



Local Government Reorganisation

Update from Cambridgeshire County Council
Friday 19 September 2025

LGR Background

- The Government wants to reduce the number of councils and simplify the way residents can access and receive services.
- In February 2025 Government sent out a statutory invitation to all 21 two-tier areas in England asking for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) proposals for their areas by 28 November 2025.
- LGR will create new 'unitary authorities', which will provide all council services in the areas they serve, replacing the existing county, city and district councils across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough from April 2028. Town and Parish Councils are not affected.
- As part of this invitation the Government set a number of key criteria or tests, against which proposals for Local Government Reorganisation need to be developed.
- Government has set a very challenging timescale in which to achieve these changes means that we are not able to consider properly all the alternatives we may have wanted to.

Your Future Councils

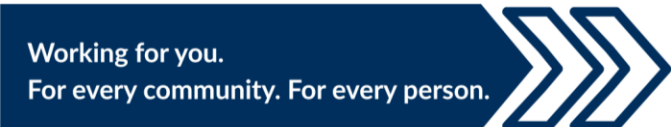
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Development of options

- Earlier this year, councils across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough worked collaboratively to identify viable options for new unitary authorities using a shared evidence base.
- There are currently three different preferred options being developed by these councils. Each option is being led by a different council.
- Cambridgeshire County Council is leading on the development of Option A. Cambridge City Council is leading the development of Option B and Huntingdonshire District Council is leading the development of Option C.
- A first phase of public engagement was held over summer which invited general feedback from residents/stakeholders about what matters most to them
- The County Council is currently leading a second phase of engagement focussed on Option A - a survey is live until Friday 3 October.

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Government's Criteria

1. The creation of a single tier of local government for the whole area concerned.
2. New unitary councils that are of the right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks.
3. New unitary councils that must prioritise the delivery of high quality and sustainable public services to citizens.
4. Plans for new unitary councils should be developed collaboratively and demonstrate how they meet local needs and are informed by local views.
5. New unitary councils must support devolution arrangements.
6. New unitary councils should enable stronger community engagement and deliver genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment.

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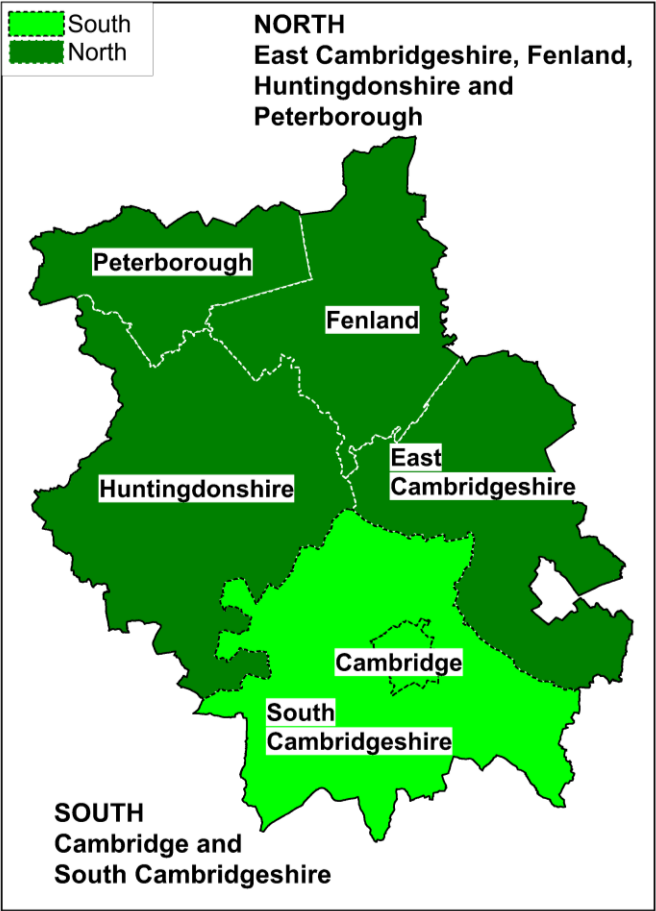
Overview of Options

