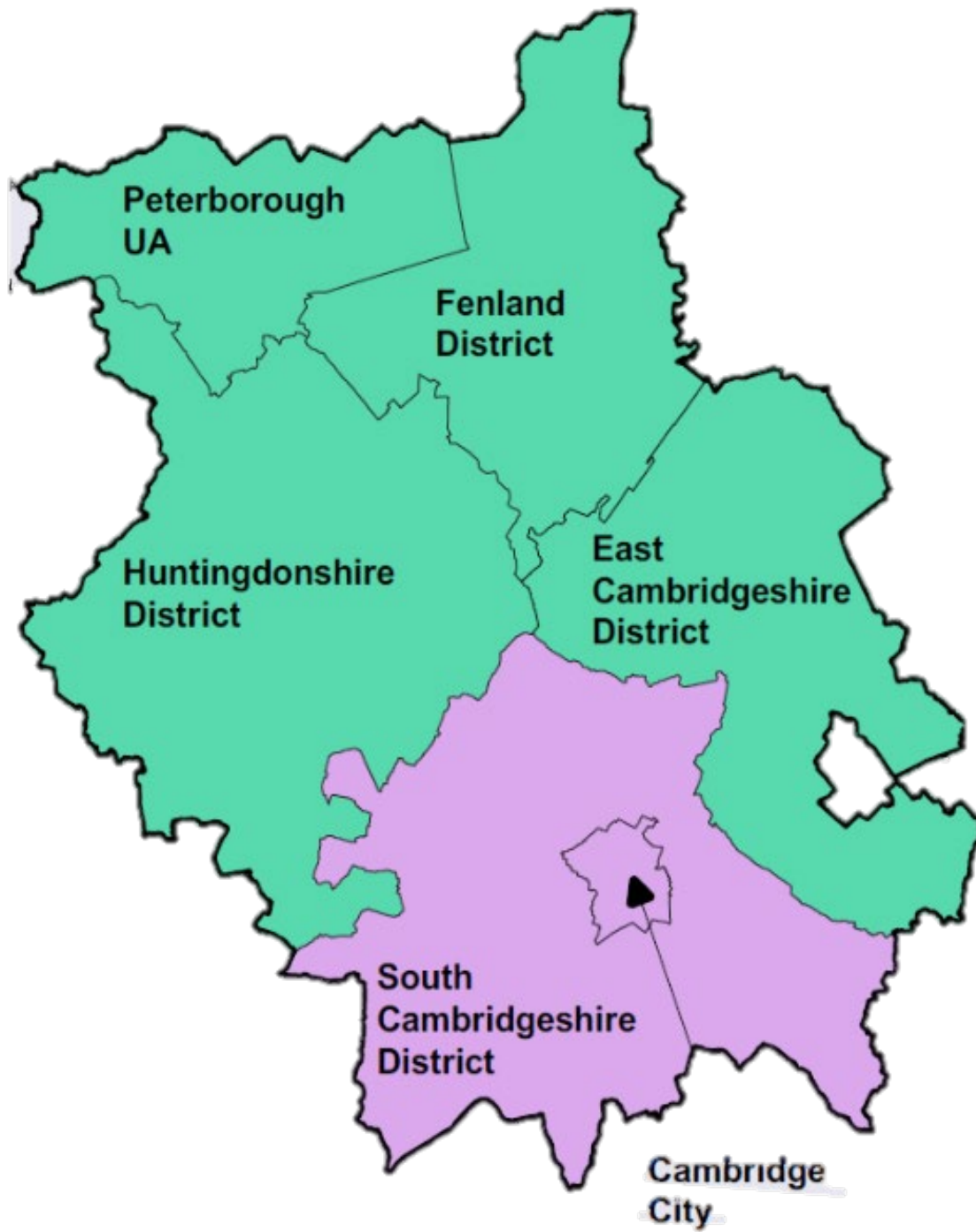
## Option B

- South Cambridgeshire District Council have published papers for their Overview and Scrutiny meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> November which contains the draft Business Case for Option B:

