

A new team will be set up to increase support for local businesses – particularly small and medium-sized companies – in South Cambridgeshire.

South Cambridgeshire District Council's Cabinet has agreed to a proposal for a new Business Support Service. It will deliver activities offering practical advice and targeted support to existing and growing businesses in the District and those looking to move into South Cambridgeshire.

Councillors want to build thriving village economies where people can work locally, buy what they need and access the services they require while keeping their impact on the environment to a minimum. The new team will be tasked with retaining existing employers, improving the survival rates of new enterprises and securing new investment in communities across the district.

When fully established, the new team of four officers will:

- Offer bespoke packages of support to small and medium-sized enterprises
- Help further develop the three Enterprise Zones in South Cambridgeshire, to encourage more businesses to locate to them
- Guide companies wishing to relocate to the district or move within it
- Deliver a programme of activities to support local village economies
- Develop new and environmentally friendly tourism initiatives such as cycling and walking routes to encourage visitors into South Cambridgeshire communities
- Provide guidance to companies on their response to the climate emergency, including advice on generating their own electricity, improving energy efficiency and recycling more waste and water
- Make the entire Council more 'business friendly', such as by creating one point of contact for local companies and becoming a vital link between the Council and other business support organisations

Growing local businesses and economies is one of the four priority areas in the Council's Business Plan and this new team, working closely with colleagues at the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service, will lead the authority's work in this area.

The new roles and Business Support Service will now be finalised before recruitment takes place within the coming months. When up and running, the service will work closely with neighbouring councils, and organisations such as the Chambers of Commerce, FSB, NFU and Visit Cambridge and Beyond to help complement the services that each provides.

The Leader of South Cambridgeshire District Council, Cllr Bridget Smith, said: "Our villages have so many fantastic small and medium sized businesses, world-renowned names, and farming, rural enterprise and tourism – and we want to ensure South Cambridgeshire is a place where they can all grow and prosper. I also want to ensure that our residents have the choice of working locally and avoiding long commutes to work which we know are

detrimental to wellbeing and productivity as well as damaging to the environment.

“Our new, locally focussed Business Support Service will make a big difference. The new team will give us a much better understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing local companies, and then feed into decisions on how businesses will be affected by housing, transport and planning projects. A key pledge in our Business Plan is to grow local businesses and economies and I very much want to see this new team helping to create new jobs and opportunities near to where people live.”

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