Option A



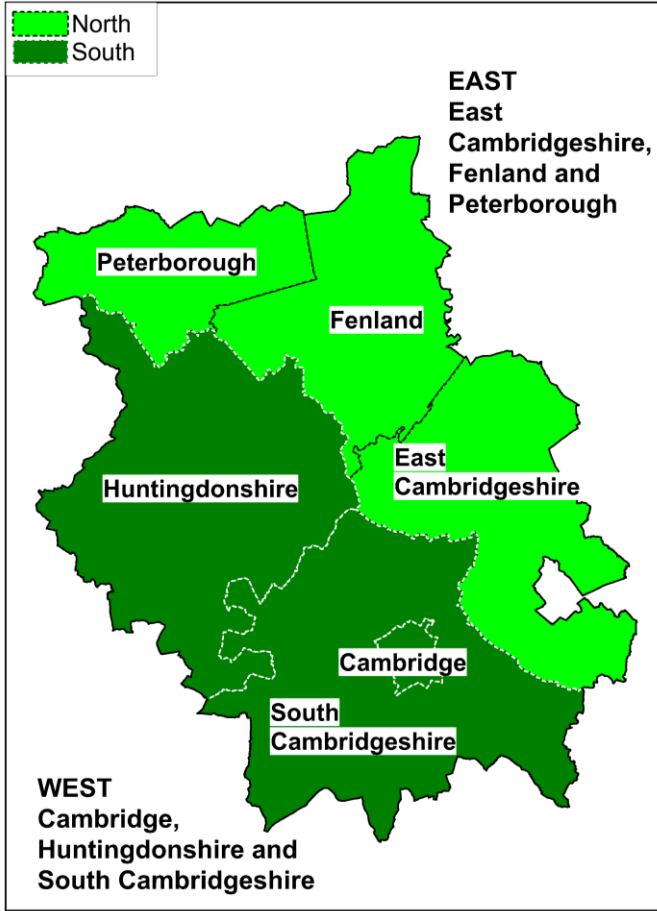
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Option B



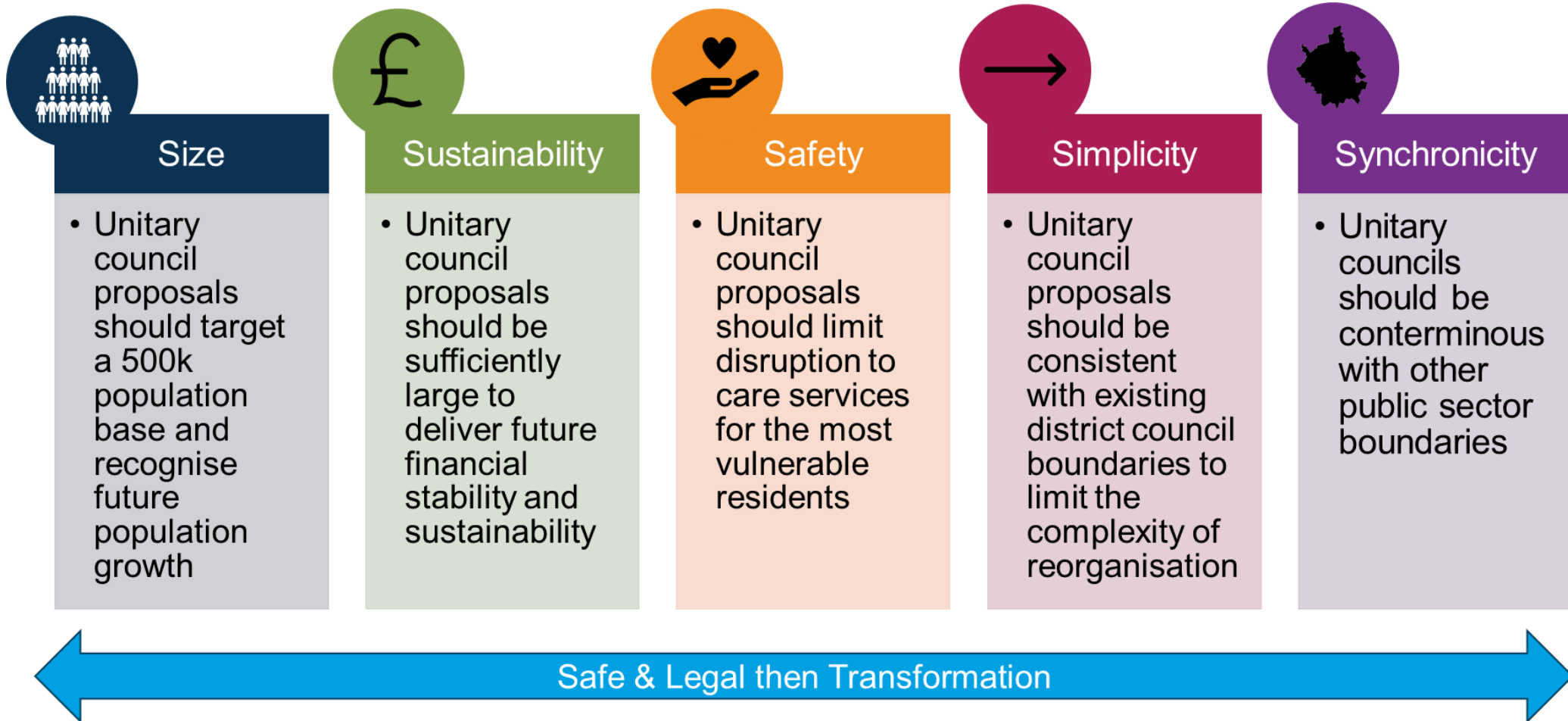
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Option C



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Cambridgeshire County Council's '5 Principles'



