



<b>Meeting</b>	Council
<b>Date and Time</b>	Tuesday, 2nd June, 2026 at 6.30 pm.
<b>Venue</b>	Council Chamber, Castle Hill, Winchester SO23 8UL

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that an Ordinary Meeting of the Council will be held at 6.30 pm on Tuesday, 2nd June, 2026 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 You Tube 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 26 February 2026 and the Extraordinary Meeting of the Council held on 24 March 2026** (Pages 5 - 26)
- 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 Tuesday 26 May 2026)

5. **Second Home Council Tax Premium (CL180) (Pages 27 - 44)**

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Consider the Monitoring Officer's report under S5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.
2. Approve the analysis of the Statutory Guidance at Appendix 1 of this report and confirm the Council's decision of 27 February 2025 to adopt a policy of charging a 100% second home council tax premium with relevant exemptions.
3. Approve the adoption of a 100% second home council tax premium for the next year 2027/2028 and future years unless and until an alternative determination is made.

6. **Winchester City Council Constitution Updates 2026 & Extension to Appointment of Independent Persons (CL178) (Pages 45 - 62)**

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Council is asked to note the updates and amendments to the council's Constitution made by the Monitoring Officer.
2. Council is asked to note the Monitoring Officer's approval of an extension to the term of the appointment of the council's three Independent Persons for two further years.

7. **Audit and Governance Committee Annual Report 2025/26 (CL179)**

(Pages 63 - 72)

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That Council note the Annual Audit and Governance Committee report for 2025/26.

8. **To consider and determine the following Recommended Minutes of the Scrutiny Committee held 26 May 2026 - Annual Scrutiny Report 2025/26 (SC102) - draft Recommended Minute to follow. (Pages 73 - 90)**

**RECOMMENDED:**

That Council note the annual scrutiny report for 2025/26.

9. **Changes to Committee Memberships**

To receive any resignations from committees and to make any necessary re-appointments.

10. **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

All of the Council's publicly available agendas, reports and minutes are available to view and download from the Council's [Website](#) and are also open to inspection at the offices of the council. As part of our drive to minimise our use of paper we do not provide paper copies of the full agenda pack at meetings. We do however, provide a number of copies of the agenda front sheet at the meeting which contains the QR Code opposite. Scanning this code enables members of the public to easily access all of the meeting papers on their own electronic device. Please hold your device's camera or QR code App over the QR Code so that it's clearly visible within your screen and you will be redirected to the agenda pack.



22 May 2026

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.

## COUNCIL

Thursday, 26 February 2026

Attendance:

Councillors Present

Achwal S (The Mayor)

Gordon-Smith	Learney
Bailey-Morgan	Lee
Batho	Morris
Becker	Murphy
Bennett	Pett
Bolton	Pinniger
Brook	Porter
Brophy	Power
Chamberlain	Rutter
Clear	Scott
Cook	Small
Cramoysan	Thompson
Cunningham	Tippett-Cooper
Cutler	Tod
Eve	Wallace
Godfrey	Warwick
Horrill	Westwood
Laming	White
Langford-Smith	Williams
Latham	

Apologies for Absence:

Councillors Achwal V, Aron, Miller, Reach and Wise

[Recording of meeting](#)

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1. **MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON 14 JANUARY 2026**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Ordinary meeting of the Council held on 14 January 2026 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. Councillor Pett declared a disclosable pecuniary

interest in respect of agenda items due to his role as the Council's representative on the South Downs National Park Authority.

However, as there was no material conflict of interest, they each 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 or a South Downs National Park Authority involvement.

Councillor Scott declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in respect of agenda item 5, Housing Revenue Account Budget (HRA) 2026/27 (CAB3540) as a Winchester City Council housing tenant. Councillor Becker also declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in respect of the same item as a property owner with a connection to a council sewage treatment works for which she paid an annual fee.

However, as there is no material conflict of interest in this item, they both remained in the room, spoke and voted under the dispensation granted on behalf of the Audit and Governance Committee that enabled them to both participate and vote on the matters in the report.

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

The Mayor referred to recent engagements and then announced his forthcoming charities events.

The Leader provided an update on several matters relating to local government reorganisation, elections, and devolution.

The Leader reminded Members that, following the previous Full Council meeting, he had written to the Government supporting the continuation of local elections, reflecting the Council's cross-party position. The Leader suggested that the debate, despite changes to the Government's position regarding local elections, had nevertheless been a useful opportunity to set out the Council's views. The Leader then advised that the Government had sought views on the design of the Structural Change Order, which included matters such as the governance of the joint committee that was to oversee reorganisation following the proposed announcement in March of this year regarding boundaries and the establishment of shadow authorities in April 2027. The name "Mid Hampshire" had been proposed for the new authority, but it was emphasised that new councils should retain the ability to choose a name once boundaries had been finalised. The Leader also reported that parish councils had been consulted on the potential synchronisation of parish elections with future unitary or mayoral elections; parishes expressed support, given the cost of running standalone elections. The Council's full response was submitted to MHCLG on 17 February.

The Leader then advised that a cross-party committee of the Council, comprising group leaders and Cabinet members, had been established to guide the Council's work on reorganisation. The Leader stressed that although the Council was preparing on the basis that reorganisation would proceed, recent uncertainties such as changes to national policy and the evolving position on

devolution meant that this could not be taken for granted. Therefore, this should be borne in mind when considering the council's budget.

Regarding Devolution, it was reported that all upper-tier authorities had now taken decisions via their full councils enabling the structural change order for devolution to progress, with respective cabinet meetings due to take place over the next few weeks. The Leader acknowledged that the upper-tier authorities had secured an improved financial settlement, increasing the combined authority's interim funding from one-third to 40% before a mayor was appointed. Of particular relevance to districts was the newly secured Strategic Place Partnership with Homes England, which would be important for housing delivery, regeneration, and planning matters. The Leader emphasised the need for strong district involvement in this work.

Finally, the Leader reported that scaffolding would be erected around the Buttercross in Winchester shortly to enable refurbishment works to begin.

The Chief Executive announced apologies for the meeting.

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

One written question had been received from a member of the public, who attended the meeting to present it. A supplementary question was also asked. The question and response are set out on the [council's website](#).

#### 5. **TO CONSIDER AND DETERMINE THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDED MINUTES: CABINET HELD 12 FEBRUARY 2026 - HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) BUDGET 2026/27 (CAB3540 - REVISED)**

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

Council noted a correction of a typographical error at Recommendation 11 of Report CAB3540 and the recommended minute. Reference to the CPI figure should read September 2025, not 2024.

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 2026 (as follows) be approved and adopted (with the correction referred to above):

1. That the HRA Financial Plan operating account, including annual working balances be noted, as detailed in Appendix 6 of the report.
2. That the 2026/27 Housing Revenue Account budget be approved, as detailed in Appendices 1 and 2 to the report.

3. That the proposed capital programme for maintenance, improvements and renewals totalling £162.7m be approved.

4. That capital expenditure be approved and authority be delegated to the Strategic Director with responsibility for housing to enter into necessary contracts for the 2026/27 capital programme of £22.8m, as detailed in Appendix 3 of the report in accordance with Financial Procedure Rule 7.4.

5. That a change in approach to delivery of retrofit installation of solar panels and batteries to achieve best value for money following the decision by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero to withhold Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund grant on battery installations be approved, as outlined at paragraphs 11.56 to 11.63 of the report.

6. That the proposed 10 year capital programme for new homes totalling £202.8m, and expenditure of £21.8m in 2026/27 be approved, as detailed in Appendix 4 of the report in accordance with Financial Procedure Rule 7.4.

7. That the financing of the HRA Capital Programme be approved as detailed in Appendix 5 of the report, (noting the planned repayment of borrowing following the 1000 homes programme).

8. That the revenue savings target of £1.13m at Appendix 7 of the report as amended be approved, which was outlined to Cabinet in November 2025 (CAB3523) and includes additional savings as outlined at paragraphs 11.32-11.38 of the report.

9. That the Section 151 Officer be authorised, in consultation with the Strategic Director with responsibility for Housing to approve buybacks of individual former HRA properties sold under the Right to Buy during 2026/27, following positive financial appraisal, utilising the unallocated New Homes budget (see paragraph 11.26 of the report).

10. That subject to the acceptance of the expression of interest to the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) round 4:

a. the Strategic Director with responsibility for Housing be authorised to enter into a revised Memorandum of Understanding with Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government to secure additional LAHF funding.

b. Authority be delegated to the Section 151 Officer to approve capital expenditure (subject to financial appraisal, in accordance with Financial Procedure Rule 7.4) of up to £12m to purchase up to 30 properties between 2026/27 and 2029/30 using the approved HRA unallocated new build budget, to be part-financed by LAHF grant with any balance via prudential borrowing.

c. The Corporate Head – Asset Management and the Strategic Director with responsibility for Housing be authorised to purchase up to 30 properties. (Paragraphs 11.74-11.78 of the report).

