

# Cllr Lorna Dupré

## MONTHLY REPORT JANUARY 2022

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Happy new year to our parish councils and local residents.

### COVID-19

#### Overview

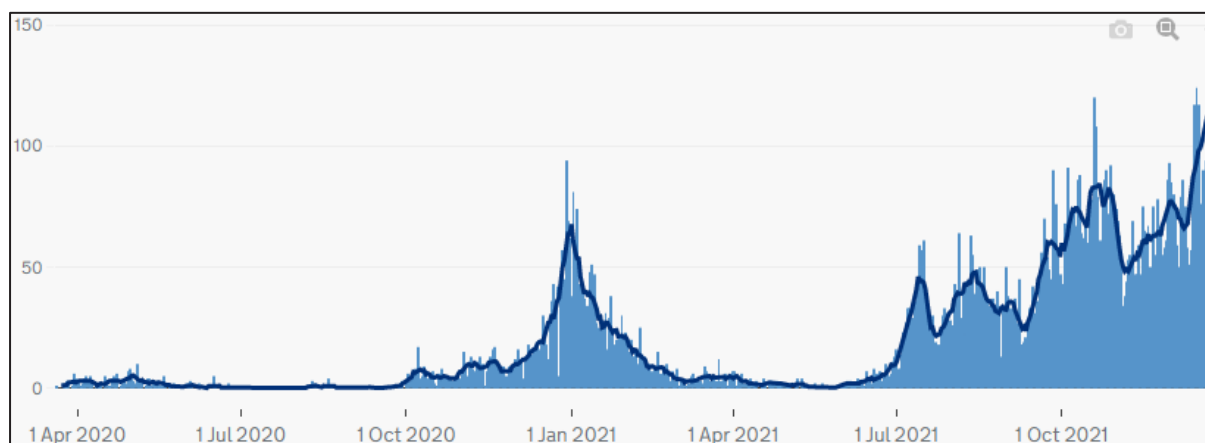
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough's Enhanced Response Area status was extended to Christmas Eve. The extra resource included a rapid response vaccination team on the ground locally, making direct contact with households in areas of low vaccination uptake, and extra national communications advising residents on protective measures to prevent infection spread.

"Pre-ERA we were considerably below both the England and East of England average for the numbers of 12–15 year-olds who were vaccinated. Now all areas in Cambridgeshire are above the England average and most are also above the East of England average too"

*Jyoti Atri, Director of Public Health for Cambridgeshire & Peterborough*

#### Case rates in Cambridgeshire

As of 30 December, there were 13,099 people in East Cambridgeshire who had tested positive, though there has been a shortage of testing capacity (see below). The daily rate of fresh cases was 149.



Cases in East Cambridgeshire since the start of the pandemic

There have been 78 cases of COVID-19 in Little Downham & Sutton in the seven days to 30 December (compared to 29 a month ago), and 80 cases in Haddenham, Stretham & Witchford (compared to 61 a month ago).

#### Covid in schools

All secondary pupils will be tested when they return to school and secondary schools will be allowed a staggered start for the first week of term. The impact of

Omicron is likely to lead to further measures in schools and head teachers will be briefed early in the new term.

## Vaccinations

In Little Downham & Sutton over 90 per cent of eligible residents have received their first dose of the vaccine, 85.6 per cent have received their second dose, and just over two-thirds have received their third dose or booster. This is above the average for East Cambridgeshire.

In Haddenham, Stretham & Witchford the figures are even better, with 92.8 per cent of first doses, 87.2 per cent of second doses, and 71.8 per cent of third doses or boosters.

A huge amount of effort went into a Christmas vaccination programme. Huge thanks are due to NHS staff and the volunteers who helped make this happen.

## Testing

The end of December has seen many residents struggling to obtain lateral flow home testing kits, and shortage of PCR testing capacity across the whole of England. At the time of writing it is still not possible to order lateral flow testing kits for home delivery.

<https://www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests>

## General Covid information

- <https://twitter.com/CambsCC>
- <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/coronavirus/coronavirus-covid-19-overview>
- <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/coronavirus-vaccine>

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## Household Support Fund

A reminder that the County Council's Household Support Fund is still open (to 31 March). It offers:

- Support with food, household energy and other essentials for individuals and families: residents are eligible to access this support if they earn less than £17,940 per year, or are in receipt of certain state benefits
- Direct food vouchers: as in previous school holidays, supermarket vouchers will be issued to families meeting the low income criteria for free school meals, funded childcare for two-year-olds, early years pupil premium, or sixth form students eligible for free school meals.

[www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/coronavirus/household-support-fund](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/coronavirus/household-support-fund)

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## Full Council meeting postponed

The Full Council meeting of the County Council on 14 December was postponed on the advice of Cambridgeshire & Peterborough's Director of Public Health, in the light of rising covid numbers.

