

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the COUNCIL held in CIVIC SUITE (LANCASTER / STIRLING ROOMS), PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON PE29 3TN on Thursday, 15 May 2025.

PRESENT: Councillor S R McAdam – Chair.

Councillors T Alban, B S Banks, A Blackwell, R J Brereton, M J Burke, E R Butler, S Bywater, J R Catmur, S Cawley, B S Chapman, S J Conboy, S J Corney, A E Costello, S J Criswell, L Davenport-Ray, D B Dew, S W Ferguson, I D Gardener, C M Gleadow, K P Gulson, J E Harvey, M A Hassall, P J Hodgson-Jones, S A Howell, N J Hunt, A R Jennings, P A Jordan, M Kadewere, P Kadewere, D N Keane, J E Kerr, C Lowe, R Martin, B A Mickelburgh, S Mokbul, J Neish, Dr M Pickering, B M Pitt, T D Sanderson, D J Shaw, R A Slade, S L Taylor, I P Taylor, D Terry, C H Tevlin, S Wakeford and N Wells.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors M L Beuttell, J Clarke, J A Gray and D L Mickelburgh.

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR

It was proposed by Councillor T D Sanderson, seconded by Councillor S Wakeford and upon being put to the vote it was

RESOLVED

that Councillor D Dew be appointed Chair of the Council for the ensuing Municipal Year.

Councillor D Dew in the Chair.

Councillor Dew made the Statutory Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

The Chair paid tribute to the way in which Councillor McAdam had performed his duties as Chair of the District Council over the course of the last year and having proposed a vote of thanks to him, which was seconded by Councillor S J Conboy, presented Councillor McAdam with his past Chair's badge.

2. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held at 7:00pm on the 26th March 2025 and at 7:30pm on 26th March 2025 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

4. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR

A proposal to appoint Councillor R A Slade to the Vice-Chair was proposed by Councillor T D Sanderson and seconded by Councillor S Wakeford.

A proposal to appoint Councillor S Bywater to the Vice-Chair was proposed by Councillor R Martin and seconded by Councillor T Alban.

Upon being put to the vote it was

RESOLVED

that Councillor R A Slade be appointed Vice-Chair of the Council for the ensuing Municipal Year.

Councillor Slade made the Statutory Declaration of Office.

Councillor Dew paid tribute to former Councillor Keith Baker who had recently passed away, following which the Council observed a minutes silence as a mark of respect for their former colleague.

5. APPOINTMENT OF CABINET

The Executive Leader, Councillor S J Conboy announced that she had appointed Councillors T D Sanderson, S Wakeford, L Davenport-Ray, S W Ferguson, J E Harvey, S A Howell, J E Kerr and B Mickelburgh to the Cabinet for the ensuing Municipal Year. She also announced that Councillor T D Sanderson would be appointed Deputy Executive Leader and Councillor S Wakeford would be appointed Assistant Deputy Executive Leader.

Councillor S L Taylor addressed the Council upon stepping down from the Cabinet and expressed her thanks to Cabinet colleagues and Officers for their support and encouragement during her time in the role.

6. REPRESENTATION OF POLITICAL GROUPS ON DISTRICT COUNCIL COMMITTEES, ETC

A report was submitted by the Elections and Democratic Services Manager (a copy of which was appended in the Minute Book) relating to the principles and proportionality to be applied to the appointment of Committees and Panels in accordance with Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and Part II of the Local Government Act 2000.

Whereupon it was

RESOLVED

that the allocation of seats on District Council Committees and Panels to political groups and non-aligned Members be determined as set out in the report now submitted.

7. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANELS

RESOLVED

that the following Members be appointed to the Overview and Scrutiny Panels for the ensuing Municipal Year:-

Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance and Growth)

A M Blackwell
J Catmur
B S Chapman
S J Corney
I D Gardener
C M Gleadow
A R Jennings
R Martin
S R McAdam
M Pickering
S L Taylor
C H Tevlin

Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environment, Communities Partnerships)

T D Alban
S Bywater
S Criswell
M A Hassall
N J Hunt
M Kadewere
C Lowe
S Mokbul
B Pitt
D Shaw
D Terry
N Wells

8. COMMITTEES

RESOLVED

- a) that Members be appointed to serve on the Corporate Governance, Development Management, Employment, Licensing and Protection, Licensing Committee and Senior Officers Committee for the ensuing Municipal Year as follows:-

Corporate Governance Committee (7)

Councillors M J Burke, J A Gray, P J Hodgson-Jones, A R Jennings D J Shaw, I P Taylor and N Wells

Development Management Committee (16)

Councillors R J Brereton, E R Butler, J Clarke, S J Corney, D B Dew, P A Jordan, K P Gulson, S R McAdam, S Mokbul, D L Mickelburgh, J Neish, B Pitt, T D Sanderson, R A Slade C H Tevlin and S Wakeford

Employment Committee (8)

Councillors A M Blackwell, S Cawley, L Davenport-Ray, S A

Howell, P A Jordan, P Kadewere, D N Keane and C A Lowe.

Licensing and Protection Committee (12)

B S Banks, M L Beuttell, S Bywater, A E Costello, S Criswell, S W Ferguson, I D Gardener, S A Howell, P A Jordan, P Kadewere, D Terry, and N Wells.

