



South
Cambridgeshire
District Council

A review of the Council's performance

Annual Report 2014 - 2015



03450 450 500

www.scambs.gov.uk

September 2015



Welcome	-	1
What we set out to do	-	2
So, how did we do	-	2
Aim A		
We are committed to being a listening Council, providing first class services accessible to all	-	2
Aim B		
We are committed to ensuring that South Cambridgeshire continues to be a safe and healthy place for you and your family	-	4
Aim C		
We are committed to making South Cambridgeshire a place in which residents can feel proud to live	-	6
Measuring our performance	-	8
Looking to the future	-	8
Appendix A	-	10

Foreward

Welcome to our Annual Report, which looks back at South Cambridgeshire District Council's performance and achievements since the launch of our Corporate Plan in April 2014.

It sets out what we have achieved for the community in terms of maintaining sound financial management, providing high quality services and contributing to residents' quality of life. There have been some notable achievements.

We have delivered major projects as part of a Business Improvement and Efficiency Programme (BIEP) to generate savings and implement better ways of working, including the introduction of new waste collection arrangements which has generated annual savings of £400k.

We signed a ground-breaking City Deal with government, as part of which we have identified transport infrastructure priority projects and agreed proposals to deliver up to 8,000 affordable homes and improve skills and digital connectivity.

A strategic partnership with Huntingdonshire District Council is underway, overseeing the development of full business cases for shared Building Control, ICT and Legal Services to reduce costs and increase resilience whilst maintaining and enhanced service standards. We have increased the percentage of household waste diverted from landfill and ensured the completion of over 200 new affordable homes.

Our district remains a fulcrum for the development of new communities, and during the year we resolved to grant Outline planning permission for Phase Two of the Northstowe development, which will deliver 3,500 new homes, alongside vital community facilities.

We have continued to demonstrate sound financial management, agreeing a balanced financial strategy for the next five years and delivering a favourable year-end General Fund budget variance of over £1 million. These measures, alongside a continued drive for savings and income, will help us to remain one of the lowest-spending councils in England.

Many of our corporate objectives represent ongoing priorities towards a long term Vision, so there is much more work to do. We updated our Corporate Plan in February 2015 to reflect these. We've included links towards the end of this report to our updated plan and progress in delivering it; look out to for opportunities to shape our future Vision over the next few months.

All these successes have relied heavily on our highly committed and well-trained workforce and councilors, and we would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank them for all that they do.



Cllr Ray Manning
Leader of Council



Jean Hunter
Chief Executive

What did we set out to do?


The Corporate Plan 2014-2019 set out the following Vision for the Council

'South Cambridgeshire will continue to be the best place to live, work and study in the country. Our district will demonstrate impressive and sustainable economic growth. Our residents will have a superb quality of life in an exceptionally beautiful, rural and green environment.

We have worked to attain our Vision through three Strategic Aims around the themes of Engagement, Partnerships and Well-being. Our key achievements under each aim are summarised below

So how did we do?

Aim A - Engagement - We will engage with residents, parishes and businesses to ensure we deliver first class services and value for money

Objective 1	Progress and achievements
<p>Develop the property company pilot scheme into a full business plan to deliver affordable housing and generate income</p> 	<p>We agreed to invest up to £7 million to our housing company, Ermine Street Housing, for the acquisition of up to 40 properties.</p> <p>The company has acquired 30 properties on the open market of which 28 have been let, and made offers on a further five. Much-needed housing provided, with local families prioritised.</p>
Objective 2	Progress and achievements
<p>Improve efficiency and value for money within a viable financial strategy</p>	<p>Outturn for 2014-15 showed a favourable General Fund variance of £1,196,000 (7.38%), without detriment to service delivery.</p> <p>Revised waste collection working arrangements launched in September 2014, have delivered annual ongoing savings of £400k and also reduced the number of bin lorries on the road and consequent emissions.</p>

Objective 3

Progress and achievements

Make the district an even more attractive place to do business

Key Account Management arrangements have been developed to deliver a joined-up approach to regulation and communication. We have key account managers in place for a number of local businesses and organisations, and have trained account managers from across directorates to provide a single point of contact for services, advice and partnership with SCDC.

