

Cllrs Lorna Dupré and Mark Inskip

MONTHLY REPORT APRIL 2022

Bin round changes

The move to new bin collection days, which we reported on last month and which began in the week of 28 March, did not exactly go smoothly. A large number of residents found their rubbish was not collected, and in a number of villages the new schedule meant two successive blue bin collections, or two green bin collections in a row.

East Cambridgeshire Local Plan single issue review

The District Council has been asked to authorise a final round of consultation on its very narrow update of its Local Plan. The consultation is likely to be in May-June, and the matter will then be referred to a Planning Inspector for Examination.

The Council understands that the latest local housing need for East Cambridgeshire is 5,398 dwellings between 2022 and 2031 when the current Local Plan ends. The Council says it believes it can deliver over 8,179 dwellings in that period—4,524 of them between 2021 and 2026.

This is interesting in the context of the recent appeal won by Persimmon against the Council in Soham, where the Inspector said there had been a 'persistent failure' by the Council to meet its housing requirements.

One issue raised by respondents to the Review is the record of the District Council in increasing the amount of affordable housing. On average, the response noted, only 47 affordable homes have been completed each year for the last ten years—one-fifth of the level of affordable housing need.

Yet another loan for council trading company

In our last report, we noted that Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority believed that its significant loan to East Cambs Trading Company Ltd (ECTC) might not be repaid by the due date of March 2023.

The loan was issued for refurbishment of the 88 former MOD homes in Ely, and the Combined Authority believes there is a high probability that the necessary cash flow will not be achieved to enable timely repayment.

Now East Cambridgeshire District Council is proposing to approve a new loan facility to the Trading Company. Their plan is to offer a loan of £7.5M for four

years, with the final repayment no later than 31 March 2026, at an interest rate of 4.5 per cent.

Trading Company to buy Paradise Pool site

The Council also proposes to sell the site of the former Paradise Pool in Ely to the Trading Company for the sum of £539,650. The Council had agreed last year to sell the site to a private developer, but it now appears that the Council was requiring a commitment to its '£100K homes' scheme within the deal, and could not reach agreement with the potential purchaser.

And the revolving door turns again

We have previously commented on the potential conflicts of interest of councillors and council officers who are also on the Board of the Council's Trading Companies.

A senior Council officer is now being seconded to the Trading Company, so has tendered their resignation as a Director of the Company, only to be replaced by another senior Council officer.

Meanwhile, the councillors who resigned as Directors so that they could vote in Council meetings on matters affecting the Company remain on the Board as 'observers'—though they have speaking rights there and can continue to influence the business of the Board.

Public toilet provision for people with disabilities

Lorna is proposing to the Full Council meeting that East Cambridgeshire should try to address the lack of large 'Changing Places' public toilets in the district for people with severe disabilities.

The only 'Changing Places' toilet in East Cambridgeshire is at The Hive, and even that is not included in the national Changing Places searchable online map. Nor is it signposted on the Council's own web page about public toilet provision. Otherwise the nearest facilities are at Bar Hill and Mildenhall.

The proposal calls on the Council to review disabled access to all public toilets in the district, and draw up plans for improvement; to engage with businesses and partners to identify places for new Changing Places toilets and seek Government funding; and to sign all public toilets in line with Crohn's & Colitis UK guidelines for invisible disabilities.

East Cambridgeshire was the only district in Cambridgeshire not to be awarded any money at all by the Government in its recent funding round to improve Changing Places toilet provision.

Planning application in Link Lane refused

An application for conversion of an existing garage to an annexe at 1 Link Lane, Sutton (22/00042/FUL) was refused by the Planning Committee.

Lorna had submitted a representation to the Committee asking them to approve the application, and the agent produced an impressive and useful document demonstrating the inconsistency of East Cambridgeshire District Council decisions on annexes and extensions, and the number of occasions on which such decisions had been overturned on appeal.

The Council still does not seem to be getting this right.

Deli at 65 High Street Sutton

Having obtained planning permission for various changes to the Deli in Sutton's High Street, ready to turn it into a hot food takeaway, the owner has now put it on the market.

It still does not have permission for change of use to a takeaway—as the estate agents' initial details erroneously claimed. And the way in which the planning permission for the flue, tandoori oven and other additions was approved is still being hotly disputed.

Elean Business Park anti-social driving

Mark and Lorna will be attending another multi-agency meeting later in April about the anti-social driving issues at Elean Business Park. We have not been made aware of any recent outbreaks since the police issued formal letters to a large number of culprits—but we are aware this is a seasonal issue and may well return. If it does, residents should report to the police, however painful that process may be these days.

Meet your councillors

We 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.

Cllr Lorna Dupré

Cllr Mark Inskip

District Councillors for the Sutton ward