

A meeting of the **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (PERFORMANCE AND GROWTH)** will be held in **CIVIC SUITE, PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON PE29 3TN** on **WEDNESDAY, 5 JULY 2023** at **7:00 PM** and you are requested to attend for the transaction of the following business:-

AGENDA

APOLOGIES

1. MINUTES (Pages 5 - 12)

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance and Growth) meeting held on 7th June 2023.

Contact Officer: B Buddle
01480 388008

2. RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS
(Pages 13 - 14)

To note responses received to questions asked at previous meetings.

Contact Officer: B Buddle
01480 388008

3. 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

4. NOTICE OF KEY EXECUTIVE DECISIONS (Pages 15 - 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: R Leighton
01480 388169

5. TENANCY STRATEGY (Pages 21 - 36)

The Panel is invited to comment on the Tenancy Strategy.

Executive Councillor: S Wakeford

Contact Officer: P Scott
01480 388486

6. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 37 - 40)

- a) The Panel are to receive the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme
- b) Members to discuss future planning of items for the Work Programme

Contact Officer: B Buddle
01480 388008

27 day of June 2023

Oliver Morley

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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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 (PERFORMANCE AND GROWTH) held in Civic Suite, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon PE29 3TN on Wednesday, 7 June 2023.

PRESENT: Councillor C M Gleadow – Chair.

Councillors A M Blackwell, I D Gardener, J E Harvey, S A Howell, A R Jennings, R Martin, Dr M Pickering, N Wells and Graham John Welton.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors S J Corney and R A Slade.

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors S W Ferguson, B A Mickelburgh and S Wakeford.

4. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings held on 5th April 2023 and 18th May 2023 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

The Chair welcomed Councillor Jennings and Councillor Welton to the Panel and thanked Councillor Cawley and Councillor Gray for their valuable contribution over the past year.

5. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

6. 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 June 2023 to 30th September 2023.

The Panel were advised that a joint meeting of both Overview and Scrutiny Panels would be convened on 6th July 2023 to discuss the Garden Waste Subscription Service report.

7. MARKET TOWNS PROGRAMME - SUMMER UPDATE

By means of a report by the Regeneration and Housing Delivery Manager (a copy of which was appended in the Minute Book), the Market Towns Programme – Spring Update 2022/2023 was presented to the Panel.

The Chair thanked the Officer for the opportunity given to Panel Members to view detail plans for the St Neots Town Centre proposal,

which had been extremely informative and helpful.

In response to concerns from Councillor Gardener, the Panel heard that a communications plan would be developed to ensure St Neots residents were proactively communicated with regarding the planned works to trees in the Market Square. Councillor Harvey's suggestion of using the old wood as part of the planning art projects for the areas was noted. Following a further question from Councillor Jennings, the Panel were advised that the County Council would be making a contribution towards the cost of the removal of the trees and that there was a working assumption that the replacement trees would remain the liability of the County Council.

Following a question from Councillor Pickering, the Panel were advised that plans were progressing in respect of the Old Falcon property and that more detail would be brought to a future report.

In response to questions from Councillor Martin around capital funding in section 2.39 of the report, the Panel heard that the two projects had been chosen due to the timescales and availability of funding available.

Following an observation from Councillor Wells, who praised the amended terminology from Masterplan, the Panel heard that the aim was to clear up confusion surrounding the terminology and to allow for clarity moving forward.

The Panel heard, in response to a question from Councillor Martin, that all funding opportunities would be maximised and that delays in procurement were due to managing both material cost and availability, resulting in a deliverable scheme. The Panel were further assured that the Council would benefit from the Eastern Highways Alliance Framework ensuring deliverability.

Councillor Blackwell expressed concerns over the continuation of the Digital Wayfinding project, following which, the Panel were assured that the project and the installed machines would continue to be monitored with an exit strategy contingency should this prove necessary. The Panel were further assured that whilst decisions could be made on this project outside of the democratic meeting cycle, the Cabinet would, where feasible, seek to loop the Panel in to the decision.