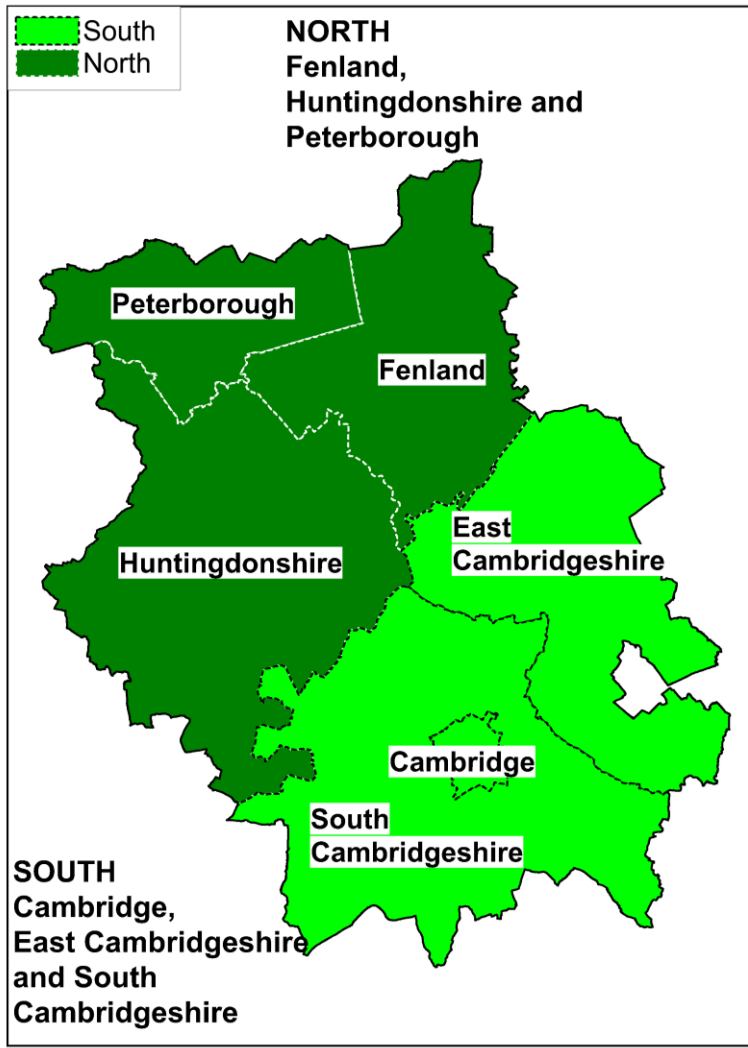
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Option A – North / South: Overview



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North – Fenland, Huntingdonshire and Peterborough.

South – Cambridge City, East Cambridgeshire and South Cambridgeshire.

➤ **More Equal**

- Most balanced land mass.
- Most balanced population and both areas over 500k by 2041.

➤ **More Empowered**

- North/South preserves the historically grounded local identities across Huntingdonshire/Peterborough and Cambridge/East Cambridgeshire.
- North/South reflects the lifestyles of residents, with a higher percentage living, working and accessing hospital services within the new unitary authority areas.

➤ **More Effective**

- The key cities of Cambridge and Peterborough would be well placed within the new authority areas to anchor effective service delivery, economic and housing growth.
- North/South provides for greater financial resilience of future councils, safeguarding important public services.
- North/South aligns to the existing NHS place-based footprints which will enable easier system-wide working with the NHS to progress the integration opportunities presented by the Long-term Plan.



Option A – North / South: Evidence Base

More Equal

Most balanced land mass.

| Option | Unitary 1 | Unitary 2 | Difference |
|----------------------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Option A North/South | 47% | 53% | 6% |
| Option B Horseshoe | 72.2% | 27.8% | 44.3% |
| Option C East/West | 45.4% | 54.6% | 9.2% |

Most balanced population and both areas over 500k by 2041

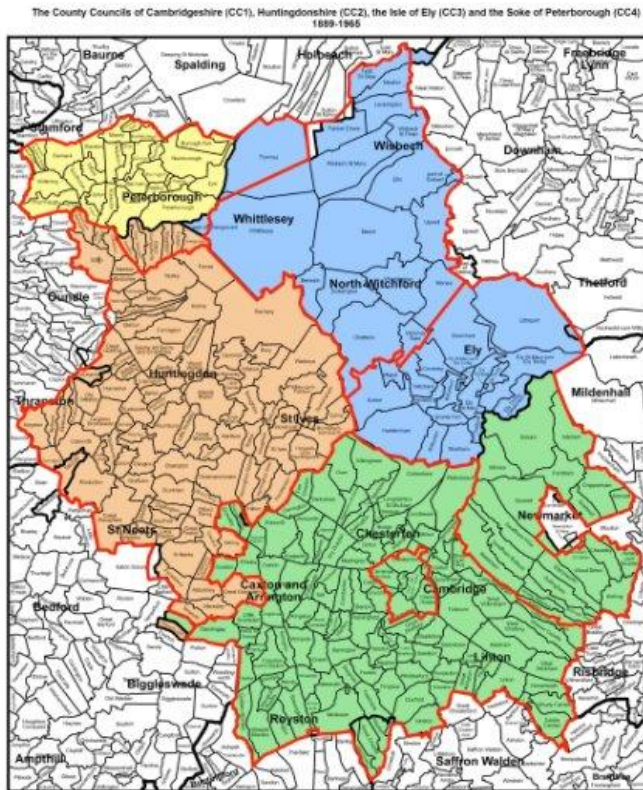
| Proposal A | 2025 | 2041 |
|-------------------|---------|---------|
| North Unitary | 520,140 | 581,110 |
| North Unitary (%) | 55.3% | 53.4% |
| South Unitary | 420,100 | 507,680 |
| South Unitary (%) | 44.7% | 46.6% |