We agreed an outline business case for a Business Hub service which will provide businesses with access to a 'One Stop' advice and support services on a variety of regulatory functions carried out by the district and county councils and Fire and Rescue service.

We delivered programme of business support workshops, described by one attendee as 'a valuable opportunity for any potential business' and 'a fantastic opportunity to learn.'

We held community pub events at the Plough and Fleece, Horningsea, attended by over 30 local businesses, and at The Plough, Shepreth. The events were attended by both landlords and parishes interested in setting up their own community pub and protecting it through the community asset register.

Objective 4

Progress and achievements

Work with tenants, parish councils and community groups to sustain successful, vibrant villages

We have been actively involved in the Connecting Cambridgeshire initiative, under which around 71,000 premises have been reached with superfast broadband, out of the target of 90,000.

350 Green Deal Assessments were completed in the district. 113 quotes had been accepted, representing grant funding of £610,102. 69 jobs in SCDC had been passed for installation and 29 installations completed.

Locality Development Officers for the North and South West areas have been appointed to work with public sector partners and communities to deliver local improvements.

The latest crime figures continue to show that the district continues to be a very safe place to live. Feedback from partners at the annual strategic community safety meeting praised SCDC for delivered improvements in working to combat anti-social behaviour.



New water park - Cambourne

Objective 5

Progress and achievements

Build new council homes to provide affordable accommodation to meet the needs of local communities

Construction of an exception site scheme at Swavesey to provide 20 council homes for local people began on site in Summer 2015

A new tenant on the Chalklands, Linton, scheme, Katy Lester, said: 'It's great to have a place to call home. Everything in the house is brand new and finished to a high standard. I feel very lucky and look forward to building a new life for myself here.'



Aim B - Partnership - We will work with partners to create opportunities for employment, enterprise, education and world-leading innovation

Objective 6

Progress and achievements

Ensure best use of Council assets and benefit from opportunities to achieve efficiencies from partnership working

City Deal partners (SCDC, the county council, University of Cambridge and Local Enterprise Partnership) signed an agreement with Government to secure £100 million funding to improve connectivity between homes and businesses in the Cambridge area.

We began work to implement the Deal, agreeing priority transport infrastructure projects to be delivered during its first five years, and a first budget which will fund work towards the delivery of up to 8,000 affordable homes, improved digital connectivity and skills, inward investment, assessment of economic impact and capacity to ensure leadership and successful programme delivery.

SCDC and Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) formally agreed the development of a strategic partnership at their Cabinet meetings on 10 July 2014.

Working also with Cambridge City Council, the partners have agreed business cases for shared Building Control, Legal and Democratic Services and ICT. These proposals are anticipated to generate total annual savings of around £1.25m across the three councils, whilst improving resilience, providing career development opportunities for staff and enhancing service standards.

Objective 7

Progress and achievements

Move to a commercial approach to service delivery

We are identified a number of opportunities to take commercialisation forward including:

- A Business Hub providing 'One stop' regulatory advice: see objective (3) above
- In-house enforcement agents
- An expanded Trade waste service.
- Energy generation, including expansion of our scheme to fit solar panels to council properties
- Extension Lifeline Plus (Supported Housing) service

Objective 8

Progress and achievements

Work with RECAP waste partners to reduce costs, carbon impact and waste sent to landfill

Cabinet (16 October) agreed to create a Single Shared Waste Service based at Waterbeach, with a single management structure and workforce, aiming to cut costs by 15% over three years.

Cambridge City & SCDC have appointed a Waste Operations Manager and Waste Policy, Change and Innovation Manager for the single service.