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## Hundred Foot de-silting

Last month I reported on concerns raised by residents and the Littleport & Downham Internal Drainage Board about this year's desilting works on the Hundred Foot.

With the consent of Natural England, the Environment Agency's contractor took representative samples on 2 December of the different types of materials removed from the river. The samples have been taken to a dedicated laboratory to establish their primary soil type, and testing results should be available in early January.

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## Local Flood Risk Management Strategy

Last month I reported on the draft Local Flood Risk Management Strategy for Cambridgeshire. The draft is now open online for public consultation to 23 January.

<https://consultcambs.uk.engagementhq.com/cambridgeshire-flood-risk-management-strategy>

Meanwhile the Council is continuing to address the huge backlog of gully clearing left by the previous administration, with a cyclical programme covering the whole county.

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## Climate Change & Environment Strategy

As Chair of the County Council's Environment & Green Investment Committee I have spent much time in the last few months working with colleagues and council officers on a major revision of the County Council's Climate Change & Environment Strategy.

The draft revised Strategy was approved unanimously by the Council's Environment & Green Investment Committee on 16 December, for referral to the Full Council at its budget meeting in February. It sets a new target for a Net Zero Cambridgeshire—2045, five years sooner than the current 2050 target.

The strategy commits the Council to focusing its contribution in three key areas—reducing carbon emissions, supporting the development of resilient communities so that they can adapt to the impacts of climate change, and supporting nature and biodiversity to thrive.

As part of the Council's plan to achieve Net Zero for its own direct carbon emissions by 2030, the draft strategy sets out how the Council will meet that deadline including:

- Low carbon transport solutions for fleet vehicles
- Net zero carbon buildings and generation of renewable energy from Council assets
- Improving the management of the Council's open spaces to increase biodiversity.

The Strategy also commits to halving the Council's indirect emissions through its supply chains by 2030, and sets out how it will work in partnership with the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority's Climate Commission and district partners to bring actions together to align work programmes. It also identifies how the Council will collaborate with businesses and communities and support all sectors to understand how they can reduce carbon emissions, benefit nature, and take positive climate action.

### Building the team

At the same meeting, the Committee agreed a proposal to use £570,000 over four years of the capital spending set aside for environmental work, to increase the team to support the delivery and funding of the Council's low carbon and energy projects. The service generates income for the Council and has also successfully applied for grants. £6M of Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund money has been awarded by the Government to the Council's projects in the last eighteen months.

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### A10/A142 BP roundabout

At the December meeting of the County Council's Highways & Transport Committee, I welcomed emerging proposals to make a safe crossing for pedestrians and cyclists at the A10/A142 BP roundabout at Ely. A report to the committee said:

"The CPCA [Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority] has indicated that work on a 'quick win' should be undertaken, developing solutions that would provide significantly enhanced active travel provision at the 10/A142 'BP' roundabout to the west of Ely that might be delivered early with their own funds. It is envisaged that a separate funding allocation for this work will be made."

There is no indication at the moment of the location or design of such a crossing, but the current expectation appears to be that it would need to be 'grade separated'—in other words, a bridge or underpass.

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## Roman crucifixion

One of my areas of responsibility as Chair of the County Council's Environment & Green Investment Committee is the county's antiquities. A recent discovery in Fenstanton is of international significance—a human skeleton with a nail through the foot, which experts believe to be the remains of a Roman crucifixion, probably of a slave. More on my blog at <https://lornadupre.mycouncillor.org.uk/2021/12/08/uks-first-example-of-roman-crucifixion-found-in-cambridgeshire-village/>

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## Meanwhile on the Combined Authority

The Combined Authority has appointed Eastern Community Homes (hosted by Cambridgeshire ACRE) to support community homes groups everywhere across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, with the exception of East Cambridgeshire which is now ploughing its own furrow.

Three of the four remaining loans across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough on the Combined Authority's housing loans book are proceeding to schedule. The one that is not is the loan to East Cambridgeshire for the MOD housing at Ely, where the projected repayment profile continues to slip. This is due to the continuing delay in sale of the fifteen 'affordable' housing units, and a slower than projected rate of sale of the market price units. The Combined Authority is monitoring East Cambridgeshire Trading Company's performance closely.

The Combined Authority has confirmed that ECTC is not defaulting on the loan. However, it says, "there is an increasing likelihood that in order to repay the loan in March 2023 then the borrower may need to re-finance the remaining market units in the scheme that might be unsold in March 2023.

The Haddenham scheme is continuing to make repayments, and the Laragh scheme at Forehill Ely has seen many housing units reserved off plan.

## 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 11 January 2022
- Tuesday 8 February 2022

Please contact Mark at [mark@markinskip.org.uk](mailto:mark@markinskip.org.uk) to book your timeslot.

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## Cllr Lorna Dupré

County Councillor for the Sutton division