

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the CORPORATE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE held in the CIVIC SUITE (LANCASTER/STIRLING ROOMS), PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON, CAMBS, PE29 3TN on Wednesday, 9 July 2025

PRESENT: Councillor D J Shaw – Vice-Chair.

Councillors J A Gray, P J Hodgson-Jones, I P Taylor, P Webb (Independent Member) and N Wells.

APOLOGY(IES): Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors M J Burke and A R Jennings.

11 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 18 June 2025 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

12 MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

13 UPDATE ON CODE OF CONDUCT AND REGISTER OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

The Committee received a report (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which provided details of the current level of returns by Town and Parish Councillors and by District Councillors. It also contained a breakdown of the adoption by Town and Parish Councils of Codes of Conduct.

The Committee noted the positive information in Appendix 1 to the report that the number of outstanding DPI forms was as little as 4. In response, the Elections and Democratic Services Manager praised the diligence of Democratic Services Member Development and Support Officer in chasing up Parish/Town Councils for up-to-date information and outstanding forms. A question was raised regarding what responsibility the Council had over the Parish/Town Councils who had chosen to adopt their own codes, in making sure those Codes were suitable, which she would take away and respond to the Committee.

Whereupon it was

RESOLVED

that the Committee considered and noted the report.

14 GLATTON AND CONINGTON COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

The Committee received a report (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which provided an update on the Community Governance Review (CGR)

of Glatton and Conington Parishes following public consultation. The report also set out the outcome of the consultation with responses received and further guidance on the CGR process in order to assist the Committee in determining a way forward for final decision.

After the Elections and Democratic Services Manager set out the report, the Committee reached the conclusion that recommendation (a) in the report was a rational change, though noted it was a difficult decision.

Whereupon it was

RESOLVED

that the Committee recommended to Council the drafting of a Reorganisation of Community Governance Order for the amendment of the Parish boundaries between the Parishes of Glatton and Conington.

15 ANTI-FRAUD, BRIBERY AND CORRUPTION STRATEGY

The Committee received a report (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which set out a revised Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Strategy which had been refreshed to take account of updated best practice in fraud prevention and legislative changes, including the introduction of the failure to prevent fraud offence. This new offence, effective from 1 September 2025, sought to hold large organisations to account if they benefitted from fraud, and was intended to encourage organisations to build a strong anti-fraud culture.

The Revenue and Benefits Manager set out the report and reminded the Committee that there was a Member briefing on Fraud which was to be held on 5 August, the invites of which had been sent out recently.

Whereupon it was

RESOLVED

that the Committee approved the Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Strategy 2025-2028 and associated action plan.

16 ANNUAL REVIEW OF FRAUD INVESTIGATION ACTIVITY

The Committee received a report (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which provided a summary of the activity undertaken by the Council's Corporate Fraud Team in 2024/2025.

The Committee noted that although it was not referenced in the report, there had not been any cases of internal fraud being committed against the Council. The Revenue and Benefits Manager stated that such information could be added to future reports.

Whereupon it was

RESOLVED

that the Committee commented on the content of the report.

17 INTERNAL AUDIT ACTIONS UPDATE

The Committee received a report (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which summarised the progress in implementing management actions arising from final internal audit reports. Implementation of the actions were the responsibility of the relevant managers with oversight from Corporate Leadership Team.

The Committee suggested that they would find it helpful if the action title captured the action summary, which the Corporate Director – Finance & Resources noted and explained that officers were learning how to use the system, which they had received training on from RSM and moving forward there would be further thought how to refine the report and elaborate accordingly for the Committee. Furthermore, the Committee requested that an appendix be included that gave me detail as to the high risk actions, noting that some of this information would need to be considered confidentially. The Corporate Director – Finance & Resources was happy to take that away, commenting that some actions may need to be considered confidentially, but the intention was to be as open and transparent as possible so she and the Monitoring Officer would look further and consider how much could be provided in the public domain and how much may need to be restricted.

Whereupon it was

RESOLVED

that the Committee commented on and noted the current position regarding actions arising from internal audit reports.

18 CORPORATE RISK REGISTER

The Committee received a report (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which provided an update on the Corporate Risk Register, presented a heat map relating to the current residual risk scores and a summary report. It provided the Committee with the opportunity to comment on and offer challenge to the Corporate Leadership Team as part of the active management of risks.

The Corporate Director – Finance & Resources set out the report and by way of clarification confirmed that none of the scores had changed, hence the report did not set out any changes – this could be clarified explicitly in future. Further, she felt aligned with the Committees comments that they would expect to see a strategic transition around the Council's merge, ensuring that the risks identified were understood by the shadow authority in due course. Finally, she commented that following the publication of the report, there had been an advertisement for a new Risk Officer with candidates being interviewed the following week, which would help moving forward.

Whereupon it was

RESOLVED

that the Committee commented on the reports in the appendices and progress with risk management.

19 CORPORATE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE PROGRESS REPORT

The Committee received and noted a report (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) on progress of actions in response to any decisions taken at previous meetings.

20 INTERNAL AUDIT UPDATE REPORT

The Committee received a report (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which presented a summary of the work undertaken by the Internal Audit Service since the Committee last met in June 2025. RSM had prepared the update and were present in the meeting.

The Audit Manager - RSM set out the report with the addition of the Corporate Director – Finance & Resources clarifying that in terms of the High Priority Action around the Recruitment Policy, this was also on the Employment Committee Agenda which was to be published in the following week, for the Committees reassurance.

The Committee was pleased that although their previous meeting was recent, more action had taken place and things updated, which was a long way from the position around 12 months earlier. They commended officers for their hard work as well as RSM for their contribution.

Whereupon it was

RESOLVED

that the Committee commented on and noted the update on work undertaken by Internal Audit up to end of June 2025.

Chair