

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 July 2025

PRESENT: Councillor S J Conboy – Chair.

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

APOLOGIES: An apology for absence from the meeting was submitted on behalf of Councillor S A Howell.

21 MINUTES

- (a) The Minutes of the meeting held on 17 June 2025 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair; and
- (b) The corrected Minutes of the meeting held on 15 May 2025 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

22 MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor Harvey declared an other registerable interest under Minute 24/25 by virtue of being Vice-Chair of Huntingdon & District Cricket Club which might be impacted by the Huntingdon Sport & Health Club. As this was a voluntary role, it was not a pecuniary interest and she partook in the discussion and deliberation of this item

23 REGENERATION OPPORTUNITIES REPORT

A report by the Head of Economy, Regeneration and Housing Delivery was submitted (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) seeking the Cabinet's approval to move forward to the next stages with a regeneration partnership with Capital and Centric (C&C) relating to sites within the Market Towns. This project sought to bring forward economic and housing led opportunities which would contribute positively and create new homes, jobs and other benefits.

After setting out the report, the Executive Councillor – Jobs, Economy & Housing – S Wakeford, in response to comments from the Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Performance & Growth), stated that the recommendations had been clarified so that the approval sought included noting the advice of the S151 officer that there were sufficient funds available to facilitate identified works within existing reserves. For clarity, the Leader read out these revised recommendations as laid out in the supplementary document published prior to the meeting.

Whereupon it was

RESOLVED

that the Cabinet

- (a) supported officers identifying and working up proposals for regeneration opportunities in the Market Towns, which could be brought forward for development in conjunction with C&C as a private sector partner – noting the benefits of the C&C operating model as listed within the appendix to the report;
- (b) endorsed the principle of working with C&C as a partner to develop and potentially deliver identified proposals – noting the appointment via a Direct Award from the 'Bloom' Framework – and noting the advice of the Corporate Director of Finance and Resources (S151) that there are sufficient funds available to facilitate the identified works;
- (c) endorsed officers proceeding to undertake engagement with stakeholders relating to any identified opportunities and potential developments as part of business case development; and
- (d) supported the principle of officers engaging in efforts to acquire land and buildings in connection with the principle of regeneration in the Market Towns, where this would align with the principles of delivering economic or housing led regeneration.

24 INCREASING AFFORDABLE HOUSING - INSPIRED SOLUTIONS

A report by the Head of Economy, Regeneration and Housing Delivery was submitted (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which detailed the proposal to work alongside Inspired Solutions to deliver various development sites across Huntingdonshire to support housing delivery in particular affordable housing responding to housing need.

The Executive Councillor – Jobs, Economy & Housing – S Wakeford in response to concerns raised by the Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Performance & Growth), explained that in the short term the costs of development would be borne by this organisation, so there may be a risk the developer's do not get as far as building houses, but the Council would not have a long term exposure on that.

He further clarified that the cost of entering the collaboration with the developers in terms of legal fees to formalise the relationship and enter into a binding commitment would be around £20,000. He further advised that in terms of specific liabilities for the Council, these estimates were not included in the papers that were circulated for the Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Performance & Growth), but prompted by questions from the Panel, work had been done on this. He clarified that the percentage of rental income loss for bad debts that might reasonably be expected would be 3% and 0.5% for long term gaps in the property beyond the ordinary turnover. In terms of average repairs costs, it was estimated that this would be just below £6,000. The reasonable risk of exposure estimated in the event that 200 homes were built would be around £37,000 per annum, which was a reassuring figure compared with the benefit of bringing forward that number of affordable homes. Finally, he explained that the intention was that this additional information around cost and risk would be included in a paper to the Overview & Scrutiny (Performance & Growth) at its next meeting. In

view of the greater clarification provided around this information, the recommendation from the Panel to not delegate the authority as laid out in recommendation 2.2 in the report was not approved by the Cabinet.

Whereupon it was

RESOLVED

the Cabinet

- (a) agreed in principle to establish a working partnership with Inspired Solutions to deliver affordable homes within the district on various sites – noting an initial aspiration for circa 200 homes; and
- (b) delegated authority to the Corporate Director of Finance and Resources (S151 Officer), in consultation with the Corporate Director of Place to negotiate and draft the following agreements:
 - i. Heads of Terms, Agreement for Leases and eventual Leases with Inspired Solutions;
 - ii. Heads of Terms, Agreement for Underleases and eventual Underleases with a company associated with Inspired Solutions; and
 - iii. Nomination Agreements for 100% nomination rights for all residential units for the period of the underleases.

