

# Cllrs Lorna Dupré and Mark Inskip

MONTHLY REPORT MARCH 2026

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## FULL COUNCIL MEETING 24 FEBRUARY

### Council budget set

The Council set its budget on 24 February. We proposed an alternative budget which would have

- established enforcement of on-street parking
- put an additional £100,000 into environmental initiatives
- given additional funding to arts, culture and tourism
- added more funding to support community facilities
- re-established an independent Citizens Advice presence in Ely

We would have paid for this through a £200,000 turnover allowance on staff costs, and a more realistic projection of income from interest.

This was defeated by the Chair's casting vote.

We also proposed to add civil parking enforcement to the list of schemes that can be funded through the Community Infrastructure Levy. This too was defeated by the Chair's casting vote.

### Crematorium project takes another £300,000

The casting vote of the Chair of the Council saw a further £300,000 added to the mounting costs of the council leadership's crematorium project. Fourteen councillors voted for this, and fourteen (including us) against.

As previously reported, a recommendation to add the £300,000 to the burgeoning bill was made by the council's Finance & Assets Committee, also by a casting vote from the committee chair.

Councillors were originally told that the crematorium's £13 million contract price was fixed, but the scheme has already blown through all of its £400,000-plus contingency.

### Inclusive play strategy and grants

Two years ago, we supported a successful motion by our colleague Cllr Chika Akinwale to carry out an inclusivity audit of local play areas and develop an inclusive play strategy. All this time later, the audit is still not completed and the strategy is nowhere to be seen.

So we were surprised when the council's political leadership proposed to use the element of the Community Infrastructure Levy set aside for inclusive play to offer grants for this purpose.

We made what we thought was the obvious point that it was not sensible to spend all the money on grants for inclusive play without a strategy, then publish a strategy when all the money had been spent. But again, we were defeated, on the casting vote of the Chair ...

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## **UNADOPTED AMENITIES ON PRIVATELY MANAGED ESTATES**

The Government is consulting on the growing issue of unadopted amenities on privately managed housing estates in England.

As this affects a considerable number of new build areas in East Cambridgeshire, Lorna has persuaded the District Council to make a response, and encouraged individual residents to do so too.

On many new developments, roads, swales, ditches, green spaces, and other communal infrastructure are maintained by private estate management companies rather than by public authorities.

Planning conditions set by the council may require the developer to maintain infrastructure for a certain number of years, but after that it's often unclear who will take responsibility, and who residents should be able to look to if there's a problem, such as flooding.

The government says it aims to:

- Reduce reliance on private estate management and increase adoption of amenities by public authorities
- Implement common standards for adoptable amenities to improve quality and consistency
- Explore mandatory adoption for certain public amenities, while considering exceptions for premium or exclusive features
- Remove perverse incentives that make non-adoption attractive to developers
- Improve data transparency, homeowner protections, and dispute resolution mechanisms
- Consider prohibiting embedded management arrangements and promoting resident-controlled management
- Assess financial sustainability of estate management charges and introduce affordability safeguards
- Seek evidence on impacts for homeowners, developers, local authorities, and management companies.

The consultation closes on 12 March.

<https://consult.communities.gov.uk/leasehold-and-private-rented-sector/reducing-the-prevalence-of-private-estate/>

More information about the consultation is available at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/reducing-the-prevalence-of-private-estate-management-arrangements/reducing-the-prevalence-of-private-estate-management-arrangements>

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## ANTI-SOCIAL DRIVING

Proposals for a Public Spaces Protection Order are due to be determined by the council's Operational Services Committee on Monday 23 March, following a period of public consultation. We have strongly supported the making of an Order to help curb this anti-social behaviour.

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## WITCHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Congratulations to Witcham Parish Council and residents of the village, whose Neighbourhood Plan received the support of ninety per cent of those who voted in the referendum on Thursday 12 February. The District Council agreed at its meeting on 24 February that the plan should be adopted, and we both spoke in support of this.

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## PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Applications in the Sutton ward which are still awaiting consideration include

- **The Bungalow, Hive Road, Witcham:** conversion from office to residential (26/00192/ERN)
- **17 Bridge Road, Mepal:** conversion, repair and partial demolition of redundant agricultural storage structures and elements of new build to create leisure and accommodation facility (25/00018/FUL)
- **78C High Street, Sutton:** change of use from office to dwelling (26/00008/ERN)
- **Three Pickerels, Mepal:** single storey function room within garden area to replace temporary marquee (25/01303/FUL)
- **Meadlands Farm, Sutton Gault:** replacement dwelling (25/01258/FUL)
- **104 High Street, Sutton:** demolition of existing garage and erection of five dwellings (25/01016/OUT)
- **Site between 8 and 14 Bridge Road, Mepal:** subdivision of existing horticultural site to create single self-build residential plot, retaining remainder for horticultural use (25/00421/OUT)
- **3 School Lane, Mepal:** construction of self-build dwelling and extension to garden (25/01344/FUL)

- **SE of 107 The Row, Sutton:** proposed lake and associated works (25/00114/FUL)
- **Garden Close, Sutton:** modification of planning obligation 17/01445/OUM affordable housing requirement (25/01097/MPO)
- **Garden Close, Sutton:** variation of approved plans 22/00057/RMM including removal of affordable housing (25/00667/VARM)

The request for variation of the affordable housing requirement at Garden Close in Sutton would leave the site with just four non-market price homes. And those four would be 'First Homes'—the national scheme for first-time home buyers to buy at a 30-50 per cent discount. So no affordable rental properties at all.

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## MARCH MEETINGS

- Wednesday 4 March: Planning Committee
  - Monday 9 March: Licensing (statutory sub-Committee)
  - Wednesday 18 March: Licensing Committee
  - Monday 23 March: Operational Services Committee
  - Thursday 26 March: Finance & Assets Committee
  - Tuesday 31 March: Audit Committee
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## MEET YOUR COUNCILLORS

We will be at Joy Bistro, 65 High Street, Sutton on Monday 30 March and Monday 27 April at 6:30-7:30PM (both dates changed from the usual first Monday because of Easter and the spring Bank Holiday). Between surgeries, residents can continue to contact us by email, Facebook, or phone.

### **Cllrs Lorna Dupré and Mark Inskip**

District Councillors for the Sutton ward  
(Mepal, Sutton, Wentworth, and Witcham)