



<b>Meeting</b>	Council
<b>Date and Time</b>	Wednesday, 9th July, 2025 at 6.30 pm.
<b>Venue</b>	Council Chamber, Castle Hill, Winchester SO23 8UL and streamed live on YouTube at <a href="http://www.youtube.com/winchestercc">www.youtube.com/winchestercc</a>

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that an Ordinary Meeting of the Council will be held at 6.30 pm on Wednesday, 9th July, 2025 in the Council Chamber, Castle Hill, Winchester SO23 8UL and all Members of the Council are summoned to attend.

**Note:** This meeting is being held in person at the location specified above. Members of the public should note that the meeting will be streamed live to the council's YouTube channel ([www.youtube.com/WinchesterCC](http://www.youtube.com/WinchesterCC)).

A limited number of seats will be made available at the above named location, however attendance must be notified to the council at least 3 working days before the meeting. Please note that priority will be given to those having registered to speak during the Public Question session over those wishing to attend and observe. Please note that Questions must be received in writing by Democratic Services ([democracy@winchester.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@winchester.gov.uk)) prior to **10am**, five working days preceding the day of the council meeting.

## AGENDA

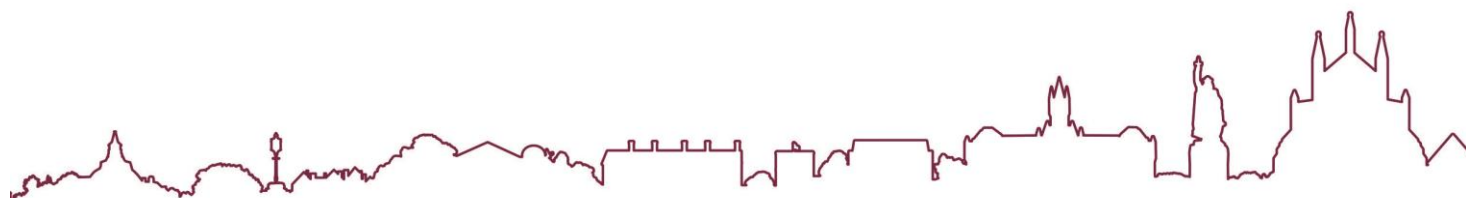
1. **Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on 27 February 2025, the Extraordinary Council held on 19 March 2025 and Mayor Making and Annual Council held on 14 May 2025.** (Pages 5 - 32)

2. **Disclosure of Interests.**

To receive any disclosure of interests from Councillors or Officers in matters to be discussed.

*Note: Councillors are reminded of their obligations to declare disclosable pecuniary interests (DPIs), other registerable interests (ORIs) and non-registerable interests (NRIs) in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct.*

3. **Announcements from the Mayor, Leader and Chief Executive.**



4. **Questions from Members of the Public.**  
To receive and answer and questions from the public.  
(Questions must be received in writing by Democratic Services –  
[democracy@winchester.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@winchester.gov.uk) – no later than 10am on Wednesday 2 July  
2025).

5. **Twinning Agreement - Nizhyn, Ukraine (CL175).** (Pages 33 - 44)

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That Council endorse the proposed town twinning agreement at the Appendix to the report as the basis for the twinning agreement between the city of Winchester (town wards) and Nizhyn City Council (Ukraine) and that the Mayor of Winchester sign accordingly.

6. **To consider and determine the following Recommended Minutes of the Scrutiny Committee held 5 June 2025 - Draft Annual Scrutiny Report 2024/25 (SC098).** (Pages 45 - 64)

RECOMMENDED:

That Council note the annual scrutiny report for 2024/25.

7. **Changes to Committee Memberships**  
To receive any resignations from committees and to make any necessary re-appointments.
8. **Questions from Members of Council.**  
The total time for questions and the answer and supplementaries thereto shall not exceed 40 minutes.

LAURA TAYLOR  
Chief Executive

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1 July 2025

Agenda Contact: David Blakemore, Democratic Services Team Manager  
Tel: 01962 848217 Email: [dblakemore@winchester.gov.uk](mailto:dblakemore@winchester.gov.uk)

**Quorum** = 15 members

### **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Members of the public may ask questions of the Leader, Cabinet Members and Committee Chairs at Ordinary Meetings of the Council. The total time allocated for questions by the public shall normally be limited to 20 minutes.

A question may only be asked if notice has been given by delivering it in writing to Democratic Services no later than 5 working days preceding the Council meeting. For example, if the Council meeting is being held at 7pm on a Wednesday then the question would need to be received by 10am on the preceding Wednesday. Please email to [democracy@winchester.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@winchester.gov.uk).

### **FILMING AND BROADCAST NOTIFICATION**

This meeting will be recorded and broadcast live on the Council's website. The meeting may also be recorded and broadcast by the press and members of the public – please see the Access to Information Procedure Rules within the Council's Constitution for further information, which is available to view on the [Council's website](#).

### **DISABLED ACCESS:**

Disabled access is normally available, but please phone Democratic Services on 01962 848 264 or email [democracy@winchester.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@winchester.gov.uk) to ensure that the necessary arrangements are in place.

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# Public Document Pack Agenda Item 1

## COUNCIL

**Thursday, 27 February 2025**

Attendance:

Councillors Present

Gordon-Smith (Mayor)

Achwal S  
Achwal V  
Aron  
Becker  
Bennett  
Bolton  
Brook  
Brophy  
Clear  
Cook  
Cramoysan  
Cutler  
Eve  
Godfrey  
Horrill  
Laming  
Langford-Smith  
Latham

Learney  
Lee  
Morris  
Pett  
Pinniger  
Porter  
Power  
Rutter  
Scott  
Thompson  
Tippett-Cooper  
Tod  
Wallace  
Warwick  
Westwood  
White  
Williams  
Wise

Apologies for Absence:

Councillors Batho, Chamberlain, Cunningham, Greenberg, Miller, Murphy, Reach and Small

[Recording of meeting](#)

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1. **MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON 15 JANUARY 2025**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Ordinary meeting of the Council held on 15 January 2025 be approved and adopted.

2. **DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

Councillors Porter, Tod, Wallace, Warwick and Williams each declared disclosable pecuniary interests in respect of agenda items due to their role as Hampshire County Councillors. However, as there was no material conflict of interest, they remained in the room, spoke and voted under the dispensation

granted on behalf of the Audit and Governance Committee to participate and vote in all matters which might have a County Council involvement.

Councillor Becker declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in respect of agenda item 5, Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget 2025/26 (CAB3490) as a property owner with a connection to a council sewage treatment works. Councillor Becker left the room during consideration of this item and took no part in the discussion or decision.

Councillor Scott declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in respect of agenda item 5, Housing Revenue Account Budget (HRA) 2025/26 (CAB3490) as a Winchester City Council housing tenant. However, because the contents of the report did not relate specifically to his tenancy, there was no material conflict of interest and he had been granted a dispensation by the Monitoring Officer that enables him to participate and vote on these matters.

3. **ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE MAYOR, LEADER AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

The Mayor referred to his recent and forthcoming events and also those arranged in aid of his charities. He reminded Council of the annual Mayor of Winchester's Community Awards presentations in the Guildhall on 13 March 2025.

The Leader then provided an update to Council on plans for local government reorganisation and regarding Hampshire County Council, Portsmouth and Southampton City Councils and the Isle of Wight having been accepted into the Devolution priority programme. He urged everyone to respond to the consultation regarding the creation of a Mayoral combined authority.

With regards to local government reorganisation, a deadline of 26 September 2025 had been set for a formal deadline for proposals, and for an interim plan to be submitted on or before 21 March 2025. This interim plan would set out a direction and highlighting issues to be addressed in advance of the final plan and would be taken to a special Cabinet (20 March 2025) and Extraordinary Council meeting (19 March 2025).

The Leader then referred to the existing financial pressures on most upper tier councils and that despite the challenges presented by reorganisation, there should continue to be good local services provided and opportunities for the city and district to continue to thrive

The Chief Executive announced apologies for the meeting.

4. **QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

Three written questions had been received from members of the public, who attended the meeting to present them. Supplementary questions were also asked. The questions and responses are set out on the [council's website](#).

5. **TO CONSIDER AND DETERMINE THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDED MINUTES: CABINET HELD 12 FEBRUARY 2025 - HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) BUDGET 2025/26 (CAB3490 AND ADDENDUM)**

Councillor Becker left the meeting before consideration of this item and took no part in the discussion or decision.

Councillor Westwood (Cabinet Member for Housing) moved that the recommended minute of Cabinet be approved and adopted (seconded by Councillor Learney, Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency).

Council proceeded to ask questions and then debate the matters in the recommended minute and report.

**RESOLVED:**

That the recommended minute of Cabinet held 12 February 2025 (as follows) be approved and adopted:

That Council:

1. Note the HRA Financial Plan operating account, including annual working balances, as detailed in Appendix 6 of report CAB3490.
2. Approve the 2025/26 Housing Revenue Account budget as detailed in Appendices 1 and 2 to the report.
3. Approve the proposed capital programme for maintenance, improvements and renewals totalling £167.868m.
4. Approve capital expenditure and delegate to the Strategic Director with responsibility for housing authority to enter into necessary contracts for the 2025/26 capital programme of £21.134m, as detailed in Appendix 3 of the report in accordance with Financial Procedure Rule 7.4.
5. To approve the award of a contract, by direct award, for technology-based retrofit works of £4.3m per year in 2025/26, 2026/27 and 2027/28 (totalling £12.8m), contingent on funding secured from the Department of Energy Security and NetZero Social Housing Fund Wave 3 Grant, equivalent to 190 properties over 3 years. (See Para 11.62 to 11.65 of the report).
6. Approve the proposed 10 year capital programme for new homes totalling £237.7m, and expenditure of £5.255m in 2025/26, as detailed in appendix 4 of the report in accordance with Financial Procedure Rule 7.4,
7. Approve the financing of the HRA Capital Programme as detailed in Appendix 5 of the report, (noting the planned repayment of borrowing following the 1000 homes programme).

8. Approve the revenue savings target of £2m outlined to Cabinet in the November options paper and subsequently consulted upon and summarised at appendix 7 of the report.

9. Authorise the Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Strategic Director with responsibility for Housing to approve the buy-back, during 2025/26, of individual former HRA properties sold under the Right to Buy, following positive financial appraisal, utilising the unallocated New Homes budget (see para 11.26 of the report).

