

A meeting of the **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (CUSTOMERS AND PARTNERSHIPS)** will be held in **CIVIC SUITE, PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON PE29 3TN** on **THURSDAY, 1 DECEMBER 2022** at **7:00 PM** and you are requested to attend for the transaction of the following business:-

AGENDA

APOLOGIES

1. MINUTES (Pages 5 - 10)

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Customers and Partnerships) meeting held on 3rd November 2022.

Contact Officer: B Buddle
01480 388008

2. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

To receive from Members declarations as to disclosable pecuniary and other interests in relation to any Agenda item.

Contact Officer: B Buddle
01480 388008

3. NOTICE OF KEY EXECUTIVE DECISIONS (Pages 11 - 20)

A copy of the current Notice of Key Executive Decisions is attached. Members are invited to note the Plan and to comment as appropriate on any items contained therein.

Contact Officer: H Peacey
01480 388169

4. BUSINESS RATES RURAL SETTLEMENT LIST (Pages 21 - 30)

The Panel is invited to comment on the Business Rates Rural Settlement List Report.

Contact Officer: A Burns
01480 388122

5. CHANGE TO PANEL NAME

To discuss the proposed change of Panel name to Overview & Scrutiny (Environment, Communities and Partnerships).

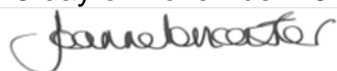
Contact Officer: B Buddle
01480 388008

6. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 31 - 32)

The Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme is to be presented to the Panel.

Contact Officer: B Buddle
01480 388008

23 day of November 2022



Head of Paid Service

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and other Registerable and Non-Registerable Interests.

Further information on [Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and other Registerable and Non-Registerable Interests is available in the Council's Constitution](#)

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The District Council also permits filming, recording and the taking of photographs at its meetings that are open to the public. Arrangements for these activities should operate in accordance with [guidelines](#) agreed by the Council.

Please contact Mrs Beccy Buddle, Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny), Tel No. 01480 388008/e-mail Beccy.Buddle@huntingdonshire.gov.uk if you have a general query on any Agenda Item, wish to tender your apologies for absence from the meeting, or would like information on any decision taken by the Committee/Panel.

Specific enquiries with regard to items on the Agenda should be directed towards the Contact Officer.

Members of the public are welcome to attend this meeting as observers except during consideration of confidential or exempt items of business.

Agenda and enclosures can be viewed on the [District Council's website](#).

Emergency Procedure

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HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (CUSTOMERS AND PARTNERSHIPS) held in Civic Suite, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon PE29 3TN on Thursday, 3 November 2022.

PRESENT: Councillor N J Hunt – Chair.

Councillors T Alban, M J Burke, S Bywater, S J Criswell, M Kadewere, C Lowe, S R McAdam, D J Shaw and G J Welton.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors J E Kerr and J E Harvey.

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors B M Pitt and S L Taylor .

12. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 7th July 2022 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

Minute 22/11 was corrected to read Her Majesty the Queen, after which the Minutes of the meeting held on 8th September 2022 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

13. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

14. NOTICE OF KEY EXECUTIVE DECISIONS

The Panel received and noted the current Notice of Key Executive Decisions (a copy of which has been appended in the Minute Book) which has been prepared by the Executive Leader for the period 1st November 2022 to 28th February 2023.

15. ONE LEISURE PRICING PROPOSAL 2023-24

By means of a report by the Interim Head of Leisure (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book), the One Leisure Pricing Proposal 2023-24 was presented to the Panel.

The Panel heard from Councillor Welton, who stated that he broadly agreed with the proposed option 2 price increase, remaining mindful that One Leisure needed to remain sustainable whilst staying within financial reach of residents. Councillor Welton continued that he was sure all would agree

the importance and connection between physical and mental wellbeing especially after the testing nature of the previous few years. Reassurance was sought that the attendance, customer retention and new membership would be monitored across One Leisure sites and reported back on a quarterly basis, the Panel heard that this is already covered in the quarterly reports which are seen at the Overview and Scrutiny Performance and Growth Panel. In response to a further question asking if there would be scope for centres to negotiate with local groups to secure regular bookings ensuring long term use of the facilities, the Panel were further advised that following new appointments within One Leisure, links would be established with local fitness groups to ensure that fitness remains accessible with the importance of fitness to improve mental wellbeing being noted.

