

A meeting of the **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ENVIRONMENT, COMMUNITIES AND PARTNERSHIPS)** will be held in the **CIVIC SUITE, PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON PE29 3TN** on **THURSDAY, 7 NOVEMBER 2024** at **7:00 PM** and you are requested to attend for the transaction of the following business:-

AGENDA

APOLOGIES

1. MINUTES (Pages 5 - 8)

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environment, Communities and Partnerships) meeting held on 3rd October 2024.

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. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 9 - 22)

- 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

4. COUNCIL TAX PREMIUMS (Pages 23 - 42)

The Panel is invited to comment on the Council Tax Premiums Report.

Executive Councillor: S Ferguson

Contact Officer: K Kelly 01480 388151

5. COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT 2025-26 (Pages 43 - 48)

The Panel is invited to comment on the Council Tax Support 2025-26 Report.

Executive Councillor: S Ferguson

Contact Officer: K Kelly 01480 388151

6. ONE LEISURE PV SOLAR INSTALLS (Pages 49 - 80)

The Panel is invited to comment on the One Leisure PV Solar Installs Report.

Executive Councillor: B Pitt

Contact Officer: M Raby 07919 110010

7. PRIORITY ONE DELIVERY UPDATE QUARTER 2 (Pages 81 - 104)

The Panel is to receive a presentation update on Priority One, Improving Quality of Life for Local People.

Executive Councillor: B Pitt

Contact Officer: C Deeth 01480 388233

30 day of October 2024

Michelle Sacks

Chief Executive and 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

In the event of the fire alarm being sounded and on the instruction of the Meeting Administrator, all attendees are requested to vacate the building via the closest emergency exit.

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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, 3 October 2024.

PRESENT: Councillor J E Kerr – Chair.

Councillors T Alban, S J Criswell, M A Hassall, N J Hunt, M Kadewere, C Lowe, S R McAdam, S Mokbul, D J Shaw and C H Tevlin.

APOLOGIES: An apology for absence from the meeting was submitted on behalf of Councillors S Bywater.

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor S L Taylor.

24. MINUTES

Cllr Hassall wished to clarify that his concerns with the project were related to the funding of the project and that he had suggested BAU as an additional investment opportunity as an example that he would have liked to explore as an alternative.

He also stated that he had felt that success criteria was lacking from the report and that he would have liked Cabinet to explore that.

With these amends being noted the Panel agreed that the minutes of the meeting of 5th September 2024 were approved as a correct record and were signed by the Chair.

25. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

None declared.

26. 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 and the current Notice of Key Executive Decisions which had been prepared by the Leader for the period 1st October 2024 to 31st January 2025 were presented to the Panel.

27. HUNTINGDONSHIRE PRIORITY NATURAL LANDSCAPES

By means of a report and presentation by the Parks and Countryside Project Manager (copies of which were appended in the Minute Book), the Huntingdonshire Priority Natural Landscapes Report was presented to the Panel.

The Panel heard that, following questions from Councillor

Alban, the project was an evidence based piece of work and whilst discussions had been held with local landowners during the evidence gathering process, this had not been opened to public consultation at this stage. The Panel were also advised that the study was not focussed on access to the identified spaces, many of the spaces had public rights of way or assumed access and it was noted that during adverse weather some rights of way may be closed in order to protect the habitats and environment of the location.

It was clarified to the Panel, in response to an enquiry from Councillor Shaw that there were nine identified locations within the document and that the tenth location were the river corridors.

Following a question from Councillor Hassall, the Panel heard that the report had not been presented to the Local Plan Advisory Group (LPAG). The Panel were advised that the report would be further presented to Cabinet and to Council during the October cycle of meetings. The Panel were reassured that the priority landscapes identified were where the Council wanted to enhance and not inhibit development and would be part of an evidence base being pushed into the Local Nature Recovery Strategy which is a County wide piece of work that will be a planning document with formal consultation built in. This piece of work would be developed by Cambridgeshire County Council who will be undertaking the work on behalf of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority. This Strategy will help to identify the right locations for new developments. It was noted that the work so far is a technical study, which will form an evidence base which, once developed and adopted, could be used by Planning to make informed decisions. This work is part of a framework of evidence and will be used as supporting evidence once adopted. Councillor Hassall argued that this study would be of great benefit to LPAG in developing the Local Plan as an evidence based piece of work. It would be helpful for the Group to know where the biodiversity priority areas are and would be fantastic to get this overlay to sit alongside the Local Plan whilst that is in development to ensure there are no conflicts in identified areas.

Councillor Hassall proposed to add an additional recommendation to the Cabinet report, this recommendation was seconded by Councillor Mokbul and the Panel voted unanimously in favour of forwarding the proposed recommendation to the Cabinet.

6) to agree that the report and presentation be also presented to the Local Plan Advisory Group.

In response to a question from Councillor McAdam, it was clarified to the Panel that whilst the team did not have the

knowledge of how many farmers were currently adopting a nature friendly farming approach, it was known that interest in and adoption of this approach was increasing. This was due to a generational shift in farmers and a resulting change of approach and attitude. It was anticipated that there would be a significant shift in support of this approach over the next decade.

Following a query from Councillor Hunt, the Panel heard that whilst it was not anticipated for the identified locations to change in the future, the detailed measures and actions which sit alongside the geology would be updated as appropriate.

The Panel heard, following questions from Councillor Alban and Councillor Shaw, that this evidence base would assist in assessing the Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and would not be prohibiting development but identifying where BNG credits could be used. It was noted that developers may not be able to apply BNG credits to their own sites and whilst there was not a requirement to use those credits within the district of development, developers were penalised if that was invested away from the original site with the penalty increasing the further away the investment was made. It was noted that there was a process to be followed in spending these credits and that the priority was to be invested locally in the first instance. It was noted that the BNG credits were administered by the Council and that this was an emerging system. It was noted that a criteria to claim credits was a commitment to maintain the proposed project for 30 years. It was also advised that BNG credits were one element in achieving nature recovery and that many other actions would assist with the wider vision of developing this.

It was clarified, following a further question from Councillor Alban, that the definition of a minor amendment as used in Recommendation 4, was a common term used within reports to allow for adjustments or corrections to the detail of the documents. It was assured that this would not undermine the progress of the documents and would be keep the same intention and direction of the current report.

In response to a question from Councillor Hassall who enquired whether there were enough East West corridors, the Panel heard that this would be monitored as it would take time to assess how this would progress. It was noted that where focus could be made on increasing the population and resilience of species within specific areas, it was often found that, with time, this would then encourage the spread and development of that species in the surrounding areas.

Following the discussion, it was

RESOLVED

that Cabinet be encouraged to consider the comments from Overview and Scrutiny when making a decision upon the recommendations within the report; and;

that Cabinet be encouraged to add the proposed recommendation 6 to the report;

6) to agree that the report and presentation be also presented to the Local Plan Advisory Group.

Chair

Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2024-25

Performance and Growth Agenda Items			
Meeting Date	Pre-Scrutiny	Scrutiny Review	Task and Finish Groups Working Groups
5 th November 2024		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Performance 2024/25 Quarter 2 Report • Finance Performance 2024/25 Quarter 2 Report • Treasury Management 6 Month Performance Review • CIS Property Portfolio Update (Part 2 item) 	
4 th December 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market Towns Programme (Winter Update) • Affordable Housing Delivery 		
Unscheduled/Pending Further Details			

Environment, Communities and Partnerships Agenda Items

Meeting Date	Pre-Scrutiny	Scrutiny Review	Task and Finish Groups Working Groups
6 th November 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Tax Support 2025/26 • Council Tax Premiums • One Leisure PV Solar Installs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priority One Delivery Update Quarter 2 	
5 th December 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural Rate Relief 2025/26 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility of Public Open Spaces • Delivery of Healthy Open Spaces Strategy 	
9 th January 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HDC Energy Statement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	
Unscheduled/ Pending Further Details		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Lettings Plan 	

Task and Finish Groups

Performance and Growth

Review of External Appointments to Outside Organisations

Membership: Cllrs S Cawley, S J Corney, I D Gardener and S A Howell

Progress:

Summer 2022: Terms of Reference have been established. Questionnaire has been sent to all relevant boards and organisations. Regular meetings are established from September.

September 2022: Evidence and information gathering underway.

November 2022: Information gathering completed.

February 2023: Report presented to O&S Panel and Cabinet

March 2023: Cabinet response to the report received by the Panel.

July 2023: Communication to be sent to all Councillors who are representatives on outside organisations to advise the new reporting progress.

January 2024: Group met to discuss progress and anticipated plan to move forward.

Next steps: Regularly review and monitor implementation of recommendations.

Environment, Communities and Partnerships

Climate Working Group

Members: Cllrs T D Alban, J Kerr, C Lowe and D Shaw

Lead Officer: Neil Sloper

Progress:

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.

January 2024: Meetings held to discuss proposed work plan for the group and to discuss HVO Fuels project

Next Steps: Meetings to be scheduled to allow involvement in proposed works.

Disabled Facilities Grants Group

Members: I P Taylor, B Banks, C Tevlin and C Lowe

Lead Officer: Claudia Deeth

Progress:

February 2024: Councillors invited to express their interest in being involved with the project.

August 2024: initial meeting held and scope of project discussed

Next Steps: A review of the DFG process has been commissioned via the HDC Transformation Team, once the feedback and outcomes of this have been received further meetings will be scheduled to establish Terms of Reference and timeline for the group. This is expected during Autumn 2024

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: 14 October 2024
For Period: 1 November 2024 to 28 February 2025

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, Transformation and Workforce	73 Hogsden Leys St Neots Cambridgeshire PE19 6AD E-mail: Lara.Davenport-Ray@huntingdonshire.gov.uk
Councillor S Ferguson	Executive Councillor for Resident Services and Corporate Performance	9 Anderson Close St Neots Cambridgeshire PE19 6DN Tel: 07525 987460 E-mail: Stephen.Ferguson@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

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Councillor J Harvey	Executive Governance Services Councillor for and Democratic	c/o Huntingdonshire District Council Pathfinder House St Mary's Street Huntingdon Cambridgeshire PE29 3TN Tel: 07941 080531 E-mail: Jo.Harvey@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 Communities, Health and Leisure	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 Parks and Countryside, 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 Economy, Regeneration 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.

- 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 2024/25	Grants Panel	16 Oct 2024		Harriet Robinson, Community Development Project Support Officer Tel: (01480) 388513 or email: Harriet.Robinson@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		B Pitt & L Davenport-Ray	Environment, Communities & Partnerships
One Leisure PV Solar Installs	Cabinet	12 Nov 2024		Neil Sloper, Assistant Director Strategic Insights and Delivery Tel: (01480) 388635 or email: Neil.Sloper@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		L Davenport Ray	Environment, Communities & Partnerships
Council Tax Support 2025/26	Cabinet	12 Nov 2024		Katie Kelly, Revenue and Benefits Manager Tel: (01480) 388151 or email: Katie.Kelly@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		S Ferguson	Environment, Communities & Partnerships

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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
Council Tax Premiums	Cabinet	12 Nov 2024		Katie Kelly, Revenue and Benefits Manager Tel: (01480) 388151 or email: Katie.Kelly@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		S Ferguson	Environment, Communities & Partnerships
Infrastructure funding statement	Cabinet	10 Dec 2024		Claire Burton, Implementation Team Leader Tel: (01480) 388274 or email: Claire.Burton@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		T Sanderson	Performance & Growth
Affordable Housing Delivery	Cabinet	10 Dec 2024		Pamela Scott, Regeneration and Housing Delivery Manager Tel: (01480) 388486 or email: Pamela.Scott@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		S Wakeford	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 - Winter Update	Cabinet	10 Dec 2024		Pamela Scott, Regeneration and Housing Delivery Manager Tel: (01480) 388486 or email: Pamela.Scott@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		S Wakeford	Performance & Growth
Rural Rate Relief 2025/26***	Cabinet	10 Dec 2024		Katie Kelly, Revenue and Benefits Manager Tel: (01480) 388151 or email: Katie.Kelly@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		S Ferguson	Environment, Communities & Partnerships
Approval of Council Tax Base 2025/26	Chair of Corporate Governance and Section 151 Officer	12 Dec 2024		Katie Kelly, Revenue and Benefits Manager Tel: (01480) 388151 or email: Katie.Kelly@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		B Mickelburgh	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
HDC Energy Statement	Cabinet	21 Jan 2025		Helen Lack, Development Manager Tel: (01480) 388658 or email: Helen.Lack@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		L Davenport-Ray	Environment, Communities & Partnerships
Final 2025/26 Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy (2026/27 to 2029/30) including Capital Programme***	Cabinet	11 Feb 2025		Suzanne Jones, Director of Finance and Corporate Services Tel: (01480) 387072 or email: Suzanne.Jones@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		B Mickelburgh	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
Treasury Management Capital and Investment Strategies***	Cabinet	11 Feb 2025		Suzanne Jones, Director of Finance and Corporate Services Tel: (01480) 387072 or email: Suzanne.Jones@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		B Mickelburgh	Performance & Growth
Business Rates Discretionary Rate Relief Policy***	Cabinet	11 Feb 2025		Katie Kelly, Revenue and Benefits Manager Tel: (01480) 388151 or email: Katie.Kelly@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		S Ferguson	Environment, Communities & Partnerships

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Public
Key Decision – Yes

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: Council Tax Premiums

Meeting/Date: Overview & Scrutiny (Environment, Communities and Partnerships)

Executive Portfolio: Cllr S Ferguson

Report by: K Kelly – Revenues & Benefits Manager

Ward(s) affected: All

Executive Summary:

This report sets out a proposal to implement additional Council Tax Premiums in relation to unoccupied properties across the district, with a view to encouraging owners to bring empty properties back into use.

RECOMMENDED

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel is invited to comment on the Council Tax Premiums report and appendices.

Public
Key Decision – Yes

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: Council Tax Premiums

Meeting/Date: Cabinet – 12th November 2024
Council – 11th December 2024

Executive Portfolio: Resident Services and Corporate Performance
(Cllr S Ferguson)

Report by: K Kelly – Revenues and Benefits Manager

Ward(s) affected: All

Executive Summary:

Under the Local Government Finance Act 1992, the Council can determine the level of Council Tax discount awarded for certain unoccupied dwellings as well as charging additional premiums on dwellings that have been unoccupied and unfurnished for more than two years.

Previously the Council has opted to remove discounts for certain unoccupied properties and to charge an additional premium on dwellings that have been left empty and unfurnished for two years or more.

The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 provides for the empty homes premium to be charged sooner and introduces the option to charge a premium on second homes in the district.

The following report details the steps that can be taken to introduce the additional premiums with a view to encouraging empty homes across the district to be brought back into use.

Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet is

RECOMMENDED

To note the contents of the report and endorse the recommendation that the Council:

- 1) Amends the existing empty homes premium to charge the additional 100% Council Tax premium after one year of the conditions being met, rather than the current two years, with effect from 1st April 2026

- 2) Approves the introduction of a second homes premium of 100% with effect from 1st April 2026
- 3) Provides delegated authority for the s151 Officer, in conjunction with the Executive Councillor for Resident Services and Corporate Performance, to adopt a policy setting out exceptions to the premiums in line with any regulations or guidance issued by Central Government, and to make subsequent updates to the policy as and when required.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 allows the Council to apply a Council Tax premium on empty and unfurnished properties after one year rather than two. It also allows the Council to implement a premium on dwellings on second homes.
- 1.2 This report sets out key factors for consideration.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 While most Council Tax discounts and exemptions are set nationally some discounts can be decided locally, allowing Local Authorities to determine levels of discount that best suits local need.
- 2.2 The discounts that can be set locally relate to dwellings that are:
- unoccupied and require, or are undergoing, major repair to render them habitable
 - unoccupied and unfurnished
 - unoccupied and furnished
- 2.3 The Council has previously determined that no discount should be provided on properties that are unoccupied and undergoing or require major repair, nor for those that are unoccupied and unfurnished.
- 2.4 In addition, any dwelling that has been unoccupied and unfurnished for two years or more is also charged an additional Council Tax premium at the maximum amount permitted, as a way of deterring owners from leaving properties empty for long periods of time.
- 2.5 For Council Tax purposes, all properties that are furnished but are not occupied by anyone as their sole or main residence are classed as second homes.
- 2.6 The Council has previously determined that no discount should be awarded on second homes but has not previously been able to charge a premium on such dwellings. This creates a loophole by which homeowners can avoid being charged the empty homes premium by furnishing unoccupied properties.
- 2.7 Further details of the current levels of discounts and premiums that have been determined by the Council and the conditions when these apply can be found in APPENDIX A.
- 2.8 Any decision to introduce a Council Tax premium on second homes must be taken at least one year prior to the start of the year for when it would become effective. Therefore, the earliest date from when the charge could become effective is 1st April 2026, with a determination to implement the charge being made before 31st March 2025.

- 2.9 The Government has legislated for a range of exceptions to the premiums and is expected to provide further guidance on their application in due course.
- 2.10 Following a determination to charge the additional premiums, a policy covering the application of the charges and full details of exemptions will be developed, taking into account the regulations and guidance by Central Government.

3. ANALYSIS

- 3.1 Empty properties can have a number of unwanted impacts in communities and with increasing pressure to find homes for people in need, the application of Council Tax premiums can help incentivise owners of empty properties to bring these back into use.
- 3.2 The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 amended the Local Government Finance Act 1992 to provide Local Authorities with the powers to make further changes to levels of Council Tax charged in respect of empty dwellings:
- To bring forward the date from which a premium can apply on dwellings which are unoccupied and unfurnished, from two years to one. The “empty homes premium”.
 - To implement a premium on dwellings that are unoccupied and furnished. The “second homes premium”.

Empty Homes Premium

- 3.3 There are currently 83,401 dwellings on the Council Tax list for Huntingdonshire. On 1st August 2024, the empty homes premium applied to 143 dwellings across the district that have been empty and unfurnished for two years or more as follows:

Empty Period	Additional Council Tax	Number of Dwellings
2 – 5 years	100%	95
5 - 10 years	200%	29
10 years plus	300%	19

- 3.4 The premiums are applied to every dwelling which has been unoccupied and unfurnished for more than two years. This starts from the date that the property first met the conditions and does not reset with a change of ownership. There are currently no exceptions to the premium being applied.
- 3.5 Applying a premium on unoccupied and unfurnished properties after one year rather than two would encourage homeowners to bring properties back into occupation at an earlier date.

- 3.6 There are a further 170 dwellings that have been unoccupied and unfurnished for between twelve months – two years that would become subject to an additional premium of 100% under the proposals.
- 3.7 Any decision taken to vary the amount of empty homes premium charged must be taken before the financial year in which it relates.

Second Homes Premium

- 3.8 There were 269 properties classed as being second homes on 1st August 2024. That is, they were not being occupied as anyone's sole or main residence and were furnished. 34% of owners of second homes in Huntingdonshire live outside of the district or abroad.
- 3.9 The Legislation allows the Council to charge an additional premium of up to 100% in respect of such properties. Unlike the empty homes premium, there is no requirement for a property to have been classified as a second home for a fixed period before the premium can apply, and so it would become payable of the effective date.
- 3.10 Any decision taken to implement a Council Tax Premium on second homes must be taken at least one year in before the beginning of the year to which it relates. Therefore, a decision must be taken before 31st March 2025 for the second homes premium to apply from April 2026.

Exceptions

- 3.11 The current empty homes premium is applied to all dwellings that meet the specified conditions, without exception.
- 3.12 In order to ensure that the implementation of premiums works towards policy aims of encouraging empty homes back into use and does not unfairly penalise owners, new legislation has been passed that provides exceptions to the premiums in certain circumstances. These are as follows:

Exception	Empty Homes Premium Exception	Second Homes Premium Exception
Properties undergoing probate: A 12-month exception will apply after probate or letters of administration have been granted	✓	✓
Properties actively marketed for sale or let: A 12-month exception will apply	✓	✓
Properties that are empty and undergoing major repairs	✓	
Annexes forming part of, or being used as part of the main dwelling		✓
Job-related Dwellings, where a person is required to live in a		

specified dwelling as part of their employment. This does not apply where someone chooses to have an additional property to be closer to work, nor where an individual is posted to a new location but maintains their previous address		✓
Occupied caravan pitches and boat moorings		✓
Seasonal homes where year-round or permanent occupation is prohibited		✓

- 3.13 In addition to the exceptions listed above, Government has encouraged Local Authorities to also take account of other circumstances in its application of premiums to ensure that the approach seeks to deliver policy aims and does not unfairly penalise those where the dwellings are empty for genuine reasons.
- 3.14 Examples of where discretion is encouraged includes properties that are difficult to sell such as retirement properties, or where properties are empty due to their particular use, such as furnished properties used for emergency housing or domestic violence refuges.
- 3.15 The legislation regarding exceptions to the Council Tax premiums has recently been enacted, and Government have confirmed that further guidance will be issued covering the application of the exceptions. A policy setting out the full details of exceptions will therefore be developed in due course and published prior to commencement of the charges.
- 3.16 Where a property is exempt from Council Tax, for example, a property left empty which was previously occupied by a person who has moved into hospital or care, the premiums will not apply. The premiums will only apply to *chargeable dwellings*, e.g. those that are on the Council Tax list but not exempt.

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. KEY IMPACTS / RISKS

- 5.1 Bringing empty homes back into use can have a positive impact on the local housing market and the communities in which these homes are situated.
- 5.2 The premiums are not intended to penalise owners who are already taking steps to bring properties back into use, and the list of exceptions set out by Government provide for a range of circumstances where the premium would either be delayed or would not apply.

- 5.3 There is a risk that homeowners may look to avoid the premium by taking advantage of the 12-month exception for homes being marketed for sale by advertising the property for sale or rental at an inflated price. However, as part of the policy that will be developed, owners may be required to provide evidence of the marketing and valuation where this appears to be inflated, in order to benefit from the exception.
- 5.4 Owners of second homes used as holiday lets may seek to move second homes from Council Tax into Business Rates as a way of avoiding the premium. A dwelling can move to Business Rates as a self-catering property provided it has been available to let for short periods totalling at least 140 nights and must have actually been let for at least 70 nights over the previous 12 months.
- 5.5 It would be for homeowners to provide such evidence to the Valuation Office Agency, a Government department, who would then decide if a property should appear on either the Council Tax or Business Rates list.

6. WHAT ACTIONS WILL BE TAKEN/TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- 6.1 Changes to the empty homes premium can be effective from the 1st April provided that a determination is made before the financial year to which it relates, but the second homes premium requires at least one year's notice.
- 6.2 As the legislation regarding exceptions is yet to be enacted, it is recommended that the decision is taken to implement both changes with effect from 1st April 2026. This allows time for the policy to be developed following the legislation being passed, and for owners of empty properties to be notified of the changes.
- 6.3 The regulations require that a notice must be in placed in a local newspaper within 21 days of a decision to introduce or amend the premiums.

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

[\(See Corporate Plan\)](#)

- 7.1 The Corporate Plan 2023 – 2028 outlines our ambition to:
- 1) Improve the quality of life for local people
 - 2) Create a better Huntingdonshire for future generations
 - 3) Doing our core work well
- 7.2 The application of Council Tax premiums on unoccupied properties is intended to encourage owners to bring these back into use, directly supporting these ambitions. This would have a positive impact on the communities in which such properties are situated, reducing the risk of vandalism and anti-social behaviour that empty dwellings can attract.

- 7.3 Bringing empty properties back into use can help to meet the Council's housing need and supports the journey of Pride in Place as part of the Council's Place Strategy – Huntingdon futures.
- 7.4 Where the status of the unoccupied properties remains unchanged following the implementation of the proposals, additional Council Tax will be generated which contributes to the cost of local services.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Sections 79 and 80 of The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 enable the Council to bring forward the application of the empty homes premium to one year rather than two, and to implement a premium on second homes. Exceptions to the premiums are set out within The Council Tax (Prescribed Classes of Dwellings and Consequential Amendments) (England) Regulations 2024.
- 8.2 In exercising its functions in relation to premiums, the Council must have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State. Government has confirmed that further guidance on the application of the exceptions will be issued in due course, but at the time of writing this had not been received.
- 8.3 The decision to implement the revised empty homes premium must be taken before the financial year to which it relates, and a decision to implement the second homes premium must be taken at least one year before the beginning of the year to which it relates.
- 8.4 Section 67 (2) of The Local Government Finance Act sets out that the decision to introduce a premium can only be made by Full Council.

9. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Whilst the primary objective of charging Council Tax premiums is to encourage empty dwellings back into use, additional income is generated via premiums applied to dwellings that remain empty.
- 9.2 The current empty homes premiums generate around £443k of additional Council Tax each year, of which the Council retains around 7%, or £30k.
- 9.3 Applying this premium at one year rather than two years could generate around £370k of additional Council Tax should these properties remain empty, of which the Council would retain around £25k.
- 9.4 Introducing a premium on second homes in the district could generate additional Council Tax of up to £600k pa should the status of these properties remain unchanged, with around £42k of this being retained by the Council.

10. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 An equalities impact assessment has been conducted which confirms that the decision to implement the additional Council Tax premiums would have

no differential impact on protected characteristics. The full document can be found in APPENDIX B.

11. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

- 11.1 The application of additional premiums on empty and second homes is intended to encourage owners of such properties to bring these back into use.
- 11.2 Taking targeted action to bring empty homes back into use helps to tackle a number of social, economic and public health issues, as empty properties can provide opportunities for vandalism, fly-tipping and anti-social behaviour. Unsightly homes can have a negative impact on neighbouring properties and also reduce pride in the community.
- 11.3 The exceptions will ensure that the premiums are applied fairly and do not unfairly penalise owners who are taking steps to bring properties back into use.
- 11.4 A decision to charge the second homes premium must be taken at least one year before the year in which the charge applies, and whilst the earlier empty homes premium could be implemented with effect from 1st April 2025, the legislation setting out the detail of the exceptions has not yet been passed. Implementing both changes with effect from 1st April 2026 provides time for the policy to be adopted and for homeowners to be advised of the changes.

12. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED

APPENDIX A – Current Levels of Council Tax Discounts and Premiums set Locally

APPENDIX B – Equalities Impact Assessment

13. BACKGROUND PAPERS

[Summary of responses and government's response to the consultation on proposals to exempt categories of dwellings from the council tax premiums in England - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Council Tax information letter 2/2024: proposals to exempt categories of dwellings from the council tax premiums in England - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

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APPENDIX A

Current Levels of Council Tax Discounts Set Locally

Dwellings that are:		Discount
Class A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no-ones' sole or main residence; and • furnished; and • subject to a planning restriction that prevents occupation for a continuous period of at least 28 days per annum 	0%
Class B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no-ones' sole or main residence; and • furnished; and • not subject to a planning restriction that prevents occupation for a continuous period of at least 28 days per annum 	0%
Class C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • unoccupied; and • Substantially unfurnished 	0%
Class D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • unoccupied and require or are undergoing major repair in order to render them habitable 	0%

Current Levels of Council Tax Premiums Set Locally

Dwellings that have been unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for:	Additional Charge
2 years	100%
5-10 years	200%
10 years plus	300%

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Service area	Revenues and Benefits
Date of assessment	13/09/2024
Name of policy/service to be assessed	Council Tax Premiums
Is this a new or existing policy/service?	New
Name of manager responsible for new or amended policy/service	Katie Kelly
Names of people conducting the assessment	Katie Kelly
Step 1 – Description of new or amended policy/service	
Describe the aims; objectives and purpose of the new or amended policy/service (include how it fits in to wider aims or strategic objectives).	<p>The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 amended the Local Government Finance Act 1992 to provide Local Authorities with the powers to make changes to levels Council Tax charged in respect of empty dwellings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To bring forward the date from which a premium can apply on dwellings which are unoccupied and unfurnished, from two years to one. The “empty homes premium” • To implement a premium on dwellings that are unoccupied and furnished. The “second homes premium”.



	<p>Empty properties can have unwanted impacts in communities and with increasing pressure to find homes for people in need, the application of Council Tax premiums can help incentivise owners of empty properties to bring these back into use.</p>
<p>The Equality Act 2010 requires the Council to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations, the Council also needs to demonstrate its compliance with the Equality Duty. The Council therefore needs to understand how its decisions and activities impact on different people. An Equality Impact Assessment is the current method by which the Council can assess and keep a record of the impact of new or amended strategies, policies, functions or services. The council retains these duties even when outsourcing services or providing shared services.</p> <p><i>Definition of Adverse Impact - occurs when a decision, practice, or Policy has a disproportionately negative effect on a protected group. Adverse Impact may be unintentional.</i></p>	
<p>Are there any (existing) equality objectives of the new/amended policy/service</p>	<p>None</p>
<p>Who is intended to benefit from the new/amended policy/service and in what way?</p>	<p>The application of Council Tax premiums on unoccupied properties is intended to encourage owners to bring these back into use. This would have a positive impact on the communities in which such properties are situated and would help reduce housing supply pressures.</p> <p>Where the status of the unoccupied properties remains unchanged following the implementation of the proposals, additional Council Tax will be generated which contributes to the cost of local services</p>



<p>What are the intended outcomes of this new/amended policy/service?</p>	<p>To encourage owners of unoccupied or periodically occupied dwellings to bring them back into occupation</p>
<p>Step 2 – Data</p>	
<p>What baseline quantitative data (statistics) do you have about the function relating to equalities groups (e.g. monitoring data on proportions of service users compared to proportions in the population), relevant to this new/amended policy/service? Huntingdonshire Statistics</p>	<p>There are currently around 83,000 dwellings on the Council Tax list for Huntingdonshire District.</p> <p>Of these, 143 dwellings have been empty and unfurnished for two or more years and are currently subject to the empty homes premium.</p> <p>There are currently a further 170 dwellings that have been empty and unfurnished for between 1 – 2 years that would become subject to the premium under the proposals.</p> <p>There are 269 dwellings that are classed as second homes, that is, unoccupied and furnished, that would become subject to the premium under the proposals.</p>
<p>What qualitative data (opinions etc) do you have on different groups (e.g. comments from previous consumer satisfaction surveys/consultation, feedback exercises, or evidence from other authorities undertaking similar work), relevant to this new/amended policy/service?</p>	<p>Government published a consultation for 8 weeks in Summer 2023 on proposals to exempt some categories of dwelling from the additional premiums and seek views on when such exceptions might apply.</p> <p>615 responses were received, and as a result of the consultation Government has set out it’s intention to legislate for certain exceptions to the premiums.</p> <p>Full details of the consultation can be found at:</p>



