

Four-day week update – Best Value Notice dropped

At the beginning of November, the government decided to drop the council's Best Value Notice, which had been in place since November 2023 over concerns that residents were not getting value for money under the four-day week.

It is disappointing that the government has opened the door to four-day working weeks because we have seen worrying trends at the council. Over 160 staff are having to work more than four days a week to prop up the council – and 16% do another paid job on their day off each week, throwing into doubt the supposed staff wellbeing benefits of the four-day week.

It is my understanding that a public consultation on the four-day week will happen at a postponed date of January 2025 – two years after the four-day week trial first began. When this consultation is live, I would encourage all residents to make your voices heard on this significant issue. Are you happy to pay for your council to have an extra day off each week?

I believe that, in these uncertain times, we require more support from our local councils – not less. I am continuing to scrutinise council performance to ensure the four-day week does not jeopardise further services for residents.

Supporting family farms

I am proud to back British farmers – strongly opposing the government's family farm tax. It was encouraging to see over 20,000 farmers and their families protesting against the tax in London on 19 November.

Our farmers put food on our table and care for our natural environment. We depend on them for our survival, so it is concerning that the farm tax threatens Britain's oldest farming families who have fed our nation for centuries.

We encourage you to [share our video](#) supporting British farmers.

Fraud awareness - #DoTheRightThing

I am encouraging residents to #DoTheRightThing to prevent fraudulently claiming Council Tax discounts or exemptions.

Since July 2023, over £800,000 in lost Council Tax has been identified – placing an unfair burden on others and reducing the funds available for essential public services. We are therefore urging residents to [check if they are eligible](#) for Council Tax discounts, and to [report suspected fraud online](#).

Pension Credit

I am encouraging pensioners to check if they are eligible for Pension Credit this winter to receive help with Winter Fuel Payments.

You must apply by 21 December 2024, and backdate your application to at least 22 September 2024, in order to be eligible. Please visit the [council's webpage](#) for more information.

White Ribbon Accreditation

I support the council's White Ribbon Accreditation, working with White Ribbon UK to prevent harassment, abuse, and violence against women and girls.

It is vital to make our workplace and communities safe for everybody. I continue to support the council's work to raise awareness for this important campaign and support the efforts of council staff to advocate positive attitudes within South Cambridgeshire.

Grants for community groups and parish councils

If you are from a local community group or parish council, I am 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 my report. If I can be of any assistance, please do get in touch.

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