



A meeting of **HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL** will be held in the **CIVIC SUITE (LANCASTER / STIRLING ROOMS), PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON PE29 3TN** on **WEDNESDAY, 9 SEPTEMBER 2026** at **7:00 PM** and you are requested to attend for the transaction of the following business:-

AGENDA

APOLOGIES

1. MINUTES (Pages 25 - 52)

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 15th July 2026 and the Extraordinary meeting held on the 1st September 2026.

Time Allocation: 2 Minutes.

2. MEMBERS INTERESTS

To receive from Members declarations as to disclosable pecuniary, other registerable and non-registerable interests in relation to any Agenda item. See Notes below.

Time Allocation: 2 Minutes.

3. CHAIR'S ENGAGEMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS (Pages 53 - 54)

To note the Chair's engagements since the last Council meeting.

Time Allocation: 5 Minutes.

4. NOTICES OF MOTION

a) Motion from Councillor R Coogan

Capital & Centric Regeneration Schemes, Accountability and Protection of Public Funds

This Council notes that:

1. Huntingdonshire District Council has committed public resources to regeneration work undertaken with Capital & Centric in relation to:
 - Tebbutts Road car park, St Neots;
 - Princes Street bus station and car park, Huntingdon; and

- the former cattle market square and gatehouse, St Ives.
2. Regeneration is important to the future prosperity of Huntingdonshire's towns. However, regeneration involving public money and publicly owned assets must be founded upon clear objectives, a robust business case, demonstrable public benefit, value for money, proper scrutiny and meaningful engagement with the communities affected.
 3. Members who previously supported progression of this work have subsequently expressed publicly that the proposals which emerged were not what they understood the Council had sought or expected from the process.
 4. Those concerns create a legitimate need to establish, as a matter of fact, what services, outputs and deliverables were commissioned, what was subsequently authorised, what has been delivered and what public money has been expended.
 5. Where a council commissions work from an external organisation, residents are entitled to expect that the Council will satisfy itself that the services and deliverables paid for were provided in accordance with the contractual arrangements, approved instructions and agreed objectives.
 6. Equally, no conclusion that any contractor, consultant or development partner has failed in its contractual obligations should be reached without examination of the evidence, contractual documentation and appropriate professional legal advice.
 7. Money already spent must never, of itself, become a justification for spending further public money. Decisions about future expenditure should be based upon the current merits, costs, risks and likely public benefits of proceeding.

This Council therefore resolves to:

1. Protecting taxpayers' money is a fundamental responsibility of this Council.
2. Regeneration should enhance town centres, support existing and future businesses, improve accessibility and confidence, and deliver identifiable benefits for the residents whose assets and money are being used.
3. Where the objectives of a publicly funded project have materially changed, have not been delivered, or no longer represent sufficient value for money, the Council should be prepared to stop, reassess and, where necessary, change course.
4. Where professional examination establishes that services or deliverables paid for by this Council were not provided in accordance with contractual obligations, the Council should pursue every proportionate and lawful avenue available to protect the public purse and recover money properly due to it.

5. Such decisions must be based upon evidence and professional advice, rather than political preference, retrospective disagreement with a design proposal, or assumptions about contractual performance.
6. Residents should be able to see clearly what public money was spent, what was commissioned, what was delivered and what action has been taken to protect their interests.

This Council therefore resolves to:

1. State that Full Council does not support the further progression of the current contract, and disengages with Capital & Centric completely including work started on:
 - Tebbutts Road car park, St Neots;
 - Princes Street bus station and car park, Huntingdon; and
 - the former cattle market square and gatehouse, St Ives.
2. Request that Cabinet takes all lawful and contractually permissible steps to bring the Council's participation in the current proposals for those sites to an orderly conclusion, having full regard to the Council's contractual, procurement, financial and statutory obligations.
3. Request that no further discretionary expenditure, commission, instruction or material officer resource is committed to developing the current proposals, except where such expenditure or action is:
 - required by an existing legal or contractual obligation;
 - necessary to protect the Council's legal or financial position; or
 - specifically authorised following consideration of a clear and evidenced financial justification.
4. Request that the Monitoring Officer, Section 151 Officer and other appropriate senior officers undertake, or commission where independence or specialist expertise makes this appropriate, a comprehensive contractual, financial and governance review of the Council's relationship with Capital & Centric in relation to the three schemes.
5. Request that the review establishes, so far as the evidence permits:
 - the original objectives approved for each scheme;
 - the services, outputs and deliverables commissioned;
 - the contractual basis upon which those services were commissioned;
 - all material instructions subsequently issued by or on behalf of the Council;
 - any changes to scope, objectives or deliverables and the authority by which those changes were approved;
 - all payments made and liabilities incurred by the Council;
 - what services, work products and deliverables were actually received;

