

Clr Lorna Dupré

MONTHLY REPORT DECEMBER 2022

COST OF LIVING

Social tariffs

The government has worked with a range of Internet Service Providers (ISPs) and Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) to deliver low-cost broadband and phone service packages, called social tariffs, for those on low incomes. Social tariffs are available for people claiming Universal Credit, Pension Credit and some other benefits, with some providers offering deals from £15 a month.

Warm Home Discount scheme reopened

The Warm Home Discount scheme will provide a discount of £150 off electricity bills for three million low-income households this winter. Most households will receive the discount automatically.

The government has launched a new online tool to make it easier to check if you are eligible for the discount. This will guide customers through the eligibility criteria, asking questions about electricity supply, the benefits they receive and characteristics of their property. All customers will receive a letter between November and mid-January confirming eligibility and the payment will be made automatically through energy suppliers by March 2023. The government is also writing to customers who may be eligible, advising them to use the tool below to check eligibility, and use the helpline for particularly complex cases.

<https://www.gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme>

WaterCare

Anglian Water offers a range of financial assistance to those needing a helping hand. This includes including discounted tariffs, assistance if you have fallen behind with payments, and affordable payment plans.

<https://www.anglianwater.co.uk/help-and-advice/water-care/>

FULL COUNCIL

Full Council meeting 13 December

The Council's business will include five motions for debate.

- A Conservative motion calling for the composition of all Council working groups to mirror the overall composition of the Council.
- A Lib Dem motion calling for managed divestment by the Council's Pension Fund from fossil fuels.
- A Labour motion on local level support for asylum seekers and migrants.

- A Conservative motion calling for the employment of an independent organisation to scrutinise the current consultation by the Greater Cambridge Partnership on bus service improvements and congestion charging in Cambridge.
 - A Conservative motion asking officers to collect data and draw up maps of road space, roadworks, road closures, bus reductions and other information following theories that these events were deliberate attempts to mislead the public about the level of traffic congestion in Cambridge during the current consultation by the Greater Cambridge Partnership.
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STRATEGY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Budget

The County Council faces a budget gap of about £29M due to inflation, as reported previously. At the time of writing, much work has been done to close that gap ahead of the February budget meeting, but a £13M gap remains to be filled. Detailed papers are being presented to December committee meetings.

COMMUNITIES, SOCIAL MOBILITY & INCLUSION (COSMIC)

Cultivate Cambs awards

The Committee is being asked to make grants to seventeen projects, including the following with a delivery area covering East Cambs.

- A permanent Wellbeing Hub for children and families who have experienced domestic abuse or trauma (Cambridge Acorn Project CIC)
- A new Meals on Wheels delivery base in Fenland to reach customers who cannot be reached from Cambridge (Camms Meals on Wheels)
- A pilot of holistic support for young adult carers aged 16-25 (Centre 33)
- Extension of specialist sight loss and visual impairment clinical psychology service (Fight Against Blindness)
- Collaborative working on food access and a Food Poverty Action Plan (Luvely—formerly the Garage Community Trust)
- To increase digital inclusion by purchasing three NHS recommended digital rainbow tables (Red2Green)
- Surplus Food Meal Kits for families unable to afford or access a healthy diet (Re-imagine Resource Centre CIC)

Repair cafés

Cambridge Carbon Footprint charity has submitted a proposal for a one-off piece of work to support the roll-out of repair cafés in areas that do not currently have access to them. More information about repair cafés at <https://cambridgecarbonfootprint.org/repair-cafes/>

