

Cllr Lorna Dupré

MONTHLY REPORT AUGUST 2026

FULL COUNCIL

Reform UK held the Ramsey and Bury county council seat on Thursday 16 July. The council's current composition is therefore

Liberal Democrat and Independent	33
Conservative	10
Reform UK	9
Labour	5
Green	3
Non-aligned Independent	1

The next meeting of the full county council is on Tuesday 13 October.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION

On the last day of Parliament before its summer holiday, the [then] Secretary of State for local government announced that he would be delaying a decision on new councils for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. He said a decision would be made 'by October'. Following the installation of a new Prime Minister, he is no longer Secretary of State.

The Government has said no further information is required from the existing councils in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough before it makes its decision.

Before the delay was announced, it had been rumoured that the Government would announce Option D as its preference—splitting Huntingdonshire down the middle. Peterborough MP Andrew Pakes, who along with North West Cambridgeshire MP Sam Carling drew up and promoted Option D, however said in Parliament in response to the Secretary of State's announcement that none of the four options was 'good enough for Peterborough'.

The Government has said that it expects local elections to the new councils in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to go ahead in May 2027, regardless of the delayed announcement. The Association of Electoral Administrators says that six months is the minimum time needed to prepare for an election, so this timetable puts huge pressure on the councils running the elections next May. It also gives very little time to complete preparations for apportionment of assets and liabilities between the councils, and to set up new services—two or (probably) three services for highways, social services, education, and more.

Ely & East Cambridgeshire MP Charlotte Cane asked in Parliament what further consultation there would be with local communities before a decision is made, and also whether there would extra support for election officers. The Secretary of State said the decision would be taken 'in good time for the appropriate electoral arrangements to be put in place' and did not answer the question about additional consultation.

ADULTS & HEALTH

Get Activated!

Cambridgeshire County Council's Get Activated summer activity campaign is back for 2026—promoting hundreds of free or low-cost activities for children, young people, and families.

At locations across Cambridgeshire, the county council and its partners will be running a variety of fun events and activities to help children and families stay healthy and connected throughout the summer holidays. From sports, arts and crafts, and outdoor adventures, to wellbeing sessions, community events and taking part in the Summer Reading Challenge, families will be able to enjoy a wide range of activities to keep everyone active, entertained, and having fun.

You can share your moments on social media using the hashtag #GetActivated <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/council/campaigns/get-activated>

Learning disability partnerships rated Good by CQC

People with learning disabilities across Cambridgeshire are benefiting from high-quality, compassionate and person-centred support, according to four Care Quality Commission (CQC) assessments published in late July.

Following visits in April 2026, the CQC rated the Cambridgeshire Learning Disability Partnership (LDP) services in Fenland, Huntingdonshire, East Cambridgeshire, and City & South Cambridgeshire as Good overall, recognising significant improvements since their previous inspections in 2023.

Services were assessed against the CQC's key areas of Safe, Effective, Caring, Responsive and Well-led. All four partnerships received ratings of Good in all areas, except Well-led which was rated as 'requires improvement'. This was due to one standard in relation to statutory notifications not always being submitted to the regulator in line with requirements. All other standards within the Well-led area were rated good or outstanding. Actions have been completed to ensure statutory notifications are submitted in line with CQC requirements in future.

The East Cambs report is at <https://www.cqc.org.uk/location/1-2540660517>

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

Significant improvement in children's services

Ofsted carried out a focused visit to Cambridgeshire in June, and has recognised significant improvements in the County Council's provision of appropriate placements for Cambridgeshire children in care since their last visit in 2024.

The summary also identifies four areas for improvement:

- the sufficiency of accommodation to meet the needs of children in care in Cambridgeshire;
- the quality and consistency of children's case records to reflect decision-making and children's journeys through care;
- the quality and effectiveness of supervision in progressing children's plans; and
- the quality and effectiveness of quality assurance activities to implement learning and develop social work practice.

A comprehensive action plan is developed after each inspection of Cambridgeshire's children's services, and the council will continue to work hard to develop a wide range of care options for children who cannot remain at home. Ensuring that children in care live in the best available homes—full of love, care and support—remains an absolute priority.