| Option | 2025 Difference in population | 2041 Difference in population |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Option A North/South | 10.6% | 6.8% |
| Option B Horseshoe | 30.6% | 26.2% |
| Option C East/West | 9.8% | 12.8% |

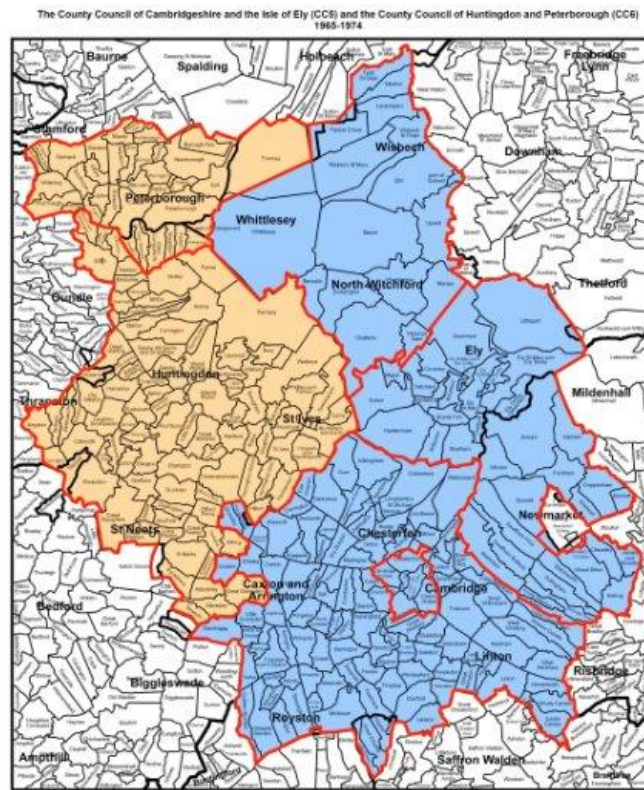
Option A – North / South: Evidence Base

More Empowered

North/South preserves the historically grounded local identity between Huntingdonshire/Peterborough and Cambridge/East Cambridgeshire.



1889-1965



1965-1974

- From 1889-1974 at least parts of East Cambridgeshire have consistently been under the same authority as Cambridge City.
- From 1965-74 Huntingdonshire and Peterborough were under same authority and Cambridge and East Cambridgeshire were under the same authority.

