

# Cllr Lorna Dupré

## MONTHLY REPORT APRIL 2025

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### LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION

Council leaders across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough have sent a letter to the Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution setting out progress on plans to move towards a new system of local government.

The letter, signed by the Leaders of Cambridgeshire, Peterborough, Huntingdonshire, East Cambridgeshire, Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire, is in response to the invitation from Government for councils to work together to develop a proposal for local government reorganisation. They have also issued the following joint statement.

“We are approaching local government reorganisation with an open mind and a spirit of wanting the best for all our residents and for the local area as a whole. Not all of us would have chosen this path, but we accept that it is the path we are on and realise it is important that we collaborate to control our own destiny.

“In recent weeks, we have been working closely together to understand the differing perspectives of each authority and to consider the various unitary scenarios.

“Further work will take place, at pace, after the county council and mayoral elections to reach a shared understanding of how best to progress our proposals. The scenarios we are considering will take account of historic community identities, the interests of residents, economic geographies, and local demographic representation.

“We look forward to further discussions with each other and with government, and when the time is right, with residents, Members of Parliament and our partners including the police, NHS, fire service and town and parish councils. We will continue to work together to achieve the best outcome possible for our residents and every community, village, town and city in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.”

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### ADULTS & HEALTH

#### Community Navigators service renewed

The renewal of a service which helps residents remain independent and stay living in their own communities has been approved by Cambridgeshire County Council’s Adults and Health Committee.

'Community Navigators', which has been running since 2012, provides personalised support to older people, residents aged 18 and over with disabilities, and their carers. A dedicated team of staff and volunteers from Care Network, which currently runs the service on behalf of the council, connects individuals to services, activities, and interventions in their local communities.

The support provided includes

- Informing people about, and referring them to, relevant activities and services.
- Helping people access information to answer questions and enable them to do things for themselves.
- Supporting people to access activities that enable them to remain independent, safe, and well.
- Reaching out to communities to engage with people who may be eligible for Adult Social Care services.

Service users can choose to receive support either in the community, at home, or over the phone.

Over the last three years, Community Navigators has received nearly 9,000 referrals via the NHS, community and voluntary sector, and the county council's adult social care service. A further two-year contract is due to start on 1 October.

**<https://care-network.org.uk/community-navigators/>**

## **Learning Disability Support**

County councillors have confirmed their commitment to ensuring ongoing support for people with learning disabilities and their families, following changes to how the council works with the NHS in Cambridgeshire.

The Learning Disability Partnership (LDP), which has provided integrated health and social care support for adults with learning disabilities in Cambridgeshire, has been formally dissolved from 1 April 2025. Councillors are calling on local health partners to fully share information about the arrangements for NHS funded support from this month and to ensure complete continuity of care from the NHS for people currently receiving services, to match those commitments already made by the council.

The Council and the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Integrated Care Board (ICB) are continuing discussions on how to work together to maintain services across the county. However, discussions are ongoing about payments owed for the services provided by the council, including historical debts. There still remains an opportunity to reach an agreement before entering formal legal mediation, and the council hopes for a constructive resolution that benefits all involved, particularly those who rely on these important services.

County councillors have raised concerns about this service separation and the associated financial issues, which has been formally escalated as a corporate risk by the council. The council continues to press for a resolution.

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## CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

### Holiday Activities & Food

Funding for the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme has been extended by the Department for Education into 2025. The programme offers families the opportunity to access funded places and a meal for their child during the main school holidays of Easter, Summer, and Christmas.

Any child receiving benefit-related free school meals is eligible for the Easter programme, which will run between 7 and 17 April. Approximately 20,000 HAF eligibility vouchers were sent to Cambridgeshire families on 3 March.

Each voucher offers a child sixteen hours of access, for no charge, to a HAF registered holiday scheme. Eligible children will be able to access:

- A variety of schemes including sports, playschemes, drama, technology, outdoor adventure and youth schemes.
- Enriching experiences to develop children's skills and confidence.
- At least one nutritious meal a day.
- Daily physical exercise through sports and/or play.

Further information can be found at

**[www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/council/communities/support-with-the-cost-of-living/holiday-activities-and-food-programme](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/council/communities/support-with-the-cost-of-living/holiday-activities-and-food-programme)**

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## COMMUNITIES, SOCIAL MOBILITY & INCLUSION (COSMIC)

### The Library Presents ... your choice

Residents are invited to choose the acts they would like to see perform in the Autumn 2025 Season of *The Library Presents*, Cambridgeshire's library-based arts programme. Between 26 March and 2 May, residents are invited to take part in The Library Presents choosing process. Their selections will help decide which artists and performances feature in the Autumn lineup.

Since its launch in 2018, *The Library Presents* has delivered more than 1,000 hours of entertainment, and more than 500 events, offering everything from live music and puppetry to immersive digital arts and hands-on workshops. Browse the selection at your participating libraries or go online between 26 March and 2 May to take part.

**<https://www.library.live/the-library-presents>**

## **Council of Sanctuary**

Cambridgeshire County Council has received Council of Sanctuary status, reaffirming the council's commitment to creating a welcoming and inclusive environment for people seeking sanctuary in Cambridgeshire.