- whether those outputs complied with the relevant contractual requirements and authorised instructions;
- whether any material service, output or deliverable was omitted, altered or not provided;
- whether any contractual variation was properly approved and documented;
- whether there is evidence of non-performance, defective performance, breach of contract, overpayment or any other matter capable of giving rise to a financial remedy;
- what termination, dispute-resolution, warranty, indemnity, repayment or other contractual protections are available to the Council;
- whether any recoverable loss has been suffered by the Council; and
- the reasonable prospects, likely costs and proportionality of pursuing recovery.

6. Request that, where the review identifies a proper legal basis and a proportionate financial case for recovery, Cabinet and the appropriate officers take all reasonable and lawful steps available to protect the Council's position and recover taxpayers' money, including where appropriate:

- contractual repayment or reimbursement;
- recovery of overpayments or sums otherwise due;
- negotiation;
- formal contractual dispute procedures;
- mediation or other alternative dispute resolution;
- enforcement of contractual warranties, indemnities or other remedies; and
- where necessary, proportionate and supported by professional legal advice, civil proceedings.

7. Request that where professional legal advice identifies a claim with reasonable prospects of success and a potentially material recovery for the Council, any decision not to pursue that claim is supported by a documented assessment of the legal, financial and commercial reasons for that decision.

8. Request that the review also considers whether the Council's own governance, commissioning, contract-management or decision-making arrangements contributed to any failure to achieve the originally approved objectives, so that responsibility is established fairly and lessons are learned regardless of where any failure occurred.

9. Request that the findings are reported to Cabinet and the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Panel, subject only to those redactions genuinely necessary to protect legal professional privilege, commercially confidential information, personal data or the Council's position in any potential proceedings.

10. Request that the report includes, as a minimum:

- total public expenditure incurred on each scheme;
- contractual commitments and liabilities remaining;

- any potential termination costs;
- the services and deliverables commissioned;
- the services and deliverables received;
- any sums considered potentially recoverable;
- the proposed course of action to protect the Council's financial position;
- an assessment of whether value for money has been achieved; and
- recommendations for improving the governance of future major regeneration projects.

11. Request that, subject to legal and commercial restrictions, sufficient information is subsequently published to allow residents to understand what money was spent, what the Council received in return and what action has been taken to protect the public purse.

12. Require that any future proposal for substantive regeneration of these three sites is supported by a robust and transparent business case before significant public resources are committed, including:

- clearly defined objectives and measurable public benefits;
- economic impact;
- impact upon existing businesses and town-centre vitality;
- parking, transport and accessibility implications;
- financial costs and funding assumptions;
- risk and sensitivity analysis;
- consideration of viable alternative options;
- the consequences of taking no action;
- clear governance and accountability arrangements; and
- meaningful consultation with residents, businesses, relevant town councils and other affected stakeholders.

13. Reaffirm that this Council supports ambitious and appropriate regeneration across Huntingdonshire, but that ambition must be accompanied by accountability, sound financial management, proper scrutiny and demonstrable benefit to the communities whose money and assets are being used.

b) Motion from Councillor R Ioannides

Opposition to Further Asylum Accommodation and Sanctuary Status in Huntingdonshire

This Council notes that:

1. Immigration, border control, asylum determination, immigration enforcement and the removal of persons who have no lawful right to remain in the United Kingdom are responsibilities of the UK Government.
2. The provision and commissioning of accommodation for persons supported through the asylum system is principally a Home Office responsibility and is delivered through nationally commissioned arrangements and accommodation providers.

