

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (PERFORMANCE AND GROWTH) held in Civic Suite, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon PE29 3TN on Wednesday, 4 March 2026.

PRESENT: Councillor C M Gleadow – Chair.

Councillors A Blackwell, J R Catmur, B S Chapman, S J Corney, I D Gardener, A R Jennings, R Martin, Dr M Pickering and C H Tevlin.

APOLOGY(IES): Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors P Kadewere and S L Taylor and C H Tevlin.

59. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 4th February 2026 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

60. MEMBERS INTERESTS

Councillor Gardener declared an other registerable interest in minute 25/63 by virtue of being a Member of the Fire Authority, a Member for Cambridgeshire County Council and a Member of Grafham Parish Council.

Councillor Blackwell declared an other registerable interest in minute 25/63 by virtue of being a Member of Huntingdon Town Council.

Councillor Chapman declared an other registerable interest in minute 25/63 by virtue of being a Member of St Neots Town Council.

Councillor Martin declared an other registerable interest in minute 25/63 by virtue of being a Member for Cambridgeshire County Council.

Councillor Gleadow declared a non-registerable interest in minute 25/63 by virtue of being the Ward Member for St Ives and an other registerable interest in being a Member of the St Ives Fire station and a Member of One Leisure Shadow Cabinet.

Councillor Corney declared a non-registerable interest in minute 25/63 by virtue of being the Ward Member for Ramsey.

61. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

With the aid of a report by the Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny) (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme was presented to the Panel.

62. OUTSTANDING RESPONSES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The Panel received and noted the responses received in relation to questions arising at previous meetings of the Panel.

Councillor Chapman reiterated that the missed green waste collections in St Neots should be reflected within the overall missed bin figures, given that this is a paid service.

63. COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY FUNDING

By means of a report by the Funding Project Manager of Strategic Growth (a copy of which was appended in the Minute Book), The Community Infrastructure Levy Funding Report was presented to the Panel.

Concern was raised that the proposed Youth building was being treated in the same way as a general community facility. He emphasised that young people require a dedicated space rather than hired rooms within other buildings, noting that no such provision currently exists in St Neots. He referenced the Huntingdonshire Futures Place Strategy—particularly its focus on Youth Provision—and considered the application to be well aligned with its objectives. It was further highlighted that the proposal would bring a unit vacant for three years back into use and that its town-centre location was preferable, as out of town sites could increase the risk of anti-social behaviour.

It was explained that the query in the report relates to current community facilities and their use needing a fuller explanation. The principle of youth space is recognised, and the Town Council were invited to work with the Implementation and Planning teams to explore and progress this project for a future round.

Support was expressed for the previous points raised, noting that the proposal represented a positive opportunity to bring a currently vacant unit back into productive use. It was emphasised that repurposing the unit for a community focused initiative would provide clear benefits to local residents.

It was noted that Section 4.9 (f) highlights the concern that this is a prime retail space. There are conflicts with Local Plan policy for prime retail spaces that would need to be investigated and Planning Permission granted for this project to be considered deliverable. Due to this this needs resolution first. To date there have been no discussions with the Planning Department about this and this is the first step needed to ensure deliverability.

The Panel were reminded that there was an error in the published paper and attention was drawn to the Supplement which had since been provided.

Queries around the scoring mechanism were raised by the Panel.

The scoring system is an indicative one at present. In Overview & Scrutiny 8th October 2025 Officers highlighted that scoring was being reviewed and Members were invited to volunteer by the Chair. No requests have been received to date. All applications are assessed against Legislation and CIL governance. It was explained that the Team would not be comfortable using it as the basis for approval or rejection of applications at this stage.

A Member commented on the application for the Huntingdon Sports and Health Hub, noting that while they welcomed the prospect of enhanced facilities, they had reservations about the level of expenditure involved, referencing other projects that they felt would be a worthy legacy for Huntingdonshire.

It was advised the amount of funding assigned to the project is to be agreed under delegated authority by the S151 Officer as per governance agreed at HDC Cabinet in February 2026.

The Executive Member highlighted additional projects currently in progress, citing as an example the work being undertaken by the Combined Authority on plans to enhance further education provision in St Neots. It was emphasised that the allocation of CIL funding was fundamentally based on the prioritisation of identified needs and projects.

