

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

MEETING HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER - DISTRICT COUNCIL OFFICES, GERONON ROAD, LETCHWORTH, SG6 3JF
ON TUESDAY, 14TH APRIL, 2026 AT 7.30 PM

MINUTES

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

In Attendance: *Isabelle Alajooz (Director - Governance and Monitoring Officer), Ian Couper (Director - Resources), Steve Crowley (Director - Enterprise), Jo Doggett (Director - Regulatory), Jamie Graham (Democratic Services Apprentice), Frank Harrison (Environmental Health Manager), Susan Le Dain (Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer), James Lovegrove (Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager), 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 Ralph Muncer was present as Chair of the Section 106 Task and Finish Group.

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

32 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Audio recording – 1 minute 43 seconds

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Laura Williams and Sean Nolan.

33 MINUTES - 17 FEBRUARY 2026

Audio recording – 2 minutes

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 17 February 2026 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chair.

34 NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

Audio recording – 2 minutes 53 seconds

There was no other business notified.

35 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Audio recording – 2 minutes 57 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.

36 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Audio recording – 4 minutes 12 seconds

There was no public participation at the meeting.

37 ITEMS REFERRED FROM OTHER COMMITTEES

Audio recording – 4 minutes 17 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.

38 STRATEGIC PLANNING MATTERS

Audio recording – 5 minutes 34 seconds

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

- This report detailed the latest position on key planning and transport issues affecting the Council since it was last updated in January 2026.
- The consultation by government on proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) closed on 10 March and the response from the Council was detailed in Appendix A.
- A new layer of strategic plans, Spatial Development Strategies (SDS) had been consulted on as part of the new plan-making system and this proposal was supported by the Hertfordshire Growth Board.
- The regulations for the new plan-making system came into effect on 25 March 2026 which set the requirements for Local Plans to be prepared within a 30 month period.
- Further consultations were released in March 2026 in relation to the proposed National Scheme of Delegation for planning committees.
- Amendments to Part L of the Building Regulations would come into effect in March 2026 to ensure new homes were zero carbon in use.
- The Council would publish a formal notice of intention to review the Local Plan this month with the mandatory 4-month period ending in October 2026.
- An appeal would be heard in May 2026 seeking to overturn the proposed expansion of Luton Airport and subject to the outcome of this hearing, Luton Rising would seek to implement the proposed expansion later this year.

- The status of the six strategic sites in the Local Plan was summarised in paragraph 8.20 of the report.
- The Council maintained regular contact with the six neighbouring local authorities on the status of their Local Plans.
- The Town Centres Strategy was consulted on between 3 December 2025 and 30 January 2026 and officers were undertaking an analysis of the results. A final Town Centre Strategy would be presented to Cabinet for adoption in June/July 2026.

Councillor Donna Wright proposed and Councillor Daniel Allen seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

- (1) Noted the report on strategic planning matters.
- (2) Endorsed the responses in Appendices A, B and C; and the proposed next steps in relation to the Local Plan review.

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

39 RENTERS RIGHT ACT

Audio recording – 16 minutes 10 seconds

Councillor Mick Debenham, as Executive Member for Regulatory, presented the report entitled 'Renters Right Act' and advised that:

- The Renters Rights Act would be implemented by a phased approach and Part 1 of the Act would come into effect on 1 May 2026.
- This would abolish 'no fault' evictions, ending the ability of landlord to evict tenants without statutory grounds.
- There would be an automatic move to assured periodic tenancies.
- Any increases in rent would be limited to once every 12 months.
- The introduction of prohibitions on rental bidding and obtaining rent in advance of occupation.
- Strengthened protections against any discrimination of tenants.
- There was a new right for tenants to request pets, where landlords must consider these requests reasonably.
- New Burdens Funding had been awarded to local authorities by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to assist with the burden the changes in the Act would impose on them. North Herts Council had received £33K for 2025/26 and would receive £55K in 2026/26 and a further £26K in 2027/28.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Ian Albert
- Councillor Daniel Allen
- Councillor Tamsin Thomas

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

- For clarification, Jigsaw was an organisation funding and supported by the government to promote the collaboration of Private Rented Sector regulatory teams to support the introduction of the Renters Right Act.
- Additional funding had been received by government and some of this funding could be used for the resourcing of additional staff if required.
- These policies were for adoption by all local authorities, so there would be no disparity in the Local Government Reorganisation.
- A Landlord Ombudsman would be established in 2027 to assist and provide support to private rented sector tenants
- The Act was introduced to rebalance the powers and protection afforded to tenants as it was felt by government that previous legislation had shifted the powers too much in favour of the landlord, although it was recognised that any effect could only be seen over time.

