

Cllr Lorna Dupré

MONTHLY REPORT JUNE 2025

COUNTY COUNCIL ANNUAL MEETING

The County Council held its annual meeting on Tuesday 20 May. Lucy Nethsingha was re-elected as Leader of the Council, and I am now Deputy Leader of the Council.

The meeting appointed Chairs and Vice Chairs of its committees, and representatives to some of its major partners. I am now Vice Chair of the Council's Strategy Resources & Partnership Committee, and the County Council's nominee to the Board of the Greater Cambridge Partnership.

Speaking after the meeting, Cllr Nethsingha drew attention to the 'extraordinary challenges' of the rising number of older people needing social care and of children with special needs and disabilities. She said the new Liberal Democrat administration will 'make sure our council continues to be more caring, better connected and that Cambridgeshire continues to be a wonderful environment for all to thrive'.

ADULTS & HEALTH

Pressures ahead for Integrated Care Boards (ICBs)

NHS England has published what has been described as a 'draft blueprint of the future model of ICBs'. These local boards are responsible for planning, funding, and commissioning NHS services for their local populations.

Spending per head by ICBs, which varies across the country from £49 to just under £21, will be cut to £18.76. Plans on how ICBs will meet this new target should have been submitted by 30 May.

There will also be a shift in the functions of ICBs, including to neighbourhood health providers. Boards were told in March they must cut their running costs by around half by October 2025 and to focus on reducing duplication when making cuts. Health minister Karin Smyth recently revealed that no impact assessment had been conducted of the decision to reduce ICB running costs.

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

Schools funding

The Cambridgeshire Schools Forum received a report on the final closing balance of maintained schools in the county (schools that are not academies).

The number of schools reporting a deficit revenue position at the end of 2024/25 has increased compared to previous years (37, compared to 31 a year earlier). The reasons for deficit budgets vary, but recurring themes include:

- Falling rolls between October 23 and October 24.
- Operation of unsustainable staffing structures compared to overall pupil numbers.
- Increase in staffing costs, not covered by funding uplifts.
- Having to operate additional classes due to infant class size legislation.
- Increasing cost pressures relating to SEND.

The two maintained schools in the Sutton division—Sutton CofE VC Primary School and Rackham Church of England Primary School—both have positive end-year balances.

Special educational needs and disabilities inspection

National inspectors from Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) last month published their report on provision for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) in the county.

The County Council and the NHS are jointly responsible for the planning and commissioning of these services as part of the Cambridgeshire Area SEND Partnership, for children and young people with SEND in Cambridgeshire. The partnership has been given the middle rating of three possible outcomes.

The inspectors highlighted several areas of good practice, including a clear and coherent strategy, the capacity to improve provision, and strong relationships across the partnership. It made five recommendations for improvement:

1. Improved timeliness and quality of Education Health & Care Plans.
2. Improved access and shorter waiting times for specialist mental health pathways and neurodevelopmental assessments.
3. Better opportunities for 'co-production' with children and young people with SEND, so their voices and views are more fully included.
4. Improved support for children and young people with SEND as they prepare for adulthood, especially in mainstream schools.
5. Better communication of the local area partnership's offer, so that schools, services and families know about and understand what the area seeks to provide.

The council has already invested £500,000 to manage the increased demand for Education Health & Care Plans and approved a further £920,000 annual investment in February this year.

The full report is at <https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50276860>

COSMIC

Find your family in the library

Did you know that Cambridgeshire Libraries give you access to Ancestry, the database where you can search millions of historical documents and genealogy resources, including the 1921 census? Ancestry is available at the County Council's 33 libraries and is free to access with your library card.