10. Subject to the acceptance of the expression of interest to the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) round 3:

a. Authorise the Strategic Director with responsibility for Housing to enter into a revised Memorandum of Understanding with Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government to secure additional LAHF funding estimated at £2.841m

b. Delegate authority to the Section 151 Officer to approve capital expenditure (subject to financial appraisal, in accordance with Financial Procedure Rule 7.4) of up to £6.0m to purchase up to 12 properties using the approved HRA unallocated new build budget, to be part-financed by LAHF grant with any balance via prudential borrowing.

c. Authorise the Corporate Head – Asset Management and the Strategic Director with responsibility for Housing to purchase up to 12 properties. (Para 11.70-11.72 of the report)

11. Approve the average rent increase for 2025/26 for all affordable, Shared Ownership and social housing of 2.7% based on the September 2024 CPI figure of 1.7% +1% (see para 11.6-11.7 of the report).

12. Approve amendments to HRA tenant service charges in 2025/26 to reflect cost recovery based on 2023/24 actual costs, subject to capping at 5% or £5, whichever is greater, and noting that capped charges will be subject to gradual increases in future years (see para 11.41 to 11.45 of the report).

13. Note that the previously approved consultation on the move to full cost recovery for both private and tenant connections of the council's sewage treatment works will now take place in 2025/26 (see para 11.46-11.51 of the report).

14. Note that the draft HRA Business 30-year Plan is viable and sustainable and has the capacity to support the delivery of 1,000 new affordable homes.



6. **TO CONSIDER AND DETERMINE THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDED MINUTES: CABINET HELD 12 FEBRUARY 2025 - GENERAL FUND BUDGET 2025/26 (CAB3494)**

Councillor Cutler (Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance) moved that the recommended minute of Cabinet be approved and adopted (seconded by Councillor Tod, Leader and Cabinet Member for Asset Management).

Council proceeded to ask questions and then debate the matters in the recommended minute and report.

In accordance with legislative requirements on recorded votes at Budget meetings, a recorded vote was first taken regarding Recommendations 1 – 8 of the Recommended Minute of Cabinet.

The following Members voted in favour of Recommendations 1 – 8:

1. Councillor Sudhakar Achwal
2. Councillor Vivian Achwal
3. Councillor Rachel Aron
4. Councillor Kathleen Becker
5. Councillor Michael Bennett
6. Councillor Adrian Brophy
7. Councillor Angela Clear
8. Councillor Susan Cook
9. Councillor Steve Cramoysan
10. Councillor Neil Cutler
11. Councillor Nathan Eve
12. Councillor Russell Gordon-Smith
13. Councillor Brian Laming
14. Councillor Ritchie Latham
15. Councillor Kelsie Learney
16. Councillor Danny Lee
17. Councillor Jonny Morris
18. Councillor Jerry Pett
19. Councillor Clare Pinniger
20. Councillor Jackie Porter
21. Councillor Margot Power
22. Councillor Jane Rutter
23. Councillor Jamie Scott
24. Councillor Lucille Thompson
25. Councillor John Tippet-Cooper
26. Councillor Martin Tod
27. Councillor Malcolm Wallace
28. Councillor Chris Westwood
29. Councillor Suzanne White
30. Councillor Jonathan Williams
31. Councillor Charlie Wise

The following Members voted against Recommendations 1 – 8:

1. Councillor Neil Bolton
2. Councillor Caroline Brook
3. Councillor Stephen Godfrey
4. Councillor Caroline Horrill
5. Councillor Paula Langford-Smith
6. Councillor Jan Warwick

No Members abstained from voting.

RESOLVED:

That the recommended minute of Cabinet held 12 February 2025 (Recommendations 1 – 8, as follows) be approved and adopted:

1. That the level of General Fund Budget for 2025/26 be agreed and Council endorse the summary as shown in Appendix A of report CAB3494.
2. That the Greener Faster and carbon investment proposals be approved, used as the basis of this budget and as set out in the CAB3483 including:
  - a. £135,000 additional budget per annum for the ongoing costs of providing the food waste collection service.
  - b. £460,000 one-off budget to fund the phased roll out of the food waste service from October 2025, without government funding.
3. That in relation to the Healthy Communities priority of the new Council Plan:
  - a. the revised income bands for the Council Tax Reduction scheme for working age applicants (set out in appendix E of the report) that ensure claimants continue to receive the appropriate level of support after the DWPs increase in Universal Credit rates be approved with effect from 1 April 2025.
  - b. That the amendment of the Council Tax Reduction scheme for working age applicants to include all additional support and new disregards with effect from 1 April 2025 be approved, as set out in the report.
  - c. That £15,000 from the Cost of Living Reserve be used to extend the Council Tax Exceptional Hardship Fund into 2025/26.
4. That in relation to the Good Homes for All priority, additional investment of £300,000 per annum to fund increased demand for temporary accommodation to prevent homelessness be approved.
5. That an additional £50,000 per annum be included to fund additional pressures on council contracts.
6. That service income annual budgets be amended as follows, in response to revised estimates:

- a. Garden Waste income increased by £30,000 (to reflect increases subscriptions, although partly off-set by increased contract costs of delivering the service to more households).
- b. Planning fee income reduction of £200,000 (to reflect the current reduced levels of applications received)

7. That following a review of earmarked reserves they be amended as follows:

- a. £200,000 of the Transitional Reserve be re-allocated to the Thriving Places Reserve to invest one-off resources into planning enforcement.
- b. £2m of the Transitional Reserve be re-allocated to the Property Reserve to fund maintenance requirements of corporate properties.
- c. £902,000 of the Exceptional Inflation Reserve be re-allocated to the Car Parks Property Reserve to fund maintenance of and investment in parking.
- d. £425,000 from the Major Investment Reserve be re-allocated to the Local Development Framework Reserve to fund Local Plan requirements.
- e. An additional £250,000 per annum be set aside into the Property Reserve, for the maintenance of and investment in operational assets.
- f. An additional £100,000 per annum be set aside into the Car Parks Reserve to fund maintenance of and investment in parking.

8. That the sum of £1,364,045 be treated as Special Expenses under Section 35 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 in respect of the Winchester Town area as set out in section 16 and Appendix D of the report.

In accordance with legislative requirements on recorded votes at Budget meetings, a recorded vote was then taken regarding Recommendations 9 – 12 of the Recommended Minute of Cabinet.

The following Members voted in favour of Recommendations 9 – 12:

1. Councillor Sudhakar Achwal
2. Councillor Vivian Achwal
3. Councillor Rachel Aron
4. Councillor Kathleen Becker
5. Councillor Michael Bennett
6. Councillor Neil Bolton
7. Councillor Caroline Brook
8. Councillor Adrian Brophy
9. Councillor Angela Clear
10. Councillor Susan Cook
11. Councillor Steve Cramoysan
12. Councillor Neil Cutler
13. Councillor Nathan Eve
14. Councillor Stephen Godfrey

15. Councillor Russell Gordon-Smith
16. Councillor Caroline Horrill
17. Councillor Brian Laming
18. Councillor Paula Langford-Smith
19. Councillor Ritchie Latham
20. Councillor Kelsie Learney
21. Councillor Danny Lee
22. Councillor Jonny Morris
23. Councillor Jerry Pett
24. Councillor Clare Pinniger
25. Councillor Jackie Porter
26. Councillor Margot Power
27. Councillor Jane Rutter
28. Councillor Jamie Scott
29. Councillor Lucille Thompson
30. Councillor John Tippet-Cooper
31. Councillor Martin Tod
32. Councillor Malcolm Wallace
33. Councillor Jan Warwick
34. Councillor Chris Westwood
35. Councillor Suzanne White
36. Councillor Jonathan Williams
37. Councillor Charlie Wise

No Members voted against the recommendations or abstained from voting.

RESOLVED:

That the recommended minute of Cabinet held 12 February 2025  
(Recommendations 9 – 12, as follows) be approved and adopted

9. That the Council Tax for the Special Expenses in the Winchester Town area at Band D for 2025/26 be increased by the maximum allowed under the referendum limit of 2.99% combined between the town and district.

10. That the deficit balance on the Council Tax Collection Fund for distribution to this Council, calculated in January 2025 of £142,787, be approved.

11. That the level of Council Tax at Band D for City Council services for 2025/26 be increased to £163.66, an increase of £4.30 reflecting an average Council tax increase of 2.7%.

12. That a Second Home premium for Council Tax which will take effect from 1 April 2026 (12 months' notice is required to implement this premium), and the adoption of exceptions (listed at Appendix F) in respect of properties included in the Council Tax Premium schemes be approved.

**Council Tax for the City of Winchester for the year commencing 1 April 2025.**

In accordance with legislative requirements on recorded votes at Budget Meetings, a recorded vote was then taken regarding the Council Tax Resolutions (1 – 7), as set out on pages 97 – 100 of the agenda pack.

The following Members voted in favour of the Council Tax Resolutions (1 – 7):

1. Councillor Sudhakar Achwal
2. Councillor Vivian Achwal
3. Councillor Rachel Aron
4. Councillor Kathleen Becker
5. Councillor Michael Bennett
6. Councillor Neil Bolton
7. Councillor Caroline Brook
8. Councillor Adrian Brophy
9. Councillor Angela Clear
10. Councillor Susan Cook
11. Councillor Steve Cramoysan
12. Councillor Neil Cutler
13. Councillor Nathan Eve
14. Councillor Stephen Godfrey
15. Councillor Russell Gordon-Smith
16. Councillor Caroline Horrill
17. Councillor Brian Laming
18. Councillor Paula Langford-Smith
19. Councillor Ritchie Latham
20. Councillor Kelsie Learney
21. Councillor Danny Lee
22. Councillor Jonny Morris
23. Councillor Jerry Pett
24. Councillor Clare Pinniger
25. Councillor Jackie Porter
26. Councillor Margot Power
27. Councillor Jane Rutter
28. Councillor Jamie Scott
29. Councillor Lucille Thompson
30. Councillor John Tippet-Cooper
31. Councillor Martin Tod
32. Councillor Malcolm Wallace
33. Councillor Jan Warwick
34. Councillor Chris Westwood
35. Councillor Suzanne White
36. Councillor Jonathan Williams
37. Councillor Charlie Wise

RESOLVED:

That the Council Tax for the City of Winchester for the year commencing 1 April 2025 (as follows) be approved and adopted:

1. That any expenses incurred by the Council in performing in a part of its area a function performed elsewhere in its area by a Parish Council/Town Council/Parish Meeting shall not be treated as special expenses for the purposes of Section 35 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, except in the case of the following special items relating to the non-parished area the aggregate amount of which is £1,364,045 and which is shown within the total of special items at paragraph 4(e) below:-

- (a) Magdalen Hill and West Hill Cemeteries;
- (b) Allotments;
- (c) Town centre Christmas lighting;
- (d) Footway lighting;
- (e) Bus shelter maintenance;
- (f) Grants and Vision Delivery ("parish" element);
- (g) Recreation Grounds & Open Spaces (except Abbey Gardens, Riverside Walks, the Weirs and St Giles Hill);
- (h) Neighbourhood Services;
- (i) Public Conveniences
- (j) Maintenance work to Council Owned Bridges
- (k) Night Bus Contribution
- (l) Neighbourhood Plans
- (m) Community Infrastructure
- (n) Administration of the Town Forum

2. That it be noted that the Head of Revenues, in consultation with the Corporate Head of Finance calculated the Council Tax Base for 2025/26 at

- (a) 54,886.50

being the amount calculated by the Council for the whole Council area, in accordance with Section 31B(1) (Item T) of the Local Government Act 1992, as amended (the "Act"), as its Council Tax base for the year.

