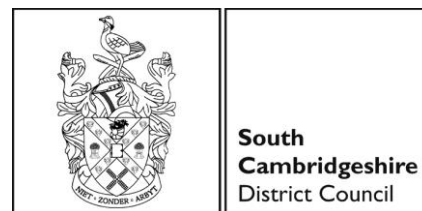


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To: Chair – Councillor Anna Bradnam
Vice-Chair – Councillor Peter Fane
All Members of the Council

Quorum: 15

Dear Councillor

This is a supplement to the previously-published agenda for the meeting of **Council** on **Tuesday, 21 February 2023**, containing those reports which had not been received by the original publication deadline.

Yours faithfully

Liz Watts

Chief Executive

Agenda

Pages

17 (b) From Councillor Carla Hofman

A written answer to the following question:

To Lead Cabinet Member for Communities

“Can the lead member provide an update on the support the council has provided to local people on the cost of living crisis following the approval by cabinet of a package of measures late last year?”

17 (e) From Councillor Dr Susan van de Ven

A written answer to the following question:

To the Lead Cabinet Member for Economic Development

“Can Councillor McDonald explain how the council is supporting local businesses outside of the booming science and IT sectors to survive and thrive during this difficult economic period?”

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Agenda Item 17b

Written response to question from Councillor Carla Hofman:

Question:

To the Lead Cabinet Member for communities

Can the lead member provide an update on the support the council has provided to local people on the cost of living crisis following the approval by cabinet of a package of measures late last year?

Response from Councillor Bill Handley, Lead Cabinet Member for Communities:

We've heard a great deal about the cost of living crisis, so I won't labour the point here except to describe the things that the council has been doing to mitigate the effects on our residents. We have resolved to identify and target our response to those people who are just about managing – in work and not receiving government benefits but finding themselves in financial difficulties due to recent events.

Late last year the council allocated a £400,000 budget to help mitigate the effects of the rising cost of living and then moved quickly to implement a number of support measures.

Although this Council has provided vital funding for a range of programmes that I will touch on in a moment, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Integrated Care System which provided funding for the Warm Hubs that popped up in many villages in the early winter. More about them in a moment.

Rather than go through the full programme of measures run by the council, I want to highlight three main things.

Firstly, we made available 400 electric blankets and slow cookers to reduce the cost of cooking food and of keeping warm and, using the council's own data, we targeted those who are just about managing. We have had some heart-warming letters of thanks.

Secondly, warm hubs. When the council made the decision late last year to increase funding, we went from trying to deliver just a handful of hubs to 25 of them. This happened in a matter of weeks. Cambridgeshire ACRE have been instrumental in this as our partner, but once again our community volunteers have made the difference as the hubs can only work with their help and I'd like to thank them all.

And finally, food parcels. Our food parcel scheme provides one week of food to the door without having to go through any complex application process. We are looking to expand this scheme and I would urge members to refer people in their wards who they think would benefit. Again, this campaign is having a big impact on people's lives.

Members will have seen a key decision notice published for Cabinet in March where we will be assessing the next phase of our cost-of-living support. I'm proud of all of the work that has been undertaken by officers, partners and volunteers on this and I look forward to working with our dedicated officers and partners on the next steps. to continue to support vulnerable South Cambs people through this very difficult time.

Agenda Item 17e

Written response to question from Councillor Dr Susan van de Ven:

Question:

Can Councillor McDonald explain how the council is supporting local businesses outside of the booming science and IT sectors to survive and thrive during this difficult economic period?

Response from Councillor Peter McDonald, Lead Cabinet Member for Business:

Thank you for your question.

I'm pleased to say that our Economic Development Team (including Business Support and Investments) are continuing to work directly with businesses, in a demand responsive way, to support them during these difficult economic times. They work with businesses of all sizes, including new start-ups and across all sectors.

The team offers a package of support to businesses, which includes:

- Our dedicated business support and development webpage which over the last year has received over 10,000 views
- Our monthly Business Support Newsletter – our subscription numbers are around 1000
- Our dedicated social media channels, where we run campaigns promoting local businesses
- Visit South Cambs, which since launching in September 2021 has had over 600 listings and attracted more than 13,000 users. In the upcoming months there will be a focus on supporting South Cambridgeshire pubs to support them with marketing and the launch of 'South Cambs pubs and restaurant week' to help drive customers towards these businesses
- Over the last year the team has run 8 Business Webinars, attended by 99 businesses and a series of mental health and wellbeing webinars which were funded by the County Council

- We continue to work with local communities to establish new markets, and have launched the South Cambridgeshire Market Webpage, which includes a Market Toolkit and Market and Stallholder Directories. In December 2022 we hosted a Christmas Market in Cambourne which had over 70 traders and over 1000 visitors. It is estimated that it generated £20-25k in sales on the day.
- The team are also working with partners and stakeholders to introduce sector specific forums – the first of these will be with the Smart Manufacturing Alliance to understand the challenges that the South Cambridgeshire Manufacturing and Production sector are facing.
- Through the Ukraine Working Group we are also helping Ukrainians find work opportunities, by joining with local partners such as the Job Centre. We have supported a jobs fair which saw 27 job offers made.
- And as part of our joint working with our neighbouring Local Authorities we are working on building a business resilience pack, to create a comprehensive support package which will shortly be available through our individual websites.

Our dedicated Business Engagement Officers continue to work across the District and have engaged with 137 high street businesses over the last year to help us better understand local challenges and to offer advice and support. This can include advice on areas such as recruitment, diversification, the green agenda and branding and marketing amongst others. They are also important in being able to promote campaigns, changes to legislation, grant availability, and other Council services such as Environmental Health and our Commercial Waste Services to our local businesses.

I will also mention the Shared Prosperity Fund and the Rural England Prosperity Fund (jointly £2.8m), both of which the team will be overseeing for South Cambridgeshire. With this funding we will support and provide grants to businesses to become greener, support new start-ups and establish a Business and IP Centre for South Cambs with particular focus on supporting entrepreneurs from under-represented groups and female-led start-ups. Funding will also be made available to parishes to go towards Improving High Streets and includes the Visitor Economy and Markets Development programmes that will build on our work to showcase South

Cambridgeshire as a fantastic place to visit, as well as promoting its hospitality services and events to residents.

This is just a snapshot of our activities, so please do come and speak to me if you would like to know more about the support we are offering to businesses.

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