3. Huntingdonshire District Council does not determine asylum claims and does not possess a general legal power to prohibit the Home Office from accommodating individuals within the district.
4. Nevertheless, the location and concentration of asylum accommodation can have consequences for local housing supply, community cohesion, policing, healthcare, environmental health, housing enforcement and other public services affecting Huntingdonshire residents.
5. Huntingdonshire District Council currently publishes wording stating that it welcomes asylum seekers, refugees and detainees and describes Council officers as providing a link between HDC, Serco and community organisations.
6. Compliance with statutory duties imposed upon the Council is separate from political endorsement of the Government's asylum accommodation or dispersal policies.

This Council Believes:

1. Huntingdonshire should not become, seek recognition as, describe itself as, or adopt the policies or commitments of a Council, District, Borough or Local Authority of Sanctuary.
2. There should be no further expansion of Home Office asylum accommodation within Huntingdonshire.
3. Huntingdonshire has already contributed to national asylum accommodation arrangements and should not be expected to accept additional capacity.
4. The availability of accommodation within Huntingdonshire should not, of itself, be treated by the Home Office or its contractors as justification for further procurement or placements within the district.
5. The Government should take proper account of existing housing pressures, infrastructure capacity, availability of public services and the cumulative effect of asylum accommodation when determining where accommodation should be located.
6. Where the Council possesses a lawful discretion, it should exercise that discretion in favour of protecting the interests, resources and services of Huntingdonshire residents and not voluntarily facilitating the expansion of asylum accommodation within the district.
7. Persons whose asylum claims remain legally unresolved must be distinguished from persons who have exhausted all relevant appeal rights and have been finally determined to have no lawful basis to remain in the United Kingdom.

8. Where a person has been finally determined to have no lawful right to remain in the United Kingdom, the Government should secure their prompt removal rather than allowing prolonged residence at public expense.
9. The Council's compliance with statutory duties towards any person should not be represented as political support for further asylum dispersal or accommodation within Huntingdonshire.

This Council therefore resolves to:

1. No Sanctuary Status

That Huntingdonshire District Council:

- a) shall not seek, endorse or support designation, accreditation or recognition as a Council of Sanctuary, District of Sanctuary or equivalent;
- b) shall not adopt any Sanctuary charter, pledge or commitment which creates a political commitment to encourage or facilitate additional asylum accommodation within Huntingdonshire; and
- c) formally rejects the principle that Huntingdonshire should be designated or promoted as a sanctuary destination for additional asylum accommodation.

2. Zero Further Expansion

This Council formally opposes any further expansion of Home Office asylum accommodation within Huntingdonshire.

The Council's position is that there should be:

- no additional asylum hotels;
- no additional large or medium asylum accommodation sites;
- no net increase in dispersed asylum accommodation;
- no procurement of additional houses, flats, HMOs or other residential premises for the purpose of increasing asylum accommodation capacity;
- no conversion of further commercial, institutional or other premises into asylum accommodation; and
- no replacement of accommodation which leaves the Home Office asylum estate with new accommodation elsewhere within Huntingdonshire.

3. Immediate Moratorium

This Council calls upon the Home Secretary, the Home Office and its contracted accommodation providers to impose an immediate moratorium on the procurement and establishment of any additional asylum accommodation capacity within Huntingdonshire.

This moratorium should apply to hotels, houses, flats, HMOs, hostels, former commercial buildings, large sites, institutional premises and any other form of accommodation principally procured for the Home Office asylum estate.

4. No New Placements Requiring Additional Capacity

This Council calls upon the Home Office to ensure that no additional asylum placements are made within Huntingdonshire where doing so would require the procurement, commissioning or expansion of additional asylum accommodation capacity within the district.

5. No Renewal or Replacement of Existing Accommodation

This Council calls upon the Home Office and its contractors not to renew, extend or replace existing asylum accommodation contracts within Huntingdonshire as those contracts or arrangements expire.

Where an asylum accommodation property or facility leaves the Home Office estate, this Council's position is that it should not be replaced by another property or facility elsewhere within Huntingdonshire.

6. Progressive Withdrawal

This Council calls for the existing Home Office asylum accommodation estate within Huntingdonshire to be progressively reduced, with the objective of ending the use of Home Office asylum accommodation within the district.

The Executive Leader shall write to the Home Secretary requesting a timetable for progressively reducing existing asylum accommodation capacity within Huntingdonshire.

