

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, 5 December 2024.

PRESENT: Councillor J E Kerr – Chair.

Councillors T Alban, S Bywater, M A Hassall, M Kadewere, S Mokbul and D J Shaw.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors S J Criswell, N J Hunt, C Lowe, S R McAdam and C H Tevlin.

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors L Davenport-Ray and S W Ferguson.

35. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of 5th December 2024 were approved as a correct record and were signed by the Chair.

36. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

37. 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 December 2024 to 31st March 2025 were presented to the Panel.

38. BUSINESS RATES - RURAL SETTLEMENT LIST

By means of a report by the Revenues and Benefits Manager (a copy of which was appended in the Minute Book), the Business Rates – Rural Settlement List report was presented to the Panel.

It was observed that the villages of Buckden and Diddington were two very separate locations and that by being considered together Diddington would potentially lose out under the scheme. It was confirmed to the Panel that there were no qualifying businesses within either village and that to separate the two would still leave Buckden defined as an urban settlement. It was proposed by Councillor Hassall to add an additional recommendation to the Cabinet report, this was seconded by Councillor Mokbul and the Panel voted unanimously in favour of forwarding the proposed recommendation to the Cabinet;

3) Separate the two villages of Buckden and Diddington, defining Buckden as an urban settlement and Diddington as a

rural settlement.

It was noted that it would be helpful to highlight in future reports which settlements have seen a change in definition and a future reference handy to highlight which settlements have seen a change in definition.

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 3 to the report;

3) to separate the two villages of Buckden and Diddington, defining Buckden as an urban settlement and Diddington as a rural settlement.

39. NET ZERO VILLAGES PROJECT PROPOSAL 2024/25

By means of a report by the Climate Co-ordinator, (a copy of which was appended in the Minute Book), the Net Zero Villages Project Proposal 2024/25 was presented to the Panel.

The Panel heard that the communications plan for the scheme would commence from 16th December 2024 and that details would also be included in the next Town and Parish newsletter as would the next Town and Parish Forum.

It was confirmed to that Panel that both Trusts and Parish Councils could apply for the scheme. It was noted that the scheme was only to be run in this financial year, however if future budgets allowed for continuation this would be considered.

The distribution of the grant funds to the applications was discussed, with the Panel being advised that the logistics of this had yet to be finalised. The subject of over subscription to the scheme was discussed, and the Panel heard that the team would advise unsuccessful applicants of alternative grant and funding opportunities as they became available.

The Panel heard that the Project Support Officer role would provide admin support to the scheme as well as a point of contact for applicants.

It was clarified to the Panel that should projects not be completed by 28th February 2025, the CPCA would be consulted and that the surplus funding would be returned to the CPCA.

Chair