



A meeting of the **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ENVIRONMENT, COMMUNITIES AND PARTNERSHIPS)** will be held in the **LANCASTER & STIRLING, CIVIC SUITE, PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON, PE29 3TN** on **THURSDAY, 5 NOVEMBER 2026** at **7:00 PM** and you are requested to attend for the transaction of the following business:-

AGENDA

APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTES

1. MINUTES (Pages 7 - 12)

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environment, Communities and Partnerships) meeting held on 1st October 2026.

Contact Officer: B Buddle 01480 388008

2. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

To receive from Members declarations as to disclosable pecuniary and other interests in relation to any Agenda item.

Contact Officer: B Buddle 01480 388008

3. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 13 - 26)

- a) The Panel are to receive the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme
- b) Members to discuss future planning of items for the Work Programme

Contact Officer: B Buddle 01480 388008

4. COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT 2027/28 (Pages 27 - 44)

The Panel is invited to comment on the report prior to it's consideration by Cabinet and Council.

Executive Councillor: Cllr N Hunt

Contact Officer: K Kelly 01480 388151

5. HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY (Pages 45 - 74)

The Panel is invited to comment on the Homelessness Strategy.

Executive Councillor: Cllr N Hunt

Contact Officer: J Collen 01480 388220

6. SAFEGUARDING POLICY (Pages 75 - 100)

The Panel is invited to comment on the updates to the Safeguarding Policy.

Executive Councillor: Cllr S Claffey

Contact Officer: P Corley 01480 388269

7. CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL HEALTH COMMITTEE

To consider appointing a new substitute Member to the Cambridgeshire County Council Health Committee.

28 day of October 2026

Michelle Sacks

Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and other Registerable and Non-Registerable Interests.

Further information on [Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and other Registerable and Non-Registerable Interests is available in the Council's Constitution](#)

Filming, Photography and Recording (including Live Streaming) at Council Meetings

This meeting will be filmed for live and/or subsequent broadcast on the Council's YouTube site. The whole of the meeting will be filmed, except where there are confidential or exempt items. If you make a representation to the meeting you will be deemed to have consented to being filmed. By entering the meeting you are also consenting to being filmed and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings for webcasting and/or training purposes. If you have any queries regarding the streaming of Council meetings, please contact Democratic Services on 01480 388169.

The District Council also permits filming, recording and the taking of photographs at its meetings that are open to the public. Arrangements for these activities should operate in accordance with [guidelines](#) agreed by the Council.

Please contact Mrs Beccy Buddle, Democratic Services Officer, Tel No: 01480 388008/e-mail Beccy.Buddle@huntingdonshire.gov.uk if you have a general query on any Agenda Item, wish to tender your apologies for absence from the meeting, or would like information on any decision taken by the Committee/Panel.

Specific enquiries with regard to items on the Agenda should be directed towards the Contact Officer.

Members of the public are welcome to attend this meeting as observers except during consideration of confidential or exempt items of business.

Agenda and enclosures can be viewed on the [District Council's website](#).

Emergency Procedure

In the event of the fire alarm being sounded and on the instruction of the Meeting Administrator, all attendees are requested to vacate the building via the closest emergency exit.

Attending Council and Committee Meetings

Huntingdonshire District Council welcomes members of the public to attend meetings that are open to the public.

Members of the public may attend, film, photograph, and report on meetings that are open to the public. *

In some circumstances, a meeting may resolve to exclude the public and press to consider confidential or exempt information. Where this occurs, members of the public and press will be asked to leave the meeting room for that part of the meeting.

Most public meetings are webcast live, and recordings are available afterwards. This means you do not need to attend in person to follow proceedings.

The council permits public speaking at the Development Management Committee (planning) meetings.

View further information about [public speaking at Development Management Committees \[PDF, 0.5MB\]](#)

The council permits public questions at full council meetings. View further information about [submitting a question \[PDF, 0.1MB\]](#).

Public access and seating

Meetings that are open to the public can be attended by anyone.

Seating in public areas is limited. Where demand exceeds the number of seats available, admission will be managed on a first-come, first-served basis, with priority given in the following order:

1. People who live, work or own property within the Huntingdonshire District
2. Other interested members of the public.

This means that attendees within each priority group will be admitted in the order they arrive, subject to the number of seats available.

Reserved seating

Council Meetings - If you have registered in advance to ask a public question at a meeting of Full Council in accordance with the Council's [Constitution \[PDF, 1.5MB\]](#), a seat will be reserved for you.

Development Management, Licensing and Other Regulatory Hearings - If you have registered to speak or make representations in relation to an application or matter being considered by the Committee, a seat will be reserved for you.

You do not need to arrive early to secure your place.

When seating is full

Once all public seats are occupied, no further admission will be possible. Standing is not permitted in meeting rooms. Additional seating cannot normally be provided, except where required as a reasonable adjustment for accessibility needs, including carers or support workers.

For meetings of the Development Management Committee, Licensing Committee and other regulatory hearings, priority will be given to applicants, objectors, registered speakers and other parties directly involved in agenda items.

Arrival, sign-in and security

All visitors must sign in on arrival.

If attendance is expected to exceed capacity, you may be asked to provide evidence that you live, work or own property within the Huntingdonshire District so that seating priority can be allocated fairly. In these circumstances, we would request a photographic ID and evidence of your address or work premises. We recommend bringing only essential items.

Bags and personal belongings may be subject to security checks. Where necessary, security staff may also conduct further searches.

These arrangements apply equally to all public attending and are intended to help ensure meetings can take place safely and without disruption.

Any personal information collected as part of the sign-in process will be used only for meeting management and safety purposes in accordance with the [Council's Privacy Notice](#). Information will be retained no longer than is necessary.

Items not permitted

- Placards, banners, flags or similar items
- Knives, scissors or other sharp objects
- Whistles, air horns, loudhailers or other noise-making devices
- Bottles or other containers containing liquids, except drinking water intended for personal use during the meeting
- Any item that security staff reasonably believe could compromise safety or disrupt the meeting.

If you wish to bring large or specialist equipment into the meeting, such as recording equipment, please contact [Democratic Services](#) in advance via email to help avoid delays when entering the meeting.

Behaviour at meetings

Everyone attending a meeting is expected to treat others with courtesy and respect. Any form of verbal or physical abuse will not be tolerated. Anyone presenting such behaviour will be asked to leave immediately.

Accessibility

If you have any accessibility requirements, it would be helpful to contact [Democratic Services](#) before the meeting so we can fully support you.

Speaking at a meeting or asking a question

Members of the public may ask questions at meetings of Full Council.

Members of the public may also speak or make representations at meetings of the Development Management Committee, Licensing Committee, and other regulatory hearings where public participation arrangements apply.

Please note that this must be arranged in advance in accordance with the Council's Constitution.

Feedback

If you have concerns about how these arrangements were applied at a meeting, please contact [Democratic Services](#).

Legal framework

*Public access to meetings, and the right to film, photograph, record and report proceedings, are governed by legislation including the Local Government Act 1972, Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014.

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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 its 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 its 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

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Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2026-27 - Environment, Communities and Partnerships

Forward Agendas

Meeting Date	Pre-Scrutiny	Scrutiny Review
5 th November 2026	• Council Tax Support 2027/28 • Homelessness Strategy • Safeguarding Strategy Update	
3 rd December 2026		• Food Waste Collections – 6 month Review • Alternative Fuels – 12 month Review
4 th February 2027		• Community Safety Partnership Working Group Report • Update on CCC Health Scrutiny Committee (meeting 16th December)
4 th March 2027		Armed Forces Covenant Annual Update Report
1 st April 2027		Update on CCC Health Scrutiny Committee (meeting 30 th March)

Unscheduled Agenda Items

Item	Notes	Progress
CPCA	• Request for the Mayor to attend to update the Panel on his plans for investment, environment and leisure in the district • Noted that some subjects may fall under the O&S P&G Panel	DSO to pick up conversation with CPCA

O&S Topics Identified For Further Consideration

Subject	Brief	Status
Immigration Reforms	• National reform on this is due Autumn 2026 – concern that this will have an increased impact on homelessness and crisis payments due to more people not having recourse to public funds • Potential increase in pressure on Local Authorities. What is the projected scale of this?	To remain on the work programme topics identified list and revisit once the national work on this has been completed.
One Leisure	• Update on the impact of concessionary services inc financial and social values, the return for the Council. • Concern about accessibility for eligible residents in rural areas • Full scoping request received	DSO liaising with Officers to establish working group
Shared Services	• How will this look after LGR? • Noted that this may be covered by the LGR Scrutiny Committee	Paused due to delays LGR
CPCA Local Nature Recovery Scheme	• Full scoping request received	DSO liaising with Officers to establish how to progress.
Hinchingbrooke Country Park	• To scrutinise the development project at HCP at the request of the Chair	DSO liaising with Officers to establish how to progress.

Items identified for Member Briefings

Item	Notes	Progress
Recycling and Waste	• General overview on the recycling service • How much waste is collected across the service and what amount is rejected? What happens to rejected waste? • What is the take up on recycling services? • Concern that HMOs and Flats with communal bins experience barriers to the service	Member briefing scheduled for 1 st December.
Playgrounds	• Village playparks and open spaces – how do Parish Councils access funding for installation and maintenance? • How do parishes earmark suitable land for installation? • Noted that the Council have a Play Sufficiency Report and approved Strategy	Member briefing scheduled for new year

Working Groups

Items identified for Working Groups

Item	Notes	Progress
Hydro-electric and small wind turbines	• Noted that a pub in St Neots has a very small hydro electric system in place • How can HDC influence the community to invest in these projects? • Available grants?	DSO to discuss with relevant Officers and bring to the Climate Working Group as a topic – timescales being established
Air quality and congestion	How does the Council monitor Air Pollutants in the district?	DSO to discuss with relevant Officers and bring to the Climate Working Group as a topic– timescales being established

Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure	• What is the Council doing on this? • Is the focus on business or residential? • What gives good value for money? • Noted that the matter has previously been reviewed by the Climate Working Group but that an update on developments would be wise.	DSO to discuss with relevant Officers and bring to the Climate Working Group as a topic– timescales being established
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Climate Working Group

Members: Cllrs A Bulat, D McIlwain, C Lowe, S Mokbul and S Lancaster

Lead Officer: Adjusted to suit the topic, enquiries to B Buddle

Progress: Ongoing group which meets as required to look at specific topics

August 2025: Group met twice to discuss both the Energy Strategy and the Fleet Decarbonisation Project for initial feedback prior to their inclusion in the democratic cycle of meetings over Autumn 2025

February 2026: Group invited to comment on the Interim RECAP Partnership Waste Strategy. This will be brought to Members through the Members Briefing.

August 2026: Meeting of the Group to comment on the Annual Climate Plan prior to it's consideration by the Panel at the September meeting.

Next Steps: Meetings to be scheduled as required to allow involvement in proposed works.

Topics identified for future meetings and appropriate timelines being established with officers; hydro-electric power, air quality in the district, Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy Update

Community Safety Partnerships Working Group

Members: Cllrs S Bywater, A Bulat, M Burke, J Francis, D McIlwain

Lead Officer: C Deeth

Progress:

2nd October 2026: Group met to establish Terms of Reference and to confirm anticipated timeline of the project with a view to bringing the final report to the February 2027 meeting of the Panel.

23rd October 2026: Meeting to further discuss themes for the group. Membership of the group was discussed and will be discussed further at the November meeting of the Panel.

