

# Cllrs Lorna Dupré and Mark Inskip

MONTHLY REPORT JUNE 2026

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## ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING

East Cambridgeshire District Council held its Annual Council Meeting on Thursday 21 May. The Chair and Vice Chair of the Council, council leadership, committee places and appointments to the Combined Authority were confirmed.

### A10 improvements

A motion was proposed by the Conservative group calling for full dualling of the A10 from Ely to the A14. Superficially this is a popular idea. However, the reality is that the Government is not committed to it, the money is not there, such a scheme would be hugely expensive, the Combined Authority would be required to contribute many millions of pounds it has not identified, and it would take many years to even start.

We and our Liberal Democrat colleagues proposed that the council should back a more practical and deliverable approach, recognising that full dualling may not be achievable in the near future because of funding uncertainty and the length of time major road schemes can take to deliver.

Our amendment supported a phased approach beginning with junction improvements, safety works, active travel provision and targeted interventions at key pinch points. It also called for the A10 to remain a strategic transport priority for the Combined Authority, Homes England and regional partners.

Cllr Christine Whelan (Ely West) said:

“Residents in East Cambridgeshire need action on the A10, but they also need honesty. Full dualling could be part of a long-term answer, but it is expensive, environmentally complex, and currently lacks a clear national funding route.

“If we make this a ‘dualling or nothing’ debate, we risk waiting another decade while congestion, safety concerns and unreliable journeys continue. Our amendment keeps the long-term ambition alive, but pushes for urgent, deliverable improvements now.”

Lorna added:

“This was not about abandoning ambition for the A10. It was about being honest with residents. A phased programme of improvements is the best

way to secure action now while continuing to argue for the long-term investment the route needs.

“The Conservatives had the chance to back a balanced, realistic and deliverable plan. Instead, they rejected it. Local people deserve better than another round of promises about jam tomorrow.”

Cllr Whelan concluded:

“Major transport schemes in the Eastern region have shown that even successful projects can take many years to plan, fund and build. That is why we need a realistic approach for the A10.

“This amendment was not less ambitious—it was more serious. It says we wanted progress, not just promises. It says we wanted the A10 treated as a strategic priority, but we also wanted residents to see practical improvements within a realistic timeframe.”

## Bank closures

We criticised Conservative councillors at East Cambridgeshire District Council after they used their majority to pass a weakened version of a motion on high street bank closures and financial inclusion.

The original motion, proposed by Mark and seconded by Cllr Christine Colbert (Ely West), called for strong action in response to the sustained withdrawal of high street banking services across East Cambridgeshire. It highlighted the closure of branches including NatWest Ely in September 2025, Barclays Ely in April 2024, HSBC Ely in 2020, Barclays Burwell in 2016 and Barclays Littleport in 2014/15. The motion warned that many residents and businesses are now left without access to a local bank branch and must travel outside the district for in-person banking services.

The motion also set out that Post Office services, while important, do not replace full banking provision. It raised concerns about the lack of dedicated financial advice, fraud and safeguarding support, full business banking services, and capacity for larger or more complex transactions.

It called for the council to press government for a broader definition of banking access beyond cash access, reform of banking hub criteria to take account of digital exclusion, rurality and transport limitations, and stronger protections to prevent the loss of the last bank branch in a community. It also called for engagement with major banks, action on digital exclusion, work with local businesses and charities, and a report back to Full Council within six months.

However, Conservative councillors passed an amendment which removed many of these stronger commitments. The amended motion instead instructs the

Leader to write to the local MP about the work of LINK and Cash Access UK, continues existing digital inclusion work, encourages community hubs to apply for digital hub grants, and asks the council's economic development service to communicate with businesses, business groups and charities.

Mark said:

"This was a chance for East Cambridgeshire District Council to stand up for residents, small businesses, charities and rural communities who have been badly let down by the withdrawal of local bank branches.

"Our motion recognised that this is about far more than access to cash. People need face-to-face advice, fraud and safeguarding support, business banking, help for those who are digitally excluded, and services that work for rural communities with poor transport links.