	<p>Consultation on proposals to exempt categories of dwellings from the council tax premiums in England - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</p> <p>The outcome of the consultation can be found at:</p> <p>Summary of responses and government's response to the consultation on proposals to exempt categories of dwellings from the council tax premiums in England - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</p> <p>Government's response to the consultation can be found at:</p> <p>Council Tax information letter 2/2024: proposals to exempt categories of dwellings from the council tax premiums in England - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</p>
<p>Age – this refers to the protected characteristic of age. A person belonging to a particular age (for example 32-year olds) or range of ages (for example 18 to 30-year olds).</p> <p>Are there concerns that the new policy/service could have a differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic?</p> <p>Are there any concerns that the policy/service amendments could have differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic?</p> <p>For some services this should include consideration of impact in terms of safeguarding young people.</p> <p>What evidence do you have for your answer?</p>	<p>The proposed changes will have no differential impact due to age.</p>



<p>Disability – this refers the protected characteristic of disability. A person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.</p> <p>Are there concerns that the new policy/service could have a differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic.</p> <p>Are there any concerns that the policy/service amendments could have differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic?</p> <p>What evidence do you have for your answer?</p>	<p>The proposed changes will have no differential impact due to disability.</p>
<p>Gender reassignment – gender reassignment discrimination occurs when a person is treated differently because they are trans*.</p> <p>Are there concerns that the new policy/service could have a differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic.</p> <p>Are there any concerns that the policy/service amendments could have differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic? What evidence do you have for your answer? *although the term gender reassignment and transsexual is in the Equality Act 2010, it is accepted that the preferred term is trans.</p>	<p>The proposed changes will have no differential impact due to gender or gender reassignment.</p>
<p>Marriage and civil partnership in the workplace; this refers the protected characteristic of marriage and civil partnership which is a union between a man and a woman or between a same-sex couple. Civil partnership is between partners of the same sex. Discrimination is</p>	<p>The proposed changes will have no differential impact due to marriage or civil partnership</p>



<p>when a person is treated differently at work because a person is married or in a civil partnership.</p> <p>Are there concerns that the new policy/service could have a differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic.</p> <p>Are there any concerns that the policy/service amendments could have differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic?</p> <p>What evidence do you have for your answer?</p>	
<p>Are there concerns that the function could have a differential impact in terms of pregnancy and maternity in the workplace (e.g. pregnant or breast-feeding women). Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.</p> <p>Are there concerns that the new policy/service could have a differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic.</p> <p>Are there any concerns that the policy/service amendments could have differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic?</p> <p>What evidence do you have for your answer?</p>	<p>The proposed changes will have no differential impact due to pregnancy or maternity</p>



<p>Race – this refers to the protected characteristic of race. It refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins. Gypsy/Travellers are distinct group within this category</p> <p>Are there concerns that the new policy/service could have a differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic.</p> <p>Are there any concerns that the policy/service amendments could have differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic?</p> <p>What evidence do you have for your answer?</p>	<p>The proposed changes will have no differential impact due to race</p>
<p>Religion and Belief in the workplace - refers to any religion, including a lack of religion. Belief refers to any religious or philosophical belief and includes a lack of belief.</p> <p>Are there concerns that the new policy/service could have a differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic.</p> <p>Are there any concerns that the policy/service amendments could have differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic?</p> <p>What evidence do you have for your answer?</p>	<p>The proposed changes will have no differential impact due to religion or belief</p>
<p>Sex - this refers to the protected characteristic of sex which can mean either male or female, or a group of people like men or boys, or women or girls.</p> <p>Are there concerns that the new policy/service could have a differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic.</p>	<p>The proposed changes will have no differential impact due to sex.</p>



<p>Are there any concerns that the policy/service amendments could have differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic? What evidence do you have for your answer?</p>	
<p>Sexual orientation – this relates to whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.</p> <p>Are there concerns that the new policy/service could have a differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic.</p> <p>Are there any concerns that the policy/service amendments could have differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic?</p> <p>What evidence do you have for your answer?</p>	<p>The proposed changes will have no differential impact due to sexual orientation</p>
<p>Are there concerns that the function could have a differential impact on part time/full time employees? What evidence do you have for your answer?</p>	<p>The proposed changes will have no differential impact due to part-time or full-time employees.</p>
<p>Are there concerns that the function could have a differential impact in terms of specific characteristics of Huntingdonshire e.g. Rural isolation</p>	<p>The proposed changes will have no differential impact for any other reasons</p>

Findings

The proposals are designed to encourage owners of unoccupied properties to bring them back into use. Whilst there will be a financial impact on owners where the status of the dwelling remains unchanged, the proposals are not intended to unfairly penalise owners who are already taking steps to bring properties back into use. A policy will be developed to confirm the exceptions to the premiums in line with legislation when it is enacted.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the EIA is approved

Public
Key Decision – Yes

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: Council Tax Support Scheme 2025/26

Meeting/Date: Overview & Scrutiny (Environment, Communities and Partnerships)

Executive Portfolio: Cllr S Ferguson

Report by: K Kelly – Revenues & Benefits Manager

Ward(s) affected: All

Executive Summary:

Following the decision to adopt a new Local Council Tax Support Scheme from April 2024, this report provides an update on performance of the scheme to date, along with a recommendation to maintain the existing scheme for 2025-26.

RECOMMENDED

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel is invited to comment on the Council Tax Support Scheme report.

Public
Key Decision – Yes

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: Council Tax Support Scheme 2025-26

Meeting/Date: Cabinet – 12th November 2024
Council – 11th December 2024

Executive Portfolio: Resident Services and Corporate Performance
(Cllr S Ferguson)

Report by: K Kelly – Revenues and Benefits Manager

Ward(s) affected: All

Executive Summary:

Since the abolition of Council Tax Benefit in 2013, Local Authorities in England have been required to administer their own Council Tax Support (CTS) schemes.

Whilst support for residents of pensionable age is determined by Central Government, schemes for working age residents are set locally. Local Authorities are required to review their CTS schemes annually and to decide to either maintain their existing scheme or replace it.

The Council agreed to make amendments to the CTS scheme for 2024-25, and the following report provides a summary of the operation of the new scheme alongside recommendations for 2025-26.

Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet is

RECOMMENDED

To note the contents of the report and endorse the recommendation that the scheme principles for 2025-26 remain unchanged, ensuring that the scheme continues to deliver support to low-income households across the district in line with our Corporate Priority to improve the quality of life for local people.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 Since 2013, the Council has been required to design and administer its own Council Tax Support (CTS) Scheme for residents of Working Age. The scheme for Pension Age residents is set by Central Government.
- 1.2 The Council is required to review the CTS scheme each year in accordance with schedule 1a (5) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and decide to maintain or amend the scheme.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 CTS is a means-tested support scheme that reduces the amount of Council Tax payable by residents on low incomes. Whilst CTS rules for pension age residents are prescribed by Central Government, Local Authorities are required to design and administer their own schemes to support residents of working age.
- 2.2 When CTS was introduced in 2013, many Local Authorities opted to implement schemes that required working age residents to make a minimum contribution towards their Council Tax. Huntingdonshire District Council's scheme was largely based on the national Council Tax Benefit scheme and required a minimum contribution of 20% for most working age households.
- 2.3 A review of the scheme in 2023/24 found that the landscape had changed since the scheme was implemented. Caseload numbers had decreased over time, and the reactive nature of Universal Credit (UC) had increased the volume of changes required to be processed by Benefits teams.
- 2.4 The review also highlighted that Council Tax collection rates for residents in receipt of CTS was lower than those that were not, suggesting that the requirement for a minimum contribution did not always translate into those payments being received.
- 2.5 In December 2023 the Council amended the CTS scheme for 2024/25, offering a simplified scheme intended to provide greater levels of support for those most in need, in line with our Corporate Priority to keep people out of crisis and support those in crisis.

3. ANALYSIS

- 3.1 The redesigned CTS scheme launched in April 2024 with the intention of providing increased levels of support of up to 100% of Council Tax liability to low-income households across the district.
- 3.2 The new scheme was designed to be easier to understand, with levels of support determined by weekly income bands. Amendments to the scheme were also implemented to make it easier for residents to access support by removing the requirement for residents to make a separate claim for CTS when they made a claim for Universal Credit.

3.3 As a result of the changes implemented the following impacts have been achieved:

Intention	Outcome
To provide increased levels of support to low-income households	<p>Implemented with effect from 1st April 2024, the new CTS amounts appeared on Council Tax bills received in March 2024.</p> <p>The number of households receiving 100% CTS has increased under the revised scheme, from 1,307 in March 2024 to 3,893 in August 2024, following the removal of the requirement for a minimum Council Tax contribution of 20%.</p>
To ensure the scheme is easier to understand and access, with clear income bands to indicate likely award amounts and claims for UC being accepted as a claim for CTS	<p>As at the end of August 2024, an additional 708 households now receive support compared to March 2024.</p> <p>Most of these resulted from DWP notifications of new UC claims rather than CTS claims direct, ensuring that the Council is proactively providing support to those eligible to receive it.</p>
To reduce the number of Council Tax bills sent due to CTS changes, via the introduction of income bands	The period April – August 2024 saw a 10% reduction (640) in Council Tax bills being sent as a result of CTS, despite the increased caseload.
To ensure a simplified scheme provides opportunities for automation and improvements in processing times*	<p>In the period April – August 2024, the proportion of changes processed automatically rose from 30.6% in 2023 to 62.52% in 2024.</p> <p>This has enabled improvements in processing times, with the average number of days to process changes in circumstances reducing from 8.78 days in 2023 to 3.42 days for the same period in 2024.</p> <p>Improvements in processing have also enabled a 50% increase in new claims (508) to be processed over the same 5-month period with only small adjustment on processing times (2 days), with the time taken to process</p>

*please note the processing times quoted relate to CTS only, rather than the combined Housing Benefit and CTS performance that is reported as part of KPIs

	<p>new claims standing at an average of 22.7 days.</p> <p>The advances in automation have enabled the team to tolerate the increased caseload with no additional budget pressure. In addition, the extra resource secured to support the implementation of the scheme, funded by the Transformation fund and in-year salary savings, has also been released.</p>
To provide support for those negatively impacted by the new scheme design	<p>Households that were likely to be negatively impacted by the amended scheme were invited to apply for discretionary support via an Exceptional Hardship Scheme.</p> <p>49 invitations to apply were issued and 8 applications received. 3 cases were provided with additional support, with 5 applications being rejected due to no evidence of affordability issues.</p>
To reduce recovery action taken in relation to small debts	<p>An overall reduction in the number of Reminders and Summons has been noted in the first few months of the year, with 615 less reminders (5%) being issued and 527 (14%) less court summonses.</p>

3.4 The analysis of the CTS scheme to date shows that it is performing as expected, with no unintended consequences being realised. No complaints have been received in relation to the amended scheme.

3.5 As such, it is recommended that no changes are made to the local CTS scheme for 2025/26.

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. KEY IMPACTS / RISKS

5.1 The cost of CTS is calculated as a reduction to the Council taxbase. That is, the number of band D equivalent dwellings across the district from which Council Tax can be generated.

- 5.2 A forecast of the impact of CTS is included within the tax base forecast each year. As well as CTS, the taxbase forecast also includes an estimate of new properties that are likely to be brought into the Council Tax list during the year, along with adjustments for other discounts and exemptions. Following the decision to adopt the new Council Tax Support Scheme, the taxbase for 2024/25 was set at 66,095.9 band D equivalent dwellings.
- 5.3 Regular monitoring of the taxbase is conducted, with the trend indicating that the forecast will be met in year.

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

(See Corporate Plan)

- 6.1 The Corporate Plan for 2023-2028 outlines our commitment to:
1. Improve the quality of life for local people
 2. Create a better Huntingdonshire for future generations
 3. Deliver good quality, high value-for-money services
- 6.2 The CTS scheme directly supports points 1 and 3, by ensuring that the requirement to pay Council Tax continues to be proportionate to financial circumstances by reducing or even eliminating the requirement to pay for low-income households across the district.
- 6.3 By accepting a claim for UC as a claim for CTS without requiring a separate application, support has been provided to an additional 708 eligible households across the district. This ensures that some of the most vulnerable residents who may not have otherwise sought help are supported with the cost of Council Tax.
- 6.4 Changes to the scheme have also enabled improvements in administration performance, ensuring that residents receive decisions in a timely manner whilst reducing the risk of overpayments.

7. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

- 7.1 Following a review of the CTS scheme, it is evident that the scheme is performing as intended, with additional support being provided to low-income households in line with our Corporate Priorities whilst also delivering improved processing times and efficiency savings.

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Public
Key Decision - Yes

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: One Leisure PV Solar Installs

Meeting/Date: Overview & Scrutiny - Environment, Communities and Partnerships – 7th November 2024

Executive Portfolio: Councillor Ben Pitt (BP)

Report by: Matthew Raby (MR) – Facilities Manager

Ward(s) affected: Huntingdon, Ramsey, St Ives and St Neots

RECOMMENDATION

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel is invited to comment on the recommendation for Cabinet to authorise the Installation of Solar Photo Voltaic Panels at One Leisure Huntingdon Dryside, One Leisure Ramsey, One Leisure St Ives Outdoor and One Leisure St Neots as outlined in the attached cabinet report.

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Public
Key Decision – Yes

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: One Leisure PV Solar Installs

Meeting/Date: Overview and Scrutiny – 7th November 2024
Cabinet – 12th November 2024

Executive Portfolio: Councillor Ben Pitt (BP)

Report by: Matthew Raby (MR) – Facilities Manager

Ward(s) affected: Huntingdon, Ramsey, St Ives and St Neots

Executive Summary:

Solar Photovoltaic (PV) panels are currently installed on the rooves at

- One Leisure Huntingdon Dryside (OLH)
- One Leisure St Ives Indoor (OLSI)
- One Leisure St Ives Outdoor (OLSIO)
- One Leisure St Neots (OLSN)

Following a review of utility costs and energy usage it has been identified that installing further/new roof mounted solar panels at

- One Leisure Huntingdon Dryside (OLH)
- One Leisure Ramsey (OLR)
- One Leisure St Ives Outdoor (OLSIO)
- One Leisure St Neots (OLSN)

will reduce expenditure for each of these sites as well as help HDC to achieve its overall goal of being Net Zero by 2040 by reducing Carbon used.

Indicative designs have been populated providing an estimated energy reduction (kWh and CO2 Tonnes) and cost savings. Please see appendix 1 for full projected savings.

Total project cost - £412,000

All 4 project installs have a combined payback period of 8.25 years.

Recommendation(s):

To note the impact of the carbon reduction and cost savings over the expected 25 year lifespan of the solar PV panels.

The Cabinet is

RECOMMENDED

- To approve the project to be funded by the use of Reserves; and the project be added to the Councils capital programme to be delivered across the 24/25 and 25/26 financial years.
- To delegate to the Corporate Director - Finance & Resources (S151) in consultation with the Executive Councillor for Finances & Resources to make any consequential amendments to budgets and release of necessary funds to deliver the project.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 This report aims to gain formal approval to proceed with the project of installation of Solar PV panels on the following One Leisure Sites.

- One Leisure Huntingdon Dry
- One Leisure Ramsey
- One Leisure St Ives Outdoor
- One Leisure St Neots

2. THE SCHEME

2.1 With the Net Zero target of 2040, decarbonisation and reducing carbon is a key priority. The installation of further Solar PV Panels would contribute towards this, an increased benefit is that there is a financial saving associated as summarised in the chart below (please see appendix 1 for full financial savings).