Licensing Committee (12)

B S Banks, M L Beuttell, S Bywater, A E Costello, S Criswell, S W Ferguson, I D Gardener, S A Howell, P A Jordan, P Kadewere, D Terry, and N Wells.

Senior Officers Committee (4)

M L Beuttell, S Cawley, P A Jordan and T D Sanderson.

that the following Members be nominated from which the Elections and Democratic Services Manager be authorised when necessary to convene a meeting of the Appeals Sub-Group to include up to five Members (excluding Members of the Employment Committee) to determine appeals under the Council's disciplinary and appeals procedures – Councillors B S Banks, A M Blackwell, S Bywater J R Catmur, S Corney, A Costello, S Criswell, S W Ferguson, I D Gardener, P J Hodgson-Jones, N J Hunt, M Pickering, T D Sanderson, D J Shaw and S Wakeford.

9. CONSTITUTION REVIEW WORKING GROUP

RESOLVED

that Councillors M J Burke, J A Gray, J E Harvey, P Hodgson-Jones, R Martin, D Mickelburgh, T D Sanderson and S Wakeford be appointed to the Constitution Review Working Group for the ensuing Municipal Year.

10. CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND PETERBOROUGH COMBINED AUTHORITY MEMBERSHIP AND OTHER APPOINTMENTS

With the assistance of a report by the Chief Executive (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book), Council were invited to make appointments / nominations to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority for the 2025/26 Municipal Year.

Whereupon it was

RESOLVED

- a) that Councillor S J Conboy, Executive Leader of Council be appointed to act as the Council's appointee to the Combined Authority and one substitute member;
- b) that one member from the Conservative Party and one member from the Liberal Democrat Party be nominated to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, with two members from the same political parties be nominated as substitutes;

- c) that one member from the Liberal Democrat party be nominated to the Audit and Governance Committee, with one member from the same political party as the substitute member; and

that the Chief Executive be authorised to make any amendments to the appointments to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Audit and Governance Committee in consultation with the Political Group Leaders, if the Political Balance is amended by the Combined Authority between now and the next Council meeting.

11. CORPORATE PLAN REFRESH 2025

In conjunction with a report by the Head of Policy, Performance and Emergency Planning (a copy of which was appended in the Minute Book), the Executive Leader, Councillor S J Conboy presented to Members the Corporate Plan Refresh 2025 Report for the Council's consideration and approval.

Councillor R Martin addressed the Chamber and stated that he did not wish to question the intentions behind the refreshed Plan but did challenge the assumptions, effectiveness and priorities of the Plan. He observed the national cost of living crisis and felt that the Plan read more like a shopping list of unrestrained aspirations and was therefore unrealistic. He observed that whilst this may be well intentioned, he felt it was unrealistic and noted that in particular the lack of core prioritising and focus had previously been highlighted as an area of concern but was still not addressed by the refresh in his opinion. He also felt that the Plan focussed on outputs rather than outcomes for the district with strong focus being placed on enabling and influencing partners and a reduced focus on Council actions.

In particular, Councillor Martin stated that he felt that the Climate Strategy lacked proportionality and that costly projects were being undertaken without a measured return on investment. He was concerned that there was vagueness when working with housing partners with big aspirations but lack of detail on how Council resources could process these schemes. Councillor Martin was concerned that the Plan was not appealing to residents due to its length and encouraged Members to reject the Plan and ask that it be reworked into a more realistic, slimmer and more targeted version which would hold delivery above discussion, impact above intention and residents above process.

Councillor L Davenport-Ray responded that many of the projects within the Climate Strategy had had external funding which had been hard fought for and was essential to assist the Council in achieving its net zero aspirations.

Councillor Conboy acknowledged the comments of Councillor Martin and lamented that the same sentiments had not been shared as part of the Scrutiny process, as this would have given an opportunity for concerns to be addressed and mitigated. Councillor Conboy further stressed the importance of partnership working in being preventative and that the interventions which could be achieved in this manner of working were beneficial to residents and the local economy.

Further comment was made by Councillor S Wakeford, who gave the example of working with housing partners to ensure good economic growth for the district, and stated that the targets within the Plan allowed for the Council's influence on this to be measured. He felt that this was a Corporate Plan that the Council could be proud of.

Councillor P Hodgson-Jones observed that the right kind of measures and objectives needed to be smart and realistic. In his opinion, the Council's scrutiny function could be more involved in identifying underachieving targets and bringing those back to the Council Chamber. He felt that the Corporate Plan indicators were not sufficient to the Plan's success but that response to scrutiny and criticism would help to drive forward. He observed that with the impending Local Government Review, the Council needed to show that they were able to effectively and efficiently run their affairs to ensure that they could be influential in the new unitary structure, thus ensuring the best outcome for residents.

Councillor Conboy reminded the Council of the work which had been undertaken to improve and evolve the Council's Scrutiny process and noted that this would continue to evolve. She also welcomed feedback and scrutiny from across the Chamber to ensure effectiveness and due diligence.

Having been moved and seconded, and upon being put to the vote, it was

RESOLVED

- a) that the refreshed Corporate Plan (attached at Appendix 1 of the report) be approved; and
- b) that the Key Performance Indicator changes (attached at Appendix 4 of the report) be approved.

Chair