

MEMBERS' NEWSLETTER



UPDATE FROM THE MAYOR PAUL BRISTOW

2026 is off to a strong start, with progress on projects across Peterborough and Cambridgeshire that will get growth moving.

In January, the Combined Authority Board approved our Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan, which lays a strong foundation for how we're going to deliver our priorities over the next year.

Within that budget was the Mayoral Precept. When I campaigned to be Mayor, I promised in my manifesto that I wouldn't increase the precept for council tax-payers at a time when households are battling high costs of living. As well as freezing the precept, I also secured approval for funding on free parking as part of my plan to revitalise our high streets. I will continue to work with partners to move free parking forward.

We also saw a fresh milestone for a new bus depot

in Peterborough, with funding approved the next stages of the project, including securing a site and developing a full business case. A new depot is much needed. It will enable better services, increase capacity for more buses and support a future franchising network.

Funding was also approved for a new digital strategy, which is being delivered in partnership with Connecting Cambridgeshire. This will improve broadband speeds and 4G and 5G connection across the region, creating more opportunities for work, education and business.

February marks the start of Mayor's Day Out, moving full steam ahead with my initiative that is designed to take learning beyond the classroom. Working with Cambridgeshire County Council, I want to create new opportunities for children to visit some of our region's cultural and natural attractions, while relieving some of the financial pressures on schools.

We've already gathered great momentum to get our region moving and I am determined that this continues throughout 2026.



UPDATE FROM THE CEO ROB BRIDGE

February has been a productive and busy month for the Combined Authority, with important progress made in how we work with partners, plan for the future and deliver on our ambitions.

At the Combined Authority Board last week, the mayor presented his Budget proposals for 2026/27. This included a proposal to maintain the Mayoral General Precept at its current level, which was approved. The Board also approved our draft Business Plan and Budget for 2026/27, and Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and Capital Programme for 2029/30. Together, this sets out where the Combined Authority plans to invest its funding, and all of the key projects we will be working on in the next year, aligned with the ambitions of both the Local Growth Plan and the new Corporate Plan.

meeting with Homes England earlier in the month, where we received updates on projects being supported through our Homes England funding allocation. These projects are important components of the Local Growth Plan and are helping to unlock opportunities for housing, regeneration and infrastructure in priority locations across the region.

Alongside this, we recently held the first Mayor's Question Time of this Mayoral term. Held in Peterborough, the event gave residents and the media the opportunity to put questions directly to the Mayor, through both pre-submitted questions and an open floor discussion. A wide range of issues were raised, prompting a constructive and open discussion. We are now planning a series of Mayor's Question Times to be held quarterly across the region.

All of these developments provide a strong foundation for the work the Combined Authority is doing. We will continue to build on this, working with partners to deliver meaningful outcomes for communities across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

We had our latest Strategic Place Partnership

MAYOR'S BUDGET APPROVED, BACKING FREE PARKING, LOCAL GROWTH AND VALUE FOR MONEY

Paul Bristow has secured approval from the Combined Authority Board for his 2026/27 budget, setting out how the Combined Authority will focus its resources on supporting local growth, delivering on key priorities and ensuring value for money.

As pledged when he was elected, the Mayoral Precept, which forms part of council tax bills, will remain at £36 per year for a Band D household.

His budget includes £1.5m million over two years to support bringing in free parking schemes in Peterborough city centre and Huntingdonshire, working in partnership with Peterborough City Council and Huntingdonshire District Council. The proposed two-year trial will test how free parking can increase footfall, support high streets and help local businesses compete with out-of-town and online retail and leisure. Scheme details will be developed and subject to further agreement, including approval of detailed business cases.

The budget also confirms continued funding for the Mayor's Day Out scheme. The approved funding will allow the scheme to continue until March 2030.

Alongside the Mayor's Budget, the Board approved the Combined Authority's Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan, setting out a balanced and affordable funding plan aligned with the Corporate Plan. This supports continued investment in transport, infrastructure, skills, homes and business growth, backing the Mayor's ambition to triple the region's economy by 2050, as set out in the Local Growth Plan.

MORE THAN 4,000 YOUNG PEOPLE SET TO BENEFIT FROM MAYOR'S DAY OUT



The Mayor's Day Out initiative has begun its 2026 programme, with Paul Bristow due to join pupils from Hardwick and Cambourne Primary School on their visit to the Museum of Zoology in Cambridge.

The scheme is designed to remove financial barriers that prevent schools from accessing cultural and natural attractions, while inspiring young people to explore places they may not otherwise visit.

Backed by £100,000 from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, Mayor's Day Out will support 158 school trips, giving more than 4,000 pupils the chance to learn through real-world experiences across the region.

Participating venues will receive digital badges as part of the Region of Learning initiative, encouraging families and residents to visit and learn more about the area's history, heritage and landscape. Young people will also be able to earn their own digital badge to mark their participation in the Mayor's Day Out programme.

Mayor's Day Out also supports the wider ambition to boost the local visitor economy by encouraging families to champion attractions on their doorstep.

REGENERATION AND GROWTH HOT TOPICS AT MAYOR'S FIRST QUESTION TIME IN PETERBOROUGH

Making Peterborough a better place to live and work were among key questions put to Paul Bristow at his first Mayor's Question Time event held on January 14 at St John's Church in Peterborough city centre.

Chaired by local broadcaster Kev Lawrence, the event gave members of the public the opportunity to question the Mayor directly and hear more about his priorities for the city and wider region.

A strong theme throughout the evening was revitalising the city, with residents keen to see faster progress on regeneration and investment to help Peterborough thrive.