25 ONE LEISURE INDEPENDENT REVIEW UPDATE

A report by the Head of Leisure, Health & Environment was submitted (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which provided an update on the progress One Leisure and the Council had made following the recommendations made and set out within the Independent Review of the One Leisure Long Term Operating Model. It also provided an opportunity to review, consider and respond to the progress One Leisure had made since the Independent Review of One Leisure was commissioned in late 2023. Furthermore, it closed out an action from (section 6.5 – point 5) from the original Independent Review of the Long-Term Operating Model for One Leisure which stated: *“A further commitment that One Leisure will return to Members and update on actions against all the recommendations made by the independent consultant”*.

At the start of this item, the Executive Councillor – Governance and Democratic Services – J Harvey, declared an interested by virtue of being Vice-Chair of Huntingdon & District Cricket Club which might be impacted by the Huntingdon Sport & Health Club. As this was a voluntary role, it was not a pecuniary interest and she partook in the discussion and deliberation of this item.

The Leader – Councillor S Conboy set out the report, noting the comments from the Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Performance & Growth). She thanked all staff involved who worked tirelessly in accomplishing the achievements in the report.

Whereupon it was

RESOLVED

that the Cabinet

- (a) noted the progress of actions identified within the report over the last 12 months;
- (b) commented on the progress that has been made on the 22 actions identified within the Year 1 – Transformation Progress Report of Actions & Recommendations from the Long-Term Operating Model for One Leisure undertaken by First Point Management; and
- (c) acknowledged and accepted the key actions from the associated summary presentation and outlined within Section 4 of the report.

26 REVISED CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

A report by the Climate Co-ordinator and the Development & Delivery Manager was submitted (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which provided an update on progress of the delivery of the Council's Climate Strategy and Action Plan since its adoption in February 2023. Key areas of success in the report would cover the 2024-2025 budget year.

The report also presented a summary of progress, highlighting the current position of Huntingdonshire District Council, demonstrating actions undertaken to reduce emissions through the approach set out in the Climate Strategy for the Council to be:

- **a positive example** through its actions to be a net carbon zero Council by 2040;
- **an enabler** supporting action within our communities and across our partners; and
- **an encourager** to ensure the efforts of those that live, work, and visit our district help to achieve the aspiration of a net carbon zero Huntingdonshire by 2040.

The Executive Councillor - Climate, Transformation and Workforce - L Davenport-Ray highlighted the consistent progress made on the climate action scorecards which had been released the previous week, which the Cabinet were pleased to note. She also credited the excellent officers involved who had shown skill and hard work. Finally, she updated the Cabinet with her work with the Executive Councillor – Planning – T Sanderson, in drafting a technical advice note for the Council's Planning team to publish which would give developers an idea of the things the Council would like to see happen in Huntingdonshire, helping to use the influence it had as a planning authority, which the Cabinet were pleased to see coming forward.

Whereupon it was

RESOLVED

that the Cabinet

- (a) commented on the delivery of the Climate Action Plan for 2024-25;

- (b) noted the progress made by the Council and its partners towards achieving Carbon Net Zero by 2040; and
- (c) commented on and approved the updated Climate Action plan as shown in Appendix 6 and note the amendment of actions in Appendix 7.

27 HUNTINGDONSHIRE ECONOMIC GROWTH STRATEGY

A report by the Economic Development Manager was submitted (a copy of which was appended to the Minute Book) which presented the refreshed Economic Growth Strategy for Huntingdonshire to Cabinet for endorsement. The strategy outlined a clear framework for promoting sustainable and inclusive economic growth over the next 2–5 years which would enable the Economic Development Team to deliver the strategy effectively, ensuring the district remained attractive and competitive in a rapidly evolving economic landscape.

In setting out the report, the Executive Councillor – Jobs, Economy & Housing – S Wakeford referenced that the report had been taken through the Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Performance & Growth) in June to allow for more time to be informed by their input. As well as that it had been valuable engaging with Councillors across the Council at an earlier formative stage in putting the strategy together, as well as stakeholders from beyond the Council.

Whereupon it was

RESOLVED

that the Cabinet endorsed the refreshed Economic Growth Strategy, enabling the Economic Development Team and partners to deliver its objectives over the next 2–5 years.

28 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

29 3C SHARED SERVICES PARTNERSHIP RENEWAL AGREEMENT

The Cabinet gave consideration to an exempt report (a copy of which is appended in the annex to the Minute Book) on the 3C Shared Services Partnership Renewal Agreement.

RESOLVED

The Cabinet endorsed the recommendations contained within the exempt report.

Chair