7. No Voluntary Council Facilitation

Where Huntingdonshire District Council has a lawful discretion, the Council will not voluntarily:

- offer or nominate Council-controlled land or property for asylum accommodation;
- lease or make Council-controlled property available principally for asylum accommodation;
- identify Council assets for that purpose;
- enter into new discretionary agreements principally intended to establish or expand asylum accommodation;
- actively promote Huntingdonshire to accommodation providers as a location for further asylum accommodation; or
- voluntarily participate in schemes whose principal purpose is to increase Home Office asylum accommodation capacity within the district.

Nothing within this resolution requires the Council to refuse to comply with an obligation imposed upon it by law.

8. Formal Opposition to New Home Office or Contractor Proposals

Where the Home Office, Serco or any successor accommodation provider informs or consults the Council regarding proposed additional asylum accommodation within Huntingdonshire:

the political position of Huntingdonshire District Council shall be one of formal opposition to further expansion.

The Executive Leader or relevant Executive Councillor shall make the strongest lawful representations available against such expansion, including representations concerning:

- existing asylum accommodation within the district;
- local housing need;
- availability of private rented accommodation;
- homelessness pressures;
- healthcare capacity;
- policing and community safety;
- infrastructure;
- environmental health;
- community cohesion;
- cumulative impact; and
- additional financial pressure upon local public services.

For the avoidance of doubt, this political position shall not predetermine any individual planning, licensing, housing enforcement or other regulatory decision which legislation requires to be determined independently and on its individual merits.

9. Removal of the Council's Existing "Welcome" Policy Wording

This Council rejects the use of corporate Council communications to express political support for further asylum dispersal into Huntingdonshire.

The Council therefore requests the removal and replacement of its existing corporate wording stating that:

“We welcome asylum seekers, refugees and detainees...”

insofar as that wording represents an institutional political position concerning asylum seekers.

It shall be replaced by politically neutral factual information which:

- explains the respective responsibilities of the Home Office and Huntingdonshire District Council;
- identifies any statutory services or assistance which individuals are legally entitled to access;
- provides necessary public information;
- distinguishes refugees, persons with unresolved asylum claims and persons with no lawful right to remain; and
- makes clear that compliance with statutory obligations does not amount to Council endorsement of further asylum accommodation or dispersal within Huntingdonshire.

Nothing within this resolution prevents the Council from providing factual information necessary for residents to access services to which they are legally entitled.

10. No Discretionary Funding to Expand Asylum Accommodation

Where legally permissible:

no new discretionary expenditure from Huntingdonshire District Council's locally controlled resources shall be approved where its principal purpose is to procure, establish, expand or encourage additional Home Office asylum accommodation within Huntingdonshire.

This shall not prevent expenditure:

- required by law;
- necessary to discharge an existing statutory duty;
- required to protect children or vulnerable persons where the Council has a legal responsibility;
- necessary for regulatory or enforcement functions;
- necessary to protect the Council's financial interests; or
- recoverable from the Home Office or another public authority where accepting that funding protects Huntingdonshire taxpayers from costs which would otherwise fall upon the district.

11. Full Enforcement of Planning, Housing and Licensing Requirements

The Council shall continue to apply all lawful planning, environmental health, housing standards, HMO licensing, fire safety referral, waste, nuisance and enforcement requirements to properties used for asylum accommodation.

There shall be no relaxation of regulatory standards because accommodation is being procured or funded by the Home Office or one of its contractors. Individual regulatory decisions shall continue to be taken lawfully and on their merits.

12. Prior Consultation

This Council calls upon the Home Office and its contractors not to procure or commission further asylum accommodation within Huntingdonshire without advance notification to Huntingdonshire District Council and meaningful engagement with the communities directly affected.

Where additional accommodation is proposed, the Council shall request disclosure, so far as lawfully possible, of:

- the proposed location;
- accommodation type;
- maximum capacity;
- proposed duration;
- intended cohort;
- security arrangements;
- safeguarding arrangements;
- property management arrangements;
- anticipated pressure upon public services;
- additional funding being provided to public authorities; and
- arrangements for dealing with complaints, antisocial behaviour or other community concerns.

