

**NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

**MEETING HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, DISTRICT COUNCIL OFFICES, GERNON  
ROAD, LETCHWORTH GARDEN CITY, SG6 3JF  
ON TUESDAY, 20TH JANUARY, 2026 AT 7.30 PM**

**MINUTES**

**Present:** *Councillors: Val Bryant (Chair), Ian Albert, Mick Debenham, Tamsin Thomas, Laura Williams and Donna Wright.*

**In Attendance:** *Isabelle Alajooz (Director - Governance and Monitoring Officer), Ian Couper (Director - Resources), Robert Filby (Trainee Committee Member and Scrutiny Officer), Frank Harrison (Environmental Health Manager), Sarah Kingsley (Director - Environment), Susan Le Dain (Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer), Anthony Roche (Chief Executive), Rachael Rooney (Interim Strategic Planning Manager) and Nigel Smith (Director - Place).*

**Also Present:** *There were no members of the public present.*

*Councillor Claire Winchester was presented as Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.*

**1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

*Audio recording – 1 minute 59 seconds*

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Daniel Allen and Amy Allen.

**2 MINUTES - 19 NOVEMBER 2025**

*Audio recording – 2 minutes 14 seconds*

Councillor Val Bryant, as Chair proposed and Councillor Ian Albert seconded and, following a vote it was:

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 19 November 2025 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chair.

**3 NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS**

*Audio recording – 3 minutes 6 seconds*

There was no other business notified.

**4 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

*Audio recording – 3 minutes 11 seconds*

- (1) The Chair advised that, in accordance with Council Policy, the meeting would be recorded.
- (2) The Chair reminded Members that the Council had declared both a Climate Emergency and an Ecological Emergency. These are serious decisions, and mean that, as this was an emergency, all of us, Officers and Members had that in mind as we carried out our various roles and tasks for the benefit of our District.
- (3) The Chair drew attention to the item on the agenda front pages regarding Declarations of Interest and reminded Members that, in line with the Code of Conduct, any Declarations of Interest needed to be declared immediately prior to the item in question.
- (4) The Chair advised for the purposes of clarification that 4.8.23(a) of the Constitution did not apply to this meeting.
- (5) The Chair advised of a change in the order of the agenda. Agenda item 17 would be considered following agenda item 15.

**5 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

*Audio recording 4 minutes 27 seconds*

There was no public participation at the meeting.

**6 ITEMS REFERRED FROM OTHER COMMITTEES**

*Audio recording – 4 minutes 36 seconds*

The Chair advised that the items referred from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Finance, Audit and Risk Committee would be taken with the respective items on the agenda.

**7 GARDEN WASTE CHARGE 2026/27**

*Audio recording – 6 minutes 2 seconds*

In the absence of the Executive Member for Environment, Councillor Ian Albert, as Executive Member of Finance and IT, presented the report entitled 'Garden Waste Charge 2026/27' and advised that:

- This report was asking Cabinet to approve the annual garden waste subscription charge from 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2027.
- Unlike household waste and recycling, there was no legal requirement to collect garden waste unless householders opted into the service and agree to pay a collection fee.
- Currently approximately 30k households in North Herts were signed up to the garden waste collection service.
- The current charge was £55 for one bin to be collected, with a 50% concession offered to households in receipt of Council Tax Reduction.
- The current charges for Hertfordshire authorities were detailed in the table in paragraph 8.2 of the report.
- It was recommended to increase the garden waste charge to £57 to help cover inflation cost, as highlighted in paragraph 10.1 of the report.

Councillor Ian Albert proposed and Councillor Mick Debenham seconded and, following a vote, it was:

**RESOLVED:** That Cabinet approved the garden waste subscription charge for the period 1 April 2026 – 31 March 2027, at £57.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** To ensure the Council's Garden Waste service is financially sustainable, in line with the priorities of the Council and of the Shared waste service.