- (b) for dwellings in those parts of its area to which a Parish/Town precept relates as in the attached Annex 1 as set out on [page 101 of the agenda pack](#).

3 Calculate that the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2025/26 (excluding Parish Precepts) is £10,346,770.

4 That the following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the year 2025/26 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Act:

(a) £138,753,451

being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act taking into account all precepts issued to it by Parish Councils.

(b) £123,490,060

being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act.

(c) £15,263,391

being the amount by which the aggregate at 4(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 4(b) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act, as its Council Tax requirement for the year. (Item R in the formula in Section 31B of the Act).

(d) £278.09

being the amount at 4(c) above (Item R), all divided by Item T (2(a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including Parish Precepts).

(e) £6,280,666

being the aggregate amount of all special items referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act (as per the attached Annex 2)

(f) £163.66

being the amount at 4(d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 4(e) above by Item T (2(a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no special item relates.

5 That it be noted for the year 2025/26, Hampshire County Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner - Hampshire have stated, and the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority has recommended the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

<u>Precepting Authority</u>	<u>Precept Amount</u>
Hampshire County Council (HCC)	£88,357,934
Police and Crime Commissioner – Hampshire (PCCH)	£15,119,035
Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority (HFRA)	£4,821,230

<u>Valuation Bands</u>	<u>HCC</u>	<u>PCCH</u>	<u>HFRA</u>
A	1,073.22	183.64	58.56
B	1,252.09	214.25	68.32
C	1,430.96	244.85	78.08
D	1,609.83	275.46	87.84
E	1,967.57	336.67	107.36
F	2,325.31	397.89	126.88
G	2,683.05	459.10	146.40
H	3,219.66	550.92	175.68

6. That the Council, in accordance with Sections 30 and 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the aggregate amounts shown in columns 2-9 of Annex 2 as the amounts of Council Tax for 2025/26 for each part of its area and for each of the categories of dwellings shown.

7. That the Council determines that the Council's basic amount of Council Tax for 2025/26 is not excessive in accordance with principles approved under Section 52ZB of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

7. **TO CONSIDER AND DETERMINE THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDED MINUTES: CABINET HELD 12 FEBRUARY 2025 - CAPITAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY 2025 - 35 (CAB3495)**

Councillor Cutler (Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance) moved that the recommended minute of Cabinet be approved and adopted (seconded by Councillor Tod, Leader and Cabinet Member for Asset Management).

Council proceeded to ask questions regarding the matters in the recommended minute and report. There was then no debate before Council then considered the recommendations before it.



RESOLVED:

That the recommended minute of Cabinet held 12 February 2025 (as follows) be approved and adopted:

1. That the Capital Investment Strategy is approved including:
  - a) the Capital Programme and Capital Programme Financing (Appendices A and B to the report);
  - b) the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy Statement (Appendix E of the report);
  - c) the Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy (Appendix G of the report); and
  - d) the prudential indicators detailed in the report and Appendix F.

8. **TO CONSIDER AND DETERMINE THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDED MINUTES: CABINET HELD 12 FEBRUARY 2025 - TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2025/26 (CAB3496)**

Councillor Cutler (Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance) moved that the recommended minute of Cabinet be approved and adopted (seconded by Councillor Tod, Leader and Cabinet Member for Asset Management).

Council proceeded to ask questions and then debate the matters in the recommended minute and report.

RESOLVED:

That the recommended minute of Cabinet held 12 February 2025 (as follows) be approved and adopted:

1. That the Treasury Management Strategy Statement which includes the Annual Treasury Investment Strategy for 2025/26 (and the remainder of 2024/25) is approved;
2. That authority is delegated to the Section 151 Officer to manage the council's pooled property investment and long-term borrowing according to the Treasury Management Strategy Statement as appropriate; and
3. That authority is delegated to the Section 151 Officer, who in turn discharges this function to Hampshire County Council's Director of Corporate Operations, as agreed in the Service Level Agreement, to manage all council investments (other than the high yield portfolio) and short-term borrowing according to the Treasury Management Strategy Statement as appropriate.

9. **WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL CONSTITUTION UPDATES 2025 (CL173)**

The Monitoring Officer introduced the report and then responded to questions.

RESOLVED:

That Council note the updates and amendments made by the Monitoring Officer.

10. **NOTICES OF MOTION**

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 10, a motion had been submitted by Councillor Wallace which was as set out on the agenda. With the leave of the Mayor and the agreement of the proposer, the motion had been altered prior to the meeting and the altered motion was as presented to Council in a supplementary agenda.

The motion (as altered) was seconded by Councillor White.

Councillor Wallace introduced his motion (as altered) and Council then debated the matters therein. In summary the following points were raised:

- i. The Council has a long track record of delivering energy efficient homes across the district, incorporating solar PV.
- ii. The retrofit programme includes solar PV and the Council has also applied for grant from Social Housing Fund to further expand the programme.
- iii. Energy prices continue to rise, whilst solar panel costs were in decline. It was therefore perhaps timely to reassess options regarding installing solar PV more broadly across the Council's housing stock.
- iv. A business model would need to demonstrate appropriate average payback period to the Council. There were options to consider working in partnership with energy providers.
- v. Cabinet would consider a decarbonisation of Council homes policy paper to support the Council Plan climate change objectives for 2030.
- vi. There should be evidence of tenants receiving benefit from solar PV on their homes, when there would be upheaval from the installation works.
- vii. Solar PV provides increased financial security for tenants, reducing reliance on the expensive grid electricity and from unpredictable price fluctuations. Dynamic sharing technology can share solar energy generated to all tenants, including those unable to have panels on their roofs.
- viii. Tenant engagement is important, i.e. explaining the benefits and allowing tenants to make the choice to engage with the programme.

- ix. Rather than as a separate project, the proposals in the motion would be dovetailed with existing programmes of work and into budget setting for 2026/27 and the Council Plan.
- x. A feasibility study for installing solar PV on council homes would answer many detailed questions that have arisen.
- xi. The Council should ensure that it looked at the approach taken to solar PV in the context of the broader retrofit strategy.

Having reserved her right to speak, the seconder of the motion (Councillor White) then addressed Council, followed by the proposer of the motion (Councillor Wallace) who exercised his right to respond to debate. The Council then voted on the motion (as altered) as set out on the supplementary agenda.

**RESOLVED:**

That the motion (as altered) proposed by Councillor Wallace (seconded by Councillor White) be supported, and that this Council resolves to:

- i. Use existing resources and experience of solar PV installation on HRA communal blocks and individual homes, along with analysis of current market models, to undertake a feasibility study for installing solar PV on Council Homes.
- ii. Results from the study to be taken to Economy & Housing Policy Committee for review and comment, then reported to Cabinet prior to budget setting for 26/27.

**11. CHANGES TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIPS**

There were no changes to committees to announce.

**12. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF COUNCIL**

8 written questions had been received which were heard at the meeting along with associated supplementary questions. The questions received and their response were subsequently set out on the [council's website](#).

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and concluded at 10.10 pm

The Mayor

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## **COUNCIL (EXTRAORDINARY MEETING)**

**Wednesday, 19 March 2025**

**Attendance:**

Councillors Present

Gordon-Smith (Mayor)

Achwal S  
Achwal V  
Aron  
Batho  
Becker  
Bennett  
Bolton  
Brophy  
Chamberlain  
Clear  
Cook  
Cutler  
Eve  
Godfrey  
Horrell  
Laming  
Langford-Smith  
Latham  
Learney  
Lee

Miller  
Morris  
Murphy  
Pett  
Pinniger  
Porter  
Power  
Reach  
Rutter  
Scott  
Small  
Thompson  
Tippett-Cooper  
Tod  
Wallace  
Warwick  
Westwood  
White  
Williams  
Wise

**Apologies for Absence:**

Councillors Brook, Cramoysan and Cunningham

[Recording of meeting](#)

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### 1. **DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

Councillors Porter, Tod, Wallace, Warwick and Williams each declared disclosable pecuniary interests in respect of agenda items due to their role as Hampshire County Councillors. However, as there was no material conflict of interest, they remained in the room, spoke and voted under the dispensation granted on behalf of the Audit and Governance Committee to participate and vote in all matters which might have a County Council involvement.

2. **QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

There were no written questions received for response at the meeting.

3. **QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF COUNCIL**

2 written questions had been received which were heard at the meeting along with associated supplementary questions. The questions received and their response were subsequently set out on the [council's website](#).

4. **LOCAL GOVERNMENT RE-ORGANISATION IN HAMPSHIRE AND THE SOLENT - AGREEMENT TO JOINT INTERIM PLAN (CL174)**

The Leader introduced the report and summarised the detailed work undertaken since 5 February 2025 when the Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution (Jim McMahon MP) formally invited collaboration with other regional council leaders to develop a proposal for local government reorganisation.

The Leader then referred to the interim plan (appended to report CAB3502 at Appendix 2) which he explained was to be firstly considered by Cabinet on 20 March 2025 prior to its submission, having firstly considered any comments of full Council.

The Leader highlighted agreed principles in the interim plan and confirmed that these reflected key matters raised by councillors during their informal briefings. The overall aim of the interim plan was for a new council which effectively served residents and the area.

Council proceeded to ask questions on the report and proposed interim plan. In summary, the following matters were raised, which were responded to by the Leader:

- a) Would new applications for Assets of Community Value be supported and would town and parish councils be supported with requests to transfer local assets to them?
- b) A question was raised regarding how reorganisation supported the claim of improved democratic representation and better local government. With fewer councillors representing more residents, councillors would need more support from officers, and how would this support be delivered given the need to create efficiencies?
- c) Clarification was requested as to when resident engagement plans were to be published in advance of the final submission date for local government reorganisation.
- d) Further information was sought as to whether there was dialogue with government regarding progress following submission of an interim plan, and what were the criteria for potentially being dropped from the priority programme, and what the consequences of this might be.