ENVIRONMENT & GREEN INVESTMENT

Cambridgeshire's carbon footprint

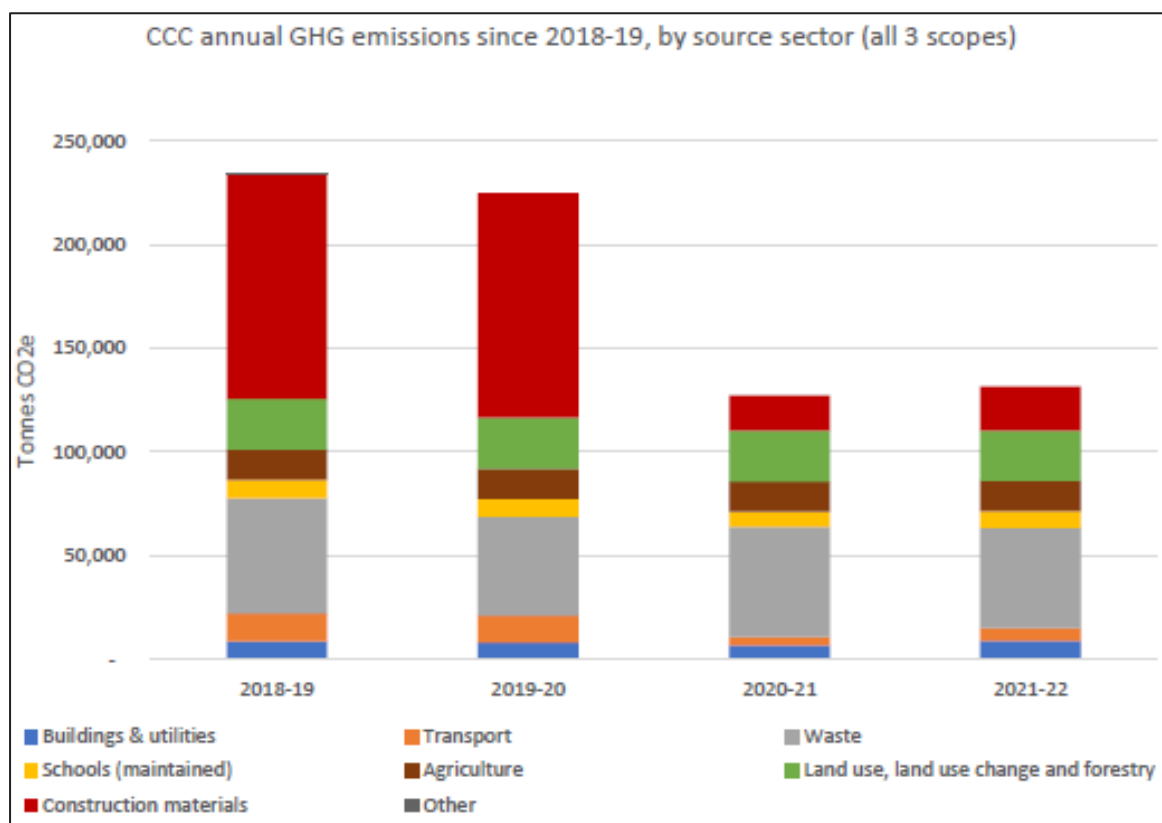
The Environment & Green Investment Committee received its annual update on carbon emissions from Cambridgeshire County Council, and from Cambridgeshire as a whole.

Cambridgeshire County Council

The Council's carbon emissions fall into three categories.

- Scope 1: direct emissions
- Scope 2: purchased electricity
- Scope 3: indirect emissions from assets outside the council's direct control.

The vast majority (95 per cent) of the Council's carbon emissions are 'Scope 3'. The council's carbon emissions for Scopes 1 and 2 were 1 per cent higher than the previous year, but 19 per cent down on the 2018-19 baseline. Scope 3 emissions were 4 per cent higher than the previous year, but 45 per cent down on the 2018-19 baseline, mostly due to reduced construction activity.