Councillor Mick Debenham proposed and Councillor Tamsin Thomas seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

- (1) Adopted the following policy amendments and new related policies, so as to enable the Council to enforce the requirements of the Act from 1 May 2026:
 - i. Amendments to the Corporate Statement of Enforcement Policy (CSEP)
 - ii. Amendments to the CSEP Appendix B: Environmental Health.
 - iii. Amendments to the CSEP Appendix G: Access to Housing.
 - iv. Adoption of The Housing Authority Enforcement Policy.
 - v. Adoption of The Civil Penalties Policy for Proceedings under the Renters Rights Act 2025 and other Housing Legislation.
- (2) Delegated and passed to the Director – Regulatory in consultation with the Executive Member for Regulatory, in accordance with the provisions of the Council, to make future amendments to:
 - i. The CSEP, Appendix B: Environmental Health
 - ii. The CSEP, Appendix G: Access to Housing
 - iii. The Housing Authority Enforcement Policy
 - iv. The Civil Penalties Policy for Proceedings under the Renters Rights Act 2025 and other Housing Legislation.

REASON FOR DECISIONS: The recommendations ensure the Council can meet its statutory duties under Section 107 of the Renters Rights Act 2025 and permits the necessary amendments to existing Council policies and provisions. This will enable the Council to better protect those constituents living in the rented sector, provide clear foundation for those providing rented accommodation and mitigate the risk of legal challenges and reputational harm should the Council fail to fully adopt this new statute.

40 ARRANGEMENTS FOR CARRYING OUT PUBLIC HEALTH FUNERALS

Audio recording – 37 minutes 36 seconds

Councillor Mick Debenham, as Executive Member for Regulatory, presented the report entitled 'Arrangements for carrying out Public Health Funerals' and advised that:

- This report provided the key information to enable the Council to adopt the Policy to accommodate the key provision for carrying out Public Health Funerals in accordance with Section 46 of the Public Health Act 1984.
- Each local authority was responsible for making necessary funeral arrangements for anyone who died in their district where no other arrangements were being made.
- In North Hertfordshire, the funeral would be burial in a common grave at Wilbury Hills Cemetery, Letchworth.
- The burial would be a dignified service and the Council would provide a celebrant if a non-religious service was appropriate.
- The Council was not legally obliged to comply with the requests of a will but would consider a cremation if there were sufficient funds available in the estate to cover cost.

In response to a question from Councillor Daniel Allen, the Environmental Health Manager advised that if a resident had been rehoused outside of the district, the Council would still fund the burial.

Councillor Mick Debenham proposed and Councillor Daniel Allen seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

- (1) Adopted the Policy as presented. Please note that this format has been adopted as this document is made available to our residents to help them through the requirements necessary to arrange a funeral should they need to.
- (2) Noted that under the provisions of section 46 of the Act, each local authority has the responsibility to make necessary funeral arrangements for anybody who dies in their district where no other suitable arrangements are being or are likely to be made. This policy sets out how the Council will deliver this duty and outlines the limitations of this obligation.
- (3) Noted what measures will be followed to try to locate a will, identify relatives who may wish to arrange the funeral and identify anything of value to try to offset funeral costs. The policy also confirms that should the Council arrange the funeral, we will provide a simple but dignified service administered by a minister, a representative of another faith or a civil funeral celebrant as well as permitting friends and family to attend the service.
- (4) Delegated future amendments of this Policy to the Director – Regulatory in consultation with the Executive Member for Regulatory in accordance with the provisions of the Council's Constitution.

REASON FOR DECISIONS: The reason for recommending the approval of this Policy is to enable the Council to clearly state how it intends to meet its obligations under the Act, whilst putting in place limitations against the unreasonable use of public funds and to protect the reputation of the Council and the officers involved.