It was thereupon

RESOLVED

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

8. MID TERM REVIEW OF THE HOUSING STRATEGY 2020-2025

By means of a report by the Regeneration and Housing Delivery Manager (a copy of which was appended in the Minute Book), the Mid Term Review of the Housing Strategy 2020-2025 was presented to the Panel.

In response to a question from Councillor Gardener on whether agricultural workers would be included within the definition of key workers, the Panel heard that there was a suggestion that this term maybe replaced with Essential Workers by Government in the future, the Council would expect this type of demand to be identified as part of Housing Needs Surveys in local parishes the Council would then use opportunities to meet that demand, within existing policy in the Local Plan.

Following a question from Councillor Pickering, it was acknowledged that whilst an ongoing issue of under occupation of social housing exists, it is a sensitive issue. The Panel were assured that the Council would continue to work in partnership with Social Landlords to manage the situation as proactively as possible in line with the tenancies of those residents affected.

In response to a question from Councillor Harvey regarding Disabled Facilities Grants, the Panel heard that a piece of work would be planned to review and assess the current need and anticipated demand in this area.

Following an observation from Councillor Blackwell on the alarming statistics surrounding dementia sufferers, the Panel heard that the report outlines the importance of the work being undertaken in aligning the stark challenges faced by the Council.

Having praised a comprehensive report, it was thereupon

RESOLVED

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

9. FIRST HOMES STATEMENT

By means of a report by the Regeneration and Housing Delivery Manager (a copy of which was appended in the Minute Book), the First Homes Statement was presented to the Panel.

Following a question from Councillor Pickering, the Panel heard that self-employed residents would be classified the same as employed residents in respect of meeting employment within the district criteria.

Councillor Blackwell expressed concerns that by including siblings within the criteria, the scheme would be subject to abuse. The Panel were advised that a sibling connection had been retained within the scheme in line with LGA guidance however it could be reflected upon.

The Panel were assured, following a question from Councillor Howell, that once identified as a First Home, a restriction would be placed with the Land Registry to ensure that this status remained in perpetuity.

It was clarified to the Panel, following a question from Councillor Harvey, that the reference to a connection with older children within

the report was not intended to exclude a connection with younger children.

In response to a question from Councillor Martin, it was confirmed to the Panel that those who are employees of a Huntingdonshire business but that work from home, would satisfy the employment connection.

It was thereupon

RESOLVED

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

10. CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT, 2022/23 QUARTER 4

By means of a report by the Business Intelligence & Performance Manager Performance and Data Analyst (a copy of which was appended in the Minute Book), the Corporate Performance Report 2022/23 Quarter 4 Report was presented to the Panel.

Following a question from Councillor Jennings on the lack of set targets on some of the performance indicators and status indicators, the Panel heard that the team were aware of some discrepancies within the report, however this would be addressed and the proposed changes to the reports in 2023/24 would resolve this issue for the future. It was further advised, that for every measure in the new corporate plan there would be a target and intervention level set.

In response to a question from Councillor Pickering, the Panel heard that the measures for garden waste would be improved as it was acknowledged that the weather could greatly affect this measure, especially with the impacts of climate change. Going forward, a more appropriate target would be set for the 'percentage of waste that is recycled' and the inclusion of a 'weight of waste collected per household' to ensure that not only waste recycled but the efforts to reduce waste overall could be tracked by Officers and Members.

Councillor Gleadow observed the improvement shown within the planning service and praised the team for this achievement.

It was thereupon

RESOLVED

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

11. FINANCE PERFORMANCE REPORT 2022/23 QUARTER 4

By means of a report by the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources (a copy of which was appended in the Minute Book), the Finance Performance Report 2022/23 Quarter 4 Report was presented to the Panel.

Following a question from Councillor Harvey on the reduction seen by CCTV in section 3.2, the Panel heard that this was due to additional variable income that was not achievable.

The Panel heard, following a further question from Councillor Harvey, that the A14 Contribution, early repayment, in section 3.3 had been researched and it was felt that the option taken held the most benefit for the Council.

Councillor Jennings praised a very comprehensive report but enquired about an expected utilities saving at One Leisure St Neots. The Panel were advised that the detail would be checked and confirmed back to the Panel.