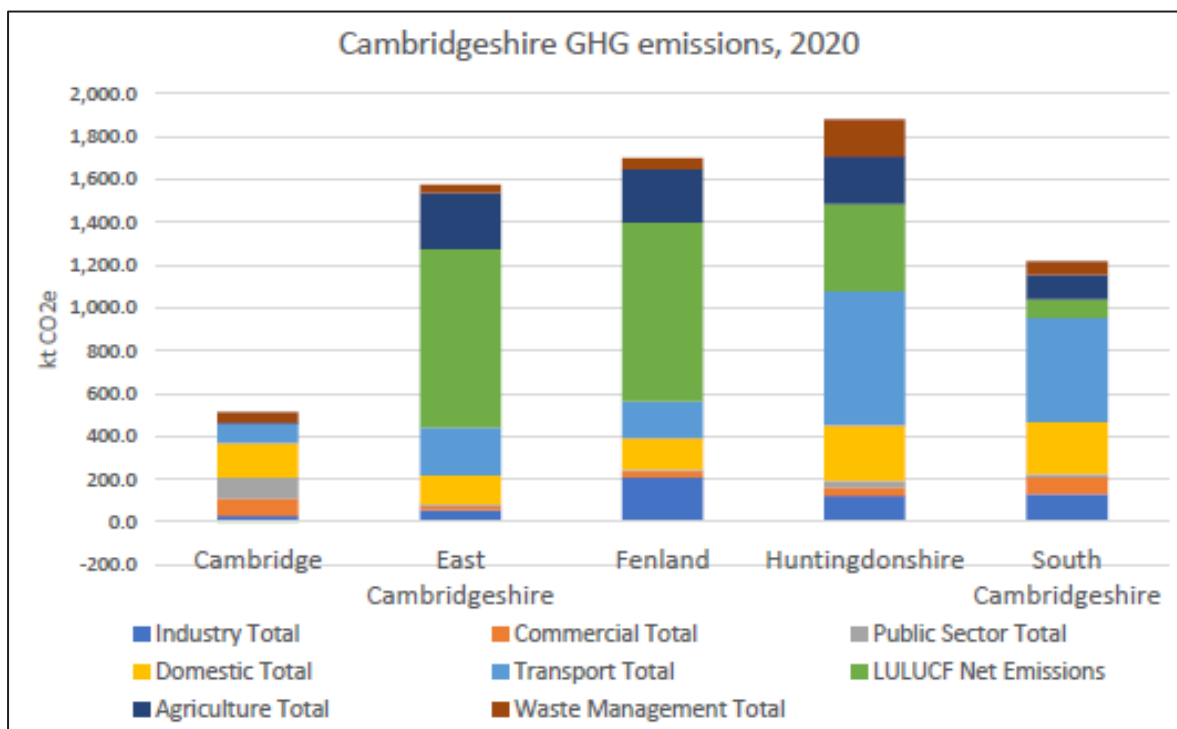


Cambridgeshire

Calculation of the county's carbon emissions now includes methane (CH₄) and nitrous oxide (N₂O) as well as carbon dioxide (CO₂). This means that emissions from agriculture and waste are now more fully accounted for.

2020 is the most recent year of data currently available at the time of writing. In that year the total GHG emissions for Cambridgeshire were 6.89 million tonnes CO₂e—a 5.9 per cent reduction compared to 2019. However 2020 is the year that the global COVID-19 pandemic hit, and some of the reductions will be due to reduced transport and business activity as a result of the UK-wide lockdowns during that year.

Land use, land use change and forestry (LULUCF—in green) remains the highest emitting sector in the county, followed by transport (in light blue).



Carbon emissions by district is always an interesting comparison. Of course East Cambridgeshire has half the population of Huntingdonshire so on a population basis these figures would look very different.

Optimising the revenue from our energy projects

The Environment & Green Investment Committee has agreed to engage a specialist energy market services provider to help the council increase the revenue it generates from selling renewable energy and battery storage services from the Council's large energy services.

HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORT

20MPH schemes

The Highways & Transport Committee is being asked to approve two changes to the Council's policy on 20MPH speed limits, and a new prioritisation matrix to enable it to assess applications for 20MPH schemes in Cambridgeshire.

The first change would remove the requirement that mean speeds should already be 24MPH or less on any road being considered for a 20MPH limit.

The second change would encourage extended area-based schemes rather than isolated roads or *culs-de-sac*.

The proposed prioritisation matrix consists of five questions.

1. Does the application address a known safety issue?
2. Could the suggested scheme increase safety for vulnerable highway users and encourage active travel modes?
3. Does the application maximise the impact of the introduction of 20MPH?
4. Does the application have demonstrable local support?
5. How deliverable is the scheme?

Drought damaged roads

Following up on my November report, I have continued to meet with the Leader of the Council and the chair and vice-chair of Highways & Transport to address the issue of drought damaged roads.

I also appeared with local residents Clair'Marie Mackness and Joyann Taylor on BBC Look East with evidence of the rapid deterioration of Black Bank and Hundred Foot Bank, and on BBC Radio Cambridgeshire with the chair of Cambridgeshire CPRE talking about this.

Officers are gathering information and liaising with neighbouring councils about a joint approach to this very significant problem on large numbers of local roads.

Civil Parking Enforcement

The County Council, Combined Authority and Greater Cambridge Partnership are discussing a collective funding offer to support the initial costs for Fenland, Huntingdonshire and South Cambridgeshire district councils in setting up civil parking enforcement (where on-street parking is enforced by the councils not by the police).

This will require up to £150,000 from each body (£50,000 per funder for each district). These contributions are subject to respective approval, and discussions continue, particularly with the CPCA, to identify additional funding. The same offer will be made to East Cambridgeshire District Council should it decide to join the rest of the country and adopt civil parking enforcement.

