

## January 2024 Update from Cllr Heather Williams

### Leader of the Conservative Group at South Cambridgeshire District Council

#### Four-day week data published

On 22 January 2024, the 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 my hard-fought battle to gain access to this information for residents and councillors.

At an Extraordinary Full Council meeting on 20 November 2023, I asked to see the business case for the four-day week. In January, I still had not had a response to my request to see the business case and followed up on this request. I 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 I am very concerned that the true cost of this trial has not been properly considered.

On 4 January 2024, I received word that Cabinet had decided they would not publish the data until the Best Value Notice was withdrawn. This worried me as I 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, I requested to see the four-day week data under my rights as a member of the Scrutiny committee – to help me properly scrutinise the administration.

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

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

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

### **Timeline of Data Requests and Submissions**

Best Value Notice issued	3 November 2023
Data request outline received	8 November 2023
Data request confirmed and live online	13 November 2023
Deadline for first weekly data submission	20 November 2023
<b><i>I asked to see the business case for the four-day week trial.</i></b>	<b><i>20 November 2023</i></b>
Deadline for retrospective data submission	11 December 2023
Expanded and revised weekly and retrospective data request received	29 December 2023
<b><i>I received word that Cabinet would not be publishing the data until the Best Value Notice was withdrawn</i></b>	<b><i>4 January 2024</i></b>
<b><i>I requested to see the data under my rights as a Scrutiny member</i></b>	<b><i>8 January 2024</i></b>
<b><i>I received confirmation that the data would be provided to me within 10 working days</i></b>	<b><i>9 January 2024</i></b>
<b><i>I received notification that the data would be made public for everyone to see on 22 January 2024</i></b>	<b><i>16 January 2024</i></b>
Deadline for expanded and revised data request	15 January 2024
Launch of SCDC online publication of data	22 January 2024

## **Best Value Notice**

The District Council continues to be subject to a Best Value Notice from Government. I am 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.

## **Consultations**

I am 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, 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.

**Cllr Heather Williams**

**SCDC The Mordens Ward**

Tel: 07885 774 775

Email: [cllr.williamsh@scambs.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.williamsh@scambs.gov.uk)

Twitter: @Cllr\_H\_Williams

Facebook Page: Cllr Heather Williams

Website: [www.cllrheatherwilliams.co.uk](http://www.cllrheatherwilliams.co.uk)