

County Council Annual Report 2025 – Cllr Susan van de Ven

County Council Statutory Duties

Children's and Adult Social Care, Public Health, Children's Services (including Schools, Special Educational Needs, Children and Family Centres, Education Transport) Highways, Minerals and Waste (disposal and recycling centres), Libraries.

Key themes

- Since the 2008 financial crash Government Revenue Support Grant has declined dramatically placing a greater burden on Council Tax which is capped. Over time this has resulted in the loss of numerous non-statutory services and the consolidation of others.
- Our county is characterised by some of the highest population growth in the country due to the continuing national interest in growing the Cambridge area economy and resulting requirements for planned development.
- Children's and Adult Social services account for about 75% of our overall budget and are driven by demand; often they work alongside health services in complex accounting arrangements.
- The aging population is more pronounced in Cambridgeshire than nationally.
- While most social services are based on statutory need, the council has managed to deliver small budget but effective universal prevention services.
- Infrastructure is generally old and maintenance very challenging. While significant sums have been budgeted by the council for highways maintenance, and some government grants have been made, the estimated financial requirement to bring the network into proper repair vastly outweighs what is possible.
- Library Services have been resilient; this has been strongly supported by volunteer-run community services in villages like Bassingbourn and Melbourn.
- Public service ethos is strong, and the council is fortunate to have a dedicated workforce in challenging circumstances. New apprenticeship schemes are doing well.
- This week marks the conclusion of the 2021 Administration, which has been made up by a multi-party collaboration (Liberal Democrat, Labour and Independent).

Budget headlines

- Investing £21 million into the county's 4,500 miles of road network, footpaths, multi-use paths, and drainage systems in 2025-26, with a further £20 million being invested in 2026-27.

- Investing £20 million over the next 3 years to support providers of adult social care services to pay care workers the Real Living Wage, helping to recruit and retain people to deliver these essential services.
- Investing £6.8 million in low carbon heating for schools and council buildings and £8.7 million being invested to deliver enhanced and upgraded household waste recycling centres in Milton and March.
- We have a budget gap of £34.2 million in 2025-26 which needs to be closed.
- Council tax increase of 4.99% for 2025-26. This increase will generate around £20 million in additional funding, helping to balance the books and set a legal budget, but more importantly, committing to:
 - ❖ ensuring that adult care services can continue to support and protect vulnerable adults by investing over £30 million to meet rising demand and costs and supporting the social care workforce.
 - ❖ funding almost £0.8 Billion investment in capital expenditure to build new schools, investing in care and community facilities, including libraries, and continue to deliver our ambitious net zero target.
 - ❖ provide £2.5m to maintain holiday school vouchers for those most in need.
 - ❖ sustaining home to school transport for children in education across the county by a further £4.7 million in additional funding to help meet rising demands and costs.
 - ❖ helping to provide extra capacity to support children and young people in care and children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

My Local Priorities

- Responding to individual resident queries
- Regular reports to and liaison with parish councils
- Liaison with North Herts and Herts County Councils for common concerns
- Cam Vale Bus User Group to advocate for local services
- Ivy Farm Bridge Bassingbourn-Royston A505 – work with Herts CC as bridge owner in quest to create right of way over existing agricultural bridge
- Meldreth Shepreth Foxton Community Rail Partnership to advocate for local rail services including maintaining the 16-17 yr student fare discount for all education and training Cambridgeshire rail travel; direct link to Cambridge South Station; community development opportunities
- Melbourn Greenway for enhancement of local active travel connections between Cambridge and Royston and very locally in Melbourn and Meldreth: Meldreth Station Link path, potential traffic calming measures, off-road A10 link to Royston

- A505 Study Group – considering opportunities for future safety and access along A505 between Royston-Duxford
- Anglian Water liaison

My County Council area of responsibility

- Co-Chair of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Health and Wellbeing Board/Integrated Care Partnership alongside local NHS, working collaboratively for coordinated move to localise and integrate preventive approaches to health and care.
- Vice Chair of Adults and Health Committee, overseeing Adult Social Care and NHS Scrutiny:
- County Council Partnership Governor, Cambridge University Hospitals Trust

‘Cambridge 2050’:

- Michael Gove announced a plan in July 23 for 250,000 homes in Greater Cambridge by 2040.
- In November 2023 he revised this to 150,000 homes
- Government’s ‘Case for Cambridge’ published March 2024
- The Greater Cambridge Local Plan process is for 50,000 homes by 2041
- EWR Southern route chosen – impacting Harston, Haslingfield etc
- Cambridge South Station to open Jan 2026

Local Government Reorganisation:

Government is conducting a major local government review, and it now looks virtually certain that the district and county councils will cease to exist by 2028 with their activities subsumed into a unitary authority. What the new unitary authority will look like is still being worked through by the minister of state.

Council tax in Local Government context (based on a Band D property)

Authority	Amount
Cambridgeshire County Council	£1,431.19
Cambridgeshire County Council: Adult Social Care Precept	£269.45
South Cambridgeshire District Council	£175.40
Cambridgeshire Police and Crime Commissioner	£299.43
Cambridgeshire Fire Authority	£87.21
Mayoral Combined Authority	£36