

A meeting of the **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ENVIRONMENT, COMMUNITIES AND PARTNERSHIPS)** will be held in **CIVIC SUITE, PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON PE29 3TN** on **THURSDAY, 5 DECEMBER 2024** at **7:00 PM** and you are requested to attend for the transaction of the following business:-

## **AGENDA**

### **APOLOGIES**

**1. MINUTES** (Pages 5 - 10)

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environment, Communities and Partnerships) meeting held on 7th November 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 11 - 24)

- 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. BUSINESS RATES - RURAL SETTLEMENT LIST (Pages 25 - 38)**

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

*Executive Councillor: S Ferguson*

**Contact Officer: K Kelly  
01480 388151**

**5. NET ZERO VILLAGES PROJECT PROPOSAL 2024/25 (Pages 39 - 46)**

To note the Net Zero Villages Project Proposal 2024/25 Report.

*Executive Councillor: B Pitt*

**Contact Officer: H Robinson  
01480 388388**

27 day of November 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](#)

**Filming, Photography and Recording (including Live Streaming) at Council Meetings**

This meeting will be filmed for live and/or subsequent broadcast on the Council's YouTube site. The whole of the meeting will be filmed, except where there are confidential or exempt items. If you make a representation to the meeting you will be deemed to have consented to being filmed. By entering the meeting you are also consenting to being filmed and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings for webcasting and/or training purposes. If you have any queries regarding the streaming of Council meetings, please contact Democratic Services on 01480 388169.

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](mailto: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, 7 November 2024.

PRESENT: Councillor J E Kerr – Chair.

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

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors T Alban and N J Hunt.

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors L Davenport-Ray, S W Ferguson and B M Pitt.

### 28. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of 3rd October 2024 were approved as a correct record and were signed by the Chair.

### 29. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor J Kerr declared a registerable interest in minute 24/31 by virtue of owning multiple properties within the district.

Councillor S Mokbul declared a registerable interest in minute 24/31 by virtue of owning multiple properties within the district.

### 30. 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 July 2024 to 31st October 2024 were presented to the Panel.

*19:03 Councillor C Tevlin entered the meeting*

### 31. COUNCIL TAX PREMIUMS

By means of a report by the Revenues and Benefits Manager (a copy of which was appended in the Minute Book), the Council Tax Premiums report was presented to the Panel.

It was confirmed to the Panel that the proposal was to charge 100% Council Tax Premium after one year of the conditions being met. It was also confirmed that the date that the property became empty would be the date used once the proposed changes come into effect.

The Panel heard that whilst there was no legal definition in what constituted an unfurnished home, the broad view was that the home should be habitable with some furniture and white goods present. Following a further question from Councillor Hassall, it was clarified that the Council proposed to charge the maximum amounts permitted by the legislation.

The Panel heard that the Council were able to exercise discretion in genuine cases of houses being on the market and specifically where a property had been through probate for a period longer than exception provided. Further detail on this would be worked into future policy development. It was also confirmed that notice would be placed into local newspapers to confirm the changes along with 12 months notice of these coming into effect.

It was advised to the Panel that properties which were vacant due to the occupant/s moving to a care home would remain exempt provided that they remained unoccupied.

It was confirmed to the Panel, that the empty period after which a premium could be charged, as set out within the recommendations, was set in legislation.

It was advised that guidance was in place to ascertain what classified as a property being actively marketed for sale, but that further work would be developed on this subject during future policy development.

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

4) to agree that an update of the numbers of the properties falling under the scheme be reported back to the democratic cycle once the new policy has been in place for 12 months.

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 4 to the report;

4) to agree that an update of the numbers of the properties falling under the scheme be reported back to the democratic cycle once the new policy has been in place for 12 months.

## **32. COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT 2025-26**

By means of a report by the Revenues and Benefits Manager (a copy of which was appended in the Minute Book), the Council Tax Support 2025/26 report was presented to the Panel.

Support for the Scheme was expressed by the Panel and following a question relating to the costs associated with recovering unpaid Council Tax where it was hoped that this would be reduced due to residents no longer being liable for the bill under the new scheme, the Panel heard that the financial impact of the scheme was being tracked against the prediction. The Panel were advised that a more detailed update could be brought once the scheme had been in place for 12 months.

Whereupon it was

RESOLVED

that the Panel's comments would be communicated to the Cabinet in order for an informed decision to be made on the report recommendations.

### **33. ONE LEISURE PV SOLAR INSTALLS**

By means of a report and presentation by the Facilities Manager (copies of which were appended in the Minute Book), the One Leisure PV Solar Installs Report was presented to the Panel.

The Panel heard that the export had not currently been included due to the connection times of UK Power Networks, the aim was to install the system and then a decision on how to manage any generated surplus could be looked at on a case by case basis. The Panel also heard that the designs were based on half hourly data for each centre, based on this there was an anticipated return of over 75%.

Concern was expressed over the usage of lithium and alternative methods of battery storage were queried, alongside the recyclability of the panels at the end of their lifespan. The concerns around lithium were observed and the Panel heard that further detail on the recyclability would be sought and reported back to the Panel at a later date.

The bundling within the report with the return at the St Ives site expected to be 12 years against the other sites at 8 years was of concern to the Panel, particularly the concern that this would affect the SALIX recycling fund. It was further suggested that the £52,000 for the St Ives site may be better used to provide battery storage for the other three sites. The Panel were assured that the project would be funded by Council reserves and that the project was anticipated to have an excellent payback. It was noted that due to the nature of energy consumption at leisure centres, there would be a much different usage when compared to a residential property, and that the designs proposed would make the best use of the available array as possible. Furthermore, it was noted that to proceed with the project across all four sites would massively reduce overhead and that there would be significant financial and environmental benefits through the implementation of the scheme. The Panel were advised that an annual return of 12.1% was anticipated.

