

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the CABINET held in the CIVIC SUITE (LANCASTER/STIRLING ROOMS), PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON, PE29 3TN on Tuesday, 15 October 2024

PRESENT: Councillor S J Conboy – Chair.

Councillors L Davenport-Ray, S W Ferguson, J E Harvey, B A Mickelburgh, B M Pitt, T D Sanderson, S L Taylor and S Wakeford.

41 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 10th September 2024 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

42 MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

43 HUNTINGDONSHIRE'S PRIORITY NATURAL LANDSCAPES

Consideration was given to a report by the Parks and Countryside Project Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) seeking formal recognition of the priority landscapes set out in the Nature Recovery Network for Huntingdonshire.

In introducing the report, the Executive Councillor for Parks and Countryside, Waste and Street Scene reported that this was a significant step forward for Huntingdonshire which would guide the Council in enhancing the natural environment as the District continues to grow, without hindering future development. The landscapes which had been identified not only included areas of large ecological interest but included river corridors too. Having acquainted the Cabinet with the legislative requirements under the Environment Act 2021 which introduced the Biodiversity Net Gain and Local Nature Recovery Strategy, the Cabinet noted that this document would help to inform future planning policy whilst also setting out a framework for local action to enhance biodiversity and people's connection to nature.

In noting that a presentation had been delivered by Mr M Baker from The Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environment, Communities and Partnerships) at their meeting on 3rd October 2024, the Executive Councillor for Climate Transformation and Workforce welcomed the report and commented that the priorities would fit into the Countywide Nature Recovery Strategy process.

The Executive Councillor for Parks and Countryside, Waste and Street Scene drew the Cabinet's attention to the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environment, Communities and Partnerships) making particular reference

to the comments made by Councillors Alban, McAdam and Hassall. Having expressed their support for the proposed additional recommendation made by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environment, Communities & Partnerships) and in seeking clarity on which Executive Portfolio Holder would be responsible for the fourth recommendation within the report, the Cabinet extended their thanks to Mr M Baker from The Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire and to Officers for their hard work and efforts in delivering the report.

In welcoming the approach made by Overview and Scrutiny to include an additional recommendation within the report the Executive Leader drew attention to the Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge report which would be presented to Council the following evening. Consideration would be given to the reporting and meeting cycle, in particular, the pre-scrutiny process.

Whereupon, it was duly moved and seconded that the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- a) to formally recognise and adopt the Priority Landscapes of Huntingdonshire as set out in the report now submitted;
- b) to endorse the use of the Nature Recovery Network for Huntingdonshire Document as an evidence base for the identification of Priority Natural Landscapes;
- c) to endorse the use of the Nature Recovery Network for Huntingdonshire Document to inform the response to and engagement with the development of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and subsequently future Planning Policy;
- d) to delegate authority to the Assistant Director (Strategic Insights and Delivery) in consultation with the Executive Councillor for Parks and Countryside, Waste and Street Scene to make any minor amendments to the Priority Landscapes of Huntingdonshire policy (subject to a review of the policy to be undertaken within three years);
- e) to delegate authority to the Corporate Director (Place) to implement any necessary procedural changes as a result of this endorsement; and
- f) agreed that the report and presentation be also presented to the Local Plans Advisory Group.

The meeting concluded at 7:19pm.

Chair