## 8 LOCAL PLAN NEXT STEPS

*Audio recording – 10 minutes 1 second*

Councillor Donna Wright, as Executive Member for Place, presented the report entitled 'Local Plan Next Steps' and advised that:

- This report outlined the new local plan-making system and any required actions.
- A review of the Local Plan had been agreed back in January 2024 by Cabinet.
- A timetable was prepared to allow the Local Plan to be adopted by the end of 2027. However, progress had stalled awaiting new government guidelines.
- In November 2025 government guidelines were issued on how councils should prepare Local Plans.
- The new system proposed by government has a 30-month timetable, preceded by a mandatory 4 month 'Get Ready Period'.
- Examination and adoption of a revised Local Plan was expected within 1 month of the Inspector's report.
- The revised proposed Local Plan timetable was set out in Appendix A. This would allow completion by the end of 2028 but aiming to submit for examination prior to Local Government Reorganisation.
- The Strategic Planning Team were not fully staffed at present.
- The Local Plan timetable would be kept under review to keep in line with available resources and regular reports to the Strategic Planning Board.
- Cabinet were being asked to approve the general direction of travel for the Local and Plan and to approve delegated powers to publish a Local Plan timetable.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Tamsin Thomas
- Councillor Ian Albert

In response to questions, Councillor Wright advised that:

- The government had made it clear that the 30-month deadline was mandatory.
- The Secretary of State had powers to intervene if authorities were not progressing satisfactorily within the deadline.
- Member workshops were already planned for February and March and public consultations would also be part of the process.

In response to a question, the Interim Strategic Planning Manager advised that:

- A series of Member workshops in February, March and throughout the summer were planned.
- The first 'scoping' stage of the Local Plan would happen during the 4 month 'Get Ready Period'.
- The new requirements meant that a Summary of Consultation would need to be published.

- A Communications Strategy would be developed to ensure communication with the wider community.

In response to a question, the Director – Place advised that:

- The Strategic Planning Team were currently looking to recruit permanent staff.
- The Local Plan timetable would be kept under review in line with resourcing availability.

Councillor Donna Wright proposed and Councillor Tamsin Thomas seconded and, following a vote, it was:

**RESOLVED:** That Cabinet:

- (1) Approved the broad 'direction of travel' for the Local Plan Review pending formal laying and enactment of the relevant legislation and regulations.
- (2) Delegated authority to the Director: Place, in consultation with the Executive Member for Place to, following the creation of a new planning system:
  - a. Publish the formal notice of intention to undertake a review of the Local Plan; and
  - b. Approve and publish a revised Local Plan timetable, attached as Appendix A, subject to any alterations necessary to ensure alignment of timings with the new statutory framework.

**REASON FOR DECISIONS:** To ensure the Council is well-positioned to progress preparation of the Local Plan as quickly as possible once the new plan-making system comes into effect. Cabinet previously first resolved, in principle, that a review of the Local Plan should take place in January 2024. However, the Council did not progress on the review which was held back due to the delays in the publication of the regulations and guidance on the new local plan system.

## 9 STRATEGIC PLANNING MATTERS

*Audio recording – 21 minutes 19 seconds*

Councillor Donna Wright, as Executive Member for Place, presented the report entitled 'Strategic Planning Matters' and advised that:

- This report outlined recent government policy updates following consultations on reforming the statutory consultee system, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), in November and December 2025.
- The Council was preparing a response to these consultations and Cabinet would be kept informed of progress.
- It was hoped to have a draft NPPF consultation ready by February 2026.
- Progress of the six strategic sites of the Local Plan were detailed in paragraph 8.14 of the report.
- Progress of the Local Plans of neighbouring local authorities were summarised in pages 45 and 46.
- Following changes in the plan-making system, Hertfordshire County Council would be responsible for preparing a spatial development strategy.
- A further legal appeal was being considered regarding the proposed expansion of Luton Airport.
- Consultation for the North Herts Draft Town Centres Strategy was currently underway.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Tamsin Thomas
- Councillor Ian Albert

In response to a question, the Interim Strategic Planning Manager advised that as part of preparation of the Local Plan it was planned to hold a Member briefing to ensure viability of the plan and an optimum outcome.

In response to a question, Councillor Wright advised that the feedback received from Cabinet following the changes to the NPPF would be included in the consultation.

In response to a question, the Chief Executive advised that talks were being held with Hertfordshire County Council and Hertfordshire Futures to see if there might be any opportunities for the Council following the creation of Universal Studios in Bedfordshire. Any relevant information would be shared with Members.

The following Members took part in the debate:

- Councillor Val Bryant
- Councillor Tamsin Thomas

Points raised during the debate included:

- The importance of ensuring Cabinet was kept up to date with relevant information.
- How good it was for the Council that its six strategic sites in the Local Plan were all progressing through the master planning process.