Next Steps – 5th November 2026: discuss membership of the group at the Panel meeting

20th November 2026: Meeting arranged to discuss progress on identified themes

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NOTICE OF EXECUTIVE KEY DECISIONS INCLUDING THOSE TO BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE

Prepared by: Councillor Sarah Conboy, Executive Leader of the Council
Date of Publication: 19 October 2026
For Period: 1 November 2026 to 28 February 2027

Membership of the Cabinet is as follows:-

Councillor Details		Councillor Contact Details
Page 19	Councillor S J Conboy	Executive Leader of the Council and Executive Councillor for Place
		c/o Huntingdonshire District Council Pathfinder House St Mary's Street Huntingdon Cambridgeshire PE29 3TN Tel: 01480 414900 / 07831 807208 E-mail: Sarah.Conboy@huntingdonshire.gov.uk
	Councillor S Claffey	Executive Councillor for Climate, Transformation and Workforce
		c/o Huntingdonshire District Council Pathfinder House St Mary's Street Huntingdon Cambridgeshire PE29 3TN E-mail: Stephen.Claffey@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

Councillor L Dewey-Beckett	Executive Governance Services	Councillor for and Democratic	c/o Huntingdonshire District Council Pathfinder House St Mary's Street Huntingdon Cambridgeshire PE29 3TN Email: Liam.Dewey-Beckett@huntingdonshire.gov.uk
Councillor J Harvey	Executive Councillor for Finance & Resources		c/o Huntingdonshire District Council Pathfinder House St Mary's Street Huntingdon Cambridgeshire PE29 3TN Tel: 07441 392492 E-mail: Jo.Harvey@huntingdonshire.gov.uk
Councillor N Hunt	Executive Councillor for Resident Services and Corporate Performance		c/o Huntingdonshire District Council Pathfinder House St Mary's Street Huntingdon Cambridgeshire PE29 3TN Tel: 07525 987460 E-mail: Nathan.Hunt@huntingdonshire.gov.uk
Councillor J Kerr	Executive Councillor for Parks and Countryside, Waste and Street Scene		c/o Huntingdonshire District Council Pathfinder House St Mary's Street Huntingdon Cambridgeshire PE29 3TN Tel: 07906 899425 E-mail: Julie.Kerr@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

Page 21

Councillor B Mickelburgh	Deputy Executive Leader and Executive Councillor for Economy, Regeneration and Housing	c/o Huntingdonshire District Council Pathfinder House St Mary's Street Huntingdon Cambridgeshire PE29 3TN Tel: 07762 109210 E-mail: Brett.Mickelburgh@huntingdonshire.gov.uk
Councillor D Mickelburgh	Executive Councillor for Communities, Health and Leisure	c/o Huntingdonshire District Council Pathfinder House St Mary's Street Huntingdon Cambridgeshire PE29 3TN Tel: 01733 794510 E-mail: Debbie.Mickelburgh@huntingdonshire.gov.uk
Councillor T Sanderson	Executive Councillor for Planning	c/o Huntingdonshire District Council Pathfinder House St Mary's Street Huntingdon Cambridgeshire PE29 3TN Tel: 01480 436822 E-mail: Tom.Sanderson@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

Notice is hereby given of:

- Key decisions that will be taken by the Cabinet (or other decision maker)
- Confidential or exempt executive decisions that will be taken in a meeting from which the public will be excluded (for whole or part).

A notice/agenda together with reports and supporting documents for each meeting will be published at least five working days before the date of the meeting. In order to enquire about the availability of documents and subject to any restrictions on their disclosure, copies may be requested by contacting the Democratic Services Team on 01480 388169 or E-mail Democratic.Services@huntingdonshire.gov.uk.

Agendas may be accessed electronically at the [District Council's website](#).

Formal notice is hereby given under The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 that, where indicated part of the meetings listed in this notice will be held in private because the agenda and reports for the meeting will contain confidential or exempt information under Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended) and that the public interest in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in disclosing it. See the relevant paragraphs below.

Any person who wishes to make representations to the decision maker about a decision which is to be made or wishes to object to an item being considered in private may do so by emailing Democratic.Services@huntingdonshire.gov.uk or by contacting the Democratic Services Team. If representations are received at least eight working days before the date of the meeting, they will be published with the agenda together with a statement of the District Council's response. Any representations received after this time will be verbally reported and considered at the meeting.

Paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended) (Reason for the report to be considered in private)

1. Information relating to any individual
2. Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual
3. Information relating to the Financial and Business Affairs of any particular person (including the Authority holding that information)
4. Information relating to any consultations or negotiations or contemplated consultations or negotiations in connection with any labour relations that are arising between the Authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of or office holders under the Authority
5. Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings
6. Information which reveals that the Authority proposes:-
 - (a) To give under any announcement a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or
 - (b) To make an Order or Direction under any enactment
7. Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime.

Huntingdonshire District Council
Pathfinder House
St Mary's Street
Huntingdon PE29 3TN.

- Notes:-
- (i) Additions changes from the previous Forward Plan are annotated ***
 - (ii) Part II confidential items which will be considered in private are annotated ## and shown in italic.

Matter for Decision Description of Decision	Decision Maker	Date decision to be taken	Documents Available	How relevant Officer can be contacted	Reasons for the report to be considered in private (paragraph no.)	Relevant Executive Councillor	Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Panel
NDR Rural Settlements List 2027/28 Annual review of Rural Settlements to facilitate the award of Business Rates Relief.	Executive Councillor for Resident Services and Corporate Performance and Section 151 Officer	11 Nov 2026		Katie Kelly, Head of Revenues, Benefits and Customer Service Tel: (01480) 388151 or email Katie.Kelly@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		N Hunt	
Council Tax Support 2027/28 Annual review of the Local Council Tax Support Scheme.	Cabinet	17 Nov 2026		Katie Kelly, Head of Revenues, Benefits and Customer Service Tel: (01480) 388151 or email Katie.Kelly@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		N Hunt	Environment, Communities & Partnerships

Matter for Decision Description of Decision	Decision Maker	Date decision to be taken	Documents Available	How relevant Officer can be contacted	Reasons for the report to be considered in private (paragraph no.)	Relevant Executive Councillor	Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Panel
Homelessness Strategy Adoption of refreshed Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan.	Cabinet	17 Nov 2026		Jon Collen, Housing Needs Manager Tel: (01480) 388220 or email Jon.Collen@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		N Hunt	Environment, Communities & Partnerships
Exceptional Circumstances Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) application*** Exceptional circumstances application for strategic Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) CIL funding.	Cabinet	15 Dec 2026		Row Lyons, Funding Project Manager Tel: (01480) 388782 or email Row.Lyons@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		T Sanderson	Performance & Growth

Matter for Decision Description of Decision	Decision Maker	Date decision to be taken	Documents Available	How relevant Officer can be contacted	Reasons for the report to be considered in private (paragraph no.)	Relevant Executive Councillor	Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Panel
Council Tax Base To set the Council Tax Base for 2027/28.	Chair of Corporate Governance Committee & Section 151 Officer	17 Dec 2026		Katie Kelly, Head of Revenues, Benefits and Customer Service Tel: (01480) 388151 or email Katie.Kelly@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		N Hunt	
2027/28 Revenue Budget & Medium-Term Financial Strategy*** To consider and approve the budget proposals for the year 2027/28 and the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).	Cabinet	9 Feb 2027		Lydia Morrison, Interim Corporate Director – Finance & Resources Tel: (01480) 388178 or email Lydia.Morrison@huntingdonshire.gov.uk Sandra Beard, Head of Finance Email: Sandra.Beard@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		J Harvey	Performance & Growth

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Committee/Panel – Overview and Scrutiny
(Environment, Communities and Partnerships)
5th November 2026

Cabinet – 17th November 2026

Council – 16th December 2026

Report by: Katie Kelly – Head of Customer
Services, Revenues & Benefits

Lead Cllr: Cllr N Hunt - Executive Councillor
for Resident Services and
Corporate Performance



Wards	Open / Exempt	Key Decision?
ALL	Open	Yes

Council Tax Support Scheme 2027/28

Executive Summary:

This report provides an update on the Local Council Tax Support Scheme that was implemented in April 2024, along with a recommendation to maintain the existing scheme for 2027-28.

1. Recommendations

- 1.1. The Overview and Scrutiny Panel is invited to comment on the Council Tax Support Scheme report

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Cabinet:	17 th November 2026
Council:	16 th December 2026
Report by:	Katie Kelly – Head of Customer Services, Revenues & Benefits
Lead Cllr:	Cllr N Hunt - Executive Councillor for Resident Services and Corporate Performance



Wards
All

Open / Exempt
Open

Key Decision?
Yes

Council Tax Support Scheme 2027/28

Executive Summary:

Whilst support for residents of pensionable age is determined by Central Government, schemes for working-age residents are set locally, with local authorities in England being required to administer their own Local Council Tax Support (CTS) schemes since the abolition of Council Tax Benefit in 2013. Local authorities are required to review their CTS schemes annually and decide whether to maintain their existing scheme or replace it.

The Council made significant amendments to the CTS scheme for 2024/25 to ensure that it provided additional support to low-income households across Huntingdonshire, in line with corporate priorities. This report provides an update on the operation of the scheme.

Recommendations

- 1.1. To note the contents of the report and endorse the recommendation to Council that the scheme principles remain the same for 2027/28.

Key Corporate Plan Priorities

1

Assistance provided via the CTS Scheme directly supports the Council's Corporate Priorities to improve the quality of life for local people, and to deliver good quality, high value-for-money services.

Place Strategy Priorities

1

The support provided to low-income households via the CTS scheme directly supports the Health Embedded journey by reducing financial hardship, a key determinant of health.

Report Author(s)

Katie Kelly, Head of Customer Services, Revenues and Benefits
(katie.kelly@huntingdonshire.gov.uk)

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 Since 2013, the Council has been required to design and administer its own Council Tax Support (CTS) scheme for residents of working age. The scheme for pension-age residents is set by Central Government.
- 1.2 The Council is required to review the CTS scheme each year in accordance with Schedule 1A(5) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and decide whether to maintain or amend the scheme.

2. BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

- 2.1 CTS is a means-tested support scheme that reduces the amount of Council Tax payable by residents on low incomes. Whilst CTS rules for pension-age residents are prescribed by Central Government, local authorities are required to design and administer their own schemes to support residents of working age.
- 2.2 In December 2023, the Council decided to amend the CTS scheme for 2024/25, offering a simplified scheme intended to provide greater levels of support for those most in need, in line with our corporate priority to keep people out of crisis and support those in crisis.
- 2.3 The new scheme was designed to offer support of up to 100% Council Tax liability, an increase from the previous scheme which was capped for many at 80%. It also introduced weekly income bands linked to Universal Credit (UC) standard allowances to determine levels of support, making the scheme easier to understand.
- 2.4 The requirement for residents to make a separate claim for CTS when making a claim for UC was also removed, making it easier for residents to receive the support to which they are entitled.
- 2.5 The following impacts should be noted:

Intention	Impact
To increase support for low-income households	The number of households receiving 100% support is currently 3997, or 4.69% of households across the district. This is an increase of 56 since August 2025. In August 2024, this figure was 3,893.
To make the scheme easier to access	The removal of the requirement for residents to make a separate claim for CTS when claiming UC has supported more households to access the scheme, as it was previously noted that some residents receiving UC were not claiming the support to which they were entitled under the CTS scheme. In August 2024 there were 4,874 households in receipt of CTS. By August 2025 this had increased

	to 5,125, and in August 2026 this figure currently stands at 5,035, or around 5.92% of households across the district.
Improve administration and responsiveness	The updated scheme has enabled greater use of technology to support the automated processing of changes in circumstances. These changes have enabled the team to tolerate increases in caseload and work volumes within existing resources, whilst ensuring decisions continue to be reached in a timely manner. In the period April–August 2026, 71.44% of changes in circumstances were completed automatically, compared to 69.84% in the same period last year and 62.52% in 2024. The average number of days to process changes is currently 3.02, a slight increase from 2.86 in the same period last year. However, it should be noted that the number of changes processed during this period has increased by 5,400. The average number of days to process changes for the period April–August 2024 was 3.42. In the period April–August 2026, the average number of days taken to process new claims was 20.79. This is a slight increase on the previous year's figure of 18.8, but less than the figure of 22.7 days the year before.
Reduce the number of bills issued due to CTS	The introduction of income bands was intended to provide some stability for residents, so that not every change in circumstances would result in a change in the amount of support awarded. 2026 year-to-date figures show that 452 fewer bills have been issued as a result of CTS when compared to the previous year, despite the higher number of changes being processed. The trend of an overall reduction in volumes of non-payment reminders and summonses has also continued into the first five months of this financial year.

- 2.6 Analysis of the CTS scheme to date shows that it continues to operate as intended, delivering much-needed support to low-income households across the district within a responsive timeframe.

- 2.7 It is therefore recommended that the scheme remains the same for 2027/28, with the starting point for the income bands increased in line with annual uplifts in the standard allowances for Universal Credit when confirmed by DWP. An overview of the scheme principles can be found in Appendix A.

3. COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

(The comments of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Panel will be included in this section prior to its consideration by the Cabinet.)

- 3.1 Text

4. IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

4.1 Council Key Priorities and Performance

- 4.1.1 The Corporate Plan for 2023-2028 outlines the Council's commitment to:

- improve the quality of life for local people;
- create a better Huntingdonshire for future generations; and
- deliver good quality, high value-for-money services.

- 4.1.2 The CTS scheme directly supports points 1 and 3, by ensuring that the requirement to pay Council Tax continues to be proportionate to the financial circumstances of residents by reducing or even eliminating the requirement for contributions from low-income households across the district.

- 4.1.3 Changes to the scheme have enabled improvements in service delivery, ensuring that residents receive decisions in a timely manner whilst reducing the risk of overpayments, and have enabled the team to manage an increased caseload within existing resources.

4.2 Financial Implications

- 4.2.1 CTS is a Council Tax discount and as such the cost of the scheme is calculated as a reduction to the Council Tax base. That is, the number of band D equivalent dwellings across the district from which Council Tax can be generated. As such, the cost of the scheme is shared proportionately across all precepting authorities, in line with the treatment for other discounts and exemptions.

- 4.2.2 A forecast of the Council Tax base is set each year, which includes estimates of new properties being added to the Council Tax list, along with a forecast of the impact of other discounts, exemptions and CTS. The current trend indicates that the tax-base impact of the CTS scheme remains broadly in line with forecast.

