HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ENVIRONMENT, COMMUNITIES AND PARTNERSHIPS) held in the LANCASTER & STIRLING, CIVIC SUITE, PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON, PE29 3TN on Thursday, 1 October 2026.

PRESENT: Councillor T Alban – Chair.

Councillors A Bulat, S Bywater, C Innes, R Martin, D McIlwain, S Mokbul, N Sarkies, I P Taylor and N Wells.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors S Lancaster, C Lowe and M Young.

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor D Mickelburgh.

20. MINUTES

Upon the opening of the meeting the Chair thanked previous Panel members Councillor S Claffey and Councillor J Francis for their contributions to the Panel and welcomed Councillor N Wells and Councillor I Taylor to the Panel.

The Minutes of the meeting of 3rd September 2026 were approved as a correct record and were signed by the Chair.

21. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No interests were declared.

22. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

With the aid of a report by the Democratic Services Officer (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) an update on the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme and Notice of Key Decisions were presented to the Panel.

The Panel agreed to amend the membership of the Climate Working Group to Councillors Bulat, Lancaster, Lowe, Mokbul and McIlwain. It was noted that there would be additional space for a Lib Dem Councillor to join and Councillors were asked to express their interest via email to democratic services.

The Panel noted the progress made by the Community Safety Partnership Working Group and that their first meeting would be held the day after the Panel meeting. It was anticipated for verbal updates on progress to be brought to the November and December Panel meetings with the full report due to be presented back to the Panel at the February meeting.

23. PROCUREMENT OUTCOMES - THE SOCIAL VALUE POLICY

By means of a report by the Procurement Manager (a copy of which was appended in the Minute Book), the Procurement Outcomes – the Social Value Policy was presented to the Panel.

A couple of points of clarity were made following the Officer's introduction. The definition of social value engine was clarified to the Panel as a nationally recognised peer-reviewed tool using many different measures which allows for a suggested outcome based on the value of the grant awarded and the agreement made. The definition of proxy was clarified to the Panel as the different measures used.

It was observed that 5.5 of the report looked at post decision implementation, and it was advised to the Panel that a follow up report on outcomes once the policy was in place could be brought to a further meeting of the Panel if it were to be requested.

It was confirmed that the policy would be applied to all future procurements once approved and would not be retrospectively applied to previous agreements although it was noted that social value was already built into public sector frameworks so would have already been applied where this framework had been applied. It was noted that procurement was influenced by several internal factors including the MTFS, and that the policy itself which established mitigation of risks. In terms of liaising with local businesses, it was noted that the Council's Economic Development Team had established networks which could be utilised for this purpose. It was further acknowledged that local businesses may also see this as a risk but that work and legislation was in place to collaborate and work for the benefit of local communities.

It was noted that whilst the Council had a database of current contractors, some had a national office with local branches therefore data from the database would not give a full picture of current local connections but that this reporting would be possible through the social value engine tool.

The Panel heard that support for bid writing was available for local businesses through Support Cambridgeshire. It was also noted that the Council organised Business Breakfasts allowed for networking and information sharing with local businesses. Work to understand further opportunities to engage small businesses and co-operative models of delivery would continue to be investigated. The importance of maintaining a balance between the social value and quality of fulfilment whilst remaining mindful of spending public money was noted as well as the importance of measuring the tangibility of social value versus value for money.

Following a question on how applications could be weighed against each other if offering different social and financial benefits, the Panel were advised that any social value related to a specific contract would be stipulated in the procurement process with the investment into the CHAWs fund an alternative route rather than a preference.

The Panel were keen to see specific codification of Council priorities

and how that would adapt to different contracts. Following which the Panel heard that there were two ways to stipulate weighting which were detailed within the policy and that each procurement was dealt with on a project by project basis to ensure that the right weighting had been applied.

The six social value outcomes were discussed and how these would be met using the software to the social value engine where each of the metrics is responded to and then the evidence against them is gathered back and flagged against the outcomes. The scoring process was noted to be established before the contract was tendered and that a balanced perspective was maintained through an officer Panel and scoring process.

