Cllrs Lorna Dupré and Mark Inskip

MONTHLY REPORT NOVEMBER 2026

OCTOBER FULL COUNCIL

Last month's Full Council meeting was slightly unusual, in that it took place in the foyer of the council offices.

Earlier that day, a member of our group said he would attend the council meeting. He had recently had surgery and had been home for a week to start recuperating. He was mobile enough to get to the premises, but not to climb the stairs. The lift at The Grange, out of order for months, was still not working.

We asked the council how our colleague would get to the council chamber on the first floor, as is his legal right and democratic responsibility. After some hesitation, the senior officer we spoke to suggested that two council officers could carry him. Our response to that astonishing suggestion (health and safety, risk assessment, sheer dignity) was crystal clear.

The council then said that having failed to ensure that this, or any other meeting they were planning to hold, was accessible to councillors and the public, they would hold the meeting in the foyer of the council building. There were no microphones, only one camera, and the acoustics were terrible. Extraordinary.

Business of the meeting

1. We abstained on a proposal that the council should ask the Government to stop Local Government Reorganisation, and give them responsibility for adult social care and mending the roads. It isn't going to happen.
2. We voted against a premature proposal to oppose the applications for wind farms at Chatteris and Redmere, because the applications have not even been submitted yet. There may be reasons to oppose them, but not without the evidence that will still be coming in over the next year.
3. We withdraw a motion which would have stopped the council spraying pesticides on its children's playgrounds, because the Conservative group amended it to delete every single recommendation.
4. We voted against a proposal to give the contract for Ely Markets and open spaces to the company (ECSS) that empties the bins and sweeps the streets, because the papers were so thin and the council leader refused to allow them to be brought to a future meeting with more information.
5. We appointed a new independent person to the council's Audit Committee. We were given no information about him other than a name, but fortunately Google helped find out his background and qualifications.

WIND FARM PROPOSALS

We attended two of the three events about the wind farm proposals at Chatteris and Redmere. There are many unanswered questions, and data to be provided.
https://www.vattenfall.co.uk/our-projects/chatteris/
https://www.vattenfall.co.uk/our-projects/redmere/

ELEAN BUSINESS PARK DATA CENTRE

We have now spoken to representatives of the company and have rather more information about what is happening.

Icona Capital (part of SWI Group) is tasked to build out the existing planning permission. Its representatives had knowledge of SWI group's larger plan.

Power connection

Matrix Networks built the sub-station on the site, which has capacity for 6MVA. They are also responsible for the new grid connection from Histon to add another 24MVA to bring capacity up to 30MVA by late 2027 or early 2028. The owners have access to offers of up to 530MVA of power, consistent with SWI Group's suggestion of a much larger facility. However no more power beyond the planned 30MVA will be available to them before 2032.

The company's preferred option to connect power from Histon to Sutton will be from the existing UKPN primary sub-station at the end of The Borough in Aldreth. The Aldreth sub-station will be connected back to the strategic grid substation at Histon, assuming this is a 33kV connection.

To get to Histon new ducting will be installed along The Borough in Aldreth. The cable will then route along by-roads to Rampton and along the road from Rampton to Cottenham and south to Histon. The Rampton-Cottenham-Histon works are expected to be under traffic management rather than road closures.

From Aldreth to Sutton the plan is to use existing ducting, laying cable through it in 400 metre lengths which would need to be joined. The roadworks would need to be roughly every 400 metres and take around two months. Again this would be traffic controlled works rather than road closures. The only closures would be at The Borough for two weeks, and briefly at Church Lane Haddenham. Work at The Borough is due to start on 30 November for two weeks. Residents have been notified. There are no firm dates for the rest of the route.

Data centre construction

The existing planning application is for four data centre buildings, the sub-station (already built), and an office block. Two single storey buildings were listed as having two 4.5MW data halls each, and two double storey buildings were listed as having four 4.5MW data halls each, giving a total of twelve data halls.

Data centre technology has moved on in recent years and it is possible to install significantly more power in the same space. The data centre is not expected to require large quantities of water for cooling, as it would be a closed loop system.

The plan for now is to construct only DC3, the single storey building on the south-east of the site. It is proposed to raise the height of DC3 by half a metre compared to the approved permission with less material removed from the site. We have spoken about the need for further updates as plans progress, and also the importance of providing drop-in opportunities for residents.



Permitted data centres at Elean Business Park: building outlined in purple (DC3) to be constructed first

AUDIT

In 2015, the Government abolished the Audit Commission leading to a breakdown of local audit in local government in England. Councils are slowly rebuilding assurance in their financial statements, but East Cambridgeshire is well behind the vast majority of other councils—and Government expectations. External Audit reports at **https://eastcambs.gov.uk/node/3489** (Items 7 and 8)

LOCAL PLANNING APPLICATIONS

AWAITING CONSIDERATION OR DECISION

Applications in the Sutton ward awaiting consideration or determination include

Mepal

- **Three Pickerels, Mepal**: single storey function room within garden area to replace temporary marquee (25/01303/FUL)
- **Arthur Rickwood, Chatteris Road, Mepal**: extension to warehouse, repositioning of septic tank, associated works, landscaping (26/00481/FUL)

Sutton

- **20 The Orchards**: part two storey and part single story extension to rear (26/00143/FUL)
- **124 The Row**: single and two-storey rear extensions and partial demolition of existing garage (26/00825/FUL)
- **95 High Street**: demolish existing bungalow and replace with new detached two-story self-build dwelling (26/00797/FUL)
- **3 The Row**: change of use of part of orchard to garden (25/01235/FUL)
- **28 The Orchards**: outbuilding in rear garden (retrospective) (26/01117/FUL)

Witchford

- **Land parcel between Granny's End Road and A142 off Marroway Lane**: material change of use of land to residential caravan site comprising two gypsy / traveller pitches (26/00878/FUL)

DECIDED

Applications in the Sutton ward recently decided include (all permitted)

- **19 Link Lane Sutton**: single storey rear extension with 2 no. new rooflights to existing roof (26/00939/FUL)
- **Units 5 And 6 Elean Business Park**: change of use from storage and distribution to general industrial use (26/00642/FUM)
- **126 High Street**: conversion of outbuildings to habitable space, demolition of conservatory and existing outbuilding; external alterations (26/00076/FUL)
- **3 Peacock Chase**: loft conversion, single storey rear extension, internal alterations and outbuilding (26/00103/FUL)

NOVEMBER MEETINGS

- Thursday 11 November: Licensing Committee
- Monday 16 November: Operational Services Committee
- Thursday 26 November: Finance & Assets Committee

MEET YOUR COUNCILLORS

We will be at Joy Bistro, 65 High Street, Sutton on Monday 7 December and Monday 4 January 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)