

LONGSTANTON WARD DISTRICT COUNCELLOR REPORT JUNE 2023

NORTHSTOWE TOWN COUNCIL (27TH JUNE 2023)

CLLR NATALIE WARREN-GREEN

Four day week trial for SCDC officers

The 4 Day week continues to hit the media and news, here is an update for you from the CEO to offer some clarity on the situation and especially on costs, and the expansion of the trial to waste services, which have been questioned in the press:

- SCDCs Cabinet agreed for the Council to trial a 4-day week to improve recruitment and retention of staff, improve productivity and deliver savings and efficiencies.
- The trial is expected to lead to an overall reduction in costs. In some areas – such as waste services – costs may increase a little, but this will be more than offset by reduced costs elsewhere.
- It is often appropriate to use agency staff for specialist projects but, before the start of the 4-day week trial, the Council was spending around £2 million a year on agency staff who were just covering office-based vacancies that there were difficulties recruiting in to. It is expected that this figure could be reduced to £1 million a year due to improved recruitment in the 4-day week.
- In the first 3 months of the desk-based trial, agency costs for covering vacancies had already reduced by £300,000.
- For the trial in the waste service, any cost for the initial 3-month trial will be met within existing funds. However, should the Council adopt the 4-day week on a more permanent basis, there will be some additional revenue cost for that service.
- There would undoubtedly be savings in waste due to reduced use of agency staff, reduced overtime to catch up on time lost through Bank Holidays and reduced recruitment costs, but these are difficult to quantify at this stage.
- Therefore, the additional cost for the waste service is estimated to be around £207,000 a year split between SCDC and Cambridge City Council. In the medium term there will also be a need to purchase 2 new vehicles, the depreciation costs for which are included in the £207,000 figure.
- This additional cost in waste will need to be offset against the savings achieved in other parts of the Council when calculating the financial net benefits delivered by the 4-day week.
- The change to 4-day arrangements in waste will include improved service to residents by eliminating the need to change collection days when a bank holiday falls on a Monday. This should also lead to improved recycling rates due to an increase in bins being presented for collection on the correct day.
- The reduction in the use of agency staff will also decrease the number of missed bins due to greater familiarity permanent staff have of their rounds.
- Environmental benefits include the improved grouping of properties for bin collections with reduced fleet mileage contributing to the Council's Net Zero Carbon targets.

STZ proposals – comments on the consultation results

The results of the STZ consultation have been published and can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/mra44p8x>

The following comments are based on an initial review of the GCP report by the Lib Dem Group at SCDC. They have also been shared with the Oakington & Westwick TAG group:

- The aims of the proposals are to improve the quality of life by reducing traffic congestion and pollution. The scheme also seeks to address the serious inequalities apparent in the Greater Cambridge area and to increase the benefits, both to people and the environment, that come from enabling residents to use a modern public transport system in preference to private motor vehicles.
- Residents who live and travel to work in the Greater Cambridge area understand that the rapid economic growth in Greater Cambridge needs the infrastructure and housing to support it and that doing nothing is not an option. This was the purpose of the government's City Deal funding which underpins the STZ proposals. Respondents support better bus services but remain worried, especially during a cost-of-living crisis, about the burden of a Sustainable Travel Zone (STZ) charge. Even though the proposals give 3 or 4 years to improve public transport provision before any charging occurs, the public remains sceptical.

- The planned withdrawal of rural bus services by Stagecoach in recent months shows market failure; private bus companies will put their business needs ahead of unprofitable but vital community transport provision. Franchising offers control over routes, fares, frequency and hours of operation and could be in place within the next 18 months.
- People who cannot drive and/or afford a car, such as some young people and the less well-off are very supportive of improved bus services. Young people feel that their education and job choices are badly restricted if they do not own a car, and they welcome alternatives.
- There was clear concern about charging to access the Addenbrookes site, right from the first publication of the map of the STZ, and changes to it were always likely. We expect changes to be made such that trips will not incur a Zone charge.
- Tradespeople welcome the prospect of easier city access that reduced congestion would bring but think that a premium charge on commercial vehicles is unfair. We hope that this differentiation will be removed.
- Respondents thought that an all-day charge is unnecessary, and we are supportive of a scheme that charges only at peak times. This would allow family visits, voluntary care workers and delivery trips to be scheduled to take place without incurring any charge.
- It is clear that residents throughout Cambridgeshire support Active Travel. One of the least contentious areas of feedback is the work of the Greenways Project and other active travel schemes. People have told us they want to be able to cycle or walk easily and safely to more places, something that is currently restricted to the villages closest to Cambridge.
- The final decision on the scheme will be taken by Cambridgeshire County Council later in the year.