It was observed that the siting of the panels within the rooves of the centres would be a much better location than taking up valuable agricultural land, it was also suggested that the Panel would like to

see the progress of the project as it developed and after 12 months of implementation.

It was noted, that energy usage at the St Ives site was more sporadic than the other three sites due to the services provided there.

The Panel heard that there had already been successful installs of solar panels across the council's estate, including Eastfield House and One Leisure and that this was part of the first stage of introducing renewable energy generation.

The Panel were advised, that a solar canopy was due to be installed in the carpark at One Leisure St Ives Indoor following funding from Sport England. It was noted that the steelworks for this type of project doubled the payback period.

Disappointment was expressed that government funding was not available for the project, the Panel heard that by progressing opportunities to decarbonise where they presented was preferable to waiting for funding. It was also noted that significant savings on utilities and carbon emissions would be made by implementing the project.

The Panel heard, that subject to the approval of the project, it was hoped to progress using the supplier already secured for the St Ives canopy work which would allow the work to proceed quickly. It was noted that this supplier was based in Northampton but that work was underway to look at the procurement procedure for the Council and how this could positively impact local businesses. Councillor Shaw proposed to add an additional recommendation to the Cabinet report, this recommendation was seconded by Councillor Mokbul and the Panel voted in favour, with one Councillor abstaining, of forwarding the proposed recommendation to the Cabinet;

3) to agree to apply greater weight to tender applicants from within the district.

Following the discussion and the Panels support of the project, Councillor Shaw proposed to add an additional recommendation to the Cabinet report, this recommendation was seconded by Councillor Lowe and the Panel voted unanimously in favour of forwarding the proposed recommendation to the Cabinet;

4) that the Panel encourage Cabinet to proceed with Option 2 outlined within the report.

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 recommendations 3 and 4 to the report;



3) to agree to apply greater weight to tender applicants from within the district; and

4) that the Panel encourage Cabinet to proceed with Option 2 outlined within the report.

#### **34. PRIORITY ONE DELIVERY UPDATE QUARTER 2**

By means of a report and presentation by the Community Services Manager (copies of which were appended in the Minute Book), the Priority One Delivery Update Quarter 2 Report was presented to the Panel.

The Panel heard that residents had historically reached out to the Citizens Advice Bureau when in crisis. By working in partnership with this and other agencies, Council staff were able to signpost residents to the most appropriate service to meet their needs. The Panel observed that it was reassuring to note that residents would be helped regardless of how they accessed the help required.

It was noted that a dedicated officer at Cambridge Skills was able to support residents wishing to further their employment and skills opportunities, and partnership working would be undertaken to ensure that support would be provided when residents in need were identified. The Panel suggested that it would be helpful to increase visibility on this opportunity to residents, following which, it was advised that this would be explored and brought back to the Panel in a future report.

Support for the work undertaken by officers was expressed by the Panel, and it was advised that a whole system approach would be the ideal. It was noted that the GP service could be the weak link within the system due to waiting times but that social prescribers were key to linking into the health service and it was further noted that monthly meetings between service providers were ongoing to streamline the processes involved and improving services for residents.

Chair

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## Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2024-25

Performance and Growth Agenda Items			
Meeting Date	Pre-Scrutiny	Scrutiny Review	Task and Finish Groups Working Groups
4 <sup>th</sup> December 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Market Towns Programme (Winter Update)</li> <li>• Affordable Housing Delivery</li> </ul>		
8 <sup>th</sup> January 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• East West Rail Consultation</li> </ul>		
5 <sup>th</sup> February 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final 2025/26 Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy (2026/27 to 2029/30) including Capital Programme</li> <li>• Treasury Management Capital and Investment Strategies</li> <li>• Financial Performance 2024/25 Quarter 3 Report</li> <li>• Corporate Performance 2024/25 Quarter 3 Report</li> </ul>		
Unscheduled/Pending Further Details			

### Pending agenda items

Meeting Date	Item	Recommendation	Outcome
8 <sup>th</sup> January 2025	Huntingdonshire Futures Grant Scheme Update	Proceed to agenda as post decision scrutiny.	
5 <sup>th</sup> March 2025	Market Towns Programme (Spring Update)	To be presented at the Member briefing instead of the meeting.	

<b>Environment, Communities and Partnerships Agenda Items</b>			
<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Pre-Scrutiny</b>	<b>Scrutiny Review</b>	<b>Task and Finish Groups Working Groups</b>
5 <sup>th</sup> December 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rural Rate Relief 2025/26</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Net Zero Villages Project Proposal 2024/25</li> </ul>	
9 <sup>th</sup> January 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HDC Energy Statement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>	
6 <sup>th</sup> February 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Business Rates Discretionary Rate Relief Policy</li> <li>Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil</li> <li>Food Waste</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Play Sufficiency</li> </ul>	
Unscheduled/ Pending Further Details			

### **Pending agenda items**

<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
6 <sup>th</sup> February 2025	Priority One Delivery Update Quarter 3	To be presented at the Member briefing instead of the meeting.	