It was remarked that St Neots has a significant youth population and the view was expressed that a dedicated facility would be of benefit to the community. He acknowledged the high cost associated with the proposed location and remarked that other retail sites had been used for development. It was commented that consideration of an alternative site would have been welcomed. It was also noted that the use of the Oast House has not been agreed yet.

The Panel was reminded of the importance of obtaining planning permission. Members were advised that broader discussions regarding the proposed location could be held with the Planning Department outside of the CIL process. It was noted that there was no objection to the concept itself; however, concerns remained regarding the process and the deliverability of the project at the location proposed.

The Panel were pleased to see the high number of approvals this round and asked if the next funding rounds dates had been agreed.

It was confirmed that the next dates would be post Elections.

Following the discussion, it was

RESOLVED

that the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel be passed to Cabinet for their consideration when making a decision upon the recommendations within the report.

64. CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT 2025/26 (QUARTER 3)

By means of a report by the Business Intelligence and Performance Manager (a copy of which was appended in the Minute Book), the Corporate Performance 2025/26 Quarter 3 Report was presented to the Panel.

Further clarification was sought regarding the issues being experienced on Highways works and wondered if it was a coincidence that 3 sites had been affected.

The Panel were informed that Cambridgeshire County Council holds responsibility for the Section 278 Highways Agreement and therefore has authority to restrict when the developer may undertake works. Officers confirmed that the Council remains in regular dialogue with the developer, noting that it is in all parties' interests for the units to be delivered, marketed, and made available to residents as soon as possible. It was further reported that the three sites concerned fall within the same circumstances, and discussions have taken place with the County Council to explore whether any flexibility can be provided regarding the timing of works.

Satisfaction was expressed with the progress of the Disability Grant but disappointment was noted regarding the ongoing delays.

Concerns were raised regarding the Waste Performance Indicators, noting that achieving the target for PI19 may negatively impact the figures for PI20. It was further suggested that including tonnage per bin would provide useful contextual information.

This was noted as a welcome suggestion and something that the Team would like to take on board in the future.

Councillor Chapman requested his thanks be passed onto the Housing Department for their work with a resident in his ward. He went on to highlight concerns regarding homelessness and stated that data on the number of rough sleepers would provide a clearer understanding of the full extent of homelessness within the District.

It was noted that an annual count of rough sleepers is undertaken one night each year in November; however, it was acknowledged that this method does not provide an accurate reflection of the actual number of individuals sleeping rough. It was agreed that obtaining more comprehensive data would be beneficial.

Following a query regarding the use of stretch targets, the Panel was informed that stretch targets have historically played an important role in setting performance expectations. It was noted that, while such

targets can drive improved performance, overly challenging targets may have a demoralising effect. The importance of establishing achievable and realistic targets was therefore emphasised.

Clarification was sought on whether the fly-tipping figures included waste discarded from vehicles on the motorway and asked if this could be incorporated, noting that such waste detracts from the appearance of the District. It was emphasised that litter picking along the highway is a dangerous task and congratulated the people who carry out the work.

The Panel heard that this is not classed as Fly tipping but acknowledged that the problem appears to be getting worse again and is difficult to stay on top of.

The Committee welcomed the improved presentation of the reports, noting that they were now easier for the Panel to consider. Support was shown with the earlier observation that, although many Indicators are marked green, the report does not fully reflect all activity within the Organisation. It was suggested that providing additional information on the Amber and Red Indicators would aid understanding of the Council's overall position.

The Panel were thanked for their feedback on these reports.

Action 29 of the Progress Report was raised, the Panel seeking clarification on how performance could be improved, noting that no supporting metrics were provided in the report.

The Panel was informed that the Local Plan would be central to achieving this objective. Members were advised that the action comprised two key elements: firstly, the development of the guidance, and secondly, its subsequent implementation. It was noted that the guidance had now been produced and the rollout phase was underway. Officers expressed the expectation that, over time, this would support the delivery of higher-quality housing.

Following the discussion, it was

RESOLVED

that the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel be passed to Cabinet for their consideration when making a decision upon the recommendations within the report.

Chair

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