- e) A question was asked regarding the Community Governance Review for Winchester Town Forum area, and if this was progressing given pressures on resources?
- f) Regarding the southern parishes, would there continue to be opportunities for the Leader to attend their parish council meetings to respond to the potential impact of reorganisation on these areas?
- g) Assurances were requested that the needs of communities and assets of the Winchester town area would be protected.
- h) A question was asked regarding the Denmead Parish area, and the potential for it to be part of a future adjacent southeast Hampshire unitary council.
- i) Confirmation was sought as to whether all the local authorities in the regional area were acting in a mature way, and that differences were being dealt with cooperatively.
- j) A question was asked about how the Leader expected to use information supplied by the County Council on demographics and service usage to justify decisions on unitary authority groupings, and what other evidence would be used. A further question was then asked regarding shared interests with Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council and whether that would influence future decisions regarding boundaries. Clarification was sought regarding factors that the Leader considered to be important in relation to a possible grouping of councils.
- p) A question was raised as to whether the models being considered included the prioritisation of the climate and nature emergencies and whether these matters would be central to reorganisation? Further clarification was requested on how National Parks would be considered within the process.
- q) Further clarification was sought on how strongly a local area committee approach could be played to ensure that the voice of local communities was heard.
- r) A question was raised regarding the Winchester Mayoralty and whether it would be guaranteed through the formation of a new Winchester Town Council. In addition, the community governance review should look at parish boundaries around Kings Barton.
- s) How could residents be engaged more fully in the discussion about local government reorganisation and was there a commitment to do so?

Council proceeded to debate the matters in the report and interim plan. In summary, the following matters were raised:

- a) Whilst the plan was interim, emerging discussion on the impact on the southern wards must be noted.
- b) Whilst better local government for residents was welcomed, the reorganisation plan could be seen as a way fix historic underfunding of local authorities and may potentially reduce services and increase resident costs.
- c) The interim plan lacked detail on discussions to reach a coherent final proposal. There was concern that Leaders could be focused on their own areas rather than remaining objective.
- d) Councils should stay united and learn from others to ensure the best resident outcome and maintain service delivery.
- e) The interim plan submission was supported as pragmatic, but reservations remained. Reorganisation had merits, but there were concerns at creating large unitary authorities, the fast pace of change and lack detail regarding parish councils.
- f) The council should remain active in discussions, ensuring that community voices, especially southern parishes, were heard and community identity considered.
- g) Staff at the council should continue to be supported during the process.
- h) The six-week notice for the interim plan was too short considering the necessary resident, business, and councillor engagement and consultation.
- i) Although the report stated no immediate equalities implications, careful consideration was needed as proposals progressed. Persistent gender inequality amongst councillors and council staff pay gaps required addressing from the start.
- j) A point was made about resident consultation, questioning how and which residents were being heard. Creating communities with geographical identity was important, alongside recognising community diversity to ensure a sustainable economic and socially cohesive unitary authority.
- k) Concern was raised about reducing councillor numbers, noting the UK's already low ratio of representatives to residents. Further reduction risked poor local governance and democracy, and community voices risked being lost due to cost-cutting pressures.

The Leader then summarised the range of themes and key discussion points for Cabinet's consideration, and he thanked members for their contributions. These are as set out in the resolution below.



RESOLVED:

1. That Cabinet consider the points raised during Full Council consideration of the Cabinet report of 20 March 2025 as set out below:

- a) Dialogue and collaboration with neighbouring authorities should be maintained and the council should remain actively engaged in the ongoing process. Collective progress should be ensured to learn from all parties, including dissenting views. Ongoing learning and participation must be prioritised.
- b) Clarity on the engagement plan - engagement with residents was essential as specific options emerged, ensuring clear choices and input opportunities. Residents should remain central to engagement planning.
- c) The importance of equality and diversity were highlighted regarding local representation. Councils should be accessible to all, considering factors beyond age and gender, such as caring responsibilities and work. This should also be reflected in resident engagement, which should ensure all voices are heard.
- d) A robust approach regarding neighbouring authority discussions on localism, local identity, and empowering local communities was emphasised, requiring action and demonstrable work. Learning from best practices elsewhere.
- e) Core objectives included local resident interests and broader Hampshire and Solent commonality. Effective delivery across all authorities was crucial, requiring a system designed for regional functionality, irrespective of hosting authority or structure. The system's effectiveness for all residents, regardless of location, was paramount.
- f) Parishes and local communities (particular in the southern parishes) require consultation and support, ensuring their voices were heard as well as assistance with identifying potential community assets. The Winchester town would be subject to a community governance review to establish a town council, and this review must consider the town area's relationship with neighbouring authorities.
- g) Ward Councillor roles were recognised and appreciated, especially for their understanding of local communities and for their engagement with residents on the local government reorganisation process. Their feedback was highly valued.
- h) A strategic regional approach to the climate and nature emergencies was essential and appropriate representation within the interim combined authority was a means to facilitate this.
- i) Staff support was a priority during the transition of local government reorganisation.

- j) Overall, despite concerns regarding process and impact on communities, submitting the interim plan was considered the right course. Prioritising resident needs, effective service delivery, and achieving a strong council representing local communities were paramount within a functional regional system.

2. That it be noted that Cabinet is asked to approve the submission to the Government of the Interim Plan for local government reorganisation in Hampshire and Solent at their meeting on 20 March 2025.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and concluded at 8.30 pm

The Mayor

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## COUNCIL

Wednesday, 14 May 2025

Attendance:

Councillors Present

Gordon-Smith (Mayor)

Achwal S  
Achwal V  
Aron  
Bailey-Morgan  
Batho  
Becker  
Bennett  
Bolton  
Brook  
Brophy  
Chamberlain  
Clear  
Cook  
Cunningham  
Cutler  
Eve  
Godfrey  
Horrill  
Laming  
Langford-Smith

Latham  
Learney  
Lee  
Morris  
Murphy  
Pinniger  
Porter  
Power  
Reach  
Rutter  
Scott  
Small  
Thompson  
Tippett-Cooper  
Tod  
Wallace  
Warwick  
Westwood  
White  
Williams

Apologies for Absence:

Councillors Cramoysan, Miller, Pett and Wise

[Recording of Meeting](#)

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1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for the meeting were noted as above.

2. **DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

No declarations of interest were made.

3. **TO ELECT FROM AMONGST THE MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL A PERSON TO BE MAYOR OF THE CITY OF WINCHESTER FOR THE ENSUING YEAR**

Proposed by Councillor Tippet-Cooper and seconded by Councillor Reach and unanimously resolved that Councillor Sudhakar Achwal be elected the 826th Mayor of the City of Winchester for the period commencing 14 May 2025.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Sudhakar Achwal be elected the 826th Mayor of the City of Winchester for the period commencing 14 May 2025.

4. **TO MOVE A VOTE OF THANKS TO THE RETIRING MAYOR**

Proposed by Councillor Porter and seconded by Councillor Power and unanimously resolved that the best thanks of the Council be accorded to Councillor Gordon-Smith for his service to the council as Mayor.

RESOLVED:

That the best thanks of the Council be accorded to Councillor Gordon-Smith for his service to the Council as Mayor.

5. **TO ELECT FROM AMONGST THE MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL A PERSON TO BE DEPUTY MAYOR OF THE CITY OF WINCHESTER FOR THE ENSUING YEAR**

Proposed by Councillor Clear and seconded by Councillor Learney and unanimously resolved that Councillor Scott be elected Deputy Mayor of the City of Winchester for the period commencing 14 May 2025.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Scott be elected Deputy Mayor of the City of Winchester for the period commencing 14 May 2025.

6. **TO CONFIRM THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FOR THE ENSUING YEAR**

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Tod be confirmed as Leader of the Council (Chairperson of Cabinet).

7. **THE LEADER TO CONFIRM THE DEPUTY LEADER (VICE CHAIRPERSON OF CABINET) AND THE OTHER MEMBERS OF CABINET**

The Leader, Councillor Tod, confirmed the Deputy Leader (Vice Chairperson of Cabinet) and other members of Cabinet.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Cutler be appointed as Deputy Leader (Vice Chairperson of Cabinet) and Councillors Becker, Cramoysan, Learney, Porter, Reach and Thompson as remaining members of Cabinet.

8. **TO DETERMINE THE NUMBER OF SEATS TO BE ALLOCATED TO EACH GROUP AND TO CONFIRM THE MEMBERS AND DEPUTY MEMBERS OF THE FOLLOWING BODIES (OR OTHER BODIES AS COUNCIL MAY DETERMINE) FOR THE ENSUING YEAR**

RESOLVED:

1. That the Monitoring Officer be authorised to make any minor consequential amendments to the Constitution to give effect to the decisions made.

2. That allocation of seats to political groups and memberships of the following bodies be confirmed be as follows:

**Scrutiny Committee** (9) – Councillors Batho, Clear, Laming, Murphy, Pett, Power (Liberal Democrats 6) and Councillors Brook, Bolton (Conservatives 2) and Councillor Wallace (Green) plus deputies – Councillors Gordon-Smith, Scott (Liberal Democrats 2) and Councillors Horrill, Godfrey (Conservatives 2) and Councillors Bailey-Morgan and Lee (Green 2)

**Audit and Governance Committee** (7) – Councillors Brophy, Chamberlain, Morris, Pinniger, Power (Liberal Democrats 5) and Councillor Godfrey (Conservatives 1) and Councillor Bailey-Morgan (Green 1) plus deputies – Councillors Aron, Bennett (Liberal Democrats 2) and Councillors Bolton, Miller (Conservatives 2) and Councillors Lee, Wallace (Green 2)

**Licensing and Regulation Committee** (10) – Councillors Brophy, Gordon-Smith, Laming, Latham, Morris, Pett, Wise (Liberal Democrats 7) and Councillors Cunningham, Langford-Smith (Conservatives 2) and Wallace (Green 1) plus deputies – Councillors Small, Tippet-Cooper (Liberal Democrats 2) and Councillors Bolton, Godfrey (Conservatives 2) and Lee (Green 1)

**Planning Committee** (9) – Councillors Aron, Gordon-Smith, Laming, Rutter, Small, Williams (Liberal Democrats 6) and Councillors Cunningham, Langford-Smith (Conservatives 2) and White (Green 1) plus deputies – Councillors Clear, Pett (Liberal Democrats 2) and Councillors Bolton, Godfrey (Conservatives 2) and Lee (Green 1)

**Economy and Housing Policy Committee** (8) – Councillors Batho, Chamberlain, Eve, Gordon-Smith, Morris, Murphy (Liberal Democrats 6) and Councillor Bolton (Conservatives 1) and White (Green 1) plus deputies – Councillors Brophy, Westwood (Liberal Democrats 2) and Councillors Horrill, Warwick (Conservatives 2) and Councillors Bailey-Morgan and Lee (Green 2)

**Health and Environment Policy Committee** (8) – Councillors Bennett, Brophy, Latham, Pett, Power, Westwood (Liberal Democrats 6) and Councillor Miller (Conservatives 1) and Lee (Green 1) plus deputies – Councillors Eve, Tippet-Cooper (Liberal Democrats 2) and Councillors Horrill, Warwick (Conservatives 2) and Councillors White and Bailey-Morgan (Green 2)

**Housing Appeals Committee** (3) - Councillors Batho, Power (Liberal Democrats 2) and Councillor Horrill (Conservatives 1) plus deputies – Councillor Clear (Liberal Democrats 1) and Miller (Conservatives 1)

**Joint West of Waterlooville Planning Committee** (5) – Councillors Bennett, Laming, Williams, Rutter (Liberal Democrats 4) and Councillor Langford-Smith (Conservatives 1) plus deputies – Councillors Clear and Small (Liberal Democrats 2) and Councillor Cunningham (Conservatives 1)

Further to the above, and pursuant to Section 16 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, the Chief Executive served notice of each of the leaders of the political groups on the Council as to the allocation of seats indicated above.

