

Cllr Lorna Dupré

MONTHLY REPORT MAY 2024

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

Preparing for adulthood

Young adults across Cambridgeshire with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), have helped design an event called Preparing for Adulthood, for 14 to 25-year-olds with SEND, as well as professionals, parents, and carers.

The event will be an annual one, providing information and resources to empower young adults with SEND and their families and carers. Highlights include information sessions on job coaching advice, mental health and wellbeing, networking opportunities, and accessible information, as well as a range of fun activities.

Communities, Social Mobility & Inclusion (COSMIC)

Domestic abuse survivors with learning disabilities

A campaign has been launched to find carers for people with learning disabilities who have experienced domestic abuse.

The initiative—the first of its kind in the country—is a joint scheme between Cambridgeshire Shared Lives and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Partnership. Its aim is to recruit Shared Lives Domestic Abuse Carers who will be self-employed with the scheme paying their fees. Carers can offer support just for a few hours in the daytime, for an overnight stay, or for an extended break.

sharedlivesplus.org.uk/scheme/cambridgeshire-shared-lives-scheme/

ENVIRONMENT & GREEN INVESTMENT

Flooding

The County Council is still working through the large number of flooding incidents following a very wet winter and a series of storms. These include

- Seeking further information about the balancing pond and drainage on Phase 1 of the Vistry site at the top of Mepal Road Sutton and flooding in Tower Road, The Orchards and St Andrew's Close.
- Further investigation of drainage in Mepal, with cleansing, jetting and tracing along High Street, New Road, School Lane and Bridge Road.
- Liaising with developers over watercourses at Manor Close Witchford.
- Reviewing highways and surface water drainage at Witcham Toll.

Regional Flood & Coastal Committee

I attended a meeting of the Anglian (Great Ouse) Regional Flood & Coastal Committee in late April. Unusually a number of residents were present, for an item on the agenda scheduled for just ten minutes—dilapidation of sluices at St Ives and Brownhill Staunch, where some of the gates have had to be left stuck in the down position, affecting water levels. Government funding for maintenance isn't anywhere near enough—we were told that the Environment Agency received one-tenth of the funding they asked for from the Government.

Community energy ...

On Wednesday 24 April I introduced a stakeholder workshop at The Maltings in Ely exploring how the County Council can support communities to benefit from the transition to clean energy. The council intends to develop an action plan which will cover community energy, domestic retrofits, engaging with strategic plans, and testing place-based investment models for net zero, with consultation in the summer and adoption of the plan in the autumn.

... greener together

Meanwhile a *Greener Together* event in Burwell on Wednesday 15 May is showcasing local community-led green initiatives, with discussion groups on community energy plans, repair cafés, lessons from retrofitting Gardiner Hall Burwell, biodiversity net gain, and 'top 20 actions for East Cambridgeshire'.

Vape recycling

Vape recycling has been introduced at all of the council's Household Recycling Centres. The new bins offer a safe, environmentally friendly way for residents to dispose of single use and reusable vapes. These are taken to a facility where materials are separated and cleaned before being sent for recycling.

Anything containing batteries, including vapes, should never be placed in waste or recycling bins at home. Disposable vapes contain lithium-ion batteries which can catch fire if damaged. Three million vapes are currently thrown away each week across the UK, and research shows that electrical items including vapes disposed of in the wrong bin cause more than six hundred fires every year in refuse collection vehicles and at waste sites.

HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORT

Peat roads £5M programme under way

In February this year, the County Council's joint administration voted to invest £43 million in repairs to Cambridgeshire's roads in the next two years—the biggest investment in over a decade. This includes £5 million specifically to deal with the worst of our 'soil affected roads'—peat based roads which are deteriorating much more quickly than they used to.

Several weeks ago work started to recycle and stabilise sections of the A1101 Bates's Drove between Littleport and Welney. In the coming twelve months another nine locations will also be treated, including stretches of Hill Row Causeway in Haddenham, Twenty Pence Road in Wilburton, and the road from Earith to Willingham.

In the longer term, however, the County Council will need around £300 million to fully solve these problem roads—which means national investment and support from Cambridgeshire's MPs to get it.

Gulleys found!

The joint administration of the County Council continues to turn round the highways failures of the previous incumbents. A report to the council's Highways & Transport Committee on 30 April said, "through regular review of the road network, there [have] been a further 1,855 gulleys added to the programme which had not been previously plotted on the system".

Local highways improvements

I took part in the Local Highways Improvement panel for East Cambridgeshire last month, which considered the nine 'complex' highways improvement applications from local parish councils and community groups in the district. Just one of these was from the Sutton division—a weight limit application from Sutton Parish Council.

'Non-complex' applications are being scored by council officers. The results will be received by the Local Highways Improvement working group, and successful bids recommended to the council's Highways & Transport Committee on 2 July.

PLANNING (including consents)

Sunnica solar farm

The statutory deadline for the Secretary of State to decide the application for this huge solar farm stretching from Red Lodge to Burwell was moved on yet again, this time from Thursday 11 April to Thursday 20 June.

Meanwhile on the Combined Authority

The Combined Authority Board has awarded a contract to AtoB to fill some of the gaps left in the No9 bus service from Littleport via Ely and Stretham to Cambridge, following the cutbacks by Stagecoach. This has increased the number of journeys from the three Stagecoach decided to leave in place, but still means gaps of three hours in the morning and evening peak hours which is not much use for people seeking to get to and from work.

MEET YOUR COUNCILLORS

- **Coveney:** I hope to be at the coffee morning in the village hall on Wednesday 15 May from 10:30 to 11:30AM.
- **Little Downham:** I hope to be at the Book Café in the Village Hall on Friday 31 May from 10:00 to 11:00AM.
- **Sutton:** Cllr Mark Inskip and I will be in the school Community Room on Monday 13 May and Monday 3 June 6:30-7:30PM. I also hope to be at the Sutton Timebank coffee morning on Tuesday 28 May 10:00-11:00 and Nellie's on Wednesday 8 May 12:30-1:30PM.
- **Witchford:** unfortunately I will be unable to attend the coffee morning in St Andrew's Hall this month due to other commitments.

I can also be contacted

- by email at lorna@lornadupre.org.uk
- on Facebook
- by phone on 07930 337596

Cllr Lorna Dupré

County Councillor for the Sutton division