41 LEASE ON LETCHWORTH MULTI STOREY CAR PARK

Audio recording – 44 minutes 52 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:

- How this was a good opportunity to achieve better use of the car park at no cost to the Council.
- What might be lost by surrendering the lease, such as any influence on prices and opening hours.
- The importance of ensuring communication channels remained open with the new provider.

Councillor Tamsin Thomas as Executive Member for Enterprise, presented the report entitled 'Lease on Letchworth Multi Storey Car Park' and advised that:

- The report detailed the negotiations that have taken place regarding the proposed surrender of the lease of the Letchworth Multi Storey Car Park at the request of the Martin Group who currently hold the lease.
- The Martin Group were looking to undertake a regeneration of the Shopping Centre and as part of the pre-planning application stage have asked the Council to consider early surrender of the car park lease.
- The Martin Group would ensure that parking tariffs remained competitive with the other local car parks.
- The Martin Group would be introducing an automatic number plate recognition system, and this would maintain effective parking enforcement was in place.
- There would be an improvement to the current facilities with an extension in opening hours and the implementation of better security.
- Officers had estimated the additional capital and revenue costs associated with retention of the car park for the remainder of the lease, which could total £3.4 million.
- Cllr Thomas expressed her thanks to the Director – Enterprise and officers who had ensured every aspect had been considered and this was reflected in the report.

The following Members took part in the debate:

- Councillor Ian Albert
- Councillor Daniel Allen

Points raised during the debate included:

- The importance of keeping discussions open with the Martin Group to ensure the proposals set out in paragraph 8.12 of the report were put in place.
- The extension in opening hours would be of benefit to the local community.
- From a financial aspect, the surrender of the lease was the right outcome for the Council.

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

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

- (1) Approved the surrender of the lease for the Letchworth Multi Storey Car Park.
- (2) Granted delegated authority to the Director of Enterprise in consultation with the Executive Member for Enterprise to negotiate and approve the details of any surrender in line with the broad principles in this report.

REASON FOR DECISIONS: After undertaking a review of the current operation and long-term needs of this car park, the surrender of this lease provides a positive outcome to the Council and the conditions that have been negotiated ensures there will be improvements to the car park which will benefit the public and economic vitality of the town centre.

42 REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT (RIPA) UPDATE AND ANNUAL REVIEW

Audio recording – 56 minutes 5 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 was no challenge from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to the recommended amendment to RIPA as this would ensure the Council kept in line with current legislation.

Councillor Daniel Allen, as Executive Member for Governance, presented the report entitled 'Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) Update and Annual Review' and advised that:

- This report provided Cabinet with an update on RIPA and reported on the annual policy review.
- Although use of these powers was rare, the proposed amendments would ensure that the Council had an up-to-date RIPA framework which reflected current legislation and supported effective governance and assurance.

Councillor Daniel Allen proposed and Councillor Mick Debenham seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

- (1) Noted the content of the report; and
- (2) Resolved to adopt the amended RIPA Policy (Appendix A).

REASON FOR DECISIONS: The Council is required to ensure it has an up-to-date, compliant and operationally usable RIPA framework that reflects current legislation and codes of practice and supports effective governance and assurance. 3.2. Approval of the updated policy reduces legal, regulatory and reputational risk, supports lawful enforcement activity where required, and strengthens transparency and democratic oversight.

43 SECTION 106 TASK AND FINISH GROUP REPORT 2026

Audio recording – 57 minutes 2 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:

- How the Council were unlikely to get another chance to undertake a Section 106 Task and Finish Group before the Local Government Reorganisation.
- How Section 106 contributions were spent was of great importance to the local community and the Council needed to ensure the right benefits were delivered to residents.
- That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed that all eight recommendations in the report should be referred to Cabinet.