Councillor Blackwell expressed concerns over Council Tax arrears mentioned within the report, the Panel were advised that work would continue to recover these arrears and that this would be monitored.
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Following a question from Councillor Harvey, the Panel heard that some long term vacancies had been removed from the MTFs where there were no plans to recruit.

The Panel heard, following a question from Councillor Gardener, that fleet maintenance was ongoing in line with the Climate Strategy, with great success, with the aim to maintain current fleet rather than invest in new vehicles.

It was thereupon

RESOLVED

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

12. TREASURY MANAGEMENT OUTTURN REPORT 2022/23

By means of a report by the Chief Finance Officer (a copy of which was appended in the Minute Book), the Treasury Management Outturn Report 2022/23 was presented to the Panel.

Following a question from Councillor Pickering, the Panel heard that the increase in the overall property value of the Rowley Centre St Neots was due to the unit occupied by Cineworld having returned to full rent (valuations being based on rent yield), from the reduced rent during the COVID pandemic.

In response to a question from Councillor Jennings, it was confirmed to the Panel that all borrowing was on fixed rate terms, the majority being borrowed from the Public Works Loans Board, in addition there is a small loan from Salix Ltd at fixed 0% interest.

The Panel heard, following an observation by Councillor Blackwell, that an inconsistency in the report relating to People for Places in section 3.1 would be corrected to Places for People.

In response to a question from Councillor Harvey, the Panel heard that the reduction in property value of the existing portfolio shown in Table 8 was due to a decrease in rent and estimated future yield at two locations which impacted on the property value, it was also advised that new valuers had been appointed which had resulted in some valuation changes.

It was thereupon

RESOLVED

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

13. CORPORATE PLAN TARGETS 2023/24

By means of a report and presentation by the Chief Operating Officer (copies of which was appended in the Minute Book), the Corporate Plan Targets 2023/24 was presented to the Panel.

Councillor Jennings observed that some Performance Indicators were set substantially below the targets achieved in the past year. The Panel heard that this was to allow the team to clear the existing backlog and would provide a long term benefit.

The Panel heard that due to residents being able to self-serve via the website, the nature of the calls received by the call centre had become more detailed which had resulted in changes to call handling. This had resulted in a better service for residents who were able to have their enquiries resolved by the call centre on first contact whilst still maintaining good call handling times when benchmarked against other local Councils. Following a further question from Councillor Martin on how the call centre data would be presented, the Panel heard that this would be developed as the year progressed.

Councillor Martin expressed concerns that Performance Indicator 11 was not ambitious enough and enquired whether a higher intervention level would be possible. The Panel heard that a lot of the factors involved were outside of the Councils control and relied on other organisations therefore it was felt that the targets were realistic.

Following an enquiry from Councillor Gardener, the Panel heard that the progress of the Market Towns projects would be seen across the spectrum of Corporate Plan Targets.

In response to a question from Councillor Blackwell surrounding sickness targets, the Panel heard that these had been kept in line with national averages due to the diverse nature of roles across the workforce, however work would be undertaken to ensure intervention levels were consistent with those of neighbouring authorities.

Following a question from Councillor Martin surrounding Performance Indicator 13, the Panel were advised that the detail would be sought and reported back to the Panel at a future date.

14. 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.

Councillor Gardener requested that he remain on the Flooding Working Group for any future meetings given his involvement in the Overview and Scrutiny Flooding Study and given the flooding issues which had occurred within his Ward.

Councillor Howell enquired whether it would be possible to look at a study involving Business Development in the future.

Chair

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Overview and Scrutiny (Performance and Growth) Panel – Questions requiring a response.

