

January 2024 Update from Cllr Heather Williams

Leader of the Conservative Group at South Cambridgeshire District Council

Four-day week data finally published

On 22 January 2024, the Lib Dem administration finally published the four-day week performance data on the council's website that is being sent to government under the Best Value Notice. This data can be found [here](#).

The publication of the data follows our hard-fought battle to gain access to this information for residents and councillors.

At an Extraordinary Full Council meeting on 20 November 2023, we asked to see the business case for the four-day week. In January, we still had not had a response to our request to see the business case and followed up on this request. We then learned that there was no business case – only the original proposal agreed by Cabinet on 12 September 2022. Everything the council does has a cost attached – any time spent on projects by council officers is time being paid for and costing residents, which is why it is so concerning that the Cabinet paper said there was no cost associated with the trial.

Financial

27. There would be no cost to undertaking the trial.

With no business case to underpin the trial we are very concerned that the true cost of this trial has not been properly considered.

On 4 January 2024, we received word that the Lib Dem Cabinet had decided they would not publish the data until the Best Value Notice was withdrawn. This worried us as we did not know how long this would take and proper scrutiny of the data should be made in a timely manner.

On 8 January 2024, Conservative councillors requested to see the four-day week data under their rights as a member of the Scrutiny committee – to help them properly scrutinise the administration.

It was confirmed that we had a right to see the information being sent to government and following our request, the administration finally agreed to publish the four-day week data on the council's website.

While we have succeeded in getting the Lib Dem administration to share the data they are sending to government, we will not stop here. We will continue to push for more transparency in relation to the four-day week to enable residents to see where their money is going.

We also asked to see how much money the Lib Dem administration has spent on legal advice relating to the four-day week. We are still awaiting an answer about this.

Best Value Notice

The District Council continues to be subject to a Best Value Notice from Government. We are aware that the administration has not been able to supply answers to all of the initial queries and requests. Government have subsequently requested further information from the Council.

When there will be a vote to make the trial permanent or not is yet unknown. Cabinet may alone decide to extend the trial.

Civil Parking Enforcement in South Cambs

Cambridgeshire County Council was given new Civil Parking Enforcement powers, which includes South Cambs. Since 19 December 2023, warning notices with no fines attached have been issued to parking offenders. However, from 1 February 2024, Penalty Charge Notices will be issued with fines between £50 and £70, depending on the severity of the offence.

To avoid paying fines, we encourage you to always check signs and notices in the area where you are planning to park. Parking restrictions are there for a reason: to ensure maximum safety for everybody. Please do think carefully about where you park, as these new powers mean you're much more likely to be fined for parking where you shouldn't.

Consultations

We are encouraging residents, businesses and local organisations to have their say on the future of housing in Cambridgeshire.

The consultation runs for six weeks from 22 January 2024 to 4 March 2024. More information on how to share your views can be accessed via the link below:

[Have your say on the future of local housing \(scambs.gov.uk\)](https://scambs.gov.uk)

Grants for community groups and parish councils

If you are from a local community group or parish council, we are encouraging you to make the most of the council's available grant schemes. The [GrantGrabber service](#) helps you search for available grants – all in one place.

For further information on receiving a grant for a community project from the council, please visit the [grants webpage](#).

Thank you for reading our report. If we can be of any assistance, please do get in touch.

Cllr Heather Williams

Leader of the Opposition at South Cambridgeshire District Council

Email: cllr.williamsh@scambs.gov.uk

Twitter: @scambs_cons

Facebook Page: South Cambridgeshire Conservative Group

Website: www.southcambsconservativegroup.co.uk