

Huntingdonshire District Council
Joint Administration Agreement
between the HDC Independent, Liberal Democrat,
Labour and Green Groups

Introduction

On 5 May 2022 residents in Huntingdonshire voted for change. The HDC Independent, Liberal Democrat, Labour and Green Groups believe we have a duty to reflect that vote. As a Joint Administration, our community-focused councillors will work in cooperation towards a greener, fairer Huntingdonshire.

We commend the excellent work undertaken by Council staff. We look forward to working together as we set a new strategic direction for the Council.

The Joint Administration's key objectives for the current term of this Council will focus on:

- Enhancing employment opportunities and supporting businesses
- Supporting the needs of residents
- Improving the housing situation
- Strengthening our communities
- Tackling climate change and caring for the environment

We will explore all options available to invest in our services and people. We will also budget prudently, seek economies and efficiencies where we can, and secure additional funding for the District wherever possible.

To achieve these priorities, we will work constructively with the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA), Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC), and other public bodies, along with business partners and the third sector. We will maximise all opportunities for inward investment and work with other parts of government to improve infrastructure and connectivity across the District. We will grow positive and productive relationships with local town and parish councils.

To reflect the urgency of the climate crisis and ecological emergency, all Council decision-making will consider environmental and ecological limits as well as effects on future generations.

The following sections outline how we intend to achieve our priorities. Our ability to deliver these priorities will greatly depend upon the state of the District's finances.

1. Enhancing employment opportunities and supporting businesses

We will:

- promote Huntingdonshire as a location for high-tech, highly-skilled and green economic opportunities and jobs, within environmental limits

- take more opportunities to support local businesses with the Council's purchasing power
- focus on how we rejuvenate our economy in the wake of the pandemic, including
 - engaging with businesses to understand their future needs and aspirations
 - matching work space to the needs of our residents and businesses
 - supporting provision of high-speed broadband and mobile phone coverage across the District

2. Supporting the needs of residents

We are committed to ensuring that Huntingdonshire residents have a high quality of life. Residents face life's basic necessities becoming ever more unaffordable. To help mitigate the cost of living crisis, we will use universal access to basic services as a guiding principle.

All residents deserve to have:

- somewhere warm and safe to live
- a healthy diet
- opportunities to improve their skills, access employment and improve household income
- open spaces and leisure facilities to support their physical and mental health
- access to the digital and transport infrastructure needed for modern life

We will take a positive and proactive approach to:

- creating opportunities to join up services for the benefit of residents by working with the new integrated care system, other public bodies and the third sector
- working to ensure that Huntingdonshire is an inclusive District for all residents
- advocate that more of the wealth created in our local communities should stay in our local communities

3. Improving the housing situation

We will undertake a full review of housing need. We will update the Local Plan and other relevant policies accordingly. Quality of the built environment, creating healthy spaces and communities, available sustainable public transport, and embedding digital connectivity will all be important considerations.

This review will also include an examination of the suitability of new housing developments with respect to:

- Protecting and enhancing the local environment
- protecting the character of a local area
- sustainable construction practices
- building homes to high environmental standards
- potential work locations for new residents
- available sustainable public transport and active travel options
- appropriate infrastructure

We will also:

- encourage new building developments that accommodate a range of occupant needs
- work closely with towns and parishes to widen knowledge around the Community Infrastructure Levy and how local communities can access these funds
- encourage communities to develop and maintain Neighbourhood Plans

4. Strengthening Our Communities

We will:

- progress strategies for all our communities, urban to rural, that reflect the needs and aspirations of those living there
- work with police and communities to help people feel safe where they live
- support local people take action to improve their area including through 'seed funding' projects with community grants

In managing the Council's assets and using its resources, we will consider the social and economic impacts upon local communities, as well as financial implications for the Council. We will explore every opportunity to build capacity and empower communities to take ownership and meet residents' needs.

We want our communities to be great places to live and work. We will explore all opportunities to increase the provision of green spaces, play areas, youth activities and community buildings.

5. Tackling climate change and caring for the environment

Huntingdonshire must proactively tackle the climate crisis and ecological emergency. We will act upon this by:

- declaring a climate emergency to help focus minds and urgently implementing a Climate Action Plan
- designing Council policies that enable cutting of emissions and provide positive examples for businesses and residents
- considering environmental impact in all policy-making and our stewardship of Council assets and resources
- ensuring our updated Local Plan reflects the priorities outlined in our Climate Action Plan

Working together

We will ensure the Council communicates regularly with residents, meaningfully engaging with them in the widest possible aspects of our work. We will listen and respond to the concerns of residents in shaping policies and priorities. We will improve the tone of debate in Council meetings so it is polite and considerate, drawing on insights from councillors of all political persuasions. We will work to ensure residents of Huntingdonshire get good services and good value for their council tax, while considering social value as a priority.