9. **TO ELECT THE CHAIRPERSONS OF EACH OF THE FOLLOWING BODIES (OR OTHER BODIES AS COUNCIL MAY DETERMINE) FOR THE ENSUING YEAR**

RESOLVED:

That chairpersons of the following bodies be confirmed as follows:

Scrutiny Committee – Councillor Brook  
Audit and Governance Committee – Councillor Morris  
Licensing and Regulation Committee – Councillor Laming  
Planning Committee – Councillor Rutter  
Economy and Housing Policy Committee – Councillor Batho  
Health and Environment Policy Committee – Councillor Pett  
Housing Appeals Committee - Councillor Power  
Joint West of Waterlooville Planning Committee – Councillor Rutter

10. **TO PASS THE A RESOLUTION IN RESPECT OF THE WINCHESTER TOWN FORUM**

Proposed by The Leader, Councillor Tod and seconded by Councillor Cutler.

RESOLVED:

That the Winchester Town Forum be established for 2025/26 with membership consisting of all Members who represent the five Winchester Town Wards.

11. **TO PASS A RESOLUTION IN RESPECT OF THE HOUSING (APPEALS) COMMITTEE**

Proposed by The Leader, Councillor Tod and seconded by Councillor Cutler.

RESOLVED:

That alternative arrangements other than proportional representation be agreed in respect of the Housing (Appeals) Committee.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and concluded at 7.50 pm

The Mayor

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REPORT TITLE: TWINNING AGREEMENT - NIZHYN, UKRAINE

9 JULY 2025

REPORT OF CABINET MEMBER: Cllr Martin Tod, Leader of the Council

Contact Officer: Gareth John      Tel No: 01962 848135  
[gjohn@winchester.gov.uk](mailto:gjohn@winchester.gov.uk)

WARD(S): WINCHESTER TOWN WARDS

PURPOSE

The Council has been approached by representatives of Nizhyn City Council (Ukraine) to establish a 'twinning agreement' between their city and the city of Winchester. This is in recognition of the strong ties that have developed in recent years between our respective communities.

Nizhyn (pronounced 'Nee-jin') is an historic city located in the Chernihiv region of northern Ukraine along the Oster River some 72 miles northeast of Kyiv. It has a population of around 72,000 and is home to over 300 historic buildings, 70 of which are of significant cultural and historic value. Nizhyn is also home to Nizhyn Gogol State University, which is one of the oldest institutions of higher education in Ukraine, established in 1805 and has approximately 8,000 students. Nizhyn is a major industrial centre which is currently twinned with Ioannina (Greece), Preiļi (Latvia), Świdnica (Poland) and State College (Pennsylvania, United States).

The proposal has the support of Councillor Kathleen Becker (Cabinet Member for Healthy Communities) and Councillor John Tippet-Cooper (the Council's 'Sanctuary Champion'). Members will be familiar that the Council continues to offer support, along with residents of the district, to those who have left Ukraine and have found sanctuary in the district.

The proposed agreement is included at the Appendix, and it should be emphasised that the agreement is regarding the area encompassing the city of Winchester (town wards), and not the Winchester district.

The Winchester City Council district is currently twinned only with Giessen in Germany. There have also been links with other "Winchesters", principally Winchester, Virginia, with which an informal 'Sister City' relationship had existed.

There are other 'twinning' throughout the district (e.g. Alresford, Bishops Waltham), including the Winchester (town)/Laon link. These are all community-to-community arrangements, and the Council will only be involved informally by arrangement.

On this basis, the agreement at the Appendix is intended to be signed by the respective mayors as representatives of the two communities, emphasising that the links are made and to be fostered by the people of Winchester (town wards) and of Nizhyn, rather than the authorities.

In conclusion, the nature of the agreement is recognised as being to foster and develop mutual understanding and respect between the residents of both town areas. Whilst these purposes are clearly stated, there is no commitment to undertake any specific programme of activities by the Council itself, nor dedicate any resource.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

That Council endorse the proposed town twinning agreement at the Appendix to the report as the basis for the twinning agreement between the city of Winchester (town wards) and Nizhyn City Council (Ukraine) and that the Mayor of Winchester sign accordingly.

IMPLICATIONS:1 COUNCIL PLAN OUTCOME

- 1.1 The Council Plan looks to achieve, through the 'Healthy Communities' priority the continued support for the City of Sanctuary movement and for refugees to our district. Welcoming and providing ongoing support to those leaving Ukraine has been at the forefront of this in recent years. Ukrainian guests are a welcome and integrated part of our district community.
- 1.2 The fostering of twinning links with Ukraine is in recognition of the positive ties that have developed between our two communities, and it will further enhance these links through residents of Winchester and their twinned town, rather than by the respective authorities.

2 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 2.1 The Council has no formal Twinning Budget (and nor has there been for many years). As the agreement proposed will be an informal community-to-community arrangement, there are no additional resource implications.

3 LEGAL AND PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There are no legal responsibilities which relate to town twinning agreements as the arrangements are not underpinned by any statute, although The Local Government Act 1972 gives power to councils to enter into twinning arrangements and to expend money on them.
- 3.2 The Director (Legal) has assessed and concluded the proposed twinning agreement at the Appendix as having no legal basis, nor containing any implications that the council could be bound by.
- 3.3 The Council would be able to terminate the twinning agreement in the future should it be considered appropriate to do so by the passing of a resolution at Council.

4 WORKFORCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 None directly, other than, potentially, assistance with facilitating dialogue and information sharing between the two communities.

5 PROPERTY AND ASSET IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 None from this report.

6 CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

- 6.1 This proposal brought forward for consideration has been undertaken via consultation between representatives of Nizhyn City Council (Ukraine), Councillor Kathleen Becker (Cabinet Member for Community and

Engagement), Councillor John Tippet-Cooper (the Council's 'Sanctuary Champion').

## 7 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

7.1 None from this report.

## 8 PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

8.1 None from this report.

## 9 DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT

9.1 None from this report.

## RISK MANAGEMENT

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>
<u>Financial Exposure</u>  There is no direct financial resourcing requirements associated with the proposal.	N/A	The Council would retain a 'watching brief' on the working of the agreement over time.
<u>Exposure to challenge</u>  That signing of the agreement be challenged due to perceived legal basis of the pledges within.	There are no legal responsibilities which relate to town twinning agreements as the arrangements are not underpinned by any statute. The agreement, as worded, is an informal arrangement with no legal basis.	The Council would be able to terminate the twinning agreement in the future should it be considered appropriate to do so by the passing of a resolution at Council.
<u>Innovation</u>  <b>(1)</b> The agreement may inadvertently attract unforeseen negative comment from communities.	<b>(1)</b> Each of the pledges within the agreement promote positive outcomes that foster understanding, cooperation, and sustainable development.	<b>(1)</b> Continued support of the Council's commitment to the City of Sanctuary movement: for example, the agreement highlights importance of 'reflecting the spirit

<p><b>(2)</b> There are risks stemming from the possibility that the Russia/Ukraine conflict shall result in increased Russian-borne cyberthreats to the Council as an ally of Ukraine</p>	<p><b>(2)</b> The Council's IMT service is vigilant and has robust measures already in place regarding the ongoing threat of cyberthreats.</p>	<p>of our community and core values of openness, kindness, and respect for everyone.</p> <p><b>(2)</b> Investigation of technical advances etc regarding protecting public services from cyberthreats</p>
<p><u>Reputation</u></p> <p>Changes to international political circumstances.</p>	<p>Should any future risk to the Council's reputation be identified as having stemmed from the agreement, then the Council would be able to terminate the twinning agreement in the future (should it be considered appropriate to do so) by the passing of a resolution at Council.</p>	<p>The Council would retain a 'watching brief' on the working of the agreement over time.</p>
<p><u>Achievement of outcome</u></p> <p>There are no direct staffing or financial resources associated with the proposal.</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>The Council would retain a 'watching brief' on the working of the agreement over time.</p>
<p><u>Community Support</u></p> <p>The agreement, and pledges therein would have support from communities.</p>	<p>The Council Plan looks to achieve, through the 'Healthy Communities' priority, the continued support for the City of Sanctuary movement and for refugees to our district.</p>	<p>The fostering of twinning links with Ukraine is in recognition of the positive ties that have developed between our two communities</p>
<p><u>Timescales</u></p> <p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>

<u>Project capacity</u>  There are no direct staffing or financial resources associated with the proposal.	N/A	The Council would retain a 'watching brief' on the working of the agreement over time
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## 10 SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

- 10.1 Winchester City Council has previously endorsed twinning links. The city of Winchester (town wards) has been linked with the city of Laon in France since 1994 and the Winchester district has an older link with Giessen in Germany, which was formalised in 1963. There has also been links with other "Winchesters", principally Winchester, Virginia, with which an informal 'Sister City' relationship exists.
- 10.2 These are community-to-community arrangements, and the Council is only involved informally by arrangement, e.g. agreements are signed by respective mayors as representatives of the two communities and the links fostered by residents and their twinned towns, rather than the authorities.
- 10.3 The fostering of twinning links with Ukraine is in recognition of the positive ties that have developed between our two communities. In Winchester this has been further strengthened by the establishment of the Winchester Ukrainian Cultural Association (WUCA), which has a membership of approximately 200 and whose purpose is *"to support and promote the cultural, educational, and community interests of the Ukrainian community residing in Winchester and surrounding areas"*. As representatives of our Ukrainian community, WUCA will also have a distinct role in future "delivery" of the twinning agreement.
- 10.4 In the absence of budget or officer support, the proposed twinning agreement with Nizhyn City Council (Ukraine) has been drafted accordingly to ensure that it contains no legal obligations or binds the Council to any resource commitment.

## BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

None

## Other Background Documents:

None

## Appendix

Twinning Agreement



## TWINNING AGREEMENT

between

**the Nizhyn City Council of Chernihiv Region (Ukraine)**  
**and the City of Winchester, Hampshire (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)**

The Nizhyn City Council of Chernihiv Region (Ukraine)  
 and the City of Winchester, Hampshire (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland),

hereinafter referred to as the Parties

**Recognizing** the close ties between our communities,

**Affirming** the resilience, determination, and courage of the people of Nizhyn and Ukraine in defending their freedom and democratic values,

**Confirming** our shared commitment to democracy, local self-government, human rights, and the rule of law,

**Dedicated** to strengthening international partnerships that foster mutual understanding, cooperation, and sustainable development,

WE HEREBY COMMIT TO:

- Maintain close ties between our cities by encouraging cooperation between our local authorities, institutions, and communities.
- Promote environmental responsibility by sharing information on projects and approaches that enhance sustainable development and protect natural resources.

- Strengthen community connections by fostering people-to-people engagement that embraces inclusion, diversity, and mutual respect.
- Support educational and cultural exchange enabling students, teachers, artists, and civic organizations to learn from and inspire one another.
- Promote economic and social development by encouraging the exchange of knowledge and best practices in governance, sustainable development, and urban planning.
- Jointly uphold freedom, democracy, and resilience, advocating for the right of every person to live in peace and security.

This partnership reflects our belief in international friendship and the role of local communities in building a more just and peaceful world together.

This Agreement is concluded for an indefinite period.

This Agreement shall enter into force on the date of its signing by the authorized representatives of both Parties, following prior approval by the competent authorities of both Parties, if required by the legislation of Ukraine and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The Agreement shall be published in accordance with the applicable laws of both countries.

Each Party reserves the right to terminate this Agreement. The Agreement shall be terminated three months after one Party receives written notification from the other Party of its intention to terminate the Agreement.

Amendments and additions to this Agreement shall be made by mutual written consent of the Parties. Disagreements regarding the interpretation or application of the provisions of this agreement shall be resolved through negotiations and consultations between the Parties.

Signed on the \_\_\_\_\_, 2025, in the city of \_\_\_\_\_, in two copies, each in Ukrainian and English, both texts being equally authentic.



**On behalf of the Nizhyn City Council  
Chernihiv Region (Ukraine)**

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Mayor of Nizhyn  
**Oleksandr KODOLA**

**On behalf of the City of Winchester,  
Hampshire (United Kingdom of Great  
Britain and Northern Ireland)**

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Mayor of Winchester  
**Sudhakar ACHWAL**

## УГОДА ПРО ПОБРАТИМСТВО

між

**Ніжинською міською радою Чернігівської області (Україна)  
та Містом Вінчестер, Гемпшир (Сполучене Королівство Великої Британії та  
Північної Ірландії)**

Ніжинська міська рада Чернігівської області (Україна)  
та Місто Вінчестер, Гемпшир (Сполучене Королівство Великої Британії та Північної  
Ірландії),

що далі іменуються Сторонами

**Визнаючи** тісні зв'язки між нашими громадами,

**Підтверджуючи** стійкість, рішучість і мужність народу Ніжина та України в  
захисті своєї свободи й демократичних цінностей,

**Стверджуючи** нашу спільну віру в демократію, місцеве самоврядування, права  
людини та верховенство права,

**Віддані** зміцненню міжнародних партнерств, які сприяють взаєморозумінню,  
співпраці та сталому розвитку,

**ЦИМ ЗОБОВ'ЯЗУЄМОСЯ:**

- Підтримувати тісні зв'язки між нашими містами, заохочуючи співпрацю між нашими органами місцевого самоврядування, установами та громадами.
- Сприяти екологічній відповідальності, обмінюючись інформацією про проекти та підходи, що підвищують сталий розвиток та захищають природні ресурси.
- Зміцнювати зв'язки між громадами, сприяти розвитку взаємодії людей, що передбачає інклюзію, різноманіття та взаємну повагу.

- Підтримувати освітній та культурний обмін, дозволяючи студентам, вчителям, митцям і громадським організаціям вчитися одне в одного та надихати одне одного.
- Сприяти економічному та соціальному розвитку, заохочуючи обмін знаннями й найкращими практиками у сфері врядування, сталого розвитку та міського планування.
- Разом підтримувати свободу, демократію та стійкість, виступаючи за право кожної людини жити в мирі та безпеці.

Це партнерство відображає нашу віру в міжнародну дружбу та роль місцевих громад у спільній побудові більш справедливого та мирного світу.

Ця Угода укладається на невизначений термін.

Ця Угода набирає чинності з дати підписання уповноваженими представниками обох Сторін після попереднього схвалення компетентними органами обох Сторін цієї Угоди, якщо законодавство України та Сполученого Королівства Великої Британії та Північної Ірландії вимагає такого схвалення для набуття чинності цієї Угоди. Угода буде опублікована відповідно до чинного законодавства обох країн.

Кожна зі Сторін має право припинити дію цієї Угоди. Дія цієї Угоди припиняється через три місяці після отримання однією з Сторін письмового повідомлення від іншої Сторони про її намір припинити дію цієї Угоди.

Зміни і доповнення до цієї Угоди вносяться за взаємною письмовою згодою Сторін. Розбіжності щодо тлумачення або застосування положень цієї угоди вирішуються шляхом проведення переговорів та консультацій між Сторонами.

Підписано \_\_\_\_\_ 2025 року в м. \_\_\_\_\_ в двох примірниках, кожний українською та англійською мовами, при чому обидва тексти мають однакову силу.

**Від Ніжинської міської ради  
Чернігівської області (Україна)**

**Від Міста Вінчестер,  
Гемпшир (Сполучене Королівство  
Великої Британії та Північної Ірландії)**

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Міський голова міста Ніжина  
**Олександр КОДОЛА**

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Міський голова Вінчестера  
**Судгакар АЧВАЛ**

## **THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**5 June 2025**

### **Minute Extract**

#### **ANNUAL SCRUTINY REPORT 2024/25**

The Chairperson introduced the report, which set out proposals for the Annual Scrutiny Report, ([available here](#)). The committee was recommended to consider the report and make any necessary comments on the content before its submission to the full council.

#### **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:**

That Council note the annual scrutiny report for 2024/25.

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REPORT TITLE: DRAFT ANNUAL SCRUTINY REPORT 2024/25

5 JUNE 2025

REPORT OF CHAIRPERSON: COUNCILLOR CAROLINE BROOK

Contact Officer: Matthew Watson Tel No: 01962 848 317 Email  
Mwatson@Winchester.Gov.Uk

WARD(S): ALL

PURPOSE

At the end of each municipal year, the Chairperson of the Scrutiny Committee reviews the work of all overview and scrutiny bodies and reports to the council.

Appendix 1 contains the draft report for the 2024/25 municipal year so that the Scrutiny Committee can add its comments before it is finalised for presentation to the full council.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the committee consider and makes any necessary comments on the content of the report before its submission to full council.

# **Annual Scrutiny Report 2024/25**



## **What is Scrutiny?**

Scrutiny improves decision-making by reviewing and suggesting improvements to decisions.

Decisions taken must be monitored in this way to ensure that the council's services are of high quality and that the decision-making process is transparent and that the council's various programmes of work remain on track. It also provides an opportunity for the views of the public, businesses, community groups and others to be considered when reviewing the council's activities.

To achieve this, the council has established three Policy and Scrutiny committees, which are:

1. The Economy and Housing Policy (EHP) Committee
2. The Health and Environment Policy (HEP) Committee
3. The Scrutiny Committee

One of the key roles of scrutiny is to hold decision-makers to account for their decisions. Scrutiny committees have the power to require Cabinet Members to attend their meetings and explain the decisions they have taken. Having heard from decision-makers and gathered any other evidence, policy and scrutiny committees can make recommendations on how things could be improved.

A key part of the role of the two policy committees is also to consider proposals for new policy and recommend new ways forward as well as to review existing policies and strategies.

In addition to reviewing decisions and performance, the policy and scrutiny committees can look at topics in more detail. Establishing a 'task and finish' group is a way to undertake more detailed work, gather evidence on the topic and develop recommendations that can make a difference and add value.

By focusing on a particular topic, a task and finish group can gather evidence from several sources, including customers, other people affected by the issue and experts from outside the Council. This provides the opportunity for the public to influence the policy-making process.

## **The Committees**

The Council has the following policy and scrutiny committees, which, as specified in the Council's constitution, carry out the overview and scrutiny function with the following remits:

### **Economy and Housing Policy Committee**

To maintain a strategic overview of the progress towards the achievement of the relevant priorities in the Council Plan, to include:

Thriving Places - making our district a place where residents want to live, visitors come and visit and attractive for sustainable business investment and growth that provides opportunities for young people to live and work in the district.

Good Homes for All - Focussing on increasing the number of affordable homes across the district while taking action to ensure our tenants live in council homes that are decent, safe and energy efficient and resilient to the effects of climate change.

### **Health and Environment Policy Committee**

To maintain a strategic overview of the progress towards the achievement of the relevant priorities in the Council Plan, to include:

Greener Faster - working with and enabling businesses, organisations, and residents to reduce carbon emissions and achieve the council's net zero carbon commitment for the district by 2030.

Healthy Communities - providing safe and attractive public facilities and open spaces to enable our residents to improve their health and wellbeing. Working collaboratively with voluntary and community sector partners to tackle social isolation, build community cohesion and support those most in need including targeted support for residents affected by the increased cost of living

### **Scrutiny Committee**

The Scrutiny Committee reviews and/or scrutinises decisions made, or actions taken in connection with the discharge of any of the Council's functions, apart from regulatory functions (decisions made in respect of permissions, licences, and other similar consents).

The broad terms of reference are as follows:

To review and scrutinise any decisions made or to be made or actions to be taken in connection with the discharge of the Council's functions, including holding the Cabinet to account by reviewing and scrutinising executive decisions.