"Instead of backing meaningful action, Conservative councillors watered the motion down. They removed the call for stronger government action, removed the demand for reform of banking hub criteria, removed the call for stronger regulatory protections, and removed the requirement for a report back to Full Council. That is deeply disappointing."

Cllr Christine Colbert added:

"Residents are rightly angry when essential local services disappear from their towns and villages. Bank closures hit older people, disabled residents, people on low incomes, rural communities and small businesses especially hard.

"Post Offices and banking hubs have a role to play, but they are not a full replacement for proper local banking. The Conservative amendment failed to match the scale of the problem facing East Cambridgeshire.

"We are disappointed and angry that Conservative councillors chose to weaken a serious, practical motion when they should have joined us in sending a clear message to government and the banks."

We will continue to press for fair access to in-person banking across East Cambridgeshire and for rural communities to be properly recognised in national banking access rules.

### **Fair access to employment**

Cllr Charlotte Cane MP proposed a motion that would have guaranteed a job interview for applicants who declared themselves to be care-leavers or to have disabilities, if they met the essential criteria for the post.

Unfortunately—and surprisingly—the motion was defeated by Conservative councillors who all voted against it.

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## **NEW WASTE COLLECTION REGIME BEGINS**

All households received their first collections with the new service at the beginning of June. Many residents were exceptionally eager to start using the new food waste service, with an estimated participation rate of over 90 per cent.

Several properties had not received their new black bins and food waste caddies in time for the start of the new arrangements. This led to a large number of black bags being left out, which the waste crews have cleared. The council's Parks and Open Spaces team had to step up in support and undertake rather different work to normal. Around 250 sets of bins are still to be delivered in the coming week.

Large numbers of residents have requested larger capacity bins. Requests received before the start of the new service have been met, but residents making later requests have been advised they will now need to wait until the service settles into 'business as usual'.

Lorna has made the council aware of reports of some food caddies being thrown back towards properties rather than being neatly returned after they have been collected. Waste teams will be reminded of the need to treat empty containers appropriately.

More information, including links to report issues with bin delivery or collection, at <https://eastcambs.gov.uk/services/services/waste-and-recycling>

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## **AFFORDABLE HOMES AT GARDEN CLOSE**

We were very pleased indeed that East Cambridgeshire District Council's Planning Committee unanimously refused permission for Abbey Homes to drop all the affordable housing from the development at Garden Close.

We submitted written objections to the application, and Lorna spoke to the Planning Committee on our behalf to urge them to refuse it. Lorna said (altered slightly in delivery):

"I'm speaking today on behalf of Cllr Mark Inskip as well as on my own behalf, as the two councillors for the Sutton ward, to support the officers' recommendation for refusal of this application and also of the related application 25/00667/VARM which you will be asked to determine following the current item.

I intend to speak only once, on both applications at once, as they cover the same ground.

The officers' report rightly states that the planning history for this site is complex.

- Sutton Parish Council originally included it in its first neighbourhood plan as a site for twenty-five bungalows on part of the current footprint.
- Endurance Estates then drove outline planning permission on the site for a significantly greater number of homes on a considerably larger area of the site, which was refused by this committee but allowed on appeal.
- The site was then sold with outline permission to Abbey Homes, who submitted several reserved matters applications before eventually securing consent from this committee.

The development is therefore already considerably larger than originally envisaged by the parish council.

Cllr Inskip and I lodged an objection to these applications on the ground that removal of all affordable housing from the site is contrary to the Local Plan, and to the local need identified by the Sutton Parish Council Housing Needs Assessment produced in 2021 in support of the parish's Neighbourhood Plan.

Officers have laid out for you the requirement of the Local Plan, and the reasons why this should be respected.

Meanwhile Sutton Parish Council's Housing Needs Assessment estimated three dwellings per annum surplus affordable housing for rent, and a 7.5 dwellings per annum shortfall in affordable housing for sale, in Sutton over the plan period 2022-2036.

The application to remove all affordable housing from the site therefore falls far short of the expectations of the Neighbourhood Plan and the assessed needs of the village.

I hope the committee will agree and will endorse the officer recommendation to refuse both this and the next application."