Minute No.	Item	Councillor	Question	Answer
23/11	Finance Performance Q4	Cllr Jennings	Query over an expected utilities saving at One Leisure St Neots.	It is clarified that the Officer's narrative refers to a variance against the Q3 forecast and not the budget.
23/13	Corporate Plan Targets 2023/24	Cllr Martin	Query over targets set on Performance Indicator 13 with detail being sought.	PI 13 is a new measure (adding 'other' to 'minor') so the Q4 figure for last year's measure and the figure in the target report for this year's should be different and are both correct. The change was made at Planning's request to be consistent with what they are required to report in the Government return. It will allow HDC to measure consistently both internally (for Cllrs and Officers) and also to enable easier benchmarking against others (giving an external perspective)

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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: 19 June 2023
For Period: 1 July 2023 to 31 October 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

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Agenda Item 4

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

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 2023/24	Grants Panel	19 July, 16 August, 20 September & 18 October 2023		Claudia Deeth, Community Resilience Manager Tel No: 01480 388233 or email: Claudia.Deeth@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		B Pitt & M Hassall	Environment, Communities & Partnerships
Garden Waste Subscription Service	Cabinet	18 Jul 2023		Andrew Rogan, Waste Operations Manager Tel No: 01480 388082 or email: Andrew.Rogan@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		M Hassall	Environment, Communities & Partnerships
Tenancy Strategy	Cabinet	18 Jul 2023		Pamela Scott, Housing Strategy and Delivery Manager Tel No: 07874 887465 or email: Pamela.Scott@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		S Wakeford / 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 - Autumn Update	Cabinet	19 Sep 2023		Pamela Scott, Housing Strategy and Delivery Manager Tel No: 01480 388486 or email: Pamela.Scott@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		S Wakeford	Performance & Growth
Page 20 of 40 Redesign of Council Tax Support Scheme	Cabinet	14 Nov 2023		Katie Kelly, Revenue and Benefits Manager Tel No: 01480 388388 or email: Katie.Kelly@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		S Ferguson	Environment, Communities & Partnerships
Electric Vehicle Charge Strategy***	Cabinet	14 Nov 2023		George McDowell, Parking Services Officer Tel No: 01480 388386 or email: George.McDowell@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		L Davenport-Ray	Environment, Communities & Partnerships

Public
Key Decision - Yes

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: Tenancy Strategy

Meeting/Date: Overview & Scrutiny (Performance and Growth)
5th July 2023

Executive Portfolio: Executive Councillor for Jobs, Economy & Housing

Report by: Regeneration & Housing Delivery Manager

Ward(s) affected: All

RECOMMENDATION

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel is invited to:

- Note the content of the report
- Comment on the Tenancy Strategy 2023.

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Public
Key Decision - Yes

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: Tenancy Strategy 2023

Meeting/Date: Overview & Scrutiny (Performance & Growth)
5 July 2023

Cabinet
18 July 2023

Executive Portfolio: Cllr S. Wakeford, Executive Councillor for Jobs,
Economy & Housing

Report by: Regeneration and Housing Delivery Manager

Ward(s) affected: All

Executive Summary:

The aim of this strategy is to set out Huntingdonshire's vision for the way social housing providers in the district should let their properties to meet the needs of residents.

Even though Huntingdonshire is not a stock owning Council having transferred its affordable housing stock in 2000, to Huntingdon Housing Partnership (HHP) through a Large Scale Voluntary Transfer (LSVT), now part of the Places for People Group, the Council is still required under the Localism Act to develop and publish a tenancy strategy setting out how social housing in its area is let and managed including:

- the kinds of tenancies they grant,
- the circumstances in which they will grant a tenancy of a particular kind,
- where they grant tenancies for a term certain, the lengths of the terms, and
- the circumstances in which they will grant a further tenancy on the coming to an end of an existing tenancy.

The Tenancy Strategy relates to lettings of all social and affordable rented properties, including general needs, adapted, sheltered and extra-care housing. It does not cover lettings to hostels, transitional accommodation or other forms of supported housing and does not apply to low cost home ownership (generally Shared Ownership) residents.

All Registered Providers (RP's) with housing stock in Huntingdonshire are required to have regard to this strategy and ensure that, wherever possible, their policies work to complement, and do not contradict, our Tenancy Strategy.

Recommendation(s):

Cabinet is requested to:

- Note the contents of this report and;
- Agree to the Tenancy Strategy 2023.

