

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ENVIRONMENT, COMMUNITIES AND PARTNERSHIPS) held in Civic Suite, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon PE29 3TN on Thursday, 6 June 2024.

PRESENT: Councillor J E Kerr – Chair.
Councillors T Alban, S Bywater and S Mokbul.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors S J Criswell, M A Hassall, N J Hunt, M Kadewere, S R McAdam, D J Shaw, C H Tevlin and G J Welton.

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor L Davenport-Ray.

4. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings held on 4th April 2024 and 22nd May 2024 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

5. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

6. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

7. ANNUAL CLIMATE REVIEW

By means of a report and presentation by the Climate Co-ordinator (a copy of which was appended in the Minute Book) the Annual Climate Review was presented to the Panel.

Following a question from Councillor Mokbul, the Panel heard that the Climate Strategy sets out the Council's ambitions and priorities to be net zero by 2040. The Panel were assured that progress on the journey would be reported annually. It was further observed that the advancements in technology were phenomenal and that it was anticipated that adjustments could be made as new technologies become available.

Councillor Bywater observed that the cross agency working with the Police and Fire services was very encouraging but enquired what the risks would be to maintain the trajectory. The Panel heard that the trajectory was based upon the technologies currently available and that the biggest identified risk would be lack of funding.

Following an enquiry from Councillor Kerr, the Panel heard that the prices within the trial were under regular review and that there was a narrowing of the cost between HVO and regular diesel as the market

develops however by developing partnerships with other agencies, it was expected that economies of scale could be achieved.

In response to a question from Councillor Alban, the Panel heard that conversations were ongoing to expand the current partnership agencies across the district and that it was anticipated that this could be expanded over the coming months.

The Panel heard, following a further question from Councillor Alban, that information gathering was being shared between the Council and partner agencies to establish shared learnings. It was noted that whilst HVO was a substitute fuel and not the end solution, the Council were in a good position as an innovator and influencer in the field. It was observed that the opportunity to move to an electric fleet was being investigated however the rural nature of the district needed to be taken into consideration.

Following an enquiry from Councillor Mokbul regarding the use of solar panels on bus stops, the Panel heard that there were multiple owners of bus stops across the district but that the Council was aware that such opportunities were being investigated by the County Council.

8. ELECTRICAL VEHICLE CHARGING IN HUNTINGDONSHIRE

By means of a presentation by the Operations Manager – Parking and Market Services (a copy of which was appended in the Minute Book), an update on Electrical Vehicle Charging in Huntingdonshire was presented to the Panel.

In response to a question from Councillor Bywater, who praised the rural reach of the project, the Panel heard that communication channels with parishes had been established during the consultation and the development of the strategy and that interested parishes were noted.

Following a question from Councillor Mokbul, the Panel heard that should tranche 3 of the project be reached, collaborative work with Cambridgeshire County Council would be undertaken to develop further opportunities.

9. HOME ENERGY UPDATE

By means of a presentation by the Home Energy Reduction Officer, an update on Home Energy was presented to the Panel.

It was observed by Councillor Alban that not all of those living in fuel poverty would have technology available and that it would be helpful if Councillors could be provided with guidance on the topic to allow them to assist affected residents.

Councillor Bywater expressed concern about affected residents in private rented accommodation, following which, the Panel were assured that subject to Landlord compliance, there were schemes in place to help these residents.

Following a further question from Councillor Bywater, the Panel were

assured that communications with parishes were already ongoing and that the team were constantly exploring ways to connect residents with solutions. The Panel also heard that if Councillors are able to identify affected residents or communities to the team, they can then engage and action from there.

Chair