Councillor Bywater stated that he felt it was important to note that in order to make leisure affordable and achievable to residents of the district, the previous administration had made no increase to pricing over the previous 4 years. This was noted to be especially important to those who were in financial difficulty and there were fears that increasing prices would potentially make leisure unaffordable for some with concerns that residents would be forced to choose between heating and food, therefore it was felt to be wrong to assume that households would have spare income to take up physical activities such as weightlifting. Further concern was expressed that the proposed model relied on consistent footfall maintained at current rates, which may not be the case if prices were to be increased and may in fact have a detrimental effect on the services and facilities provided. Councillor Bywater questioned the Portfolio holder to clarify what had been done to increase footfall and customer retention in relation to this paper. Councillor Bywater further questioned the figures shown in the Appendix to the report and requested more clarity on the comparison between the current income versus potential income. In response to both questions, the Panel heard that detailed work had been undertaken to ensure the needs of residents and accessibility were taken into account alongside benchmarking and competitor analysis.

Councillor Lowe enquired what work had been done by One Leisure on generating alternative revenue streams through use of the pools by other providers such as aqua clubs or physiotherapy services, the Panel heard that this was something which would be picked up under the One Leisure Active Lifestyles umbrella as well as continuing to work with local fitness groups to maximise revenue streams and accessibility to fitness for all residents.

Following repeated questioning from Councillor Alban on the report author, as he felt some comments were politically volatile and inaccurate, the Panel heard that a balanced approach had

been taken between the Officer and Executive Councillor who were both present in the meeting to jointly present the report. In response to Councillor Alban's question about pricing residents out of the facilities, the Panel were reassured that the Executive were mindful of the current economic climate and had ensured that the One Leisure Concessionary Scheme had been made more visible on the One Leisure website so that those who were most affected were still able to access the centres and fitness provision.

Councillor Alban further questioned the validity of the report due to the absence of mini soccer as a revenue stream. The Panel were assured of robust figures within the report as pitch hire for mini soccer was included within the grass and 4G pitch hire lines.

Following a question from Councillor Burke on the future plans and strategy for the Burgess Hall site, the Panel were assured that an update on this would be brought to the Panel in the coming months for discussion.

In response to a question from Councillor Alban who felt that the Courts for Kids scheme could help combat youth dropout rate from team and organised sport activities and that this scheme should continue to be marketed to encourage customer loyalty across the lifespan of residents, the Panel were assured that a new business strategy was being developed which would be brought to the Panel to provide an update in the coming months.

Councillor Shaw enquired whether the predicted increase of 88% in energy bills was still realistic, the Panel were assured that the figures were based on what is known at the moment but would be continually monitored.

Councillor Criswell commented on the proposed change of pricing being a political decision and that prices would be increasing at the worst possible time for the centres users, a fact which he felt would be generally accepted by the Panel, and enquired what the alternative plan would be should a review in 6 months find significantly reduced use of the centres resulting in the centres no longer serving the residents and their needs. Councillor Criswell stressed the importance of a plan for recovery which he felt must have been considered by the administration having made a political decision to proceed with the proposed cost increases.

The Panel were advised that advice had been taken from the industry body UK Active and that the proposed plan would allow the centres to remain competitive in the marketplace whilst still serving local communities. The Panel were further assured that research had been undertaken on similar models already

implemented in other centres across the country and early indications showed that there had been no negative impact. The proposed pricing option B would allow the service to remain competitive within the marketplace with the least impact on residents.

Councillor Criswell further questioned whether the Portfolio Holder was happy with the political decision to increase prices and what they would propose to do should the increase prove detrimental to the centres. The Panel heard that the Council needed to be mindful that the leisure provision could not be subsidised however much that may be desired. The proposed plan would ensure the sustainability of the One Leisure centres and that they could continue to be operated by the District Council. The importance of the centres and their role within the community was understood by the Executive, who had full confidence in the success of the proposed option B increase, therefore an alternative plan had not been made at this time. The Panel were further assured that footfall and income was regularly reviewed and action taken as required. Councillor Criswell responded that he was pleased to hear the desire to keep the service sustainable but remained concerned that the increased pricing would result in a section of society being prohibited from using the centres at the expense of keeping them sustainable.

Councillor Alban expressed that whilst he understood the need to be proactive and keep the facilities sustainable, the lack of an alternative plan, not only for income but to also maintain accessibility to fitness provision for all, was of great concern.