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To set out Huntingdonshire's vision for the way social housing providers in the district should let their properties to meet the needs of residents.
- 1.2 Specifically, to develop and publish a tenancy strategy setting out how social housing in its area is let and managed including:
 - the kinds of tenancies they grant,
 - the circumstances in which they will grant a tenancy of a particular kind,
 - where they grant tenancies for a term certain, the lengths of the terms, and
 - the circumstances in which they will grant a further tenancy on the coming to an end of an existing tenancy.

BACKGROUND

- 1.3 HDC first Tenancy Strategy was published in September 2012, following the introduction of the Localism Act 2011 which placed a duty on local housing authorities to develop and publish a tenancy strategy setting out how social housing in its area is let and managed.
- 1.4 Registered Providers of Social Housing (RP's) is a term given to organisation that provide social housing that is registered and regulated by the Government. They can be public or private organisations that offer different types of tenancies and licences to their residents; they are often known as Housing Associations.
- 1.5 It is now necessary to refresh this document following the expiry of the first strategy.
- 1.6 The Council's Corporate Plan states that:

“we want everyone to live in a safe, high quality home regardless of health, stage of life, family structure, income and tenure type. Homes should be energy efficient and allow people to live healthy and prosperous lives, New homes should be zero carbon ready and encourage sustainable travel”.
- 1.7 Social housing plays an important part in delivering this vision. Sufficient flexible and affordable homes that meet local needs contributes to strong and happy communities where people can prosper.
- 1.8 The principles that underpin this strategy are:
 - A social home for those in need, whilst they remain in social need,
 - Making best use of stock,
 - A fairer system, that promotes social mobility and aspiration,
 - Helping people to move up the social ladder.

- 1.9 When reviewing this strategy, the Council, has had regard to the Huntingdonshire Lettings Policy and Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy.

COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

- 2.1 Comments from this Panel will be included in this section prior to its consideration by the Cabinet.

KEY IMPACTS / RISKS

- 3.1 The Council is required to have an up to date Tenancy Strategy in accordance with the Localism Act 2011, failure to have a strategy will mean that the Council is unable to influence RP's on how they manage their tenancies in the District.
- 3.2 The RP's listed in the strategy have had an opportunity to comment on this draft document prior to its finalisation, we will continue to work with them as part of the Council's Enabling function and seek the most secure tenancies for our residents as part of the lettings process.

LINK TO THE CORPORATE PLAN OBJECTIVES

- 4.1 The completion of the Tenancy Strategy aligns to Huntingdonshire District Council's Corporate Plan under the Priority – "In creating a better Huntingdonshire for future generations", under the outcome of Improving Housing.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Senior Officers across the Council have reviewed the Tenancy Strategy and their comments have been included in the document.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There will be no additional resource implications, in implementing this Strategy, activities relating directly to HDC will be undertaken by existing teams and partnerships are already established with RP's.

HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Within the Health and Wellbeing Integrated Care Strategy, there is a priority of, "*Reducing poverty through better housing, employment and skills*" This strategy aligns with this priority by providing residents with stable, secure affordable housing.

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 In February 2023 the Council formally approved the Council's Climate Strategy this recognises that the current cost of living and climate crises require joint attention to support the wellbeing of residents and businesses. In passing this motion, the council committed to not only the delivery of a Climate Strategy but also that in making decisions it will wherever possible

seek to contribute to positive environmental and social benefits. The delivery of good quality, affordable and secure accommodation for residents supports this ambition.

EQUALITIES

- 9.1 The Council has a statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and foster good relations in respect of nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.
- 9.2 A Tenancy Strategy will enable the Council to set out guidelines on how tenancies should be managed by RP's in Huntingdonshire which will aim to prevent discrimination and promote equality of opportunity. The strategy relates to lettings of all social and affordable rented properties, including general needs, adapted, sheltered and extra-care housing.