11. That the average rent increase for 2026/27 for all affordable, Shared Ownership and social housing of 4.8% be approved, based on the September 2025 CPI figure of 3.8% +1% (Paragraphs 11.6-11.8 of the report).

12. That amendments to HRA tenant service charges in 2026/27 be approved to reflect cost recovery based on 2024/25 actual costs (see paragraphs 11.41 to 11.45 of the report).

13. That it be noted 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 2026 - GENERAL FUND BUDGET 2026/27 (CAB3541 - REVISED)**

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

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

**AMENDMENT** – Moved by Councillor Lee and seconded by Councillor Bailey-Morgan:

Add new Recommendation 6 (d).

£130,000 to establish a two-year fixed-term River Catchment Officer post and associated project costs, to provide strategic leadership and coordinate delivery of work to strengthen river protection and recovery across the district, funded from the Transitional Reserve.

Councillor Lee introduced the Amendment. Following continuation of the debate of the original motion (the recommended minute of Cabinet), a second Amendment was then proposed.

**AMENDMENT** – Moved by Councillor Godfrey and seconded by Councillor Bolton:

Add new Recommendation 6 (d).

A £1m business support budget to provide hospitality venues across the Winchester district with a one off 15% Hospitality Relief for 2026/2027 for properties subject to a business rates increase in 2026/2027 and a further

one off 15% Hospitality Relief for hospitality venues not in receipt of Pub Relief for 2026/2027, with the cost, including £15,000 for scheme administration, to be met from the transitional reserve.

The Mayor then called for an adjournment to the meeting whilst the first Amendment above was circulated in writing and for the groups to informally discuss. The second Amendment above had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

Upon its reconvening, Council proceeded to firstly debate the matters in the first Amendment above (Moved by Councillor Lee and seconded by Councillor Bailey-Morgan).

At conclusion of debate, following the seconder of the Amendment speaking (Councillor Bailey-Morgan - having reserved his right), Councillor Cutler was then invited to exercise his right of reply before Council then voted on the Amendment.

In accordance with legislative requirements on recorded votes at Budget meetings, a recorded vote was taken on the Amendment before Council.

**The following Members voted in favour of the Amendment before Council:**

1. Councillor Liam Bailey-Morgan
2. Councillor Neil Bolton
3. Councillor Caroline Brook
4. Councillor Susan Cook
5. Councillor Patrick Cunningham
6. Councillor Stephen Godfrey
7. Councillor Caroline Horrill
8. Councillor Paula Langford-Smith
9. Councillor Danny Lee
10. Councillor Malcolm Wallace
11. Councillor Jan Warwick
12. Councillor Suzanne White

**The following Members voted against of the Amendment:**

1. Councillor James Batho
2. Councillor Kathleen Becker
3. Councillor Michael Bennett
4. Councillor Adrian Brophy
5. Councillor Chris Chamberlain
6. Councillor Angela Clear
7. Councillor Steve Cramoysan
8. Councillor Neil Cutler
9. Councillor Nathan Eve
10. Councillor Russell Gordon-Smith
11. Councillor Brian Laming
12. Councillor Ritchie Latham
13. Councillor Kelsie Learney

14. Councillor Jonny Morris
15. Councillor Richard Murphy
16. Councillor Jerry Pett
17. Councillor Clare Pinniger
18. Councillor Margot Power
19. Councillor Jane Rutter
20. Councillor Jamie Scott
21. Councillor Anne Small
22. Councillor Lucille Thompson
23. Councillor John Tippet-Cooper
24. Councillor Martin Tod
25. Councillor Chris Westwood
26. Councillor Jonathan Williams

**The following Members abstained from voting:**

1. Councillor Sudhakar Achwal

**The following Members were absent during voting:**

1. Councillor Jackie Porter

**AMENDMENT LOST.**

Following its introduction by the proposer (Councillor Godfrey), Council then proceeded to debate the matters in the second Amendment.

At conclusion of debate, following the seconder of the Amendment speaking (Councillor Bolton - having reserved his right), Councillor Cutler was then invited to exercise his right of reply before Council then voted on the Amendment.

In accordance with legislative requirements on recorded votes at Budget meetings, a recorded vote was taken on the Amendment before Council.

**The following Members voted in favour of the Amendment before Council:**

1. Councillor Neil Bolton
2. Councillor Caroline Brook
3. Councillor Susan Cook
4. Councillor Patrick Cunningham
5. Councillor Stephen Godfrey
6. Councillor Caroline Horrill
7. Councillor Paula Langford-Smith
8. Councillor Jan Warwick

**The following Members voted against of the Amendment:**

1. Councillor Liam Bailey-Morgan
2. Councillor James Batho
3. Councillor Kathleen Becker
4. Councillor Michael Bennett

5. Councillor Adrian Brophy
6. Councillor Chris Chamberlain
7. Councillor Angela Clear
8. Councillor Steve Cramoysan
9. Councillor Neil Cutler
10. Councillor Nathan Eve
11. Councillor Russell Gordon-Smith
12. Councillor Brian Laming
13. Councillor Ritchie Latham
14. Councillor Kelsie Learney
15. Councillor Danny Lee
16. Councillor Jonny Morris
17. Councillor Richard Murphy
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 Anne Small
25. Councillor Lucille Thompson
26. Councillor John Tippet-Cooper
27. Councillor Martin Tod
28. Councillor Malcolm Wallace
29. Councillor Chris Westwood
30. Councillor Suzanne White
31. Councillor Jonathan Williams

**The following Members abstained from voting:**

1. Councillor Sudhakar Achwal

**AMENDMENT LOST.**

Following summing up by Councillor Cutler who was the proposer of the original substantive motion (which was the Recommended Minute of Cabinet), and the seconder (Councillor Tod) then exercising his right to speak, in accordance with legislative requirements on recorded votes at Budget meetings, a recorded vote was first taken regarding Recommendations 1 – 7 of the Recommended Minute of Cabinet.

**The following Members voted in favour Recommendations 1 – 7 of the Recommended Minute of Cabinet:**

1. Councillor Liam Bailey-Morgan
2. Councillor James Batho
3. Councillor Kathleen Becker
4. Councillor Michael Bennett
5. Councillor Adrian Brophy
6. Councillor Chris Chamberlain
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 Richard Murphy
19. Councillor Jerry Pett
20. Councillor Clare Pinniger
21. Councillor Jackie Porter
22. Councillor Margot Power
23. Councillor Jane Rutter
24. Councillor Jamie Scott
25. Councillor Anne Small
26. Councillor Lucille Thompson
27. Councillor John Tippet-Cooper
28. Councillor Martin Tod
29. Councillor Malcolm Wallace
30. Councillor Chris Westwood
31. Councillor Suzanne White
32. Councillor Jonathan Williams

**The following Members voted against Recommendations 1 – 7 of the Recommended Minute of Cabinet:**

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

**The following Members abstained from voting:**

1. Councillor Sudhakar Achwal

**RESOLVED:**

That the recommended minute of Cabinet held 12 February 2026 (Recommendations 1 – 7, as follows) be approved and adopted:

1. That the level of General Fund Budget for 2026/27 be agreed and the summary be recommended as shown in Appendix A of CAB3541, as amended, due to the late change in the Government's local government financial settlement announced by MHCLG on 10 February 2026.

2. That in relation to the Greener Faster Council Plan priority:  
a. a growth of £30,000 be approved to increase the annual Town Account tree maintenance budget as a result of risks associated with the effects of climate change and associated tree disease.

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) be approved, that ensure claimants continue to receive the appropriate level of support after the DWP's increase in Universal Credit rates with effect from 1 April 2026.

4. That in relation to the Efficient and Effective priority:  
a. a growth to the annual expenditure budget of £89,000 be approved for improvements to make the way our residents' contact us is easier and faster.

5. That other service expenditure annual budgets be amended as follows, in response to revised estimates:

- a. Utility budget increased by £150,000 in order to cover the additional forecast utility costs from 2026/27.
- b. An additional budget of £115,000 per annum from 2026/27 for the Corporate Head of Resources.
- c. A growth of £130,000 to reflect the net budget pressure of the migration of the Land Charges service to HM Land Registry.
- d. A net budget saving of £215,000 per annum to reflect changes to forecast employers' pension contributions and rates.