13. Transparency and Member Reporting

The Council requests that Members receive regular reports, insofar as the information is lawfully available, identifying:

- the total number of asylum accommodation properties within Huntingdonshire;
- the aggregate accommodation capacity;
- the broad geographical distribution of accommodation;

- properties entering or leaving the Home Office estate;
- new procurement enquiries received from Home Office contractors;
- Home Office funding received by HDC;
- identifiable expenditure incurred by HDC;
- identifiable demands upon Council services; and
- representations made by the Council opposing further expansion.

Commercially confidential and personal information shall not be disclosed where disclosure would be unlawful.

14. Persons With No Lawful Right to Remain

This Council calls upon His Majesty's Government to ensure that persons who have exhausted all applicable appeal rights and have been finally determined to have no lawful basis to remain in the United Kingdom are removed promptly and efficiently in accordance with the law.

The Executive Leader shall write to the Home Secretary requesting:

faster determination of outstanding asylum claims;

faster resolution of immigration appeals;

effective enforcement of final immigration decisions;

increased removals of persons with no lawful right to remain;

appropriate arrangements with countries of origin for returns; and

an end to prolonged taxpayer-funded accommodation for persons who have no continuing lawful basis to remain in the United Kingdom.

15. Formal Notification of Huntingdonshire's Position

The Executive Leader shall send a copy of this resolution to:

- the Home Secretary;
- the Minister responsible for asylum and immigration;
- the Home Office;
- the Home Office asylum accommodation provider responsible for Huntingdonshire;
- Huntingdonshire's Members of Parliament; and

- other relevant public authorities involved in asylum accommodation planning within the district.

The correspondence shall expressly state:

“Huntingdonshire District Council does not consent to the further expansion of Home Office asylum accommodation within Huntingdonshire. The Council calls for an immediate moratorium on additional asylum accommodation capacity, for existing accommodation not to be renewed or replaced as contracts expire, and for the Home Office asylum accommodation estate within Huntingdonshire to be progressively reduced with the objective of ending its use within the district.”

16. Standing Asylum Accommodation Preparedness and Response Protocol

This Council requests that Cabinet establishes and maintains a standing Asylum Accommodation Preparedness and Response Protocol, capable of immediate activation upon notification or discovery of any proposed new asylum accommodation, expansion of existing asylum accommodation or substantial new placement within Huntingdonshire.

The Protocol should provide for immediate coordination between all relevant Council functions, including:

- planning;
- legal services;
- housing;
- environmental health;
- HMO licensing;
- community safety;
- safeguarding;
- finance;
- communications;
- enforcement; and
- any other relevant regulatory service.

The Protocol should identify in advance the respective responsibilities of officers, escalation procedures, legal advice arrangements, Member notification requirements and the Council's available statutory and non-statutory responses so that HDC is not required to establish its powers and procedures from first principles after a proposal has already substantially progressed.

17. Immediate Planning, Legal and Regulatory Assessment and Evidence File

Upon becoming aware of any significant proposal for new or expanded asylum accommodation within Huntingdonshire, this Council requests that Cabinet ensures that:

a. an immediate planning and legal assessment is undertaken, including consideration of:

- the existing lawful use of the premises;
- the proposed use;
- whether a material change of use would occur;
- whether planning permission is required;
- applicable planning conditions;
- HMO licensing requirements;
- housing standards;
- environmental-health requirements;
- occupancy and amenity considerations;
- any relevant regulatory requirements; and
- all enforcement powers lawfully available to HDC;

b. a contemporaneous evidence file is opened immediately, recording all relevant:

- planning evidence;
- housing impacts;
- service pressures;
- environmental-health matters;
- community-safety evidence;
- safeguarding considerations;
- financial consequences;
- correspondence with the Home Office and accommodation providers;
- representations from other public authorities; and
- evidence relating to the suitability or otherwise of the proposed location.

Where officers reasonably consider that a planning, housing, licensing or other regulatory breach exists or is likely to occur, this Council requests that every appropriate, lawful and proportionate enforcement option is considered without delay, including formal enforcement action and, where supported by specialist legal advice and the evidential and legal tests are satisfied, injunctive relief.

18. Immediate Member Notification and Scrutiny

This Council requests that:

- a. relevant Ward Councillors and all Group Leaders are notified promptly when the Council receives credible notification of a significant new asylum accommodation proposal or proposed substantial expansion within Huntingdonshire;
- b. Members are provided, insofar as legally permissible, with sufficient information to understand the nature, scale, location and likely consequences of the proposal; and
- c. any substantial proposal and HDC's response to it is reported to the appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Panel at the earliest practicable opportunity.