Appendix 1

Tenancy Strategy 2023

CONTACT OFFICER

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Tenancy Strategy 2023

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Division & Service:	Housing Strategy		
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1. Introduction

- 1.1. The aim of this strategy is to set out Huntingdonshire’s vision for the way social housing providers in the local authority area should let their properties to meet the needs of residents.
- 1.2. Huntingdonshire transferred its affordable housing stock in 2000, to Huntingdon Housing Partnership (HHP) through a Large Scale Voluntary Transfer (LSVT), HHP then became Luminous who more recently became Chorus (now Places for People). It is therefore important for us to hold a Tenancy Strategy that is up to date to inform Registered Provider (RP) practices in the area
- 1.3. The Tenancy Strategy relates to lettings of all social and affordable rented properties, including general needs, adapted, sheltered and extra-care housing. It does not cover lettings to hostels, transitional accommodation or other forms of supported housing and does not apply to low cost home ownership residents.
- 1.4. All RP’s with housing stock in Huntingdonshire are required to have regard to this Tenancy Strategy. We ask that RPs in Huntingdonshire review their own Tenancy Policies in light of this strategy to ensure that, wherever possible, their policies work to complement, and do not contradict, our Tenancy Strategy.

Huntingdonshire Social Housing

- 1.5. The Council’s Corporate Plan states that:

“we want everyone to live in a safe, high quality home regardless of health, stage of life, family structure, income and tenure type. Homes should be energy efficient and allow people to live healthy and prosperous lives, New homes should be zero carbon ready and encourage sustainable travel”.
- 1.6. Social housing plays an important part in delivering this vision. Sufficient flexible and affordable homes that meet local needs contributes to strong and happy communities where people can prosper.
- 1.7. The principles that underpin this strategy are:
 - A social home for those in need, whilst they remain in social need,

- Making best use of stock,
- A fairer system, that promotes social mobility and aspiration,
- Helping people to move up the social ladder.

Background

- 1.8. Our first Tenancy Strategy, published in September 2012, introduced a new housing offer for local people through the use of flexible, fixed term tenancies. The aim of introducing five year fixed term tenancies was to make more efficient use of housing stock, more effectively focus provision on those in most need and to promote social mobility.
- 1.9. Fixed term tenancies were introduced through changes to legislation, however, they did not deliver the intended benefit due to the limitations of legal processes and the time and resources spent on maintaining the tenancy review process.

Legal and regulatory context

- 1.10. The Localism Act 2011 placed a duty on local housing authorities to develop and publish a tenancy strategy setting out how social housing in its area is let and managed including:
 - the kinds of tenancies they grant,
 - the circumstances in which they will grant a tenancy of a particular kind,
 - where they grant tenancies for a term certain, the lengths of the terms, and
 - the circumstances in which they will grant a further tenancy on the coming to an end of an existing tenancy.
- 1.11. RPs, must have due regard to this Tenancy Strategy when developing tenancy policies.
- 1.12. The Council, when reviewing this strategy, has had regard to the Huntingdonshire Lettings Policy and Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy.
- 1.13. The relevant legislation and codes of guidance have also been considered, these include:
 - Housing Act 1985 (as amended)
 - The Housing Act 1996 (as amended)
 - Homelessness Act 2002
 - Housing Act 2004
 - Allocation of Housing and Homelessness (eligibility) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended)
 - Localism Act 2011 (as amended)
 - The Housing and Planning Act 2016
 - The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
 - The Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018
 - The Housing (Assessment of Accommodation Needs) (Meaning of Gypsies and Travelers) (England) Regulations 2006 (Statutory Instrument: 2006 No. 3190)
 - The Equality Act 2010
 - Human Rights Act 1998
 - Housing & Regeneration Act 2008

- Secure Tenancies (Victims of Domestic Abuse) Act 2018
- 1.14. The Regulator of Social Housing's Tenancy Standard requires that RPs let their homes in a fair, transparent and efficient way. 'RPs shall offer tenancies or terms of occupation which are compatible with the purpose of the accommodation, the needs of individual households, the sustainability of the community, and the efficient use of their housing stock'.
- 1.15. RPs should develop their tenancy policies in line with the relevant legislation and regulator's expectations as set out in the Tenancy Standard.