## 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

<b>Climate Working Group</b>
<b>Members:</b> Cllrs T D Alban, J Kerr, C Lowe and D Shaw <b>Lead Officer:</b> Neil Sloper
<b>Progress:</b> <b>November 2022:</b> Initial Meetings held to establish Terms of Reference for the group. <b>April 2023:</b> Regular meetings established. Evidence and information gathering to be progressed. Group to be involved in the Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy Development. <b>January 2024:</b> Meetings held to discuss proposed work plan for the group and to discuss HVO Fuels project <b>November 2024:</b> Meeting to discuss future proposed projects <b>Next Steps:</b> Meetings to be scheduled to allow involvement in proposed works.

<b>Disabled Facilities Grants Group</b>
<b>Members:</b> I P Taylor, B Banks, C Tevlin and C Lowe <b>Lead Officer:</b> Claudia Deeth
<b>Progress:</b> <b>February 2024:</b> Councillors invited to express their interest in being involved with the project. <b>August 2024:</b> initial meeting held and scope of project discussed <b>Next Steps:</b> 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:** 11 November 2024  
**For Period:** 1 December 2024 to 31 March 2025

Membership of the Cabinet is as follows:-

Councillor Details		Councillor Contact Details
Page 15 of 40	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: <a href="mailto:Sarah.Conboy@huntingdonshire.gov.uk">Sarah.Conboy@huntingdonshire.gov.uk</a>
	Councillor L Davenport-Ray	Executive Councillor for Climate, Transformation and Workforce
		73 Hogsden Leys St Neots Cambridgeshire PE19 6AD  E-mail: <a href="mailto:Lara.Davenport-Ray@huntingdonshire.gov.uk">Lara.Davenport-Ray@huntingdonshire.gov.uk</a>
Councillor S Ferguson	Executive Councillor for Resident Services and Corporate Performance	9 Anderson Close St Neots Cambridgeshire PE19 6DN  Tel: 07525 987460 E-mail: <a href="mailto:Stephen.Ferguson@huntingdonshire.gov.uk">Stephen.Ferguson@huntingdonshire.gov.uk</a>

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: <a href="mailto:Jo.Harvey@huntingdonshire.gov.uk">Jo.Harvey@huntingdonshire.gov.uk</a>
Councillor B Mickelburgh	Executive Councillor for Finance & Resources	2 Grainger Avenue Godmanchester Huntingdon Cambridgeshire PE29 2JT  Tel: 07441 392492 E-mail: <a href="mailto:Brett.Mickelburgh@huntingdonshire.gov.uk">Brett.Mickelburgh@huntingdonshire.gov.uk</a>
Councillor B Pitt	Executive Councillor for Communities, Health and Leisure	17 Day Close St Neots Cambridgeshire PE19 6DF  Tel: 07703 169273 E-mail: <a href="mailto:Ben.Pitt@huntingdonshire.gov.uk">Ben.Pitt@huntingdonshire.gov.uk</a>
Councillor T Sanderson	Deputy Executive Leader and Executive Councillor for Planning	29 Burmoor Close Huntingdon Cambridgeshire PE29 6GE  Tel: 01480 436822 E-mail: <a href="mailto:Tom.Sanderson@huntingdonshire.gov.uk">Tom.Sanderson@huntingdonshire.gov.uk</a>



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: <a href="mailto:Simone.Taylor@huntingdonshire.gov.uk">Simone.Taylor@huntingdonshire.gov.uk</a>
Councillor S Wakeford	Executive Councillor for Economy, Regeneration and Housing	4 Croft Close Brampton Huntingdon Cambridgeshire PE28 4TJ  Tel: 07762 109210 E-mail: <a href="mailto:Sam.Wakeford@huntingdonshire.gov.uk">Sam.Wakeford@huntingdonshire.gov.uk</a>

Page 17 of 40

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](mailto: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](mailto: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.

Page 18 of 46

- 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	18 Dec 2024 15 Jan 2025 19 Feb 2025 19 Mar 2025		Claudia Deeth, Community Resilience Manager Tel: (01480) 388233 or email: Claudia.Deeth@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		B Pitt & L Davenport-Ray	Environment, Communities & Partnerships
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

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
A141 Consultation***	Cabinet	10 Dec 2024		Clara Kerr, Chief Planning Officer Tel: (01480) 388430 or email: Clara.Kerr@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		T Sanderson	Performance & Growth
Approval of Council Tax Base 2025/26	Chair of Corporate Governance and Section 151 Officer	19 Dec 2024		Katie Kelly, Revenue and Benefits Manager Tel: (01480) 388151 or email: Katie.Kelly@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		B Mickelburgh	Performance & Growth

Page 20 of 46

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
Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil***	Cabinet	21 Jan 2025		Andrew Rogan, Waste Operations Manager Tel: (01480) 388082 or email: Andrew.Rogan@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		S Taylor	Environment, Communities & Partnerships
East West Rail Consultation***	Cabinet	21 Jan 2025		Claire Burton, Implementation Team Leader Tel: (01480) 388274 or email: Claire.Burton@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		T Sanderson	Performance & Growth

Page 21 of 46

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
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
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

Page 22 of 46

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
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
Community Infrastructure Levy Funding***	Cabinet	15 Apr 2025		Claire Burton, Implementation Team Leader Tel: (01480) 388274 or email: Claire.Burton@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		T Sanderson	Performance & Growth

Page 29 of 46

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**Public**  
**Key Decision - Yes**

## HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

**Title/Subject Matter:** Business Rates – Rural Settlement List

**Meeting/Date:** Overview and Scrutiny (Environment, Communities and Partnerships) – 5 December 2024

**Executive Portfolio:** Cllr S Ferguson – Executive Councillor for Resident Services and Corporate Performance

**Report by:** Revenues and Benefits Manager

**Ward(s) affected:** All

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### **Executive Summary:**

The Council is required to review and determine a Rural Settlements List and publish this by 31<sup>st</sup> December each year in order to facilitate the award of business rates relief to qualifying businesses in settlements where the population is less than 3,000.