Councillor Donna Wright proposed and Councillor Tamsin Thomas seconded and, following a vote, it was:

***RESOLVED:*** That Cabinet noted the report on strategic planning matters and appendices.

***REASON FOR DECISION:*** To keep Cabinet informed of recent developments on strategic planning matters.

## 10 REVOCATION OF AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT AREAS IN HITCHIN

*Audio recording 31 minutes 55 seconds*

Councillor Mick Debenham, as Executive Member Regulatory, presented the report entitled 'Revocation of Air Quality Management Areas in Hitchin' and advised that:

- The Council had declared two Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs).
- The declaration of the AQMAs required development of an Air Quality Action Plan to put measures in place to reduce air pollution objective levels.
- The impact of a combination of measures had resulted in the pollution levels in the two AQMAs falling below objective levels for 5 years or more.
- Air Quality Management Order No 1 in Stevenage Road, Hitchin was detailed in Appendix A.
- Air Quality Management Order No 2 in Payne's Park, Hitchin was detailed in Appendix B.
- The development of a Local Air Quality Strategy was highlighted in Appendices C1-3.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Ian Albert
- Councillor Tamsin Thomas

In response to questions, Councillor Debenham advised that:

- A health impact assessment was underway and air quality pollution levels were being monitored throughout the district, including in Grove Road.
- Where legislation required a Council to revoke an area, air quality pollution levels would still be monitored.

In response to questions, the Environmental Health Manager advised that:

- The air quality in Grove Road was being monitored by diffusion tubes which monitor road vehicle pollutant levels.
- There were currently 42 diffusion tubes monitoring air quality levels around the district.
- An option where the Council could consider having a localised version of portable air quality monitoring devices was detailed in the report, but there would be cost implications.
- There had not been any feedback received regarding timescales for delivery of an Air Quality Strategy.
- The monitoring of air quality levels in roads that would be impacted by the expansion of Luton Airport was ongoing.
- It was a legal requirement where lower than air quality threshold limits for 5 years or more were recorded, a Council was required to revoke, but air quality pollution would still continue to be monitored throughout the district.

Councillor Mick Debenham proposed and Councillor Ian Albert seconded and, following a vote, it was:

**RESOLVED:** That Cabinet approved the Revocation Orders (as appended to this report) for the following areas:

- The No1. AQMA Stevenage Road Hitchin,
- The No2. AQMA Payne's Park Hitchin.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** The reason for recommending the Revocation of the AQMAs is that there is no reasonable justification for retaining AQMAs where the air pollution levels can be shown to have significantly reduced below statutory air quality objectives as defined by HM Government within UK Air Quality Regulations.

## 11 COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN 2025-26 (QUARTER 2 UPDATE)

*Audio recording – 46 minutes 45 seconds*

The Chair invited Councillor Claire Winchester, as Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to present the referral on this item. Councillor Winchester advised that there had been discussions around:

- The good work that was happening in the district and that there was a clear narrative in the report for any delays or changes to milestones.
- The recommendations of the report were approved by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- The projects of the Council Delivery Plan were of great importance to the residents of North Hertfordshire.

Councillor Ian Albert, as Executive Member for Finance and IT, presented the report entitled 'Council Delivery Plan 2025-26 (Quarter 2 Update)' and advised that:

- This report outlined the most recent updates for the Council Delivery Plan.
- Information on the actions being taken for red performance indicators was detailed in paragraph 8.4 of the report.
- The new Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) which related to the Corporate Peer Challenge Report, aligned with the Council Delivery Plan were set out in paragraph 8.7 of the report.
- The development of Churchgate was part of the Enterprise Directorate report which would be presented to the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- Work was ongoing regarding the split of missed bin collection data between North and East Hertfordshire.
- The impacts on resourcing needed to be considered when the budget was set.

In response to a question from Councillor Mick Debenham, the Director – Resources advised that targets would be set by Cabinet for KPIs, in consultation with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Not all KPIs would have targets.

In response to a question from Councillor Mick Debenham, the Chief Executive advised that the Corporate Peer Challenge follow up report had been received and this would be presented to Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet in February 2026.

Councillor Ian Albert proposed and Councillor Mick Debenham seconded and, following a vote, it was:

**RESOLVED:** That Cabinet noted progress against Council projects and performance indicators, as set out in the Council Delivery Plan (Appendix A), and approved new milestones and changes to milestones.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** The Council Delivery Plan (CDP) monitoring reports provide Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and Cabinet, with an opportunity to monitor progress against the key Council projects, and understand any new issues, risks, or opportunities.