Councillor Bywater echoed the Portfolio Holder's concerns over the potential loss of public swimming pools across the district, and highlighted the plight of Sawtry swimming pool. The Panel heard that this facility had previously been managed by the Council but had been transferred to another leisure provider under the previous administration. The Panel were further advised that whilst the Council was not in a position to once again manage the facility, operational skills and support had been offered by the Leisure team to assist the current operator should they decide to reinstate the facility for the community. Councillor Bywater expressed grave concerns that the proposed price increases would be felt by some residents more than others as up to 40% increases were proposed in some activities. Councillor Bywater further stated that whilst mindful of the current economic climate, not having an alternative plan was a massive concern.

In response to a question from Councillor Alban on what consideration had been given to not increase prices, the Panel heard that all options had been considered but that the service was still in the post COVID recovery stage and that the

proposed focus on increasing footfall as well as direct debit membership opportunities was due to the fact that those streams drive the revenue forward. It was noted that pay as you go options would remain available for all fitness and leisure activities.

Councillor Shaw empathised on the timing of the proposal within the current economic climate but observed that the example of Sawtry swimming pool highlighted the importance of the proposed price increase to ensure better economic sustainability across the centres.

Following the discussion of the report, it was thereupon

RESOLVED

that the Cabinet be recommended to endorse the recommendations within the report.

16. WARM SPACES

By Means of a report by the Corporate Director - People (a copy of which was appended in the Minute Book), the Panel heard about the Warm Spaces initiative.

The Panel heard that although the majority of locations so far were in bigger towns and villages, all facilities identifying as warm spaces could apply for funding from the Community Chest Fund. As more groups are established, gaps will become identified and work can then be undertaken to help support groups in those areas.

Following an enquiry from Councillor Criswell, the Panel heard that there would be support to empower volunteers and to assist existing groups in supporting local residents. The Panel were further assured that support for dealing with those in immediate crisis would be paramount alongside helping residents establish long term solutions.

The Panel were advised that a map of warm hubs across the district would be provided in answer to a query from Councillor Alban. Following a further enquiry from Councillor Alban, the Panel heard that the Community Chest grants were capped to ensure as many groups as possible could be supported across the district.

Councillor Lowe enquired how those in need would be encouraged to attend the spaces and observed that there may be some social stigma attached to the centres. The Panel were reassured that by working with volunteers in the local community some of the anticipated stigmas would be addressed. The Panel also heard that some of the warm spaces

were adapted from existing social gatherings, such as coffee mornings, which would help encourage vulnerable residents to attend. Volunteers within the spaces would be trained and supported to help assist residents with unlocking long term support such as unclaimed benefits.

Following support for the scheme from Councillor Bywater, it was then enquired what barriers to employment were currently impacting residents. The Panel were assured that by working with Partner organisations such as the Department of Work and Pensions, the Council would assist residents into employment by clarifying support available to aid the transition into employment and alleviate concerns around the differences from any benefits and support currently received.

The Panel heard, following a question from Councillor Shaw, that by working closely with the County Council and other partnership organisations across the district, the Council would be able to ensure that vulnerable residents were being supported. It was further elaborated that this partnership approach may involve signposting to hubs outside of the district area as they may be more accessible for those residents living on the fringes of the district.

Councillor McAdam observed that despite the unprecedented situation, partnerships with the volunteer sector would allow better communication with communities and enable barriers to be broken down with residents engaging with services. The Panel was assured that feedback would be obtained and fed back to establish progress and success of the project.

The Panel were further assured, following an enquiry by Councillor Welton, that the work being undertaken on the project was currently resourced and also utilised the Council's apprenticeship scheme. However, long term options would be investigated with partners to ensure funding remained in place and residents would continue to be supported.

