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, 30 September 2026.

PRESENT: Councillor A Wood – Chair.

Councillors L Ascroft, A Blackwell, S Cawley, J Francis, I D Gardener, M A Hassall, C Innes, R Martin, W Smith, H Tobias and R Tomlinson.

APOLOGY(IES): Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors R Ioannides and G Seeff .

24. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 2nd September 2026 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

25. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor Tomlinson declared a non-registerable interest in minute 26/27 by virtue of being the Ward Member for St Neots Priory Park & Little Paxton and had written a letter regarding a CIL application.

Councillor Innes declared a non-registerable interest in minute 26/27 by virtue of being the Ward Member for St Neots Priory Park & Little Paxton and had written a letter regarding a CIL application.

Councillor Hassall declared a non-registerable interest in minute 26/27 by virtue of being the Ward Member for Buckden.

Councillor Innes declared a other registerable interest in minute 26/27 by virtue of being the Chair for Grafham Parish Council.

26. 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.

The Chair advised that the Corporate Performance Report had been moved from November to December to align with the usual reporting schedule.

It was also reported that the KPI Working Group now comprised four members: Councillors Ascroft, Ioannides, Martin and Tobias.

Councillor Martin expressed disappointment regarding the limited number of agenda items scheduled for current and forthcoming meetings and suggested that additional scrutiny topics should be brought forward. Particular attention was drawn to procurement matters and the Committee's role in scrutinising procurement activity.

The Chair requested that Councillor Martin submit a scoping document outlining the proposed scope of procurement scrutiny for consideration by officers and the committee.

Officers agreed to arrange provision of a scoping document template.

27. STRATEGIC COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY ALLOCATION, ROUND 1 2026/27

By means of a report by the Funding Project Manager of Strategic Growth (a copy of which was appended in the Minute Book), The Community Infrastructure Levy Funding Report was presented to the Panel.

The Chair sought clarification on how CIL performance was monitored and whether any key performance indicators were in place. Officers explained that performance was monitored through service targets relating to the collection of CIL receipts, response times to enquiries, assessment of applications and statutory reporting requirements. Whilst no specific CIL KPIs existed, performance was measured through officer objectives and wider Planning Service reporting.

In response to questions regarding demand for funding, Officers confirmed that information on the number of CIL enquiries received between funding rounds could be circulated following the meeting. It was noted that the latest funding round had been launched within a relatively short timeframe, which may have affected the number of submissions received. To address this, future funding rounds had now been scheduled in advance to provide greater certainty for applicants.

Members sought assurance that smaller Parish Councils and community organisations were not disadvantaged compared with larger organisations when applying for funding. Officers explained that all applicants receive the same level of support through the enquiry process, including detailed feedback on their proposals, assessment against the Statement of Intent, identification of potential weaknesses and advice on additional funding opportunities. Officers emphasised that support is available to organisations of all sizes, from parish councils and sports clubs to the NHS and County Council.

Officers further advised that, as part of the pre-application process, they regularly direct potential applicants towards alternative grant funding streams and appropriate council services where projects may not meet the criteria for Strategic CIL funding.

Members discussed the relationship between the Local Plan, infrastructure requirements and future CIL commitments. Officers explained that future infrastructure needs identified through the Local

Plan are considered alongside annual reporting through the Infrastructure Funding Statement, which records CIL and S106 receipts, expenditure and strategic infrastructure commitments.

Questions were raised regarding the collection of CIL payments from developers. Officers outlined the process whereby invoices are issued following commencement of development and confirmed that payment compliance rates were generally high, with only occasional instances requiring further enforcement action.

The Panel considered the delegated authority decisions included within the report and requested additional information regarding the rationale for approvals and refusals. Officers acknowledged that previous reports had included more detail and agreed to consider reinstating this information in future reporting.

Concerns were raised regarding transparency and requested greater visibility of how delegated decisions align with the strategic objectives of the CIL programme. Officers advised that work was underway to explore options for making CIL and Section 106 information more publicly accessible through the Council's website.

Discussion took place regarding the monitoring of approved projects and the management of allocated funding. Officers explained that each project is monitored through an agreed programme of milestones, reporting requirements and funding agreements. Larger projects are supported through regular progress meetings, whilst all projects are subject to ongoing monitoring by officers.

Members were advised that where projects experience delays or require an extension to agreed timescales, these requests are considered through the appropriate governance process. Funding agreements include completion dates and conditions that applicants must meet before payments are released.

Clarification was sought regarding the refusal of the Digital Hub application under delegated authority. Officers explained that, whilst the proposal was recognised as a valuable community project, insufficient evidence had been provided to demonstrate the required connection between the project and the mitigation or support of growth, which is a statutory requirement for Strategic CIL funding. Officers emphasised that unsuccessful applicants are encouraged to resubmit applications where identified issues can be addressed.

Officers further confirmed that the refusal of an application in one funding round does not prevent it being reconsidered in a future round following revisions.

Praise was expressed for Officers and their work with parish councils and commented positively on the support provided throughout the application process. He stated that, in his experience, smaller parish councils were not disadvantaged when applying for CIL funding and thanked officers for their assistance.

Members discussed the level of information provided regarding live projects and requested enhanced reporting on project delivery, expenditure, milestone achievement and overall progress. Officers

acknowledged these comments and agreed to explore mechanisms for providing greater transparency whilst balancing commercial confidentiality considerations.

Further discussion took place regarding the use of Strategic CIL funding for Council-owned capital projects. Councillor Martin requested greater visibility of expenditure on such projects and suggested that future reports should provide a more comprehensive overview of all CIL expenditure, including allocations made under separate governance arrangements.

Officers clarified that only the Huntingdon Sports and Health Hub had received funding under the revised governance arrangements for Council projects. It was agreed that opportunities for broader reporting on Strategic CIL expenditure and governance arrangements would be explored.

The Chair sought clarification regarding the Longsands Academy Community Sports Hub proposal and noted that Strategic CIL represented 24% of the total project cost. Officers confirmed that a detailed breakdown of funding sources had been submitted as part of the business case and that no CIL funding would be released until all remaining funding had been secured. This requirement would form part of the funding agreement and ongoing monitoring arrangements.

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