The council is amongst one of the first county councils in the UK to receive this national award, which celebrates local authorities that work hard to demonstrate hospitality and a warm welcome to new arrivals in the area. The title was awarded by City of Sanctuary UK, a nationally coordinated network of organisations and services that support refugees and people seeking asylum. Cambridgeshire's wider commitment to being a place of welcome and inclusion.

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## **ENVIRONMENT & GREEN INVESTMENT**

### **Tree & Woodland Strategy**

The County Council has adopted a Tree and Woodland Strategy and Action Plan. It has also approved the introduction of a 'woodland pledge' to increase canopy cover and safeguard existing woodland across the council's own landholdings.

A target to increase woodland canopy to 13 per cent, and to increase the hedgerows to 323km, will be included in the Council's performance management framework and in the Climate Change and Environment Strategy.

### **Biodiversity Strategy**

The Council has also adopted a Biodiversity Strategy with objectives and Action Plan. The key performance indicators within the action plan will form part of the Council's performance management framework.

The objectives of the strategy are based on the Making Space for Nature review led by Sir John Lawton in 2010 which sets out the key principles for rebuilding nature in the UK and make it bigger, better, and more connected.

### **Cambridgeshire co-president for UK100**

Leader of Cambridgeshire County Council Cllr Lucy Nethsingha has been appointed as one of three new co-presidents of UK100, the UK's network of local government leaders committed to tackling climate change.

UK100 is a cross-party membership organisation supporting the most ambitious councils to go further and faster on their Net Zero and Clean Air targets. All members of the UK100 network have pledged to meet their ambitious climate targets ahead of the government's 2050 goal, and as a member, Cambridgeshire County Council is making good progress to reduce its own carbon emissions.

Between 2018-19 and 2023-24, direct emissions from the council's own assets have reduced by 42 per cent. The ongoing reduction in direct emissions is due to

a programme of low carbon heating projects. Fossil fuel-based heating systems like gas or oil boilers have been replaced with low-carbon air source heat pumps at 25 council buildings. The Council is also exploring ways it can reduce its indirect emissions further.

### **Drainage on Ely Road Little Downham**

Discussions on potential drainage solutions in the area of the entrances to Old Fir Close and the new development next door to it are ongoing.

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## **HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORT**

### **Chain Causeway Sutton**

Works are now completed, and traffic is now flowing again, to the relief of some and the disappointment of others. We will need to wait until the summer to hear whether Sutton Parish Council's (third) application for a weight limit through the village has been successful.

### **Mepal to Sutton walking and cycling route**

Consultants WSP have been working on potential active travel improvements between Mepal and Sutton. Council officers suggest these discussions focus on:

- Upgrading the shared-use path along the A142 from Sutton to Mepal
- A new toucan crossing to facilitate the path's safe crossing of the A142
- A new toucan crossing at the A142-Ely Rd roundabout

At present, it is hoped that this project could be delivered in the 2027/28 financial year.

### **Footpath 3 Gravel End to Downham Hythe**

Work began on Monday 10 March to restore this footpath, with an expected completion date in May.

### **Mill Road bridge bus gate**

Following an extended period for drivers to get used to the new layout, fines at the Mill Road bridge bus gate in Cambridge are now in effect.

### **VE and VJ Day street parties**

Cambridgeshire residents wanting to host a street party to celebrate the eightieth anniversaries of Victory in Europe (VE) Day and Victory over Japan (VJ) Day will not have to pay a fee for the production of their Temporary Traffic Regulation Order (TTRO) to legally close a road.

Applications for VE Day celebration road closures must be made by Thursday 17 April 2025 and applications for VJ Day celebration road closures must be made by Friday 25 July 2025. Before applying for a road closure, applicants should

consult with residents in the area to make sure there are no objections, ensure signs are clearly visible for all road users, and make sure the street is cleared of any rubbish before it is reopened.

Communities hosting events and activities connected with VE Day and VJ Day commemorations are also being encouraged to add them to the interactive map at <https://ve-vjday80.gov.uk/events/> allowing others to discover what is taking place in their local area and get involved.

An application form, and more information on applying for a road closure to hold a street party, can be found at <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/travel-roads-and-parking/roads-and-pathways/highway-events/organising-a-street-party-event>

### Meanwhile on the Combined Authority

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee discussed a—heavily redacted—report on concerns about past governance of the Combined Authority's housing fund, particularly (though not only) regarding schemes in East Cambridgeshire. The redacted report can be found at <https://democracy.cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=139&MId=164> (Item 13).

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## MEET YOUR COUNCILLORS

### Sutton surgery

Cllr Mark Inskip and I hold our monthly councillor surgery at Joy Bistro 65 High Street Sutton. Forthcoming dates are Monday 7 April and 12 May, 18:30-19:30.

### Or catch me on ...

- Friday 25 April, 12:00-13:00, Scott Court Sutton Nellie's community café

The above may change at short notice subject to late changes to my diary.

I can also be contacted

- by email at [lorna@lornadupre.org.uk](mailto:lorna@lornadupre.org.uk)
- on Facebook
- by phone on 07930 337596

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## Cllr Lorna Dupré

County Councillor for the Sutton division