

Cllr Lorna Dupré

MONTHLY REPORT APRIL 2022

COVID-19

Overview

At the time of writing, despite the removal of precautions, COVID cases are higher than they have ever been, with at least one in 25 people currently infected.

Vaccinations

The following COVID vaccinations can now be booked online, or are available at mobile vaccination centres.

- First and second doses for people aged twelve or over
- First boosters for people aged sixteen or over, plus at-risk children aged twelve to fifteen
- 'Spring boosters' for people aged 75 or over, plus people aged twelve or over with a weakened immune system
- Additional primary doses for people with a severely weakened immune system aged twelve or over

Online vaccination bookings <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/book-coronavirus-vaccination/>

Mobile vaccination centres <https://www.thevaccinators.co.uk/>

FINANCES & COUNCIL ASSETS

Council chamber at Alconbury

The County Council's Strategy & Resources Committee has agreed to request a report on the use of the 'Multi-Function Room' at the Council's new HQ at Alconbury Weald. The report will be considered in September, following concerns in some quarters that the room may not be suitable for full council meetings (61 councillors, plus council officers, press and public) even after COVID precautions are no longer needed.

ADULTS & HEALTH

NHS Health Checks

The County Council has allocated more than £1M for additional NHS health checks. These are offered to people aged 40-74 without pre-existing disease every five years, and are mostly delivered by GP practices.

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

Holiday vouchers

The council's Children & Young People Committee agreed at its meeting on 1 March to continue the supermarket voucher scheme for 2022/23 for eligible families, on the same basis as in the current financial year. This will cost around £3.6M, and will operate alongside the Holiday Activity and Food Scheme which will also continue to run in the coming year.

COMMUNITIES, SOCIAL MOBILITY & INCLUSION

Decentralisation

The County Council is embarking on the early stages of a major project to decentralise service delivery and decision-making. The aim is a reorientation of the Council's work to be more deeply embedded in local communities—giving residents more ownership of the Council's direction and giving the Council more accountability to residents.

ENVIRONMENT & GREEN INVESTMENT

Sampling of materials from Hundred Foot

At the time of writing, a meeting to discuss the analysis of the samples from the Hundred Foot de-silting has been postponed from 31 March, with a revised date for a meeting yet to be set.

The Internal Drainage Board / District Council sample has been analysed and a report produced for those funding it. The Environment Agency has received the results from its sample but so far has not shared them with partner organisations.

Water management tour

On Thursday 31 March I joined council officers and fellow councillors on an information tour of some of the water management installations on the Hundred Foot, at Earith, Welches Dam, and Denver. The tour was hosted by the Environment Agency.

Wisbech incinerator

I recently joined the Leader of the County Council, Lucy Nethsingha, on a visit to the site of the proposed Wisbech incinerator, at the invitation of the objector group Wisbech Without Incineration. The site is in a very populated part of Wisbech, with considerable numbers of businesses including food firms which would really struggle if an incinerator were placed next to them.

Ouse Washes works

The Environment Agency has announced its work programme for the sixth year of its barrier bank works on the Ouse Washes.

Work on the Welney demountable flood barrier will start on 13 June and finish on 16 September, with a full road closure planned for 20 July to 25 August. There will be no access to the Middle Level Barrier Bank at Welney.

Bank raising work between Welches Dam and the railway bridge, and haul road works between Mepal and Welney, will also be completed.

The following footpaths will remain closed while the work is done.

- Sutton Gault to A142 Mepal
- A142 Mepal to Welches Dam
- Welches Dam to railway bridge
- Railway bridge to Welney
- Welney to Welmore Lake Sluice access restricted at Welney from June

Public drop-in event

There will be a drop-in event on Saturday 23 April, 10:00AM-2:00PM at the William Marshall Centre in Welney (PE14 9SD) to talk to the project team and view current progress and the plan for work.

Repair cafés

A motion was passed last month at the County Council's full council meeting to receive a report on how the Council can support new and existing Repair Cafés to increase reuse and recycling rates.

HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORT

Road pricing

A motion proposed to the County Council's full council meeting on 15 March would have ruled out any form of road pricing in Greater Cambridge—but was defeated. It said nothing positive, and offered no solutions.

Traffic in Cambridge is already congesting the city, and is set to grow by 30 per cent in the next ten years. Proposals to build a new dual carriageway from Ely to Milton would attract many more vehicles, with no plan for where they would go once they reached the Milton interchange.

Public transport into Cambridge is patchy at best for much of East Cambridgeshire, with no obvious source of funding to improve it. The previous Mayor's 'CAM Metro' was planned to come no closer to us than Waterbeach. Adding more buses without resolving Cambridge traffic would simply increase

congestion. And what public transport investment there has been over the years has passed East Cambridgeshire and Fenland by, as it arcs from south east of Cambridge through South Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire up towards Peterborough. This leaves many people who cannot drive, or cannot afford to run a car, with limited or no options for travel.

The Greater Cambridge Partnership has been consulting residents, including East Cambridgeshire residents, on how to solve all these issues. This work is still ongoing, which is why ruling out options at this stage is not a sensible suggestion.

Local road updates

A142 Mepal

The dates for the closure of Mepal Viaduct, so that failed bridge joints can be replaced, are now the weekends of

- 13-16 May
- 20-23 May
- 27-30 May

Road crossing at The Brook Sutton

The County Council's Highways & Transport Committee has agreed to spend some money this year to investigate options for a pelican crossing on The Brook in Sutton near the school.

Road maintenance plans

The County Council has agreed plans for road maintenance for the next two years.

This year will see

- Reconstruction of part of Chain Causeway Sutton
- Surface treatment of Main Street Wentworth; Fairfield Sutton; Kiln Close Orchard Estate, and Walnut Tree Close Little Downham
- Slurry sealing of pavements at Main Street Coveney, Walnut Tree Close Little Downham, Manor Road Witchford

Next year includes

- Pavement resurfacing on Eagles Lane, Orchard Estate and Kiln Close Little Downham
- Reconstruction of parts of Bates's Drove A1101 near Hundred Foot Bank

Coveney Footpath 3

I have followed up an enquiry about Coveney Footpath 3 from Gravel End to Downham Hythe, which has been closed for several months. The closure is due

to a broken Anglian Water pipe encased in the concrete bridge over the main drain part way along the footpath. The footpath was closed without the Council having been informed. Officers have now submitted an emergency Order to close Coveney Footpath 3 until the damage to the footbridge can be repaired. They are now in contact with Anglian Water over the closure and the repair.

Heavy goods vehicles on local roads

The County Council working group I chair, which is drawing up a new policy on HGVs including weight limits, should be at the point of producing a draft policy shortly. I have met with Combined Authority officers, who are working on a new draft Local Transport & Connectivity Plan, to ensure our two pieces of work align.

Meanwhile on the Combined Authority

On 25 March I chaired the first Ask The Mayor event, at the Storey's Field Centre in Eddington. Ten members of the public, including two East Cambridgeshire district councillors, asked questions of Mayor Nik Johnson.

The Combined Authority's Overview & Scrutiny Committee held its last meeting of the council year on 28 March, with a wide-ranging discussion of the Combined Authority's Climate Change Action Plan.

The Board meeting on Wednesday 30 March was asked to agree to return to the Government £22M of a £78.3M grant which it had been unable to spend on Green Homes retrofitting. This is very disappointing news for households who might otherwise have received investment to increase the energy efficiency of their homes and reduce fuel costs, though there will be further spending on Green Homes retrofit from the next phase of Government grant.

The Combined Authority proposes to make Pathfinder House in Huntingdon its new office base, retaining (for the time being) its satellite office in Ely.

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 12 April 2022
- Tuesday 10 May 2022

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

Clr Lorna Dupré

County Councillor for the Sutton division