4.3 Legal & Constitutional Implications

- 4.3.1 The Council is required to review its Council Tax Support scheme each year in accordance with Schedule 1A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

4.4 Community Impact

- 4.4.1 The recommendation supports a continued positive community impact by maintaining levels of Council Tax Support for low-income households across the district, helping to reduce financial hardship and supporting the Council's priority to improve the quality of life for local people.

4.5 Equality & Diversity Implications

- 4.5.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment was completed prior to the 2024 scheme amendments being made, which is considered to remain relevant. Details can be found in Appendix B.

4.6 Implications on Resources

- 4.6.1 N/A

4.7 Health & Wellbeing Implications

- 4.7.1 The recommendation supports positive health and wellbeing outcomes by helping to reduce financial hardship for low-income households, recognising that financial stability is an important factor in residents' overall wellbeing.

4.8 Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) Implications

- 4.8.1 This report relates to the CTS scheme for 2027/28 only and so there are no LGR implications to consider as part of this report.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 5.1 The Council is required to review the CTS scheme each year in accordance with schedule 1A (5) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.
- 5.2 If the decision is not taken, the Council would not meet its statutory requirement to agree a CTS scheme for 2027/28, which would impact on its ability to support low-income households.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS– LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

APPENDIX A – Scheme Principles 2027/28

APPENDIX B – Equalities Impact Assessment 2023

APPENDIX A – CTS Scheme Principles 2027/28

1) Income Bands

The scheme is designed so that Band 1 figures align with Universal Credit allowances, followed by bands of £50. These are updated annually in line with UC allowance uprating. The figures shown below are for 2026/27.

Band	Discount	Single Person (weekly net income)	Couple with no children (weekly net income)	Couple or Lone Parent with one child/young person (weekly net income)	Couple or Lone Parent with two children /young persons (weekly net income)	Couple or Lone Parent with three children /young persons (weekly net income)	Couple or Lone Parent with four or more children/young persons (weekly net income)
1*	100%	Less than £99.01	Less than £154.01	Less than £225.01	Less than £295.01	Less than £365.01	Less than £435.01
2	75%	£99.01 to £149.00	£154.01 to £204.00	£225.01 to £275.00	£295.01 to £345.00	£365.01 to £415.00	£435.01 to £485.00
3	50%	£149.01 to £199.00	£204.01 to £254.00	£275.01 to £325.00	£345.01 to £395.00	£415.01 to £465.00	£485.01 to £535.00
4	25%	£199.01 to £249.00	£254.01 to £304.00	£325.01 to £375.00	£395.01 to £445.00	£465.01 to £515.00	£535.01 to £585.00
5	0%	£249.01 +	£304.01+	£375.01+	£445.01+	£515.01+	£585.01+

- 2) The highest level of discount is equal to the maximum Council Tax liability (100%), Band 1, and all current applicants that are in receipt of a ‘*passported benefit’ such as Employment and Support Allowance (Income Related) will receive maximum discount;
- 3) All other discount levels are based on the applicant’s and partner’s, (where they have one) net weekly income, and the scheme allows for variation in household size with the levels of income per band increasing where an applicant has a partner, and / or dependants.
- 4) Any changes are applied on a daily basis in line with Council Tax liability. Claims can be backdated up to a maximum of 12 months from the date of claim where circumstances show that the applicant would have been continuously eligible for the period in question had they applied at the time.
- 5) There are no reductions in CTS award levels where an applicant has non-dependants living with them.
- 6) To encourage work, a standard disregard of up to £50 per week is provided against all earnings.
- 7) Disability benefits such as Disability Living Allowance and Personal Independence Payment are disregarded, and a further disregard of £50 per week is applied to a customers’ total income where one of those benefits are in payment.

- 8) Carer's Allowance and the Support Component of Employment and Support Allowance is disregarded to protect carers and those with additional support needs.
- 9) Childcare, child maintenance, and child benefit is disregarded, in order to support families.
- 10) Universal Credit is made up of different components dependant on the household circumstances. The following elements are disregarded within the scheme: housing element, limited capability for work, childcare, disabled child, and carer's element.
- 11) War pensions and war disablement pensions are disregarded.
- 12) The Capital limit is set at £10,000, and any applicant who has capital above that level will not qualify.
- 13) The CTS scheme makes provision for discretionary support to be sought on the grounds of exceptional hardship. Further details can be found within the Council Tax Discretionary Relief Policy.
- 14) The full technical scheme document is published on the website [here](#)

Huntingdonshire District Council Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)



Service area	Revenues and Benefits
Date of assessment	20/09/2023
Name of policy/service to be assessed	Council Tax Support Scheme (CTS) 2024-25
Is this a new or existing policy/service?	Redesign of existing scheme
Name of manager responsible for new or amended policy/service	Katie Kelly
Names of people conducting the assessment	Katie Kelly
Step 1 – Description of new or amended policy/service	
Describe the aims; objectives and purpose of the new or amended policy/service (include how it fits in to wider aims or strategic objectives).	Our Corporate plan for 2023-2028 outlines our commitment to: • Improve the happiness and wellbeing of residents by keeping people out of crisis and helping those in crisis; and • Deliver good quality, high value-for-money services A review of the CTS scheme was listed as an action within the corporate plan in furtherance of these aims. The Council is required to review its scheme for working age each year. There are issues with the current scheme that need to be addressed if the system is to continue to provide effective support to low-income taxpayers and to support the Council to provide the service in an efficient manner. The main issues are as follows: • The need to assist low-income households and assist in the collection

Huntingdonshire District Council Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)



	of Council Tax; • The introduction of Universal Credit for working age applicants; and • The need for a simplification of the scheme In view of the problems being experienced with the current scheme, it is proposed that an alternative approach be taken from 2024/25. The approach has been to fundamentally redesign the scheme to address all of the issues with the current scheme and in particular; (a) The level of support available to the poorest households: (b) The problems with the introduction of full-service Universal Credit; and (c) The significant increase in administration costs due to the high level of changes received in respect of Universal Credit. Pension age applicants for CTS will not be affected by this change
The Equality Act 2010 requires the Council to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations, the Council also needs to demonstrate its compliance with the Equality Duty. The Council therefore needs to understand how its decisions and activities impact on different people. An Equality Impact Assessment is the current method by which the Council can assess and keep a record of the impact of new or amended strategies, policies, functions or services. The council retains these duties even when outsourcing services or providing shared services. <i>Definition of Adverse Impact - occurs when a decision, practice, or Policy has a disproportionately negative effect on a protected group. Adverse Impact may be unintentional.</i>	
Are there any (existing) equality objectives of the new/amended policy/service	Improved support for working age applicants

Huntingdonshire District Council Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)



Who is intended to benefit from the new/amended policy/service and in what way?	Low income working age households who apply and qualify for Council Tax Reduction. The revised scheme will: (a) Provide more support to those on the lowest income (up to 100% of the Council Tax payable); (b) Be easier to understand and claim; and (c) Address the administration issues caused by the introduction of Universal Credit.														
What are the intended outcomes of this new/amended policy/service?	Improved support for low-income households														
Step 2 – Data															
What baseline quantitative data (statistics) do you have about the function relating to equalities groups (e.g. monitoring data on proportions of service users compared to proportions in the population), relevant to this new/amended policy/service? Huntingdonshire Statistics	Financial modelling has been conducted across the current working age caseload in order to assess any potential impacts. The current working age caseload is as follows: <table> <tr> <td>Total caseload:</td><td>4,121</td></tr> <tr> <td>Female:</td><td>67.8%, Male 32.2% split</td></tr> <tr> <td>Age Range:</td><td>18-24 4.6%</td></tr> <tr> <td></td><td>25-34 20.5%</td></tr> <tr> <td></td><td>35-44 23.4%</td></tr> <tr> <td></td><td>45-59 36.4%</td></tr> <tr> <td></td><td>60+ 15.1</td></tr> </table> Proportion of cases with a disability premium: 43.4% Financial modelling has shown that 96% of caseload will be better off or will have no change to the levels of support awarded as a result of changes to the scheme. Around 4% may receive a reduced amount or nil	Total caseload:	4,121	Female:	67.8%, Male 32.2% split	Age Range:	18-24 4.6%		25-34 20.5%		35-44 23.4%		45-59 36.4%		60+ 15.1
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Huntingdonshire District Council Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)



	award. Where this occurs, the applicant may apply for additional support under the Council's Exceptional Hardship scheme.
What qualitative data (opinions etc) do you have on different groups (e.g. comments from previous consumer satisfaction surveys/consultation, feedback exercises, or evidence from other authorities undertaking similar work), relevant to this new/amended policy/service?	The proposals have been subject to a statutory consultation process. A public consultation ran for 7 weeks from 21 st July 2023. A consultation for major preceptors ran for 4 weeks from the same date. The responses received are contained within Appendix C of the report.
Age – this refers to the protected characteristic of age. A person belonging to a particular age (for example 32-year olds) or range of ages (for example 18 to 30-year olds). Are there concerns that the new policy/service could have a differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic? Are there any concerns that the policy/service amendments could have differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic? For some services this should include consideration of impact in terms of safeguarding young people. What evidence do you have for your answer?	The proposed changes will affect working age applicants only. Pension age applicants will not be affected as their scheme is prescribed by Government. The majority of working age applicants will see an increase in support or maintain the same level of support. Inevitably with any change in scheme there may be some that received a reduced amount or nil award under the new scheme. Where this occurs, the applicant may apply for additional support under the Council's Exceptional Hardship scheme.
Disability – this refers the protected characteristic of disability. A person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.	The proposed change to the scheme will have no differential impact due to disability, the proposed scheme is designed to continue to protect the disabled by disregarding disability benefits such as Disability Living Allowance and Personal Independence Payments.

Huntingdonshire District Council Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)



Are there concerns that the new policy/service could have a differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic. Are there any concerns that the policy/service amendments could have differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic? What evidence do you have for your answer?	The scheme will also further protect disabled applicants as it will provide a further income disregard per week which will reduce the level of income taken into account when calculating any support. If a reduction in support occurs as a result of changes to the scheme, the applicant may apply for additional support under the Council's Exceptional Hardship scheme.
Gender reassignment – gender reassignment discrimination occurs when a person is treated differently because they are trans*. Are there concerns that the new policy/service could have a differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic. Are there any concerns that the policy/service amendments could have differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic? What evidence do you have for your answer? *although the term gender reassignment and transsexual is in the Equality Act 2010, it is accepted that the preferred term is trans.	The proposed change to the scheme will have no differential impact due to gender or gender reassignment.
Marriage and civil partnership in the workplace; this refers the protected characteristic of marriage and civil partnership which is a union between a man and a woman or between a same-sex couple. Civil partnership is between partners of the same sex. Discrimination is when a person is treated differently at work because a person is married or in a civil partnership. Are there concerns that the new policy/service could have a differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic.	The proposed change to the scheme will have no differential impact due to marriage or civil partnership

Huntingdonshire District Council Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)



Are there any concerns that the policy/service amendments could have differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic? What evidence do you have for your answer?	
Are there concerns that the function could have a differential impact in terms of pregnancy and maternity in the workplace (e.g. pregnant or breast-feeding women). Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding. Are there concerns that the new policy/service could have a differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic. Are there any concerns that the policy/service amendments could have differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic? What evidence do you have for your answer?	The proposed change to the scheme will have no differential impact due to pregnancy or maternity
Race – this refers to the protected characteristic of race. It refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins. Gypsy/Travellers are distinct group within this category Are there concerns that the new policy/service could have a differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic.	The proposed change to the scheme will have no differential impact due to race

Huntingdonshire District Council Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)



Are there any concerns that the policy/service amendments could have differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic? What evidence do you have for your answer?	
Religion and Belief in the workplace - refers to any religion, including a lack of religion. Belief refers to any religious or philosophical belief and includes a lack of belief. Are there concerns that the new policy/service could have a differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic. Are there any concerns that the policy/service amendments could have differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic? What evidence do you have for your answer?	The proposed change to the scheme will have no differential impact due to religion or belief
Sex - this refers to the protected characteristic of sex which can mean either male or female, or a group of people like men or boys, or women or girls. Are there concerns that the new policy/service could have a differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic. Are there any concerns that the policy/service amendments could have differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic? What evidence do you have for your answer?	The proposed change to the scheme will have no differential impact due to sex.

Huntingdonshire District Council Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)



Sexual orientation – this relates to whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes. Are there concerns that the new policy/service could have a differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic. Are there any concerns that the policy/service amendments could have differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic? What evidence do you have for your answer?	The proposed change to the scheme will have no differential impact due to sexual orientation
Are there concerns that the function could have a differential impact on part time/full time employees? What evidence do you have for your answer?	The proposed change to the scheme will have no differential impact due to part-time or full-time employees. The scheme treats earnings in the same way irrespective of hours worked.
Are there concerns that the function could have a differential impact in terms of specific characteristics of Huntingdonshire e.g. Rural isolation	The proposed change to the scheme will have no differential impact for any other reasons and in summary is more generous to working age applicants.