Transport and opportunity for young people were also key themes at the Question Time, with the Mayor highlighting progress with funding for a new bus depot, protecting bus services between Peterborough, March and Ramsey, and the launch of the Youth Hub at Peterborough United, with funding from the Combined Authority's Youth Trailblazer scheme.

To listen to the Question Time, go to, Part 1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8fFrtepu1i4>
Part 2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nSeev9-porU>



BOARD AGREES ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMME TO HELP SHAPE A STRONGER, MORE SUSTAINABLE BUS NETWORK

The Combined Authority Board has agreed to begin a programme of resident engagement to help shape the future of supported bus services and build a stronger, more sustainable bus network across the region.

The decision follows the application of the Contracted Bus Services Review Framework, agreed in November, which provides a consistent and transparent way to assess performance and ensure public funding delivers the greatest benefit. The Combined Authority currently spends around £15.5 million each year supporting non-commercial bus services. With rising costs and finite budgets, the framework helps ensure services remain affordable while protecting access to jobs, education, healthcare and town centres.

Resident engagement will cover around 35 services and focus on what matters most to communities, how services work together as a network, trade-offs around frequency, coverage and reliability, and alternative delivery models such as Tiger on Demand. Feedback will inform future route designs and timetables.

Alongside this, the Board agreed to withdraw two services with very low use: 13B (Nosterfield End to Linton) and 19A (Cambridge to Landbeach), the latter duplicating the number 100 service. Changes will be introduced with notice and targeted passenger communications.

Resident engagement on proposed service and area-based changes is expected to commence in Spring 2026. Following engagement, more detailed proposals will be developed and brought back to Transport Committee and the Combined Authority Board for consideration later in the year. Any further changes to the bus network would be subject to Board approval.



Residents across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough are being encouraged to share their views on how the region moves by taking part in our **Micromobility Strategy Engagement Survey**, which runs until Wednesday 4 March.

If you would like any materials to help encourage residents to have their say, please contact us at comms@cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk

NEW WAVE OF APPRENTICESHIPS AND INTERNSHIPS TO LAUNCH CAREERS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE



A major drive to get young people into high-quality careers has been launched today by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, opening up new pathways for 16–21-year-olds to enter the workforce.

As part of its status as a national ‘Youth Guarantee Trailblazer’, the Combined Authority is expanding its skills offer to create more opportunities than ever before. The initiative focuses on two key routes into work: increasing the number of apprenticeships and launching fully funded internships to help young people take that first vital step on the career ladder.

To ensure young people in the region have access to the best possible start, the Combined Authority has strengthened the support available to create these roles:

- **Zero-Cost Internships:** For the first time, 18–21-year-olds can access fully funded 6-week internships. This removes the cost barrier for employers, creating more short-term placements for young people to gain experience and prove their potential.
- **More Apprenticeships:** To generate more apprenticeship vacancies for 16–18-year-olds, the local support grant has been doubled to £4,000. This funding is designed to encourage more local employers to create training roles, giving school leavers a direct route into skilled employment.

The expanded programme comes at a crucial time. While the region is growing, too many young people are still struggling to find their footing in the job market.

Current figures show that 3.9% of 16–17-year-olds in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough are Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET), with that figure rising to 5.4% in Peterborough. By increasing the number of paid internships and apprenticeships, the Combined Authority aims to reverse this trend and offer a clear alternative to unemployment.

To deliver these opportunities, the Combined Authority is offering significant financial support to local businesses. Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) can now access up to £5,000 in total cash support when hiring a young apprentice (combining local and national grants) or take on an intern at zero wage cost for six weeks.



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& PETERBOROUGH**
COMBINED AUTHORITY

PAUL BRISTOW MAYOR
OF CAMBRIDGESHIRE
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UPCOMING EVENTS

Here are our upcoming meetings. You can view the full calendar [on our website here](#).



16 FEBRUARY

Staffing Committee
1:00pm

5 MARCH

Audit and Governance Committee
10:00am

2 MARCH

Funding Committee
10:00am

9 MARCH

Skills Committee
10:00am

3 MARCH

Overview and Scrutiny Committee
10:00am

11 MARCH

Growth Committee
10:00am

4 MARCH

Transport Committee
10:00am

18 MARCH

Combined Authority Board
10:00am



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LATEST NEWS

Here are a few of our latest news stories. You can view all of them [on our website here](#).



LOCAL NATURE RECOVERY STRATEGY PUBLISHED AND DELIVERY PLAN SET FOR THIS SUMMER

The Combined Authority has published the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, which is a bold plan to revive and protect nature across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. The strategy and all supporting documents are available to view online [here](#).



MAYOR VISITS CAMBRIDGE REGIONAL COLLEGE HUNTINGDON TO EXPLORE SKILLS AND GROWTH INITIATIVES

Cambridge Regional College (CRC) welcomed the Mayor Paul Bristow and Rob Bridge, to its Huntingdon campus to showcase the college's work in supporting skills development and regional growth.



PLAN TO BOOST BROADBAND SPEEDS AND MOBILE COVERAGE GETS BACKING

The Combined Authority Board approved funding for a digital strategy to bring faster broadband and better mobile coverage across the region. Building on the success of the existing programme, the strategy will continue to ensure the region has the digital connectivity infrastructure needed.



LOCAL LEADERS UNITE BEHIND PLAN FOR PETERBOROUGH'S CITY CENTRE

Paul Bristow, Andrew Pakes and Dr Shabina Qayyum have written a joint letter* to Matthew Pennycook MP, Minister of State for Housing and Planning. They have set out a united case for action to transform the City Centre and unlock the city's next phase of growth.