

South Cambridgeshire District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee held on
Tuesday, 25 April 2023 at 5.20 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillor Stephen Drew – Chair
Councillor Graham Cone – Vice-Chair

Councillors: Anna Bradnam Libby Earle
Sue Ellington Peter Fane
James Hobro Helene Leeming
Judith Rippeth Richard Stobart
Dr. Aidan Van de Weyer

Officers in attendance for all or part of the meeting:

In the Chamber: Marco De Luca (Principal Operations Manager – Waste), Bode Esan (Head of Climate, Environment & Waste), Andrew Francis (Elections and Democratic Services Manager), Lee Hillam (Operations Programme Manager), Peter Maddock (Head of Finance), Ian Senior (Scrutiny and Governance Adviser), Liz Watts (Chief Executive), Dee Wood (Waste Policy Officer) and Jeff Membery (Head of Transformation, HR and Corporate Services)

Councillor Bill Handley (Lead Cabinet Member for Communities) was in attendance remotely, by invitation.

Councillor Henry Batchelor (Lead Cabinet Member for Environment) was present in the Chamber.

1. Chair's announcements

The Chair made several brief housekeeping announcements.

2. Apologies for absence

Councillors Tom Bygott and Sally Ann Hart sent apologies.

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4. Minutes of Previous Meeting

By affirmation, the Committee authorised the Chair to sign, as a correct record, the minutes of the meeting held on 28 March 2023.

Councillor Judith Rippeth had not been present at that meeting so was not part of the affirmation.

5. Public Questions

Mr. Daniel Fulton had registered to ask a question but was unable to attend the meeting. As requested by him, the question was not asked in his absence and no answer was provided.

6. Collection Changes - The future of waste collections

The Scrutiny and Overview Committee considered a draft Cabinet report that focussed on waste collection optimisation, past and future housing development, legislative change, and the trial of a four-day-week waste collection service subject to receiving approval from Cambridge City Council as this Council's partner in the Greater Cambridge Shared Waste Service (GCSWS). At the Chair's invitation, the Head of Climate, Environment and Waste gave a brief overview of the proposals.

In reply to Councillor Richard Stobart, the Head of Climate, Environment and Waste summarised the methodology adopted. He said that GCSWS had appointed an experienced consultancy company (ISL) to advise it about how best to conduct the review. ISL had used industry-recognised software to undertake their analysis and modelling. Their approach had involved establishing a baseline for the existing operations based on vehicle type, the nature and weight of materials collected, travel time, collection areas and destination for treatment and disposal. ISL had also looked at data mapping tools. The baseline models for each waste stream (recycling, organic and residual waste) had then been checked and refined against actual data collected from in-vehicle software and the depot weighbridge. Having been calibrated, the baseline models had then been used to assess alternative solutions for refreshing the collection of each of the waste streams.

Councillor Sue Ellington asked whether the proposed four-day-week was affecting South Cambridgeshire District Council's relationship with local authorities such as Huntingdonshire District Council, and whether this Council would be causing them problems if new working arrangements had the effect of attracting their own refuse operatives. She also asked about South Cambridgeshire operatives working elsewhere on their non-working day. Councillor Henry Batchelor (Lead Cabinet Member for Environment) informed the Committee that the feedback from waste collection crews at both South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridge City Council, as well as from Trade Unions, had been positive. Officers felt that, on balance, the benefits were likely to outweigh any risks, and that South Cambridgeshire District Council would be setting an example that other local authorities might eventually follow.

The Waste Policy Officer said that several options existed for developing a new working pattern that focussed on improving the health and wellbeing of staff.

Councillor Anna Bradnam observed that long-term injury among waste collection operatives might increase as a result of implementing a four-day-week for them. Councillor Bradnam said it would be crucial to monitor the situation and, if possible, identify injuries picked up as a result of the 4-Day-Week and those resulting from activities, such as other manual labour, pursued on Non-Working Days. The Lead Cabinet Member for Environment acknowledged the high-risk nature of some jobs and assured the Committee that health and wellbeing would be treated as being of paramount importance.

Councillor Helene Leeming asked officers to amend the report to Cabinet on 15 May 2023 so that the financial implications set out in paragraphs 43 to 48 were more transparent.

The Committee explored the overall impact of introducing a four-day-week. This included

anticipated costs and net environmental benefits, as well as the need to continue supporting behavioural change among residents to prepare them for future methods of dealing with waste.

Councillor Anna Bradnam highlighted a discrepancy in the budgeted cost of the four-day-week trial as shown in paragraphs 46 and 48 of the report. The Head of Climate, Environment and Waste acknowledged that the figure of £33,000 in the table at paragraph 48 (route optimisation and four-day-week trial period) should be £16,500 representing a 50:50 split between South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridge City Council.

Concluding the debate, the Chair thanked officers for their contribution to the meeting and emphasised that South Cambridgeshire District Council owed GCSWS staff a duty of care. He noted that the four-day-week trial would not proceed if Cambridge City Council failed to support it.

Having reviewed the draft report, and by affirmation, the Scrutiny and Overview Committee **supported the recommendation** that Cabinet should

- a. note the round optimisation process and revised number of routes as set out at paragraph 33;
- b. note the impact that past and future growth and legislative changes will have on the collection service;
- c. approve the trial of a four-day-week waste collection service for three months from Summer 2023 to be funded by existing operational budgets within the service, with a report on the outcome of the trial presented to Cabinet in the Autumn of 2023; and
- d. note that any agreement to trial a four-day-week will need to be approved by Cambridge City Council (part of the GCSWS).

7. **Work Programme**

Members **received and noted** the Scrutiny and Overview Committee work programme attached to the agenda.

Councillor Richard Stobart, Chair of the Young People Task & Finish Group, updated the Committee about the Group's progress to date, highlighting a separate meeting with officers already promoting youth engagement with the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service. The Scrutiny and Overview Committee Vice-Chair thanked Councillor Stobart for his leadership of the Task & Finish Group.

8. **To Note the Date of the next meeting**

Members noted that the meeting scheduled for 11 May 2023 had been cancelled and that the next Scrutiny and Overview Committee meeting would take place on Thursday 8 June 2023 starting at the new time of 5.30pm.

The Meeting ended at 7.20 p.m.