### [Agenda item - Local Government Reorganisation](#)

- The above papers also collate the links to the other 4 business cases.
- In September, following a meeting of its Full Council, East Cambridgeshire District Council officially confirmed it would be supporting the development of the business case for Option B.
- ECDC released a press release about this on their website, [Council leader expresses "significant concerns" for Proposal A.](#)
- Further information about [Option B](#) and the #OptionBforMe campaign is available on the ECDC website.
- ECDC will formally consider which option to support at its [Full Council meeting on 20 November](#).
- Analysis of Option B is included within the CCC and PCC papers linked elsewhere in these papers. If further information on these business cases become available, links will be published here.

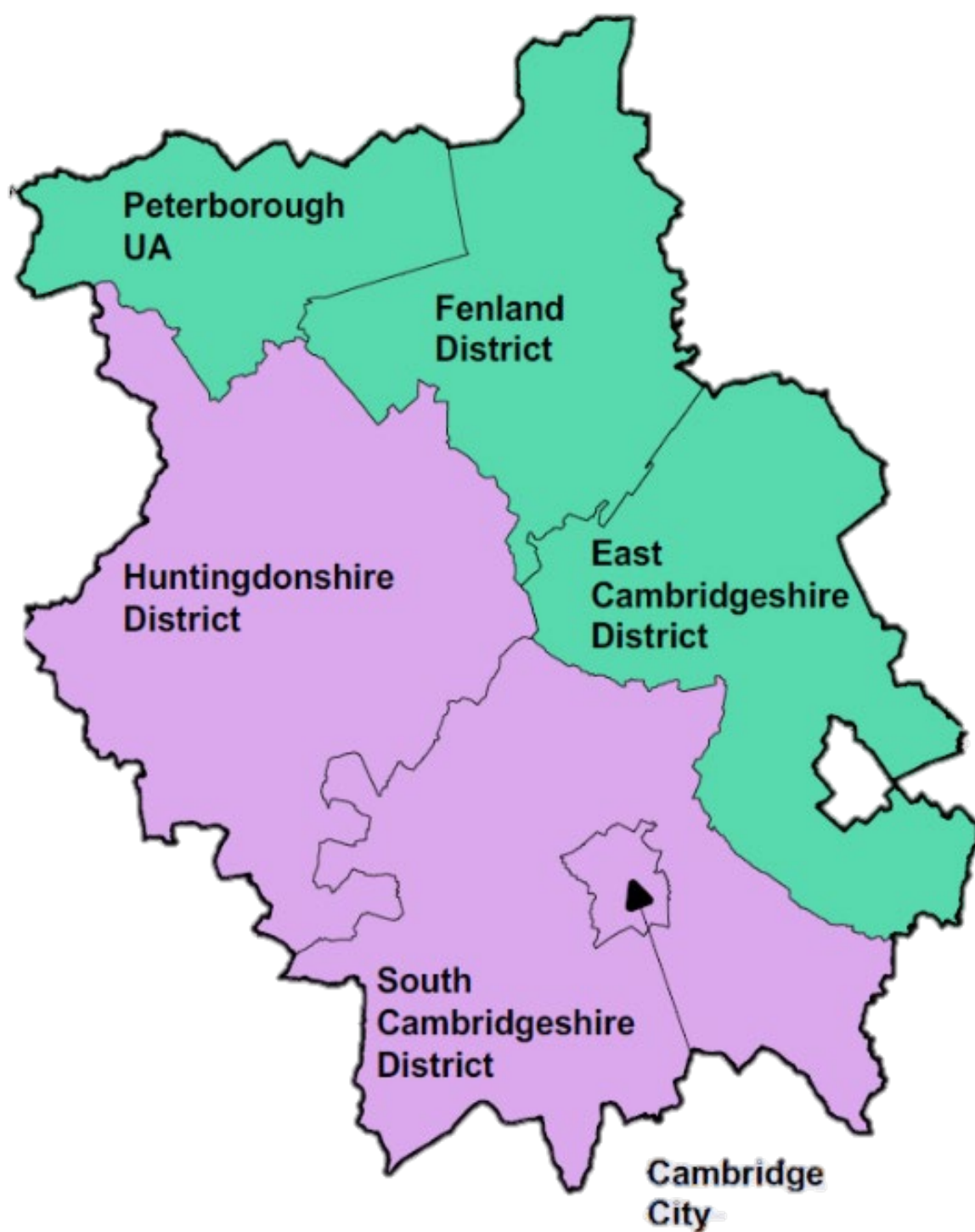
Map of Option B



## Option C

- The business case for Option C is being led by Huntingdonshire District Council. HDC are considering papers at their Overview and Scrutiny meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> November. You can find a link to the papers for this meeting here: [Agenda for Overview and Scrutiny Joint Group on Wednesday, 12 November 2025, 7:00 pm - Huntingdonshire.gov.uk](#)
- Analysis of Option C is included within the CCC and PCC papers linked elsewhere in these papers. If further information on these business cases become available, links will be published here.

