

Cllr Lorna Dupré

MONTHLY REPORT SEPTEMBER 2021

COVID-19

Cases

At the end of August East Cambridgeshire had 305 cases per 100,000 population, a decrease of 16.2 per cent, and lower than the national average.

Vaccinations

Information about walk-in vaccination clinics is available at thevaccinators.co.uk
Alternatively, appointments can be booked online at www.nhs.uk

Testing

Mobile rapid testing vehicles continue to visit sites across the county, offering on-the-spot lateral flow tests as well as test kits to take away and complete at home. You can also order kits to use at home. More information at www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/rapidtesting

Information

- <https://twitter.com/CambsCC>
 - <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/coronavirus/coronavirus-covid-19-overview>
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Highways works

A142 Witcham Toll to Chatteris

The delayed 'signing and lining' of this stretch of the A142 will now start on Monday 6 September with road closures in place 8:00PM to 6:00AM until Saturday 11 September.

<https://one.network/?tmi=GB21090084>

Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet

On Wednesday 18 August a six-month Examination began into Highways England proposals for a major road scheme on the A428 between the Black Cat roundabout south of St Neots and Caxton Gibbet. The project involves a new ten-mile dual carriageway on the route between the two roundabouts, and a number of junction changes.

The scheme is classed as a National Significant Infrastructure Project, which means the application will be decided by the Planning Inspectorate, not by local councillors.

<https://highwaysengland.co.uk/our-work/a428-black-cat-to-caxton-gibbet/>

Real time roadworks information trial success

Several months ago I asked County Council officers to try to provide more up to date information about road resurfacing. The weather can easily delay road surfacing programmes, which then need to be updated. This wasn't happening as often as it could, leaving me—and residents—confused.

So a couple of months ago council officers and contractors set up a WhatsApp Group among themselves. The contractors posted information and pictures to the group at the beginning and end of each day. They also reported if they changed sites during the day.

Information Services officers used the information to update the Council website once a day. The Communications team and the Council's Integrated Highways Management Centre posted the information on the relevant Twitter feeds. Real time closure information was fed through to satnavs via the one.network web platform. And the Council's Contact Centre used the WhatsApp information to provide up to date information in response to customer enquiries.

Officers managing the works could track the contractor more accurately, ask more informed questions, and respond better to enquiries. The contractors felt this was a success and are keen to adopt the new system when they carry out works in Cambridgeshire. Their Micro Asphalt team want to use it for their autumn programme which will start in September. The Integrated Highways Management Centre was happy as it could deal with enquiries much more quickly, though there were some issues with roadworks permits. Staff are also putting out information on Instagram. Information Services staff were pleased, as they could update the website each day. They could do this more quickly and provide more accurate information. The Contact Centre felt it was particularly helpful for highlighting weather delays, and informing enquirers about these.

From a staff point of view the trial was a huge success, and will improve the information the Council provides about these works. The autumn Micro Asphalt program begins in September, and staff will use this method again. Meanwhile the Council will look to provide links for parishes and councillors so that they can access the information and advise residents how to do so.

The new Joint Administration of Cambridgeshire County Council, and its Highways Chair Cllr Peter McDonald, are keen to improve the use of IT to manage the council's highways. So I'm pleased this first project has got off to such a positive start.

Civil parking enforcement

The County Council is proposing to apply to the Department of Transport for a Designation Order for the introduction of Civil Parking Enforcement in Fenland, Huntingdonshire, and South Cambridgeshire. Other councils in Oxfordshire are

also in process of application. This will leave East Cambridgeshire as one of only four councils in England with police enforcement (or lack of it) of on-street parking.

Meanwhile the Government is proposing to finally implement Part 6 of the Road Traffic Act 2004. This gives power to local councils, rather than the police, to enforce moving traffic offences—not speeding, but offences such as breaching weight limits. I have asked council officers, and been advised, that these powers will only be available to councils with Civil Parking Enforcement. This would mean a double whammy for East Cambridgeshire—the police not enforcing on-street parking, and the council the only one in the county unable to enforce moving traffic offences either.

Community Flood Action survey

As part of its Community Flood Action Programme, Cambridgeshire County Council is updating its riparian guidance document to make it more useful for those living next to a watercourse.

A *riparian owner* is anyone who owns a property where there is a watercourse within or adjacent to the boundaries of their property. A watercourse includes a river, stream or ditch. A riparian owner is also responsible for watercourses or culverted watercourses passing through their land.

As this document is aimed at residents and landowners, the Council wishes to seek their views and get a better understanding of their awareness of riparian issues. The Council has therefore prepared a short survey (five questions—link below) for residents and landowners to complete. The Council plans to keep the survey open until Thursday 30 September but this can be extended if necessary.

In addition, the Council would be grateful for any photographs of watercourses that residents may have, to include in the guidance document. If anyone would like to submit photos, please email them to CFAP@cambridgeshire.gov.uk and include the name they would like to be credited as.