6. That one-off service expenditure budgets be approved as follows:

- a. A £470,000 digital transformation budget, relating to the implementation of improvements to make our residents' digital contact with us easier and faster, with £400,000 funded from the digital transformation reserve and £70,000 funded from the transitional reserve.
- b. A Town Account budget of £15,000 for feasibility work related to speed indicators within the town area, funded by the town reserve.
- c. £1.7m for essential structural and repair works to the Guildhall to maintain this listed civic building (and required prior to further decision making on the future operating model of the Guildhall and Abbey House) funded from Property - Asset Management Reserve, and delegates authority to:
  - i. the Strategic Director to appoint, in accordance with the council's Contract Procedure Rules (CPRs), all necessary consultants to prepare design work for the works required to the Guildhall through a competitive bid process or framework;
  - ii. the Strategic Director to undertake a procurement exercise to obtain bids or use of a framework to appoint a

- contractor(s) for the works required to the Guildhall, in accordance with the council's CPRs;
- iii. the Strategic Director to appoint the relevant contractors and to negotiate and agree contractual heads of terms with the contract appointment; and
  - iv. the Service Lead: Legal to prepare and enter into all relevant agreements, negotiate the contractual agreements and see them to completion to enable the Guildhall works.

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

- a. £2m of the Major Investment Reserve be re-allocated to the Property Reserve to fund maintenance requirements of corporate properties.
- b. £1m from the Major Investment Reserve be re-allocated to the Car Parks Property Reserve to fund maintenance of and investment in parking.
- c. An additional £500,000 per annum be set aside into the Property Reserve, for the maintenance of and investment in operational assets.

In accordance with legislative requirements on recorded votes at Budget meetings, a recorded vote was then taken regarding Recommendations 8– 12 of the Recommended Minute of Cabinet.

**The following Members voted in favour Recommendations 8 – 12 of the Recommended Minute of Cabinet:**

1. Councillor Liam Bailey-Morgan
2. Councillor James Batho
3. Councillor Kathleen Becker
4. Councillor Michael Bennett
5. Councillor Neil Bolton
6. Councillor Adrian Brophy
7. Councillor Chris Chamberlain
8. Councillor Angela Clear
9. Councillor Susan Cook
10. Councillor Steve Cramoysan
11. Councillor Patrick Cunningham
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 Richard Murphy

24. Councillor Jerry Pett
25. Councillor Clare Pinniger
26. Councillor Jackie Porter
27. Councillor Margot Power
28. Councillor Jane Rutter
29. Councillor Jamie Scott
30. Councillor Anne Small
31. Councillor Lucille Thompson
32. Councillor John Tippet-Cooper
33. Councillor Martin Tod
34. Councillor Malcolm Wallace
35. Councillor Jan Warwick
36. Councillor Chris Westwood
37. Councillor Suzanne White
38. Councillor Jonathan Williams

**No Members voted against Recommendations 8 – 12 of the Recommended Minute of Cabinet.**

**The following Members abstained from voting:**

1. Councillor Sudhakar Achwal
2. Councillor Caroline Brook

**RESOLVED:**

That the recommended minute of Cabinet held 12 February 2026 (Recommendations 8 – 12, as follows) be approved and adopted:

8. That the sum of £1,434,779 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 17 and Appendix D of the report.

9. That the Council Tax for the Special Expenses in the Winchester Town area at Band D for 2026/27 be increased by 5% (£4.50) to £94.58.

10. That the surplus balance on the Council Tax Collection Fund for distribution to this Council, calculated in January 2026 of £107,910, be approved.

11. That the level of Council Tax at Band D for City Council services for 2026/27 be increased to £168.49, an increase of £4.83 reflecting an average Council tax increase of 2.95% (the maximum allowed under the referendum limit of 2.99% when combined with the increase to the Special Expenses for the town area).

12. That the carry forward of the balance of the Council Tax Exceptional Hardship Fund in 2025/26 to 2026/27 be approved in order to extend this vital support for those on low income.

**Council Tax for the City of Winchester for the year commencing 1 April 2026.**

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 93 – 99 of the agenda pack.

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

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

**The following Members abstained from voting:**

1. Councillor Sudhakar Achwal

**RESOLVED:**

That the Council Tax for the City of Winchester for the year commencing 1 April 2026 (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 £1,434,779 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) Grants and Vision Delivery (“parish” element);
  - f) Recreation Grounds & Open Spaces (except Abbey Gardens, Riverside Walks, the Weirs and St Giles Hill);
  - g) Neighbourhood Services;
  - h) Public Conveniences
  - i) Maintenance work to Council Owned Bridges
  - j) Night Bus Contribution
  - k) Neighbourhood Plans
  - l) Community Infrastructure
  - m) 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 2026/27 at (a) 56,017.20  
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 at [page 97 of the report pack](#).

3. Calculate that the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2026/27 (excluding Parish Precepts) is £10,873,117.
  
4. That the following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the year 2026/27 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Act:
  - (a) £142,222,053  
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) £126,181,417  
being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act.
  - (c) £16,040,636  
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) £286.35  
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) £6,602,298  
being the aggregate amount of all special items referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act (as per the attached Annex 2 at [page 99 of the report pack](#))
  - (f) £168.49  
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 2026/27, 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)	£94,675,230
Police and Crime Commissioner – Hampshire (PCCH)	£16,270,756
Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority (HFRA)	£5,200,637

<u>Valuation Bands</u>	<u>HCC</u>	<u>PCCH</u>	<u>HFRA</u>
A	1,126.74	193.64	61.89
B	1,314.53	225.91	72.21
C	1,502.32	258.19	82.52
D	1,690.11	290.46	92.84
E	2,065.69	355.01	113.47
F	2,441.27	419.55	134.10
G	2,816.85	484.10	154.73
H	3,380.22	580.92	185.68

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 2026/27 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 2026/27 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 2026 - CAPITAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY 2026 - 36 (CAB3539)**

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 2026 (as follows) be approved and adopted:

1. The Capital Investment Strategy be 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 of the report.

8. **TO CONSIDER AND DETERMINE THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDED MINUTES: CABINET HELD 12 FEBRUARY 2026 - TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2026/27 (CAB3538 - REVISED)**

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 2026 (as follows) be approved and adopted:

1. That the Treasury Management Strategy Statement which includes the Annual Treasury Investment Strategy for 2026/27 (and the remainder of 2025/26) is approved.
2. That authority be 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 be 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. **CHANGES TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIPS**

There were no changes to committee memberships for Council to note.

10. **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 10.45 pm  
(adjourned between 8.10pm and 8.30pm)

The Mayor

## COUNCIL

Tuesday, 24 March 2026

Attendance:

Councillors Present

Achwal S (Mayor)

Gordon-Smith  
Achwal V  
Batho  
Becker  
Bennett  
Bolton  
Brook  
Brophy  
Chamberlain  
Clear  
Cook  
Cramoysan  
Cutler  
Eve  
Godfrey  
Horrill  
Langford-Smith  
Latham  
Learney  
Lee

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

Apologies for Absence:

Councillors Aron, Bailey-Morgan, Cunningham, Laming and Miller

[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 the agenda item due to their role as Hampshire County Councillors.

Councillor Pett declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in respect of the agenda item due to his role as the Council's representative on the South Downs National Park Authority.

However, as there were no material conflicts of interest, they each 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 or a South Downs National Park Authority 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**

1 written question had been received which was heard at the meeting. There was no supplementary question asked. The question received and its response was subsequently set out on the [council's website](#).

As the question related to the main item of business, the Mayor advised that it would be heard immediately after its introduction.

4. **TO CONSIDER AND DETERMINE THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDED MINUTES OF CABINET HELD 18 MARCH 2026 - ADOPTION OF THE WINCHESTER DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN 2040 AND THE PREPARATION OF THE LOCAL PLAN 2044 (CL177 REVISED)**

Councillor Porter (Cabinet Member for Place and the Local Plan) moved that the recommended minute of Cabinet be approved and adopted (seconded by Councillor Tod, Leader and Cabinet Member for Regeneration).

Council noted that a revised version of report CL177 and an extract of the draft minutes of Cabinet held 18 March 2026 had been circulated with supplementary agendas, and the Recommendations within were inclusive of minor changes to those in the original version of report CL177.

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

At conclusion of debate, following the seconder speaking (Councillor Tod - having reserved his right), Councillor Porter was then invited to sum up before Council then voted on the Recommendations before Council.

RESOLVED:

That the recommended minute of Cabinet held 18 March 2026 (Recommendations 1 – 4, as follows) be approved and adopted:

1. That the Inspector's conclusions that the Winchester District Local Plan 2020–2040 is legally compliant and sound, subject to the recommended Main Modifications, are accepted.

2. That the Winchester District Local Plan 2020–2040, incorporating the Inspector's Main Modifications (as amended), Additional Modifications and associated changes to the Policies Map, proceeds to Full Council on 24 March 2026 for adoption in accordance with Regulation 26 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as

amended) and Section 23(2) and (3) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended).

3. That upon adoption of the Winchester District Local Plan 2020–2040, the existing Development Plan Documents (Local Plan Part 1 – Joint Core Strategy, Local Plan Part 2 – Development Management and Site Allocations, and the Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Development Plan Document) are withdrawn as they will be superseded.