Map of Option C



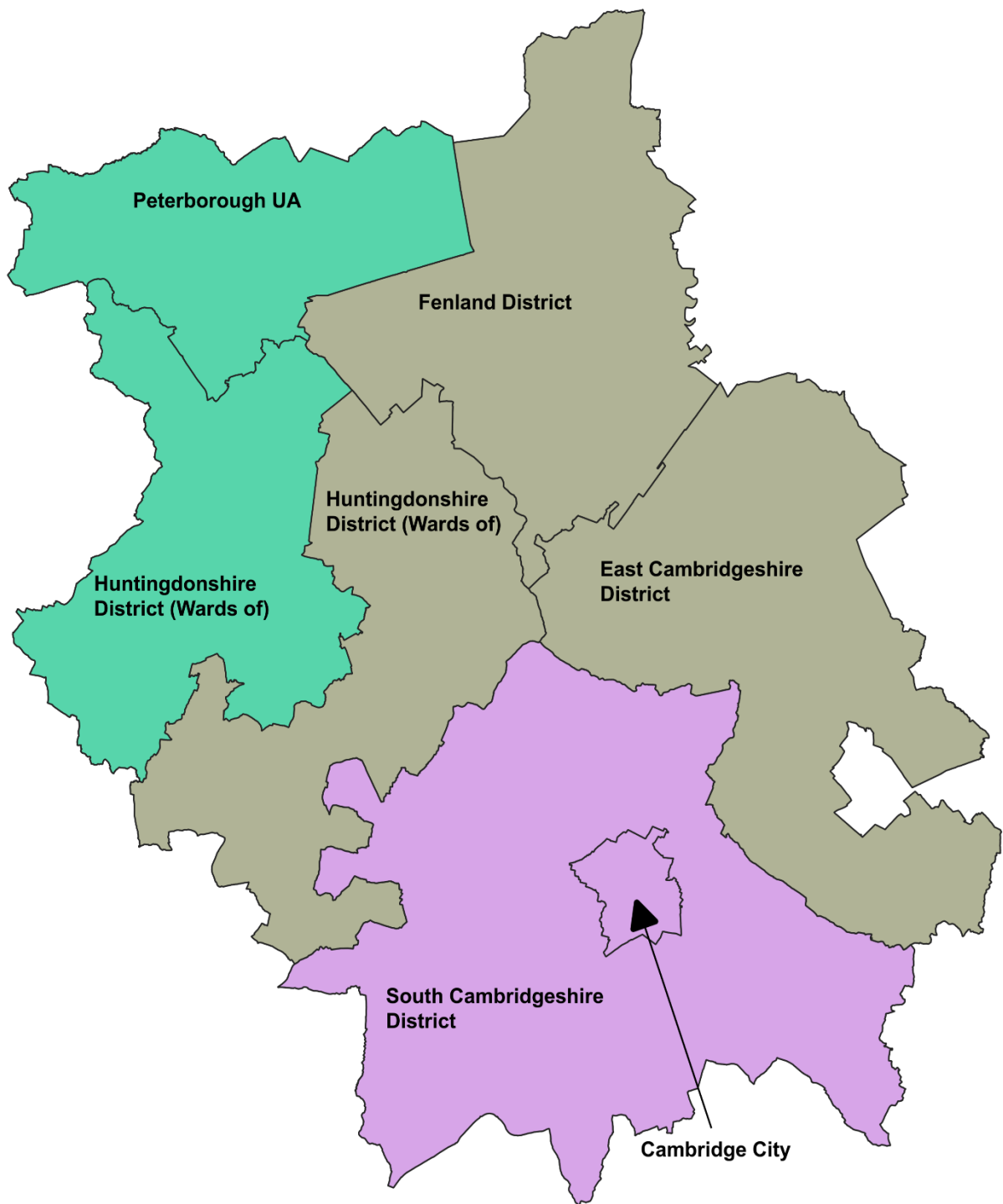
## Option D

- Peterborough City Council (PCC) have led on the development of Option D, represented by the map below.
- PCC have developed a business case for Option D and published their papers for their Overview and Scrutiny meeting which occurred on 28<sup>th</sup> October 2025. The links to the papers for O&S are included below:
  - **Cover Report**  
<https://democracy.peterborough.gov.uk/documents/s56813/Local%20Government%20Reorganisation%20in%20Cambridgeshire%20and%20Peterborough%20-%20Scrutiny%20Committee%20Report.pdf>
  - **Appendix 1 Business Case for Option D – 3 Unitary Authority Business Case**  
<https://democracy.peterborough.gov.uk/documents/s56800/Appendix%201%20-%20Option%20D%203%20Unitary%20Authority%20Business%20Case%20Greater%20Peterborough%20Mid-Cambridgeshire.pdf>
  - **Appendix 2 Group Leaders Update**  
<https://democracy.peterborough.gov.uk/documents/s56855/Appendix%202%20-%20LGR%20-%2020%20October%202025%20Update%20Group%20Leaders%20and%20Members%201.pdf>
  - **Appendix 3 – Showing Hunts wards split**  
<https://democracy.peterborough.gov.uk/documents/s56856/Appendix%203%20-%20Option%20D%20showing%20Hunts%20Wards%20split.pdf>
  - **Appendix 4 – CCC Council Papers – Option A**  