Councillor Ralph Muncer, as Chair of the Section 106 Task and Finish Group, presented the report entitled 'Section 106 Task and Finish Group Report 2026' and advised that:

- As a result of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan and the subsequent increased housing supply, there would be a significant amount of development over the following decade which would result in many changes to the district.
- Without adequate infrastructure put in place, development of this increased housing supply was unsustainable.
- This inquiry had concluded was that if there was disconnect between the infrastructure priorities of the community and the infrastructure delivered through the Section 106 developer contributions, this could lead to detrimental impacts on communities.
- The 8 key recommendations in this report sought to close the gap between the communities and the councils that served them.
- As developers were looking to expedite housing developments with Section 106 contributions, it was crucial for the Council to obtain engagement as early as possible to ensure the funds were used where they were most needed.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Mick Debenham
- Councillor Daniel Allen
- Councillor Val Bryant
- Councillor Ian Albert

In response to questions raised, Councillor Muncer advised that:

- Education and Highways were the two key departments allocated Section 106 contributions and recommendation 5 of the report was trying to improve local community infrastructure to ensure that local needs were prioritised.
- To ensure more engagement with the Hertfordshire County Council Infrastructure Prospectus, recommendation 6 would enable district councillors to identify priorities that affected local communities.
- Although there were not any recordings available from the discussions that had taken place with officers, their comments had been very useful, and changes had been made to the report following these consultations.
- Although the conversations that took place with Community Partnership Officers were informal, there had been agreement to try to obtain the best possible outcomes for local communities.
- Concerns raised with the Community Partnerships team were considered when the recommendations were drawn up.

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- There had not been any engagement with the Leader of the Council or the Executive Member at the time of the report, as it had been felt it was of more importance to work with officers, as this report would eventually come to Cabinet.
- The deadline for this report had not allowed sufficient time for consultation with the Chairs of the Community Forums.
- A three to six-month consultation would be required to consult with the Community Forums, and the Terms of Reference may need to be updated to reflect this.
- The Council wanted to provide local people with the opportunity to raise their concerns and for councillors to then decide on what was a priority and what could be delivered.

The following Members took part in the debate:

- Councillor Val Bryant
- Councillor Donna Wright
- Councillor Daniel Allen
- Councillor Ian Albert
- Councillor Tamsin Thomas

Points raised during the debate included:

- This report was welcomed as there did need to be more clarity surrounding Section 106 contributions.
- The recommendations of the report were ambitious, and some were aspirational.
- It would be beneficial to look at what was being done by other local authorities.
- The Task and Finish Group had spent sixteen months working on this report, but there had been no communication with the Director for Governance or the Executive Member and only formal interviews with NHC Officers. No Chairs on Parish Town Councils were interviewed.
- The Chairs of the Community Forums should have been consulted.
- Training should be provided for Parish Councils and this need more consideration.
- The Task and Finish Group did not notify the Cabinet Member for Resources that there might be budget implications before the 2026/27 budget was agreed.
- Cabinet should note this report and further work and consultations should be undertaken on recommendations 1 – 8 before Cabinet were asked to consider them.

Councillor Val Bryant proposed an additional recommendation to request the Executive Member for Place and the Executive Member for Governance, alongside Directors, explore and develop the proposals further and consider implementation, with a report back to a future meeting of Cabinet. This was seconded by Councillor Donna Wright.

Having been proposed and seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

- (1) Noted the report.
- (2) Tasked the Executive Member for Place and the Executive Member for Governance, together with relevant Officers, to further consider the recommendations and develop proposals for report to a future meeting of Cabinet.

REASON FOR DECISION: To enable the Overview and Scrutiny Committee the opportunity to scrutinise the s106 Task and Finish Group report and recommendations.

N.B. Following this item there was a break in proceedings and the meeting reconvened at 21:27.

44 **COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN 2025-26 (QUARTER 3 UPDATE)**

Audio recording – 1 hour 55 minutes and 44 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 best way to monitor the number of complex projects and risks for the Council.
- The reassurance provided by this report that project timetables were being kept.
- How the effective management of the most complex projects would depend on staff capacity and retention.
- Overall, there was a lot of reassurance gained from the report, but the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would continue to monitor progress of the projects in between quarterly reports.