17. OVERVIEW AND 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.

Chair

NOTICE OF EXECUTIVE KEY DECISIONS INCLUDING THOSE TO BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE

Prepared by: Councillor Sarah Conboy, Executive Leader of the Council
Date of Publication: 11 November 2022
For Period: 1 December 2022 to 31 March 2023

Membership of the Cabinet is as follows:-

Councillor Details		Councillor Contact Details
Councillor S J Conboy	Executive Leader of the Council and Executive Councillor for Place	Cloudberry Cottage 9 Earning Street Godmanchester Huntingdon PE29 2JD Tel: 01480 414900 / 07831 807208 E-mail: Sarah.Conboy@huntingdonshire.gov.uk
Councillor L Davenport-Ray	Executive Councillor for Climate & Environment	73 Hogsden Leys St Neots Cambridgeshire PE19 6AD E-mail: Lara.Davenport-Ray@huntingdonshire.gov.uk
Councillor S Ferguson	Executive Councillor for Customer Services	9 Anderson Close St Neots Cambridgeshire PE19 6DN Tel: 07525 987460 E-mail: Stephen.Ferguson@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

Councillor M Hassall	Executive Councillor for Corporate & Shared Services	Care of Huntingdonshire District Council St Mary's Street Huntingdon Cambridgeshire PE29 3TN Tel: 07825 193572 E-mail: Martin.Hassall@huntingdonshire.gov.uk
Councillor B Mickelburgh	Executive Councillor for Finance & Resources	2 Grainger Avenue Godmanchester Huntingdon Cambridgeshire PE29 2JT Tel: 07441 392492 E-mail: Brett.Mickelburgh@huntingdonshire.gov.uk
Councillor B Pitt	Executive Councillor for Community & Health	17 Day Close St Neots Cambridgeshire PE19 6DF Tel: 07703 169273 E-mail: Ben.Pitt@huntingdonshire.gov.uk
Councillor T Sanderson	Deputy Executive Leader and Executive Councillor for Planning	29 Burmoor Close Huntingdon Cambridgeshire PE29 6GE Tel: 01480 436822 E-mail: Tom.Sanderson@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

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Councillor S Taylor	Executive Councillor for Leisure, Waste & Street Scene	66 Wren Walk Eynesbury St Neots Cambridgeshire PE19 2GE Tel: 07858 032076 E-mail: Simone.Taylor@huntingdonshire.gov.uk
Councillor S Wakeford	Executive Councillor for Jobs, Economy and Housing	4 Croft Close Brampton Huntingdon Cambridgeshire PE28 4TJ Tel: 07762 109210 E-mail: Sam.Wakeford@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

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Notice is hereby given of:

- Key decisions that will be taken by the Cabinet (or other decision maker)
- Confidential or exempt executive decisions that will be taken in a meeting from which the public will be excluded (for whole or part).

Notice/agenda together with reports and supporting documents for each meeting will be published at least five working days before the date of the meeting. In order to enquire about the availability of documents and subject to any restrictions on their disclosure, copies may be requested by contacting the Democratic Services Team on 01480 388169 or E-mail Democratic.Services@huntingdonshire.gov.uk.

Agendas may be accessed electronically at the [District Council's website](#).

Formal notice is hereby given under The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 that, where indicated part of the meetings listed in this notice will be held in private because the agenda and reports for the meeting will contain confidential or exempt information under Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended) and that the public interest in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in disclosing it. See the relevant paragraphs below.

Any person who wishes to make representations to the decision maker about a decision which is to be made or wishes to object to an item being considered in private may do so by emailing Democratic.Services@huntingdonshire.gov.uk or by contacting the Democratic Services Team. If representations are received at least eight working days before the date of the meeting, they will be published with the agenda together with a statement of the District Council's response. Any representations received after this time will be verbally reported and considered at the meeting.

Paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended) (Reason for the report to be considered in private)

1. Information relating to any individual
2. Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual
3. Information relating to the Financial and Business Affairs of any particular person (including the Authority holding that information)
4. Information relating to any consultations or negotiations or contemplated consultations or negotiations in connection with any labour relations that are arising between the Authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of or office holders under the Authority
5. Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings
6. Information which reveals that the Authority proposes:-
 - (a) To give under any announcement a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or
 - (b) To make an Order or Direction under any enactment
7. Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime.

Huntingdonshire District Council
Pathfinder House
St Mary's Street
Huntingdon PE29 3TN.

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- Notes:-
- (i) Additions changes from the previous Forward Plan are annotated ***
 - (ii) Part II confidential items which will be considered in private are annotated ## and shown in italic.