Findings

Pension age applicants will not be affected as their scheme is prescribed by Central Government. Other measures undertaken to mitigate any potential negative impact on other protected groups include consulting the public about the proposed changes and asking for their views on the proposals, the disregard of disability benefits and implementation of the Council's CTS Exceptional Hardship scheme.

Council Tax Support is widely publicised on the Council's website, through information with Council Tax bills, and via signposting by officers. The Council has good links with independent debt advice agencies across the district, some of which fed into the consultation, to where customers that may be struggling financially would be signposted for support.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the EIA is approved

O & S Panel (E, C & P) – 5th November 2026
Cabinet – 17th November 2026

Report by:
Housing Needs & Resources Manager

Lead Cllr:
Cllr N Hunt – Executive Councillor for Resident
Services & Corporate Performance



Wards	Open / Exempt	Key Decision?
All	Open	Yes

Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-2031 – Consultation Draft

Executive Summary: This report sets out the statutory need to complete a review of homelessness and produce a strategy, explaining how the Council intends to address homelessness issues within the district. It is also a statutory requirement to consult widely before formally adopting a Strategy and the purpose of this report is to seek approval to consult on this Strategy before formal adoption.

The Strategy has four main purposes:

1. To address the causes of homelessness in the area;
2. To introduce initiatives to prevent homelessness wherever possible;
3. To ensure that the Council provides sufficient temporary accommodation for those households that are or may become homeless; and
4. To ensure that appropriate support is available for people who have previously experienced homelessness in order to prevent it happening again.

The Strategy identifies five main priorities that our work will focus on delivering. These are:

Priority 1: Prevent homelessness through earlier intervention and targeted support.

Priority 2: Provide high-quality, person-centred homelessness services.

Priority 3: Reduce rough sleeping and support recovery.

Priority 4: Increase access to safe, suitable and sustainable housing.

Priority 5: Develop strong partnerships and place lived experience at the heart of service delivery.

Recommendations

Overview & Scrutiny (Environment, Communities & partnerships) is recommended to:

- 1.1. Review and comment on the Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-2031 - consultation draft.

O & S Panel (E, C & P) – 5th November 2026
Cabinet – 17th November 2026

Report by:
Housing Needs & Resources Manager

Lead Cllr:
Cllr N Hunt – Executive Councillor for Resident
Services & Corporate Performance



Wards	Open / Exempt	Key Decision?
All	Open	Yes

Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-2031

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Priority 1: Prevent homelessness through earlier intervention and targeted support.

Priority 2: Provide high-quality, person-centred homelessness services.

Priority 3: Reduce rough sleeping and support recovery.

Priority 4: Increase access to safe, suitable and sustainable housing.

Priority 5: Develop strong partnerships and place lived experience at the heart of service delivery.

Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended to:

- 1.1. Approve the Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-2031 as a consultation draft.
- 1.2. Delegate authority to the Corporate Director – Communities, in consultation with the Executive Councillor for Resident Services & Corporate Performance, to:
 - a) adopt the Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026 unless there are major issues raised at the consultation stage that require reconsideration by Cabinet.
 - b) make administrative or minor changes to the Strategy, within the life of the Strategy. To include amendments in response to changes in legislation or Government programmes that do not constitute a major shift in the Strategy's direction.
 - c) approve an annual Action Plan that accompanies the Strategy. The Action Plan being an operational plan that has actions linked to the approved strategic priorities.

Key Corporate Plan Priorities

1

Improving quality of life for local people

Keeping people out of crisis

Helping people in crisis

Report Author(s)

Author 1, Housing Needs & Resources Manager, Jon.Collen@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1** The Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy is a major policy item for the Council. It sets out the key role that the Council plays in preventing homelessness, assisting households where homelessness cannot be prevented and how homelessness can be resolved, primarily by ensuring that there are sufficient options in the private or social rented sectors to provide new homes.
- 1.2** The purpose of this report is to seek approval to consult widely on this Strategy prior to formal adoption.

2. BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

- 2.1** There is a statutory requirement for all housing authorities to publish a Homelessness Strategy every 5 years. The Council's last strategy was completed in 2021 and is therefore due again. It was timely to go through this process given that there have been a number of policy announcements and legislative changes from Government over the last 12 months.
- 2.2** The main policy drivers that have informed the Strategy are:
 - ◆ the Government's National Plan to End Homelessness, published in December 2025, establishing a vision that homelessness should be rare, brief and non-recurring; and
 - ◆ the national Rough Sleeping Programme launched in August 2026. The programme combines immediate provision for a route off the street for everyone before Christmas this year, with longer-term settled accommodation and intensive support for people who have experienced long-term rough sleeping.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED & NOT RECOMMENDED

- 3.1** The Council must publish a revised Strategy every 5 years to fulfil its statutory duties. Having a current Strategy would mean that the Council is complying with the Homelessness Act 2002.

4. COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

- 4.1** The comments of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Panel will be included in this section prior to its consideration by the Cabinet.

5. POST-DECISION IMPLEMENTATION

- 5.1** The Council is required to consult widely prior to adopting or modifying a homelessness strategy. Consultation with partners and the public will take place for an eight-week period prior to the draft Strategy being adopted, subject to any necessary changes arising from the consultation. Should the consultation give rise to the need to make any significant changes to the Strategy, it will be brought back before Cabinet to discuss and approve any such changes.

6. IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

6.1 Council Key Priorities and Performance

The Strategy is aligned with the priorities within the Corporate plan.

Specifically, it aims to:

- Improve the quality of life for local people; by
 - Keeping people out of crisis
 - Helping people in crisis

Five additional metrics have been introduced by Government as part of the Local Outcomes Framework capturing: temporary accommodation, prevention and relief duties, and rough sleeping. The aim of including these outcome metrics is to encourage local authorities to change approaches and practice that will prevent and reduce homelessness and rough sleeping in their area. The Strategy and identified priorities align with these new metrics and performance against these will be captured as part of our annual performance report and the progress being made against the action plan.

6.2 Financial Implications

- 6.2.1** Preparation of the Strategy involves staffing resource that is met within existing budgets. The annual Action Plans that will be developed will commit the Council to exploring and delivering on various activities that are likely to have resource implications. Many of these will be met through business-as-usual activities but where resource implications are identified they will be explored as part of the delivery against the Action Plan.
- 6.2.2** Government awards local housing authorities an annual revenue grant to support homelessness prevention activities and contribute to the cost of temporary accommodation. These grants have been reviewed in 2026/27, with Government announcing for the first time, a three-year revenue funding commitment to local authorities attached to the delivery of the National Plan to End Homelessness. This funding is intended to support councils to deliver the vision in the cross-government strategy on homelessness and rough sleeping, which the priorities within the Strategy mirror.
- 6.2.3** 2026/27 is the first year of this allocation and so the Council has some certainty of funding through to 2028/29. This funding means that it is unlikely that any growth bids will be required through the Medium-Term Financial Planning process during this three-year period to deliver on activities within the action plan.
- 6.2.4** The new grant combines several grant schemes into one, now called the Homelessness, Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse Grant (HRSDAG). The purpose of the grant is to support local authorities to:
- a. Discharge their duties under the Housing Act 1996, as set out in the Homelessness Code of Guidance for local authorities, and provide support for rough sleeping.
 - b. Deliver against local homelessness strategies and the metrics in the Local Outcomes Framework.
 - c. Focus on early intervention and maximising prevention activities.

- 6.2.5** The table below gives the Council's allocation of HRSDAG over the three-year period:

Year	HRSDAG Allocation
2026/27	£1,143,289
2027/28	£1,155,201
2028/29	£1,162,406

6.3 Policy, Legal & Constitutional Implications

- 6.3.1** The Strategy outlines the Council's priorities and strategic direction relating to homelessness and rough sleeping. This in turn is governed by the relevant homelessness legislation, placing various duties on the Council to provide homelessness assistance. The Strategy does not alter those duties, and it does not introduce any new policy or legal implications.
- 6.3.2** The adoption of a plan or strategy is the responsibility of Cabinet unless it falls within the documents named in Article 4 of the Constitution. The Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy is not named in Article 4 and thus is the responsibility of Cabinet.
- 6.3.3** The purpose of the delegations is to provide a more efficient way of making minor changes, saving council time and resources. The Cabinet can be reassured that any major shift in the Strategy's direction would still require a new formal report and decision.

6.4 Community Impact

- 6.4.1** The Strategy sets out the Council's priorities and action plan, which are designed to deliver positive outcomes for residents faced with the threat of homelessness. By responding to residents faced with housing difficulties the Strategy aims to keep people out of crisis, or where homelessness cannot be prevented, aims to provide assistance to help people in crisis.

6.5 Equality & Diversity Implications

- 6.5.1** The Strategy is expected to deliver positive impacts across all protected characteristics by improving access to housing, support services, and early intervention to prevent homelessness. While no direct negative impacts have been identified, it is acknowledged that there is the potential for indirect or systemic barriers affecting certain groups that may face disproportionate challenges.
- 6.5.2** For example, individuals with disabilities, particularly those with mental health conditions, are overrepresented in homelessness statistics and will benefit from improved accessibility and tailored support. Ethnic minorities and LGBTQ+ individuals may face barriers due to language, discrimination, or lack of inclusive services; these will be addressed through staff training, monitoring of outcomes, and culturally competent service delivery. Victims of domestic abuse, predominantly women, and single males experiencing rough sleeping will be supported through expanded support services and specialist accommodation.

6.6 Implications on Resources

- 6.6.1** As highlighted earlier, the Strategy will be delivered within existing resources and where additional resources are required, as emerges from the delivery of the annual action plan, these will be met from the Government grant allocation.

6.7 Health & Wellbeing Implications

- 6.7.1** Homelessness and rough sleeping can have a significant impact on a person's health and wellbeing, and many health issues may ultimately be a contributing factor leading to homelessness. The Strategy's priorities aim to provide enhanced support, identifying housing issues at the earliest opportunity so that homelessness may be avoided all together. Where this is not possible, the emergency response and the support to recover and move to safe, suitable accommodation will both directly and indirectly help to minimise the potential impact on someone's health and wellbeing.

6.8 Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) Implications⁴

- 6.8.1** There are no direct implications of the Strategy on LGR. Under LGR any newly created local authority would be required to publish its own Homelessness Strategy.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS – LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

Document List	Custodian	File Location
National Plan to End Homelessness	Gov.uk	National Plan
Rough Sleeping Programme	Gov.uk	Rough Sleeping Programme
Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2021-2031 – consultation draft.	HDC	Appendix 1 of this report
Action Plan Dec 2026 to March 2028	HDC	Appendix 2 of this report

Huntingdonshire District Council

Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026–2031 – Consultation Draft

Preventing Homelessness, Supporting Recovery and Ending Rough Sleeping

Foreword

Everyone deserves a safe, secure and affordable place to call home. Housing provides the foundation from which people can build healthy, independent and fulfilling lives. When that foundation is lost, the impacts can be profound, affecting health, wellbeing, employment, education, family relationships and community cohesion.

Like many areas across England, Huntingdonshire is experiencing increasing pressure on its housing system. Rising housing costs, limited affordability, increasing demand for homelessness assistance and growing complexity of support needs continue to create significant challenges for residents and partner organisations alike. At the same time, the rural nature of our district presents unique challenges, with residents often facing barriers to accessing services, support and suitable accommodation.

Despite these challenges, Huntingdonshire remains a place of opportunity, innovation and strong partnership working. Across the district, public services, housing providers, health organisations, voluntary agencies, town and parish councils and community groups are working together to improve outcomes for residents experiencing housing difficulties.

This Strategy sets out our shared vision for tackling homelessness and rough sleeping between 2026 and 2031. It establishes a clear framework for action based on prevention, early intervention, partnership working and housing-led solutions. It reflects the Government's ambition that homelessness should be rare, brief and non-recurring.

Our commitment is simple: wherever possible, we will prevent homelessness before it occurs. Where homelessness cannot be prevented, we will ensure people receive timely support, access to suitable accommodation and the assistance needed to build a stable and sustainable future.

Working together with our partners and communities, we will continue striving towards a Huntingdonshire where everyone has the opportunity to live safely, independently and securely.

1. Introduction

Homelessness remains one of the most significant social challenges facing communities across the country. While the causes of homelessness are often complex and varied, the consequences are consistently damaging for individuals, families and communities.

Homelessness describes a situation where an individual or household does not have access to accommodation that is available, suitable, secure, and reasonable for them to occupy as their home. It includes both visible homelessness, such as rough sleeping, and hidden forms of homelessness, such as staying temporarily with friends or family, or being at risk of losing their home.

The Homelessness Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities to assess homelessness needs and publish a strategy setting out how homelessness will be prevented and addressed. This Strategy fulfils that requirement and provides Huntingdonshire District Council's strategic framework for tackling homelessness and rough sleeping between 2026 and 2031.

The Strategy has been informed by:

- A review of homelessness and rough sleeping within Huntingdonshire.
- Engagement with statutory, voluntary and community sector partners.
- Local housing and demographic evidence.
- National policy and legislative developments.