From our indicative designs the expected system sizes are noted below although this is subject to final structural surveys and gaining the necessary permissions and consent from relevant Schools and Planning.

OLH – 54kWp System
OLR - 140kWp System
OLSIO – 44kWp System
OLSN – 94kWp System

Indicative Solar PV designs below

One Leisure St Ives Outdoor



One Leisure Huntingdon (Dryside)



One Leisure St Neots



One Leisure Ramsey



Total indicative costs are as below.

OLR - £120,000
 OLH – £57,000
 OLSI Outdoor – £52,000
 OLSN - £110,000
 Sub Total - £339,000
 Procurement/ Project Management/ Lease fees - £38,000
 Contingency - £35,000
 Total - £412,000

Payback Periods for each project as separate projects.

OLR: 7 Years
 OLH: 8 Years
 OLSIO: 12 Years
 OLSN: 6 Years

All 4 projects have a combined payback period of 8.25 years

The export of any excess electricity gained from the solar PV systems has not been included within the project due to this potentially having an impact on the installation time due to the delayed acceptance on applications from UK Power Network (UKPN). Following the installations we would be able to determine the excess electricity available and investigate the options of both exporting back to the grid and battery storage on an individual site basis.

Savings Across All Sites (cumulative):

	kWh Saving:	Financial Saving:	CO2 Savings:
Year 1	231,462 kWh	£60,354.00	40 tonnes
Year 2	461,767 kWh	£120,408.00	80 tonnes
Year 3	690,920 kWh	£180,159.00	120 tonnes
Year 4	918,928 kWh	£239,614.00	160 tonnes
Year 5	1,145,795 kWh	£298,771.00	200 tonnes
Year 10	2,263,232 kWh	£590,147.00	400 tonnes
Year 20	4,415,816 kWh	£897,839.00	800 tonnes
Year 25 (panel lifespan)	5,449,314 kWh	£1,420,808.00	950 tonnes

These are indicative savings and kWh production based on a desk top proposal. Saving will vary with regards to installation size and electric contract pricing.

3. OPTIONS CONSIDERED

3.1 Options considered are noted below.

OPTION 1 = DO NOTHING: (Not recommended)

Pros:

- No change

Cons:

- No Change
- Spending more money
- Lesson control on carbon footprint
- Miss opportunity for revenue from sale of excess energy production

OPTION 2 = DELIVER A BIG BANG APPROACH: (Recommended)

Deliver all installs simultaneously.

This is the recommended approach as we can deliver as a single project.

Pros:

- Shorter Delivery timescales.
- Staff allocation over a shorter period.
- Payback on project returns sooner.
- Equipment and materials purchased in bulk therefore avoiding inflation over time.

Cons:

- Lack of opportunity for lessons learnt.

OPTION 3 = DELIVER A PHASED APPROACH: (Not recommended)

Pros:

- Enables us to review any lessons learnt from previous installations.

Cons:

- Longer delivery timescales
- Staff allocation over a longer period.
- Cost of materials and inflation could impact quotations.
- Project management costs would increase due to duration of the project.

The outcome recommendation from this is to complete the project as Option 2 = Deliver a big bang approach.

Our recommendation is that we proceed with completion of all 4 sites. Payback is at 12 years for One Leisure St Ives Outdoor although the other 3 are within 8 years.

Note: Within our Salix recycling fund which has been running since 2010, any project with a pay back of less than 10 years is normally automatically accepted due to the excellent return on investment

4. COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

To be added following O&S on 7th November 2024

5. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Title	Start/Finish Date	Duration
Tender Contract	Completed within Solar Canopy Tender for OLSI	N/A
Award of tender	November 2024	1 Week
Pre-liminary assessments		4 Weeks
Design and Development Stage		4 Weeks
DNO Application and Planning Permission		12 Weeks
Delivery		18 Weeks
Snagging		4 Weeks
Practical Completion	September 2025	N/A

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

(See Corporate Plan)

6.1 The installation of Solar PV panels links to Priority 2 of HDC’s Corporate Plan. It is estimated that the installation would reduce carbon emissions by 40 CO2 tonnes per annum.

Priority 2 - Creating a better Huntingdonshire for future generations




Improving housing



Forward-thinking economic growth



Lowering carbon emissions



Lowering carbon emissions

We will take positive action to reduce carbon emissions and become a net zero carbon Council by 2040. We will enable and encourage local people and businesses to reduce carbon emissions and increase biodiversity across Huntingdonshire.

- 6.2 The installation of the Solar PV will also link with Priority 3 of HDC's Corporate Plan. It is estimated that the installation would reduce One Leisure's annual utility spend by £60,000.



Delivering good quality, high value-for-money services with good control and compliance with statutory obligations

Around 80% of our resources are aligned to business as usual (BAU) service delivery and our third priority focuses on delivering good quality, high value for money services with good control and compliance with statutory functions. While new activities will mostly focus on delivering outcomes under our two new outward-facing priorities, we will continue to provide a wide range of existing statutory and important services and seek to improve their efficiency and effectiveness.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Leases will need to be updated for One Leisure Ramsey, St Ives and St Neots. This will involve Estates and Legal to make and review the required changes.
- 7.2 Planning permission may be required so this will be applied for at the earliest opportunity.

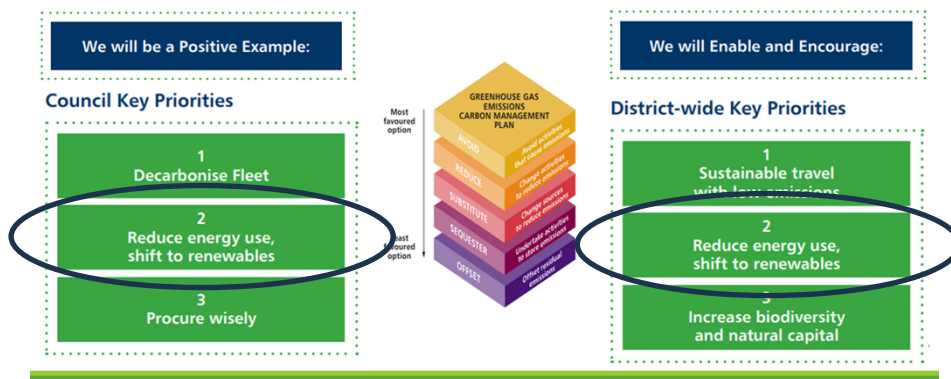
8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 No additional resources will be required for the delivery of the Solar PV panel installation. Facilities Management will oversee the project with assistance from each of the One Leisure Managers. Procurement of this project for this project was included with the recent tender for the Solar PV Canopy at OLSI so can be awarded directly.
- 8.2 Finance have confirmed that there is sufficient funding within reserves to cover the cost of this investment. Approval is therefore sought to utilise this funding, with a delegation to the councils Corporate Director - Finance & Resources (S151) to make the necessary adjustments.

9. ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 In February 2023 HDC agreed its climate strategy with its aim to be Net Zero by 2040. By implementing the installation of Solar Panels this will assist to delivering this objective.

Climate Strategy Priorities



Priority*	Action	Theme	Portfolio
High	Review Council assets to establish further opportunities to improve insulation, energy efficiency and adaptation to reduce their carbon impact	Energy and Renewables	Corporate and Shared Services
High	Develop plan for the Council to use 100% renewable energy	Energy and Renewables	Corporate and Shared Services

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

10.1 This is an affordable, suitable and deliverable scheme enabling One Leisure to reduce its utility costs and CO2 consumption while assisting the overall HDC goal of being Net Zero by 2040.

11. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED

Appendix 1 – Estimated Payback
Appendix 2 - PID One Leisure Solar.

CONTACT OFFICER

Name/Job Title: Matthew Raby – Facilities Manager (Hard Services)
Tel No: 07919 110010
Email: Matthew.Raby@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

One Leisure Ramsey

Year	Import from Grid (kWh)	Unit Rate (£/kWh)	Electricity Spend	Solar PV Onsite Usage (kWh)	Cost Savings from Onsite Generation	Export Income	CapEx Cost	Annual Savings	Servicing Cost	Project Costs (project management and contingency)	Cumulative Net Savings
1	346,852	0.2562	£88,863.48	80520	£20,629		-£119,949	£20,629	£250	£18,250	-£117,820
2	346,852	0.2562	£88,863.48	80117	£20,526			£20,526	£250		-£97,544
3	346,852	0.2562	£88,863.48	79716	£20,423			£20,423	£250		-£77,371
4	346,852	0.2562	£88,863.48	79318	£20,321			£20,321	£250		-£57,299
5	346,852	0.2562	£88,863.48	78921	£20,220			£20,220	£250		-£37,330
6	346,852	0.2562	£88,863.48	78527	£20,119			£20,119	£250		-£17,461
7	346,852	0.2562	£88,863.48	78134	£20,018			£20,018	£250		£2,307
8	346,852	0.2562	£88,863.48	77743	£19,918			£19,918	£250		£21,975
9	346,852	0.2562	£88,863.48	77355	£19,818			£19,818	£250		£41,543
10	346,852	0.2562	£88,863.48	76968	£19,719			£19,719	£250		£61,012
11	346,852	0.2562	£88,863.48	76583	£19,621			£19,621	£250		£80,383
12	346,852	0.2562	£88,863.48	76200	£19,522			£19,522	£250		£99,655
13	346,852	0.2562	£88,863.48	75819	£19,425			£19,425	£250		£118,830
14	346,852	0.2562	£88,863.48	75440	£19,328			£19,328	£250		£137,908
15	346,852	0.2562	£88,863.48	75063	£19,231			£19,231	£250		£156,889
16	346,852	0.2562	£88,863.48	74687	£19,135			£19,135	£250		£175,774
17	346,852	0.2562	£88,863.48	74314	£19,039			£19,039	£250		£194,563
18	346,852	0.2562	£88,863.48	73942	£18,944			£18,944	£250		£213,257
19	346,852	0.2562	£88,863.48	73573	£18,849			£18,849	£250		£231,856
20	346,852	0.2562	£88,863.48	73205	£18,755			£18,755	£250		£250,361
21	346,852	0.2562	£88,863.48	72839	£18,661			£18,661	£250		£268,773
22	346,852	0.2562	£88,863.48	72475	£18,568			£18,568	£250		£287,091
23	346,852	0.2562	£88,863.48	72112	£18,475			£18,475	£250		£305,316
24	346,852	0.2562	£88,863.48	71752	£18,383			£18,383	£250		£323,449
25	346,852	0.2562	£88,863.48	71393	£18,291			£18,291	£250		£341,490

One Leisure St Neots

Year	Import from Grid (kWh)	Unit Rate (£/kWh)	Electricity Spend	Solar PV Onsite Usage (kWh)	Cost Savings from Onsite Generation	Export Income	CapEx Cost	Annual Savings	Servicing Cost	Project Costs (project management and contingency)	Cumulative Net Savings
1	542,295	0.25344	£137,439	90731	£22,995		-£109,999	£22,995	£250	£18,250	-£105,504
2	542,295	0.25344	£137,439	90278	£22,880			£22,880	£250		-£82,874
3	542,295	0.25344	£137,439	89826	£22,766			£22,766	£250		-£60,359
4	542,295	0.25344	£137,439	89377	£22,652			£22,652	£250		-£37,957
5	542,295	0.25344	£137,439	88930	£22,538			£22,538	£250		-£15,668
6	542,295	0.25344	£137,439	88486	£22,426			£22,426	£250		£6,507
7	542,295	0.25344	£137,439	88043	£22,314			£22,314	£250		£28,571
8	542,295	0.25344	£137,439	87603	£22,202			£22,202	£250		£50,523
9	542,295	0.25344	£137,439	87165	£22,091			£22,091	£250		£72,364
10	542,295	0.25344	£137,439	86729	£21,981			£21,981	£250		£94,095
11	542,295	0.25344	£137,439	86295	£21,871			£21,871	£250		£115,715
12	542,295	0.25344	£137,439	85864	£21,761			£21,761	£250		£137,227
13	542,295	0.25344	£137,439	85435	£21,653			£21,653	£250		£158,629
14	542,295	0.25344	£137,439	85007	£21,544			£21,544	£250		£179,924
15	542,295	0.25344	£137,439	84582	£21,436			£21,436	£250		£201,110
16	542,295	0.25344	£137,439	84160	£21,330			£21,330	£250		£222,190
17	542,295	0.25344	£137,439	83739	£21,223			£21,223	£250		£243,162
18	542,295	0.25344	£137,439	83320	£21,117			£21,117	£250		£264,029
19	542,295	0.25344	£137,439	82903	£21,011			£21,011	£250		£284,790
20	542,295	0.25344	£137,439	82489	£20,906			£20,906	£250		£305,446
21	542,295	0.25344	£137,439	82076	£20,801			£20,801	£250		£325,997
22	542,295	0.25344	£137,439	81666	£20,697			£20,697	£250		£346,445
23	542,295	0.25344	£137,439	81258	£20,594			£20,594	£250		£366,789
24	542,295	0.25344	£137,439	80851	£20,491			£20,491	£250		£387,030
25	542,295	0.25344	£137,439	80447	£20,388			£20,388	£250		£407,168

One Leisure Huntingdon (Dryside)

Year	Import from Grid (kWh)	Unit Rate (£/kWh)	Electricity Spend	Solar PV Onsite Usage (kWh)	Cost Savings from Onsite Generation	Export Income	CapEx Cost	Annual Savings	Servicing Cost	Project Costs (project management and contingency)	Cumulative Net Savings
1	167,840	0.26388	£44,290	38004	£10,028		-£56,480	£10,028	£250	£18,250	-£64,952
2	167,840	0.26388	£44,290	37814	£9,978			£9,978	£250		-£55,223
3	167,840	0.26388	£44,290	37625	£9,928			£9,928	£250		-£45,545
4	167,840	0.26388	£44,290	37437	£9,879			£9,879	£250		-£35,916
5	167,840	0.26388	£44,290	37250	£9,830			£9,830	£250		-£26,336
6	167,840	0.26388	£44,290	37064	£9,780			£9,780	£250		-£16,806
7	167,840	0.26388	£44,290	36878	£9,731			£9,731	£250		-£7,324
8	167,840	0.26388	£44,290	36694	£9,683			£9,683	£250		£2,108
9	167,840	0.26388	£44,290	36511	£9,635			£9,635	£250		£11,493
10	167,840	0.26388	£44,290	36328	£9,586			£9,586	£250		£20,829
11	167,840	0.26388	£44,290	36146	£9,538			£9,538	£250		£30,117
12	167,840	0.26388	£44,290	35966	£9,491			£9,491	£250		£39,358
13	167,840	0.26388	£44,290	35786	£9,443			£9,443	£250		£48,551
14	167,840	0.26388	£44,290	35607	£9,396			£9,396	£250		£57,697
15	167,840	0.26388	£44,290	35429	£9,349			£9,349	£250		£66,796
16	167,840	0.26388	£44,290	35252	£9,302			£9,302	£250		£75,849
17	167,840	0.26388	£44,290	35075	£9,256			£9,256	£250		£84,854
18	167,840	0.26388	£44,290	34900	£9,209			£9,209	£250		£93,814
19	167,840	0.26388	£44,290	34726	£9,163			£9,163	£250		£102,727
20	167,840	0.26388	£44,290	34552	£9,118			£9,118	£250		£111,595
21	167,840	0.26388	£44,290	34379	£9,072			£9,072	£250		£120,417
22	167,840	0.26388	£44,290	34207	£9,027			£9,027	£250		£129,193
23	167,840	0.26388	£44,290	34036	£8,981			£8,981	£250		£137,925
24	167,840	0.26388	£44,290	33866	£8,937			£8,937	£250		£146,611
25	167,840	0.26388	£44,290	33697	£8,892			£8,892	£250		£155,253