Reviewing and scrutinising the performance of the Council in relation to its policy objectives and performance targets

Exercise the right to Call-In for reconsideration of decisions made but not yet implemented by the Leader, the Cabinet and Cabinet Members and Officers.

It can monitor the implementation of decisions, and service performance, and make reports and/or recommendations to the Cabinet. More generally, the Scrutiny Committee can select topics for closer enquiry in the interest of improving the council. It can further review and scrutinise the performance of other public bodies in the area and invite reports from them and/or invite them to address the Committee about their activities and performance. They can ask questions and gather evidence from any person or body (with their consent) and exercise the right to call in, for reconsideration, decisions made but not yet implemented by the Leader, Cabinet, or officers.

For Section 19 of the Police & Justice Act 2006, the Committee acts as the Council's Crime & Disorder Committee and as such is responsible for reviewing and scrutinising the decisions and work of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP)

This report from the Committee Chairperson which is found later in this report provides an overview of the work undertaken by the Committee during the 2024/25 municipal year. The committee held seven formal meetings with high attendance and increased public participation. Key topics discussed included waste and recycling, the Local Plan, financial performance, housing, and community safety. The committee made several recommendations to the Cabinet and engaged in constructive discussions with public participants and Councillors.

## **Membership and Meetings**

**Economy and Housing Policy Committee:** The following Councillors have attended the committee during the year: Councillor Batho, Councillor Chamberlain, Councillor Achwal, Councillor Eve, Councillor Morris, Councillor Murphy, Councillor White, Councillor Horrill, Councillor Aron, and Councillor Miller.

The following cabinet members attended the committee to address the meeting: Councillor Thompson (Cabinet Member for Business and Culture), Councillor Westwood (Cabinet Member for Housing), and Councillor Tod (Leader and Cabinet Member for Asset Management).

**Health and Environment Policy Committee:** The following Councillors have attended as committee members during the year: Cramoysan, Bennett, Bolton, Brophy, Latham, Lee, Power, Aron, Batho,

The following cabinet members attended the committee to address the meeting: Becker (Cabinet Member for Community and Engagement), Learney (Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency), Porter (Cabinet Member for Place and Local Plan), and Tod (Leader and Cabinet Member for Asset Management).

**Scrutiny Committee:** The following Councillors have attended the committee during the year: Councillor Brook, Councillor Wallace, Councillor V Achwal, Councillor Batho, Councillor Laming, Councillor Pett, Councillor Reach, Councillor Bolton, Councillor Clear, Councillor Horrill, Councillor Godfrey, Councillor Cramoysan, Councillor Achwal, Councillor Warwick, Councillor Lee, and Councillor Cook

The following cabinet members attended the committee to address the meeting:

Councillor Cutler (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance), Councillor Tod (Leader and Cabinet Member for Asset Management), Councillor Westwood (Cabinet Member for Housing), Councillor Becker (Cabinet Member for Community and Engagement), Councillor Learney (Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency), Councillor Porter (Cabinet Member for Place and Local Plan), and Councillor Thompson (Cabinet Member for Business and Culture).

## **Items considered during 2024/25**

The following specifies the substantial agenda items for each meeting of the three Committees.

### **Scrutiny Committee.**

#### **06/06/24**

1. Procurement Of Waste & Recycling Collection Vehicles / Update On Waste And Recycling. (Presentation)
2. Appointments Of External Bodies Related To Scrutiny
3. Annual Scrutiny Report 2023/24
4. Annual Report - Exceptions To Forward Plan 2023/24

#### **29/07/24**

1. Local Plan - Regulation 19.

#### **04/09/24**

1. Q1 Finance & Performance Monitoring
2. Housing Revenue Account Outturn 23/24
3. General Fund Outturn 23/24

#### **14/10/24**

1. Bar End Depot, Bar End Road, Winchester – Disposal
2. Council Plan 2025-30 (Presentation)

#### **12/11/24**

1. General Fund Budget Options & Medium-Term Financial Strategy
2. Housing Revenue Account Business Plan & Budget Options
3. Procurement Of HRA Repairs And Maintenance Term Contract
4. Acquisition Of Affordable Homes At Kings Barton
5. Future Of Waste And Recycling; New Food Waste Collections And Recycling Service.

#### **04/02/25**

1. Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget 2025 - 2026
2. General Fund Budget 2025- 2026
3. Capital Investment Strategy 2025 - 2035
4. Treasury Management Strategy 2025 - 2026

#### **05/03/25**

1. Annual Community Safety Performance Update
2. Development Delivery Plans - Central Winchester Regeneration
3. Q3 Finance & Performance Monitoring

## **Health and Environment Policy Committee**

**19/09/24**

1. Council Health Priorities (Presentation)
2. Air Quality Strategy (Presentation)
3. Council Plan 2025-30 (Presentation)

**03/12/24**

1. Update On Performance Of The Council's Leisure Facilities Managed Under Contract By Everyone Active (HEP042)
2. Winchester District Nature Improvement Plan 2025-2030 (Presentation)

**26/02/25**

1. Sports Facilities Assessment and Playing Pitch Strategy 2025 (Presentation)
2. Waste Update (Verbal Update)

## **Economy and Housing Policy Committee**

**17/09/24**

1. Review Of Economy And Housing Policy Committee Resolutions
2. Winchester District Economy Review (Presentation)
3. Housing, Repairs And Maintenance Contract Procurement (Presentation)
4. Council Plan 2025-30 (Presentation)

**26/11/24**

1. Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG): Policy Review (Presentation)
2. Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan & Budget Options

**11/02/2025**

1. Summary Of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund And Rural England Fund Programmes 2022-2025
2. Housing Repairs and Maintenance Policies

**Public participation.**

The policy and scrutiny committee welcomes and encourages engagement with residents and other community representatives during its public participation session. During 2024/25 all public meetings of the council were live-streamed, recorded and made available on the council's YouTube channel which has improved the visibility and transparency of meetings.

The agenda, minutes, audio and video recordings for all Policy and Scrutiny meetings can be found on our website.

## **Review of 2024/25**

Economy and Housing Policy Committee.

Report of the chairperson of the committee, Cllr James Batho.

The start of the year saw a General Election which resulted in an extended hold on Council meetings. The first EHP meeting was cancelled leaving three meetings to be held in the municipal year.

### **Economy**

At the September meeting the Business and Culture team brought forward a review of the Winchester District Economy. The committee were pleased to see the range of activity and wanted to continue supporting skills development, particularly in retrofitting and digital support, ensure that rural areas remain a focus, continue and expand work in the solar energy sector and to prioritise efforts that align with the 'Greener Faster' initiative, recognising its importance in improving the district's performance.

At the final meeting in February the Summary of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Fund Programmes 2022-2025 was presented. The committee raised concerns regarding the equitable distribution of funding across wards, particularly between rural and urban areas, members agreed they would communicate with their respective wards, encouraging parishes and organisations to apply for grants in the upcoming year. The Cabinet Member was asked to consider whether maintaining some level of contribution from businesses, as beneficiaries of the funding, should be pursued, acknowledging the reduction in match funding requirements to encourage business engagement. Officers were asked to explore avenues to support more community involvement and funding applications, alongside business-related projects and continue to emphasise learning from both successful and unsuccessful projects, maintaining dialogue and providing feedback to applicants ensuring a steady stream of potential projects for the future.

### **Housing**

During the year changes were made to the involvement of tenants, and the committee looks forward to contributions from these revised forums. The work of all involved is greatly appreciated.

At the first meeting in September the Housing team presented the Housing, Repairs and Maintenance Contract Procurement which aims to consolidate many of the repair, maintenance and retrofit contracts into a partnership led relationship with a selected supplier. The committee made several recommendations, the main points being to ensure that clear and detailed KPIs were developed and to focus on defining and maximising the social value aspects within the contract, acknowledging that this significant contract presented an opportunity to improve the social aspects of the local communities.



In November the committee looked at the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG). Recently applications and approved grants had risen, and the average cost of works increased, while the grant allocations had remained the same. The committee were presented with 3 options for policy change, each with its advantages, disadvantages, and potential impacts on the Council's ability to fulfil its duties and manage the DFG budget effectively. The committee agreed that a change to the policy regarding means testing was appropriate to ensure that the funding was targeted to those most in need and noted that option three had the potential downside of providing support to those who could contribute a significant amount themselves whilst option two, allowed "boundary" cases to be considered and so enabled funds to be used more beneficially.

The committee also considered the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan and Budget Options. The main cost pressures on the HRA are continuing inflationary pressures on building supplies, increased capital costs for maintaining existing housing stock, high capital financing interest rates and challenges in new homes viability due to high public works loan board interest rates. The budget options presented support the Council's commitment to increasing investment in customers' homes, delivering 1,000 new homes by 2032/33, and improving customer service for repairs and maintenance. The committee highlighted the importance of policy reviews, particularly in areas such as the repairs recharge, voids, and the repair process.

At the final meeting in February the committee was asked to review and comment upon four Policies: Disabled Adaptations, Housing Repairs and Maintenance, Housing Repairs Recharge and Managing Damp and Mould. The committee raised the importance of a robust appeals process, particularly for the recharge policy, anticipating potential challenges from tenants due to its new implementation. The committee welcomed the regular review of the policies and suggested stating the implementation date and review date on the policy itself. The committee requested a review of the policies at this committee in one year, following implementation, to assess the actual situation.

## **The Health and Environment Policy Committee**

Report of the chairperson of the committee, Cllr Steve Cramoyson

### **Introduction**

The Health and Environment Policy Committee (HEP) met three times during the council year, in September, December and February. The planned July meeting was cancelled due to the General election. HEP considered and contributed to papers covering a range of issues affecting both the district's environment and the health/wellbeing of the district's residents and communities.

### **September 2024 Meeting**

Members of the public addressed the committee on: EV charging for taxis, Air quality and Council Health priorities.

The committee contributed to three Policy papers.

### **Health priorities:**

The first was a paper delivered by Mike Newman from the Public Health Team at Hampshire County Council who explained how HCC operated with a wide range of partners - agencies, institutions and stakeholders, setting out high level data to understand performance, and proposals for health priorities to test against existing and emerging strategies, policies and plans and map against the work of the council to continue to generate health benefits, both directly and indirectly. The committee asked questions, challenged some of the data presented and provided informed opinion on a many of the points covered in the presentation including:

- the levels of anxiety reported and the role of social prescribing
- the adequacy of pharmacies and food insecurity, particularly access to reasonably priced, good quality fresh produce locally.
- Concerns were raised about the impact of switching off the Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN) landline in rural areas and the associated stress for residents with poor mobile network coverage.

