

May 2024 Update from Cllr Heather Williams

Leader of the Conservative Group at South Cambridgeshire District Council

Best Value Notice extended

On 8 May 2024, the government extended the Best Value Notice for the council because there are still concerns residents are not getting value for money under the four-day week trial. Despite the trial officially ending in March, council staff continue to work four days a week (now 32 hours instead of 30 hours) for full pay.

Councillors considered the Best Value Notice at the council's AGM on 23 May 2024. Our group proposed an amendment to stop the four-day week in June to ask for the Best Value Notice to be withdrawn. It was disappointing that Lib Dem councillors unanimously voted down this amendment, instead agreeing to continue providing weekly performance data to continue with the four-day week.

We are continuing to scrutinise the performance data and are continuing to fight for a consultation with South Cambs residents and for all councillors to get a vote on the four-day week.

New grants for community groups

We are encouraging community groups to apply for several new grants that have become available in order to help improve community cohesion in South Cambridgeshire.

- **Rural England Prosperity Fund** – the council has been allocated almost £900,000 to support local businesses and community initiatives, such as volunteering opportunities and creating or diversifying jobs. You can apply for £10,000 to £100,000 of funding. Check if your area is eligible [here](#). You can also [view government guidance](#) which includes examples of eligible projects.
- **Community growing projects** – parish or town councils, community groups and schools are all eligible for grants of up to £500 to set up community gardens. For more information and how to apply, please visit the [webpage](#).

- **Northstowe Community Activation Fund** – £120,000 of grant funding is available to help promote community cohesion in Northstowe. Parish or town councils and non-profit organisations can apply – please do visit the council's [webpage](#) for more information.

General Election and the council

Due to the ongoing General Election campaign, the council will not be making any announcements that appear to endorse any political party. This means public statements from councillors will not be included in the council's communications.

Please do rest assured, however, that we as councillors are still here to help you if you need it. We can be contacted by email or phone – please check the council's [webpage](#) to find your councillor and their contact details if you need to get in contact.

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

Cllr Heather Williams

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