<https://forms.office.com/r/5HQbNqGtba>

Chief Executive

The search is on for a new Chief Executive for Cambridgeshire County Council to succeed the present postholder Gillian Beasley, who told councillors of her intentions before May's election. Gillian is currently Chief Executive of both Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council, but both councils have agreed that this joint arrangement should cease. Cambridgeshire will therefore have its own Chief Executive dedicated entirely to the county.

... and other postholders

Meanwhile Sue Procter joins Cambridgeshire County Council as Director of Highways & Transport. Sue is currently at Kirklees Council, and will take up her new role from 1 November.

The carbon footprint of where we live

The Centre for Research into Energy Demand Solutions has produced a new place-based carbon calculator. This looks at a single year in carbon emissions across England, to help us understand where our community's footprint comes from, and how we can reduce it. The latest statistics are for 2018, and are calculated down to LSOA or 'Lower Super Output Area' level.

<https://www.carbon.place/>

Decentralisation of services

One of the new Joint Administration's major commitments is to decentralise council services, making decisions closer to communities. This might include:

- Joint decision making—the County Council working closely with the District or City Council, Town or Parish Councils, local voluntary, community and faith groups, and communities to identify priorities and agree how best to deliver to them.
- Service relocation—County Council services physically located within the heart of communities where there is an evidenced need, with opportunities for co-location between council departments and with partner agencies.
- Delegation of funding, service delivery, and/or decision making—a community or local organisation being given formal delegation to deliver a service or to make decisions relating to county council services.

A progress report will be made to the December meeting of the Communities, Social Mobility & Inclusion Committee. The Council aims to support and enable partners to deliver services or make joint decisions, rather than adding pressure and cost to those organisations. This will be an important principle to establish before firm decisions can be made, and reflects some of the early feedback received from District and City Councils.

Foster carers

Cambridgeshire County Council needs more foster carers. Fostering means caring for one or more children or young people in your own home when they are unable to live with their family.

Foster carers provide a safe and secure home for children and young people of all ages, and come from a wide range of ages, cultures and backgrounds. Becoming a foster carer normally takes four to six months. The Council offers

- a generous mileage allowance, a setting-up fee for furniture and equipment, two weeks additional basic maintenance payments for holidays, birthdays allowance, a festivities allowance, and an initial clothing and school uniform allowance.
- round-the-clock 'out of hours' support should you need reassurance.
- a dedicated social worker to provide regular supervision and support.

Foster carers could earn up to £44,720 plus benefits for looking after two children aged eleven or over, subject to experience, training, and assessment.

There are lots of different types of fostering available for the right people and their families. Applicants will need enthusiasm and commitment to support the needs of children and young people in care, as well as a spare bedroom—and be over 21 years of age. The Council urgently needs foster carers for teenagers, sibling groups, and children with disabilities.

There are a lot of myths around fostering, which the Council is keen to dispel.

- [Finances and home](#)
- [Career and work](#)
- [Personal circumstances](#)
- [Relationships and lifestyle](#)

More information:

- [Six steps to fostering](#)
- [Siblings and teenagers](#)

Being involved with social services or the police will not automatically rule out an applicant. The Council would just need to discuss this further. For more information

- visit www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/fostering
- call 0800 052 0078 or
- text FOSTERING to 60777

Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy

The County Council has drawn up a Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy as all county councils are required to do by the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. The three key aims of this strategy are to achieve:

- Earlier identification of, and intervention for, domestic abuse through access to domestic abuse support, local authority housing advice, and social and private landlords.
- A reduction in the number of victims of abuse who are made homeless as a result of domestic abuse.
- Increased housing sustainment options so that people experiencing domestic abuse can remain safely in their home when it is their choice to do so, or do not lose their tenancy status if they relocate.

The Council's Communities, Social Mobility & Inclusion Committee is being asked to approve the strategy for submission to Government.

Mepal Makers

The County Council's Communities, Social Mobility & Inclusion Committee on 2 September is recommended to approve a grant of £2,000 to Mepal Makers for a Community Workshop 'Men's Shed'. The project involves making, repairing, recycling and upcycling as a way to increasing the mental health welfare of older men, increasing resilience, and fostering inter-generational community links.

Meanwhile on the Combined Authority

The Mayor has offered to be available twice a year for a Mayor's Question Time—once for the Combined Authority's Overview & Scrutiny Committee, and once more publicly. The Committee does not believe this is often enough.

A paper to the Combined Authority Board suggested it might like to buy a redundant building at Alconbury Weald for its own occupation. The Board said No, and has instead decided to consult other public sector organisations in Cambridgeshire on what premises are available across the county.

The Combined Authority will shortly be revising its Local Transport Plan, and discussing principles for affordable housing in Cambridgeshire.

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 14 September 2021
- Tuesday 12 October 2021

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

Cllr Lorna Dupré

County Councillor for the Sutton division