For a full list of the points raised refer to the minutes. The committee welcomed visibility of the strategy, and the process described and would welcome future updates.

### **Air Quality Strategy:**

A presentation outlining how the City Council is evolving its Air Quality Strategy from an Air Quality Management area (AQMA) for a specific area of Winchester to an Air Quality Strategy (AQS) for the whole district. The council is leading Hampshire in the development of an Air Quality Strategy (AQS) for the whole district, with the area of works led by both the Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency and the Cabinet Member for Place and Local Plan. An AQS had been commissioned following meetings of the cross-party steering group, comprising of members from all parties and stakeholders from WinACC, the Business Improvement District (BID), a representative from the Director of Public Health and relevant officers. The committee asked an extensive range of questions about the processes and other authorities that are contributing to the AQS. Questions about the sources of pollution

in the district, and about the availability of EV charging points, among many others. The committee was pleased to endorse the strategy and looks forward to a future update.

### **The Council Plan**

Members were pleased to be asked to review and comment on the direction of the council plan, including the vision, themes and priorities, focussing on the responsibilities of the committee in respect of health and environment, namely: Living Well, Cost of Living, Climate Emergency/Greener Faster.

The committee raised many questions and provided opinions on around 20 areas of policy around the council plan. These fed into the Council plan published in January 2025.

### **December 2024 Meeting**

This meeting focused on the Performance of the Councils Leisure Facilities managed by Everyone Active, and Winchester District Nature Improvement Plan 2025-2030.

#### **Performance of the Councils Leisure Facilities managed by Everyone Active**

The presentation highlighted that Winchester Sports and Leisure Park (WSLP) had received an 'Outstanding' rating achievement in the Quest accreditation in May 2024 one of only four facilities in England to achieve this rating, the National Operator of the Year award given to Everyone Active at the UK Active awards in October 2024.

Membership numbers at both centres were on an upward trajectory. Usage in nearly all categories was also up, except dry side usage at Meadowside which was attributed to flooding which took the dry side facilities out of action for several months. Strategies are in place to address this.

As with other reports HEP proceeded to question and challenge the report which stood up well.

#### **Winchester District Nature Improvement Plan 2025-2030**

The Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency introduced the item which provided proposals to refresh the council's strategic approach to nature improvement in the district, as a result of local and national policy changes. It was recognised that there were limited resources available and the need to make considerable savings over coming years was emphasised. The Service Lead: Sustainability and Natural Environment and Principal Ecologist/Biodiversity Officer gave a presentation which set out the current position, changes since the creation of the Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) and the proposed way forward.

The committee emphasised the need to maximise assets and leverage strategies like BNG, local network recovery, ecosystem services, and local groups. Concerns were expressed regarding the resource implications of BNG in planning conditions, including monitoring, quantification, and resource allocation. The committee outlined the importance of effective use of resources, along with the valuable role of citizen scientists in collecting data and providing credibility. There was a call for clear Key

Performance Indicators (KPI's), measurable outcomes, and cost-benefit analysis and the importance of creating a legacy for the district and future cycles was highlighted.

## **February 2025 meeting**

### **Sports Facilities Assessment and Playing Pitch Strategy 2025**

A representative of Sport Winchester addressed the Committee on this item, speaking in support of the strategy. A number of points were raised, including: Two areas where participation was rapidly increasing are women and girls' sports and accessibility for people with disabilities or mental health challenges, but current facilities did not adequately meet these needs.

Introduced by the Service Lead for Communities & Wellbeing, Continuum Sport and Leisure provided a presentation and answered questions thereon.

The committee reviewed, questioned and debated the process by which the strategy was evolving before going through an assessment of the findings on a sport-by-sport basis. In total there were 25 points of question or debate raised, including the following:

How will the strategy enable funding to be accessed? The strategy will inform both council and all the relevant potential funding bodies of key priorities for the district.

- How are the needs in terms of facilities and sports for people with disabilities assessed? Clubs were asked about their provision in place already or had identified a need for growth in the future and where national governing bodies were aware of the activity. The accessibility of pavilions were also checked.
- How were Parish Councils engaged? Every parish council received communication with surveys and offers to meet and discuss facilities. Where sites were owned, parishes were invited to attend site visits.

In summary, HEP supported the process and the direction that the strategy was taking.

### **Waste & Recycling update**

Committee noted the verbal update. The primary new news was that £50.5 million investment in new recycling infrastructure was approved by Hampshire County Council. This would enable the collection of pots, tubs, trays, and cartons going forward, with this project expected to take around 2 ½ years to build, and a potential completion around October 2027. Hampshire had informed DEFRA (Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs) that they are likely to be delayed in meeting the Government's April 2026 deadline for collecting pots, tubs, trays, and cartons on this basis. In addition, the Government was still planning to implement a deposit return scheme by October 2027. In total these new recycling options could improve recycling levels by approximately 10%.

From the debate:

- the final decision on co-mingling versus twin stream had not been formally made, but that the likely direction would be twin stream collections.
- the initial extra costs of twin stream were, £72 million less over 10 years comparing a twin stream rather than co-mingled collections.

- supported the council's approach to move the MRF project forward and encourage all other authorities to adopt twin stream collections.

Finally, I'd like to thank all officers & portfolio holders for bringing policy papers to the committee for policy development. Thanks to Democratic services, especially Claire Buchanan, ensuring the meetings ran smoothly. Thanks also to fellow councillors who sit on the committee for constructively engaging with each paper and subject and in sharing their expertise and knowledge on these. And members of the public who attended to speak on several of the agenda items across the year. Together this ensures that Council policies are scrutinised in a public forum with the opportunity for the public to have their say on the policies that council implements.

## **The Scrutiny Committee**

Report of the chairperson of the committee. Councillor Caroline Brook.

This report provides an overview of the work undertaken by the Scrutiny Committee during the 2024/25 municipal year in fulfilling our role to review and scrutinise decisions made, and actions taken.

Throughout the year, the committee held seven formal meetings, with high attendance at each. Public participation increased significantly, and we received deputations from members of the public or non-committee members at all meetings. Notably, 17 members of the public addressed the committee in July regarding the Local Plan.

The year began with a learning and training session in June 2024, facilitated by the Centre for Governance & Scrutiny (CfGS). This session was well attended and well received by committee members.

At our June meeting, we discussed the procurement of waste and recycling collection vehicles and recommended that the Cabinet implement education programmes to encourage composting and food waste reduction.

At our July meeting, we considered the Local Plan Regulation 19, focusing on whether the policy responses were suitable and met tests of soundness. Members of the public and Councillors raised numerous concerns regarding settlement boundaries, late inclusion of sites, planning guidance for developments, consultation processes, housing numbers, infrastructure, and alignment with national policies. We asked the Cabinet to consider the points raised during public participation and members' debate.

In September we received an update on Q1 Finance & Performance Monitoring, and members raised several questions about invasive plant species, the carbon neutrality action plan, waste and recycling, housing performance, energy efficiency, and data security. We asked the Cabinet Member to provide updates and clarifications on several of these points. We scrutinised the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Outturn 2023/24, and questioned inflation underpayments, fire safety provisions, external income, and vacant staff posts. We also reviewed the General Fund Outturn for 2023/24 and asked for clarification on unusable reserves, asset management, one-off budgets, and underspends in climate emergency and transformation programme budgets. We recommended that the Cabinet Member benchmark asset management performance and provide a Member Briefing on council assets, which was later undertaken with five members of the committee.

At our October meeting we discussed the proposed disposal of Bar End Depot, hearing from members of the public and raising questions about the proposal's alignment with planning policies, the mix of uses, safeguards for developers altering terms, the size of the convenience store, and community needs. We recommended

that the Cabinet consider issues related to consultation responses, parking access, climate commitments in the development, and the description of healthcare provision.

We also received a presentation on the Council Plan 2025-30 and provided feedback on topics such as KPIs, community centres, allotments, rural support, digital connectivity, recycling, website usability, cultural strategy, housing, and energy efficiency.

In November we considered the General Fund Budget Options & Medium-Term Financial Strategy and raised questions about the food waste service costs, the garden waste service, property assets, reserves, and the TC-25 programme. We scrutinised the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan & Budget Options, raising questions about the tenant involvement budget, the savings targets, revenue pressures, service charges, new homes in rural areas, and the increase in reported repairs. We requested that tenant service charge information be made available.

We reviewed the proposals for the Procurement of HRA Repairs and Maintenance Term Contract, questioning the risks of a long-term contract, environmental considerations, the quality-to-price ratio, and opportunities for SMEs. We requested a breakdown of current repairs. We considered the Acquisition of Affordable Homes at Kings Barton and asked about staged payments, energy efficiency standards, and the speed of delivery. Finally, for this meeting we discussed the "Future of Waste and Recycling; New Food Waste Collections and Recycling Service," and sought clarification on increased costs, HVO costs, government funding assumptions, and the use of depot sites.

At our February meeting, we scrutinised the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget 2025-2026, raising questions on business cases for property purchases, the forecast underspend, tenant feedback, rent increases, and service charges. We noted the report and requested various updates and clarifications. We also considered the General Fund Budget 2025-2026, with questions on topics such as the property portfolio, parking reserve, the cost of the Guildhall, food waste service financing, the TC-25 programme, and CIL funding. We requested that asset and parking information be more accessible. We reviewed the Capital Investment Strategy for 2025-2035 and the Treasury Management Strategy 2025-2026 and raised questions about the tailing off of general fund capital expenditure, plans to sell council assets and the management of shared undertakings.

At our final meeting in March 2025, we received the Annual Community Safety Performance Update and heard from Chief Inspector Korine Bishop. The Committee raised many questions about reporting criminal activity, rural crime statistics, contact with police services, broadband resilience for emergencies, and support for domestic violence initiatives. We agreed on actions regarding the Local Resilience Forum and providing a breakdown of crime statistics. We also discussed the "Development Delivery Plans - Central Winchester Regeneration", and raised questions about the

commencement of development, economic vibrancy, ownership of the site, Kings Walk development, CIL funding, inclusion of council homes, and the Bus Station Redevelopment. We agreed on actions including a member briefing and website updates. We scrutinised the Q3 Finance & Performance Monitoring report, raising concerns about progress towards carbon neutrality, waste and recycling, homelessness, and KPIs for a vibrant economy. We resolved to arrange follow-up meetings on KPIs and public toilets.

Members of the cabinet attended all our meetings, allowing for discussion and questions concerning policy and progress. No call-in of key decisions was initiated in the year.

All committee members contributed constructively to the issues put before them, and I am grateful to them and the officer team for their support. My thanks also go to the Committee Vice-Chair for their help and advice during the past 12 months.