This document establishes the Council's vision, priorities and strategic direction. Delivery will be supported through a detailed Action Plan, which will be reviewed annually to ensure services remain responsive to changing needs and emerging challenges.

2. Policy, Legislative and Strategic Context

2.1 National Policy Context

The national approach to homelessness has increasingly focused on prevention, early intervention and housing-led solutions. There is growing recognition that homelessness cannot be addressed solely through crisis responses and emergency accommodation. Sustainable outcomes require coordinated action across housing, welfare, health, employment and support services.

Government is increasingly involving Mayoral Strategic Authorities (MSA's) within the area of homelessness and rough sleeping. An example is the recent allocation of Rough Sleeping Programme funding to MSA's to coordinate strategic regional

responses, pool resources across local council boundaries, and integrate housing, health, criminal justice, and support services.

In December 2025, the Government published *A National Plan to End Homelessness*, establishing a vision that homelessness should be rare, brief and non-recurring. The Plan is based on five interrelated pillars:

Universal Prevention

Addressing the root causes of homelessness through housing supply, affordability, poverty reduction and improved tenancy security.

Targeted Prevention

Providing enhanced support to groups known to face an increased risk of homelessness, including care leavers, prison leavers, survivors of domestic abuse and people leaving health institutions.

Preventing Crisis

Identifying housing issues at the earliest opportunity and helping households maintain accommodation wherever possible.

Improving Emergency Responses

Ensuring people who experience homelessness have access to safe, suitable accommodation and effective support.

Recovery and Preventing Repeat Homelessness

Supporting residents to maintain stable housing and avoid future experiences of homelessness.

These principles underpin this Strategy and reinforce the importance of prevention, partnership and sustainable housing outcomes.

2.2 Legislative Framework

The Council delivers its homelessness functions within a comprehensive legislative framework that defines local authority duties and responsibilities.

Key legislation includes:

- Housing Act 1996 (as amended)
- Homelessness Act 2002
- Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
- Localism Act 2011
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Care Act 2014

Appendix 1

- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Equality Act 2010
- Mental Health Act 1983 (as amended)

Together, this framework places a strong emphasis on early intervention, prevention, partnership working and protecting vulnerable households.

The Rough Sleeping Programme

The Government's Rough Sleeping Programme represents a significant national commitment to reducing and ultimately ending rough sleeping. The programme promotes rapid access to accommodation, intensive wraparound support and long-term housing solutions for people experiencing the most severe and prolonged forms of homelessness.

The programme supports local authorities and partners to strengthen outreach services, improve accommodation pathways and create sustainable routes away from rough sleeping.

2.3 Regional and Sub-Regional Context

Many drivers of homelessness extend beyond district boundaries. Huntingdonshire therefore works closely with partners across Cambridgeshire and the wider region to develop coordinated responses to housing need and rough sleeping.

The Council works alongside:

- Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority
- Cambridgeshire County Council
- Cambridgeshire's district and city councils
- Parish Councils
- Housing associations and registered providers
- Health and social care partners
- The Integrated Care System
- Police, Probation and criminal justice agencies
- Voluntary, community and faith sector organisations

Strong partnership working helps deliver effective pathways for residents leaving institutions, supports rough sleeping initiatives and promotes coordinated responses to housing pressures.

3. Huntingdonshire: Local Context

Huntingdonshire is the largest district in Cambridgeshire by geographical area and is home to a diverse mix of market towns, villages and rural communities.

The district's principal settlements include:

- Huntingdon
- St Neots
- St Ives
- Ramsey
- Godmanchester

Huntingdonshire continues to experience population growth and economic development, making it an attractive place to live and work. However, these strengths are accompanied by increasing pressure on housing affordability and housing supply.

Recent data from the Office for National Statistics show that Huntingdonshire residents continue to face a range of housing challenges including:

- Rising private sector rents – with the average monthly rent in September 2026 being £1,065, 4% higher than the same month in the previous year.
- High barriers to home ownership – average house prices being £307,000 in August 2026, a 1% rise over the previous year.
- Ongoing demand for affordable housing – over 3000 households on the housing register as at the end of September 2026.
- Increased pressure on temporary accommodation – 135 households in temporary accommodation at the end of September 2026 compared to 129 a year earlier.
- Reduced housing options for lower-income households

The rural nature of the district also presents additional challenges. Hidden homelessness can be more difficult to identify, while transport limitations and reduced access to services can make it harder for vulnerable residents to obtain support.

These local circumstances require a homelessness response that is flexible, preventative and tailored to the needs of both urban and rural communities.

This Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy links closely to several other key council strategies because homelessness is driven by multi-faceted social, health, economic, and housing supply issues.

The diagram below illustrates which strategies homelessness is closely linked to and it is recognised how the strategic direction and work in these other areas may influence our ability to help resolve homelessness through areas such as the supply of affordable housing.



4. Homelessness in Huntingdonshire: Needs, Trends and Challenges

The Council's Homelessness Review identified a number of key trends influencing local demand and shaping future service requirements.

Housing Affordability

Increasing housing costs continue to place pressure on households across all tenures. Access to both social housing and the private rented sector remains challenging for many residents.

Increasing Demand

The number of households seeking homelessness assistance has continued to increase, reflecting wider economic pressures and worsening affordability.

Temporary Accommodation Pressures

Demand for temporary accommodation remains significant, creating both operational and financial pressures and highlighting the need for preventative approaches.

Rough Sleeping

While rough sleeping levels remain relatively low compared with some urban areas, rough sleeping continues to occur within the district. Hidden homelessness and sofa surfing remain areas of concern.

Multiple Disadvantage

Many residents experiencing homelessness face several interconnected challenges, including:

- Poor mental health
- Substance misuse
- Domestic abuse
- Family breakdown
- Financial hardship
- Physical health problems
- Social isolation

These factors demonstrate that homelessness is rarely caused by a single issue and that sustainable solutions require both suitable housing and personalised support.

5. Strategic Challenges

While Huntingdonshire remains a prosperous and desirable place to live, a number of structural and emerging challenges continue to influence levels of homelessness and housing insecurity.

Key challenges include:

- Rising housing costs and affordability pressures.
- Demand for affordable rented housing exceeding supply.
- Increasing use and cost of temporary accommodation.
- Growing complexity of support needs.
- Access to accommodation for single people and younger households.

- Rural isolation and hidden homelessness.
- Economic uncertainty and cost of living pressures.
- Workforce recruitment and capacity challenges across housing and support services.

The Council and its partners must respond proactively through prevention, innovation, partnership working and effective use of resources.

6. Our Vision

Our Vision for 2031

Our vision is that homelessness in Huntingdonshire should be rare, brief and non-recurring. We will work with residents, communities and partners to ensure everyone has access to safe, suitable and sustainable accommodation, together with the support required to maintain independence, improve wellbeing and achieve positive life outcomes.

7. Our Strategic Ambitions

Make Homelessness Rare

By addressing the root causes of homelessness and strengthening prevention, resilience and early intervention services.

Make Homelessness Brief

By ensuring rapid access to advice, support and suitable accommodation whenever homelessness cannot be prevented.

Make Homelessness Non-Recurring

By helping residents sustain accommodation, build resilience and access the support required for long-term housing stability.

8. Our Principles

We will:

- Put prevention first.
- Intervene early.
- Place residents at the centre of service delivery.
- Work collaboratively.

- Promote housing-led solutions.
- Champion equality and inclusion.
- Value lived experience.
- Pursue continuous improvement through evidence and learning.

9. Our Strategic Priorities

Priority 1

Prevent Homelessness Through Earlier Intervention and Targeted Support

Prevention remains the most effective way of reducing homelessness and improving outcomes for residents.

We will strengthen early intervention, tenancy sustainment and targeted support to identify housing issues before they escalate into crisis.

Strategic Outcomes

- Earlier identification of risk.
- Increased tenancy sustainment.
- Fewer homelessness presentations.
- Improved access to preventative support.
- Ensure residents in rural communities can access prevention, advice and support services regardless of location.

Priority 2

Provide High-Quality, Person-Centred Homelessness Services

Where homelessness cannot be prevented, residents should receive a timely, coordinated and compassionate response.

We will continue improving customer experience, assessment processes and accommodation pathways.

Strategic Outcomes

- Faster access to support.
- Reduced time spent in temporary accommodation.
- Improved housing outcomes.

Priority 3

Reduce Rough Sleeping and Support Recovery

No one should be forced to sleep rough.

We recognise that rough sleeping is often the most visible form of homelessness but represents only a small proportion of those experiencing housing insecurity. We will continue to strengthen local outreach arrangements, improve partnership responses and ensure people sleeping rough are supported into accommodation as quickly as possible.

Particular focus will be given to preventing repeat rough sleeping and supporting people with complex needs.

Strategic Outcomes

- Reduced rough sleeping.
- Improved access to support services and supported housing options.
- More sustainable move-on into settled housing.
- Reduced repeat rough sleeping.

Priority 4

Increase Access to Safe, Suitable and Sustainable Housing

Access to appropriate housing is fundamental to preventing and relieving homelessness.

We will work closely with housing providers, developers, landlords and support agencies to increase housing opportunities and improve accommodation pathways.

Strategic Outcomes

- Increased housing options.
- Improved access to affordable housing.
- Better move-on opportunities.
- Expanded housing-led interventions.

Priority 5

Develop Strong Partnerships and Place Lived Experience at the Heart of Service Delivery

Homelessness cannot be resolved by a single organisation acting alone.

We will strengthen relationships across housing, health, social care, criminal justice and voluntary sector services while ensuring that the voices of residents inform future service development.

Strategic Outcomes

- Stronger partnership working.
- Better coordinated services.
- Improved data and performance management.
- Greater involvement of people with lived experience.

10. Delivering the Strategy

Successful delivery will depend upon strong leadership, effective partnership working and clear accountability.

The Strategy will be supported through:

- A detailed annual Action Plan.
- Multi-agency partnership working.
- Regular performance monitoring.
- Resident engagement and feedback.
- Ongoing review of emerging needs and priorities.

11. Governance and Accountability

Delivery of this Strategy will be overseen by Huntingdonshire District Council through regular performance monitoring and partnership governance arrangements.

Progress will be reviewed through:

- Annual Action Plan updates.
- Quarterly performance reporting.
- Partnership review meetings.
- Service user feedback.

This will ensure the Strategy remains responsive to emerging needs, policy developments and changing housing pressures.

12. Measuring Success

Progress will be measured through a framework of quantitative and qualitative indicators, including:

- Increased positive outcomes at the prevention duty stage.
- Reduced use of temporary accommodation.
- Reduced levels of rough sleeping.
- Improved tenancy sustainment rates.
- Increased access to suitable accommodation.
- Enhanced partnership effectiveness.
- Improved long-term housing outcomes.

Annual reporting will provide transparency, accountability and opportunities for continuous improvement.

Conclusion

The causes of homelessness are complex, but homelessness itself is not inevitable. Through strong partnerships, earlier intervention, effective prevention and a commitment to continuous improvement, Huntingdonshire District Council and its partners will work together to ensure that fewer people experience homelessness and that those who do receive the support needed to recover quickly and sustainably.

This Strategy provides a clear framework for achieving that ambition and for creating a district where everyone has the opportunity to live in a safe, secure and suitable home. By working together, we will strive to ensure that homelessness in Huntingdonshire becomes increasingly rare, increasingly brief and increasingly non-recurring.

Case Studies – examples of the types of homelessness and assistance offered to residents

Case Study 1

Ms L lived in a Private Rented Tenancy with her two children, one of whom was dependant and one an adult, but with additional needs for whom she was a carer. She approached the Housing Advice & Options Team for advice about her options following a relationship breakdown.

Ms L had a joint tenancy with her ex-partner and they were still living together in the property that had been their home for the last five years. Following the relationship breakdown she was no longer able to afford the rent on her own, as she was only able to work part time due to her caring responsibilities.

A prevention duty was accepted towards her on the basis of a valid notice seeking possession being served by the landlord. Prevention work was undertaken, including exploring the possibility of supporting Ms L with any rent shortfall to remain in her home so she could be helped to move in a more planned way. This was not successful as the landlord would not agree to this arrangement and wanted to regain possession of the property. Ms L had to move out of the property to avoid Court action being taken against her where she would also have been liable for costs.

She initially made her own arrangements for temporary accommodation but was allocated temporary accommodation by the Council once these arrangements broke down. A Main Housing Duty was then accepted towards Ms L and her Home-Link application was awarded the highest priority band.

Given that social housing was the only realistic and affordable housing solution, Ms L was assisted with bidding for properties through the Home-Link scheme and was allocated a 3-bed tenancy in the area of her choice. She and her children were then offered additional support via the Residents' Advice Team to help them settle into their new home.

Case Study 2

Ms Q was a high-risk victim of domestic abuse being supported by a number of agencies. Ms Q's circumstances were discussed at a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference, a local, confidential meeting where statutory and voluntary agencies share information on high-risk domestic abuse cases to create coordinated safety plans.

