

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, 17 June 2025

PRESENT: Councillor S J Conboy – Chair.

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

12 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 15th May 2025 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

13 MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

14 GREAT STAUGHTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN EXAMINATION OUTCOME AND PROGRESSION TO REFERENDUM

A report by the Planning Policy Team Leader was submitted (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which sought agreement to act upon the Examiner's report into the Great Staughton Neighbourhood Plan leading to a referendum on whether or not it should be brought into force as part of the statutory development plan. It also set out a timetable for this process.

Whilst setting out the report, the Executive Councillor for Planning commented that Great Staughton Parish Council had been very proactive and transparent with the local community as part of this process.

Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Cabinet agreed that the District Council should act upon the Examiner's report to accept the recommended modifications and progress the neighbourhood plan to referendum.

15 DISCRETIONARY CHARGES IN PLANNING INFRASTRUCTURE AND PUBLIC PROTECTION

A report by the Head of Planning, Infrastructure & Public Protection was submitted (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) explaining the reasons for reviewing and implementing changes to discretionary Charges in Planning, Infrastructure and Public Protection, focusing on enhancing service delivery, covering rising operational costs, reacting to national government changes and ensuring the sustainability of the services

In setting out the report, the Executive Councillor for Finance & Resources referred to the comments made by the Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Performance & Growth), particularly in relation to their concerns regarding the wording of recommendation B. He noted that the Panel were widely in favour of the proposal but agreed with their recommendation that the wording of recommendation B needed to clarify that the delegated authority would be until the end of the current financial year. However, with regards to the Panel's recommendation to extend the delegation to the Shadow Executive Councillors for Planning & Finance, he commented that this was not something recognised by the Constitution. As such, he was nervous about acknowledging that which did not exist Constitutionally. Although he had no problem with Councillors keeping an eye on the governance checks and balances, proceeding via the method of involving Shadow Cabinet within that delegation was not accepted.

Similarly, the Executive Councillor for Economy, Regeneration and Housing agreed and stated that informal discussions or briefings behind the scenes in the usual way would give Scrutiny colleagues some reassurance.

A question was raised by the Executive Councillor for Climate, Transformation and Workforce regarding whether the views of developers had been sought with regards to the charges proposed to be introduced. Furthermore, she asked that if the approval was for one year, whether there would opportunity after that to go back again to developers to gauge their thoughts.

In response, the Executive Councillor for Planning was happy to take that back to the Planning Department to seek clarification. The Executive Councillor for Finance & Resources stated that this would fall into the normal Fees and Charges schedule, and during the course of the normal budget round, if there were lots of pushback or concerns, although this was unlikely, they would appear in the Fees and Charges.

The Cabinet agreed that the wording of recommendation B in the report should be amended to reflect that the delegated authority was for the current financial year, and it was

RESOLVED

- (a) the contents of the report be noted;
- (b) that the Council be recommended to approve the review of Discretionary Charges within Planning, Infrastructure and Public Protection, and authority be delegated to the Head of Planning, Infrastructure and Public Protection, in consultation with the Section 151 Officer and Executive Councillor for Finance & Resources, to implement changes; and
- (c) that the Council be recommended to delegate authority to the Head of Planning, Infrastructure and Public Protection, in consultation with the Section 151 Officer and Executive Councillor for Finance & Resources, to undertake the following, for the current financial year
 - i. Introduction of new fees.
 - ii. Modification of existing fees.

- iii. Updating/adjusting of fees.
- iv. Waiving of fees.

16 CORPORATE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2025/26

A report by the Head of Policy, Performance & Emergency Planning was submitted (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which presented the targets and tolerances for the key performance indicators against which the performance of the Council's services would be monitored. The indicators were agreed by Cabinet on 15th April 2025 as part of the Corporate Plan refresh.

In setting out the report, the Executive Councillor for Resident Services and Corporate Performance noted the comments from the Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Performance & Growth), particularly that they were highly supportive of these targets and grateful they had been listened to, and that the changes they had suggested in April had been incorporated into the Performance Indicators.

Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

- (a) that the proposed target and tolerances for the key performance indicators 2025/26 as set out in Appendix 1 be endorsed; and
- (b) that the Council be recommended to approve the proposed target and tolerances for the key performance indicators 2025/26 as set out in Appendix 1.