2. Tenancy Types

- 2.1. Tenancy types will vary depending on whether the landlord is a RP or a landlord within the private rented sector. Tenancy types include:
- Introductory/probationary/starter tenancies
 - Secure/Assured tenancies (Lifetime Tenancies)
 - Secure/Assured Flexible tenancies (fixed term tenancies)
 - Non-secure tenancies (periodic tenancies for temporary accommodation provided under homelessness legislation (part 7 of the Housing Act 1996))
 - Assured Short hold tenancies
 - Shared ownership tenancies
 - Other tenancy types as allowed by law.
- 2.2. The Council will support the use of introductory tenancies for new tenants moving into social housing for the first time. Following this, it is expected that the vast majority of tenants will become secure lifetime tenants. Where a tenancy is not managed properly by the tenant during the introductory period the RP may seek to end it during that term or to extend the period of the introductory tenancy.
- 2.3. Where an introductory tenancy isn't used there is an expectation that RPs offer appropriate support to assist with establishing and sustaining the tenancy.
- 2.4. The Council considers that secure, lifetime tenancies will provide the best environment for families to thrive and become part of a sustainable community. We encourage RPs to use the most secure form of tenancy available to them wherever possible in order to create settled homes for families to live in. However, we do recognise that in some special circumstances the use of fixed term (flexible) tenancies might be appropriate for a RP to make best use of stock and meet the individual needs of residents.
- 2.5. The Council would expect RP's in the establishment of all new tenancies to support tenants for the first twelve months of occupation in the sustainment of their tenancy.
- 2.6. The Council would expect RP's to ensure that residents live in high quality, well maintained and safe homes and that tenants are empowered and listened to in relation to their tenancies and services provided to them.

3. Circumstances to consider when granting a tenancy

Fixed term tenancies

- 3.1. Where fixed term tenancies are used by RPs, the tenancy must be granted for a minimum fixed term of five years, or exceptionally, a tenancy for a minimum fixed term of no less than two years, in addition to any probationary tenancy period.

- 3.2. The choice of tenancy term should be based on both individual needs and the characteristics of particular housing schemes. We would expect RPs to take into account the needs of those households who are vulnerable by reason of age, disability or illness, and households with children. Factors such as schooling, training, employment, regeneration, family stability and community sustainability should also be considered.
- 3.3. Towards the end of the tenancy term, we expect RPs to provide or signpost tenants to information and advice about housing options and help tenants secure alternative housing should their tenancy end following the review.
- 3.4. We expect that the majority of fixed term tenancies will be renewed by RPs at the review stage/end of the initial agreement period. Where fixed term tenancies are used, RPs are encouraged to consider housing need when deciding whether to review a tenancy. Similarly, we would expect them to consider using criteria intended to increase their ability to make best use of stock.

Transfers

- 3.5. RPs should act in line with legislation to ensure that eligible social housing tenants choosing to move to another social rented home with the same or another landlord are granted a tenancy with no less security.
- 3.6. RPs should also protect the tenure rights of victims of domestic abuse when social housing tenants are relocated to another social rented home as set out in 3.9.

Local lettings policies

- 3.7. The use of local lettings policies are a key feature of the council's Housing Allocation Scheme and are a useful tool when dealing with large development sites, in delivering successful mixed new communities, tackling anti-social behaviour and where local connections are required in rural exception sites. These local lettings policies apply a set of specific objectives or intents to a specific property, properties or to a specific type of development, where the qualification and priority criteria may be varied.
- 3.8. If a Local Lettings policy is being used this will be noted on the advert on Home-Link scheme to show that there are additional restrictions as to who can be offered these properties. Sensitive lets differ from a local lettings policy as the sensitive let criteria may be applied to a single property rather than a group of properties in an area.

Victims/survivors of domestic abuse

- 3.9. It is important to protect the tenure rights of victims of domestic abuse. RPs should act in line with current legislation¹ in relation to accommodating victims of domestic abuse and ensure that, when re-housing a tenant with an existing secure tenure who needs to move or has recently moved from their social home to escape domestic abuse, an equivalent tenancy is granted for their new home. This will ensure that victims will not fear losing security of tenure and will provide stability and security in their new home. RPs are encouraged to review and amend their existing policies and procedures to incorporate this requirement if they have not already done so.