Major changes to the waste service, involving revised routes and the reduction of winter green bin collections, were successfully implemented during the year.

The waste efficiencies programme delivered over £200k of savings during 2014/15 and is on course to deliver further savings of £400k per year from 2015/16.

Overall recycling and composting performance has been unaffected, with an improvement on the previous year's performance from 57% to 58% of waste recycling and composted.

Changes also achieved environmental benefits equating to 56 tonnes to CO2 savings in a full year through reduction in fuel use.



Garden waste collections - Cambourne

AIM C - We will make sure that South Cambridgeshire continues to offer an outstanding quality of life for our residents

Objective 9

Progress and achievements

Work with GPs and partners to link health services and to improve the health of our communities

We have helped to deliver new community transport schemes to reduce rural isolation, including Royston and District Community Transport (part-funding to purchase a new minibus), Meldreth's Friendship Club (weekly and monthly services for access to shops and other local amenities) Care Network (three new community car schemes, as well as a new demand-responsive service covering villages in the south-west of the district).

Work has continued to develop the Active & Healthy 4 Life exercise referral scheme, which operates in sports centres across the district, providing tailored exercise programmes for patients referred by health professionals registered with the scheme. An additional centre in Girton has been brought into the scheme, bringing the total to ten. Feedback from a resident benefiting from the GP referral scheme explained how it had 'given me the motivation to improve my health'.

We have run successful children's holiday camps in sports such as Athletics (average 97 attending per summer session), Netball (52) and Rounders (36), and awarded elite athlete funding to eight individuals totalling £3,300.

Our participation in the Together for Families project has helped turn around the lives of eight families across the district, and many more across Cambridgeshire.



Active and Healthy 4 Life - Exercise Referral - Girton

Objective 10

Progress and achievements

Ensure the impacts of welfare reform are managed smoothly and effectively

Our council tax support scheme continued to protect our most vulnerable residents whilst we collected 98.8% of housing rent and 99.2% of all Council Tax due.

The Benefits Team has received an unqualified audit report. Of £30 million paid in housing benefit to around 7,000 households last year, the adjustment required to the return was below £200.

Objective 11

Progress and achievements

Establish successful and sustainable New Communities with housing and employment at Northstowe and the major growth sites, served by an improved A14

The Northstowe Joint Development Control Committee has approved Reserved Matters relating to access to the site, the dedicated busway, primary roads and junctions for the first phase of development. Phase 1 earth works, improvements to the B1050 and construction of the first Primary School have commenced.

The committee resolved to grant outline planning application for Northstowe Phase 2 in June 2015, followed by the agreement of Heads of Terms for a legal agreement to provide a package of community facilities worth over £70 million.

Councillors resolved to grant outline planning permission for a station at Chesterton.



Artists impression - Northstowe

Objective 12

Progress and achievements

Increase the range and supply of temporary accommodation to help minimise the use of bed & breakfast accommodation for homeless households parks.

The Council helped 218 households to prevent homelessness during 2014/15.

44 households were in temporary accommodation at 31 March 2015, which is a reduction since the start of the year.

Average monthly expenditure on Bed & Breakfast accommodation has reduced from £2,075 during 2013/14 to £919 for 2014/15.



Measuring our Performance

During the year we measured 12 key performance indicators, linked to each plan aim, to assess how well we ran our business and delivered high quality services generating customer satisfaction. The main report cites some highlights around recycling, council tax and housing; the Appendix provides full details of annual performance against each indicator.

Looking to the future

Following consultation with residents we reviewed our corporate priorities and agreed an updated Corporate Plan in February 2015. The plan retained the same Vision and strategic aims and objectives, but was updated to reflect the stages that ongoing projects had reached, as well as new and emerging priorities. Visit www.scamb.gov.uk/council-aims-and-objectives to view the new plan and our progress in delivering it.



The BikeBus Explorer - Wimpole Hall