The following report details the outcome of the most recent review where three changes to the list are recommended.

### **Recommendation:**

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel is invited to comment on the report and recommendations.

**Public**  
**Key Decision - Yes**

## **HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**Title/Subject Matter:** Business Rates – Rural Settlement List

**Meeting/Date:** Overview and Scrutiny (Environment, Communities and Partnerships) – 5 December 2024  
Cabinet – 10 December 2024

**Executive Portfolio:** Cllr S Ferguson – Executive Councillor for Resident Services and Corporate Performance

**Report by:** Revenues and Benefits Manager

**Ward(s) affected:** All

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### **Executive Summary:**

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

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

Following a review of the latest population data estimates available from Cambridgeshire County Council, three changes are proposed to the List where settlements no longer meet the conditions to be classed as Rural. This will result in one business being impacted, with whom the Business Rates team will make contact to offer support and advice, if needed.

### **Recommendation:**

The Cabinet is

### **RECOMMENDED**

to

- 1) Approve Huntingdonshire District Council's Rural Settlement List for publication by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024, to facilitate the award of Rural Business Rates Relief for the financial year commencing 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025.
- 2) Delegate authority for approval of future Rural Settlement Lists to the Section 151 officer, in consultation with the Executive Councillor for Resident Services and Corporate Performance.

## **1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 The Council is required to review and determine boundaries of Rural settlements, that is, those with a population of less than 3,000, to facilitate the award of Rural Rate Relief in accordance with s42(b) of The Local Government Finance Act 1988, as amended by The Local Government and Rating Act 1997.
- 1.2 It is a requirement of the above regulations that boundaries are set and published by 31<sup>st</sup> December each year.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Rural rate relief is applied to certain types of business within a rural settlement. It can be awarded where the only village shop or post office in the settlement has a rateable value of up to £8,500 or the only public house or petrol station has a rateable value of up to £12,500.
- 2.2 The Local Government Finance Act 1988 sets out that it is the responsibility of the local authority to determine any settlements which:
  - a) Are wholly or partly within the authorities' area
  - b) Appear to have a population of not more than 3,000
  - c) and are wholly or partly within a rural area designated by the Secretary of State for the purposes of rate relief scheme.
- 2.3 A rural settlement does not necessarily have to follow ward or parish boundaries. A defined settlement can be applied by splitting an area based on other characteristics, such as geographical or demographic features.

## **3. OPTIONS CONSIDERED/ANALYSIS**

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

Urban settlements – population above 3,000  
Rural settlements – population below 3,000  
Defined settlements – Where the total parish population exceeds 3,000, but a specific area within that parish has been “defined” as a separate rural settlement.
- 3.2 The current rural settlements list has been reviewed to take account of the latest statistical population data available from Cambridgeshire County Council.
- 3.3 As a result of the review, two settlements that were previously considered to be Rural settlements have been reclassified as Urban settlements, for their population now exceeds 3,000. The affected settlements are Buckden & Diddington, and The Stukeleys. There are no businesses that currently qualify for rural rate relief within these settlements.

- 3.4 The Parish of Fenstanton was previously designated as a Defined settlement due to the split geographical location of settlements within the parish, with the village area being classified as a Rural settlement.
- 3.5 Following a review of population data, the village area population now exceeds 3,000, and so the parish has been reclassified as an Urban settlement. There is one business that will be affected by the change, with whom the Business Rates team will make contact to explore if any other support and advice is available or needed.
- 3.6 The following parishes are classified as defined settlements in order to maximise the number of businesses that benefit from rural rate relief:
- Ramsey Forty Foot, Ramsey Heights, Ramsey Mereside and Ramsey St Mary's
- 3.7 Details of the qualifying rural settlements are shown in APPENDIX A. A map of all settlements can be found in APPENDIX B, and maps of defined settlements are shown in APPENDIX C.

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

- 4.2 The award of mandatory Rural Rate Relief to qualifying shops, pubs and petrol stations in rural settlements directly contributes to the priorities set out with the Corporate Plan to improve the quality of life for local people, and to create a better Huntingdonshire for future generations.
- 4.3 Providing business rates relief to eligible small businesses also aligns with the Huntingdon Futures Place Strategy, supporting vital community amenities in rural areas.

#### **6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The Council has a legal duty to set and publish the rural settlements list by 31<sup>st</sup> December each year.

#### **7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 Qualifying businesses are entitled to 100% mandatory relief on their business rates. To date in 2024, the existing Rural Settlements List has facilitated the award of £77,184.07 Rural Rate Relief to 38 qualifying businesses.
- 7.2 The delegation to the S151 Officer to approve future Rural Settlements Lists, in conjunction with the Executive Councillor for Resident Services and Corporate Performance, will ensure that future decisions in relation to

this matter are taken in the most efficient way, whilst also ensuring robust accountability and governance.