One Leisure St Ives Outdoor

Year	Import from Grid (kWh)	Unit Rate (£/kWh)	Electricity Spend	Solar PV Onsite Usage (kWh)	Cost Savings from Onsite Generation	Export Income	CapEx Cost	Annual Savings	Servicing Cost	Project Costs (project management and contingency)	Cumulative Net Savings
1	150,947	0.3018	£45,556	22,207	£6,702		-£52,324	£6,702	£250	£18,250	-£64,122
2	150,947	0.3018	£45,556	22,096	£6,669			£6,669	£250		-£57,703
3	150,947	0.3018	£45,556	21,986	£6,635			£6,635	£250		-£51,318
4	150,947	0.3018	£45,556	21,876	£6,602			£6,602	£250		-£44,966
5	150,947	0.3018	£45,556	21,766	£6,569			£6,569	£250		-£38,647
6	150,947	0.3018	£45,556	21,657	£6,536			£6,536	£250		-£32,361
7	150,947	0.3018	£45,556	21,549	£6,503			£6,503	£250		-£26,107
8	150,947	0.3018	£45,556	21,441	£6,471			£6,471	£250		-£19,886
9	150,947	0.3018	£45,556	21,334	£6,439			£6,439	£250		-£13,698
10	150,947	0.3018	£45,556	21,228	£6,407			£6,407	£250		-£7,541
11	150,947	0.3018	£45,556	21,121	£6,374			£6,374	£250		-£1,417
12	150,947	0.3018	£45,556	21,016	£6,343			£6,343	£250		£4,676
13	150,947	0.3018	£45,556	20,911	£6,311			£6,311	£250		£10,737
14	150,947	0.3018	£45,556	20,806	£6,279			£6,279	£250		£16,766
15	150,947	0.3018	£45,556	20,702	£6,248			£6,248	£250		£22,764
16	150,947	0.3018	£45,556	20,599	£6,217			£6,217	£250		£28,731
17	150,947	0.3018	£45,556	20,496	£6,186			£6,186	£250		£34,666
18	150,947	0.3018	£45,556	20,393	£6,155			£6,155	£250		£40,571
19	150,947	0.3018	£45,556	20,291	£6,124			£6,124	£250		£46,445
20	150,947	0.3018	£45,556	20,190	£6,093			£6,093	£250		£52,288
21	150,947	0.3018	£45,556	20,089	£6,063			£6,063	£250		£58,101
22	150,947	0.3018	£45,556	19,988	£6,032			£6,032	£250		£63,883
23	150,947	0.3018	£45,556	19,888	£6,002			£6,002	£250		£69,636
24	150,947	0.3018	£45,556	19,789	£5,972			£5,972	£250		£75,358
25	150,947	0.3018	£45,556	16,690	£5,037			£5,037	£250		£80,145



Project Initiation Document

One Leisure Solar

<Date>

<Version>

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PURPOSE

The purpose of this project is to deliver Solar Panels at One Leisure Ramsey, One Leisure Huntingdon Dry, One Leisure St Neots and One Leisure St Ives Outdoor. This will reduce the electricity usage across the sites and assist with the delivery of HDC's 2040 Net Zero Target.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

There is volatility within the electricity market which has had an impact to budgets across the portfolio of properties.

By installing solar panels this will reduce running costs to assist with budgetary constraints.

Background and context

Solar panels are already installed on these sites but following a review of utility costs and usage it has been identified that installing further roof mounted solar panels at One Leisure Huntingdon Dryside, Ramsey, St Ives Outdoor and St Neots it will reduce expenditure for these sites as well as help HDC to achieve its overall goal of being Net Zero by 2040.

1. Scope

Activities in scope:

Having completed desktop reviews with consultants across all One Leisure Sites, Pathfinder House and Eastfield House this project will deliver further roof mounted Solar Panel systems at following sites.

One Leisure Huntingdon Dry
One Leisure Ramsey
One Leisure St Ives Outdoor
One Leisure St Neots

By completing these installs, we would be saving approx. 40 CO2 tonnes per year, with the solar panels having an expected lifespan of 25 years.

In year one of the project there is an expected saving of 231,462kWh which equates to £60,357 (following installation).

For the following years this is expected to decrease by 0.5% per year as per manufacturers guidelines due to panels aging and becoming less efficient. (Please see appendix 1. Estimated Payback).

The financial savings in subsequent years is subject to energy tariffs when contract renewals are due.

Activities out of scope:

At present HDC's corporate buildings and estate properties are not in scope as Eastfield House already has Solar Panels on its roof, Pathfinder House is limited on options due to plant equipment taking up most of the roof space. Smaller buildings and smaller systems will be considered at a later stage.

Batteries are out of scope, but future options are available for this. Once systems are installed it allows us to find out the kWh gap then we can size up the battery options. Currently battery storage is still developing so at the time of install we can assess what is available on the market.

At point of installation there will be no options for Feed-in tariff's but if this scheme becomes available in the future it is something we can look at.

2. Options

OPTION 1 = DO NOTHING: (Not recommended)

Pros:

- No change

Cons:

- No Change
- Spending more money
- Lesson control on carbon footprint
- Miss opportunity for revenue from sale of excess energy production

OPTION 2 = DELIVER A BIG BANG APPROACH: (Recommended)

Deliver all installs simultaneously.

This is the recommended approach as we can deliver as a single project.

Pros:

- Shorter Delivery timescales.
- Staff allocation over a shorter period.
- Payback on project returns sooner.
- Equipment and materials purchased in bulk therefore avoiding inflation over time.

Cons:

- Lack of opportunity for lessons learnt.

OPTION 3 = DELIVER A PHASED APPROACH: (Not recommended)

Pros:

- Enables us to review any lessons learnt from previous installations.

Cons:

- Longer delivery timescales
- Staff allocation over a longer period.
- Cost of materials and inflation could impact quotations.
- Project management costs would increase due to duration of the project.

3. Impact

See attached Impact assessment for further details.

The outcome recommendation from this is to complete the project as Option 2 = Deliver a big bang approach.

Our recommendation is that we proceed with completion of all 4 sites. Payback is at most 11 years for One Leisure St Ives Outdoor although the other 3 are within 8 years. Within our Salix recycling fund, which has been running since 2010, any project with a pay back of less than 10 years is normally automatically accepted due to the excellent return on investment.

This project(s) can be a modular project and split if funding for all isn't available. The site priority is listed below:

- 1st – One Leisure St Neots
- 2nd – One Leisure Ramsey
- 3rd – One Leisure Huntingdon Dryside
- 4th – One Leisure Outdoor

If we were to run these as separate projects, then the Project Management cost would increase as they would oversee the 4 sites as one project.

4. Benefits

- For business continuity we would be producing a high percentage of our own electricity for the leisure centres.
- With the volatility still in the energy market we would be making a saving on our electricity bills.
- Contributing towards moving to renewable energy sources to power our buildings.
- To improve business resilience if there is an energy crisis within the country by the production of the site's own energy.
- Support our aim of being carbon neutral by 2040.

5. COMPLETION SCHEDULE

Proposed Project Start Date

Proposed Project Start Date	01/02/2025 (ability to start soon)
Proposed Project End Date	31/01/2026

5.1 Agreed Milestones

No.	Title	Proposed Start Date	Target End Date
MS1	Completion of ITT	Included within current ITT for Canopy but option to go out again	4 Weeks
MS2	Award of tender		1 Week

MS3	Pre-liminary assessments		3 Weeks
MS4	Design and Development Stage		4 Weeks
MS5	DNO Application and Planning Permission		12 Weeks
MS6	Delivery		18 Weeks
MS7	Snagging		4 Weeks

5.2 Agreed Tolerances (completion within 12 months of start date)

Time (dates)		Tolerance
Project start date	01/02/2024	30 days
	46 Weeks	According to Milestones
Project end date	31/01/2025	30 days

Quality	Tolerance
Quality of the solar panels installed.	Looking for the installation of Tier 1 products.
Minimal disruption to the day-to-day operations of One Leisure Site.	Aware of some down time while panels are connected.

6. Budget and Funding

There is currently no government funding available for solar panels. There is also no budget within One Leisure to fund these projects. Therefore, we are going through the ideas process for council funding.

With an installation like this there would be additional annual costs of maintenance which would need to be added into sites budgets for servicing, cleaning and maintenance.

OLR - £120,000

OLH – £57,000

OLSI Outdoor – £52,000

OLSN - £110,000

Sub Total - £339,000

Procurement/ Project Management/ Lease fees - £38,000

Contingency - £35,000

Total - £412,000

Maintenance fees will be covered by centre budget but have been included in appendix A and incorporated with net savings.

7. Resource

1. Subject Matter Experts (advice, technical input, validation of fit-for-purpose solutions)

- Matthew Raby, Kerry Slater and Varsity Consultancy

Does the BAU service manager have endorsement for SME resource and availability?

Yes

2. Support services

Support service	Activity	Timeline	Demand
Finance Business Partner	Provide T1 code. Review costs and budgeting.	As authorised	Low (1 -2 day)
Procurement resource	Support with procurement and award.	As authorised	Medium (1-2 weeks)
Estates	Review existing leases. Assist with leases amendments as required.	Project Duration	Medium (1-2 weeks)
One Leisure	Communicate impact to sites.	Project Duration	High (1 -2 months+)
3C ICT resource	Agree system for monitoring.	Agreed	Low (1 -2 day)
Communications resource (TBC)	Appropriate internal and external communications.	Project Duration	Medium (1-2 weeks)
Legal	To review contracts before signing	Pre Start	Low (1 -2 day)

3. Project delivery

- Project will be delivered by Facilities Management Team with assistance from One Leisure for operational requirements/delivery.

8. Stakeholders, Boards & Members

Corporate Boards and Briefing

Stakeholders

Responsible:

- Neil Sloper (Senior Responsible Owner)
- Matthew Raby (Subject Matter Expert)
- Kerry Slater (Subject Matter Expert)

Accountable:

- Ben Pitt (Portfolio Holder)
- Cabinet for the Joint Administration
- Neil Sloper (Sponsor)

Supporting:

- Support Staff listed under 6. Resource

Informed:

- All Elected Members (Full Council)
- Residents of Huntingdonshire

Consulted:

- Cambridgeshire County Council
- The Joint Administration
- One Leisure Landowners

8.1 Project Team: Key Roles (permanent roles)

Key roles	Name	Project (if part of a programme)
Project Sponsor	Neil Sloper	
Project Manager	Matthew Raby	
Project Support	Kerry Slater	
Project Site Support	Leigh Allaker	

9. Risks

Risk	Potential impact
Electric prices going down.	Payback period increase.
Preliminary roof surveys completed. Intrusive roof surveys saying the roofs can only hold a smaller load than stated or no load.	Reduce the kWh production and carbon tonnes saving.
No investment in these installations.	No reduction in the carbon footprint of the Leisure Centres. If electricity prices increase would be increase expenditure on utilities.

10. Dependencies and Assumptions

1. This project is dependent on cabinet funding. There isn't government funding available for solar related projects.
2. To help reduce the leisure centres carbon footprint is dependent on funding like this to support HDC reach their target of being carbon neutral by 2040.

11. Communications

There is a need to engage early with the HDC Communications service to mitigate the potential for reputational damage, for disruption to service with One Leisure (which we would aim to keep to a minimum).

Key messages:

- Solar Panel Investment will assist with financial savings across One Leisure Sites.
- These installations contribute to the Councils over all aim of being net zero by 2040.

Channels:

- HDC website
- Social media – various platforms
- Press – paid advertisements and press releases
- Internal communications – Intranet and messaging

12. Governance

Member approval and key decision pathway

Governance	Decision	Timeline
Major Change Board	15 th October 2024	Completed XXX
Informal Cabinet	28 th October 2024	Estimated XXX
Overview and Scrutiny panel	7 th November 2024	Estimated XXX
Cabinet	12 November 2024	Estimated XXX

Project Governance:

Project Board to be established once project is approved to progress beyond Stage 2 of the ideas process. Project Board Terms of Reference are to:

- Make key decisions
- Monitor progress and quality
- Resolve escalated risks and issues
- Act as advocates for the project and benefits

12.1 Reporting

Activity	Agreement
Frequency of individual project board/team:	Fortnightly
Frequency of Highlight Reports to the Programme	Monthly
Frequency of Reporting to the SLT and Cabinet	Monthly

12.2 Document Control

Document Storage	Location
Name of Teams or SharePoint Project site:	
Copy URL of site and paste in right-hand	..\..\Ideas

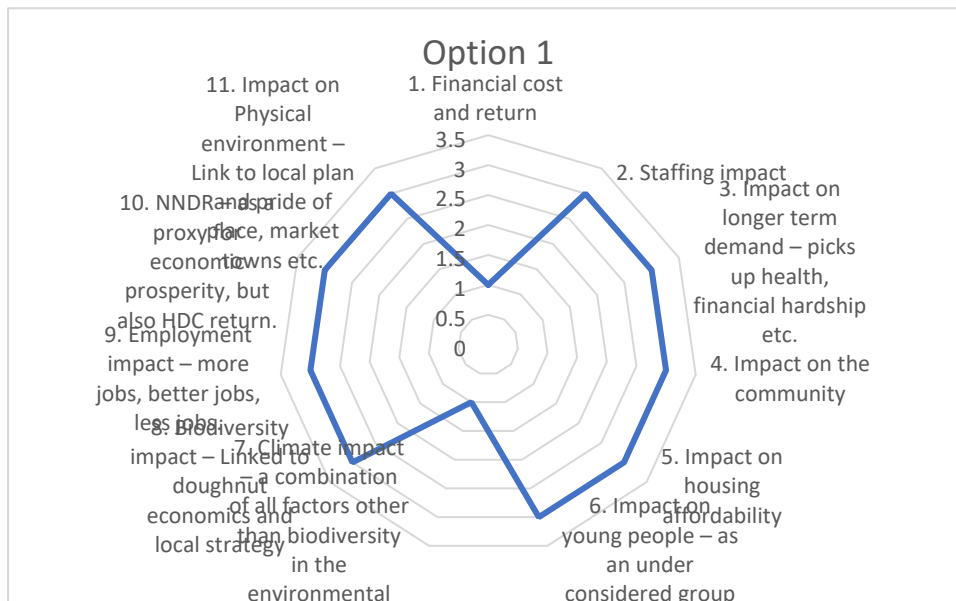
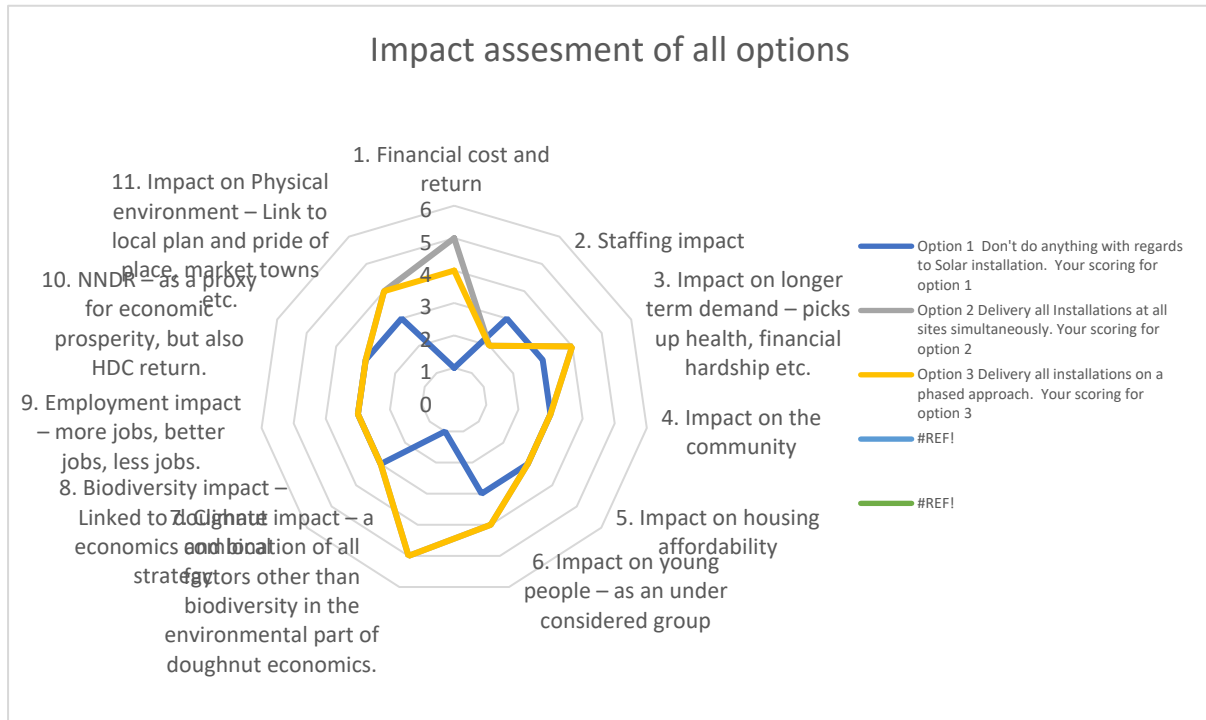
13. Monitoring and evaluation