Cambridgeshire Archives

Cambridgeshire Archives are asking Parish Councils to donate any records of any event or activity carried out for the late Queen's Platinum Jubilee, the Accession of King Charles III or the Coronation of King Charles III. They wish to preserve them for viewing by future generations. Please contact: cambs.archives@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Civil Parking Enforcement update

I thought you would like to hear that we recently took another step towards the introduction of Civil Parking enforcement (CPE) in South Cambridgeshire. The plan is for the GCP to support the project in the first few years of operation but, in time, it will have to be financially self-sufficient. There is still much to do and setting up the scheme requires multi-agency involvement, including that of central government but SCDC officers have been working on this as a priority, and it is not beyond hope that it could be introduced within a year.

South Cambs magazine

SCDC uses both private delivery and Royal Mail to deliver the South Cambs magazine. We are aware that, in some villages, there have been glitches with the service recently and I would encourage anyone who misses out to let us know via scdc@smartdistribution.co.uk or by phoning 0800 6444 011. The magazine is an important source of information on SCDC's services (including changes to bin collections) especially for those people who do not use the internet, so in future I plan to let everyone know that the magazine is due via Facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/libdems3rdMay18/>

Electric Vehicle Charging points (EVCP)

I would remind the PC that grants of up to £5K are still available to help with the purchase and installation of EVCPs for public use, including electrical works, ground works, bay markings, barriers, and signs. The EVCPs must be located in off-street car parks and the grants are available to Parish councils, Village Hall or community centre/community building Trusts, Charitable and not-for-profit organisations directly involved in running village halls, community centres, and community buildings with parking. <https://tinyurl.com/y4jwynfc>

SCDC grants for voluntary groups

Community groups in South Cambridgeshire have been given a funding boost thanks to grants from SCDC. Eleven voluntary sector groups are to receive funding this financial year as part of the Council's Grants to the Voluntary Sector scheme with an emphasis on projects that support people impacted most by the cost-of-living crisis.

The groups receiving grants are Home Start Royston & South Cambridgeshire, Cambridge Dial-a-Ride, Care Network Cambridgeshire, Cambridge Council for Voluntary Service, Cambridgeshire Older People's Enterprise, Arts and Minds, The Voluntary Network, REACH Community, Disability Huntingdon, Royston & District Community Transport and Citizens Advice.

COUNCILS, RESPONSIBILITIES AND KEY GOVERNMENT FUNDED ORGANISATIONS

If you have a problem or concern do not worry too much about who can solve it just ask the question and we will endeavour to signpost to the right person. The organisational structure of Cambridgeshire is complex, but it is important to identify where responsibility lies.

<p>County Council</p> <p>Responsibilities: Education, Transport, Highways, Heritage, Social care, Libraries, Trading standards, - Waste management, Maintaining their estate.</p> <p>Some of these services are shared between Peterborough City Council and Cambridgeshire County Council but any concerns should be directed to the county council.</p>
<p>District Council</p> <p>Responsibilities: Council tax payments and benefits, Household bin collections, Housing and housing benefits, Council leisure facilities, Environmental health, Residential planning.</p>
<p>Parish/ Town Council</p> <p>Responsibilities: Looking after community buildings, Open spaces, Allotments, Play Areas, Bus shelters.</p>
<p>Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP)</p> <p>'The local delivery body for a City Deal with central Government worth up to £500 million over 15 years, to vital improvements in infrastructure (decarbonising transport), supporting and accelerating the creation of 44,000 new jobs, 33,500 new homes and 420 additional apprenticeships.'</p> <p>Partnership between Cambridge City Council, Cambridgeshire County Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council, University of Cambridge.</p>
<p>The Combined Authority, Cambridge and Peterborough, our elected Mayor</p> <p>'A combined authority (CA) is a legal body set up using national legislation that enables a group of two or more councils to collaborate and take collective decisions across council boundaries.'</p> <p>What our mayor does – Business support, skills, housing, transport, environment, international, digital connectivity, resilience, research, and strategy. New homes.</p>
<p>Police and Crime Commissioner, Cambridge and Peterborough</p> <p>To support and challenge the Chief Constable to provide effective and efficient policing services for the area.</p>
<p>Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority</p> <p>The Fire Authority is the governing body responsible for delivering a fire and rescue service to Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. It is made up of Cambridgeshire County Councillors and Peterborough City Councillors.</p>

CONTACT DETAILS

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions about the above, or any other matters.

Cllr Natalie Warren-Green for Longstanton Ward including Longstanton, Northstowe, and Oakington & Westwick

Email: cllr.warrengreen@scambs.gov.uk

For those on social media we have a highly active Facebook group:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2066298150052161/> - Longstanton, Oakington and Northstowe