

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, 10 July 2025.

PRESENT: Councillor N J Hunt – Chair.

Councillors T Alban, S Bywater, S J Criswell, M Kadewere, C Lowe, D J Shaw and N Wells.

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

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors L Davenport-Ray and S Howell.

12. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held of 5th June 2025 were discussed. It was observed by Councillor Criswell that the carbon payback figures detailed in Minute 25/9 did not include the carbon from transportation amongst others and that it had been agreed that future reports would be more transparent with lifetime carbon figures. With that addition made to the minutes, they were approved as a correct record of the meeting held and signed by the Chair.

13. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

None declared.

14. 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 July 2025 to 30th September 2025 were presented to the Panel.

The Panel were advised that the Huntingdon RIBA item had been moved from the September to October meeting date.

Councillor Alban requested that a review on progress made by Civil Parking Enforcement be brought back to the Panel at an appropriate date.

15. ANNUAL CLIMATE REPORT AND ACTION PLAN UPDATE

By means of a report and presentation by the Climate Co-ordinator (copies of which are appended in the Minute Book), the Annual Climate Report and Action Plan Update was presented to the Panel.

Councillor Criswell congratulated Officers on the report, which he felt

was comprehensive except for demonstration of value for money and how the team assessed which projects are to be progressed. The Panel heard that cost benefit is considered with each decision made but that it was difficult to measure value for money as this was subjective. It was further questioned whether any projects had been ruled out due to the associated costs, following which, the Panel heard that costs were considered and options were weighed up ensuring a balanced approach was taken on the Council's journey to Net Zero.

In response to a question relating to the Council's Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy and how success was being measured the Panel heard that the detail on this would be sought and brought back to the Panel at a future date, potentially via the Climate Working Group. It was noted that there was a desire for the Panel to be a critical friend in this process.

Concern was expressed that the journey to Net Zero would become progressively harder as more and more big ticket items were achieved. It was noted that the process worked as a funnel with big gains in CO2 savings achieved initially filtering down to the smaller savings. It was also advised that with anticipated improvements in technologies the smaller savings would become more achievable.

It was observed that Climate Change is an abstract topic but that the report and presentation from the team demonstrated the wealth of good work undertaken and translated what that good work meant for residents.

It was advised to the Panel that the procurement training from Anglia Ruskin University had been specific for the Council's procurement team.

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.

16. ONE LEISURE INDEPENDENT REVIEW UPDATE

By means of a report and presentation by the Head of Leisure (copies of which are appended in the Minute Book), the One Leisure Independent Review Update was presented to the Panel.

Councillor Shaw complemented the team on the report and noted that he particularly enjoyed reading the conclusion of the report.

Councillor Bywater echoed this and also noted that the Sawtry swimming pool project was very much appreciated by himself and the Sawtry community. He further questioned the timelines and planning to move the leisure centres towards the Local Government Review (LGR). Following which, the Panel heard that an independent review would be undertaken to establish market position and what could be controlled within the Council's assets. The Panel were assured that

the Council were mindful of the progress and successes of One Leisure and would endeavour to protect this during and following the move into LGR.

The Panel heard that 60% of One Leisure's revenue was generated through Health and Fitness, 20% through swimming lessons and 10% through casual swimming. These activities make up the bulk of focus of One Leisure. The Panel also heard that conversations and opportunities were being developed with the Football Foundation on collaborative opportunities in line with the Council's playing pitch strategy. It was noted that the popularity of sports at centres was continually monitored and considered in line with centre development opportunities.

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.

17. ONE LEISURE ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REVIEW

By means of a report and presentation by the Head of Leisure (copies of which are appended in the Minute Book), the One Leisure Annual Performance Review was presented to the Panel.

It was noted that the journey since COVID had been incredible and that the level of improvement in the service was surprising and a credit to the team.

The Panel were advised that membership payments and signups had been moved onto a new payment system with a lot more online functionality. It was clarified that options and opportunities to link with health partners with the Customer Relationship Management system were being investigated. It was further noted that a refresh of the One Leisure website with an improved customer experience would be developed.

Following a question relating to the ebb and flow of specific sport popularity, the Panel were advised that around 60% of service revenue came via health and fitness, 20% from the swimming school programme and 10% from casual swimming bookings. It was noted that football was a prominent sport and that work was ongoing with the Football Foundation and it's Hockey equivalent to develop opportunities in those sports. It was also observed that there was a decline in demand to the service for cricket and squash.