17 CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT, QUARTER 4 2024/25

A report by the Head of Policy, Performance & Emergency Planning was submitted (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which presented an update on the progress of the Corporate Plan Actions and Corporate Performance Indicators during Quarter 4 (January to March 2025).

In setting out the report, the Executive Councillor for Resident Services and Corporate Performance stated that the Council was making very strong, measurable progress against its goals, which was a reflection of the hard work, dedication and focus of officers and teams across the Council. Furthermore, he thanked all officers who had contributed to that success.

He noted the comments made by the Overview & Scrutiny (Performance & Growth), particularly their concerns around the bin collection statistics. He responded that difficulties had been faced with regards to losing a number of highly experienced operatives, however if the numbers were compared with most authorities in the country, the Council had still done a very good job. It had been a single less than perfect year from a service that consistently delivered very good results.

Additionally, he explained that much of the Panel's concern around food waste would be rectified in the new year when the weekly food waste collection team would be introduced.

The Executive Councillor for Finance & Resources similarly commented that the average number of missed bins compared to peer Council's were on average 47% better, and additionally the financial performance from the waste collection point of view was very strong.

In response to a comment from the Executive Councillor for Climate, Transformation and Workforce, the Cabinet agreed to think how the report and the performance of contracts was presented moving forward, to help residents better recognise and understand the performance of the Council's projects. Doing so would allow the Council to better communicate this information to the public, but also allowed Members to recognise the complexity and multi layered elements of some of the areas which were contained within a single red/amber/green format.

The Leader, on behalf of the Cabinet, thanked all of the staff involved for their achievement and that they should be proud of their accomplishments.

Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Cabinet considered and commented on progress and performance during Quarter 4, as summarised in the Corporate Performance Report attached and detailed in Appendices A, B, C and D.

18 FINANCE PERFORMANCE REPORT - PROVISIONAL OUTTURN 2024/25

A report by the Corporate Director – Finance & Resources was submitted (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) providing details of the Council's provisional outturn for 2024/2025.

Having set out the report, the Executive Councillor for Finance & Resources made reference to the comments from the Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Performance & Growth). He responded that the Council had invested and given money to services that made them perform better, making them more effective which in the longer run was cheaper. He cited the examples of One Leisure who had made a surplus for the first time, which was because the Council had invested in it; St Ives Indoor Centre which was generating a third of its own electricity from the solar canopy, which was a big cost saving and which would not have happened without investing the time and effort in to the Grant; and Sawtry Swimming Pool. He concluded that the fact there had been a surplus was because the Council had been pro-active and forward thinking.

Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Cabinet considered and commented on the following -

- the revenue financial performance for the financial year 2024/25, as detailed in Appendix 1 and summarised in paragraph 3.2;

- the capital financial performance for the financial year 2024/25, as detailed in Appendix 2 and summarised in paragraph 3.3; and
- the requested rephrasing of capital budgets from 2024/25 to 2025/26 as detailed in Appendix 2.

19 TREASURY MANAGEMENT OUTTURN REPORT 2024/25

A report by the Head of Finance was submitted (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) providing an update on the Council's treasury management activity during 2024/25, including investment and borrowing activity and treasury performance.

The Executive Councillor for Finance & Resources drew attention to the comments from the Overview & Scrutiny Panel and similarly commended how readable the report was.

He also made reference to a response to a question put to the Financial and Treasury Accountant during the Overview & Scrutiny Panel, which was that with DMO where it was, and with a lot of the Council's money being in there and outperforming the money market he was comfortable with the status. Accordingly, the Cabinet were particularly pleased to note that the Financial and Treasury Accountant was equally content.

The Executive Councillor for Finance & Resources further commended the professionalism and quality of the team and the work they were doing.

Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Cabinet considered and commented on the treasury management performance for 2024/25 and recommends the report to Council for consideration.

20 HINCHINGBROOKE COUNTRY PARK JOINT GROUP MINUTES

The Cabinet has received and noted the Minutes of the Hinchingsbrooke Country Park Joint Group meetings held on 2nd April 2025 and 25th April 2025.

Chair