Road damage at The America Sutton

Work on the bump in the road at the bottom of The America, along with some patching at Chain Causeway, was carried out under an emergency closure, rather than having to wait until mid-January which was the original intention.

Windmill Lane Sutton

The poorly designed barrier between Windmill Lane and Windmill Walk in Sutton, on which a number of local young people have lost their teeth over the years, has now been replaced with a fence which provides an obvious and safer physical barrier, and also allows space for prams and buggies. Many thanks to our local highways officer Phil Harty for working so effectively with residents and me on this.

Local Highways Improvement update

The installation of solar studs on the B1411 Ely to Little Downham is still awaiting a delivery date from the contractor. At the request of the parish council, who are understandably frustrated by the delay, I have followed this up with the highways team.

Making Connections consultation

A reminder that the Greater Cambridge Partnership 'Making Connections' 2022 consultation runs until 23 December. This is about improvements to bus services, more active travel links, and a congestion charge for Cambridge.

Residents and those travelling to the area are being asked for their thoughts on the three parts of the proposal.

1. Transforming the bus network

From mid-2023, the GCP proposes to transform the bus network through new routes, additional services, cheaper fares and longer operating hours.

2. Investing in other sustainable travel schemes

Alongside the bus network, the GCP proposes to invest in new sustainable travel schemes, such as better walking and cycling links. Again, input is needed.

3. Creating a Sustainable Travel Zone

The GCP proposes the introduction of a Sustainable Travel Zone with a road user charge. Vehicles would be charged for driving within the zone between 7:00AM and 7:00PM on weekdays, and money raised would fund improvements to the bus network and other sustainable travel schemes. The Zone would be fully operational in 2027/28 but only after the bus improvements had been introduced. Again, residents' input is vital.

The survey, plus information about the proposals, including maps, frequently asked questions, dates of public meetings etc can be found at

<http://www.greatercambridge.org.uk/mc-2022>

Residents' views and insights are vital. Please have your say on this consultation.

IN OTHER NEWS

- Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service is looking for local residents and business owners to get involved in a new online feedback forum to share their views and opinions about the work of their local fire and rescue service. Anyone who signs up before Monday 19 December will be entered into a free prize draw to win a £50 gift voucher. If this is something you think might interest you, do read more at <https://www.cambsfire.gov.uk/news-and-incidents/news/2022/11/2022-11-22-fire-service-launches-community-forum>
- As austerity bites, the Cambridgeshire Schools Forum—a consultative body of schools with which the County Council meets regularly—met in early November amid rising concern about the practical impact of ‘desperate’ financial pressures on schools and Academy Trusts, and agreed the need to bring concrete examples to the attention of local MPs.

Meanwhile on the Combined Authority

A revised draft Bus Strategy has been presented to the Combined Authority's Transport & Infrastructure Committee and the Board. This sets out the principles of how the Combined Authority aims to achieve its ambition to more than double bus patronage by 2030. More details will be set out in the Combined Authority's revised Bus Service Improvement Plan.

An extension of the ‘Ting’ trial of Demand Responsive Transport, which provides bus services to 46 villages in West Huntingdonshire, was ‘called in’ by the Leader of East Cambridgeshire District Council. Her proposal to seek to open a renegotiation of the contract was defeated by 4 votes to 3. The decision of the Transport & Infrastructure Committee therefore stands and the extension of the trial, now under a new provider Vectare, continues.

The Government has still not provided clarity on funding the next steps of the Ely Area Capacity Enhancements to provide more rail capacity around Ely. This affects the ability of the Combined Authority to press ahead with plans for rail connections to Wisbech; and the Snailwell Loop which would allow improved services from Soham. Lobbying continues.

The work on implementing the Combined Authority's Improvement Plan continues, under a Board chaired by Lord Kerslake. Appointments are continuing to be made to fill the various staffing gaps in the organisation.

MEET YOUR COUNCILLOR

- **Sutton:** Cllr Mark Inskip and I will be holding our next surgery in the Community Room at the school on Monday 9 January from 6:30 to 7:30PM.

- **Witchford:** my next surgery will be on Monday 19 December, 6:30 to 7:30PM, in St Andrew's Hall in Main Street.
- **Little Downham:** I hope to be at the Book Café in the Village Hall on Friday 27 January from 10:00 to 11:00AM.

Season's greetings and all good wishes for the coming year to residents of Sutton, Mepal, Witcham, Wentworth, Coveney, Wardy Hill, Wayhead, Little Downham, Pymoor, and Witchford.



Cllr Lorna Dupré

County Councillor for the Sutton division