Although the perpetrator was serving a custodial sentence and subject to a restraining order, there remained concerns regarding her ongoing safety and the impact of further incidents on her wellbeing upon his release.

The Housing Needs Team worked closely with Ms Q's Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA) and other partner agencies, to support Ms Q to remain safely in her home, recognising that maintaining her accommodation and support networks was important to her recovery and reducing the risk of homelessness. While alternative housing options were discussed, Ms Q wished to remain in her current property close to family and friends who were part of her support network.

Following a further incident at the property following the perpetrators release, a safety plan was reviewed, and additional security measures were considered. Working collaboratively with the IDVA, the Housing Needs team assisted with funding for 18 months of internet costs, enabling the installation of a video doorbell system. This provided Ms Q with an additional layer of security, helping her to remain safely in her home and preventing the need to move that would have created a homelessness situation.

As a result, Ms Q was able to remain in settled accommodation, continue engaging with support services, and maintain her recovery within her local community.

Case Study 3

Mr M experienced a life-changing brain injury which resulted in significant mobility difficulties, leaving him unable to walk unaided and requiring ongoing care and support. As his previous accommodation was unsuitable for his changed circumstances, he was at risk of homelessness upon discharge from hospital.

Prior to his hospital admission, Mr M had experienced periods of homelessness and alcohol misuse and was already receiving support from the Counting Every Adult service (CEA) at the County Council. Recognising the risk of homelessness upon discharge from hospital the CEA team made a referral to the Housing Needs Team to secure appropriate accommodation and support.

Working closely with CEA and the hospital discharge team, the Housing Needs team coordinated a planned transition from hospital into accessible temporary accommodation in Huntingdon. The accommodation was suitable for Mr M's mobility needs and enabled care providers to visit four times a day to deliver essential care and support, ensuring his safety and wellbeing in the community.

The Housing Needs team assisted Mr M to register on the Home-Link scheme and provided ongoing support to help him bid for suitable properties. Through this process, Mr M successfully secured an offer of a suitable ground-floor flat in Huntingdon. He accepted the offer and moved into settled accommodation, providing him with a stable and accessible home from which to continue his recovery.

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Huntingdonshire District Council

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026–2031 – Consultation Draft

Action Plan: 2026- 2028

Although the strategy covers the period 2026 to 2031 this Action Plan covers the later part of 2026/27 and 2027/28 and highlights the issues that are the current priorities. Given the complexity of the challenges faced and ever moving factors influencing homelessness, it is recognised that there may need to be some flex within the lifetime of the Action Plan. The Action Plan will be formally reviewed and updated in the second half of 2027/28, for the period 2028/29 onwards.

Priority 1: Prevent Homelessness Through Earlier Intervention and Targeted Support

Strategic Objective

Reduce the number of households reaching homelessness crisis point through earlier intervention and prevention.

Action	Partners	Target Date	Measure of Success
1.1 Review and refresh homelessness prevention pathways: a) Care Leavers b) 16/17 year olds c) Hospital discharge planning d) Criminal Justice system	Cambs & Peterborough Housing Authorities Cambs County Adult & Children's Services Hospital Trusts Probation, Police & Prison Service	Ongoing at quarterly review groups	Pathways reviewed and amended where necessary at regular partnership groups
1.2 Deliver regular, multi-channel awareness raising campaigns about available services and benefits of early interventions, incorporating appropriate national campaigns.		September 2027	Delivery of relevant campaigns

Appendix 2:

1.3 Ensure new 'duty to collaborate' is rolled out and incorporated into all partnership working and established early intervention pathways	All stakeholders	June 2028 Dependant on new legislation	Update of existing pathways or establishment of new ones, in line with launch of new collaboration duties
1.4 Strengthen community and partner communication: Ensure homelessness related content is regularly shared via community sector networks to reach diverse, vulnerable and harder to reach groups and possible future customers of the service. This will also include residents in rural communities that may have difficulty accessing appropriate services.	VCFS, non-statutory and statutory stakeholders	June 2027	Systems implemented to achieve broader reach and improved awareness across all communities, inclusive messaging that reaches digitally excluded groups
1.5 Explore adoption of Ending Rough Sleeping Risk Assessment Tool (ERSRAT) once rolled out nationally - to support identification of early indicators of wider homelessness risk (e.g., rent arrears, relationship breakdown, hospital discharge, school exclusions).	Housing Needs and other HDC services holding relevant data	December 2027 Dependant on roll out after national pilots	Analysis of feedback on ERSRAT pilots to learn from good practice and how best to implement

Priority 2: Provide High-Quality, Person-Centred Homelessness Services

Strategic Objective

Appendix 2:

Ensure residents receive accessible, responsive and effective homelessness services.

Action	Partners	Target Date	Measure of Success
2.1 Customer and stakeholder feedback: Seek the views of customers and stakeholders to review how Council and commissioned services are delivered and received, ensuring continuous improvement	VCFS, non-statutory and statutory stakeholders	Year 2: 2027/28	Implementation of feedback systems to deliver evidence-based improvements
2.2 Enhance Personalised Housing Plans (PHPs): To ensure they address wider causes of homelessness and include signposting referrals to specialist support where needed, including financial inclusion and debt/money advice services to improve readiness for access to housing	Housing Needs and software provider	March 2027	More effective and personalised PHPs
2.3 Develop trauma-informed practice training programme	Training Provider	Year 2: 2027/28	Mandatory training established with future training delivery plan

Priority 3: Reduce Rough Sleeping and Support Recovery

Strategic Objective

Ensure rough sleeping is rare, brief and non-recurring.

Appendix 2:

Action	Partners	Target Date	Measure of Success
3.1 Maintain and enhance rough sleeper outreach arrangements	Outreach Providers	Ongoing	Outreach service maintained and enhanced where possible
3.2 Review local rough sleeping pathway	Support Providers	March 2027	Pathway refreshed
3.3 Develop rapid accommodation offer for rough sleepers	Registered Providers	December 2026	Protocol implemented
3.4 Strengthen health and substance misuse referrals	Drug and Alcohol Services	March 2027	Integrated referral process implemented

Priority 4: Increase Access to Safe, Suitable and Sustainable Housing

Strategic Objective

Expand housing options available for residents at risk of homelessness.

Action	Partners	Target Date	Measure of Success
4.1 Strengthen landlord engagement programme	Private Landlords	Ongoing	Annual increase in participating landlords
4.2 Review incentives for private rented sector access	Private Sector Housing	June 2027	Incentive scheme refreshed
4.3 Work with Registered Providers to improve move-on options	Registered Providers	Ongoing	Increased move-on opportunities
4.4 Identify opportunities to expand Housing First and housing-led approaches	County Council and Providers	Year 2: 2027/28	Feasibility report completed identifying funding opportunities

Priority 5: Develop Strong Partnerships and Place Lived Experience at the Heart of Service Delivery

Appendix 2:

Strategic Objective

Strengthen collaborative working and ensure services are shaped by those who use them.

Action	Partners	Target Date	Measure of Success
5.1 Develop bespoke referral guidance materials and training sessions: Co-design and distribute tailored guidance and training for internal and external partners, regarding homelessness and supported accommodation	All stakeholders	Year 2: 2027/28	Production of guidance materials & roll out of training programme
5.2 Review Duty to Refer data and prepare with partners for the new Duty to Collaborate	All stakeholders	New legislation pending. Likely 2027	Data review completed and roll out actions agreed with statutory agencies
5.3 Introduce lived experience engagement framework	Service Users	December 2027	Framework adopted

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O & S Panel (E, C & P) – 5th November 2026
 Cabinet - 17th November 2026
 Report by: Lead Safeguarding Officer
 Lead Cllr: Stephen Claffey
 Portfolio holder for Climate,
 Transformation & Workforce



Wards	Open / Exempt	Key Decision?
All	Open	Yes

Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults at Risk of Harm Policy Review

Executive Summary: Huntingdonshire District Council established this Policy previously in partnership in a Countywide Safeguarding Policy review that included recommendations from the Independent Safeguarding Partnership Team linked to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Boards (Children and Adults).

Huntingdonshire District Council introduced this agreed format policy following submission to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel and Cabinet and was formally published on 27th April 2023 with minor revisions issued on 05th June 2024.

The updated policy is entitled ‘Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults at Risk of Harm Policy’ and provides an overarching framework to the Council’s approach to all safeguarding matters. It has served the authority within that time and has provided consistency in the approach for all staff.

There have been no material changes to the guidance offered to staff in relation to reporting and recording procedures and links to guidance remains current.

The amendments incorporated into the updated policy are to provide a single good practice reference point for matters relating to Children, Young People and Adults at Risk.

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel is invited to comment on the recommendation to Cabinet to approve the updated Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults at Risk of Harm Policy from the Cabinet report attached.

1. Recommendations

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel is invited to:

- 1.1. Comment on the recommendation to Cabinet to approve the updated Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults at Risk of Harm Policy from the Cabinet report attached
- 1.2. Comment on the recommendation to enable delegated authority to be given to the Safeguarding Lead to update the Policy in the event of Legislative updates that have no material change to the provision set out within this document

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Overview and Scrutiny (Environment,
Communities & Partnerships)

5th November 2026

Cabinet

17^h November 2026

Report by: Lead Safeguarding Officer

Lead Cllr: Stephen Claffey
Portfolio holder for Climate,
Transformation & Workforce



Wards	Open / Exempt	Key Decision?
All	Open	No

Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults at Risk of Harm Policy Review

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There have been no material changes to the guidance offered to staff in relation to reporting and recording procedures and links to guidance remains current.

The amendments incorporated into the updated policy are to provide a single good practice reference point for matters relating to Children, Young People and Adults at Risk.

Recommendations

- 1.1. To approve the updated Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults at Risk of Harm Policy.
- 1.2. To enable delegated authority to be given to the Safeguarding Lead to update the Policy in the event of Legislative updates that have no material change to the provision set out within this document.

Key Corporate Plan Priorities

1

This Policy will support staff and allow staff to support our residents needs and demonstrate that we are committed to ensuring that Huntingdonshire residents have the highest possible quality of life.

2

The adoption of the County wide template will also take a positive and proactive approach to joined up services for the benefit of our residents.

Place Strategy Priorities

1

None

2

Report Author(s)

Pete Corley, Lead Safeguarding Officer (Pete.Corley@huntingdonshire.gov.uk)

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- Huntingdonshire District Council is a relevant agency in terms of safeguarding and child protection. This means the Council must
 - Fully engage with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough safeguarding arrangements
 - Ensure that the organisation works in accordance with the inter-agency safeguarding procedures
 - Have appropriate robust safeguarding policies and procedures in place specifically relevant to the organisation
 - Ensure that the workforce is appropriately skilled to recognise and respond to safeguarding matters

2. BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

- A formal review of the Councils Safeguarding Policy commenced in January 22. This review coincided with a Countywide review taking place and included recommendations from the Independent Safeguarding Partnership Team linked to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Boards (Children and Adults) and representatives from Huntingdonshire District Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council; Cambridgeshire City Council, East Cambridgeshire District Council and Fenland District Council
- The South Cambridgeshire District Council Policy was adopted as the basis for the countywide template. This was due to it having been most recently adopted through a formal Committee structure.
- Subsequently this template was updated to reflect the comments/advice provided by Sally Giddens, Practice Improvement and Development Lead, from the Independent Safeguarding Partnership Team linked to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Boards (Children and Adults).
- Comments received were used to update the template. As a result of previous close working with Sally Giddens the adoption of the template has resulted solely in format changes and no changes to existing procedures used within Huntingdonshire District Council.
- Huntingdonshire District Council introduced this agreed format policy following submission to Overview and Scrutiny Panel and Cabinet. It was formally published on 27th April 2023 with minor revisions issued on 05th June 2024.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED & NOT RECOMMENDED

- None

4. COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

- The comments of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Panel will be included in this section prior to its consideration by the Cabinet.

5. POST-DECISION IMPLEMENTATION

- Upon approval this Policy will replace the existing Safeguarding Policy on the Huntingdonshire District Council Safeguarding SharePoint site, be communicated directly to all Designated Safeguarding Officers, disseminated through standard information channels to all employees and incorporated into all future training sessions.

6. IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

- **Council Key Priorities and Performance**

- This Policy will support staff and allow staff to support our residents needs and demonstrate that we are committed to ensuring that Huntingdonshire residents have the highest possible quality of life.
- The adoption of this County wide template will also take a positive and proactive approach to joined up services for the benefit of our residents.

- **Financial Implications**

There are no additional direct financial implications from this report.

- **Policy Implications**

There are no additional direct policy implications from this report.

- **Legal & Constitutional Implications**

There are no additional direct Legal & Constitutional implications from this report.

