

## **+Report of Councillor Carla Hofman and Councillor John Williams to Parish Councils for February 2025.**

*This report contains factual information which we hope will be of use and of interest to the parish council and to the wider community of the parish.*

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### **Update on blue bin recycling contracts**

We're aware there has been coverage in local media regarding the new arrangements for the Cambridge Shared Waste blue bin recycling contract. From 3 March, there will be no impact on residents, but we will enter a new contract with ReGen Waste to process our blue bin dry mixed recycling once it has been collected by our operations teams from the kerbside. All the Recycling in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough (RECAP) councils are in a similar situation of shortly entering (or have already entered) new agreements like this.

ReGen Waste are being awarded the contract covering the haulage, sorting, onward processing and sale of recyclable materials from our blue bins. The procurement process, which was carried out by Cambridgeshire County Council on behalf of all the RECAP partner councils, explicitly defined how bidder's submissions would be scored and awarded. Therefore, all bidders knew in advance exactly how their submissions would be evaluated.

Cambridgeshire County Council undertook this procurement exercise under The Public Contracts Regulations 2015, which set out how public bodies have to procure contracts. Their procurement exercise was compliant with these regulations.

All RECAP Partners were represented as part of the scoring process and scored the written submissions before being presented with any price information. The pricing was independently evaluated by financial consultants and then a total score was made up of the written submission score and the pricing score. This was a quantitative process which provided a result.

Upon receipt of these bids, it was noted that the incumbent (Thalia) had submitted a non-compliant bid. This led to the incumbent bidder being eliminated from the process. This means that continuing to send materials to the Waterbeach site was not possible without breaking public procurement rules.

The successful bidder, ReGen Waste, is appropriately licenced, authorised and regulated by the relevant UK authorities, to undertake the operations and activities required by the RECAP contract. It already processes dry waste from other UK councils and plans to open a materials recycling centre in the Midlands.

As part of the contract, the environmental impact of the new arrangement will be reviewed once it has started to ensure that the carriage of the waste to Northern Ireland to be processed is offset against the use of HGVs that would otherwise return empty to the facility, having distributed processed material to recipients in the UK

and aboard. Sometimes processed waste such as paper must be sent aboard due to the lack of adequate facilities for it in the UK.

### **Four-day week consultation**

People can now share their views on how they have found South Cambridgeshire District Council's services during a trial of a four-day week. Public consultation started on Monday 27 January and is open for eight weeks, closing at 11.59pm on Sunday 23 March. The consultation has been set-up so that residents can share their views on how they have found Council services since January 2023 – when a trial of a four-day week began.

South Cambridgeshire residents can access the consultation online. Any South Cambridgeshire residents who would prefer to complete a paper survey can email [communications@scambs.gov.uk](mailto:communications@scambs.gov.uk) or call 01954 713 000.

Given South Cambridgeshire District and Cambridge City councils share some key services – Greater Cambridge Shared Planning and Greater Cambridge Shared Waste – residents of Cambridge city are also being encouraged to comment on their experiences of using these services.

The information gathered during the consultation will help South Cambridgeshire District Councillors decide on the next steps for the four-day week at the Council.

The Council announced plans to trial a four-day week – where people deliver 100% of their work, in around 80% of their hours, for 100% of their pay – to help address acute recruitment and retention issues.

The consultation launched as planned at 9am on Monday. The consultation platform can be accessed via [www.scambs.gov.uk/4dw](http://www.scambs.gov.uk/4dw)

Since launching we have had some questions about registering. The sign-up process gives some additional reassurance as it restricts people so that they are only able to submit a single response per email address. This makes any consultation fairer as it prevents the sending of multiple spam responses.

### **Taxi driver licensing changes for South Cambridgeshire taxis**

South Cambridgeshire has introduced updated licensing requirements for taxi drivers it licenses in a move to enhance public safety and ensure fairness for drivers.

Safeguarding training for new applicants must include disability awareness and must be undertaken in a classroom setting (online or remote) by a Council approved course provider.

Applicants refused a licence will have the right of appeal to the Magistrates Court instead of previously to the District Council's Licensing Panel.

A maximum of three competency tests may be taken before the application will be refused. A new application can be submitted after three months.

Drivers / proprietors must undertake a daily vehicle inspection as per the Department for Transport (DfT) guidance.  
Vehicle Write-Offs

New licences for category A, B, N or S insurance write-off vehicles will not be permitted, to further enhance driver and passenger safety and vehicle standards.

Wheelchair accessible private hire vehicles can be licensed if they meet a minimum Euro 5 emission standards (see policy for details). The driver handbook has been deleted and replaced with more up to date real-time information on the website, which will be more relevant to the trade.

Councillors considered it was in the grounds of public safety to retain door signage and ensure passengers accessed their correctly booked vehicle.

**Carla and John**