ENVIRONMENT & GREEN INVESTMENT

Disposable vapes ban

From 1 June it will be illegal to sell or supply disposable vapes. The government ban is being introduced to tackle the impact of these items on the environment. It is also hoped the move will help cut the number of children and young people vaping. Retailers caught breaking the law in England face a minimum £200 fine, with a prison sentence of up to two years for repeat offences. Trading Standards will be able to seize any single-use vapes they find. It is estimated that almost five million single-use vapes a week are either littered or thrown away in general waste in the UK.

Fire service issues battery charging safety reminder

Charging batteries have caused six fires in homes across the county so far this year. Firefighters have been called to fires involving batteries being overcharged, resulting in thermal runaway from the lithium-ion contained in them and causing significant damage to people's homes.

HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORT

T12 Tiger route opens from Sutton to Longstanton P&R

It's something I've been lobbying for since 2017! On Tuesday 27 May the first bus left from outside One Stop at 7:32AM to take me to Longstanton Park & Ride.

This could be a fantastically useful service to local residents—it's basically a shuttle every hour-and-five-minutes. And of course from Longstanton P&R you can get the Guided Bus to Cambridge Regional College, Cambridge Science Park, Cambridge North station, Drummer Street / New Square for the city centre (save a fortune on parking in the Grand Arcade!), Cambridge station for Cambridge Leisure, Addenbrooke's, Trumpington, St Ives, Huntingdon and Hinchbrook.

<https://bustimes.org/services/t12-longstanton-park-ride-sutton>

Day trips to Hunstanton

Did you know Whippet are running day trips from Sutton to Hunstanton every Saturday and Sunday 24 May to 31 August, and on the August bank holiday Monday?

Pick up from the One Stop at 8:45AM, arriving at Hunstanton just after 10:00AM; and leave Hunstanton at 3:50PM getting back to Sutton for 5:20PM. £15 for an adult, £12 for child or concessions. (Season tickets, multibus tickets and concessionary bus passes not valid on this route.)

whippetbus.co.uk/Hunstanton

A142 Mepal bridge closure

I have now been advised that the proposed maintenance works to Mepal bridge for four consecutive weekends will now not start until at least early August due to conflicting roadworks and diversions further afield in the county.

Highway repairs on The America

Road space on 5-6 June has been booked for works at the bottom of The America to address gullies and dropped kerbs and do some patching. These works will likely be completed under traffic lights for two days.

Surface dressing schedule postponed

Due to weather, road space permit issues, and the specialist surface treatment contractors' commitments elsewhere, the surface dressing programme will be finishing early, on Monday 2 June. This means that Main Street Coveney and Pools Road Wilburton, among others, will not be treated until the second phase of works, the dates for which are yet to be confirmed.

Footpath from Gravel End to Downham Hythe

Work on the long-closed footpath from Gravel End to Downham Hythe, which finally got under way some weeks ago, has been temporarily halted due to the presence of potential water vole activity.

Four weeks of monitoring are taking place throughout May to determine whether there is in fact such activity. If not, work can resume. If yes, it will need to be postponed to the optimum working 'window' of September / October.

A1307 maintenance works continue

Maintenance work continues on the A1307 (the old A14), with 40MPH speed limits expected to be lifted by the end of the summer. The County Council took over responsibility for this road from National Highways last year, with serious outstanding issues with the barriers between Godmanchester and Huntingdon and drainage problems at both Fenstanton and Hemingford.

Highways & Transport Committee chair Cllr Alex Beckett and I pressed County Council officers a few months ago to try to expedite this work, which has taken much longer than initially hoped, so it is excellent news that an end is in sight for these temporary speed restrictions.

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 2 June, Monday 7 July, and Monday 4 August 18:30-19:30.

Or catch me on ...

- Friday 11 June, 12:30-13:30, Scott Court Sutton (Nellie's community café)
- Tuesday 17 June, 10:00, The Glebe Sutton (Timebank coffee morning)
- Wednesday 18 June, 10:00, St Andrew's Hall (Witchford coffee morning)
- Wednesday 18 June, 14:00, Little Downham Village Hall (book café)

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

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