<https://democracy.peterborough.gov.uk/documents/s56856/Appendix%203%20-%20Option%20D%20showing%20Hunts%20Wards%20split.pdf>
  - **Appendix 5 – Newton Report**  
<https://democracy.peterborough.gov.uk/documents/s56859/Appendix%205%20-%20Newton%20Cambridgeshire%20and%20Peterborough%20People%20Services%20Report%20FINAL.pdf>
  - **Appendix 6 – Pixel Report Fair Funding Review 2.0 – updated funding disaggregation model for LGR**  
<https://democracy.peterborough.gov.uk/documents/s56860/Appendix%206%20-%20Pixel%20-%20LGR%20disaggregation%20FFR%202020%20-%20Aug%202025%20Cambridgeshire.pdf>
  - **Appendix 7 – PWC Financial Analysis**  
<https://democracy.peterborough.gov.uk/documents/s56861/Appendix%207%20-%20PWC%20Financial%20Analysis%20Outputs%20Final-%20updated%2013.10.25pptx.pdf>
  - **Appendix 8 – A case for cities**  
<https://democracy.peterborough.gov.uk/documents/s56862/Appendix%208%20-%20A%20Case%20for%20Cities%20-%20Inner%20Circle%20Consulting%20Sept%202025.pdf>
- Peterborough City Council have also published their papers for their Council meeting to be held on 12<sup>th</sup> November; the papers for which you



can find here: [Agenda for Council on Wednesday 12th November, 2025, 4.00 pm | Peterborough City Council](#)

