

Update on the Four Day Week (4DW) trial in the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service



To: Cllr Mike Davey, Executive Councillor for Finance, Resources and Transformation, 30 January 2023

Report by:

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Wards affected:

All

Non-Key Decision

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 By the time this report is received by the Strategy and Resources Committee on Monday 30th January, the 4DW trial will have started for nearly all desk-based roles in South Cambridgeshire, including the Shared Planning Service.
- 1.2 This report provides a brief summary of the planning process that took place to prepare for the trial and gives a brief insight into the first two weeks of the trial in practice (up to the report deadline date of 13 January 2023). A further verbal update will be provided at the committee meeting, by which time a full month of the trial will have taken place.

2. Recommendations

The Executive Councillor is recommended to:

- 2.1 note the report;

- 2.2 provide any feedback thought relevant to the Chief Executive of South Cambridgeshire District Council.

3. Background

- 3.1 Following the approval of the Four Day Week (4DW) trial for desk-based colleagues at SCDC (including the Shared Planning service), it was agreed that reports on progress would be presented to the Employment & Staffing Committee at South Cambridgeshire District Council and Strategy & Resources Scrutiny Committee at Cambridge City Council.

Timings of Committees

- 3.2 Due to the timings of committees, reports will be forwarded by email to one or other committee, to ensure each actual committee meeting receives up-to-date information. The report cycles, and whether a report will be presented in person to the committee or by email, is set out below. Each report will be shared with each committee (either in person or by email).

Committee	SCDC E&S*	CCC S&RS**
10 November 2022 E&S	Report in person	Report by email
30 January 2023 S&RS	Report by email	Report in person
23 February 2023 E&S	Report in person	Report by email
27 March 2023S&RS	Report by email	Report in person

* Employment & Staffing Committee (SCDC)

** Strategy & Resources Scrutiny Committee (CCC)

Planning Period (October – December 2022)

- 3.3 A project team was set up, led by colleagues in SCDC Transformation team, and attended by the Head of HR from the City Council and union representatives from both councils (Unison and GMB). Key activities completed to date included:

- Creation of a data hub on the South Cambridgeshire to store everything related to the 4DW (FAQs, training resources, etc)
- Collation of data through a tool called 'Red Teams' to understand concerns/ideas/solutions from across the Council (attended by just over 100 colleagues including approximately 20 managers)

- Creation of a weekly snapshot survey to gauge how colleagues are feeling about the 4DW and preparations
- Establishment of a group of 'Champions' from all service areas, to be the key interlocutors between the project team and services. Because of the size of the service, the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service was particularly well represented with a champion from each team within the service
- An introductory two-hour training workshop (delivered free) by Alex Soojung-Kim Pang, a leading trainer in the 4DW on how to implement a 4DW; this was open to all service managers, and champions
- A series of guidance documents on some key ways of working that we expect to apply to everyone in the first trial
- Detailed planning within each service area to work through how they intend to undertake the trial in their area
- HR drop-in sessions open to all colleagues in the trial
- A feedback form on the website that members of the public can use to ask questions or make comments about the trial: [Four-day working week trial - South Cambs District Council \(scambs.gov.uk\)](https://www.scambs.gov.uk)
- Regular responses to media enquiries
- Collation of a list of interested councils, for whom we have promised to deliver a briefing once we have data from the trial and lessons to share.

The trial – early feedback

- 3.4 This report was written on 12 January, so barely two weeks into the trial. Further information will be presented verbally at the committee.
- 3.5 The first 'pulse' survey showed positive results, but caution is advised given the very early stage of the trial. Of the 52 responses in week 2, the majority of colleagues (60%) reported that they feel they had enough time to do their jobs (17% reported that they didn't, and 23% were neutral).
- 3.6 In response to the statement 'Currently the four day week is making me feel....' 63% of respondents said 'less stressed' or 'much less stressed', while 17% of respondents said 'a little stressed' and 19% said 'no change'.

- 3.7 An escalation process has been put in place where any colleague can report via an online form directly to the Chief Executive and Chief Operating Officer if they perceive a significant issue with the implementation of the four day week that is affecting delivery of services. Although the escalation process had been used twice at the end of week two, both reports actually related to personal issues regarding the implementation, and at the time of writing, no service delivery issues have been escalated.
- 3.8 Performance KPIs and customer feedback will be monitored monthly, and at the next meeting of this committee, feedback will be available for the months of January and February.

Second Trial for Shared Waste Service

- 3.9 At the same time as the desk based trial is underway, colleagues in the Shared Waste Service are undertaking some early data collation and preliminary analysis / scenario setting to prepare for the second trial. The details of this trial will be subject to agreement by the two portfolio holders for the Shared Waste Service (Cllrs Rosy Moore and Henry Bachelor). It is anticipated that, should it be approved, the trial would start in the Summer of 2023.

Media interest

- 3.10 There has continued to be media interest around the trial, and it was mentioned in the House of Commons when Labour MP (Bootle) Peter Dodd tabled a motion for leave to bring in a Bill to reduce working hours ([Working Time Regulations \(Amendment\) - Hansard - UK Parliament](#)). The second reading of the Bill was due to be on 9 December but is now scheduled for 20 January 2023. (For the avoidance of doubt, since the question was raised by some colleagues) this bill will in no way prevent the continuation of our own trial).

Four Day Week Global Pilot

- 3.11 The six month pilot programme in the US and Ireland run by Four Day Week Global has published its results from the pilot: [The Four Day Week- Assessing Global Trials of Reduced Work Time with No Reduction in Pay – A – 30112022 \(squarespace.com\)](#)

4. Implications

a) Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising from this report which is for information.

b) Staffing Implications

This report provides information on the current trial of a 4-day working week for SCDC employees.

c) Equality and Poverty Implications

An EQIA has not been prepared on SCDC's proposed trial. The purpose of the trial is to gather evidence including on equality impacts.

d) Net Zero Carbon, Climate Change and Environmental Implications

A climate change assessment has not been prepared on SCDC's proposed trial.

e) Procurement Implications

There are no procurement implications arising from this report which is for information.

f) Community Safety Implications

There are no community safety implications arising from this report which is for information.

5. Consultation and communication considerations

The Chief Executive of Cambridge City Council and the Head of HR have been consulted on this report.

6. Background papers

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

7. Appendices

None

8. Inspection of papers

If you have a query on the report please contact Liz Watts, tel: 01954 712926, email: liz.watts@scams.gov.uk