The Panel requested tangible examples to fully understand the process and how the weighting would be applied and expressed concern that without this, it would be difficult to establish a full understanding of the potential outcomes of the policy. They were advised that whilst it would be possible to provide examples it would not be a quick process. It was reiterated that the importance and weighting of each of the six social value outcomes was established before the tender process. It was suggested that three hypothetical examples be worked up and brought back to a future scrutiny meeting or via a briefing note. Following a discussion on the matter, it was proposed to add an additional recommendation to the Cabinet report. The additional recommendation and it's wording was proposed by Councillor Martin and seconded by Councillor Bulat and the Panel voted in favour of forwarding the proposed recommendation to the Cabinet;

> 1.2 that Cabinet do not go ahead with the approval of the policy until such a time as work to provide examples as requested has been completed and reported back through the democratic process and to establish a framework to monitor and to include penalties through reporting upon that process.

It was noted that the policy had been developed following recent government legislation and took into account best practice from other local authorities. It was confirmed that measures would be in place to ensure compliance with the terms of contracts awarded to ensure promised social value elements were fulfilled.

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, and additionally, the Panel request that the Cabinet consider adding the following recommendation to their report;

> 1.2 that Cabinet do not go ahead with the approval of the policy until such a time as work to provide examples as requested has been completed and reported back through the democratic process and to establish a framework to monitor and to include penalties through reporting upon that process.

24. LEISURE AND HEALTH PERFORMANCE REVIEW

By means of a presentation by the Head of Leisure, Health and Environment (a copy of which was appended in the Minute Book), the Leisure and Health Performance Review was presented to the Panel.

In response to a question from the Panel, it was confirmed that future annual reports from the service would include future forecasts and KPIs. It was noted that the Active Lifestyles service was now in a commercially sustainable position and in a strong position to continue to deliver to residents. It was also noted that work continued at pace to assess leisure services and their development feasibility with the work at the One Leisure Huntingdon centre being highlighted. The Officers agreed to providing a quarterly briefing note on updates from the project as it progressed.

Services for older residents who lived independently rather than in a care facility were discussed and noted that further information could be provided if it were to be requested. It was noted that the Active Lifestyles team also provided services to some care home residents, which was noted to be arranged and funded by the care homes directly.

The Panel praised the work done by the Council to reinstate One Leisure Sawtry and it's associated services to Sawtry residents. The Panel discussed the balance between financial sustainability of the Leisure service and providing long term accessibility and health benefits to residents.

It was observed that the Creche facilities previously provided by One Leisure prior to Covid had not be reinstated. Officers advised that whilst they were mindful of the benefits that this service brought to residents, they also had significant cost implications to consider, however work was underway to consider options on the matter and would be reported back in due course should it be feasible.

The Panel noted the collaborative work undertaken by the team with opportunities being implemented for the centres to be a base for Community Midwives. It was advised that further work would continue to develop further partnership opportunities including those with the County Council.

Officers undertook to provide the Panel with information on membership numbers comparing active and inactive members. It was confirmed that a dedicated call handling team was in operation for One Leisure allowing customers to speak to agents rather than solely using an online booking system.

It was advised that following a recruitment process, new Marketing staff had been employed by the service and that they would undertake work to implement a marketing plan creating awareness around health and fitness opportunities and services to residents, including the Courts4Kids service and teenage membership offerings.

25. CCC HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE UPDATE

Councillor A Bulat provided a verbal update on the meeting of Cambridgeshire County Council's Health Scrutiny Committee which she attended on 1st October 2026. The main agenda items were noted as the service provisions at the Doddington and North Cambridgeshire Hospitals and the outreach and mobile breast cancer screening services. It was also noted that Councillor Claffey had previously been appointed by the Panel to be a substitute member to the Committee, the Panel discussed whether or not they should replace his appointment following his move to the Cabinet and as part of that discussed it was undertaken by Democratic Services to ascertain whether a Councillor who is also a NHS employee would be able to be appointed to the Committee. It was decided to discuss the matter further at a future meeting of the Panel once this had been established.

Chair