## 12 THE COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME (EFFECTIVENESS AND PROPOSALS FOR 2026/27)

*Audio recording – 1 hour 9 minutes 55 seconds*

The Chair invited Councillor Claire Winchester, as Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to present the referral on this item. Councillor Winchester advised that there had been discussions around:

- The age of residents who might be eligible for a reduction in Council Tax and how the awareness of the scheme may be raised.
- Appreciation of how well the scheme was working and of the consideration being given to families on low income or with a terminal illness.
- Residents were able to access information about Council services across many platforms and of the importance to ensure that any eligible residents were made aware of its existence.

Councillor Ian Albert, as Executive Member for Finance and IT, presented the report entitled 'The Council Tax Reduction Scheme (Effectiveness and Proposals for 2026/27)' and advised that:

- The Council had introduced a new banded scheme (for working age applicants) from April 2023, as detailed in section 7 of the report.
- The regulations for Council Tax support for pensioners were set by the government.
- More information of the current working age scheme could be found in section 8 of the report, with details of disregards set out in paragraph 8.2.
- The Council continued to work with Marie Curie and were continuing to see how to implement providing Council Tax support to residents with a terminal illness
- It was important that an inflationary uplift to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme bands was made to ensure that households did not drop out of the scheme. A further update would be provided to Full Council on 29 January 2026.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Val Bryant
- Councillor Mick Debenham
- Councillor Laura Williams
- Councillor Donna Wright

In response to questions, Councillor Ian Albert advised that:

- Every local authority had a Council Tax Reduction Scheme and many had also adopted the banded scheme.
- The Council had researched the best forms of communication to ensure residents were made aware of the scheme.
- The banded scheme had simplified matters, with access to more information on income meaning that fewer adjustments to entitlements needed to be made.

In response to questions, the Director – Resources advised that:

- More local authorities were moving over to using banded schemes.
- The aim of the inflationary split was to try and ensure that the number of residents benefiting from the Council Tax Reduction scheme remained about the same.
- There had been no issues reported with the new banded scheme, which was working well.

Councillor Ian Albert proposed and Councillor Mick Debenham seconded and, following a vote, it was:

**RESOLVED:** That Cabinet:

**RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL:** That it:

- (1) Amend the Council Tax discretionary policy to include the support provided to residents with a terminal illness, with the wording detailed in paragraph 8.17.
- (2) Approve changes to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme bands to reflect the impact of inflation.

**REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:** To respond to the request from Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and to consider changes for next year.

13 **SECOND QUARTER CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING REVIEW 2025/26**

*Audio recording – 1 hour 9 minutes 55 seconds*

In the absence of the Chair of Finance, Audit and Risk Committee, the Chair invited Councillor Ian Albert, as Executive Member of Finance and IT, to present the referral and report entitled 'Second Quarter Capital Budget Monitoring Review 2025/26'. Councillor Albert advised that:

- There had been discussion at Finance, Audit and Risk Committee about the timing of meetings and that by the time some reports were presented they had become relatively out of date.
- There had been discussion about how difficult it would be to get a vehicle to the upper floors of the Lairage Multi-Storey Car Park in Hitchin for resurfacing.
- This report summarised the progress with delivering the capital programme for 2025/26, which included the most recent updates.
- Following the report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the Museum Storage report, the forecast spend could be reduced to £3m which therefore required an amendment to the figure in recommendation 2.2 from £1.773M £0.773M.
- There was an additional £50K requested for the higher-than-expected demand and increased price of domestic bins.
- The forecast overspend in the Decarbonisation Project as detailed in Table 3 of the report, was set with a 5% tolerance in the budget.

In response to a question from Councillor Mick Debenham, Councillor Ian Albert advised that the timing of meetings needed to be looked at to try and ensure reports did not go out of date before they were presented to committees.

In response to a question from Councillor Mick Debenham, the Director – Resources advised that the timing of reports was based on the dates for the civic year which were set by Council.

