

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the COUNCIL held in CIVIC SUITE (LANCASTER / STIRLING ROOMS), PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON PE29 3TN on Wednesday, 15 October 2025.

PRESENT: Councillor D B Dew – Chair.

Councillors T Alban, B S Banks, M L Beuttell, A Blackwell, R J Brereton, M J Burke, S Bywater, J R Catmur, S Cawley, B S Chapman, J Clarke, S J Conboy, S J Corney, A E Costello, L Davenport-Ray, S W Ferguson, I D Gardener, C M Gleadow, K P Gulson, J E Harvey, M A Hassall, P J Hodgson-Jones, N J Hunt, A R Jennings, M Kadewere, P Kadewere, D N Keane, J E Kerr, C Lowe, R Martin, S R McAdam, B A Mickelburgh, D L Mickelburgh, S Mokbul, Dr M Pickering, B M Pitt, T D Sanderson, D J Shaw, R A Slade, D Terry, C H Tevlin, S Wakeford and N Wells.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors E R Butler, S J Criswell, J A Gray, P A Jordan, J Neish, S L Taylor and I P Taylor.

30. THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Father Philip Shryane, of St Michael's Catholic Church in Huntingdon, opened the meeting with a thought got the day.

31. MINUTES

Councillor B Chapman observed that Minute 25/19 should read Richard fitz Gilbert, with the amendment noted, the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on the 16th July 2025 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

32. MEMBER' INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

The Chair drew Members attention to the departure of Mrs Suzanne Jones, the Corporate Director of Finance and Resources and the Council's Section 151 Officer. The Chamber joined the Chair in thanking Suzanne for her hard work and dedication in the role and wished her well for the future.

33. CHAIR'S ENGAGEMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Council noted those engagements attended by the Chair and

Vice-Chair since the last meeting (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book).

34. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 10.1, the following Public Question was presented to the Council –

When will Huntington District Council pass the motion to act as though being Care Experienced is a Protected Characteristic?

The Executive Councillor for Resident Services and Corporate Performance, Councillor S W Ferguson responded to the question by acknowledging that Care Experienced people of all ages are some of the most vulnerable in society, facing disadvantages across all areas of our lives, from lower educational attainment, reduced earnings, increased risk of loneliness, increased vulnerability to grooming and other abuses, increased contact with the criminal justice system, increased risk of housing instability and homelessness and increased likelihood of mental illnesses, self-harm and suicide, which is one of our most likely causes of death. We are 360% more likely to die prematurely than our non-Care Experienced peers.

Housing is a notable area the district council has direct influence on. Looked After Children are frequently moved across the country due to lack of local placements, a third of Care Leavers become homeless within the first two years of leaving Care and 25% of England's homeless population is Care Experienced. I've been homeless four times in my life, the most recent time just a few months ago, which nearly killed me.

All Councillors and council officers are legally amongst our Corporate Parents, and LGA guidance encourages you to support us like you would your non corporate child. Passing this motion is a vital step to improving the quality of our lives and potentially even saving them.

35. QUESTIONS TO MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

In response to a question from Councillor M J Burke, the Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources, Councillor B A Mickelburgh, advised that the data in relation to the introduction of Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) was in the process of being compiled and would be including in the Parking Strategy report which would be due into the democratic cycle in Spring 2026.

Following a question from Councillor A R Jennings, the Executive Councillor for Economy, Regeneration and Housing, Councillor S Wakeford, advised the Chamber that the Council were still in the process of taking ownership of the St Neots Market Charter but that this was at the point of conclusion, Councillor Wakeford advised that due to the legal and contractual details he would be happy to further discuss with Councillor Jennings outside of the public forum of the meeting.

In response to a question from Councillor M A Hassall, the Executive Leader, Councillor S J Conboy, advised that conversations with

partners in relation to water bodies and flooding were ongoing and that those agencies were aware of residents concerns. The success of the water and flooding conference hosted earlier in the year was praised and noted that a further conference was being planned with a date to be advised. It was further noted that following flooding from previous years, significant improvements had been made to Cambridgeshire County Council's website and that residents now had the ability to report areas of standing water or concern to assist agencies in managing and responding to flooding concerns.

Following a question from Councillor M Pickering in relation to winter accessibility of footpaths within the Loves Farm area of St Neots, the Executive Councillor for Parks and Countryside, Waste and Street Scene, Councillor J E Kerr, advised the Chamber that Officers were investigating the matter and that an update would be provided in due course.

In response to a question from Councillor R Martin, the Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources, Councillor B A Mickelburgh advised that, as previously mentioned in relation to CPE, the quarter two figures were not yet available and that a full decision would be made by the Cabinet once all the data was available. Councillor Martin observed that whilst he felt this to be a prudent approach, it contradicted the Council's budget which stated that prices would change upon the implementation of CPE. In response to which Councillor Mickelburgh stated that with the benefit of time, it had been decided to pause the changes pending an analysis of the available data in order to make a fully informed decision.

Following a question from Councillor N J Hunt in relation to pollution of rivers, specifically the dumping of waste from vessels, Councillor Kerr advised that work was in progress to develop signage for moorings in the district with the Riverside Park area in Huntingdon identified as the first location.

In response to a question from Councillor C H Tevlin, the Executive Councillor for Planning, Councillor T Sanderson, advised that in relation to planning stats, the Planning department were currently exceeding expectation with the targets they had been set and the maintenance of caseloads for officers, it was also noted that additional support had been resourced in light of some staff absence and in order to ensure targets continued to be met. It was further noted that an extraordinary meeting of the Cabinet would be held on 21st October 2025 to consider the progress of the Preferred Options Draft Local Plan to 2046 and to move it into the consultation period.