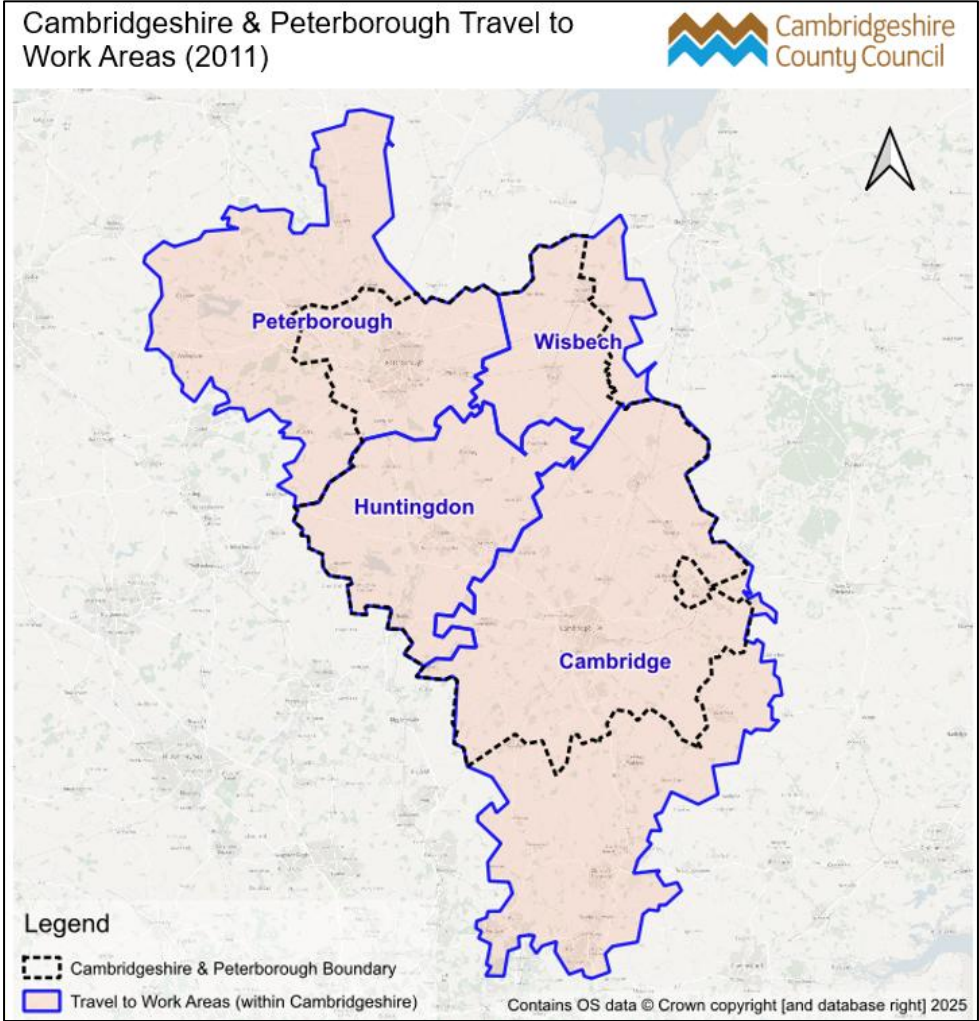
Option A – North / South: Evidence Base

More Empowered

North/South reflects the lifestyles of residents, with a higher percentage living and working within the new unitary authority areas.

Home

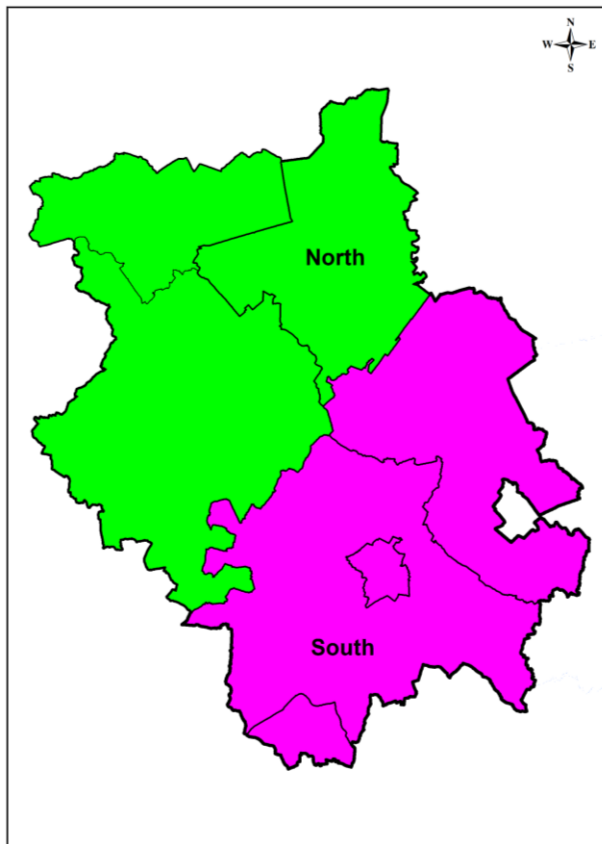
| A: North / South | | Workplace | |
|------------------|-------|-----------|---------------|
| | North | South | Outside Cambs |
| North | 77% | 8% | 15% |
| South | 5% | 81% | 15% |
| Outside Cambs | 51% | 49% | |
| B: Horseshoe | | | |
| | North | South | Outside Cambs |
| North | 75% | 10% | 15% |
| South | 7% | 80% | 13% |
| Outside Cambs | 60% | 40% | |
| C: East / West | | | |
| | East | West | Outside Cambs |
| East | 71% | 14% | 15% |
| West | 6% | 79% | 14% |
| Outside Cambs | 46% | 54% | |