## **8. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS**

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

## **9. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED**

Appendix A – Rural Settlement List

Appendix B – Settlement List Map

Appendix C – Defined Areas Map

## **CONTACT OFFICER**

Name/Job Title: Katie Kelly / Revenues and Benefits Manager

Tel No: 01480 388151

Email: [katie.kelly@huntingdonshire.gov.uk](mailto:katie.kelly@huntingdonshire.gov.uk)

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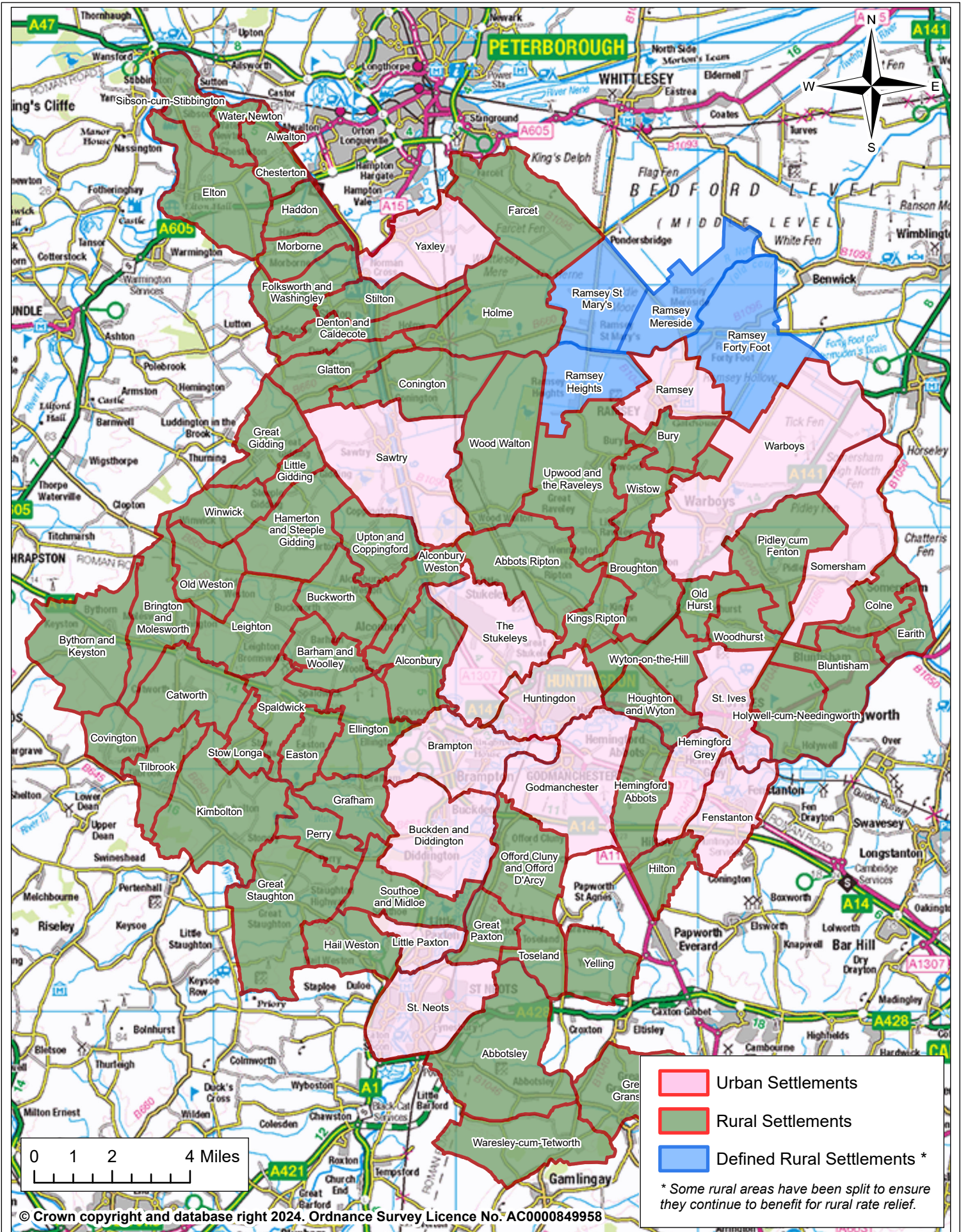
Proposed Rural Settlement List – Appendix 1

