

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ENVIRONMENT, COMMUNITIES AND PARTNERSHIPS) held in Civic Suite, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon PE29 3TN on Thursday, 6 March 2025.

PRESENT: Councillor J E Kerr – Chair.

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

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors S J Criswell, M A Hassall and S Mokbul.

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors S A Howell and S L Taylor.

46. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of 6th March 2025 were approved as a correct record and were signed by the Chair.

47. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor S Bywater declared an other registerable interest in minute 24/51 by virtue of being a ward Councillor for Sawtry.

48. 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 Notice of Key Decisions for the period 1st March 2025 to 30th June 2025 were presented to the Panel.

Councillor Tevlin provided a verbal update to the Group following the recent meeting of the DFG working group.

49. GARDEN WASTE INCENTIVE SCHEMES

By means of a report by the Head of Operational Services, (a copy of which was appended in the Minute Book), the Garden Waste Incentive Schemes Report was presented to the Panel.

It was asked, that given the uptake figures of the Saturday freighters in the north of the district, whether there be opportunity to revisit the possibility of reinstating the service there. The Panel heard that whilst the Waste Management team had done an excellent job in providing this service over the last 12 months, the costs to continue, both operationally and in manpower, were prohibitive. It was noted that workshop staff were required in addition to the collection crew itself. It was noted that community bins were being suggested as a replacement for this service. The Panel were also advised that this

service could not be moved to a weekday for the same reasons.

It was observed that there had disappointing take up figures of the community bins to date and enquired if any feedback had been received. The Panel heard that these were only initially offered to areas not covered by the Saturday service but that there had not been any major issues or unanticipated contamination problems. It was noted that the team would be collaborative in working with town and parish councils to develop this scheme further.

The Panel heard that Broughton Parish Council had embraced their community bins and that they were managing this well. The Panel heard that if taken up, the community bins would be more accessible to residents than the Saturday freighters which were only available monthly.

Disappointment was expressed that the Saturday freighter scheme was ended and was concerned that community bins for parish councils would require an impassioned resident to manage the usage. Concern was also expressed that some parishes may not have sufficient space for 10 bins or space within one location. The Panel heard that the scheme allowed parishes to choose a suitable number of bins up to ten and that the team were open to conversations regarding the location of these bins, however it was noted that this would need to remain efficient and effective for the collection team.

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

ii) that the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Panel be given sight of any decisions made or to be made under recommendation i of the report.

Following an enquiry, the Panel heard that due to the weight of garden waste, commercial sized bins would not be suitable to be used as a community bin.

The Panel were advised that the scheme was to support vulnerable residents who were unable to subscribe to the garden waste service or to dispose of their garden waste at a local recycling centre. The Panel were further assured that dialogue with parishes would be ongoing to ensure maximum efficiencies for Councils whilst supporting vulnerable residents.

It was confirmed that grey bins historically contained around 40% organic waste but that a bin would be rejected should it contain excessive quantities of garden waste.

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 ii to the report;

ii) that the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Panel be given sight of any decisions made or to be made under recommendation i of the report.

50. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED

that the press and public be excluded from the meeting because the business to be transacted contains exempt information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

51. LEISURE OPPORTUNITIES

The Panel were reminded of the Part Two nature of the item and that the contents of the report and subsequent discussion should remain confidential.

The Panel gave consideration to an exempt report by the Head of Leisure, Health and Environment, (a copy of which was appended in the annex to the Minute Book), on the leisure Opportunities Report which was presented to the Panel.

Following the discussion, it was

RESOLVED

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

Chair