

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (PERFORMANCE AND GROWTH) held in Civic Suite, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon PE29 3TN on Wednesday, 5 November 2025.

PRESENT: Councillor S L Taylor – Vice Chair.

Councillors A Blackwell, J R Catmur, B S Chapman, S J Corney, I D Gardener, A R Jennings, R Martin, S R McAdam and C H Tevlin.

APOLOGY(IES): Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors C M Gleadow and Dr M Pickering.

39. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 8th October 2025 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

40. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No interests were declared.

41. 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 was presented to the Panel.

Due to the additional extraordinary meetings and the lack of regular business, the potential cancellation of the December Panel meeting was briefly discussed.

42. OUTSTANDING RESPONSES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The Panel received and noted the responses received in relation to questions arising at previous meetings of the Panel.

43. CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT 2025/2026 (QUARTER 2)

By means of a report by the Business Intelligence and Performance Manager (a copy of which was appended in the Minute Book), the Corporate Performance 2025/26 Quarter 2 Report was presented to the Panel.

A question regarding training for AI was raised. The Member asked if this was used by Officers in a structured way or on an ad hoc basis. Attention was also drawn attention to Corporate Plan Action 64 of the report, commenting that it was classed as amber but was green previously. He asked how listening to residents is measured and does

amber mean this is not happening. The Panel heard that the proper use of AI can be a huge productivity enhancement, and an automated service is being introduced to the Customer Service Team as part of an aggressive cost saving project. In response to a query regarding CPA 64, it was confirmed that the Team have joined a County wide service to responding to Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), including sending a series of surveys to residents and interact with FAQ's and information on key questions are available on the website. They also heard further clarification regarding green, amber and red status can be provided to the Panel.

The report was praised for including the preferred direction of travel and suggested if the Green waste could be normalised by rainfall. The Panel heard that rainfall is a factor but there are many considerations which are taken into account. It was acknowledged that perhaps the target could be reviewed again.

The delivery of Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) was raised and the Member questioned why this was showing as green in the report. The Panel heard that the green status shows the strategy is in place and the data will be reviewed over a period of six months before conclusions can be drawn.

PI17 was mentioned, particularly relating to the number of business engagements made by the Economic Development Team. They would have liked to have seen more detail regarding the successes of the Team, such as the Huntingdonshire Does Defence event. The Panel heard Officers have been encouraged to bring more visibility to their interactions and are working to share this information in All Member's Briefings. It was confirmed that ensuring this information is shared means that Huntingdonshire remains a place where businesses will want to invest which remains part of the Economic Strategy.

A question was also raised about PI11, the number of Affordable Houses that have been delivered, noting that the target was predicted to remain at Red. It was requested that Councillor Wakeford come back to the Panel to advise how this is going to be addressed. It was confirmed that whilst the number of houses is not something the Organisation can directly influence, it needs to be influenced somehow as the consequences of not having enough affordable housing is reflected in some of the Red statuses showing from the Housing and Homelessness Team. It was heard that in previous years, the Organisation had delivered a record number of houses. The Panel were advised that they would need to invite Councillor Wakeford back to hear further information from him.

Relating to PI23, it was stated that it would be useful to know where the inspections had taken place and further insight into the grading system was requested. The Panel heard that a methodology and breakdown of the wards visited was provided previously but Officers were happy to share after the meeting. **A hard copy was provided to the Member after the meeting.*

The Panel questioned when Civil Parking Enforcement will be rolled out across the District as Members are still experiencing issues across their areas. The Panel heard this will be taken away and an

answer sought. They were also advised that an update will be provided in an All Member's briefing before the end of the year and further information will come back to this Panel after six months once more data has been collated and reviewed.

The topic of Active Travel Matters was mentioned, particularly the Active Travel Routes project. The Member asked if local Members had been engaged with this, raising a proposed travel route from Phoenix Park to Wyboston as a potential issue. The Panel heard that more information could be sought regarding this but it will most likely be a referral to Cambridgeshire County Council.

After an update request regarding the Old Falcon, the Panel heard that this will be taken away and a written answer sought.

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.

44. TRANSFORMATION REPORT

The Panel sought clarification regarding the use of the word 'endorse' on the recommendation for Cabinet. They stated it was not within the Panel's remit to do this. It was confirmed the term endorse was to seek support for the Report and to share their comments to the Cabinet, not to make a decision.

Disappointment was expressed that the report appeared not to be a plan for transformation, but a list of the projects already in place. It was felt the organisation should be working on ways to improve, where it currently stands and how the organisation can reach the level they aspire to. The Local Government Agency (LGA) website was referenced, particularly where it shows benchmarking capabilities, providing different capabilities to review and a scoring matrix. Further understanding was requested in how Officers are being set up towards Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) so they are in the best position for new job opportunities and how successful Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) are regarding delivering services to residents.

The Panel heard that an enormous amount of work goes into delivering services to residents and continuously improving every year. They were advised this is a first draft of the plan and remains ongoing. Officers are developing the benchmarking data as per the LGA guidelines as part of the mid-year review and aspects of this report reflect a recommendation from the Corporate Peer Review.

It was acknowledged that the Workforce strategy incorporated 'Culture' which falls under one of the seven C's of Transformation in the organisation, but the Panel were not comfortable that this be called a Transformation Plan.

Councillor Martin made a recommendation that the report have an

alternative title such as “*Project Tracker*” or “*Service Plan*” as he felt it was not a Transformation Plan which he would like to be brought back for discussion at a later date.

The Vice Chair was pleased that all the information was in one report, however agreed with Councillor Martin that she felt the report did not reflect a Transformation plan.

Further insight into project classifications was requested and the Panel asked how other projects which do not meet the criteria are tracked. It was heard the project classifications were designed to bring distinction on how projects need to be categorised. These are based on elements such as risk, cost, delivery time and the impact on other services. The continuous improvement projects not classified as such are tracked elsewhere.

Further agreement was expressed with Councillor Martin’s point regarding the report showing legacy projects rather than an action plan for transformation.

It was reiterated to the Panel that Transformation and Reorganisation are separate subjects and should not be mistaken for directly linking to each other.

Attention was drawn to the Workforce strategy, particularly how the Council are attracting new talent and supporting wellbeing in the workforce. It was noted that it would have been beneficial to include details of this in the report.

The Vice Chair expressed her disappointment that the St Neots Riverside Parks project was absent from the projects covered in the report. It was heard that although the project had planning consent and part of the project had been completed, there was no funding available to continue. The projects in the report are reflective of the Council’s agreed Capital Programme, and the St Neots Riverside Parks was not part of this. It was suggested this be taken directly to Members through budget setting for further discussion.

The motion proffered by Councillor Martin was seconded by Councillor Jennings.

The Panel heard the new Recommendation and a vote was called. It was unanimous in favour of the Recommendation.

Following the discussion, the Panel were informed that their comments would be added to the Cabinet report in order for Cabinet to make a decision upon the recommendations within the report, and additionally, the Panel request that the Cabinet consider adding the following recommendation to their report;

- 1) For the title of the report be changed to reflect the nature of the report’s contents and that the Portfolio Holder bring back a report for the Transformation Plan when ready.

Chair