4. That authority is delegated to the Corporate Head of Planning and Regulatory Services to make any non-material corrections to the Winchester District Local Plan 2020–2040, including factual updates, grammatical or formatting amendments, prior to publication in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended).

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and concluded at 8.05 pm

The Mayor

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REPORT TITLE: SECOND HOME COUNCIL TAX PREMIUM:

REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER PURSUANT TO SECTION 5 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND HOUSING ACT 1989 AND ENDORSEMENT OF THE COUNCIL'S 100% SECOND HOME COUNCIL TAX PREMIUM.

2 JUNE 2026

CABINET MEMBER: Cllr Neil Cutler, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Transformation

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

WARD(S): ALL

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this paper is for the Monitoring Officer to advise members that whilst making a decision on 27 February 2025 to implement a 100% second home council tax premium, with effect from 1 April 2026, the report to Full Council failed to demonstrate compliance with statutory guidance issued by MHCLG on 1 November 2024 ("the Statutory Guidance" set out at 11.18 below and Appendix 1) relating to a determination made under S11C of the Local Government Finance Act 1992. The Monitoring Officer, therefore, considers it their duty under S5 (2) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 to prepare a report in respect of this omission.

Following the decision taken by Full Council on 27 February 2025, more than one year before bringing the premium into effect (as required by the 1992 Act), the Council advertised notice of the decision in the local press and wrote to owners of affected properties on two occasions in both March and December 2025. Because more than 3 months has lapsed since the decision was made, it is now too late for a third party to challenge the decision to impose the 100% second home premium, which can only be done by way of Judicial Review. There is no other legal mechanism for challenge. As it can no longer be challenged the decision to implement the premium from 1 April 2026, remains valid and legally effective.

This paper also invites members to consider the analysis of the statutory guidance that the Council Tax Team have undertaken and to confirm the decision made by Council on 27 February 2025 to impose a 100% second home council tax premium and to approve the adoption of a 100% second home premium for next year - 2027/2028 - and future years unless and until an alternative determination is made.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Consider the Monitoring Officer's report under S5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.
2. Approve the analysis of the Statutory Guidance at Appendix 1 of this report and confirm the Council's decision of 27 February 2025 to adopt a policy of charging a 100% second home council tax premium with relevant exemptions
3. Approve the adoption of a 100% second home council tax premium for the next year 2027/2028 and future years unless and until an alternative determination is made.

## IMPLICATIONS:

### 1 COUNCIL PLAN OUTCOME

- 1.1 The Council's Monitoring Officer is under a legal duty pursuant to S5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 to report a failure to demonstrate compliance with the Statutory Guidance resulting in a breach of S11C (4) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.
- 1.2 The second home council tax premium as with all council tax income underpins delivery of all the priorities in the Council Plan and all core services provided across the district of Winchester.

### 2 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 2.1 The 100% second home premium on council tax raises an additional £450,000 per annum, of which £32,000 is retained by Winchester City Council and the remaining £418,000 is split between the other preceptors (Hampshire County Council, the Police and Crime Commissioner and Hampshire Fire and Rescue).
- 2.2 At the point of publication of this report, the total second homes premium collected since its introduction on 1 April 2026 has been £136,919, of which £9,789 is for retention by Winchester City Council.

### 3 LEGAL AND PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 S5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 provides that it shall be the duty of the Monitoring Officer, if it at any time it appears to him that any proposal, decision or omission by the authority has given rise to or is likely to or would give rise to a contravention of any enactment or rule of law or of any code of practice made or approved by or under any enactment to prepare a report to the authority with respect to that decision.
- 3.2 In accordance with the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, the Monitoring Officer has consulted with the Head of Paid Service and the Section 151 Officer. Section 5 requires a Full Council meeting to be convened within 21 days of this report being issued.
- 3.3 External legal advice has been sought from Kings Counsel and members have been briefed on this prior to publication of this paper at an all-member briefing.
- 3.4 The decision to implement a 100% second home council tax premium with effect from 1 April 2026 can no longer be challenged by Judicial Review as it is now far too late to bring such a challenge.

#### 4 WORKFORCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 If Council approves the recommendations in this report then there are no workforce implications associated with it.

#### 5 PROPERTY AND ASSET IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 None

#### 6 CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

- 6.1 Prior to seeking external advice, the Monitoring Officer discussed the matter with the statutory officer group consisting of the Head of Paid Service, Section 151 Officer and Monitoring Officer. This report has been shared with the statutory officer group prior to publication.
- 6.2 The Monitoring Officer has provided an all-member briefing prior to publication of this report.
- 6.3 Affected council tax payers were advised in writing on 14 March 2025 and again on 8 December 2025 of the decision to impose the second home council tax premium on 27 February 2025.
- 6.4 The decision to impose the premium was advertised in the Mid Hampshire Observer on 27 February 2025 and it was also reported in an online article in the Hampshire Chronicle on 4 March 2025.

#### 7 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1 No specific implications arising from this report.

#### 8 PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

None

#### 9 DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 9.1 In accordance with our existing Data Protection Policy, The Council will continue to regard the lawful and correct treatment of personal information as very important, in order to maintain confidence between us and the people we deal with. We ensure that the Council treats personal information lawfully and correctly, with due regard to the rights and freedoms of individuals.

#### 10 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 10.1 The legal position is set out elsewhere in this report. If Council approves the recommendations set out in the report, the prospect of successful legal challenge to the Council's second home council tax premium is considered low.

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>
Financial Exposure  Exposure to Challenge	Issue a S5 report and confirm the Council's decision to implement a second home council tax premium	The Council's decision to implement this charge is now time barred from a Judicial Review claim. The action to be taken under this report preserves the second home council tax premium policy.
Local Government Reorganisation	This decision will ensure that the second home premium will be in place for the remaining lifespan of Winchester City Council.	As a result of this premium having been implemented by the Council the new unitary authority will be able to continue to implement this policy for the Winchester district without giving the 1 year notice period required by the 1992 Act on first implementation.

## 11 SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

- 11.1 The Local Government Finance Act 1992 was amended with effect from December 2023 by the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 to give local authorities in England the discretionary power to implement a second home council tax premium of up to 100% from 1 April 2025.
- 11.2 This provision was coupled with a statutory requirement to make the determination at least one year before the beginning of the financial year to which it relates, to have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State and to advertise the decision within 21 days in a local newspaper.
- 11.3 On 1 November 2024, some 10 months after local authorities were given the power to implement the second homes premium, the Statutory Guidance was published, with limited publicity. By this time many local authorities had already implemented a second homes council tax premium without any legal requirement to consider the as yet unpublished Statutory Guidance.
- 11.4 The Council was considering its position as to whether to introduce a second homes council tax premium during 2024 and prepared a draft budget paper in

late 2024 which included the proposed determination of a 100% premium with effect from 1 April 2026 (see the report to Full Council at paragraph 21).

- 11.5 At a meeting of Full Council on 27 February 2025 the Council approved the General Fund budget for 2025/26 and in addition resolved: *“That a Second Home Premium for Council Tax which will take effect from 1 April 2026 and the adoption of exceptions (listed at Appendix F) in respect of properties included in the Council Tax Premium schemes be approved”*.
- 11.6 Notice of the Decision was published in the Mid-Hampshire Observer on the same day and it was also referred to in an online article in the Hampshire Chronicle dated 4 March 2025.
- 11.7 The Decision to charge a 100% second home premium was made pursuant to s.11C of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (“LGFA 1992”).
- 11.8 On 14 March 2025 the Council issued Council Tax bills for 2025/26. With the bills sent to owners of dwellings recorded as second homes the Council also included a letter which informed them that the second home premium would take effect from 1 April 2026 and of their right to apply for an exemption.
- 11.9 On 8 December 2025 the Council sent a further letter to owners of dwellings recorded as second homes which again informed them about the second home council tax premium and of their right to apply for an exemption.
- 11.10 In February 2026 the Council received a letter from 2 affected property owners challenging its decision to impose the second home premium and arguing that it was inconsistent with the legislative purpose, contrary to statutory guidance, irrational and disproportionate, contrary to article 1 of protocol 1 to the European Convention on Human Rights.
- 11.11 In taking the decision to impose the premium, the Council failed to demonstrate clearly in the decision papers before Full Council on 27 February 2025 that it had undertaken the reasoning process and analysis required to comply with the Statutory Guidance and consequently contravened S11C (4) of the LGFA 1992.
- 11.12 S66 of the LGFA 1992 provides that a determination under S11C cannot be challenged other than by an application for judicial review. An application for Judicial Review usually has to be made within 3 months of making the decision giving rise to the challenge.
- 11.13 Three months from the date of the decision was 27 May 2025. We are now approaching the anniversary of that date. Further, council tax bills for 2026/27 were issued on or about 12 March 2026.
- 11.14 There is now no realistic prospect of an affected property owner (or anyone else with a sufficient interest) being granted permission by the High Court to

bring a Judicial Review claim or obtaining a quashing order in respect of the decision. The decision, therefore, remains legally binding.