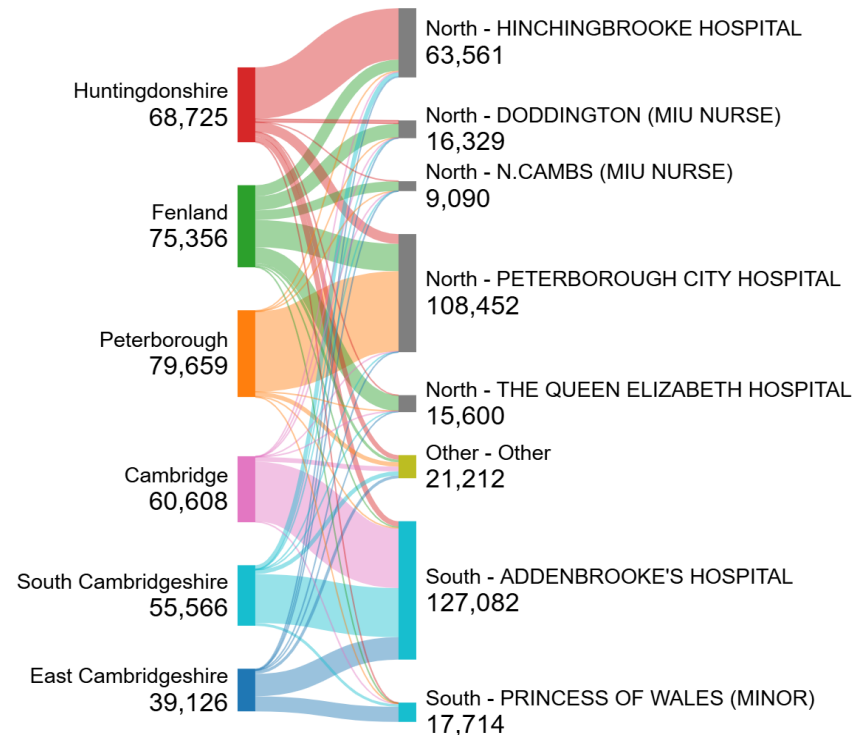
Option A – North / South: Evidence Base

More Effective

North/South aligns to the existing Integrated Care Board footprints which will enable system-wide working on already established boundaries to be more effective sooner.



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- Hospital discharge flows align well to North (Peterborough and Hinchingsbrooke) and South (Addenbrookes) supporting effective service delivery and partnership working within new authorities.
- Other services, such as SEND will be supported by strong links to the ICB and opportunities to redesign services around smaller geographics such as Integrated Neighbourhoods as per the Government's 10 Year Plan for health.

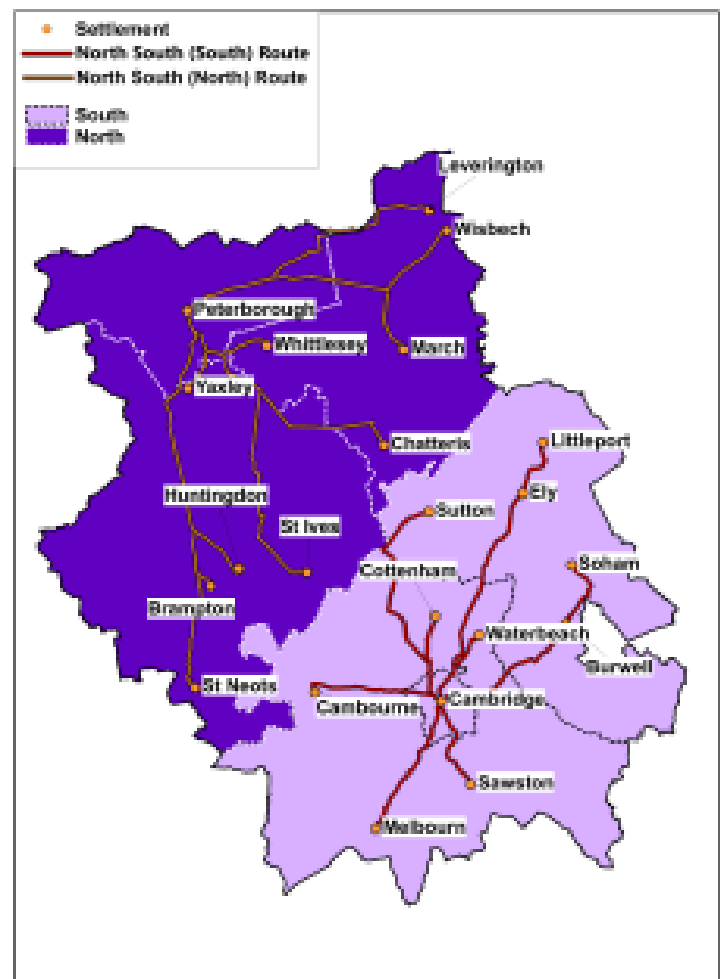
Integrated Care System Boundaries (as of July 2022)

[Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Integrated Care System | CPICS Website](https://www.cpics.nhs.uk/)

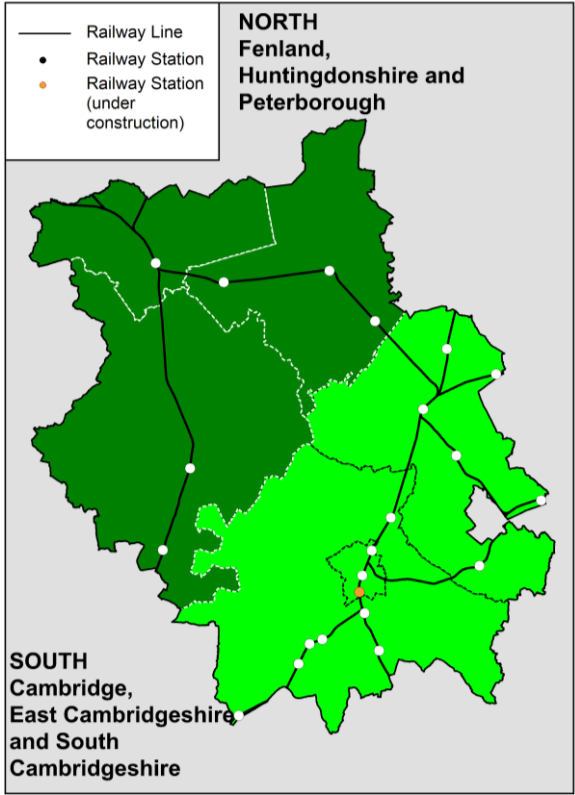
Option A – North / South: Evidence Base

More Effective

Cambridge and Peterborough would be well placed within the new authority areas to anchor effective service delivery.



| Option | Unitary Area | Average Distance (miles) to 'Anchor City' |
|--------|--------------|---|
| A | North | 17.01 |
| A | South | 11.14 |
| B | North | 23.28 |
| B | South | 12.68 |
| C | East | 23.88 |
| C | West | 6.69 |



Railways lines with stations

Cambridge for the South and Peterborough for the North are well placed geographically and provide good connectivity through public transport and road networks to enable efficient service delivery.