Councillor Ian Albert, as Executive Member for Resources, presented the report entitled 'Council Delivery Plan 2025-26 (Quarter 3 Update)' and advised that:

- There were currently a number of key projects underway which were being monitored to ensure the right officer capacity was in place.
- A new project relating to the Museum Collection Facility and the associated risks had now been added to the Council Delivery Plan.
- Three projects had been completed, and the associated risks had been managed to target level.
- The improved budget position had enabled the setting of a budget which was widely supported across the Council.
- The first meeting of the Royston Learner Pool project had taken place, and this project would now be added to the Council Delivery Plan.
- The two projects with an amber status were detailed in paragraph 8.3 of the report.
- The actions being taken for the two red status performance indicators were detailed in paragraph 8.5 of the report.
- Information regarding the missed waste collections data was set out in paragraph 8.6 of the report.
- The addition of new KPIs linked to the Council Plan as the Council moved towards 2027/28 were highlighted in paragraph 8.9 of the report.
- There would be an update on the Churchgate project to Cabinet later this year.
- The Charnwood House renovation project remained a Council priority and Expressions of Interests (EOI) as part of the first stage of the tender process have been sent out to select a lead marketing agency.

Councillor Ian Albert proposed and Councillor Daniel Allen 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.

45 THIRD QUARTER TREASURY MANAGEMENT REVIEW 2025/26

Audio recording – 2 hours 6 minutes 58 seconds

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

- A key point from the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee meeting was the small increase on investment returns over the year which was now up to £2million.
- The Finance, Audit and Risk Committee had noted that most investments of the Council were with other local authorities, which was in line with the new investment strategies.

In response to a question from Councillor Daniel Allen, the Director – Resources advised that following the Local Government Reorganisation, investments or loans would be transferred to the new authority for them to manage.

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

RESOLVED: That Cabinet noted the position of Treasury Management activity as at the end of December 2025.

REASON FOR DECISION: 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.

46 THIRD QUARTER CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING REVIEW 2025/26

Audio recording – 2 hours 10 minutes 50 seconds

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

- There had not been many questions raised at the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee and there had been a discussion around the replacement of the Priory Gardens Bandstand.
- The Independent Member of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee had noticed a discrepancy between the two papers on the value of assets which had now been rectified.
- A revised timetable for the list of the schemes in the 2025/26 Capital Programme which would have an impact on the budget in 2026/27 was set out in Table 2 of the report.
- The underspend in the cost of the Fibre Waste Bins was detailed in Table 3 of the report.
- The £16 million required to fund the Capital Programme would be met from internal borrowing as set out in Table 4 of the report.
- The Priory Gardens Bandstand replacement project approved by Cabinet would require an increase in the budget to allow this project to proceed.
- Details of how the Council would fund the Capital Programme was detailed in paragraph 8.6 of the report.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Tamsin Thomas
- Councillor Donna Wright

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

- After 1 April 2028 it would be for the new unitary authority to decide what projects would proceed.
- The current timescales for Oughtonhead Common Wier were still valid.

The following Members took part in the debate:

- Councillor Amy Allen
- Councillor Daniel Allen

Points raised during the debate included:

- The replacement of the Priory Gardens Bandstand would be of benefit to the whole community of Royston as it was used for many different events.
- The new play equipment installed at the Howard Park Gardens in Letchworth was a great benefit to the local community.

Councillor Ian Albert proposed and Councillor Amy Allen seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

- (1) Noted the forecast expenditure of £23.350M 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, increasing the estimated spend by £3.011M.
- (3) Approved a change of scope to the Priory Gardens Bandstand project from renovation to rebuild and an increase of the budget in 2026/27 by £0.025M.
- (4) 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.

47 THIRD QUARTER REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2025/26

Audio recording – 2 hours 21 minutes 23 seconds

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

- The focus of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee had been about understanding the overspends and underspends being declared.
- The Finance, Audit and Risk Committee looked at the financial risks regarding the Churchgate project and the funding that would be required.
- Explanations for all the significant variances in the 2025/26 Revenue Budget were detailed in Table 3 of the report.
- Details of the overspend variance related to the historical housing benefit subsidy which had to be paid back to the Department for Works and Pensions (DWP) were set out at the end of Table 3 in the report.

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- Corporate financial health indicators were listed in Table 4 of the report.
- Indication of current activity levels of the corporate financial health indicators were set out in Table 5 of the report.
- The impact on the General Fund balance in Quarter Three was summarised in Table 7 of the report.
- Overall, the Council was in line with the Revenue Budget forecast.

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, a £902k decrease in net expenditure.
- (3) Approved the changes to the 2026/27 General Fund budget, as identified in table 3 and paragraph 8.2, a total £201k increase in net expenditure.

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.

The meeting closed at 9.58 pm

Chair