- 11.15 Nevertheless the Council's Monitoring Officer is obliged to prepare and issue a report under s.5 LGHA 1989 in respect of the decision.
- 11.16 Issuing this report to members has had the effect of suspending further implementation of the decision until Full Council considers this report and determines the recommendations in it.
- 11.17 Council is invited to confirm the decision to implement a 100% second home council tax premium with effect from 1 April 2026 and to approve the analysis of the Statutory Guidance when determining adoption of a 100% second homes council tax premium for 2027/28 and subsequent years.
- 11.18 The relevant sections of the Statutory Guidance published by MHCLG on 1 November 2024 are set out below:

*Councils have the discretion whether to apply the premium in their local areas and will determine how best to use this in combination with other measures to bring dwellings back into use or how the additional flexibilities may be used to improve the sustainability of local services.*

*The decision to make a determination under section 11B and 11C of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 is for councils to make. However, the government expects councils to have due consideration of local circumstances.*

*Councils can choose to apply either or both of the council tax premiums; they can also choose to apply the premium to parts of the local area rather than to the whole of their local area. This flexibility allows councils to tailor the premiums to best address local concerns or priorities.*

*Councils should carefully consider whether to charge a premium and make an assessment of possible impacts, including on the local population, its communities, and the local economy. Examples of factors that councils may wish to consider are set out below. Whilst some factors will be specific to either long-term empty dwellings or second homes, others will be common to both.*

*The list is not exhaustive, and councils will want to consider all factors they think are relevant before making a decision.*

- *numbers and proportion of long-term empty dwellings and/or second homes in the local area*
- *circumstances which may affect whether the dwelling can be used as a main residence*
- *potential impact on local economies and the tourism industry*
- *potential impact on the local community*
- *potential impact on local services*

- *other measures that are available to councils to help bring empty dwellings back into use*

*Councils should consider the reasons why dwellings are unoccupied in deciding whether they want such dwellings to be included in their determination. Examples of issues councils may want to take account of in making their determination include:*

- *on average, how long dwellings in their area are available for sale or rent before completion/occupation*
- *the average price/rent in the local area*
- *whether there are circumstances which make the dwelling unsuitable for use as main residence*
- *whether there are circumstances which make the dwelling difficult to sell/let*
- *whether the dwelling is empty so that improvements can be made between sale/let*

11.19 An analysis of how the Council considers that it complies with the 1992 Act and the Statutory Guidance in implementing the second home council tax premium is set out at Appendix 1 to this report.

11.20 In making this report, I am obliged to consult with the S151 (Chief Finance officer) and the Head of Paid Service, and I can confirm to members that I have done this.

## 12 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

12.1 Revoke the second homes council tax premium in respect of 2026/27. If this option is legally permissible despite the terms of section 11C (6) of the LGFA 1992. This is not recommended as it will result in adjustments to council tax accounts to reflect reductions totalling £136,919.02 (where £9,789.71 relates to Winchester City Council) of lost council tax to date and a total of £450,000 over the whole financial year.

12.2 Discontinue the second homes council tax premium with effect from 2027/28. This is not recommended as the analysis of the Statutory Guidance set out below results in a recommendation to adopt a 100% second home council tax premium for 2027/28 and subsequent years.

### BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:-

[CAB3494 - General Fund Budget 2025/26](#)

[CAB3494 – Appendix A MTFP](#)

[CAB3494 – Appendix B Budget Proposals](#)

[CAB3494 – Appendix C Earmarked Reserves update](#)

[CAB3494 – Appendix D WTA](#)

[CAB3494 – Appendix E CTR Income Bands 25 26](#)

[CAB3494 – Appendix F Empty and Second Home Premium Exceptions](#)

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 – Analysis of Legislation and Statutory Guidance

Appendix 1**Matters for consideration for the Council Tax Second Home Premium****Part 1 Legislation – Local Government Finance Act 1992, section 11C:**

Higher amount for dwellings occupied periodically: England

(1)(b) the amount of council tax payable in respect of that dwelling and that day is increased by such percentage of not more than 100 as it may specify in the determination.

Considered in guidance at point 1. below

(2) The conditions are—

- (a) there is no resident of the dwelling, and
- (b) the dwelling is substantially furnished.

These points detail the class of property as a second home and are considered when assessing liability for council tax on a case-by-case basis.

(3) A billing authority's first determination under this section must be made at least one year before the beginning of the financial year to which it relates.

The determination was introduced by Cabinet on 12th February 2025; and approved by Full Council on 27th February 2025.

(4) In exercising its functions under this section, a billing authority must have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

See consideration in Part 2 below.

(6) A billing authority may make a determination varying or revoking a determination under this section for a financial year, but only before the beginning of the year.

The scheme was implemented with effect from 1st April 2026, and no variations have been made to the scheme.

(7) Where a billing authority makes a determination under this section it must publish a notice of the determination in at least one newspaper circulating in the area.

(8) The notice must be published before the end of the period of 21 days beginning with the date of the determination.

A notice of the determination was published in the Mid Hants Observer on 14th March 2025.

**Part 2 Guidance issued by the Secretary of State in accordance with the Local Government Finance Act 1992 Section 11C (4):**

Guidance on the implementation of the council tax premiums on long-term empty homes and second homes

1.	Councils have the discretion to decide whether to introduce a premium in their local area or parts of the area on long-term empty homes and second homes. They also have the discretion to decide on the level of the premium, up to the maximum statutory threshold [100%].
Consideration	<p>Why 100% - not less?</p> <p>The premium functions as a charge, which increases the cost for those council taxpayers who are keeping a property under-used, in order to change that behaviour. The goals are to encourage property being brought into use as a main residence and to improve sustainability of local services. Regardless of the number of second homes the purpose and mechanism of the charge are the same, so the percentage does not need to vary in relation to the scale of the issue.</p> <p>Relevant consideration include whether the premium is set at a level which is likely to be effective and proportionate in relation to its aims.</p>
Recommendation	The maximum 100% applies.
2.	Relevant factors the Council may want to consider
a.	Number and proportion of second homes in the local area

Consideration	<p>As at the latest available data, the Council has identified 281 dwellings classed as second homes (excluding statutory exceptions) out of 59,796 council tax dwellings. This represents 0.47% of all properties.</p> <p>While this proportion is small in numerical terms, even relatively low absolute numbers can have a pronounced localised impact, particularly in specific communities or neighbourhoods where second homes are clustered. In such areas, the effect on housing availability, community cohesion and local service demand can be disproportionately high.</p> <p>In addition, second homes form part of the wider context of under-occupied or intermittently occupied dwellings, limiting the effective supply of homes available for permanent residents.</p> <p>The local context is that residential sale prices and rents in Winchester are high. According to the ONS, the average house price in February 2026 was £461,000 and the average rent in March 2026 was £1,498.</p>
b.	Circumstances which may affect the use of a dwelling as a main residence
Consideration	<p>Factors for consideration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment and Economic Factors</li> <li>• Accessibility and Suitability</li> <li>• Location and Connectivity</li> <li>• Planning or Legal Restrictions</li> <li>• Personal and Family Circumstances</li> </ul>
c.	Potential impact on local economies and the tourism industry
Consideration	<p>The application of a second homes premium may offer several economic benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encouraging conversion of second homes into permanent residences, supporting a more resilient year-round economy</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helping to relieve housing affordability pressures, allowing local workers to live closer to employment opportunities</li> <li>• Generating additional Council Tax revenue that can be reinvested in local services and communities</li> </ul> <p>While the tourism sector benefits from visitor accommodation, the premium may encourage a more balanced housing mix without preventing short-term visitation.</p>
d.	Potential impact on the local community
Consideration	<p>A second home premium has the potential to influence community dynamics in several ways:</p> <p><u>Improved Community Stability</u> An increase in permanent residents can strengthen:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community networks and volunteering</li> <li>• Electoral participation</li> <li>• Viability of schools, clubs and community groups</li> </ul> <p><u>Reduced “Hollowing Out” of Communities</u> In areas with seasonal occupancy, prolonged periods of low population can reduce social cohesion and local activity. Encouraging year-round occupation may help sustain vibrant communities throughout the year.</p> <p><u>Risk of Perceived Unfairness</u> Some owners may perceive the premium as punitive, particularly where properties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have been family-owned for generations</li> <li>• are difficult to occupy throughout the year due to legitimate constraints</li> </ul> <p><u>Demographic Balance</u> Improved availability of homes for permanent occupation may help retain younger households and working-age residents, supporting long-term demographic sustainability.</p>
e.	Potential impact on local services
Consideration	<p>Local services (like council services, transport, health etc) may be affected in a range of ways:</p> <p><u>Increased Demand for Services</u> A rise in full-time residents may increase demand for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Waste and recycling services</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education provision</li> <li>• Social care and health services</li> <li>• Transport and highway maintenance</li> </ul> <p><u>More Predictable Service Planning</u> A more stable resident population allows the Council and its partners to plan and fund services more effectively and efficiently.</p> <p><u>Improved Funding Position</u> Additional revenue generated through the second homes premium may contribute to sustaining or improving services, particularly in the context of ongoing budget pressures.</p> <p><u>Reduction in Seasonal Pressures</u> In some areas, seasonal population fluctuations place short-term strain on services such as waste collection, parking and emergency response. Greater year-round occupancy may smooth these peaks and troughs.</p>
f.	Other measures that are available to councils to help bring dwellings back into use
Consideration	<p>The second homes premium sits alongside other powers and initiatives available to the Council, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Council Tax Empty Homes Premium</b> This is already in place and has been since 2019. It currently applies to dwellings that have been unoccupied and unfurnished for one year or more.</li> <li>• <b>Empty Dwelling Management Orders (EDMOs)</b> Allowing the Council to take temporary control of long-term empty properties to bring them back into residential use.</li> <li>• <b>Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPOs)</b> These require a compelling case in the public interest.</li> <li>• <b>Renovation Grants and Loans</b> Financial assistance to help owners address disrepair or improve habitability.</li> <li>• <b>Leasing Schemes</b> Arrangements with housing associations or the Council leasing properties for temporary or affordable housing purposes.</li> <li>• <b>Advice and Engagement Initiatives</b> Support from dedicated officers working with owners to overcome barriers to occupation.</li> </ul>
3.	Councils should consider the reasons why dwellings are unoccupied in deciding whether they want such dwellings to be