Option A – North / South: Evidence Base

Finances

| | | Council Tax Total Income (£000) | Business Rates Total Income (£000) | Debt per head £ | Net assets per head £ | Children's Social Care Spend (£000) | Environmental and Planning Spend (£000) |
|----------|-------------------|---------------------------------------|---|--------------------|--------------------------|---|---|
| Option A | North | 342,353 | 327,918 | 1,418 | 6,329 | 116,298 | 60,155 |
| | South | 327,238 | 310,607 | 2,305 | 8,159 | 49,324 | 74,512 |
| Option B | Horseshoe | 414,374 | 397,253 | 1,626 | 8,571 | 128,224 | 78,834 |
| | Greater Cambridge | 255,217 | 241,272 | 2,331 | 5,917 | 37,398 | 55,833 |
| Option C | East | 264,591 | 255,753 | 1,807 | 6,462 | 101,459 | 52,994 |
| | West | 405,000 | 382,772 | 1,916 | 8,027 | 64,163 | 81,583 |

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Option A – North / South: Evidence Base

More Effective

Finances

- **Local income levels** – Option A provides the best balance/ratio for council tax receipts and business rates total income
- **Tax harmonisation:** Average initial council tax bills have a good alignment within the two new authorities in Option A
- **Diversified income and relative need** – taking a long-term view of changeable fiscal climates, Option A offers diversification of income
- **Financial scale** – smaller authorities can face reduced buying power and lesser economies of scale; Option A creates authorities of appropriate financial size and diversity.
- **Investment potential** – population and economic growth requires public investment. Option A provides two authorities with sufficient size tax base as well as balanced debt and asset distribution

| Expected Council Tax Amount Band D in 2026-27 | |
|---|--------|
| Cambridge ¹ | £2,029 |
| South Cambridgeshire | £1,970 |
| East Cambridgeshire | £1,935 |
| Huntingdonshire | £1,960 |
| Fenland | £2,053 |
| Peterborough | £1,837 |

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Public Engagement – Phase 1

- 3,174 total responses across a four-week period (19 June to 20 July 2025).
- Broad geographic representation across all seven authorities.
- Public support for structural change is overwhelmingly positive (net +77) but support for change is conditional on service improvements.
- Concern about areas being overlooked, with this most apparent in rural districts like East Cambridgeshire and Fenland (81% concern)
- Public preference centres on unitary councils serving 400-500,000 residents with 500,000 being the most selected single option
- Top three priorities for future:
 1. Investing in council services (education, social housing, roads, waste)
 2. Improving response capabilities (speed and effectiveness)
 3. Ensuring councillor local area knowledge

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Phase 2 Engagement – Closing 3rd October

- Web hub for engagement be created on Your Voice - Cambridgeshire County Council - Citizen Space
- Benefits of Option A
- Survey on Option A
- FAQs about LGR

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| Criteria | Option A |
|---|--|
| The creation of a single tier of local government for the whole area concerned | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Option A abolishes all existing unitary, district/city and county councils and replaces them with two new unitary councils that reflect functional economic geographies and will support growth. Option A uses existing district boundaries as its building blocks and does not unduly advantage or disadvantage any one part of the region and is supported by a robust evidence base. |
| New unitary councils that are of the right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Option A creates two new unitary councils that will serve populations of 420,000 and 520,000 residents respectively, reflecting the Government's population guidance as closely as possible, and accounts for future population growth. Option A creates councils with population sizes that will secure economies of scale in service delivery, providing both Value for Money and financial resilience. |
| New unitary councils that must prioritise the delivery of high quality and sustainable public services to citizens | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Option A is underpinned by a vision for new unitary councils that will ensure a safe and legal transition to new arrangements. The integration of county and district services within each new unitary council will create opportunities to enhance the effectiveness of service delivery, for example bringing Adult Social Care and housing together, whilst our ambitious transformation agenda will drive cross-organisational benefits through a new operating model. |