- **Community Impact**

There are no additional direct Community Impact from this report

-

- **Environment & Climate Change Implications**

There are no additional direct Environment & Climate Change Implications from this report

- **Equality & Diversity Implications**

There are no additional direct Equality and Diversity Implications from this report

- **Implications on Resources**

There are no additional direct Implications on Resources from this report

- **Health & Wellbeing Implications**

There are no additional direct Health and Wellbeing Implications from this report

- **Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) Implications**

The outcome of LGR will result in changes to the tier designation of all future authorities in some form.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

Huntingdonshire District Council is identified in the Safeguarding Legislation as a Relevant Agency and as such is required to work with the statutory safeguarding partners to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults. Failure to adopt this Policy will result in an inability to demonstrate this responsibility and limit,

- Full engagement with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding arrangements
- Our ability to ensure that the organisation works in accordance with the inter-agency safeguarding procedures
- appropriate robust safeguarding policies and procedures specifically relevant to the organisation
- our ability to ensure that the workforce is appropriately skilled to recognise and respond to safeguarding matters.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS– LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

- None

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Huntingdonshire District Council

Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults at Risk of Harm Policy

Version	V4
Ownership	Safeguarding Governance Board
Approved By	Cabinet
Approval Date	17/11/26
Publication Date	
Date of Next Formal Review	16/11/28

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility

Safeguarding – Quick View Procedure

Is the child, young person or adult at risk of immediate significant harm?



Yes



Call [999](#)



No



Complete [HDC Log of Concern Form](#)



Speak to a Designated Safeguarding Officer, your Line manager or the Lead Safeguarding Officer in their absence



Your DSO will advise if your concerns should be reported to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Partnership Board via the [online referral form](#).

Safeguarding referrals should also be copied to DesignatedSafeguardingOfficers@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

When allegations or concerns are expressed about a Councillor, Employee, Volunteer or Contractor – contact your DSO and the Lead Safeguarding Officer.

If an allegation involves a child or young person, the Lead Safeguarding Officer will also contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for further advice.

If there is any risk of immediate significant harm then 999 must be called

If you are concerned that a person is at risk of radicalisation, you can get help for them by emailing Prevent@cambs.pnn.police.uk or calling [01480 422 596](tel:01480422596).

In an emergency call 999

[Prevent | Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Partnership Board](#)

For all Policies, guidance and individual DSO contact details see

[Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults at Risk of Harm \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

Contents

Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults at Risk of Harm Policy	1
Safeguarding – Quick View Procedure	2
1. Introduction	4
2. Purpose	4
3. What is safeguarding?	5
4. Key Legislation:	5
5. Key Legislation: Safeguarding Adults at risk	6
6. Related legislation, policies and processes	7
6.1 PREVENT	7
6.2 Modern slavery (including human trafficking):	7
6.3 Domestic abuse	8
7. Safeguarding structure	8
7.1 The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Partnership Board	8
7.2 Relevant agencies	9
8. Roles and Responsibilities	9
8.1 Council Safeguarding Lead and Lead Safeguarding Officer	9
8.2 Safeguarding Governance Board	10
8.3 Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSOs)	10
8.4 Assistant Directors and Heads of Service	11
8.5 Service Managers and Team Managers	11
8.6 Employees, councillors, volunteers and agency staff	11
9. Reporting concerns and responding to allegations	11
9.1 Reporting concerns	11
9.2 Log of Concern Form	13
9.3 Receiving an allegation of abuse	13
9.4 Allegations involving Employees, Councillors, Volunteers, Agency Staff or Contractors	14
9.5 Reporting Concerns about radicalisation	14
9.6 Monitoring and record keeping	14
10. Training	14
11. Recruitment	15
12. Equal opportunities	15
13. Information sharing	15
14. Photography, film and media	16
15. Considerations for Specific Council Functions	16
15.1 Hackney Carriage and Private Hire licencing	16
15.2 Hiring of Facilities	17
15.3 Housing Advice and Housing Support services	17
15.4 Procurement and contractors	17
15.5 Grant applicants	18

1. Introduction

This policy applies to all staff, councillors, volunteers and contractors that work within the Council. The aim of this policy is to explain the Council's Safeguarding duty.

The Council has a duty to protect the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults living in Huntingdonshire.

All organisations that make provision for children and adults at risk of harm must ensure that:

- The welfare of the child or adult at risk of harm is paramount
- All children, young people and adults at risk of harm have the right to protection from abuse. This applies regardless of, their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin religious beliefs and/or sexual identity.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse and neglect are responded to swiftly and appropriately.

We take our responsibilities seriously and expect all staff, partners and contractors to share this commitment.

Safeguarding is **everyone's** responsibility.

2. Purpose

There are two main aims of this policy:

- To protect and promote the welfare of the children, young people and adults using or receiving services provided or commissioned by Huntingdonshire District Council.
- To support the Council, its officers, councillors, contractors and volunteers in fulfilling their statutory responsibilities.

Huntingdonshire District Council is not a Children's Services Authority. It is not the role of the Council to investigate allegations of abuse. However, all employees, councillors, volunteers and contracted service providers have a clear responsibility to take action when they suspect that a child, young person or adult at risk of harm may be a victim of significant harm or abuse.

This policy demonstrates how the Council will meet its legal obligations. It explains:

- a) What the Council will do to protect and safeguard children, young people and adults at risk of harm
- b) How people can safely voice any concerns through an established procedure
- c) That the Council will deal with all reports of abuse or potential abuse in a serious and effective manner
- d) That Members, employees, volunteers and contractors receive appropriate training
- e) That robust 'safer' recruitment procedures are in place.

It should be noted that this policy is not a stand-alone document. It should be used in conjunction with the inter-agency procedures developed by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Partnership Board.

In addition, this policy also provides an overarching framework to the Council's approach to all safeguarding matters. Additional Council policies and plans exist and sit beneath the overarching framework and should be read in conjunction with this main Safeguarding Policy. This policy also extends to buildings and premises owned or operated on behalf of the council including communal buildings and leisure facilities.

3. What is safeguarding?

Safeguarding means protecting a person's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. It is about working together to support children, young people and adults at risk of harm to make decisions about the risks they face in their own lives and protecting those who lack the capacity to make these decisions.

The legislation relating to the Safeguarding of Children is different from the legislation relating to the Safeguarding of Adults at risk of harm. This policy covers adults and children. For clarity, the legislation for each group is summarised separately.

4. Key Legislation:

The key legislation underpinning the safeguarding of children, young people and adults is the Care Act 2014, Children and Social Work Act 2017 Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 and Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026.

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 confirms that the 3 statutory safeguarding partners in relation to a local authority area are defined in the Children and Social Work Act 2017 as:

- Local Authority (Tier 1/ responsible for children's services)
For Huntingdonshire District Council this is Cambridgeshire County Council
- Clinical Commissioning Group (now titled Integrated Care System)
For Huntingdonshire this is now the Central East Integrated Care Board
- Chief Officer of Police

The 3 statutory partners have a shared and equal duty to make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in a local area.

The Care Act 2014 established the need to have a Safeguarding Partnership Board for children. The **Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Children Partnership Board** brings together a number of agencies across the county to ensure that there is a joined-up approach to safeguarding children and young people. Further information about the Board, including links to useful training and information, can be accessed here

[Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Safeguarding Partnership Board
\(safeguardingcambspeterborough.org.uk\)](https://safeguardingcambspeterborough.org.uk)

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Children Partnership Board recognise the importance of the lived experience of the child. Further information and Practice guidance can be accessed here.

[Lived Experience of the Child Practice Guidance | Cambridgeshire and Peterborough
Safeguarding Partnership Board \(safeguardingcambspeterborough.org.uk\)](https://safeguardingcambspeterborough.org.uk)

5. Key Legislation: Safeguarding Adults at risk

Statutory requirements regarding the Safeguarding of Adults at Risk are set out in the Care Act 2014 and supporting statutory guidance.

The term 'Adult at Risk' is a short form of the phrase 'An adult at risk of abuse or neglect'. It refers to adults who may have safeguarding needs according to the Care Act (2014). An Adult at Risk (sometimes referred to as AAR) is an adult (someone aged 18 or older) who:

- a) Has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs)
- b) Is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, and
- c) As a result of those needs, is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

The Care Act 2014 established the need to have Safeguarding Adult Boards in each local authority area. The Act confirmed that the three statutory safeguarding partners should be; Local Authority (tier one authority), Chief Officer of Police, and Clinical Commissioning Groups.

The statutory guidance sets out the concept of Making Safeguarding Personal. This requires practitioners to find out about the lived experience of the adult.

[Lived Experience of the Adult | Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Partnership
Board \(safeguardingcambspeterborough.org.uk\)](https://safeguardingcambspeterborough.org.uk)

6. Related legislation, policies and processes

6.1 PREVENT

CONTEST is the UK's counter terrorism strategy. It aims to reduce the risks from terrorism, so that people can go about their lives freely with confidence. A key part of the CONTEST strategy is the Prevent Duty.

The Prevent Duty is set out in the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015

The Duty requires Local Authorities, schools, colleges, universities, health bodies, prisons and probation and police to consider the need to safeguard individuals from being drawn into terrorism.

The Council must incorporate the Prevent duty into existing policies and procedures to fulfil its safeguarding responsibilities. The Council must also develop a Prevent Action Plan and ensure that appropriate frontline staff (including those of its contractors), have a good understanding of the Prevent Duty and are trained to recognise vulnerability to being drawn into terrorism. The Community Safety Plan is used to ensure a consistent response to Prevent is taken across local partner agencies.

6.2 Modern slavery (including human trafficking):

This involves the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of people, who with the threat or use of force, coercion, abduction, abuse of power or deception, are exploited for the purposes of prostitution, forced labour, slavery or other similar practices. This can occur either from one country to another or even within the same country, county or town. Some victims are forced to work in places like cannabis factories, nail bars, brothels and car washes. There is no typical victim, and some victims don't understand that they have been exploited and are entitled to help and support.

Under the Modern Slavery Act 2015 the Council has a statutory duty to report and provide notification to the National Crime Agency about any potential victims of modern slavery or trafficking that we encounter.

6.3 Domestic abuse

The Domestic Abuse Act became law in April 2021. The act introduced a statutory definition of domestic abuse for the first time and defines it as ‘any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over, who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality.’ Children who witness domestic abuse are also viewed as victims of abuse. Domestic abuse has a devastating effect on victims, their families and the wider community and cuts across all boundaries of social group, class, age, religion, sexuality, gender and lifestyle.

The Council has worked with the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance and has adopted a Staff Domestic Abuse Policy – [Domestic Abuse Support \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

Public concerns relating to domestic abuse are provided guidance on the Council Website – [Domestic Abuse Advice and Information - Huntingdonshire.gov.uk](#)

7. Safeguarding structure

7.1 The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Partnership Board

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Partnership Board consists of representatives from Cambridgeshire County Council, Peterborough City Council, Cambridgeshire Constabulary and the Central East Integrated Care Board. The Partnership Board is responsible for ensuring that children, young people and adults at risk of harm, neglect and exploitation across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough receive the help and protection that they need. This is a combined safeguarding structure which covers the two local authority areas and encompasses the safeguarding of both adults and children.

The Executive Safeguarding Partnership Board is the overarching countywide governance board which oversees the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Children Partnership Board and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Adult Partnership Board.

The Safeguarding Partnership Board website is an important source of information for good practice and training.

[Multi-Agency Safeguarding Training | Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Partnership Board \(safeguardingcambspeterborough.org.uk\)](#)

7.2 Relevant agencies

Relevant agencies are organisations and agencies who are required to work with the statutory safeguarding partners to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

Huntingdonshire District Council is a relevant agency. This means the Council must:

- Fully engage with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding arrangements
- Ensure that the organisation works in accordance with the inter-agency safeguarding procedures
- Have appropriate robust safeguarding policies and procedures in place specifically relevant to the organisation
- Ensure that the workforce is appropriately skilled to recognise and respond to safeguarding matters.

8. Roles and Responsibilities

8.1 Council Safeguarding Lead and Lead Safeguarding Officer

The Council's Safeguarding Lead is the Chief Executive Officer. They are responsible for chairing the Safeguarding Governance Board, which comprises membership from across council services, including a representative from HR. The Chief Executive Officer may appoint a Chair to the Board to act on their behalf. This role will be reviewed at the Safeguarding Board on an annual basis. Minutes/Action Log will be circulated directly to the members of the Board. The Chief Executive Officer will be updated via a Senior Leadership Team update given by the Chair of the Board.

Any safeguarding allegations or concerns involving a member of staff should be reported to the Lead Safeguarding Officer and investigated by a Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) in the first instance. If the allegation involves a child or young person, the LSO must contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for further advice and support as required. The LADO will advise as to whether an allegation falls under the provisions of the procedure for Managing Allegations against People in a Position of Trust ([PiPoT](#)).