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

\* Defined rural settlement

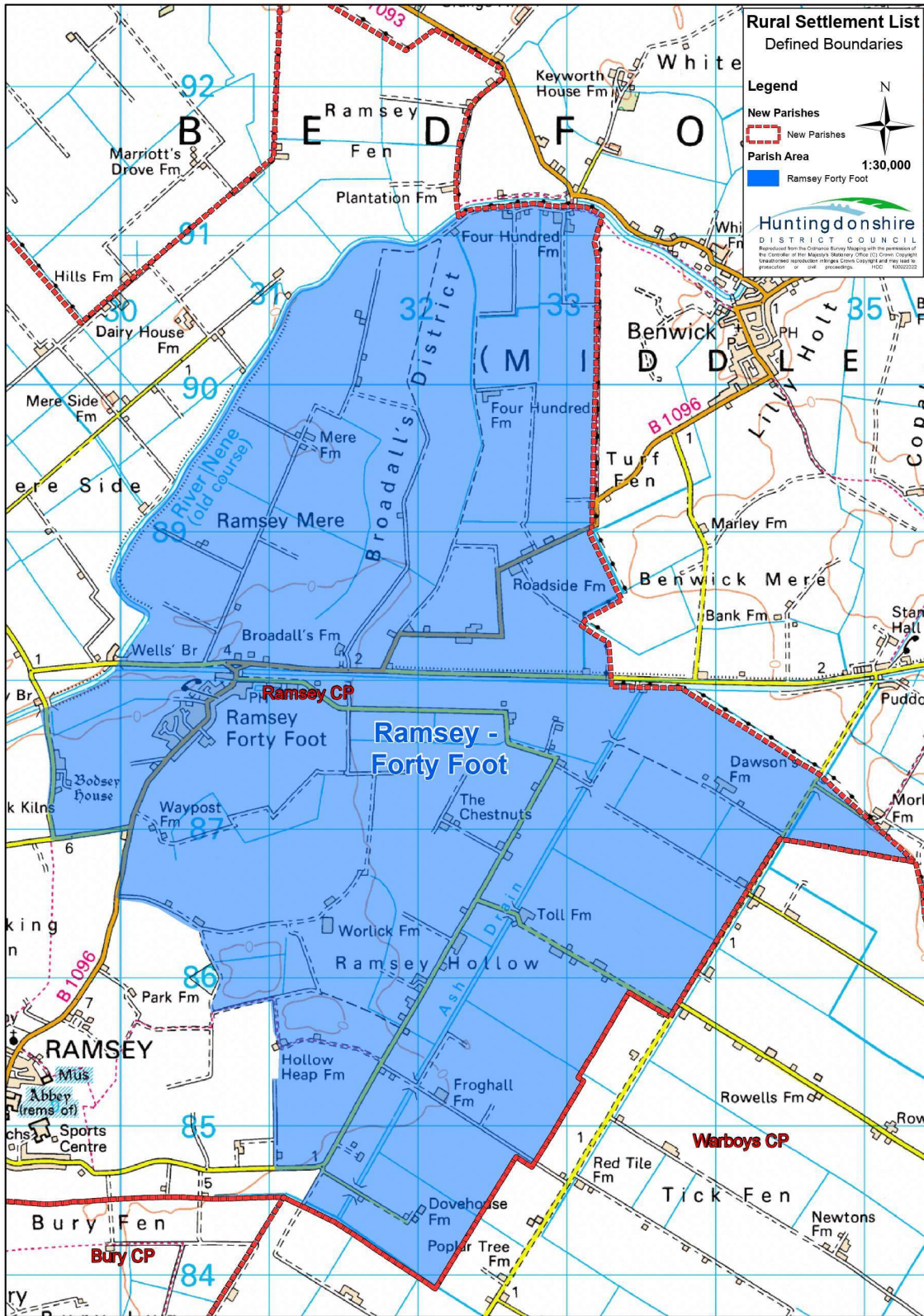
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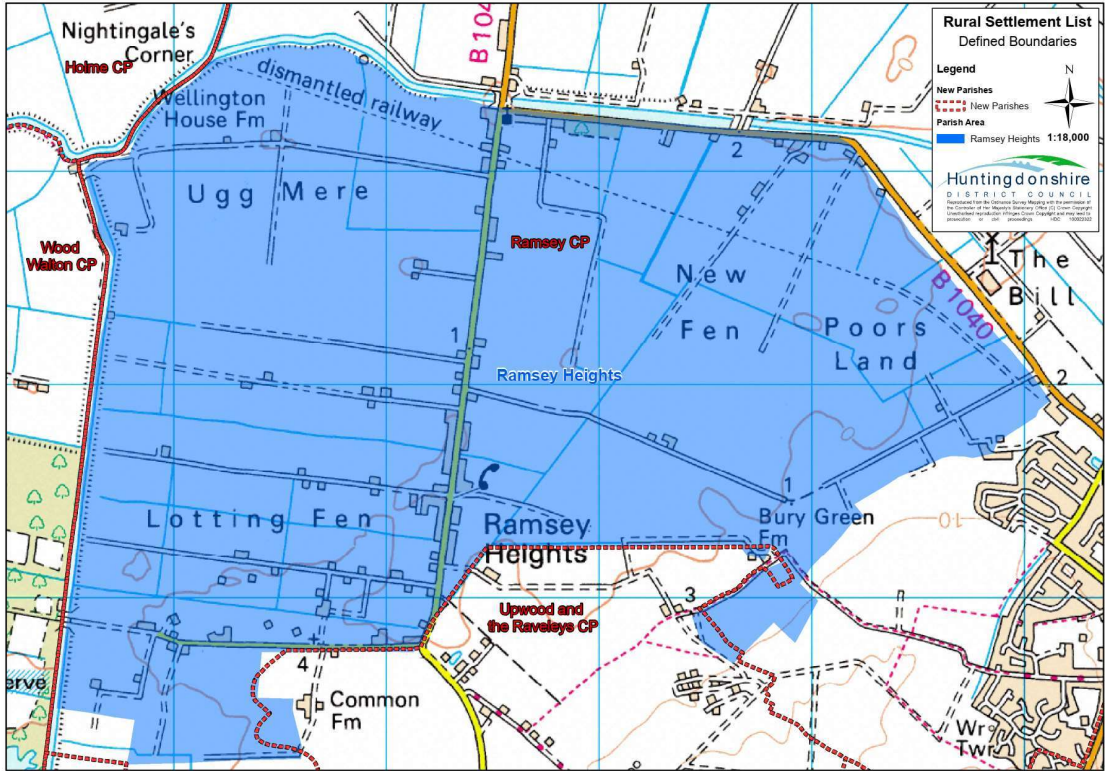