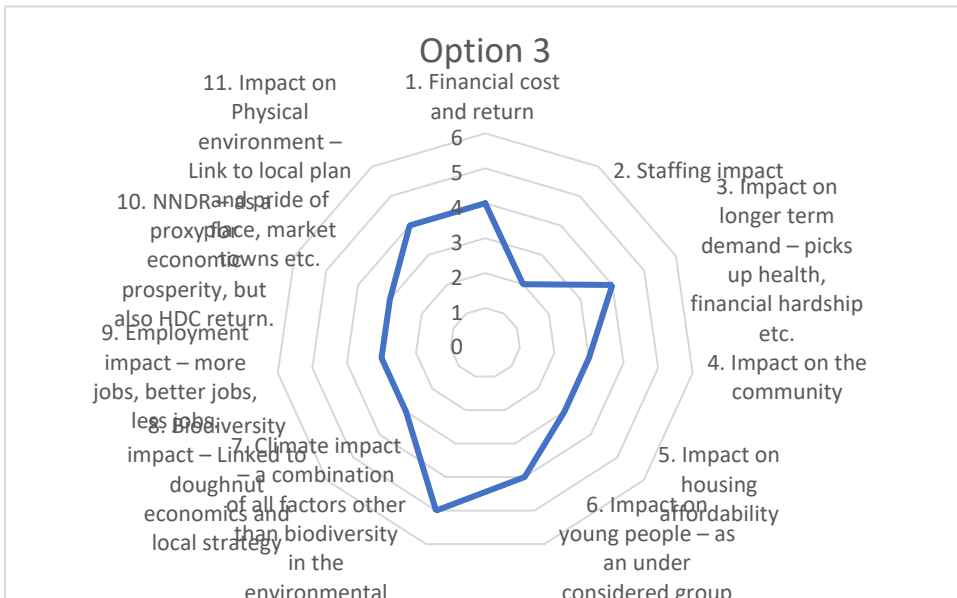
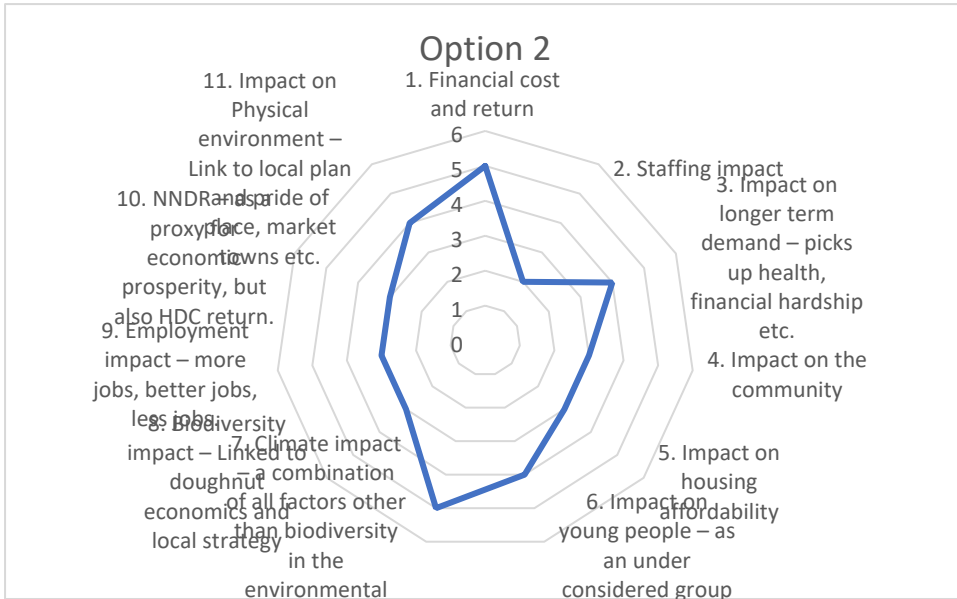
Successful delivery of the implementation plan will be managed through robust project management, defining key deliverables and milestones. Progress and assurance will be provided by the Project Board and Work Programme Board (organisational assurance)

Monthly readings will be taken from the inverters to monitor monthly production. This will be compared with monthly weather reports on daylight hours. In addition to this utility bills will be monitored for expenditure and savings.

Yearly servicing and cleaning of the panels will be completed to ensure the panels stay at optimum capabilities.

Impact Assessment







One Leisure Solar Panel Installs

Proposal

To install solar panels on the rooves at

One Leisure Huntingdon Dryside

One Leisure Ramsey

One Leisure St Ives Outdoor

One Leisure St Neots

Matt Raby and Kerry Slater

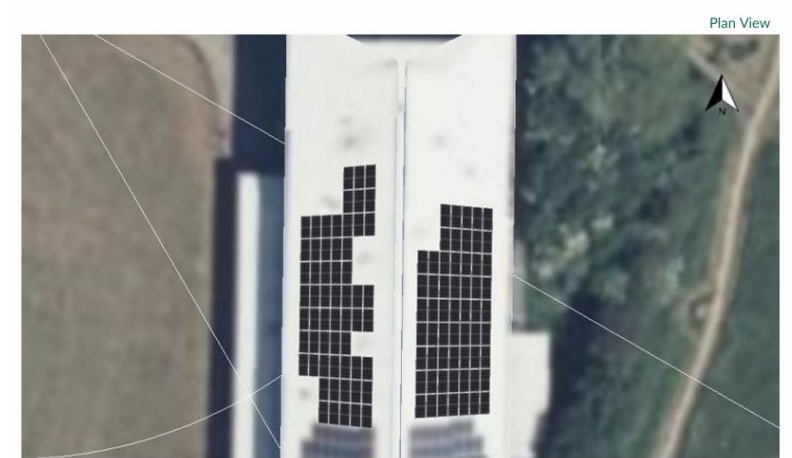
Proposed Ideas:

These are indicative designs from a desk top exercise although full structural surveys to be completed to finalise designed.

One Leisure St Ives Outdoor



One Leisure Huntingdon (Dryside)



One Leisure St Neots



One Leisure Ramsey



Solar Costing:

OLR - £120,000

OLH - £57,000

OLSI Outdoor - £52,000

OLSN - £110,000

Sub Total - £339,000

Procurement/ Project

Management/ Lease fees - £38,000

Contingency - £35,000

Total - £412,000

Payback Periods:

OLR: 7 Years

OLH: 8 Years

OLSIO: 12 Years

OLSN: 6 Years

Savings Across All Sites (cumulative):

	kWh Saving:	Financial Saving:	CO2 Savings:
Year 1	231,462 kWh	£60,354.00	40 tonnes
Year 2	461,767 kWh	£120,408.00	80 tonnes
Year 3	690,920 kWh	£180,159.00	120 tonnes
Year 4	918,928 kWh	£239,614.00	160 tonnes
Year 5	1,145,795 kWh	£298,771.00	200 tonnes
Year 10	2,263,232 kWh	£590,147.00	400 tonnes
Year 20	4,415,816 kWh	£897,839.00	800 tonnes
Year 25 (panel lifespan)	5,449,314 kWh	£1,420,808.00	950 tonnes

These are indicative savings and kWh production based on a desk top proposal. Savings will vary with regards to installation size and electric contract pricing.

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Public
Key Decision - No

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter:	Priority 1: Improving Quality of Life for Local People
Meeting/Date:	Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environment, Communities and Partnerships) – Thursday 7 th November 2024
Executive Portfolio:	Cllr. Ben Pitt, Executive Councillor for Communities, Health and Leisure
Report by:	Claudia Deeth, Community Services Manager
Ward(s) affected:	All

Executive Summary:

In 2023, the District Council published their 5-year Corporate Plan. Priority 1 within the plan is to 'Improve the quality of life for local people' with a focus on 'Improving the happiness and wellbeing of residents', 'Keeping people out of crisis' and 'Helping people in crisis'.

The purpose of this report is to provide Overview & Scrutiny with a regular update on the progress of activities that have been implemented to tackle Priority 1. The information contained within the report relates to Quarter 2 – July - September 2024 and details projects and initiatives that have been implemented using core resource as well as external funding secured to target identified issues such as cardiovascular disease and frailty prevention.

Progress against the activities to tackle Priority 1 have continued to be positive with uptake of the health courses growing with community groups delivering 168 sessions that were attended by 207 residents. The Resident Advice and Information Team have spoken with and helped over 1,700 residents who are experiencing or who are at risk of crisis as well as 16,300 meals distributed to families by Food4Nought.

At the meeting, Members will hear in more detail about the work of the Resident Advice and Information Team including some examples of customer journeys from reason for contact through to how the team have helped. We will share progress to date on the WorkWell Programme and the GP practices that we are working with.

Recommendation(s):

The Committee is requested to note the progress that has been made on Priority 1 during the second quarter and comment on the activities that are taking place including requesting any further information or specific information that they would like to see in future reports.

RECOMMENDED

That the Committee continues to receive updates in relation to the activities taking place and utilises the opportunity to observe, participate or contribute to the commissioned projects and initiatives.



IMPROVING THE Quality of Life for Local People

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● HDC CORPORATE PLAN 2023 - 28 |
PRIORITY 1



Purpose and objectives of the session

- Provide an update on progress of these activities during quarter 2.
- The plans for quarter 3.
- Seek your feedback on challenges you are seeing and your support to promote this work to residents .

Priority 1: Improving quality of life for local people



Improving the happiness and wellbeing of residents

We want the highest possible quality of life for the people of Huntingdonshire. It will be a place which attracts employers and visitors and somewhere residents are proud to call home. We will be evidence based, responsive and support the foundations of a good life. This includes personal independence, prosperity, social connection, community and good health.



Keeping people out of crisis*

We will identify the root causes that lead people into crises and find ways to prevent them. We will do this through our own actions. We will also work in partnership with residents, businesses, community groups, charities and our public sector partners.



Helping people in crisis*

Where a crisis has already happened, we will work holistically to understand the issues, the cause of these issues and what opportunities exist to address them. We will seek to prevent multiple personal crises becoming entrenched and unmanageable by addressing root causes.

* Crisis – A life changing event, or series of significant events within a short period of time, which can threaten or harm an individual's life experiences, often needing support to prevent further negative consequences.

OVERVIEW

A NUMBER OF TARGETED INITIATIVES HAVE BEEN IMPLEMENTED TO WORK HOLISTICALLY TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR LOCAL PEOPLE. THIS REPORT DETAILS WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED DURING Q1 AND DEFINES THE QUANTIFIABLE IMPACT MEASUREMENTS FOR THE FORTHCOMING QUARTERS.



Resident Advice & Information



Citizens' Advice



Assets of Community Value



Support to Refugees



Bundle of Offers



Food Support



Health Interventions (ICS)



Community Based Employment & Skills



Community Chest



Domestic Abuse



Community Health Prevention Project



- The Community Health Prevention Project, known as ‘Keeping People Healthier & Stronger for Longer’, is a 1yr programme that consists of 4 pillars.
- The programme is funded by the NHS Integrated Care System and is non-recurrent funding.
- This is the second year of ICS funding and follows on from the Health Inequalities Project.

1 Cardiovascular Disease Prevention

2 Frailty Prevention

3 Place Based Pilot - Oxmoor

4 Health Inequalities Project Sustainability

COMMUNITY HEALTH PREVENTION PROJECT - QUARTER 2 UPDATE 2024

Overall progress – Frailty (to date)

4894 Attendances across our frailty activities!

418 Sessions delivered
Over 60's, FitFuture, Staying Active, Golden Games

9 Staying Active courses completed with 68% completion rate

583 Individuals
Have taken part in a frailty related activity

Overall progress - Cardiovascular Disease (to date)

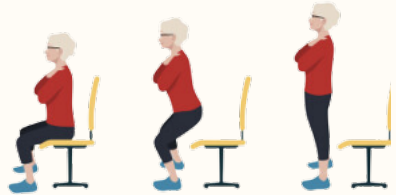




1621 Attendances across our CVD activities!

261 Sessions delivered
Active for Life, Active for Health Xtra, None to Run, Library Walks, summer

6 Active for Health Xtra courses completed with 69% completion rate

302 Individuals
Have taken part in a CVD related activity

Functional Fitness Test Results (Frailty Improvements)

30-Sec Chair Rise	Single Leg Stance	Hand Grip Strength	Chair Sit and Reach	Back Scratch
<p>How many times someone can stand and then return to sitting without using their arms within 30s</p>  <p>Assesses : lower limb strength and power. A positive change is an increase in number.</p> <p>Can indicate : risk of falls, ability to live independently morbidity. and morbidity.</p> <p>Sample size : 37 participants Average change : 26% more stands</p> <p>Most significant change : +10 stands Lowest week 1 : 3 to 8 (+40%)</p> <p>3 participants saw no change, 2 saw a reduction</p>	<p>How long someone can stand on one leg unaided, with both sides tested.</p>  <p>Assesses: Balance. A positive change is an increase in number.</p> <p>Can indicate : risk of falls, ability to live independently and morbidity.</p> <p>Sample size: 45 participants Average change: +5.5 seconds</p> <p>Most significant change: from 8 sec to 37 sec (+362%)</p> <p>38 patients saw an increase on L or R leg, 16 saw an increase in both</p>	<p>How much force is generated by the forearm muscles.</p>  <p>Assesses : Wrist strength. A positive change is an increase in number.</p> <p>Can indicate: future outcomes including length of hospital stay and mortality.</p> <p>Sample size: 30 participants Average change: +2kg</p> <p>Most significant change : Increase of 44% with left hand and 18% on the right.</p>	<p>How far can someone reach towards their toes whilst seated. Reaching the toe is a zero score.</p>  <p>Assesses : Lower body/hamstring flexibility. A positive change is an increase towards or past zero.</p> <p>Can indicate: Walking ability, posture, balance and risk of falls.</p> <p>Sample size : 45 participants Average change: +4cm</p> <p>Most significant change: week 1 from -27cm on each leg, increasing by 7cm on the left and 9cm on the right</p> <p>40 patients saw an increase on L or R leg, 32 saw an increase in both</p>	<p>How close the hands can be brought together behind the back</p>  <p>Assesses : Shoulder flexibility and range of motion. A positive change is an increase in number.</p> <p>Can indicate: posture, ability to perform every day tasks.</p> <p>Sample size: 65 participants Average change: +2cm</p> <p>Most significant change and lowest week 1: -40cm to -34cm (+6) with a +11cm increase on the other arm.</p> <p>35 patients saw an increase, 12 saw an improvement in both arms</p>