<https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50307019>

COMMUNITIES, SOCIAL MOBILITY AND INCLUSION

Graffiti youth outreach project at Ely underpass

The Gateway Project at Ely Underpass at Ely Leisure Village reached its third phase on Tuesday 21 July, with free graffiti taster sessions for Ely College students and an opportunity for visitors to meet the artists, project partners and young people involved in this initiative.

A second event will be held on Saturday 5 September, when The Gateway team will officially launch the City of Ely's first 'Free Wall'—a space where anyone can create their own graffiti artworks in line with project guidance and agreed themes. The Free Wall will be monitored and managed by the Gateway project team.

The Gateway Project has been funded through Ely City Council's Community Infrastructure Levy Sub-Committee, with contributions of expertise, time and resources by artists Nicola CRY and Kilo, Cambridgeshire County Council, East Cambridgeshire District Council, the Community Safety Partnership, Ely Tool Hire, and The Hive Leisure Centre.



ENVIRONMENT AND GREEN INVESTMENT

Active waste importation ceases at Grunty Fen landfill

Charlotte Cane MP, Cllr Tom Hawker-Dawson and I have welcomed a major breakthrough at Grunty Fen landfill, after confirmation that the site has stopped accepting active waste and is not expected to reopen for active waste disposal.

The Environment Agency has confirmed that, from 20 July 2026, the site closed to all waste inputs other than cover soils and restoration soils. The operator has also stated that it does not intend to reopen the site to active waste, with activity now focused on importing the soils needed to install the permanent cap, complete the site's restoration and prepare it for the aftercare period.

The announcement means active landfill operations have ended earlier than expected, bringing forward relief for nearby communities who have lived with fires, smoke, odour, litter, heavy lorry movements and wider impacts.

Charlotte, Tom and I have worked together over recent months to ensure residents' concerns remained firmly on the agenda, repeatedly pressing the Environment Agency and other agencies for stronger action, greater accountability and a clear route towards the site's closure and restoration. Charlotte has also raised the issue in Parliament. We are therefore delighted to welcome this major breakthrough for local residents.

This progress belongs first and foremost to the local residents who reported incidents, shared evidence and refused to let the issue be ignored. We are pleased to have been able to stand alongside them and use our roles at parliamentary and county level to help keep this issue firmly on the agenda.

We will continue pressing the operator to ensure the permanent cap is installed, restoration completed properly, and any remaining risks to nearby communities carefully managed. We will continue working until the restoration is complete and the community can finally draw a line under this long-running issue.

Agricultural water resilience grant opens

A new grant scheme for farmers and growers has launched to help boost agricultural water resilience across Cambridgeshire. Farmers, growers and horticultural businesses can now apply for grants of between £2,000 and £50,000 from a £1.3M grant scheme designed to improve water efficiency, strengthen resilience to drought, and support sustainable food production.

With funding provided by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, the scheme is being delivered by Water Resources East (WRE) in partnership with Cambridgeshire County Council as part of the Cambridge Water Efficiency Programme.

The launch comes as Cambridgeshire's agricultural sector faces growing pressure on water resources due to climate change, population growth and increasing environmental demands. Improving on-farm water efficiency is key to securing future water supplies, protecting sensitive river environments, and supporting long-term food production.

The first window for applications is now open to agricultural and horticultural businesses operating within Cambridgeshire. Applications will be reviewed at three intervals, based on applications received by 11:59PM on Sunday 27 September 2026, Sunday 29 November 2026, and Sunday 17 January 2027.

<https://wre.org.uk/agricultural-water-resilience-grant/>

Minerals and Waste local plan

Consultation on this stage of the plan opens on 3 August and closes on 10 October.

www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/mwlp-review

HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORT

£5M investment in winter readiness

The County Council's Highways & Transport Committee has agreed how to spend an additional £5M to help prepare more of the county's roads for the

winter. This comes on top of record levels of highways maintenance funding, with over £78M allocated for highways in 2026-27.

Only £31.3M of the council's highways maintenance budget comes from the Government—the rest is funded by the council itself.

Locally this will include repairs to the A142 between Ely and Soham, and the A1123 Hill Row Causeway in Haddenham. The new programme will use techniques new to Cambridgeshire such as large-scale mastic screed repairs, and structural patching as well as crack sealing to protect roads before defects form. The programme will run from August 2026 to March 2027, with a strong focus on delivering as much preventative work as possible before winter.