Succession rights

- 3.10. The Localism Act limited succession to spouses or civil partners of the deceased tenant. The need to make best use of existing social housing stock was the driver for this. However, landlords are able to grant additional succession rights under the terms of the

¹ Part 4 of the Housing Act 1985 (secure tenancies and rights of secure tenants) as amended by the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and Secure Tenancies (Victims of Domestic Abuse) Act 2018.

Tenancy Agreement. We expect RPs to make their policy on succession for all tenancy types and the granting of any additional rights clear and take account of the needs of vulnerable household members.

- 3.11. RPs should include in their tenancy policy, a position on managing successions and assignments that has due regard to legal requirements and which focuses on securing an outcome that secures the best use of accommodation and prevents homelessness.

Affordable Rent and other affordable housing options

- 3.12. The council encourages RPs and developers to consider a range of affordable housing options including Affordable Rent and shared ownership. Affordable housing includes social rented and intermediate housing, provided to specified eligible households whose needs are not met by the market.

- 3.13. Affordable housing should:

- Meet the needs of eligible households including availability at a cost low enough for them to afford, determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices.
- Include provision for the home to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or, if these restrictions are lifted, for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision.

- 3.14. Affordable Housing includes properties let under the 'Affordable Rent' model, at up to 80% of market rent. The council will ensure that Homes England processes are complied with when building new affordable homes and will expect any RP offering Affordable Rent properties in the area to comply with relevant guidance and legislation.

- 3.15. The council encourages Social Rent as a default position but will also expect RP's to make use of Affordable Rent and other Affordable Housing options including Shared Ownership to ensure that housing applicants and existing social housing tenants have access to a wider range of models and tenures to meet a range of needs.

- 3.16. The council will expect RPs developing new housing schemes that are using Affordable Rent to demonstrate consideration of the affordability of the homes in the scheme for local residents and use Local Housing Allowance rates and affordability.

- 3.17. The use and numbers of Affordable Rent and shared ownership properties should be made in alignment with the council's Local Plan.

4. Governance

- 4.1. Each RP is responsible for its own individual tenancy policies, as well as arrangements for Review and Appeals.

5. Review

- 5.1. This document will be reviewed after ten years, or earlier if required by changes to local need and/ or national legislation.

6. Consultation

Registered Providers Consulted on the Strategy

- Accent
- BPHA
- Catalyst
- CHS

- CKH
- Clarion
- Guinness
- Hastoe
- Havebury
- Home Group
- Housing 21
- HHS
- Hyde Housing
- Longhurst
- MTV
- Muir
- Orbit
- Places for People (Chorus)
- Sage
- Sanctuary
- Stonewater

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Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2023/24

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>February 2023: Report presented to O&S Panel and Cabinet</p> <p>March 2023: Cabinet response to the report received by the Panel.</p> <p>July 2023: Communication to be sent to all Councillors who are representatives on outside organisations to advise the new reporting progress.</p> <p>Next steps: Plan regular review to monitor implementation of recommendations.</p>

Market Towns Programme	TBC	TBC	February 2023: DSO to ascertain viability for a working group to be established in line with the existing project or as a standalone.
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Environment, Communities 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 Meetings held to establish Terms of Reference for the group. April 2023: Regular meetings established. Evidence and information gathering to be progressed. Group to be involved in the Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy Development. June 2023: Ongoing dialogue with the team to review a proposed work plan for the current municipal year for the group.
Climate Subgroup Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy Development	Councillor T D Alban Councillor J Kerr Councillor C Lowe Councillor D Shaw	George McDowell	February 2022: Initial meeting held May 2023: Regular meetings established. Residents survey agreed.

			July 2023: meeting planned to review the outcome of the survey.
Flooding	n/a	Oliver Morley	Autumn 2022: The Panel requested an update on how effective the measures which were put in place in July 2021 following a Flooding Task and Finish Report have been. Summer 2023: An update will be presented to the Panel.
Roman's Edge Lettings Plan	n/a		TBC: An update will be presented to the Panel.

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