St Johns Primary School - Oxmoor

<p>Children 29 Took part in the programme</p>	<p>Fitness Challenge 8% Pupils sustained their fitness challenge score.</p>
<p>Attendances 195 From the 29 children that took part</p>	<p>Fitness Challenge 92% Pupils improved their fitness challenge score.</p>

End point improvements- fitness test
 ↑ 51 shuttles across group. Average increase of 2 shuttles per person (out of 28 pupils who completed 2x fitness tests)

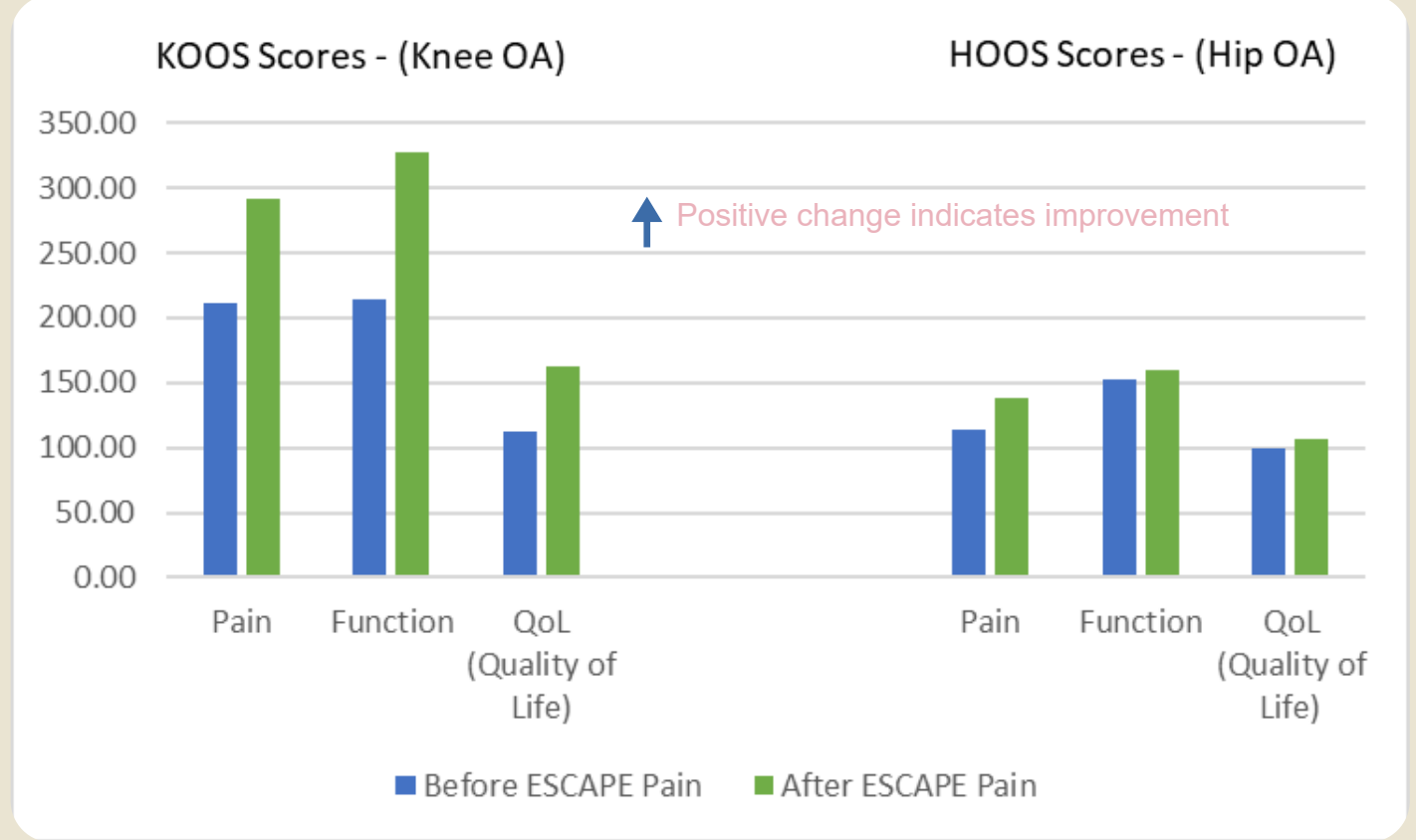
4 Healthy eating sessions delivered

11 Sessions delivered

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ESCAPE Pain - Oxmoor

<p>11 Individuals took part in the course</p>	<p>Completers = 73% 8 Out of the 11 that started the course</p>
<p>Attendances 97 From the 11 individuals that took part</p>	<p>2nd course course running 2nd Sept - 10th Oct</p>



The graphs relay the pre intervention and post intervention outcome scores for the Knee OA Outcome Score (KOOS) and the Hip OA Outcome Score (HOOS). All three subscales (pain, function and quality of life) show an improvement.

Typical Participant Journey through WorkWell Hub

How ?



1. Referral via Joy 2 days



2. Work and Health Assessment (What Matters to You Conversation) 5 days



3. Back to Work/ thrive at Work Plan 5-10 days

Social/ Relational

- Family/ dependents
- Financial
- Housing
- Community
- Lifestyle

Physical Health

- Issue
- History
- Previous treatment
- Options

Mental Health

- Issue
- History
- Previous treatment
- Options

Work

- Situation
- History
- Goals/ Aspirations
- Barriers
- Options



4. Referrals/ MDT Discussion

Example Partners/ Interventions

- Social Care
- Citizens Advice
- Food banks
- Housing advice
- Leisure

Example Partners/ Interventions

- Physiotherapy
- Health Checks
- Social Prescribers
- Advocacy

Example Partners/ Interventions

- MH Assessment
- Good Mood Café
- Talking therapy
- Wellness Walks
- Substance Misuse

Example Partners/ Interventions

- Employer Liaison
- Confidence building
- Careers advice
- Skills development
- Experience



MYCaW
Wellbeing Score

5. Review/ Check ins/ Completion 4-12 weeks



DOMESTIC ABUSE

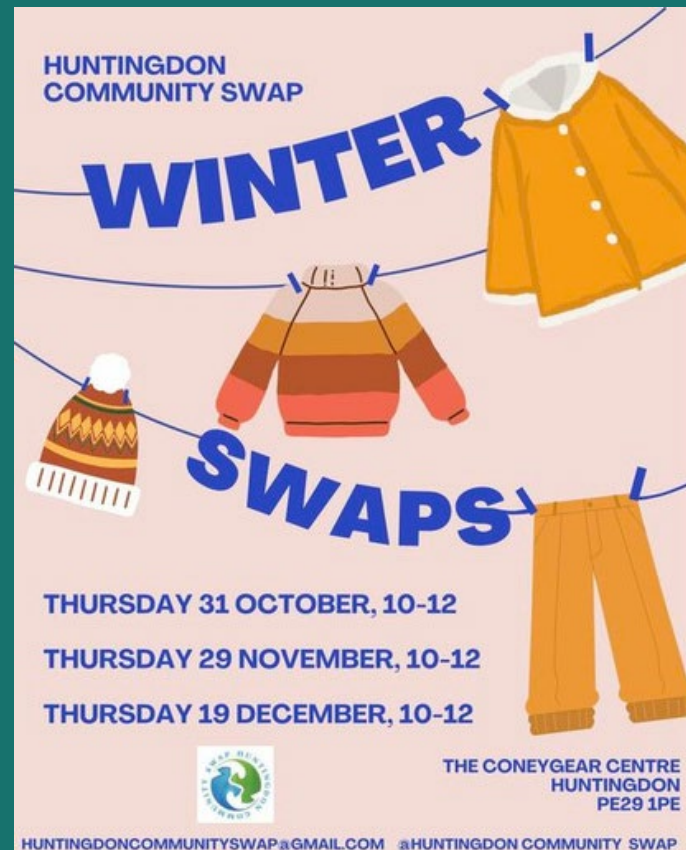


- FULL REVIEW OF HUNTINGDONSHIRE DOMESTIC HOMICIDE REVIEWS (DHRS)
 - 4 DHRs complete
 - 2 DHRs currently awaiting sign off from Home Office, 2 DHRs awaiting commencement of Criminal Justice process and 1 DHR panel to commence imminently .
 - Dedicated Member guidance on domestic abuse in the recent edition of the Town and Parish Councils newsletter .
 - Preparing for launch of 'Bags of Help'.

November 25th – 10th December – 16 Days of Action against Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence

November 25th sees commencement of the 2.5 day stages 1 and 2 of the DAHA Accreditation

COMMUNITY CHEST



- Huntingdon Clothes Swap - £1,000
- Yaxley and Farcet Men's Shed and Hobby Hub – Workshop Upgrade - £1,800
- Great Paxton Parochial Church Council – The Great Paxton Community Christmas Tree Festival - £219.00
- Upwood and the Raveleys Allotment Association – Rainwater Harvesting and Carbon Saving - £2,500
- Cornerstone Care in Confidence – Wrap around support for mothers and babies - £450.00
- St Neots Lawn Tennis Club – Clubhouse Improvement and Refurbishment - £2,500

Action	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Number of applications approved under the Community Chest Scheme.	10	6		
Amount of funding awarded via the Community Chest.	£12,250.00	£8,469.00		
Number of initiatives that contribute to improving quality of life.	10	6		





UKRAINIAN INDEPENDENCE DAY AUGUST 2024

SUPPORT TO REFUGEES



- 5 families into social housing
- 2 families into private rent
- 2 rematches
- 2 families assisted to move elsewhere

Other Support to Refugees

- 18 bed spaces in use across the community for asylum seekers
- LAF3 funding approved for 3 properties to accommodate Afghan families

Measure	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Total number of guests in the Homes for Ukraine Scheme	428	428		
Number of current sponsors in excess of hosting for 6 months.	55	66		
Number of interventions to avoid the need for temporary accommodation or to prevent homelessness.	113	26		

FOOD SUPPORT- HUNTINGDONSHIRE

In quarter 1 we were only able to provide data that related to Oxmoor Community Fridge. For quarter 2, the table now includes data for food provided by Food 4 Nought via:

- Oxmoor Community Fridge
- Yaxley Community Fridge
- The Pantry by Diamond Hampers

FINDINGS FROM REVIEW OF THE HUNTINGDONSHIRE FOOD NETWORK

The data highlights a growing need for food assistance and emphasises the importance of addressing underlying economic and social issues to reduce food insecurity. Several key findings are:

- **Increasing Demand:** A growing demand for food assistance, with a significant spike during the COVID -19 pandemic and subsequent economic challenges.
- **Seasonal Fluctuations:** Seasonal patterns were observed, with higher demand during the winter months and lower demand during the summer months for families.



Action	Q1 – Oxmoor Only	Q2	Q3	Q4
Number of meals distributed by F4N.	1,476	16,306		
Tonnes of food prevented from going to landfill.	792kg	8153.5 kg		
Number of families provided food support at Oxmoor Community Fridge.	246	3599		

- **Individual Foodbank Trends:** While there were variations among individual food banks, the overall trend of increased usage was consistent across Huntingdonshire.
- **Package Types:** A higher proportion of single packages being distributed in recent years. St Neots does not include data on individual packages, potentially leading to an underestimation of the true demand for this cohort.
- **Community Fridge Usage:** Growing food assistance demand and the need for continued logistical support to ensure no one is turned away.

