

Cllr Lorna Dupré

MONTHLY REPORT JUNE 2024

A brief report this month, given that we are now in a General Election period and a number of council meetings have been moved to dates after 4 July.

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

Ofsted report published

Cambridgeshire County Council's children's services have been graded overall as 'requires improvement' according to Ofsted—no change from the previous inspection. The report follows a recent inspection.

Inspectors said: "Senior leaders have now made an accurate self-assessment and have created strong foundations to drive practice improvement." However, inspectors said that although since 2019 there had been no overall improvement in services for vulnerable children, they acknowledged that "evidence of concrete and significant improvement in recent months had taken place."

They also added: "This improvement was initiated by a new chief executive and assisted by the appropriate decision to decouple shared leadership and service arrangements from Peterborough" and that "there has been significant political and corporate investment and commitment to the improvement of outcomes for children in Cambridgeshire."

The Council acknowledges that there is still work to be done.

Full Ofsted report at <https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50247204>

COMMUNITIES, SOCIAL MOBILITY & INCLUSION (COSMIC)

Quality of Life survey

The County Council has launched its second annual quality of life survey for Cambridgeshire. 5,500 residents, 1,100 from each district, have been selected for a telephone survey as a representative sample. However, any resident can complete the survey online until Friday 19 July.

<https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/CambsQoL2024/>

ENVIRONMENT & GREEN INVESTMENT

Wisbech incinerator

Before Parliament was dissolved at the end of May, the Government lifted its temporary ban on the Environment Agency issuing operating licences for new incinerators. The Environment Agency issued an operating licence for the

Wisbech incinerator the same day. We continue to wait to hear what is happening to Fenland District Council's application for judicial review of the Government's decision to grant planning permission.

Envar incinerator at Woodhurst

The Planning Inspector's report on the appeal against the Council's refusal of this application has been sent to the Secretary of State for consideration. A decision is expected to be issued on or before 20 August 2024.

Deposit return scheme

Also before Parliament was dissolved, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) confirmed that the Deposit Return Schemes for drinks containers will be introduced in October 2027, two years later than previously advised.

HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORT

New local highways officer

Our new local highways officer Neal Stevens has started in post and is getting busy with the many issues that require his attention.

I was very pleased how quickly he dealt with Little Downham Parish Council's request for the footway between the entrance to Old Fir Close and the junction with Cannon Street to be cleared of brambles.

Brick Lane Mepal

After many years of attempts to get this matter resolved, I am delighted to report that Cambridgeshire County Council has now concluded the investigations I requested into the spur of highway serving 2-9 Brick Lane Mepal. Officers say:

Various archival records were searched from the time of construction of the housing estate, including Housing Committee Minutes and Highway Committee Books. Within these, entries were found that confirmed Ely Rural District Council constructed the estate and in 1949 transferred the responsibility of the estate road to the Isle of Ely County Council, which was the Local Highway Authority at the time, as the predecessor to Cambridgeshire County Council.

Further to a briefing note on this matter being put to the Service Director (Highways and Transport), he has made the decision that the relevant section of road be recorded as a highway maintainable at public expense, including addition to the relevant inspection and maintenance schedules. Our highways records will be updated accordingly.

FIRE AUTHORITY

New chief fire officer recommended

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority Appointments Committee is recommending Matthew Warren as the new Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive Officer for Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service, following the retirement of Chris Strickland.

Matthew is currently Deputy Chief Executive for Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service and has worked for the Service for over twenty years. Matthew joined in 2003 as Head of Finance, before becoming Director of Resources in 2009 and Deputy Chief Executive in 2015. He will be recommended to the full Fire Authority when it meets on Thursday 20 June.

Meanwhile on the Combined Authority

New bus routes and improvements to existing routes are on the way, paid for by the Mayor's Precept. Locally these will include an additional Ely Zipper between Sutton and Ely taking in villages in between. And a new service will operate between Ely and Longstanton Park & Ride, via Witchford, Sutton, Earith and Willingham—something I have been lobbying for since 2016!

A demand-responsive travel solution for rural areas across most of East Cambridgeshire is also being worked on. Development will focus on Isleham and Little Downham and wider communities.

I'm delighted that significant moves are being made to improve bus provision locally—despite the Leader of East Cambridgeshire District Council voting against this when the Combined Authority Board was asked to approve the budget.

The routes still need to be procured and individual posters for each route will be released in the summer. The Combined Authority's web page on the bus proposals includes district-by-district explanations of the proposed routes, with maps. There's also a very quick survey to fill in—please do!

<https://cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk/better-buses/>

MEET YOUR COUNCILLORS

- **Coveney:** I hope to be at the coffee morning in the village hall on Wednesday 26 June from 10:30 to 11:30AM.
- **Little Downham:** I hope to be at the Book Café in the Village Hall on Friday 28 June from 10:00 to 11:00AM.
- **Sutton:** Cllr Mark Inskip and I will be in the school Community Room on Monday 1 July and Monday 5 August 6:30-7:30PM. I also hope to be at the

Sutton Timebank coffee morning on Tuesday 11 June 10:00-11:00 and Nellie's on Friday 28 June 12:30-1:30PM.

- **Witchford:** unfortunately I will be unable to attend the coffee morning in St Andrew's Hall this month due to other commitments.

Please note that these dates may be subject to change, particularly during the election period.

I can also be contacted

- by email at lorna@lornadupre.org.uk
- on Facebook
- by phone on 07930 337596

Cllr Lorna Dupré

County Councillor for the Sutton division