Annex: Working arrangements

1. Leadership

- 1.1. The Liberal Democrat Group will receive the Leadership of the Council, and the Independent Group will receive the Deputy Leadership of the Council. There is the option to review after two years. The Labour Group will receive the Assistant Leadership of the Council.
- 1.2. The Leader, Deputy Leader and Assistant Leader will seek to work in close cooperation at all times, and to undertake liaison meetings with officers and other internal meetings jointly, sharing information, and undertaking consultations on any decision-making.
- 1.3. For external communications—including policy announcements, media initiatives and external representations—the Leader, Deputy Leader and Assistant Leader will rotate on approximately a 3:2:1 basis by mutual agreement.
- 1.4. The Leader, Deputy Leader and Assistant Leader will jointly act as the representative voice of the Council with outside organisations—including Central Government, Local Authority Associations and Council partners—and positively promote the Council as a whole to the media.
- 1.5 Internally the Leader, Deputy Leader and Assistant Leader will jointly represent the Council's leadership to the senior officer leadership team.
- 1.6 The Leader, Deputy Leader and Assistant Leader will cooperate closely in undertaking the business of the Cabinet and jointly provide political leadership for the Cabinet in developing and delivering Council-wide strategy and good financial management.
- 1.7 Cabinet will include representation from all political groups party to this Joint Administration Agreement. The Leader and Deputy Leader will respectively act as Chair and Deputy Chair of the Cabinet.
- 1.8 The Joint Administration aims to work together in a spirit of equal partnership with all groups, to ensure the Joint Administration is effective, coherent and stable. All groups accept joint responsibility to promote a good working culture, between group leaders and their respective groups.

2. Appointments

- 2.1. Committee Chair and Deputy Chair positions will be distributed on a 3:2:1 basis where possible, with Deputy Chairs being from another group to that of the Chair where possible. Committee Chairs and Deputy Chairs will fully engage with officers and committee activities on a joint basis, including with all pre-meetings.
- 2.2. All external appointments will normally be made on a similar basis, unless otherwise mutually agreed.
- 2.3. The Leader, Deputy Leader and Assistant Leader shall jointly represent the Council on the Combined Authority Board. Attendance will rotate on approximately a 3:2:1 basis or as mutually agreed. To achieve this intention in accordance with Combined Authority rules the Council will periodically rotate its named appointee and substitute appointee among the Leader, Deputy Leader and Assistant Leader. Joint Administration group leaders will meet in advance of Board meetings to agree a common approach for forthcoming issues, and agree not to vote if there is a disagreement.
- 2.4 Representation of the Council on Combined Authority executive committees and working groups shall be as mutually agreed by Joint Administration group leaders. The same principle in 2.3 of meeting to agree a common approach in advance of these shall apply.

3. Communications

- 3.1. All speeches, presentations and other communications will refer to the new administration of the District Council using the terminology 'Joint Administration'.
- 3.2. Announcements on behalf of the Council as a whole will be made by the Leader, Deputy Leader and Assistant Leader on the basis indicated in 1.3 above, unless otherwise mutually agreed.

4. Budget-setting

- 4.1. A working group will be established consisting of the group leaders within the Joint Administration to undertake all engagement with officers in the preparation of each successive budget, with papers commonly shared with all members of the working group.

5. Voting

- 5.1. All parties in the Joint Administration agree to whip in support of the budget, confidence motions and on issues covered by this Agreement and where there is consensus between Joint Administration groups. On issues outside the Agreement or where there is no consensus, groups will determine their own whips.

6. Monitoring the operation of the Agreement

- 6.1. Periodic meetings of the leaders of all political groups within the Joint Administration will be convened to review the implementation of the Agreement. Any disputes will be resolved informally, if possible, between groups. Any group leader may call an urgent additional review meeting. Amendments to this Agreement will be made only by joint agreement of all groups.
- 6.2. We are committed to the maintenance of our Joint Administration until the next Council elections in 2026. The precise terms of this Agreement will remain in place until the 2023 Council AGM, to be renewed and amended as necessary.

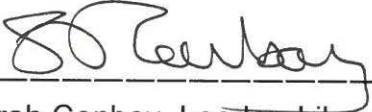
7. Maintaining the spirit of the Agreement

- 7.1. All groups commit to act in good faith according to this Agreement, to maintain constructive dialogue, to be open to alternative views, to be inclusive in sharing information with each other and to ensure 'no surprises' among one another.

Signed by:



Cllr Tom Sanderson, Leader, HDC Independent Group



Cllr Sarah Conboy, Leader, Liberal Democrat Group



Cllr Sam Wakeford, Leader, Labour Group



Cllr Lara Davenport-Ray, Leader, Green Group

Date: 17th May 2022