	included in their determination. Examples of issues councils may want to take account of in making their determination include:
Consideration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• on average, how long dwellings in their area are available for sale or rent before completion/occupation</li> <li>• the average price/rent in the local area</li> <li>• whether there are circumstances which make the dwelling unsuitable for use as main residence</li> <li>• whether there are circumstances which make the dwelling difficult to sell/let</li> <li>• whether the dwelling is empty so that improvements can be made between sale/let</li> <li>• are mandatory exceptions sufficient</li> </ul> <p>Mandatory exemption class G exempts dwellings being actively marketed for sale and class H exempts dwellings being actively marketed for let, in each case subject to a time limit of 12 months.</p> <p>Mandatory exemption class E exempts owners residing in job-related armed forces accommodation; class F exempts annexes to the main dwelling; class J exempts job-related dwellings; and class L exempts seasonal homes where year-round occupation is legally prohibited.</p> <p>As stated above, local house prices and rents are high. In general, it is reasonable to expect an owner to be able to sell or rent a residential property in Winchester within 12 months. As such, in general it is reasonable to view second home status to be a matter of choice for the owner.</p> <p>Viewed overall in the context of local housing conditions, the mandatory exemptions are considered to be sufficient.</p>
4.	Councils should consider how it might engage and consult with key stakeholders, including the local electorate and second homeowners, before taking a decision to charge a premium.
Consideration	<p>The following action was taken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the proposal was set out in the council's budget report which was published ahead of the Scrutiny Committee, Cabinet and Full Council meetings in February 2025.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a written notification was issued with the annual council tax bill in March 2025, shortly after the decision to introduce the premium,</li> <li>• notification was placed on the Council’s website in March 2025</li> <li>• a public notification was placed in the Mid-Hampshire Observer in March 2025 confirming the Council’s decision to introduce the premium,</li> <li>• a further written notification was issued, as a reminder, in December 2025,</li> <li>• reference to the new incoming premium was included in all annual council tax bills in March 2026</li> </ul>
5.	Consider how this [the introduction of the second home premium] is communicated, particularly to those who might be directly affected. Councils should also consider how they advise or inform those who may be affected but may reside outside the local area.
	<p>The following action was taken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a written notification was issued with the annual council tax bill in March 2025, shortly after the decision to introduce the premium,</li> <li>• notification was placed on the Council’s website in March 2025</li> <li>• a public notification was placed in the Mid-Hampshire Observer in March 2025 confirming the council’s decision to introduce the premium,</li> <li>• a further written notification was issued, as a reminder, in December 2025,</li> <li>• reference to the new incoming premium was included in all annual council tax bills in March 2026</li> </ul>

### Part 3 Summary

Although second homes account for 0.47% of the district’s total housing stock, their impact should not be viewed solely in numerical terms. Second homes form a significant component of under-occupied housing and can contribute to reduced housing availability.

In areas facing housing affordability pressures and limited supply, even small numbers of non-permanently occupied dwellings can have a meaningful effect and this is the case in Winchester.

The second home premium therefore represents a proportionate policy tool, aimed at influencing behaviour, improving effective housing supply, and supporting sustainable communities, rather than penalising second home ownership in itself.

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REPORT TITLE: WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL CONSTITUTION UPDATES 2026  
AND EXTENSION TO APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSONS

2 JUNE 2026

REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

Contact Officer: GARETH JOHN Tel No: 01962 848 135 Email:  
gjohn@winchester.gov.uk

WARD(S): ALL

PURPOSE

The Winchester City Council Constitution requires the Monitoring Officer to monitor and review the operation of the Constitution to ensure that its aims, principles and requirements are given full effect.

Having undertaken periodic reviews over the previous 12 months, updates have been made to the Constitution and these are being reported to Full Council for noting in accordance with Article 15.

In addition, the report also asks Full Council to note the Monitoring Officer's approval of an extension to the term of the appointment of the council's three Independent Persons for two further years.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Council is asked to note the updates and amendments to the council's Constitution made by the Monitoring Officer.
2. Council is asked to note the Monitoring Officer's approval of an extension to the term of the appointment of the council's three Independent Persons for two further years.

## IMPLICATIONS:

### 1 COUNCIL PLAN OUTCOME

#### 1.1 KEY PROPOSALS FOR CHANGE

The Monitoring Officer has undertaken a review of its Constitution to ensure that it is providing a framework for effective and lawful decision making which is transparent, accountable and encourages community involvement. In accordance with Article 15 of the Constitution, it is a requirement that any updates are reported to Full Council on an annual basis for noting.

Extension to the term of the appointment of the council's three Independent Persons provides continuity to the council's standards /code of conduct arrangements throughout the period of local government reorganisation.

### 2 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

2.1 As part of this review the contract procedure rules have been cross checked against both current best practice and legislation and have been updated accordingly – see also legal and procurement implications.

2.2 There are no ongoing financial implications, other than the annual allowance paid to each of the three Independent Persons.

### 3 LEGAL AND PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS

3.1 The Council has a legal duty, under section 9P of the Local Government Act 2000 (LGA 2000), to publish an up-to-date Constitution and keep it up to date with any necessary changes.

3.2 Section 9P of the LGA 2000 states that the Constitution must contain:

- a. The standing orders/procedure rules;
- b. The Members' Code of Conduct;
- c. Such information as the Secretary of State may direct; and
- d. Such other information (if any) as the Council considers appropriate.

3.3 It is further stated that Constitutions must be available for public inspection at all reasonable hours and supplied to anyone who requests a copy on payment of a reasonable fee. The Council's Constitution is available on the [Council's website](#).

### 4 WORKFORCE IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no workforce implications in this report.

## 5 PROPERTY AND ASSET IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no property or asset implications in this report.

## 6 CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

6.1 The amendments made by the Monitoring Officer under their delegations set out in Article 15 of the constitution have been made, as required, in consultation with the Chief Executive.

## 7 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

7.1 There are no environmental considerations in this report.

## 8 PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

8.1 The Constitution is reviewed generally to ensure that the format is easily accessible. This is an important step in ensuring that access to the democratic process is equitable.

8.2 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has not been completed as it is not in scope for these minimal updates.

## 9 DATA PROTECTION IMPACT

9.1 A Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA) has not been completed because there are no identifiable risks/issues to the rights and freedoms of natural persons.