The purpose of this provision is to ensure democratic oversight begins while proposals are still capable of being influenced rather than after accommodation arrangements have effectively been determined.

19. Current Numbers, Future Projections and Public Transparency

The Executive Leader shall request that the Home Office and its accommodation providers provide HDC with, and regularly update, insofar as disclosure is lawful:

- the current number of persons accommodated through Home Office asylum accommodation arrangements within Huntingdonshire;
- the number and type of accommodation properties currently in use;
- their aggregate capacity;
- their broad geographical distribution;
- the number of persons accommodated by broad accommodation cohort where that information can lawfully be supplied;
- the projected accommodation requirement for Huntingdonshire over the next 12, 24 and 36 months;
- anticipated increases or reductions in accommodation capacity;
- proposed procurement activity;
- expected future placement requirements; and

- the expected duration of existing accommodation arrangements.

This Council further requests full transparency from Government concerning contracts and commissioning arrangements with asylum accommodation providers insofar as those arrangements affect Huntingdonshire, including relevant information concerning contract duration, accommodation requirements, provider responsibilities and proposed changes to the accommodation estate.

Where information can lawfully be placed in the public domain without compromising personal privacy, commercial confidentiality, security or safeguarding, the Council requests that it is published so that Huntingdonshire residents and elected Members have access to accurate information rather than speculation.

20. Public-Service, Infrastructure, Community-Safety and Safeguarding Impact Assessments

For any proposed substantial asylum accommodation facility or material expansion within Huntingdonshire, this Council requests that the Home Office provides, before accommodation is commissioned wherever reasonably practicable, a clear assessment of the foreseeable short-term and long-term impacts upon:

- housing;
- homelessness services;
- healthcare;
- policing;
- community safety;
- education;
- children's services;
- adult social care;
- public health;
- transport;
- waste and environmental services;
- community infrastructure; and
- other affected local public services.

Where responsibilities fall upon Cambridgeshire County Council, Cambridgeshire Constabulary, NHS bodies or another public authority rather than HDC, this Council requests that those organisations are given sufficient advance information to undertake their own assessments.

The Council shall also request that appropriate risk and safeguarding assessments are undertaken in relation to any substantial proposed accommodation, having regard to the particular circumstances of the proposed site and surrounding area, including where relevant: proximity to schools;

- nurseries;
- children's play areas;
- supported accommodation;
- vulnerable-person services;
- healthcare facilities; and
- other locations giving rise to legitimate safeguarding considerations.

Any such assessment must be evidence-led and based upon the actual proposed use, location, occupancy arrangements and identified risks rather than assumptions about individuals.

21. Advance Notification of Future Placements

In addition to the requirements concerning new accommodation sites contained elsewhere within this motion, the Executive Leader shall request that the Home Office and its contractors provide the earliest possible advance notification of material changes in placement numbers within Huntingdonshire, including placements using existing accommodation capacity.

The information requested should include, insofar as it may lawfully be disclosed:

- anticipated numbers;
- broad accommodation cohort;
- proposed timing;
- expected duration;
- locations at an appropriate non-personal level; and
- information reasonably required by local public authorities to undertake service planning, safeguarding and community-safety assessments.

This Council believes local authorities and other public services should not first become aware of material changes in accommodation demand only after placements have occurred.

22. Statutory Local Consent Mechanism

Recognising that Huntingdonshire District Council does not presently possess a general legal veto over Home Office asylum accommodation decisions:

This Council calls upon His Majesty's Government to establish a statutory local-consent mechanism requiring meaningful consultation with the relevant local authority before substantial asylum accommodation is commissioned and providing a formal mechanism through which a local authority may withhold consent where objective evidence demonstrates that a proposed location or level of accommodation is unsuitable or would impose unacceptable cumulative impacts upon the locality.

The Executive Leader shall specifically request that Government considers legislation or national policy providing local authorities with a meaningful ability to reject proposed substantial accommodation before arrangements become operational, rather than merely being consulted after substantive decisions have already been taken.

23. Huntingdonshire Is Not a Willing Partner in Further Expansion

For the avoidance of any doubt concerning the political position established by this motion:

Huntingdonshire District Council does not regard itself as a willing partner in the further expansion of Home Office asylum accommodation within the district.