Subject/Matter for Decision	Decision/ recommendation to be made by	Date decision to be taken	Documents Available	How relevant Officer can be contacted	Reasons for the report to be considered in private (paragraph no.)	Relevant Executive Councillor	Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Panel
Community Chest Grant Aid Awards 2022/23 Page 15 of 32	Grants Panel	7 & 21 Dec 2022 4 & 18 Jan 2023 1 & 15 Feb 2023 1, 15 & 29 Mar 2023		Claudia Deeth, Community Resilience Manager Tel No: 01480 388233 or email: Claudia.Deeth@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		B Pitt & M Hassall	Customers & Partnerships
Approval of Council Tax Base 2023/24	Chairman of Corporate Governance and Section 151 Officer	6 Dec 2022		Amanda Burns, Revenues and Benefits Manager Tel No: 01480 388122 or email: Amanda.Burns@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		B Mickelburgh	Performance & Growth

Subject/Matter for Decision	Decision/ recommendation to be made by	Date decision to be taken	Documents Available	How relevant Officer can be contacted	Reasons for the report to be considered in private (paragraph no.)	Relevant Executive Councillor	Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Panel
Greater Cambridgeshire Partnership "Making Connections" Consultation***	Cabinet	12 Dec 2022		Clare Bond, Planning Policy Team Leader Tel No: 01480 387014 or email: Clare.Bond@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		S Wakeford	Performance & Growth
Infrastructure Funding Statement***	Cabinet	12 Dec 2022		Claire Burton, Implementation Team Leader Tel No: 01480 388274 or email: Claire.Burton@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		T Sanderson	Performance & Growth
UK Shared Prosperity Funding***	Cabinet	12 Dec 2022		Kate McFarlane, Corporate Director (Place) Tel No: 01480 388719 or email: Kate.McFarlane@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		S Wakeford	Performance & Growth

Subject/Matter for Decision	Decision/ recommendation to be made by	Date decision to be taken	Documents Available	How relevant Officer can be contacted	Reasons for the report to be considered in private (paragraph no.)	Relevant Executive Councillor	Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Panel
Market Towns Programme - Winter Update	Cabinet	12 Dec 2022		Pamela Scott, Housing Strategy and Delivery Manager Tel No: 01480 388486 or email: Pamela.Scott@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		S Wakeford	Performance & Growth
Rural Settlement List - Business Rates	Cabinet	12 Dec 2022		Amanda Burns, Revenues and Benefits Manager Tel No: 01480 388122 or email: Amanda.Burns@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		S Ferguson	Customer & Partnerships
Place Strategy Update***	Cabinet	24 Jan 2023		Kate McFarlane, Corporate Director (Place) Tel No: 01480 388719 or email: Kate.McFarlane@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		S Conboy	Performance & Growth

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Subject/Matter for Decision	Decision/ recommendation to be made by	Date decision to be taken	Documents Available	How relevant Officer can be contacted	Reasons for the report to be considered in private (paragraph no.)	Relevant Executive Councillor	Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Panel
Local Plan	Cabinet	24 Jan 2023		Clara Kerr, Service Manager - Growth Tel No: 01480 388430 or email: Clara.Kerr@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		T Sanderson	Performance & Growth
Climate Change Strategy	Cabinet	24 Jan 2023		Neil Sloper, Assistant Director Strategic Insights and Delivery Tel No: 01480 388635 or email: Neil.Sloper@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		L Davenport-Ray	Customer & Partnerships
Final 2023/24 Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy (2024/25 to 2027/28) including Capital Programme	Cabinet	7 Feb 2023		Karen Sutton, Director Finance and Corporate Services Tel No: 01480 387072 or email: Karen.Sutton@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		B Mickelburgh	Performance & Growth

Subject/Matter for Decision	Decision/ recommendation to be made by	Date decision to be taken	Documents Available	How relevant Officer can be contacted	Reasons for the report to be considered in private (paragraph no.)	Relevant Executive Councillor	Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Panel
2023/24 Treasury Management, Capital and Investment Strategies	Cabinet	7 Feb 2023		Karen Sutton, Director Finance and Corporate Services Tel No: 01480 387072 or email: Karen.Sutton@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		B Mickelburgh	Performance & Growth
Non-Domestic Rates Discretionary Relief Policy	Cabinet	7 Feb 2023		Amanda Burns, Revenues and Benefits Manager Tel No: 01480 388122 or email: Amanda.Burns@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		S Ferguson	Customer & Partnerships
Tenancy Strategy	Cabinet	7 Feb 2023		Pamela Scott, Housing Strategy and Delivery Manager Tel No: 07874 887465 or email: Pamela.Scott@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		S Ferguson	Performance & Growth