Councillor Ian Albert proposed as amended and Councillor Donna Wright seconded and, following a vote, it was:

**RESOLVED:** That Cabinet:

- (1) Noted the forecast expenditure of £26.416M in 2025/26 on the capital programme, paragraph 8.3 refers.
- (2) Approved the adjustments to the capital programme for 2026/27, as a result of the revised timetable of schemes detailed in table 2 and 3 and the update on the museum storage project, increasing the estimated spend by £0.773M.
- (3) Noted the position of the availability of capital resources, as detailed in table 4 paragraph 8.6 and the requirement to keep the capital programme under review for affordability.

**REASON FOR DECISIONS:** Cabinet is required to approve adjustments to the capital programme and ensure the capital programme is fully funded.

14 **SECOND QUARTER REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2025/26**

*Audio recording – 1 hour 16 minutes 35 seconds*

In the absence of the Chair of Finance, Audit and Risk Committee, the Chair invited Councillor Ian Albert, as Executive Member of Finance and IT, to present the referral and report entitled 'Second Quarter Revenue Budget Monitoring 2025/26'. Councillor Albert advised that:

- There was nothing to add from the referral from Finance, Audit and Risk Committee.
- This report informed Cabinet of the summary position on revenue income and expenditure forecasts for the financial year 2025/26, as at the end of the second quarter.
- The projected ongoing spend increase which was detailed in Table 2 of the report had been incorporated in the draft budget report.
- There had been pay cost variances which were generally due to gaps in recruitment and temporary staff costs and a summary of significant variances were highlighted in Table 3 of the report.
- There had been several carry forward requests.
- Corporate financial health indicators which looked at the major income schemes for the Council, were highlighted in Table 4.
- There had been a slight reduction in the number of garden waste collection subscribers.
- The income generated from vehicle parking fees had increased.

Councillor Ian Albert proposed and Councillor Mick Debenham seconded and, following a vote, it was:

**RESOLVED:** That Cabinet:

- (1) Noted this report.
- (2) Approved the changes to the 2025/26 General Fund budget, as identified in table 3 and paragraph 8.2, an £846k decrease in net expenditure.
- (3) Noted the changes to the 2026/27 General Fund budget, as identified in table 3 and paragraph 8.2, a total £555k increase in net expenditure. These will be incorporated in the draft revenue budget for 2026/27.

**REASON FOR DECISIONS:** Members are able to monitor, make adjustments within the overall budgetary framework and request appropriate action of Services who do not meet the budget targets set as part of the Corporate Business Planning process.

15 **SECOND QUARTER TREASURY MANAGEMENT REVIEW 2025/26**

*Audio recording – 1 hour 21 minutes 41 seconds*

In the absence of the Chair of Finance, Audit and Risk Committee, the Chair invited Councillor Ian Albert, as Executive Member of Finance and IT, to present the referral and report entitled 'Second Quarter Treasury Management Review 2025/26'. Councillor Albert advised that:

- There had been discussions at Finance, Audit and Risk regarding the over-investment of £1M in the period and that a further step had been added to the process to help ensure an over-investment did not happen again.
- There had also been a discussion around how local authority investments were secure even when a Council had been issued with a Section 114 notice, which meant that any investments with that Council had to be repaid.
- This report contained information regarding the investment of the surplus funds of the Council.

- It was positive that the forecast investment returns were higher than forecast.
- It had been highlighted at Finance, Audit and Risk that the estimates for 2026/27 would be reviewed as part of the budget setting process.
- Details of the total interest earned to date as well as the forecast to year end were outlined in paragraph 8.3 of the report.
- The percentages of investment split were set out paragraph 8.4 of the report.
- Full details of investments including the risk of default and credit rating details could be found in paragraph 8.5 of the report.
- Following a motion from Full Council and the end of 2025, a meeting had been arranged with the investment advisor to the Council to undertake a review of the Investment Strategy and the outcome would be reported back to Cabinet and Full Council as part of agreeing the Investment Strategy for 2026/27.

Councillor Ian Albert proposed and Councillor Mick Debenham seconded and, following a vote, it was:

**RESOLVED:** That Cabinet:

**RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL:** That it notes the position of Treasury Management activity as at the end of September 2025.

**REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION:** To ensure the Council's continued compliance with CIPFA's code of practice on Treasury Management and the Local Government Act 2003 and that the Council manages its exposure to interest and capital risk.