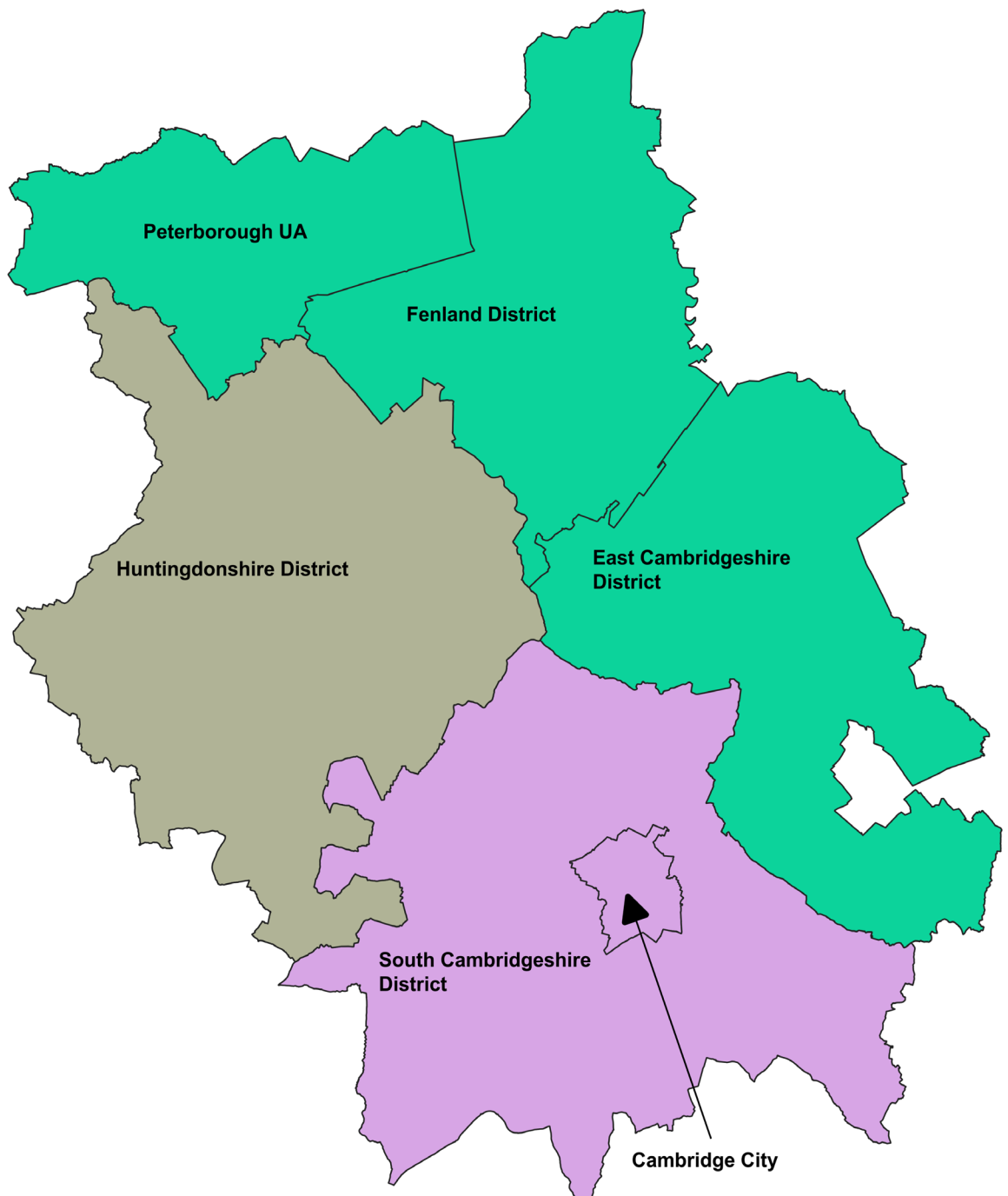
## Map of Option D



## Option E

- Option E has been developed by Huntingdonshire District Council. HDC are considering papers at their Overview and Scrutiny meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> November. You can find a link to the papers for this meeting here:
- [Agenda for Overview and Scrutiny Joint Group on Wednesday, 12 November 2025, 7:00 pm - Huntingdonshire.gov.uk](#)