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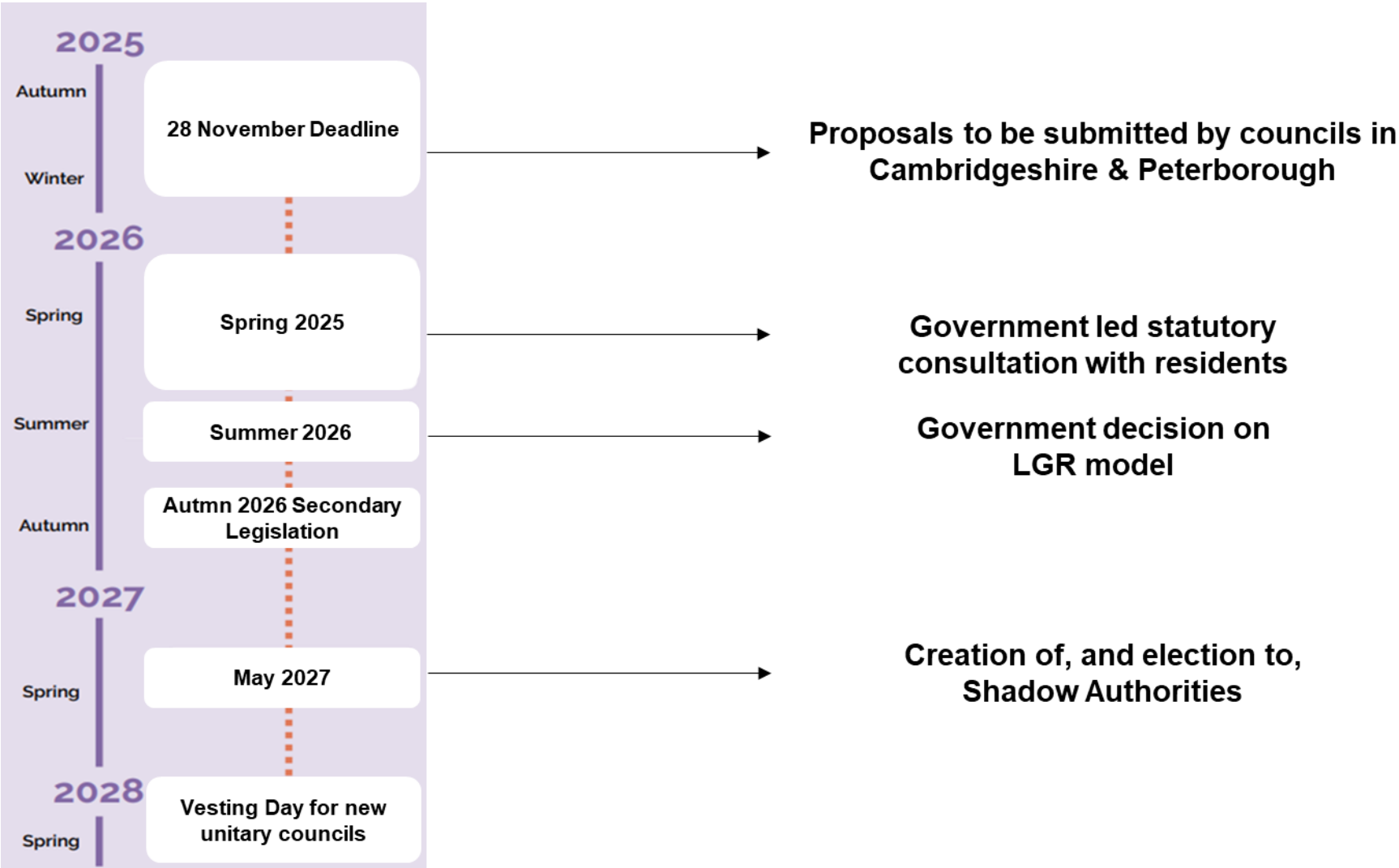
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| Criteria | Option A |
|---|---|
| Plans for new unitary councils should be developed collaboratively and demonstrate how they meet local needs and are informed by local views | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councils across Cambridgeshire have worked collaboratively to develop a shared evidence base to support proposals for LGR. • Two phases of resident and stakeholder engagement have provided a wide and deep understanding of local peoples views on our LGR proposals and their priorities for the future. This has added to the significant amount of pre-existing resident insight generated through Cambridgeshire’s annual Quality of Life Survey |
| New unitary councils must support devolution arrangements: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cambridgeshire and Peterborough already benefits from a devolution agreement with a directly elected Mayor leading our combined authority. • Option A will support the combined authority to achieve ‘Established Mayoral Strategic Authority’ status and access a range of additional devolution benefits. Two unitary councils of more equal size will provide for balanced parity of representation the combined authority board. |
| New unitary councils should enabler stronger community engagement and deliver genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Option A puts communities and neighbourhoods at its heart. Two new unitary councils for the North and South of our region are grounded in its places historic identities and reflect the daily routines of residents, such as travel to work patterns. • Option A is respectful of the regions parish and town councils, and our target operating model recommends delivering more council services closer to communities. The creation of new Area Based/Neighbourhood Area Committees will give residents greater say over what happens where they live and complement the role of locally elected councillors who will be more accountable to residents with responsibility for the full range of local government services |

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Key milestones



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Phase 2 Engagement - Web Hub and Survey

- Web hub for engagement be created on Your Voice - Cambridgeshire County Council - Citizen Space
- Benefits of Option A
- Survey
- FAQs about LGR

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