8.2 Safeguarding Governance Board

The Purpose of the Safeguarding Governance Board is to:

- Promote safeguarding amongst Huntingdonshire District Council
- Ensure safeguarding policies are up to date in terms of current/ new legislation and good practice
- Ensure appropriate training is in place
- Monitoring reporting of safeguarding concerns and outcomes
- Review related safeguarding policies and procedures
- Support the Safeguarding Lead to complete the Section 11 audit
- Aid the flow of information from and to the District Safeguarding meetings
- To designate a Lead Safeguarding Officer

8.3 Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSOs)

The work of the Safeguarding Governance Board is supported by the LSO and Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSOs) across the Council. DSOs have been trained to support staff that have reported safeguarding concerns about a child, young person, or adult at risk of harm. Their role is to:

- Provide a point of contact for staff who want to discuss concerns about a child or adults at risk of harm
- Provide guidance for the referrer to seek advice from relevant agencies
- Take forward disclosures / referrals where the referrer is unable to do so
- Provide a champion role for safeguarding issues in their service / department
- Help monitor policy and procedures at a service / departmental level

Designated Safeguarding Officers will typically hold Team Leader or Manager roles or be experienced in safeguarding matters and will understand the safeguarding process in order to appropriately advise colleagues. DSOs have also been identified from key central services (such as HR).

LSO and DSO Job Profiles are detailed on the Safeguarding SharePoint site,

[LSO and DSO Job Profiles \(sharepoint.com\)](https://sharepoint.com)

8.4 Assistant Directors and Heads of Service

Assistant Directors and Heads of Service are responsible for ensuring that Service Managers, Team Managers and staff within their service areas are aware of the contents of this Policy and the accompanying Procedures, and that the Council's duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, young people and adults with needs for care and support are met and effectively discharged.

8.5 Service Managers and Team Managers

Service Managers and Team Managers are responsible for complying with the requirements of this Policy and accompanying Procedures and for the promotion of a staff culture which recognises the rights of children, young people and adults with needs for care and support and the Council's responsibility for their safety when receiving its services.

8.6 Employees, councillors, volunteers and agency staff

All employees, councillors, volunteers and agency staff are responsible for complying with the requirements of the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures. Staff should take all reasonable steps to ensure (within the context of their duties) that risks are minimised and that children, young and vulnerable people are protected, and their welfare promoted when using Council services.

9. Reporting concerns and responding to allegations

If you think a child, young person or an adult at risk of harm is in immediate danger, phone 999.

9.1 Reporting concerns

All employees, councillors, volunteers and agency staff are responsible for carrying out their duties in a way that actively safeguards and promotes the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk. They must also act in a way that protects them from wrongful allegations of abuse as far as possible.

Abuse is a form of maltreatment that can occur in several forms which are not mutually exclusive.

For children, types of abuse include:

- Physical
- Psychological
- Sexual
- Grooming
- Child sexual exploitation
- Female genital mutilation

- Online abuse and cyberbullying
- Child trafficking and modern slavery
- Domestic abuse
- Self-neglect
- Forced marriage

Further information is available on the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Children Partnership Board website:

[Child abuse – definitions and signs – Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Partnership Board \(safeguardingcambspeterborough.org.uk\)](https://safeguardingcambspeterborough.org.uk/child-abuse-definitions-signs)

For adults, types of abuse include:

- Physical
- Sexual
- Psychological
- Discrimination
- Exploitation, modern slavery and human trafficking
- Financial
- Organisational
- Domestic abuse
- Neglect and acts of omission
- Female genital mutilation

Further information is available on the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board website.

[Abuse and Neglect – Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Partnership Board \(safeguardingcambspeterborough.org.uk\)](https://safeguardingcambspeterborough.org.uk/abuse-neglect)

Even for those experienced in working with child or adult abuse it is not always easy to recognise a situation where abuse may occur or already has taken place. Whilst it is accepted that staff are not experts at such recognition, all staff have a duty to act if they have any concerns. If they are unsure, then any concerns should be discussed with either a Designated Safeguarding Officer or the Lead Safeguarding Officer. The DSO will help advise if and how to complete a referral. A list of DSOs will be kept updated on the [Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults at Risk of Harm](https://safeguardingcambspeterborough.org.uk/safeguarding-children-young-people-and-adults-at-risk-of-harm) site.

9.2 Log of Concern Form

A log of Concern form is available for all employees, councillors, volunteers and agency staff to make a record of any kind of concern (although it is still possible for a concern to be raised directly with a DSO). A log of Concern Form must be returned to one of the Council's Designated Safeguarding Officers or directly to the LSO. The Designated Safeguarding Officer who receives the form may contact you for further information and in consultation with the LSO will decide whether a safeguarding referral should be made to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Board via the [online referral form](#).

All Huntingdonshire District Council [Log of Concern Forms](#) and associated safeguarding referrals must then be copied to DesignatedSafeguardingOfficers@huntingdonshire.gov.uk.

9.3 Receiving an allegation of abuse

When a child, young person or adult at risk makes an allegation of abuse or bullying, you should:

- Stay calm and try to get another witness if it does not compromise the situation
- If the person making the allegation does not speak in English as their first language (including if they are a user of British Sign Language), consider whether communication may be aided by accessing Interpretation and Translation services.
- If you believe the person is 'at risk' of immediate significant harm, which includes situations which any employee, councillor or volunteer would reasonably believe requires the emergency services, then you must contact the relevant emergency service and notify your Departmental DSO, LSO, Line Manager or Head of Service.
- Listen carefully to what is said and allow the person to talk at their own pace, being careful not to compromise potential evidence.
- Find an appropriate opportunity to explain it is likely that information will need to be shared with other responsible people, do not promise to keep secrets
- Only ask questions for clarification, the use of open questions, for example, what, where, when, who is advisable, do not ask leading questions (that suggest certain answers as this could compromise evidence)
- Reassure the child, young person or adult at risk of harm that they have done the right thing in telling you
- Tell them what you will do next and who you will inform
- Immediately report to and inform your Departmental DSO, LSO, Line Manager or Head of (as appropriate and where possible).

9.4 Allegations involving Employees, Councillors, Volunteers, Agency Staff or Contractors

If a concern or allegation relates to one of the above, this must be reported to the Lead Safeguarding Officer. In addition, if the allegation or concern involves a child or young person, the Lead Safeguarding Officer will liaise with the County Council Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for further advice by emailing LADO@cambridgeshire.gov.uk.

9.5 Reporting Concerns about radicalisation

If you believe someone is at risk of radicalisation, you can help them get support and prevent them becoming involved in terrorism and potentially violent activities by raising your concerns via:

Email: Prevent@cambs.pnn.police.uk Telephone: [01480 422 596](tel:01480422596)

Emergencies - If you suspect that someone is about to put themselves in danger by travelling to join a terrorist organisation or appears involved in plans to commit a criminal offence, please inform the police immediately by calling [999](tel:999).

9.6 Monitoring and record keeping

A record must be kept of all safeguarding concerns to comply with the Section 11 Audit requirements. Copies of all Log of Concern Forms and Safeguarding referrals must be copied to the DesignatedSafeguardingOfficers@huntingdonshire.gov.uk. The LSO is responsible for monitoring the inbox and retaining a record of concerns.

10. Training

The Council will take all reasonable steps to ensure that all employees, councillors and volunteers who are likely to come into contact with children and/or adults at risk of harm as a regular part of their job will be provided with appropriate training including:

- Induction training including Learn training requirements
- Departmental and service procedures
- Specific Basic Safeguarding Awareness training identified for relevant posts
- Corporate training such as Recruitment and Selection
- Specialist role specific training to be coordinated by HR as part of the Safeguarding/DBS Recruitment Process. All training content to be in line with CPSP requirements
- Councillor training to be administered by Democratic Services Member Development and Support Officer in the form of completion of the CPSP Sways for Adult and Child Safeguarding

Additional training resources and good practice information is available on [the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Partnership website](#)

11. Recruitment

Huntingdonshire District Council is committed to [safer recruitment procedures](#) set out by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Partnership Board.

It is the responsibility of the recruiting manager to undertake a risk assessment for the job description and person specification for those roles likely to involve regular and/or substantial unsupervised contact with children, young people or adults at risk of harm before recruitment takes place. This will determine the safeguarding level of all roles and ensure that only appropriate individuals are selected to undertake DBS procedures. A list is maintained by HR of those roles designated as requiring a DBS and additional training to the iLearn induction training.

12. Equal opportunities

As a council, we are committed to delivering services that narrow the gap in outcomes between disadvantaged groups and the wider community, and to ensuring that protected groups are included and have their voices heard (see our [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy](#) for more information). We are also obliged to comply with the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty. As per the [Cambridgeshire Equality Pledge](#), we recognise that we serve a diverse community with diverse needs. We are committed to anticipating and responding positively to this so that everyone can access our services. In order to achieve the Council's strategic priorities and meet the challenges we face, we involve all communities in developing our services and activities.

13. Information sharing

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Information Sharing Framework ('the Framework') is a high-level agreement between a number of public organisations in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. Its aim is to facilitate more effective data sharing across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough where this is needed to improve service delivery or to enable each organisation to respond quickly to customer needs.

Wherever possible, you should seek consent and be open and honest with the individual from the outset as to why, whom and what information will be shared. You should seek consent where an individual may not expect their information to be passed on. There may be some circumstances where it is not appropriate to seek consent, either because the individual cannot give consent, it is not reasonable to obtain consent, or because to gain consent would put a child or young person's safety or well-being at risk. Further information about information sharing can be found on the [Information Sharing | Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Partnership Board Site](#)

14. Photography, film and media

The Council will take appropriate action to protect children and young people from the inappropriate use of photographic images. Some photographs taken by or on behalf of the Council will be anonymous group shots in public places. Some photographs taken by or on behalf of the Council will feature images where people can be identified through their image. Wherever a photograph is taken, and a person is able to be identified through their image, the Council will obtain photo consent before using the image in any way. For those aged under 18 years old, photo consent from a parent or guardian will be required. It should be remembered that photographs can be used as a means of identifying children and young people, especially when they are accompanied by personal information. For any event that the Council runs, the Council will communicate that a photographer will be in attendance. The Council will also ensure that, where people have a concern about their photograph being taken, they are able to raise this concern and to take reasonable steps to avoid being photographed and still participate in the given activity or event.

Where the Council has started to introduce the use of body cameras to improve the safety of frontline Officers in particular roles, detailed guidance and procedures about the use of body cameras and camera footage will be developed.

15. Considerations for Specific Council Functions

15.1 Hackney Carriage and Private Hire licencing

All new applicants for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire driver, proprietors of Hackney Carriage and Private Hire vehicle and Operator licences will be required to pass a safeguarding course as approved by this Local Authority.

Where the Licensing Authority receives a complaint regarding the moral, physical, sexual harm or neglect of a child or adult at risk of harm as a consequence of the actions or inactions of a licence holder, the Licencing Service will liaise with Cambridgeshire County Council in relation to school contracts and the Police. Where necessary, they will revoke a licence, and if satisfied the driver is posing an immediate risk to public safety, the revocation will take effect immediately.

15.2 Hiring of Facilities

Where facilities are let to external groups or events organised, which involve children, young people or adults at risk of harm when parents/carers are not present, Huntingdonshire District Council will include provision within its conditions of hire requiring:

- Agreement to work within the expectations of the Council's Safeguarding Policy irrespective of whether the event organiser has its own policy in place
- A requirement that staff who will have significant, unsupervised involvement with children and young people over the course of the event have DBS checks appropriate for the role they are undertaking.

It is a condition of hiring the premises that the facilities are not used for meetings or events which might promote extremism.

The relevant Head of Service will assume accountability for these provisions.

15.3 Housing Advice and Housing Support services

The Council's housing and homelessness services have a duty under Section 11 of the Children Act 2004. Any person working on behalf of the Council in these services, may become aware of conditions that could have or are having an adverse impact on children. Part 1 of the Housing Act 2004 sets out that authorities must take account of the impact of health and safety hazards in housing on vulnerable occupants, including children, when deciding on the action to be taken by landlords to improve conditions. Housing authorities have an important role to play in safeguarding vulnerable young people, including young people who are pregnant or leaving care or a secure establishment.

15.4 Procurement and contractors

Any contractor or sub-contractor engaged by the Council in areas where personnel are likely to come into contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults shall ensure that:

- These personnel have a valid enhanced disclosure check through the Disclosure and Barring service against both the adults barred list and the children's barred list
- That no personnel are permitted to work directly with children, young people or vulnerable adults until they have had a disclosure check and the contractor or sub-contractor has received and evaluated the results
- Monitor the levels on an ongoing basis and validity of these checks with the personnel concerned
- Where a disclosure check for personnel is invalid or deficient the contractor or sub-contractor, shall immediately remove that personnel from the provision of parts of the service requiring direct working with children, young people or vulnerable adults and advise the Council's contract manager.

The supplier shall ensure that their personnel are suitably trained and have awareness of safeguarding and how to report any safeguarding concerns.

Where these requirements are relevant then these must form part of any service level agreement, contract or licence.

Council-owned companies are expected to take reasonable and proportionate steps in relation to safeguarding.

15.5 Grant applicants

As a minimum, all organisations receiving funding from the Council will be expected to have a safeguarding policy and procedure in place, which is understood by employees and volunteers and available to service users, irrespective of how the grant has been awarded.