## 16 REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGETS FOR 2026/27 ONWARDS

*Audio recording – 1 hour 44 minutes 34 seconds*

In the absence of the Chair of Finance, Audit and Risk Committee, the Chair invited Councillor Ian Albert, as Executive Member of Finance and IT, to present the referral and report entitled 'Revenue and Capital Budgets for 2026/27 Onwards'. Councillor Albert advised that:

- This critical paper had been examined in detail by the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee.
- There had been discussion around the new information received regarding the staff pension scheme, the level of General Fund reserves required for the Fair Funding Review and some questions over the Churchgate Project Manager role.
- It was welcomed that the Council had been given the new 3-year funding settlement from the government as this provided a level of funding certainty.
- When the Council had approved the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), there had been a level of uncertainty regarding future funding.
- The aims and results of the resident budget survey were detailed in Section 8 of the report.
- On 7 December 2025, the provisional settlement was provided by the government, which had been higher than expected.
- All assumptions were based on Council Tax being increased by 2.99%, which was the maximum allowed.
- Freezing Council Tax would result in a loss of funding of over £400k each year for the Council.
- The Council was looking at a balanced budget by 2028/29, which would mean a manageable use of reserves
- £1M was being set aside each year for costs associated with the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR).
- It was hoped that the project to install a Learner Pool at the Royston Leisure Centre would be able to proceed.

- Churchgate would be reviewed to ensure that the appropriate resources were available for the next stage of the project.
- This budget sat alongside the Council Delivery Plan.

The following Members took part in the debate:

- Councillor Mick Debenham
- Councillor Donna Wright
- Councillor Val Bryant
- Councillor Ian Albert

Points raised during the debate included:

- The investment proposals were something for the Council to be proud of.
- Communication needed to be looked at to ensure awareness of the community.
- The need to ensure there was capacity in the budget to deliver prudently and with value for money to benefit the community.

Councillor Ian Albert proposed and Councillor Laura Williams seconded and, following a vote, it was:

**RESOLVED:** That Cabinet:

- (1) Noted the Council's expected funding for 2026/27.
- (2) Confirmed (in line with the Medium-Term Financial Strategy) that budget forecasts should be based on increasing Council Tax by 2.99% (the maximum amount allowable without a local referendum). Noting that Government have assumed Council Tax will increase by the maximum allowed in calculating Core Spending Power.
- (3) Agreed which proposals (revenue and capital) should be taken forward as part of the budget-setting process for 2026/27.

**REASON FOR DECISIONS:** To ensure that all relevant factors are considered in arriving at a proposed budget and level of Council Tax for 2026/27, to be considered by Full Council on 26 February 2026.

## 17 RISK MANAGEMENT GOVERNANCE (MID-YEAR UPDATE)

*Audio recording – 1 hour 36 minutes 51 seconds*

In the absence of the Chair of Finance, Audit and Risk Committee, the Chair invited Councillor Ian Albert, as Executive Member of Finance and IT, to present the referral and report entitled 'Risk Management Governance (Mid-Year Update)'. Councillor Albert advised that:

- This report looked at the effectiveness of the Risk Management Governance arrangements at the Council.
- The risk score for the Local Plan had increased from 5 to 7.
- Cyber Risk was being addressed with training for all staff taking place.
- There had been some minor changes made to the Risk Management Framework which were detailed in paragraph 8.1.2 of the report.
- Some of the information contained in this report was duplicated in the Council Delivery Plan.
- There had been a review of the actions from the previous report and the progress in 2026/26 against these actions was highlighted in Section 12.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Donna Wright
- Councillor Val Bryant

In response to a question, the Director – Resources advised that:

- The Council had a Performance and Risk Officer who provided guidance and challenge in assessing risk.
- The Council had a Risk Performance Management Group and a Member from the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee attended their meetings when possible. The Group reviewed all new and deleted risks.
- Members of Cabinet were welcome to attend a meeting of the Risk Performance Management Group if they would like to.

In response to a question from Councillor Val Bryant, Councillor Ian Albert advised that feedback was received from the mitigation measure taken in paragraph 8.2.6 of the report.

Councillor Ian Albert proposed and Councillor Laura Williams seconded and, following a vote, it was:

***RESOLVED:*** That Cabinet:

- (1) Noted the mid-year Risk Management Governance update.
- (2) Approved the changes to the Risk Management Framework.

***REASONS FOR DECISIONS:***

- (1) Cabinet has overall responsibility for ensuring the management of risk.
- (2) Finance, Audit and Risk Committee have responsibility to monitor the effective development and operation of risk management.

The meeting closed at 9.41 pm

Chair