

Cllr Lorna Dupré

MONTHLY REPORT JULY 2021

COVID-19

Cases

Nationally and locally COVID-19 cases continue to rise sharply, largely due to the Delta variant, with an expectation of a third wave of infections peaking in early August. The proposed lifting of social restrictions on Monday 19 July come what may can only make this more likely.

Health professionals are concerned at significant rises in numbers of cases in Cambridge, along with low levels of vaccination there. Most cases are in the 18-30 population. A team is working with the city council and universities on this.

Cases per 100,000 population at end June	
Cambridgeshire	92
South Cambridgeshire	101
Cambridge	216

In East Cambridgeshire rates are also rising but remain below regional and national averages.

Vaccinations

Further walk-in clinics for those needing their first or second doses of the vaccine are due to be announced by the local Clinical Commissioning Group in the coming days. The walk-in clinics are designed to help drive up vaccination rates ahead of the planned national easing of Covid-19 lockdown restrictions on July 19. Alternatively, appointments can be booked at www.nhs.uk

Testing

Mobile rapid testing vehicles continue to visit sites across the county, offering on-the-spot tests as well as kits to take away and complete at home.

Secondary school pupils also need to rapid test twice a week, to try and reduce the spread of the virus in schools. Testing rates in secondary schools have fallen but young people continue to be carriers of the disease even though they may not be aware, so regular testing is important.

Schools and colleges can supply students with Lateral Flow Test (LFT) kits to self-swab. These can be taken home to complete and should be done twice a week. More information about accessing rapid testing can be found online at www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/rapidtesting

Information

Do check the Council's public health information messages about COVID which are updated regularly.

- <https://twitter.com/CambsCC>
 - <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/coronavirus/coronavirus-covid-19-overview>
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Independent living in Ely

Work is progressing on the opportunity to build 80 flats on land at the Princess of Wales Hospital in Ely. 16 of these will be let out to Cambridgeshire Community Services NHS Trust as a hospital rehabilitation ward enabling health and social care to be further integrated. The County Council will own the building.

Highways and transport issues arising from the scheme are a concern for nearby residents. At the Council's Adults & Health Committee I made the point that the new development needed to be a 'good neighbour' to surrounding residents. A number of us want to see more electric vehicle charging points on the site, more buses to serve it, better walking and cycling connections to, within, and from the site, and changes to highways layouts to accommodate the increased use of the site from this and other developments in the immediate area.

School meal vouchers

The Council's Children & Young People Committee has agreed in principle to provide supermarket vouchers over the summer holidays for families entitled to free school meals. The Strategy & Resources Committee is being asked for up to £537K to make up the difference between Government funding and the cost of ensuring all eligible families have their needs met.

Healthy Weight

The Adults & Health Committee has also made the decision to renew its programme of awareness about healthy weight. In 2018/19 62.8 per cent of people nationally were overweight or obese, with the East Cambridgeshire figure slightly lower than that at 58.8 per cent.

The cost of obesity to the NHS each year is £5.1 billion, rising to £27 billion if costs to the wider economy are included. The cost of malnutrition in England was estimated to be £19.6 billion per year in 2011/12, more than 15 per cent of the total public expenditure on health and social care. About half is expenditure is related to older people, and the other half to younger adults and children.

Highways works

LHI bids this year ...

The Highways & Transport Committee has now approved the prioritised Local Highway Improvement bids for this year. In our area these are

- Little Downham: solar studs along the B1411 Ely Road
- Witchford: pedestrian crossing near the school on Main Street
- Coveney: gates and signing and lining on Jerusalem Drove Wardy Hill

... and next year

The new application window for Local Highway Improvement schemes to be delivered in 2022/23 will be as follows.

- Application window opens: Monday 30 June 2021
- Application window closes: Monday 2 August 2021 (midday)
- Feasibility studies undertaken: August to October 2021
- Panel meetings: December—January 2021/22
- Report to committee including prioritised list for approval: March 2022

This will mean the winter period can be used to begin designing schemes for delivery from 1 April 2022, making use of the summer weather for delivery rather than design, although formal approval will not yet have been given.

A142 Ely to Chatteris

Cambridgeshire Highways will be carrying out road works on the A142 between Ely and Chatteris from Monday 26 July to Tuesday 3 August 2021. Works will include changes to road markings and traffic signing.

To allow work to be completed safely and efficiently the council will be closing the road to all traffic between the hours of 20:00 and 06:00 each night (weekdays only). The work will be split into two sections starting from Ely and working towards Chatteris:

- Section 1: Ely to Witcham Toll (2-3 nights), diversion via A10 to Stretham, A1123 to Haddenham, A1421 to Witcham Toll
- Section 2: Witcham Toll to Chatteris (3-4 nights), diversion via A1421 to Haddenham, A1123 to Hartford, A141 to Chatteris

There will be a signed diversion route in place for traffic to follow for both sections. Access will be maintained to properties and businesses within the works area. However some delays may occur as residents may be required to follow the diversion to enter the site at the other end, depending on where works are taking place. Traffic management operatives will be on site to assist.

