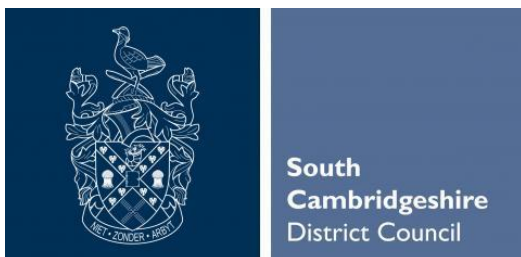


The Future of Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire Councils – Engagement Report



Background and response rate

South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) and Cambridge City Council (CCC) ran a joint engagement activity between Monday 15 September and Sunday 12 October. The purpose of this engagement was to understand public opinion on a future unitary authority based on the current collective boundaries of SCDC and CCC, to help inform the councils' joint approach to Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). The responses to this engagement, along with the feedback received from two in-person events hosted by the councils, will help inform the business case submitted to central government on the future of the area.

The survey, which utilised exactly the same questions, was hosted across both SCDC's and CCC's engagement platforms. As such, the responses to this engagement can be broken down into individuals who responded to SCDC's survey and individuals who responded to CCC's survey. Overall, the engagement received 889 responses, with 653 individuals responding to the survey hosted on the CCC platform and 236 individuals responding to the survey hosted on the SCDC platform. The full breakdown can be found in Table 1.

Table 1. Breakdown of the responses to the question 'Who are you responding as?' across both engagement platforms

Category	SCDC	CCC	Total
Resident	219	614	833
Parish or Town Council	9	2	11
Business	1	4	5
Community Group	0	4	4
Other	7	29	36
Total	236	653	889

Opinion on a future Unitary on existing borders

The engagement asked the question "How strongly do you agree that a future unitary that is created based on the current boundaries of Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District council, is best for you and your community?". Overall, 612 (69%) respondents indicated that they Agreed or Strongly Agreed with the above statement compared to 217 (24%) respondents who Disagreed or Strongly Disagreed. The remaining 60 (7%) of respondents indicated they had No Opinion. A full breakdown can be found in Table 2 (please note, because of rounding, the percentages within the SCDC column do not add up to 100%).



Table 2. Breakdown of responses to the question “How strongly do you agree that a future unitary that is created based on the current boundaries of Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District council, is best for you and your community?” across both engagement platforms.

Category	SCDC	CCC	Total
Strongly Agree	87 (37%)	275 (42%)	362 (41%)
Agree	66 (28%)	184 (28%)	250 (28%)
No Opinion	16 (7%)	44 (7%)	60 (7%)
Disagree	23 (10%)	78 (12%)	101 (11%)
Strongly Disagree	44 (19%)	72 (11%)	116 (13%)
Total	236	653	889

Further comments

The engagement also asked the question “Do you have any further comments about Local Government Reorganisation including a new unitary authority based on the current boundaries of Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire?”.

Many respondents did not give an opinion, responding with answers to the effect of “no” or “n/a”.

General Themes

Across both platforms, there were several themes identified:

- **Support for a future authority** – one of the main themes was support for a new unitary which combines Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire, with respondents pointing to the existing shared service provision, the already blurred district boundaries, and focus on growth in the area.
- **Rural vs urban priorities** - another main theme was the competing influence of urban and rural priorities, with concern being raised that either rural or urban priorities would win out over the other.
- It should be noted that the two above themes were not always mutually exclusive and some respondents included both within their answers.
- **Opposition to LGR** - some respondents expressed opposition to the concept of LGR, expressing concerns about democratic representation, that the reorganisation would not yield benefits, and that it would be too costly to achieve. However, other respondents were more optimistic around the potential to bring down costs, reduce duplication, and make services easier to access.

- **Other configurations** - some respondents also suggested that a future unitary should include other existing districts, with mentions of both East Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire.

SCDC specific themes

Individuals who responded to the survey on the SCDC engagement platform were more likely than those who responded to CCC's survey to express concerns about the conflict between urban and rural priorities, believing that the needs of urban areas would be prioritised in the proposed unitary. Respondents were also more likely to suggest that other existing districts should be included within a future unitary than those who responded to CCC's survey.

CCC specific themes

Individuals who responded to the survey hosted on the CCC engagement platform were more likely than those who responded to SCDC's survey to express support for a unitary which focuses on the city, without including the surrounding rural areas. Additionally, respondents were more likely to mention the potential benefits to highway and transport provision than those who responded to SCDC's survey.

Naming a future council

The final question in the survey also asked respondents to "Suggest a name for any future unitary that is created based on the current boundaries of Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council".

The most common response across both consultation platforms was a variation on "Greater Cambridge" or "Greater Cambridge Council". Other responses utilised the existing council names, suggesting either "Cambridge Council", "South Cambridgeshire Council", or a variation on "Cambridge City and South Council".