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Subject/Matter for Decision	Decision/ recommendation to be made by	Date decision to be taken	Documents Available	How relevant Officer can be contacted	Reasons for the report to be considered in private (paragraph no.)	Relevant Executive Councillor	Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Panel
Market Towns Programme - Spring Update***	Cabinet	21 Mar 2023		Pamela Scott, Housing Strategy and Delivery Manager Tel No: 01480 388486 or email: Pamela.Scott@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		S Wakeford	Performance & Growth
Place Strategy***	Cabinet	21 Mar 2023		Kate McFarlane, Corporate Director (Place) Tel No: 01480 388719 or email: Kate.McFarlane@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		S Conboy	Performance & Growth
Corporate Plan***	Cabinet	21 Mar 2023		Dan Buckridge, Business Intelligence and Performance Manager Tel No: 01480 388065 or email: Dn.Buckridge@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		S Conboy	Performance & Growth

Public
Key Decision - Yes

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: Business Rates Rural Settlement List

Meeting/Date: Overview & Scrutiny (Customer and Partnerships)
– 1 December 2022

Executive Portfolio: Cllr S Ferguson – Executive Councillor for
Customer Services

Report by: Revenues and Benefits Manager

Ward(s) affected: Farcet / Hemingford Grey / Offord D’Arcy and
Offord Cluny

RECOMMENDATION

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel is invited to comment on the proposed amendments to the Business Rates Rural Settlement List from the Cabinet report attached at Appendix A.

Public
Key Decision - Yes

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: Business Rates – Rural Settlement List

Meeting/Date: Overview and Scrutiny (Customers and Partnerships) – 1 December 2022
Cabinet – 12 December 2022

Executive Portfolio: Cllr S Ferguson – Executive Councillor for Customer Services

Report by: Revenues and Benefits Manager

Ward(s) affected: Farcet / Hemingford Grey / Offord D’Arcy and Offord Cluny

Executive Summary:

The Local Government and Rating Act 1997 requires that each rating authority must compile and maintain a Rural Settlement List comprising settlements with a population of less than 3,000.

The intention of the Rural Settlement List is to allow Huntingdonshire District Council to grant business rates relief to qualifying post offices, village shops, public houses and petrol stations to support rural businesses and communities.

The latest data provided by the County Council on population sizes across the parishes in Huntingdonshire has prompted a review of the current list to ensure it meets legislative criteria.

This has resulted in a proposal to amend the classifications of the parishes of Farcet, Hemingford Grey, Offord D’Arcy and Offord Cluny for the purposes of Business Rates. This will not affect the level of business rates relief in any of the parishes affected.

Recommendation:

The Cabinet is

RECOMMENDED

to approve the changes to Huntingdonshire District Council’s Rural Settlement List effective from 1 April 2023.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The Local Government and Rating Act 1997 requires that rating authorities must compile and maintain a list of settlements with a population of less than 3,000, the Rural Settlement List, in order to award rural rate relief to qualifying village shops, post houses, public houses and petrol stations.
- 1.2 Recent population data compiled by Cambridgeshire County Council has prompted a review of the Rural Settlement List to ensure that settlements are classified correctly. This report sets out why changes are being proposed to certain parishes and shows that the impact of these changes will not be detrimental in any way to businesses trading in the rural areas of Huntingdonshire.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Towns and parishes within Huntingdonshire are all designated as one of three types of settlement:

Urban settlements – population above 3,000

Rural settlements – population below 3,000

Defined settlements – population above 3,000 but the parish has been designated as a rural settlement by defining areas within the parish

A rural settlement does not necessarily have to follow ward or parish boundaries. A defined settlement can be applied by splitting an area based on other characteristics, such as geographical or demographic features.

- 2.2 Rural rate relief is applied to certain types of business within a rural settlement, i.e. with a population of less than 3,000. It applies where the only village shop or post office has a rateable value of up to £8,500 or the only public house or petrol station has a rateable value of up to £12,500. Qualifying businesses are entitled to 50% mandatory relief on their business rates. The Government proposes to increase this to 100% but the legislation has not yet been amended. However, local authorities use their powers to award 50% discretionary relief which is then re-imbursed through a Section 31 grant, which in effect grants 100% relief.
- 2.3 Under the current list, a number of parishes are classified as a defined settlement in order to maximise the number of businesses that benefit from rural rate relief:

Farcet, Fenstanton, Hemingford Grey, Offord D'Arcy and Offord Cluny, Ramsey Forty Foot, Ramsey Heights, Ramsey Mereside and Ramsey St Mary's

3. OPTIONS CONSIDERED/ANALYSIS

- 3.1 A review of the classification of all towns and parishes, and in particular the defined settlements, on the current Rural Settlement List has found the following:

Farcet: has a population of less than 3,000 but is currently split into two to enable rural rate relief to be applied to two local pubs in the area. There are now no open pubs, so it is proposed that the parish of Farcet is re-designated as a rural settlement. If the one remaining pub did re-open, it would qualify for rural rate relief.