Due to the nature of the work there will be some noisier activities such as removing existing road markings prior to laying the new ones. This is

unfortunately unavoidable; however, contractors will aim to complete all such activities as early as possible to minimise disruption to residents. As with all schemes involving road marking renewal, timings and dates are weather dependent and can change at short notice.

A10 Ely to Littleport

The A10 from Ely to Littleport is planned to see surface repairs take place starting at the end of August. This will be a significant piece of work on a busy road carrying a lot of traffic.

Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan

Cambridgeshire County Council is currently consulting on its Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). The Department for Transport recommended that all local authorities should develop LCWIPs and have advised that those authorities with plans will be well placed to bid for future funding.

The LCWIP covers the whole county and focuses on each district to highlight priority routes for cycling using census data to identify where funding could have the greatest effect in terms of where people live and work. If funding becomes available to progress any of the routes within the plan there will be further feasibility work undertaken and local consultation for each individual scheme.

I am particularly concerned at the list of prioritised cycle routes for East Cambridgeshire in Appendix 2—Cycling Prioritisation Matrices. Although the section labelled 'Ely South West—Witchford' scores highly, it proposes 'New bridge or underpass of A10, depending on future A10 works'.

It is my very strong view that safety for pedestrians and cyclists at the A10 BP junction cannot wait for works on the A10 for which there is currently no money, and which could take many years to complete. It is therefore essential that installation of a safe crossing at this location is decoupled from any long-term plans to dual the A10, and is treated as a priority, and I will be making this representation to the consultation. (A reminder of the petition at www.tinyurl.com/A10SafetyCantWait)

We have been told that it is not possible for safety reasons to install an 'at-grade' (on the same level as the existing traffic) crossing on the A10. However, there is now a precedent with the recent installation on the A10 of an 'at-grade' crossing at Waterbeach just south of the roundabout at the Cambridge Research Park.

The LCWIP consultation proposals are at <https://consultcambs.uk.engagementhq.com/ccc-local-cycling-and-walking-infrastructure-plan-consultation-2021>

The consultation will close on Tuesday 13 July. If you have any questions relating to the consultation, contact transport.delivery@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Ouse Washes exhibition and works

The Environment Agency has launched an online virtual exhibition room to provide residents with information about this year's and next year's planned work on the Ouse Washes. The exhibition will be open until the end of July at <https://eaousewashesbanks.co.uk/>

Works for this year

- April—May: Ecological surveys and grass cuts full length of the Middle Level Barrier Bank
 - June—July: Haul road repairs and topsoil slip repairs
 - July—October: Repair flood damage sustained during the winter
 - July—October: Finish the bank raising work between
 - Welney and the railway bridge
 - Welches Dam and the railway bridge
 - A142, Mepal and Welches Dam
 - September—October: Install the remaining two bird hides at the RSPB Reserve
 - October: Reinstatement of the haul road.
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Minerals & Waste Local Plan

The Planning Inspector has judged the draft Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Minerals & Waste Local Plan to be 'sound', provided it includes his main modifications to it. The County Council's Environment & Green Investment Committee agreed to recommend adoption of the Plan to the Full Council on 20 July. Because this is a joint plan, this will only take effect if Peterborough Council also agrees to adopt the Plan as modified by the Inspector.

Milton recycling centre consultation

The County Council has launched a consultation on plans for the recycling centre at Milton. The centre's planning permission expires in 2026, and it is proposed to enhance and expand the existing facility whilst 'future proofing' it to meet the needs of the local growing population. The consultation closes on Tuesday 27 July and is at www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/milton-HRC-consultation

Climate Strategy

The Council's Environment & Green Investment Committee has agreed to review the Council's climate and environment strategies by December 2021 with a view

to bringing forward its net-zero target towards 2030. The Committee will develop a *Route map to Net-Zero and Doubling Nature Programme* by March 2022.

Low carbon schools

The Committee has also agreed a new funding model for projects to move heating at maintained schools off carbon and onto renewable energy. The aim is to make this viable in more schools, and use a broader range of technologies which may in turn allow better long-term management of energy costs.

Shire Hall

The Council's Strategy & Resources Committee on Tuesday 6 July is being asked to review the financial model for the lease of Shire Hall, and to revise the income split between capital and revenue. The details are contained in a confidential appendix as it is still in commercial negotiation. The Council will also keep under close review its need for office accommodation across the county, as patterns change with more staff working from home following the pandemic. The new HQ at Alconbury is due to come into the Council's possession this month.