The council will also run a pothole innovation trial in October. This will test new equipment and materials under real-world conditions to identify the most effective approaches for future highway maintenance.

Contract awarded for innovative road repair trial

Cambridgeshire County Council has appointed Winvic Construction Ltd to deliver an innovative trial aimed at tackling the long-standing challenges of maintaining roads built on peat soils.

The soil affected roads innovation trial will test new and more resilient ways of repairing highways affected by peat and weak soils—an issue that impacts a significant proportion of the county's road network, including 97 per cent of roads in Fenland.

The trial will take place on the B1099, Upwell Road in March. A section of the road towards its junction with the B1098 (Sixteen Foot Bank) will provide an ideal location to trial a range of new engineering approaches in real-world conditions.

Construction will be followed by a twelve-month monitoring period to assess the performance of each treatment.

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/travel-roads-and-parking/highway-projects/soil-affected-roads-innovation-trial>

A142 crossing Sutton to Mepal

District councillor Mark Inskip, Mepal and Sutton parish clerks and I met with council officers last month to discuss plans for a better crossing from the top of Mepal Road Sutton across the A142 to the Mepal old alignment. We were united in asking for a speed limit reduction from the Chatteris side of the Mepal junction up beyond the current crossing point.

Chain Causeway and Hillrow Causeway coring works

Chain Causeway Sutton and Hillrow Causeway Haddenham will be closed briefly on Wednesday 12 August (Sutton) and Thursday 13—Tuesday 18 (Haddenham)

9:30AM-3:30PM for coring works to assess the structure and condition of the carriageway before reconstruction works later in the year.

Ireton's Way roadworks

Weekend working under lights is planned to take place in early August for the roadworks associated with the district council's crematorium.

Witchford Community Safety Forum

I was pleased to be invited as a panellist to the Community Safety Forum hosted by Witchford Parish Council last month. Many of the issues raised concerned highways and transport, and there was plenty of feedback to follow up.

Countryside access and Rights of Way

The County Council is reviewing its Rights of Way Improvement Plan and will soon be seeking comments from parish councils and county councillors.

The Plan outlines what the county council intends to do to protect and enhance our public rights of way network over the next ten years. The council would welcome feedback on this important policy which affects rural communities and people who do not use a car to travel around our county.

This is your opportunity to help shape Cambridgeshire's approach to public rights of way and countryside access into the future. Please look out for the engagement questionnaire arriving in your mailbox during August. If you have any questions, please email claf@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Cambridgeshire hosts national Active Travel event

Cambridgeshire recently hosted the UK's national active travel event, Active County Cambridgeshire, welcoming up to 800 industry professionals from as far afield as Heidelberg and Utrecht along with senior representatives from the Department for Transport, Welsh Government, Transport Scotland and Active Travel England.

MEANWHILE ON THE COMBINED AUTHORITY

'Rewiring the State'

The Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority has been granted 'Enhanced' status by the Government. Mayoral Authorities with this status will be in line for more powers to be passed from the Government to Mayors.

A statement by the Government at the end of July called *Rewiring the State* gives an idea of what this might involve. It includes giving Mayors control of budgets for 16-19 education, commuter rail services, social and affordable housing, with deputy mayors responsible for services from health to policing to education.

From 2028 Mayors will also receive a share of local income tax—and councils will retain more business rates.

In London the Mayor is held to account by a full, elected London Assembly. Outside London, it's not clear from the Government's proposals that much if any attention is being given to an increase in the effectiveness of scrutiny to match this accumulation of power.

MEET YOUR COUNCILLORS

Sutton surgery

Cllr Mark Inskip and I hold our monthly surgery at Joy Bistro 65 High Street Sutton. Forthcoming dates are Monday 7 September and Monday 5 October, 6:30-7:30PM.

Subject to diary changes, I hope to be at

- Sutton Timebank coffee morning on Tuesday 4 August at 10:00AM
- Witchford coffee morning on Wednesday 5 August at 10:00AM
- Coveney coffee morning on Wednesday 26 August at 10:30AM
- Little Downham Community Hub on Wednesday 26 August at 2:00PM
- Nellie's coffee morning (Sutton) on Friday 28 August at 11:00AM

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