## 10 RISK MANAGEMENT

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>
<u>Financial Exposure</u> Changes to UK Public Procurement Thresholds came into force on 1 January 2026.	Most thresholds have been slightly reduced from the levels set two years ago. Updates have been made in Part 4.7 of the Constitution (Contract Procedure Rules), e.g. to ensure compliance and minimise exposure that could have financial implications.	A compliant, clear Constitution can enhance the reputation of the council by being clear, open and transparent about its financial decision making and how money can be spent and by whom – much of this centres around procurement activity and the councils contract procedure rules.
<u>Exposure to challenge</u> The Constitution must adhere to legislation otherwise the Council	The proposed Constitution updates adhere to legislation.	Demonstrates responsiveness to revised procurement thresholds

could be subject to legal challenges and claims for costs.		ensuring updates are made at the right time.
<u>Innovation</u> Much of what can comprise a Constitution is set down in legislation. However, the review has sought to continually organise this in such a way as to make it workable and appropriate for the City Council. There is not considered to be a risk in innovation.		
<u>Reputation</u> If the Council does not have an appropriate decision-making framework in place, and cannot make timely decisions or take appropriate actions, the Council's reputation will be compromised.	The proposed Constitution has provided for appropriate decision making	A compliant, clear Constitution can enhance the reputation of the council by being clear, open and transparent.
<u>Property</u> None	None	None
<u>Community Support</u> An up to date Constitution should enable residents and other stakeholders to engage with the decision-making process in clear and accessible ways.	Commitment remains to ensuring the decision making processes are clear and transparent in the new constitution.	Good access to decision making can enhance the reputation of the council.
<u>Timescales</u> This is the annual update to Full Council, as changes have been made by the Monitoring Officer	The proposals will be reported to Full Council at its next available meeting in order for the improvements to come into effect as soon as possible.	
<u>Project capacity</u> None	None	None

<u>Local Government Reorganisation</u>	The updates adhere to legislation and/or correct and improve existing areas of the council's Constitution.	A compliant, clear Constitution will positively support preparation for transition to the new unitary authority.
Other - None	None	None

## 11 SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

11.1 In Article 15 at 15.3 the constitution says;

- a) Changes to this Constitution will only be approved at a meeting of the Full Council after consideration of any proposals by the Monitoring Officer save that there is set out below an exception to this requirement.
- b) A vote at Full Council to change the Constitution should be passed by a simple majority of those present and voting.
- c) The Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Chief Executive, has delegated authority to amend any part of the Constitution where such amendment is:
  - (i) required to be made to comply with any legislative provisions; or
  - (ii) make minor amendments to comply with changes to staffing structures, job descriptions or changes in terminology; or
  - (iii) required to remove any inconsistency or ambiguity.

11.2 Implementation of such amendments will be decided by the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Chief Executive and shall come into force with immediate effect. Such amendments shall be reported to Full Council on an annual basis.

11.3 This report is therefore in response to the annual requirement that amendments made by the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Chief Executive, be reported. The changes made by the Monitoring Officer come under (i), (ii) and (iii) above and Appendix 1 lists the majority of these with explanatory text outlining the purpose of the amendments. For ease of reference, the changes to the Audit & Governance Committee terms of references are included as Appendix 2.

### **UK Public Procurement Thresholds**

11.4 Changes to UK Public Procurement Thresholds came into force on 1 January 2026. Most thresholds have been slightly reduced from the levels set two years ago. Accordingly, minor changes were required to be made in Part 4.7

of the Constitution (Contract Procedure Rules) and these are set out in Appendix 1.

### **Independent Persons**

- 11.5 Full Council appointed three Independent Persons (IPs) at its meeting on 16 July 2024 (report CL171 refers). The report stipulates that “*the term of the appointments being for two years with one extension allowed of up to two further years.*”
- 11.6 This will mean that their initial 2 years term will be up in July this year. The Monitoring Officer has contacted them, and they have each confirmed that they would be pleased to continue to support the council.

### **CIPFA Code of Practice for the Governance Internal Audit**

- 11.7 At Its meeting on 5 March 2026, as part of its consideration of the Governance Monitoring (Report AG182 refers), the Audit and Governance Committee agreed to grant delegated authority to the Director of Legal to adopt revised terms of reference for the Committee. This was in response to the CIPFA Code of Practice for the Governance Internal Audit.
- 11.8 Arising from the assessment, there were two requirements where the council’s existing arrangements achieve partial compliance. To achieve full compliance, the council was recommended to review and update the Terms of Reference for the Audit and Governance Committee in accordance with the CIPFA model terms of reference for an Audit Committee and produce an annual report on the Committee’s activities.
- 11.9 The Committee agreed to proposals and Appendix 2a and 2b to this report sets out, for information, the changes made.

### **12 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

- 12.1 No other options have been considered in this instance as these updates and amends have been made by the Monitoring Officer in compliance with their duties.

### **13 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

[Link to constitution](#)

### **APPENDICES:**

Appendix 1 – Updates to Constitution

Appendix 2a – Audit and Governance Committee *previous* terms of reference

Appendix 2b - Audit and Governance Committee *amended* terms of reference

## Appendix 1 – Updates to Constitution

Reference	Details	Reason
<p><b>Part 3.3</b> - The Regulatory Committees and Other Non-Executive Decision Making Committees, page 71</p>	<p>New para 1.10 added:</p> <p>1.10 Members appointed to the Planning Committee and the Joint West of Waterlooville Major Development Area (MDA) Planning Committee will be required to undertake training on the functions and responsibilities of the Committees.</p>	<p>Members appointed to the Licensing and Regulation Committee <i>are required to undertake mandatory training on the functions and responsibilities of the Committee and its Sub-Committees etc.</i> (see paras 2.5 and 2.8, page 70 &amp; 71)</p> <p>The same requirement is necessary for those members appointed to the Planning Committee and Joint West of Waterlooville Major Development Area (MDA) Planning Committee.</p>
<p><b>Part 4.1</b> - Council Meeting Procedure Rules – para 15.3 (a) page 107 and paras 19.1 (b) and 19.4 (a), pages 110 and 111</p>	<p>To provide additional clarity on deadlines for submission of Motions and Questions for Full Council meetings.</p>	<p>Motions and Questions must be submitted by 10am on 5<sup>th</sup> working day (Questions) or 10<sup>th</sup> working day (Motions) before the day of the Full Council Meeting.</p>
<p><b>Part 4.3</b> - Overview and Scrutiny Committee Procedure Rules, page 123</p>	<p>Change para 3.2 to read:</p> <p>In order to maintain public confidence and to increase the effectiveness of the scrutiny function, there</p>	<p>To provide clarity that a former cabinet member is able to be appointed as a member of a Policy Committee.</p>

	will be a clear “firebreak” period between a person ceasing to be a Member of the Cabinet and then becoming <b>involved in the overview and scrutiny function a member of the Scrutiny Committee.</b>	
<b>Part 4.4</b> - Meaning of exempt information - para 8.4, page 137	Corrections to formatting.	Corrections to formatting made so that para 8.4 now accurately presents required information.
<b>Part 4.4</b> – Access to Information Procedure Rules, page 138	Correction – missing text.  Para 17.1, c. Add words to end of sentence as follows “Five working days have elapsed following the day on which the Monitoring Officer made a <b>copy of the notice available for inspection.</b> ”	Typographical error.
<b>Part 4.7</b> - Contract Procedure Rules – minor changes, page 170	Para 11.1 - Change ‘Service Lead – Legal’ to “Section 151 Officer”	Typographical error.