Following a request from Councillor A Blackwell to receive an update on the Constitution Review Working Group, the Executive Councillor for Governance and Democratic Services, Councillor J E Harvey, advised that the group had met several times since June and that the report would be brought to the Corporate Governance Committee over the coming months.

36. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CORPORATE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Councillor M J Burke, Chair of the Corporate Governance Committee

presented the Annual Report of the Committee for 2024/25 (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which summarised the Committees activities and the issues that arose within the financial year.

In presenting the report, the Chair drew attention to the key issues that had been focused on over the 12 month period and noted that Local Government Reorganisation had been factored into the report. It was noted that great consideration and action had been taken against risks for the Council and that great work had been done to mitigate risks and to improve performance. The Chair indicated his appreciation to Council Officers and auditors Ernst and Young for their support in this regard.

Whereupon it was

RESOLVED

that the Annual Report 2024/25 of the Corporate Governance Committee be received and noted.

37. ADOPTION OF GREAT STAUGHTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Having regard to a report by the Chief Planning Officer (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) on the referendum of the Great Staughton Neighbourhood Plan held on 4th September 2025, the Executive Councillor for Planning acquainted Members with the results of the referendum with an overwhelming vote in favour of supporting the Neighbourhood Plan by a substantial margin.

In opening the debate, Councillor S Cawley spoke in support of the adoption of the Plan and reflected upon the dedication of the community and parish council in bringing the plan to fruition. He further noted that the Plan would protect the rural charm, heritage and strong community spirit of the parish whilst embracing carefully managed growth and a focus on affordability of housing and the proposal of a new NHS facility. It was also observed that the Plan championed sustainability, climate resilience, protecting green spaces and habitats, promoting renewable energy and ensuring that development would respect the distinctive character of the village.

Whereupon and it having been duly proposed and seconded it was

RESOLVED

that the Great Staughton Neighbourhood Plan as attached at Appendix 1 to the report now submitted be adopted to become part of the Statutory Development Plan for Huntingdonshire with immediate effect.

38. APPOINTMENT OF INTERIM SECTION 151 OFFICER

With the assistance of a report by the Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) regarding the legislative duty placed on the Council to appoint a Section 151 Officer, the Council were advised of the outcome of the meeting of the Senior Officers Committee which had met on 14th

October 2025 to consider the appointment of an interim Section 151 Officer following the departure of the Corporate Director for Finance and Resources.

Having noted that the proposal enabled the Council to fulfil its duty to appoint an Officer who is responsible for the Council's financial affairs and to ensure that the necessary governance arrangements are in place for Huntingdonshire District Council, it was

RESOLVED

- (a) that Lydia Morrison, be appointed as the Council's Section 151 Officer on an interim basis, effective from 25th October 2025 until the formal appointment of a permanent Officer in post.

39. REPRESENTATION OF POLITICAL GROUPS ON DISTRICT COUNCIL COMMITTEES AND PANELS

With the assistance of a report by the Elections and Democratic Services Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Council were acquainted with the changes in the political makeup of the chamber and attention was drawn to the review of political proportionality set out in Appendix A of the report now submitted. It was observed that Group leaders had indicated their wish to waive these arrangements and had instead adopted alternative arrangements in line with the constitutional provision which ensured that every Councillor has a seat on a committee. The changes to seats on committees under Appendix B of the report now submitted were highlighted.

In addition attention was drawn to the formation of an Overview and Scrutiny Joint Group for the purpose of Local Government Reorganisation.

Whereupon and it having been duly proposed and seconded it was

RESOLVED

- (a) that the allocation of seats on District Council Committees and Panels to political groups and to the non-aligned Members be determined in accordance with the distribution illustrated at Appendix B;
- (b) that, in accordance with section 17(1) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, the political balance requirements of sections 15 and 16 of the Act in be waived in respect of the Employment Committee Development Management for the remainder 2025/26 Municipal year in order to enable Council to meet provision 3.5 of the Committee Procedure Rules which requires all Councillors to have a seat on a Committee;
- (c) that the requirements for appointments to advisory/sub groups in paragraph 5.3 be noted;
- (d) that a new Local Government Reorganisation Overview and Scrutiny Joint Group be established; and

(e) that 12 Members be appointed to an Overview and Scrutiny Joint Group, with a membership to comprise six Members from each Overview and Scrutiny Panel and be politically proportionate from each Panel.

40. MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES AND PANELS

On the recommendation of Councillor S J Conboy, it was

RESOLVED

that Councillor B S Chapman be appointed to the membership of the Corporate Governance Committee in place of Councillor N Wells; and

that Councillor C Tevlin be appointed to the membership of the Licensing Committee in place of Councillor I D Gardener.

41. CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND PETERBOROUGH COMBINED AUTHORITY - UPDATE

In conjunction with the decision summaries of the recent meetings of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, copies of the decision summaries are appended in the Minute Book.

Following a question relating to cuts to the Tiger Bus Passes from Councillor Hunt, Councillor Wakeford, in his capacity as the Council's representative to the transport committee of the CPCA, it was advised that the mayor had committed to consulting young people ahead of any decision being made with the consultation having gone live in the days preceding the Council meeting. Councillor Wakeford further agreed that the Tiger Pass had proved invaluable to young residents of the District and that he would support its continued existence and that further details on the future of the Tiger Pass were anticipated to be shared in the near future.

42. OUTCOMES FROM COMMITTEES AND PANELS

A copy of the list of meetings held since the last meeting of the Council held on 16th July 2025 is appended in the Minute Book and Members were advised that any issues or questions could be raised in relation to these meetings. There were no questions raised.

Chair