This Council does not accept that Huntingdonshire communities should simply be expected to absorb the local consequences of national asylum accommodation policy without meaningful local consent, adequate information, proper impact assessment and full Government funding.

Where the Government nevertheless proposes further expansion, this Council requests that Cabinet, the Executive Leader and relevant Executive Members use every lawful power, representation, escalation route, avenue and influence available to Huntingdonshire District Council to oppose and challenge that expansion, consistently with the Legal Safeguard contained within this motion.

24. Multi-Agency Service Planning and Full Government Funding

Where any existing or proposed asylum accommodation generates identifiable additional demand upon local public services, this Council shall call upon the Government to ensure that the full additional financial consequence of its national policy is met by central Government rather than local taxpayers.

Where significant accommodation is proposed, HDC shall request that the Home Office coordinates with relevant public authorities to establish:

- anticipated demand on individual services;
- additional staffing or service requirements;
- the funding available;
- the duration of that funding;

- responsibility for unforeseen additional expenditure; and
- arrangements for reviewing the actual impact following occupation.

This Council believes that neither Huntingdonshire taxpayers nor taxpayers funding other affected local public authorities should be required to subsidise identifiable additional costs arising from decisions taken by central Government.

25. Publication of Government Responses and Accountability

The Executive Leader shall request a substantive written response from the Home Office to the matters raised by this motion.

Subject to lawful redaction for personal information, safeguarding, security and genuine commercial confidentiality, this Council requests that:

- correspondence sent pursuant to this motion;
- substantive Home Office responses;
- information concerning proposed accommodation capacity;
- Government responses concerning future projections;
- relevant impact information; and
- are made available to Members and, where lawfully appropriate, published for residents.

This Council believes that decisions materially affecting Huntingdonshire communities should be made through a transparent and accountable process and that residents and their elected representatives should have access to sufficient information to scrutinise their consequences.

26. Comprehensive Formal Challenge Where a Proposal Is Unsuitable

Where the evidence file, planning assessment, legal assessment, safeguarding assessment, community-safety information or public-service impact assessment demonstrates that a proposed asylum accommodation site is unsuitable:

this Council requests that HDC submits a comprehensive formal objection to the Home Office and accommodation provider and pursues every available lawful escalation route.

The objection should identify the evidence relied upon, the specific local consequences identified and the remedy sought, and should be escalated where appropriate to:

- senior Home Office officials;
- the responsible Government Minister;

- the Home Secretary;
- Huntingdonshire's Members of Parliament; and
- any other public body possessing a relevant decision-making or oversight function.

Where the Council considers further legal action potentially available, specialist legal advice should be obtained promptly so that an opportunity to protect Huntingdonshire's lawful interests is not lost through delay.

Legal Safeguard

For the avoidance of doubt, nothing in this motion:

- seeks to determine an individual's immigration or asylum status;
- seeks to prevent any person from exercising a right conferred upon them by law;
- directs an officer or Member to act contrary to a statutory duty;
- requires unlawful discrimination against any person;
- predetermines a planning, licensing, housing, homelessness, regulatory or enforcement decision which must legally be considered on its individual merits; or
- requires Huntingdonshire District Council to obstruct the lawful exercise of a power belonging to the Secretary of State or another public authority.

The purpose of this motion is to establish the strongest lawful political and corporate position available to Huntingdonshire District Council against any further expansion of asylum accommodation within the district, to withdraw voluntary Council support for such expansion, to ensure that every lawful planning, regulatory, enforcement, financial, scrutiny and representational mechanism available to the Council is prepared and used where appropriate, and to advocate for the progressive reduction of the existing Home Office asylum accommodation estate in Huntingdonshire.

c) Motion from Councillor K Maheshwari

Local Planning Powers to Protect High Street Diversity

This Council notes that:

1. Huntingdonshire's town centres are strongest when they contain a healthy and varied mix of shops, services and other businesses.
2. Use Class E allows a wide range of commercial, business and service activities to change from one use to another without requiring planning permission.
3. This flexibility has benefits, but it can also mean that councils have limited ability to respond where one particular type of activity becomes over-concentrated in a part of a town centre.
4. The Government has announced proposals under which vape shops and adult gaming centres would require planning permission, with consultation and legislation to follow. However, similar local concerns can arise from concentrations of other Class E activities, such as barbers, nail bars, beauty businesses, mobile-phone sales and repair shops, or other uses depending on the circumstances of a particular town centre.