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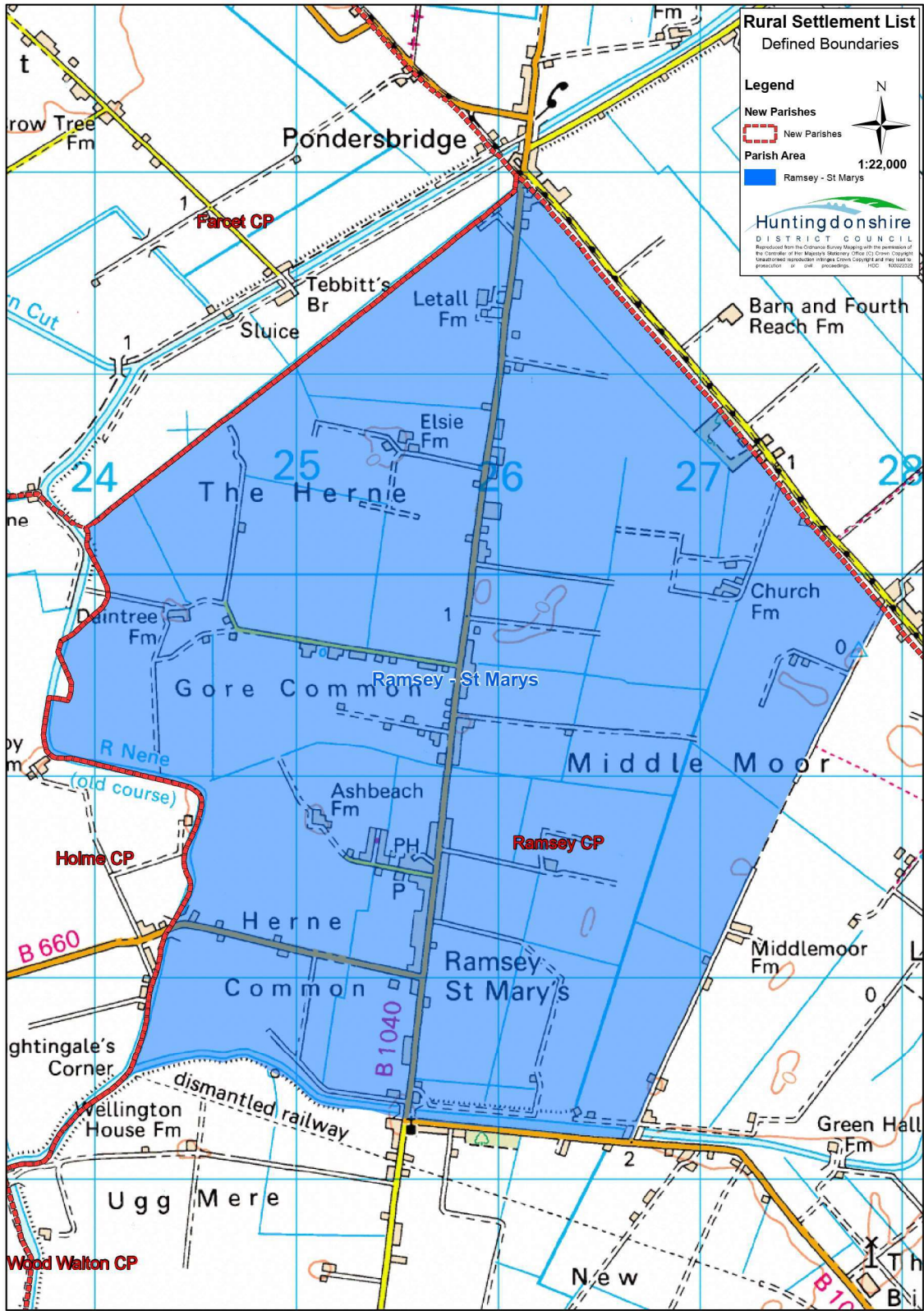












**Public**  
**Key Decision - No**

## HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

<b>Title/Subject Matter:</b>	Net Zero Villages Project Proposal, 2024/25
<b>Meeting/Date:</b>	Overview and Scrutiny (Environment, Communities and Partnerships) Panel, 5 <sup>th</sup> December 2024
<b>Executive Portfolio:</b>	Councillor Lara Davenport-Ray, Executive Councillor for Climate Transformation & Workforce
<b>Report by:</b>	Harriet Robinson, Climate Coordinator, Parks, Countryside and Climate - Operations
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	All

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### **Executive Summary:**

Net Zero Villages (NZV) funding has been provided by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) to enable Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) to support rural communities to deliver capital projects deemed appropriate to deliver reductions in greenhouse gases, towards achieving the objective of Net Zero emissions by 2050.

The NZV Grant Scheme project aligns with the following goals within our corporate plan and climate strategy:

- Corporate Plan – Enable - support of community projects and plans that reduce carbon emissions. It
- Climate Strategy – Encourage - Work with communities and partners to support climate action across the district
- Climate Strategy – Enabler – Support schemes that help communities and businesses reduce emissions and use renewable energy

The CPCA have provided a budget of £285,974 for this project, which is required to be launched by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024. Applicants will have the opportunity to request between £5,000 - £50,000 in grant money. The grant is for capital projects only for community assets e.g. buildings, land, equipment or other capital-related expenditure. This includes upgrades, extensions and improvement of facilities or purchasing of capital items for community use spaces and places. The project must demonstrate a reduction in carbon emissions.

HDC has been given the flexibility to decide which capital projects it selects and the methodology it uses. It is recommended that it follows the course of previous grants, such as Huntingdonshire Futures and Community Chest grants. Once the application deadline has passed, they will be considered by the Grants Panel with relevant Officer support, with the successful applications being announced on the 14<sup>th</sup> March 2024. HDC will be responsible for managing and monitoring the



progress of each project, reporting back to the CPCA and ensuring projects are all completed by 28<sup>th</sup> February 2026.