The applicant's representative told the committee that the cost of building houses had risen considerably in recent years, while house prices had not reflected that increase. Lorna responded by drawing attention to the years of inappropriate applications submitted since the outline application was approved

on appeal, and how the delay in planning approval for the details of the scheme was largely the fault of the applicant.

The debate is at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nFLj-aaxn\\_w](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nFLj-aaxn_w) beginning at 4:34:00 (it was a long meeting!).

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## CREMATORIUM ENVIRONMENTAL PERMIT CONSULTATION

The public consultation for the Environmental Permit for the council's crematorium at Mepal is now live. The consultation will close on Saturday 27 June.

<https://eastcambs.gov.uk/about-council/consultations/about-council/consultations/lake-view-bereavement-centre-environmental>

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## KNIFE ANGEL

The Knife Angel, a powerful 27 foot tall sculpture made from over 100,000 surrendered or seized blades, arrived in Ely recently. It was created by artist Alfie Bradley at the British Ironwork Centre to highlight the negative effects of violent behaviour and the need for change.

The sculpture will be located on Palace Green, opposite Ely Cathedral, for free public viewing until Wednesday 17 June. The visit coincides with a knife amnesty, with the police encouraging people to surrender weapons safely, helping to prevent further harm.

The visit has been made possible by Soham Town Rangers Football Club, in collaboration with partners including the police, the Police and Crime Commissioner, East Cambridgeshire District Council, Cambridgeshire County Council, and Ely Cathedral.

<https://www.britishironworkcentre.co.uk/the-knife-angel-official/>

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## LOCAL PLANNING APPLICATIONS

### AWAITING CONSIDERATION OR DECISION

Applications in the Sutton ward awaiting consideration or determination include

#### Mepal

- **17 Bridge Road, Mepal:** conservation, repair and partial demolition of redundant agricultural storage structures and elements of new build to create leisure and accommodation facility (25/00018/FUL)
- **Three Pickerels, Mepal:** single storey function room within garden area to replace temporary marquee (25/01303/FUL)
- **3 School Lane, Mepal:** detached 1.5 storey self-build property.

- **26 Chestnut Way, Mepal:** detached single-storey brick outbuilding for domestic storage
- **Arthur Rickwood, Chatteris Road, Mepal:** extension to warehouse, repositioning of septic tank, associated works and landscaping

## Sutton

- **Meadlands Farm, Sutton Gault:** replacement dwelling (25/01258/FUL)
- **Anson Packaging, Elean Business Park:** to retain portacabins (26/00363/FUL)

## DECIDED

Applications in the Sutton ward which have recently been decided include

- **Garden Close:** modification of planning obligation 17/01445/OUM affordable housing requirement (25/01097/MPO) (see above) **REFUSED**
- **Garden Close:** variation of approved plans 22/00057/RMM including removal of affordable housing (25/00667/VARM) (see above) **REFUSED**
- **SE of 107 The Row:** proposed lake and associated works (25/00114/FUL) **PERMITTED**
- **3 Victoria Place:** two-storey side and front extension, following demolition of garage; new single storey porch and additional external works (26/00324/FUL) **PERMITTED**
- **15 Painters Lane:** single storey extension to side and rear, with external alterations including removal of chimneys (26/00352/FUL) **WITHDRAWN**
- **22A High Street:** ground floor internal alterations and addition of window (26/00248/LBC) **PERMITTED**
- **The Bungalow, Hive Road, Witcham:** single storey side extensions and installation of rooflights and PV panels (26/00194/FUL) **PERMITTED**

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## FEN COTTAGE WICKEN

Fen Cottage at Wicken Fen has been awarded Grade II Listed Building status. The cottage, originally built in the 1970s, has been preserved by the National Trust as a visitor attraction showing how fenlanders lived and worked.

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## JUNE MEETINGS

- Wednesday 3 June: Planning Committee
  - Wednesday 10 June: Planning Committee
  - Wednesday 17 June: Licensing Committee **CANCELLED**
  - Monday 22 June: Operational Services Committee
  - Thursday 25 June: Finance & Assets Committee
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## **MEET YOUR COUNCILLORS**

We will be at Joy Bistro, 65 High Street, Sutton on Monday 6 July and Monday 3 August at 6:30-7:30PM. 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)