## Map of Option E



## **APPENDIX 2 – JOINT DRAFT LETTER TO GOVERNMENT**

Dear Secretary of State

Since Local Government Reorganisation was announced in December 2024, all authorities in Cambridgeshire & Peterborough have been collaborating on potential proposals for unitary councils in our area. Our officers have worked closely together and used common datasets where possible. We are now pleased to attach four proposals, which are supported as follows:

Option A (supported by: XX)

Unitary 1: Fenland, Huntingdonshire, Peterborough

Unitary 2: Cambridge, East Cambridgeshire, South Cambridgeshire

Option B (supported by: XX)

Unitary 1: East Cambridgeshire, Fenland, Huntingdonshire, Peterborough

Unitary 2: Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire

Option C (supported by: XX)

Unitary 1: East Cambridgeshire, Fenland, Peterborough

Unitary 2: Cambridge, Huntingdonshire, South Cambridgeshire

Option D (supported by: XX)

Unitary 1: Peterborough and part of Huntingdonshire

Unitary 2: Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire

Unitary 3: East Cambridgeshire, Fenland, part of Huntingdonshire

We look forward to hearing from you.

Signed by 7 leaders.

### **Appendix 3 – Draft Proposal from the Leader**

"Fenland District Council recognises that there are significant inefficiencies in the current structures both of Local Government and of local delivery of public services by National Government. Reform is desirable.

However, the reorganisation process initiated by Government in December 2024 is fundamentally flawed, failing as it does to permit the scope of reform which is needed whilst, at the same time, requiring change which will be both prohibitively expensive and, in many respects, counterproductive.

Government has completely failed to understand that many local services, to be truly local in their design and delivery, need to be provided by authorities (especially in more rural areas) which need to serve smaller populations than the Government's proposed 500,000 lower limit (or 300,000 in 'exceptional circumstances').

Government also has failed in this process to recognise that many strategic services (including ones currently controlled centrally by Government) could and should be provided by authorities with at least as large a population footprint as current Upper Tier authorities.

The Government's current reorganisation process would leave local government in England in the perverse position that urban, relatively compact, councils in London and the ex-metropolitan county areas would on average serve significantly smaller populations than in more rural, non-metropolitan areas, where the problems of rurality would be exacerbated by having to serve much larger populations than most of the metropolitan councils.

Local Government re-organisation is an expensive process - for it to be justifiable to the taxpayer, it must be effected competently. The approach of Government incurs all of the costs of reform but with far too few of the potential benefits. If the current local government reform process is allowed to proceed, the whole system will rapidly fail and will need again to be reformed, incurring substantial otherwise unnecessary additional expense.

Fenland District Council therefore calls on the Government to halt the current, fundamentally flawed, local government reorganisation process and to establish a Royal Commission (as has preceded previous, more rational, local government reform exercises) to consider all possible reforms, without the artificial constraints imposed by the Government in the current process.

If Government refuses to put a halt to the current local government reform process, despite the obvious flaws it contains, then there is no good option on the table for the residents of Fenland. All options will be worse than current arrangements.

Fenland District Council is aware that Government has advised that existing Councils, if they are to have any voice at all in the boundaries of any new Unitary Authority, must express a preference for a scheme of proposed new Unitary local authorities in their area.

Having full regard to the Government's flawed criteria, Fenland District Council supports Option D as the least bad option. Option D comprises three Unitary Authorities in the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Area:

Greater Peterborough Unitary Authority: comprising Peterborough City Council and Northern Huntingdonshire District Council

Cambridgeshire Fens Unitary Authority: comprising Fenland, East Cambridgeshire and Eastern and Southern Huntingdonshire District Councils.

Greater Cambridge Unitary Authority; comprising South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridge City Council."

[full maps and boundaries to be detailed in a separate appendix, together with proposed electoral arrangements]