**RECOMMENDED**

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel is invited to note the contents of the report and Net Zero Villages Grant Scheme.



## 1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to outline how the Net Zero Village Grant Scheme will be run.

## 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 HDC has been offered funding of £285,974 from the Combined Authority. Titled 'Net Zero Villages' this grant will enable rural villages to make effective changes towards reducing their carbon emissions. The funds must demonstrate that they match one of the descriptions in the key categories, demonstrate carbon reduction impact and show that the projects will be value for money. The total pot of money across all Districts totals £1 million. Please see Appendix 4 for further information concerning eligible and ineligible criteria.
- 2.2 All District Councils within the Cambridgeshire area have been offered funding with exception areas as detailed below:

<b>Council area</b>	<b>Excluded areas</b>
East Cambridgeshire District Council	Ely, Soham
Fenland District Council	Chatteris, March, Wisbech, Whittlesey
Huntingdonshire District Council	Huntingdon, St Neots and St Ives
South Cambridgeshire District Council	Those areas classified by ONS as part of Cambridge built-up area.
Peterborough City Council	Excluding Peterborough City area

- 2.3 Consideration has been given into other forms of applications include expressions of interest and subsequent application but given time constraints it is recommended that the current method of the grant schemes we have in place is an effective way to manage the NZV scheme as well.

## 3. OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 3.1 It is proposed that the NZV scheme will run in a similar vein to the Community Chest grants with final approval made by the Grants Panel.

## 4. KEY IMPACTS / RISKS

- 4.1 Risks include: projects overrunning, inaccurate carbon emission reduction measurement, inadequate monitoring of project and failure of project delivery

## 5. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

5.1 The timetable for implementation will be as follows:

Title	Responsibility	Due Date
Project Plan Completion	Climate Coordinator	20/12/2024
Hire Project Support Coordinator	Climate Coordinator	December 2024 - January 2025*
Launch Scheme	Climate Coordinator, Comms Team and Additional Stakeholders	31/12/2024
Grant Application Period	Applicants	Between 31/12/2024 through to 28/02/2025
Application Consideration Period	Net Zero Villages Board	Between 01/03/2025 and 12/03/2024
Successful applications announced	NZV Project Team	14/03/2025

\*subject to candidate availability and notice periods

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

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

- Corporate Plan – Enable - Support Of Community Projects And Plans That Reduce Carbon Emissions.
- Climate Strategy – Encourage - Work With Communities And Partners To Support Climate Action Across The District
- Climate Strategy – Enabler – Support Schemes That Help Communities And Businesses Reduce Emissions And Use Renewable Energy

## 7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The scheme must launch by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024. Projects must be submitted in line with the grant criteria by 28<sup>th</sup> February 2025. Successful

projects will be announced on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2025. The projects must complete by 28<sup>th</sup> February 2026.

## **8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 The breakdown of costs is as follows:

Total Budget	Admin Allocation (10%)	On Costs from Admin Spend (31%)	Budget for New Staff Hire	Remaining Spend for Projects
£285,974	£28,597.40	£8,885.19	£19,732.21	£257,376.60

## **9. ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 The work that shall be undertaken for this project will directly contribute towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions and carbon emissions.

## **10. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 There will be a requirement for HR resource during the recruitment of the Net Zero Villages Project Support Officer

## **11. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS**

11.1 The NZV grants scheme provides an opportunity to offer much-needed funding to support communities in their efforts to reduce carbon emissions.

## **12. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED**

Appendix 1 –the CPCA Net Zero Villages Application Criteria

## **13. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Net Zero Villages Programme Grant Funding Agreement

## **CONTACT OFFICER**

Name/Job Title: Harriet Robinson – Climate Coordinator  
Tel No: 01480 388388  
Email: [harriet.robinson@huntingdonshire.gov.uk](mailto:harriet.robinson@huntingdonshire.gov.uk)

## Appendix 1 – Eligible and Ineligible Criteria as provided by the CPCA

Projects are eligible if they are in a location that excludes the urban areas as shown below:

Council Area	Excluded Areas
Huntingdonshire District Council	Huntingdon, St Neots and St Ives

Using the ONS definition of built-up areas, Census 2021 figures

Criteria	Description
Project categories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tackle energy use and/or support energy efficiency or generation retrofit to community buildings</li> <li>Enabling access to public transport or access to local services through low carbon transport</li> <li>Nature based solutions to tackle overheating of community buildings</li> </ul>
Measure and impact as appropriate from this list	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carbon Emission reduction</li> <li>Reduction in energy consumption</li> <li>Reduction in running cost of community facilities</li> <li>Reduce overheating of a building</li> <li>Demonstrator project that can be replicated</li> <li>Number of the community engaged or changes in behaviour</li> </ul>
Value for money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the project represent value for money – is there a significant impact for the amount of money requested?</li> </ul>

### Ineligible projects

- Funding of Electric Vehicle charge points (as their alternative Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure funding coming)
- New gas or oil boilers
- Projects solely seeking to repair, maintain or renew due to normal wear and tear
- Projects that are not intended for community use

- Projects that have the potential to cause detrimental impacts upon the wider determinants of health
- Organisations previously awarded funding within 3 years, where the UK Subsidy Control limits will be exceeded.
- Private households, businesses premises or public sector buildings (i.e. local authority or blue light services. Parish Council owned facilities and buildings **are** eligible).