

July 2024 Update from Cllr Heather Williams

Leader of the Conservative Group at South Cambridgeshire District Council

Results of the four-day week trial

On Thursday 18 July, full council scrutinised and debated the [results of the four-day week trial](#) at South Cambridgeshire District Council. The results cover the official trial period of January 2023 to March 2024, where desk-based staff worked 30 hours per week for 37 hours' pay. The waste crews trialled a four-day week between September 2023 and March 2024, working 32 hours per week for 37 hours' pay. Despite the trial ending in March, the Lib Dem administration is continuing its part-time hours for full-time pay experiment, as all council employees are now working 32 hours per week for 37 hours' pay.

We voiced our firm opposition to the four-day week in the council meeting, asking questions of the Lib Dem administration including but not limited to:

- How is the data reliable when 37% of council staff reported working more than four days a week in 2024 to prop up the trial?
- Would the administration not agree that nearly 1 in 6 employees undertaking other paid work on their day off significantly undermines the supposed wellbeing benefits of the trial, whilst losing productivity for this council?
- If other councils were to adopt a four-day week this council would lose its competitive advantage – surely removing any benefit of being the first to trial a four-day week and requiring other recruitment innovations?
- 31% of staff reported feeling more stressed, 72% of whom were adversely impacted by that stress. Does the Leader consider those to be acceptable numbers?
- In 18 months there have been 53 process changes, such as automation and an AI webchat, yet the KPIs have remained the same. Given such fundamental streamlining, how is it right to look at unadjusted KPIs and say the data is a fair reflection of the council's four-day week performance?
- How are we monitoring the long-term impacts of increased workload intensity on the bodies of waste operatives?
- When will there be a public consultation and when will all councillors get to vote on this?

We were disappointed by the administration's refusal to respond to all of our questions. We are continuing to voice our concerns and hold the Lib Dem administration to account.

Planning website update

I am pleased to see our Planning department is creating a new more accessible website for parish councils and residents to use. This aims to be clearer and easier to use to ensure everybody can understand the technicalities of planning.

I understand this has been taken to parish forums and will undergo routine user testing at the council, but I am hopeful the new website will be available for parish councils and residents to make use of soon.

If you have any suggestions which you would like me to take forward, please go get in touch.

Civil Parking Enforcement update

We are pleased to see that Civil Parking Enforcement appears to be working in South Cambridgeshire. As in the table below, Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) have mostly been recovered – mainly issued to vehicles parked on single or double yellow lines.

Total PCNs issued	Number of PCNs paid to date	Recovery Rate %	Total amount Paid to date	Number of PCNs outstanding	%	PCNs cancelled	Cancellations as a %
555	439	79%	£16,090.00	56	10%	60	11%

It is encouraging that firm action is being taken on uncivil parking. Parking restrictions are there for a reason and protect the safety of pedestrians and road users. We are encouraging everyone to check the signs where you plan to park to prevent being issued with a fine and protect everybody's safety.

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

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