RESIDENT ADVICE & INFORMATION

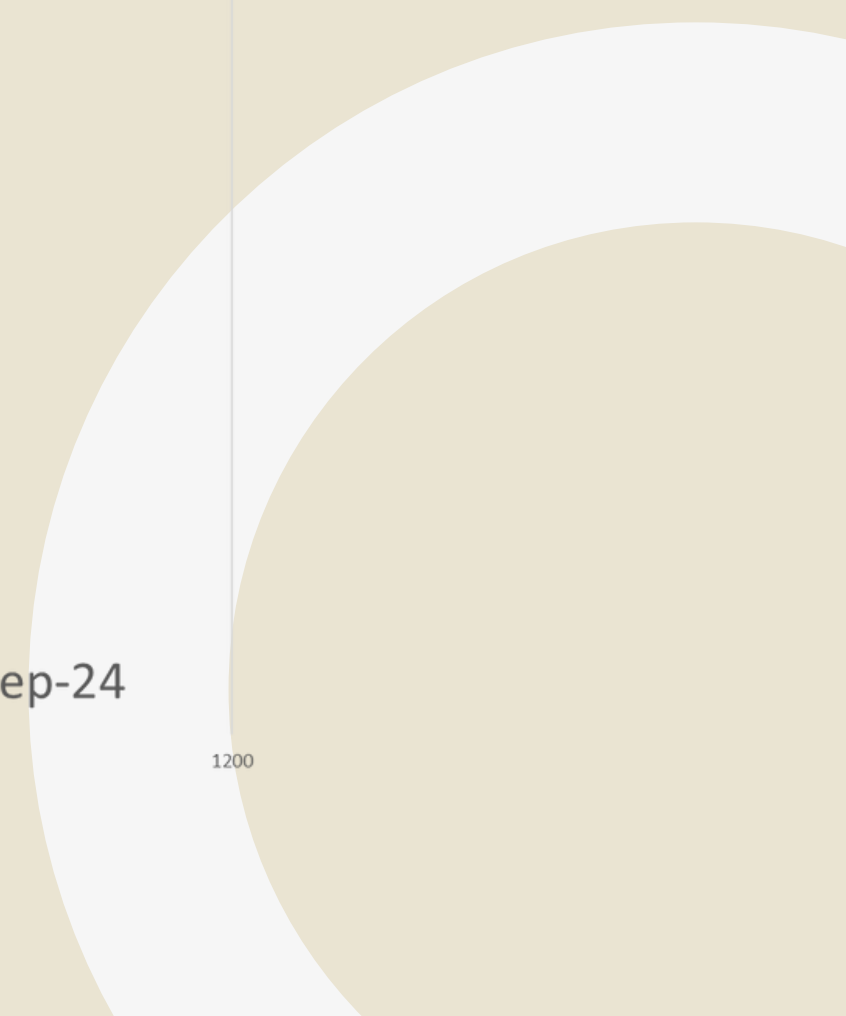
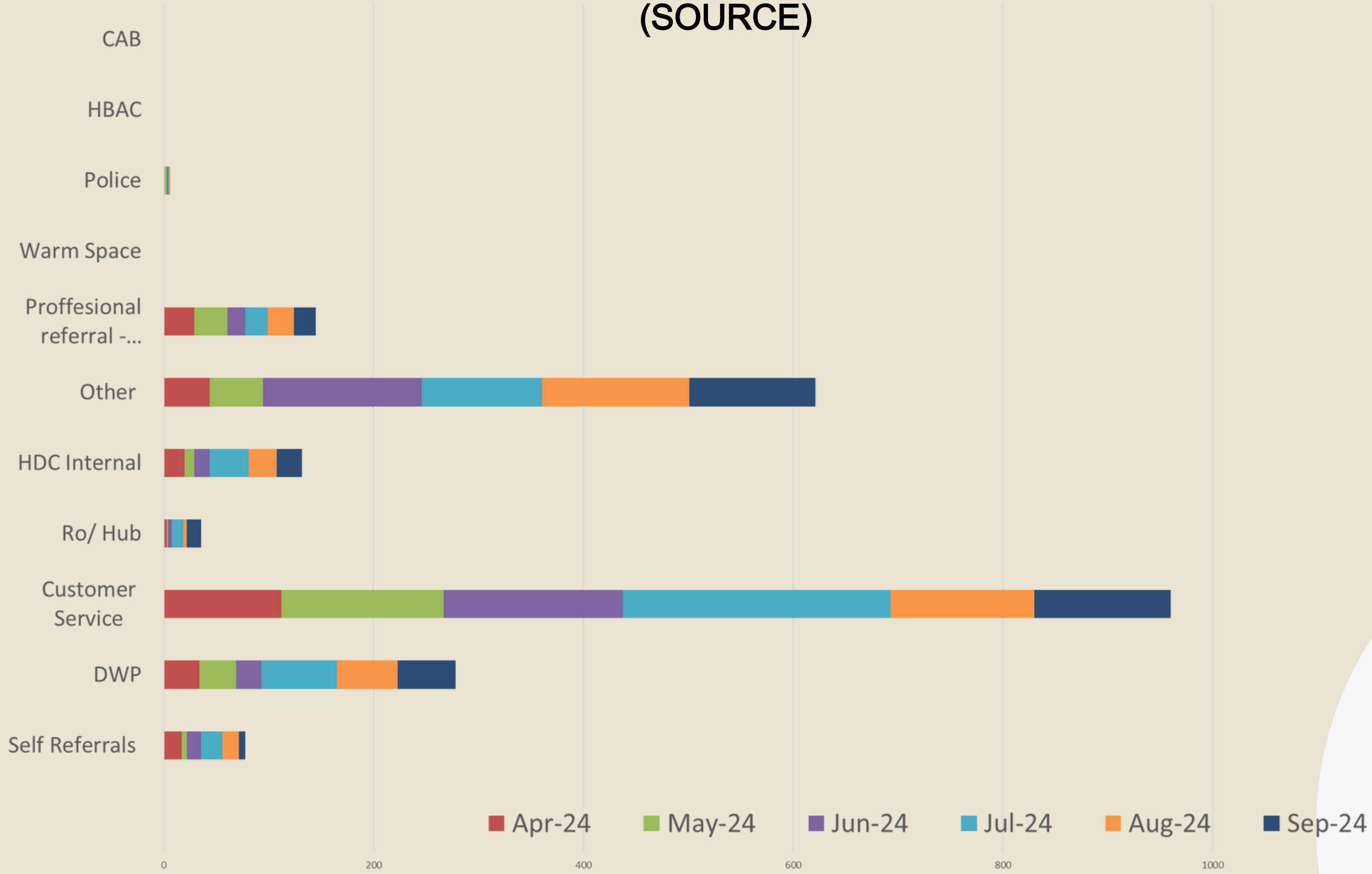


Action	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Number of service users	April - 260 May - 289 June - 389 Total - 938	July - 702 August - 512 September - 496 Total - 1,710		
Number of cases closed	Not currently recorded			
Total time spent on calls	April - 25.18 May - 26.75 June - 45.15 Total - 97.08	July - 70.72 August - 43.9 September - 65.25 Total - 179.87		
Referrals out	April - 123 May - 128 June - 121	July - 145 August - 117 September - 97		
Where referrals come from (source)	See pie chart for breakdown			
Main issue on presentation	See graph for breakdown			

+58% increase in service users for Q2.

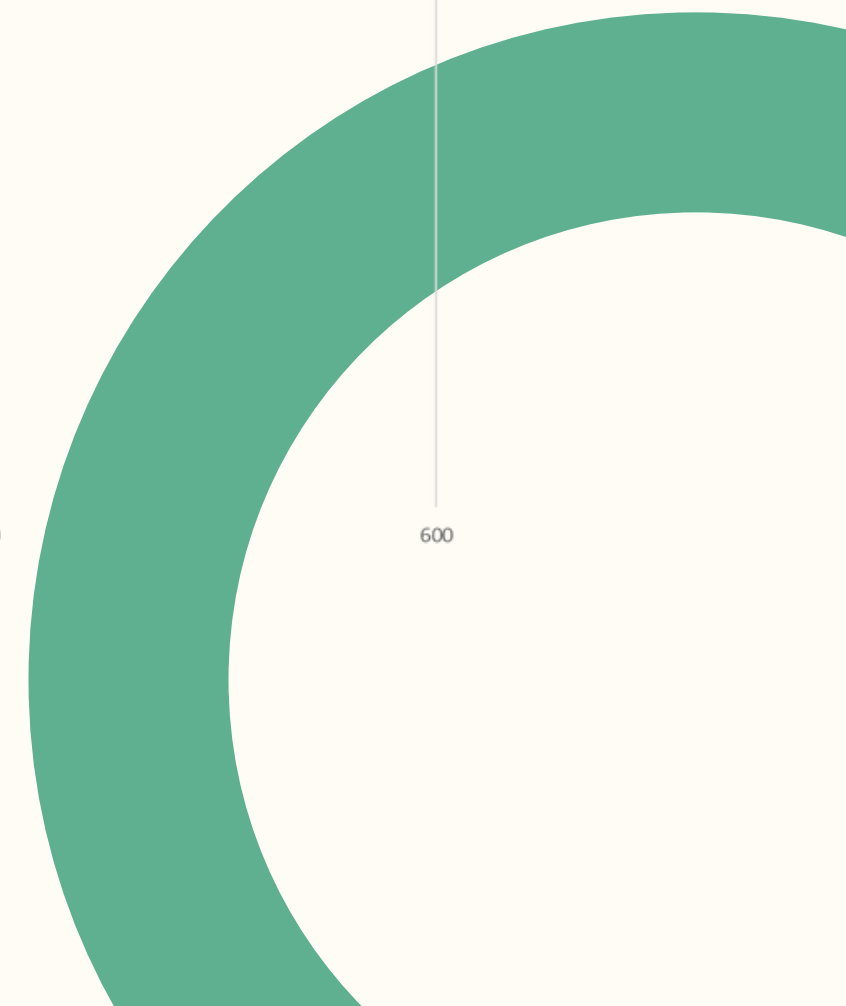
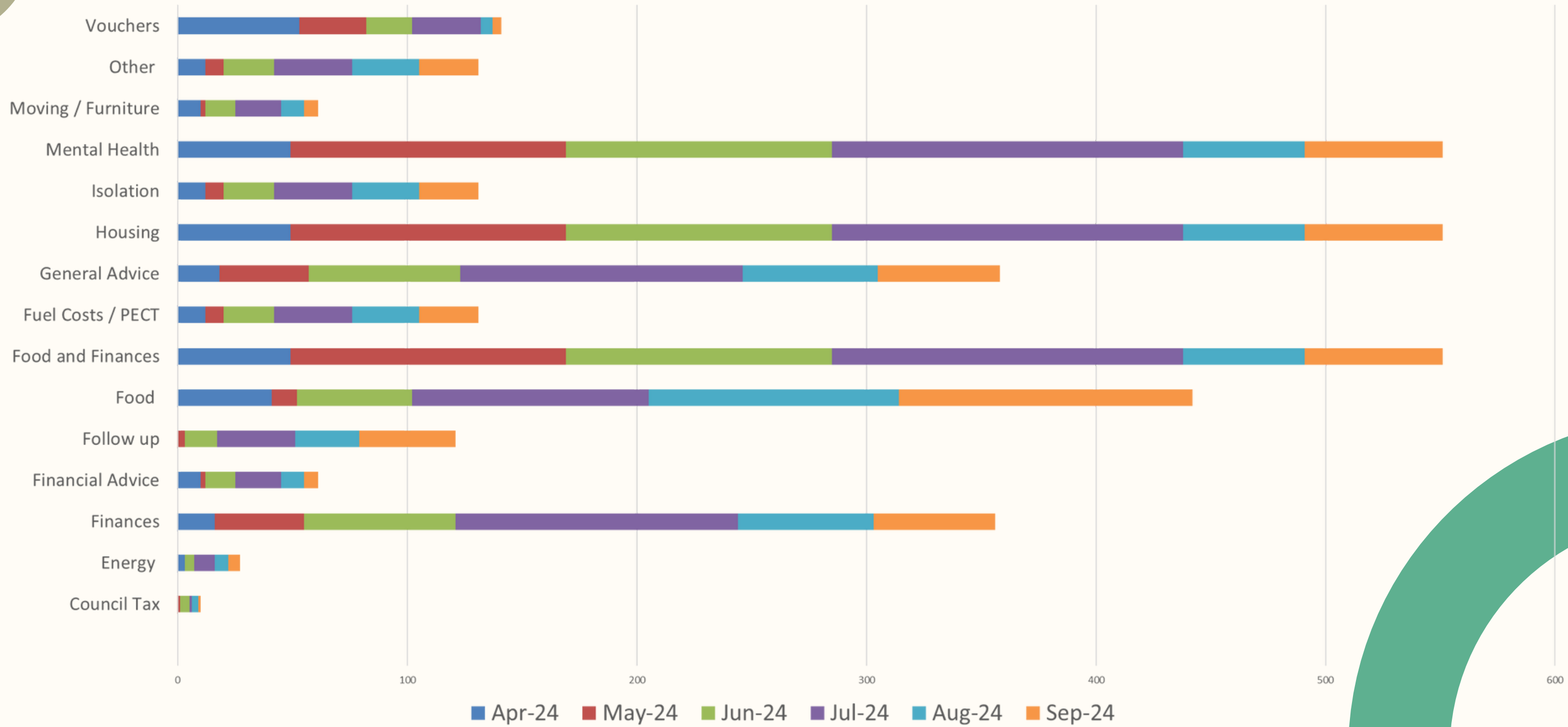


WHERE REFERRALS COME FROM (SOURCE)





Issue on Presentation



Case 1 | Jonson



I live with multiple disabilities and rely heavily on my electric mobility scooter to get around—it truly is my lifeline. Recently, I've been struggling to manage household bills, and I'm increasingly anxious about not being able to afford to charge my scooter.

Case 2 | Gabriel



After being made redundant from my previous role in marketing, I found a job delivering packages to make ends meet. Unfortunately, it pays far less than what I used to earn. I've considered pursuing an HGV (Heavy Goods Vehicle) license, as it could significantly increase my income, but the training is costly, and I simply can't afford it.

Case 3 | David



Due to recent flooding, my nurse—who usually visits for regular blood tests related to my cancer treatment—has been unable to come. I'm now concerned that this disruption will affect my scheduled blood transfusion appointment at the hospital.



CITIZEN'S ADVICE

2024 -25 (Quarter 2)

	(1) CORE service Data	(2) Project Data	Total
Clients	496	771	1,267
Simple Queries	128	179	307
Issues	1845	5,055	6,900
Activities	889	3,245	4,134
Financial Outcomes			
Income gain	£232,294	£821,413	£1,053,707
Re-imburements, services, loans	£191	£8,148	£8,339
Debts written off	£-	£270,631	£270,631
Repayments rescheduled	£-	£13,452	£13,452
Other recorded outcomes	£2,255	£77,420	£79,675
Total outcomes	£234,740	£1,191,064	£1,425,804



CITIZEN'S ADVICE

2024 -25 (Quarter 2)

BREAKDOWN OF ISSUES	1.CORE Issues data	1.Project Issues data	Total
Benefits & Universal Credit	626	2,095	2,721*
Consumer goods & services	100	202	302
Debt	38	649	687*
Education	10	3	13
Emergency support	78	185	263
Employment	207	65	272
Financial capability	127	997	1,124*
GVA & Hate Crime	13	16	29
Health & community care	41	48	89
Housing	191	255	446*
Immigration & asylum	43	18	61
Legal	122	41	163
Other	2	12	14
Relationships & family	197	96	293
Tax	12	15	27
Travel & transport	23	21	44
Utilities & communications	15	337	352*
Total	1,845	5,055	6,900

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ADDITIONAL SERVICES

- THE RELOCATION FROM EASTFIELD HOUSE TO PATHFINDER HOUSE HAS RESULTED IN THE INTRODUCTION OF:
 - WEEKLY OUTREACH SESSION IN RAMSEY
 - CONTINUATION OF A WEEKLY OUTREACH SESSION IN ST NEOTS FOLLOWING THE LOSS OF FUNDING
 - ROLL OUT OF A MONTHLY OUTREACH SESSION ON OXMOOR.
 - WEEKLY OUTREACH SESSION IN ST IVES.

CITIZEN'S ADVICE

JENNY HAD BEEN WORKING CLOSELY WITH CHANGE GROW LIVE (CGL) WHO IN TURN REFERRED HER TO CITIZENS ADVICE RURAL CAMBS (CARC) FOR ADDITIONAL SUPPORT.

Her journey was challenging and managing her health while keeping up with her financial responsibilities only added to the pressure. She was already receiving means-tested benefits, but they barely covered her essential needs. With poor mental health, she applied for Personal Independence Payment (PIP). However, the application process was difficult and overwhelming, and she found herself in need of specialist help.

At home, she was struggling as her hot water heater had broken, and she had been without hot water for some time. She wanted to get it fixed but had heard too many stories of scams and wasn't sure who to trust. To make matters worse, her cooker wasn't working, which meant she couldn't prepare proper meals. With no means for cooking, she was feeling really low and didn't want to be at home.

Jenny discussed her concerns with CARC's CGL adviser, who firstly assisted her with claiming Limited Capability for Work (LCW) benefits, which would enhance her financial support. The additional disability benefits applied for were approved, giving Jenny an extra £90 per week, a much-needed boost to her income.

Our adviser also identified that Jenny was not claiming Council Tax reduction and supported her to claim this, which added an extra £20 per week to her budget.

An application was submitted by CARC through CLAS on Jenny's behalf and she received a new cooker worth £350. This allowed her to start preparing meals again, helping her feel better being at home. She was also provided with some fuel vouchers, as she was running low on electricity.

With the water heater still broken, our adviser referred her to our Energy team who are helping her with an application for a grant to replace the water heater, ensuring she would soon have hot water again, and also addressing her concerns about scams.

Since Jenny came to see our CGL adviser, her situation has improved significantly. She's receiving an extra £90 a week in disability benefits, has saved £20 a week on her council tax, and has a brand-new cooker and now able to make her own meals. The grant for the water heater is in progress, and she no longer worries about being taken advantage of.

While Jenny's journey with CGL continues, she is now in a far more stable position, both financially and personally, and is better equipped to focus on her recovery.

*Name changed to protect client identity

WHAT NEXT?

- Roll out of the WorkWell Programme
- First stage review from Service Design Officer
- National 16 Days of Action against DA and SV
 - Roll out of Oxmoor CAB outreach session
- Review of projects funded via Community Chest during Q1
- Feedback and development of 'We Can Help' pages



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