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, 14 July 2026.

PRESENT: Councillor S J Conboy – Chair.

Councillors L Davenport-Ray, L Dewey-Beckett, J E Harvey, N J Hunt, J E Kerr, B A Mickelburgh, D L Mickelburgh and T D Sanderson.

13. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 16 June 2026 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

14. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

15. MAYORAL CAR PARKING OFFER

A report by the Head of Economy, Regeneration & Housing Delivery was submitted (a copy of which is appended to the Minute Book) providing details of the grant proposal made to the Council by the Mayor of Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA).

The Executive Councillor for Parks and Countryside, Waste & Street Scene, Councillor Kerr introduced the report and made reference to the comments of the Overview & Scrutiny (Performance and Growth) Panel, who had put forward 2 recommendations in relation to the report.

In response to questions from the Cabinet regarding the recommendation from the Overview & Scrutiny (Performance and Growth) Panel that the Council should wait for the Car Parking Strategy before making a decision, the Executive Councillor for Parks and Countryside, Waste & Street Scene, Councillor Kerr advised that a consequence of doing so could lead to the Mayor withdrawing the offer.

In discussing the report, the Cabinet made the following comments;

- that there was no such thing as ‘free parking’, and the bill would not be paid by those taking advantage of the free 2 hours. It was a universal subsidy paid for by all residents to benefit the few who happened to use cark parks;
- from a financial perspective it would be prudent to support the proposal. Any opportunity to help invest and put money into the Council’s market towns should not be declined;
- it was a difficult decision as there were better ways of

spending the money, however it was offered to the Council packaged in a certain way, and if refused residents might question why the Council had not given them access to free parking;

- the Mayor had made the political decision to prioritise subsidising car parking over sustainable transport. There was scepticism whether free parking would result in high street regeneration. However, the grant proposal was a beneficial option for residents;
- reference was made to the CPCA reducing bus services across the region and the impact that would have on residents, and the money might have been better spent on such services. However, there was reluctant support for the proposal;
- although the proposal may help some residents, shops and the Council, it was important to note that the money would come from the taxpayer and was being used in a specific way to support a political choice of the Mayor. Furthermore, evidence showed that free parking did not clearly bring more footfall into the town and did not help shops financially.
- the proposal was being labelled as a trial, which was not the case as the Council would cease to exist at the end of the period proposed, and it was not for the Council or the Mayor to decide the Parking arrangements after May 2028;
- the recommendation from the Overview & Scrutiny (Performance and Growth) Panel requesting the Business Case was welcomed;
- there were other services the Mayor could preferably have used the money on, such as buses, bus shelters, train stations, light rail or road improvements;
- there was concern whether this was the right use of public money and whether it genuinely served the residents who needed help the most. The report acknowledged there was no evidence base to suggest a direct causal link between free parking and increased local retail spend or growth in the night-time economy;
- concern was also raised around the threat to bus routes which would impact those who did not own a car and who would not benefit from free parking; the residents that most needed the Council's help were not those driving in to town centres after 4pm;
- the Cabinet was keen that the Mayor listened to the discussion of the meeting and of the Overview & Scrutiny (Performance and Growth) Panel meeting; and
- the Mayor had reached out earlier in the day regarding an ongoing conversation about the proposal, but there were no details around what that may include.

In response to a question from the Cabinet, the Deputy Chief Executive and Corporate Director – Place advised that in respect of any clawback arrangements, this had not been expressed to date, however the Council regularly entered grant agreements and Officers would approach such matters cautiously and would not put a grant agreement in place if it was going to put the Council at undue risk from those clawback arrangements. He also clarified that in terms of recommendations 1, 2 and 3 which related to agreeing the receipt of the funding, those delegations to Officers already existed, and what was being sought was the agreement of Cabinet to use that funding to implement the scheme and to secure the practical powers needed to implement it.

Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that

(1) the proposal for grant funding, which has been made by the Mayor of Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA), be noted;

(2) it be noted that sufficient powers exist for Officers to accept said grant funding in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder;

(3) Officers, on behalf of the Council, undertaking steps to formally accept the funding – including formalising necessary grant agreements and payment profiles etc, be endorsed;

(4) the use of the grant funding to implement a ‘free after 4pm parking Monday to Friday’ scheme based on the recommended option (at section 3) as set out within the report, be agreed; and

(5) authority be delegated, for the implementation of the aforementioned scheme, to the Corporate Director (Place) in consultation with the Executive Councillor for Parks and Countryside, Waste and Street Scene as necessary including:

   (a) to make and confirm necessary changes to the Parking Places Orders where required and to make and confirm the Notice of Variation required to implement the agreed charges;

   (b) to make and confirm necessary changes to the Parking Places Orders where required and to make and confirm the Notice of Variation to reinstate the current (until 1800 Monday to Friday) chargeable hours from 1st April 2028 or sooner if the operation of the scheme results in unintended or unforeseen detrimental impacts including but not limited to financially impacting the Council (e.g. where loss of income exceeds the grant contribution), or other detrimental impact occurs to people, place or the Council as a consequence of operation; and

   (c) to undertake any other activities necessary to implement, vary or cease the scheme including any necessary changes and reinstatement works.

At 7:30 pm the meeting was adjourned.

At 7:35 pm the meeting resumed.

16. CORPORATE PLAN REFRESH 2026/27

A report by the Project Manager and Data Analyst was submitted (a copy of which is appended to the Minute Book) providing an update on the refresh of the Corporate Plan for 2023-28, and presenting the actions and performance indicators for 2026/27 recommended for submission to Council for approval.

The Executive Councillor for Resident Services and Corporate Performance, Councillor Hunt introduced the report, making particular reference to the extensive investment in One Leisure Huntingdon, better protection for care leavers and homelessness prevention work. Reference was also made to the comments of the Overview & Scrutiny (Performance & Growth) Panel, around metrics and the KPI Working Group which he was happy to support as Portfolio Holder.

The Cabinet commended the addition of enhanced support for care leavers to the list of Corporate Plan Actions, particularly as a member of the public had previously addressed the Council on this topic.

Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that

(1) the refreshed Corporate Plan (Appendix A), be endorsed and recommended to Council; and

(2) the Key Performance Indicators (Appendix D), be endorsed, and recommended to Council.

17. TREASURY MANAGEMENT OUTTURN REPORT 2025/26

A report by the Head of Finance was submitted (a copy of which is appended to the Minute Book) providing an update on the Council's treasury management activity during 2025/26, including investment and borrowing activity and treasury performance.

The Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources, Councillor Harvey advised that the report was a retrospective assurance report which was positive overall, and that the Council had complied with all the relevant legislative and regulatory requirements. As it was a retrospective report, the Executive Councillor for Economy, Regeneration and Housing, Councillor B Mickelburgh, who had been the previous Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources, introduced the report. Particular reference was made to the comments of the Overview & Scrutiny (Performance and Growth) Panel around the Council's position on internal and external borrowing, as well as interest around the Commercial Investment Strategy, a report on which would be presented to the Panel in the autumn.

Whereupon it was

RESOLVED

that the Cabinet commented on the treasury management performance for 2025/26, and recommended the report to Council for considerationto Council for consideration.

18. 2025/26 FINANCE PERFORMANCE REPORT - PROVISIONAL OUTTURN

A report by the Head of Finance was submitted (a copy of which is appended to the Minute Book) presenting details of the Council's financial performance for 2025/2026.

The Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources, Councillor Harvey advised that the report was a retrospective report, setting out the provisional financial outturn for 2025/26 across both revenue and capital. As it was a retrospective report, the Executive Councillor for Economy, Regeneration and Housing, Councillor B Mickelburgh, who had been the previous Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources, introduced the report. Particular reference was made to the underspend which had resulted primarily from higher-than-expected income. The bottom line was healthy but included additional income that could not be relied upon on to be repeated in future. Reference was also made to the cost of Local Government Reorganisation, which was expected to be significant.

Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Cabinet

(1) considered and commented on the revenue financial performance for the financial year 2025/26, as detailed in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2;

(2) considered and commented on the capital financial performance for 2025/26, as detailed in Appendix 3; and

(3) considered and commented on the requested rephasing of capital budgets from 2025/26 to 2026/27 as detailed in Appendix 3.

Chair

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