Hemingford Grey: has a population of over 3,000 and is currently split into two to enable rural rate relief to be awarded to a village shop. There are no longer any businesses that would qualify for rural rate relief so it is proposed that the parish of Hemingford Grey is re-designated as an urban settlement.

Offord D'Arcy and Offord Cluny: has a population of less than 3,000 but is currently split into two to enable rural rate relief to be applied to the two village pubs and shop. One pub is now closed and the rateable values of the remaining pub and village shop are too large for them to receive rural rate relief, so it is proposed that the parish of Offord D'Arcy and Offord Cluny is re-designated as a rural settlement.

- 3.2 It is proposed that there are no changes to the classification of the other defined settlements.
- 3.3 These proposals have no detrimental / financial impact on any of the existing businesses in these parishes but ensures the Rural Settlement List reflects the current population and that rural rate relief continues to be awarded to all qualifying businesses.

4. COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

- 4.1 The comments of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Panel will be included in this section prior to its consideration by the Cabinet.

5. WHAT ACTIONS WILL BE TAKEN/TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- 5.1 The revised Rural Settlement List will be effective from 1 April 2023. The list will be available for inspection from 1 January 2023, three months before the effective date.

6. LINK TO THE CORPORATE PLAN, STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND/OR CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

- 6.1 Reviewing and maintaining the Rural Settlement List contributes to the Corporate Plan objective of Supporting Local Businesses.

7. CONSULTATION

- 7.1 The Rural Settlement List and application of rural rate relief supports the objective in the Corporate Plan of Supporting Businesses.

8. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

- 8.1 The proposed amendments to the Rural Settlement List ensures that the classification of urban, rural and defined settlements reflect the current population figures and rural rate relief is being awarded appropriately.

9. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED

Appendix 1 – Proposed Rural Settlement List

Appendix 2 – Proposed Rural Settlement List Map

CONTACT OFFICER

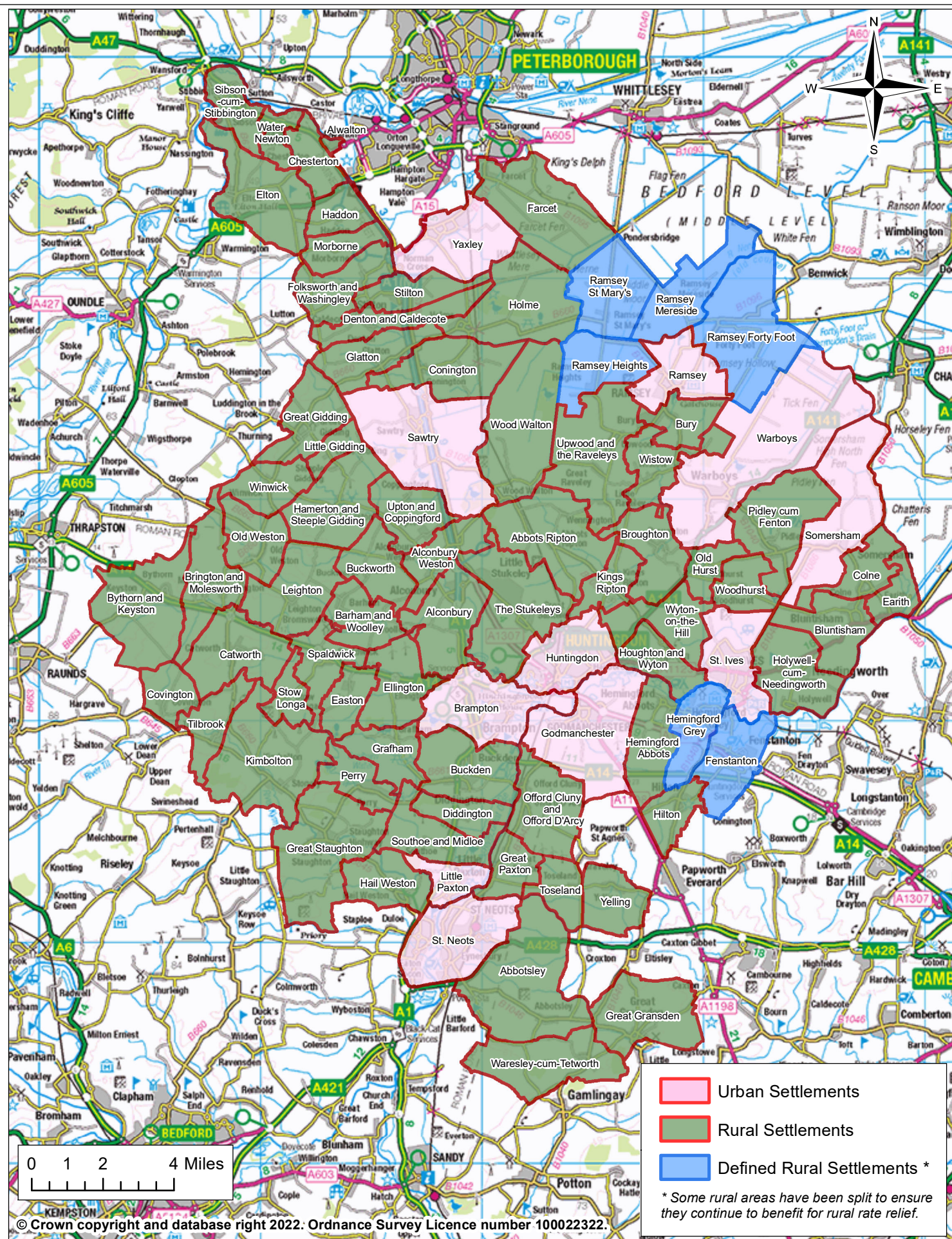
Name/Job Title: Amanda Burns / Revenues and Benefits Manager
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Proposed Rural Settlement List – Appendix 1

Abbotsley	Hemingford Abbots
Abbots Ripton	Hilton
Alconbury	Holme
Alconbury Weston	Holywell-cum-Needingworth
Alwalton	Houghton and Wyton
Barham and Woolley	Kimbolton and Stonely
Bluntisham	Kings Ripton
Brington and Molesworth	Leighton Bromswold
Broughton	Morborne
Buckden	Offord Cluny & Offord D'Arcy
Buckworth	Old Hurst
Bury	Old Weston
Bythorn and Keyston	Perry
Catworth	Pidley-cum-Fenton
Chesterton	Ramsey Forty Foot*
Colne	Ramsey St Mary's*
Conington	Ramsey Mereside*
Covington	Ramsey Heights*
Denton and Caldecote	Sibson-cum-Stibbington
Diddington	Southoe and Midloe
Earith	Spaldwick
Easton	Stilton
Ellington	Stow Longa
Elton	The Stukeleys
Farcet	Tilbrook
Fenstanton (village area only)*	Toseland
Folksworth and Washingley	Upton and Coppingford
Glatton	Upwood and the Raveleys
Grafham	Waresley-cum-Tetworth
Great and Little Gidding	Water Newton
Great Gransden	Winwick
Great Paxton	Wistow
Great Staughton	Woodhurst
Haddon	Woodwalton
Hail Weston	Wyton-on-the-Hill
Hamerton and Steeple Gidding	Yelling

* Defined rural settlement

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Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2022/23

Performance and Growth

In Progress

Topic	Membership & Scope	Lead Officer	Progress
Review of External Appointments to Outside Organisations	Cllrs S Cawley, S J Corney, I D Gardener and S A Howell	TBC	<p>Summer 2022: Terms of Reference have been established. Questionnaire has been sent to all relevant boards and organisations. Regular meetings are established from September.</p> <p>September 2022: Evidence and information gathering underway.</p> <p>November 2022: Information gathering completed.</p> <p>Next steps: Draft report underway</p>

Customers and Partnerships

In Progress

Topic	Membership & Scope	Lead Officer	Progress
Climate	Councillor T D Alban Councillor J Kerr Councillor C Lowe Councillor D Shaw	Neil Sloper	November 2022: Initial Meeting held to establish Terms of Reference for the group. Next Steps: Regular meetings to be established. Evidence and information gathering to be progressed.