Settled status

The deadline for EU citizens to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme has now passed. However, the process is difficult, many long-term residents have not realised they need to apply (they were promised in 2016 that their right to remain would be automatic), and there are a large number of residents who have therefore not completed—or even begun—their applications and who are therefore at risk of losing homes, jobs, and basic rights such as healthcare. I have been working with another councillor on a motion to the Full Council meeting on 20 July to ensure the Council continues to support these residents.

Innovate & Cultivate Fund

The next deadline to apply to Cambridgeshire County Council's Innovate & Cultivate Fund is Sunday 1 August. The fund supports projects that strengthen communities and reduce pressure on County Council services. The fund is open to voluntary and community organisations and social enterprises in and outside Cambridgeshire, and public sector organisations in Cambridgeshire.

This round is for applications for 'Cultivate' projects (£2,000-£15,000) which build community support networks for vulnerable people. 'Innovate' grants (£15,000-£50,000) are currently suspended.

The Council has advice for seven different off-the-peg project ideas to help people remain independent and active in their community, encourage

volunteering, and complement more costly Council services. You can find guidance on how to apply for a start-up grant for each of these projects at <https://data.cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/dataset/cultivate-project-ideas>

- Mobile Warden Schemes
- Community Youth Worker
- Digital Inclusion
- Timebanks
- Good Neighbour Schemes
- Dementia-Friendly Communities
- Men's Sheds

You can find application forms and more information on the Cambridgeshire Community Foundation (CCF) website <http://www.cambscf.org.uk/icf.html>

Parliamentary boundaries

The Boundary Commission for England has published proposals for new parliamentary constituencies, which are now open to consultation until Monday 2 August. This is the first stage of a review which will conclude in 2023.

For the East of England, the proposals would mean three more MPs, and the effect of this is to create an additional 'St Neots' seat in Cambridgeshire. The proposed new 'East Cambridgeshire' constituency would include the whole of the district (including Sutton and Little Downham wards and Littleport which are currently in North East Cambridgeshire) and add to this the two South Cambridgeshire wards of Cottenham and Milton & Waterbeach.

Fire Authority

Congratulations to Cllr Edna Murphy of Bar Hill and Cllr Councillor Mohammed Jamil of Peterborough, recently elected as Chair and Vice Chair of the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Fire Authority—the first woman and the first member of a minority ethnic group to hold these positions.

Meet Your Councillor

Sutton ward district councillor Mark Inskip and I will be holding our virtual surgery via Zoom from 6:30 to 7:30PM on

- Tuesday 13 July 2021
- Tuesday 10 August 2021

Please contact Mark at mark@markinskip.org.uk to book your timeslot.

Meanwhile on the Combined Authority

The Combined Authority has appointed a new Chief Executive, whose name is currently being withheld 'to enable the preferred candidate time to communicate their departure to the staff within their current organisation'.

A more orthodox approach is being taken to the Combined Authority's affordable housing programme, now under intense scrutiny by Government following the events of the previous four years. The original programme ending in March 2021 managed just 37 schemes totalling 733 homes rather than the 2,000 required. Since then, the new programme has now approved 18 schemes totalling 1,189 homes, subject to ministerial approval.

Meanwhile the previous Mayor's '£100K homes' scheme appears to have hit a major obstacle. The eight properties at Fordham have been completed, but no-one has moved in. The suggestion is that mortgageability may be an issue, which could then affect other such schemes including Alexander House on the Forehill in Ely, and the proposals for the Paradise Pool site.

The Board agreed a set of ambitious responses to the interim recommendations of Cambridgeshire & Peterborough's independent Climate Change Commission. The Leader of Fenland opposed the recommendations, and the Leaders of East Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire abstained.

The Combined Authority authorised its officers to continue discussions on bus market reform with bus operators and other partners towards putting together a case for bus franchising and developing a Bus Service Improvement Plan as required by Government.

The Combined Authority includes a Business Board, which meets in private to manage projects, funding and strategies to promote business growth. A paper was brought to the Combined Authority by the Business Board arguing that it should continue to meet in private, but this was defeated because the new Mayor voted against it. This does not mean that all the Business Board's meetings will suddenly become public, but further work will be done on how to make the Business Board more transparent.

I was re-elected as Chair of the Combined Authority's Overview & Scrutiny Committee on the toss of a coin, after a 7:7 vote of the committee. Conservative members of the Combined Authority Board submitted a requisition calling for this election to be overturned, and at the time of writing I am waiting for a view from legal officers on the validity of this challenge.

Cllr Lorna Dupré

County Councillor for the Sutton division