This Council believes that:

1. No lawful business should be treated as undesirable simply because of the type of business it is. Barbers, nail bars, mobile-phone shops and other Class E businesses can all make a positive contribution to our high streets.
2. The planning concern arises where robust local evidence shows that an over-concentration of a particular activity is materially harming the diversity, vitality or viability of a defined part of a town centre.
3. In those circumstances, locally elected councils should have a targeted and proportionate ability to require planning permission for future movement into that activity, rather than having to wait for Government to identify individual business types nationally one at a time.
4. Any such power should be evidence-based, geographically limited and subject to proper planning safeguards. Requiring planning permission should not amount to an automatic refusal; individual applications should continue to be determined on their planning merits.

This Council therefore resolves to:

1. Write to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government asking the Government to consider creating a targeted statutory mechanism enabling local planning authorities, where supported by robust planning evidence, to require planning permission for future movement into a specified Class E activity within a defined town-centre area where an over-concentration of that activity is materially harming, or is likely materially to harm, the diversity, vitality or viability of that area.
2. Ask that any such mechanism preserves the general flexibility of Class E, includes appropriate safeguards and appeal rights, and allows decisions to be taken locally on the basis of evidence rather than blanket bans or numerical quotas.

3. Send the motion to Huntingdonshire's Members of Parliament and the Local Government Association seeking their support.

5. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

To receive and respond to questions submitted by members of the public in accordance with the Council Procedure Rule 10.1.

Time Allocation: 10 Minutes

6. QUESTIONS TO MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

In accordance with the Council Procedure Rules, all questions –

- Must be relevant to an item which the Council has powers or duties;
- Must not relate to an item which is included elsewhere on the Agenda;
- Should be limited to obtaining information or pressing for action; and
- Should not exceed two minutes in duration.

Questions should not divulge or require to be divulged, confidential or exempt information.

Time Allocation: 30 Minutes.

7. PRE-SUBMISSION LOCAL PLAN TO 2046 SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS (Pages 55 - 1996)

Executive Councillor for Planning to present the Pre-Submission Local Plan 2046: Sustainability and Supporting Documents

The report has been considered at a meeting of the Cabinet earlier in the evening. The recommendations of which will be reported verbally at the meeting.

A copy of the draft Plan has been shared separately to all Members on the Member's Sharepoint site and is available on the District Council's website.

Time Allocation: 40 Minutes

8. APPOINTMENT OF AN INTERIM MONITORING OFFICER (Pages 1997 - 2002)

To consider a report by the Chief Executive on the appointment of an Interim Monitoring Officer for the District Council.

Time Allocation: 5 Minutes

9. REPRESENTATION OF POLITICAL GROUPS ON DISTRICT COUNCIL COMMITTEES AND PANELS (Pages 2003 - 2008)

To consider a report by the Elections and Democratic Services Manager on the representation of political groups on Committees and Panels in accordance with Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and the District Council's Constitution.

Time Allocation: 5 Minutes

10. CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND PETERBOROUGH COMBINED AUTHORITY - UPDATE (Pages 2009 - 2028)

This item provides an opportunity for District Council Members to ask questions on Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority issues.

If Members wish to raise questions or issues requiring a detailed response, it would be helpful if they can provide prior notice so that the necessary information can be obtained in advance of the meeting.

Time Allocation: 5 Minutes.

11. OUTCOMES FROM COMMITTEES AND PANELS (Pages 2029 - 2030)

An opportunity for Members to raise any issues or ask questions arising from recent meetings of the Council's Committees and Panels.

A list of meetings held since the last Council meeting is attached for information and Members are requested to address their questions to Committee and Panel Chairs.

Time Allocation: 10 Minutes.

12. VARIATIONS TO THE MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES AND PANELS

Group Leaders to report on variations to the Membership of Committees and Panels if necessary.

Time Allocation: 5 Minutes.

1 day of September 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

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Please contact Mrs Lisa Jablonska, Elections and Democratic Services Manager, Tel No. 01480 388004 / e-mail Lisa.Jablonska@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.