<p><b>Part 4.7 - Contract Procedure Rules – minor changes, page 171</b></p>	<p>Para 8.10 – delete at the end of para - “...in Part 5 of this Constitution providing such advice.” Repeated twice (typographical error)</p>	<p>Typographical error.</p>						
<p><b>Part 4.7 - Contract Procedure Rules – updates, page 178 – 179</b></p>	<p>Para 16 - Procurement Thresholds (TABLE 1) – updates required to section D of Table 1</p>	<p>Changes required to figures within section D, to have regard to updates to UK Public Procurement Thresholds.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="687 779 1374 1973"> <tr> <td data-bbox="687 779 772 1552"> <p>D</p> </td> <td data-bbox="772 779 1011 1552"> <p>Over the UK Public Procurement Thresholds</p> <p>UK Public Procurement Thresholds effective from 1 January 2026<sup>4</sup> are calculated <del>incl</del> VAT:</p> <p>Works Contracts: £5,193,000<del>372,609</del></p> <p>(Based on 20% VAT this figure is £4,327,447,500<del>174</del> ex VAT)</p> <p>Goods Contracts: - £207,710,004,904</p> <p>(Based on 20% VAT this figure is £1739,091<del>87</del> ex VAT)</p> <p>Services Contracts: £20744,710.00<del>904</del></p> </td> <td data-bbox="1011 779 1374 1552"> <p>Where the value exceeds the UK Public Procurement Thresholds, the procurement must be undertaken with the Procurement Team and in accordance with one of the following procedures as defined by the relevant legislation:</p> <p>Open Competitive Flexible</p> <p>The Service Lead may select the Open or Competitive Flexible Procedure and shall determine the evaluation criteria and model (based on either price or most advantageous tender, CPR35) and obtain any necessary approval prior to inviting tenders in accordance with CPR31 and <u>CPR 35</u>.</p> <p>Excerpt for Concession Contracts, use of a suitable framework agreement, DPS or DM is permitted in accordance with its terms and CPR 14 or 15.</p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="687 1552 772 1973"></td> <td data-bbox="772 1552 1011 1973"> <p>(Based on 20% VAT this figure is £1739,091<del>87</del> ex VAT)</p> <p>Light Touch Contracts: £663,540</p> <p>(Based on 20% VAT this figure is £ 552,950 ex VAT)</p> <p>Concession Contracts: £5,193<del>372,000</del>609</p> <p>(Based on 20% VAT this figure is £4,327<del>447,500</del>174 ex VAT)</p> </td> <td data-bbox="1011 1552 1374 1973"></td> </tr> </table>	<p>D</p>	<p>Over the UK Public Procurement Thresholds</p> <p>UK Public Procurement Thresholds effective from 1 January 2026<sup>4</sup> are calculated <del>incl</del> VAT:</p> <p>Works Contracts: £5,193,000<del>372,609</del></p> <p>(Based on 20% VAT this figure is £4,327,447,500<del>174</del> ex VAT)</p> <p>Goods Contracts: - £207,710,004,904</p> <p>(Based on 20% VAT this figure is £1739,091<del>87</del> ex VAT)</p> <p>Services Contracts: £20744,710.00<del>904</del></p>	<p>Where the value exceeds the UK Public Procurement Thresholds, the procurement must be undertaken with the Procurement Team and in accordance with one of the following procedures as defined by the relevant legislation:</p> <p>Open Competitive Flexible</p> <p>The Service Lead may select the Open or Competitive Flexible Procedure and shall determine the evaluation criteria and model (based on either price or most advantageous tender, CPR35) and obtain any necessary approval prior to inviting tenders in accordance with CPR31 and <u>CPR 35</u>.</p> <p>Excerpt for Concession Contracts, use of a suitable framework agreement, DPS or DM is permitted in accordance with its terms and CPR 14 or 15.</p>		<p>(Based on 20% VAT this figure is £1739,091<del>87</del> ex VAT)</p> <p>Light Touch Contracts: £663,540</p> <p>(Based on 20% VAT this figure is £ 552,950 ex VAT)</p> <p>Concession Contracts: £5,193<del>372,000</del>609</p> <p>(Based on 20% VAT this figure is £4,327<del>447,500</del>174 ex VAT)</p>	
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<p><b>Part 4.7 - Contract Procedure Rules – minor changes, page 196</b></p>	<p>Para 52.1(d) – delete para “Professional services, Such as Counsel, are required urgently.”</p>	<p>Para 52.1(d) – delete reference as Counsel is exempt under PA23</p>
<p><b>Part 4.7 - Contract Procedure Rules – minor changes, page 197</b></p>	<p>Para 52.2 – The text in the table under ‘Contract Value’ should refer to 52.1 and as ‘d’ has been removed, this needs to reference 52.1 (d) and (e) (<i>not 50.1</i>)</p>	<p>Change required to have regard to deletion of Para 52.1(d) (see above), in addition to the typographical error of ‘50.1’.</p>
<p><b>Part 6 - Members’ Allowance Scheme, pages 253 – 254</b></p>	<p>Updates to Table at Schedule 2 – “Amounts Currently Paid for Each Duty”</p>	<p>Figures updated in accordance with agreed indexation in the Members’ Allowances scheme. Figures currently shown are those paid with effect from 1 April 2025.</p>

## Appendix 2a -

### **Audit and Governance Committee – PREVIOUS terms of reference**

#### **1.1 Terms of Reference**

The Committee will have the following terms of reference relating to audit, governance and human resources functions.

#### **1.2 Audit**

- a Act as the Council's Audit Committee for internal and external audit.
- b Agree and oversee the Council's Internal Audit Plan and monitor progress against this Plan.
- c Receive, and consider the work of the external auditor.
- d Ensure that there are effective relationships between external and internal audit, inspection agencies and other relevant bodies, and that the value of the audit process is actively promoted.
- e Overview the Council's risk management arrangements to provide independent assurance of the adequacy of the risk management framework.
- f Seek assurance that action is being taken on risk-related issues identified by auditors and inspectors.
- g Approve the Governance and Assurance Statements, Statement of Accounts and anti-fraud and anti-corruption arrangements.
- h To notify, report or recommend to Cabinet and Council as appropriate.
- i Have continued due regard for all conduct and governance requirements that include the CIPFA (Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy) guidance.
- j To review, monitor and consider reports from the Section 151 Officer on Treasury management, functions and activities.

#### **1.3 Governance functions**

- a. Promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Councillors and any co-opted members.
- b. To operate the overall scheme in respect of the local determination of Code of Conduct complaints against Council and Parish/Town Members (this role is largely delegated by the Constitution to a Standards Hearings

Sub-Committee and the Monitoring Officer as set out in greater detail in the Constitution).

- c. Approve, and review relevant codes of conduct, protocols and other arrangements that relate to the governance of the Council.
- d. Promote and ensure training of Councillors and co-opted members in the relevant governance aspects.
- e. Grant dispensations, where referred by the Monitoring Officer and in accordance with the Localism Act 2011 or other legislation.
- f. To monitor the use of dispensations.
- g. To appoint a Sub-Committee which will have delegated responsibility to consider investigation reports, in respect of Code of Conduct complaints, that are referred to it by the Monitoring Officer and conduct hearings into allegations that a Member or co-opted Member of the Council or Town/Parish Council has breached the relevant code of conduct.
- h. To overview the Council's whistle blowing policy.
- i. To review, monitor and consider reports from the Monitoring Officer.

#### 1.4 Human Resource Functions

To receive and consider reports relating to workforce policies and related performance.

Where there is a specific requirement a Sub Committee can be appointed which shall deal with disciplinary matters relating to relevant officers.

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#### **Human Resources Sub-Committee**

The Human Resources Sub-Committee will be responsible for the Council's Human Resources function where not delegated under the Scheme of Delegation. This includes:

- a) All disciplinary matters relating to specified officers that are required to have Member or Committee involvement. This is elaborated in the Officer Employment Procedure Rules later in this Constitution.

#### **Standards Sub-Committee Terms of Reference**

- a) To consider investigation reports, in respect of Code of Conduct complaints, that are referred to it by the Monitoring Officer.
- b) To conduct a hearing into an allegation that a Member or co-opted Member of the Council or Town/Parish Council has breached the relevant code of conduct. At such hearing, the Member against whom a complaint has been made may respond to the investigation report.
- c) Following the hearing the Sub-Committee can make one of the following findings:

- i) That the Member has not failed to comply with the Code of Conduct and no further action needs to be taken in respect of the matters considered at the hearing;
  - ii) That the Member has failed to comply with the Code of Conduct but no further action needs to be taken in respect of the matters considered at the hearing; or
  - iii) That the Member has failed to comply with the Code of Conduct and a sanction and/or an informal resolution should be imposed.
- d) The Sub-Committee may impose any action or combination of actions available to it, or impose any informal resolution or combination of informal resolutions as are available to it either by law or policy.
- e) After making a finding the Sub-Committee shall, as soon as reasonably practicable, provide written notice of its findings and the reason for its decision to the Member and the complainant.
- f) To apply the Council's Standards Complaints Procedure and Complaints Standards Sub-Committee Procedure to hearings before the Sub-Committee.
-

## Appendix 2b

### **Audit and Governance Committee AMENDED terms of reference (as contained within the Council's Constitution, Article 9)**

The Committee will have the following terms of reference relating audit functions, governance functions and human resources functions.

#### **Governance, risk and control**

- a Act as the Council's Audit Committee for internal and external audit.
- b To review the council's corporate governance arrangements against the good governance framework, including the ethical framework, and consider the local code of governance
- c To monitor the effective development and operation of risk management in the council.
- d To monitor progress in addressing risk-related issues reported to the committee
- e To consider reports on the effectiveness of internal controls and monitor the implementation of agreed actions.
- f To consider reports on the effectiveness of financial management arrangements, including compliance with CIPFA's Financial Management Code.
- g To consider the council's arrangements to secure value for money and review assurances and assessments on the effectiveness of these arrangements.
- h To review the assessment of fraud risks and potential harm to the council from fraud and corruption.
- i To monitor the counter fraud strategy, actions and resources.
- j To review the governance and assurance arrangements for significant partnerships or collaborations.
- k Promote and ensure training of Councillors and co-opted members in the relevant governance aspects.
- l To consider reports on the effectiveness of internal controls and monitor the implementation of agreed actions.
- m To notify, report or recommend to Cabinet and Council as appropriate.

- n Have continued due regard for all conduct and governance requirements that include the CIPFA (Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy) guidance.
- o To review, monitor and consider reports from the Section 151 Officer on Treasury management, functions and activities.
- p Grant dispensations, where referred by the Monitoring Officer and in accordance with the Localism Act 2011 or other legislation.
- q To monitor the use of dispensations.
- r To appoint a Sub-Committee which will have delegated responsibility to consider investigation reports, in respect of Code of Conduct complaints, that are referred to it by the Monitoring Officer and conduct hearings into allegations that a Member or co-opted Member of the Council or Town/Parish Council has breached the relevant code of conduct.

### **Governance reporting**

- a To review the AGS prior to approval and consider whether it properly reflects the risk environment and supporting assurances, including the head of internal audit's annual opinion.
- b To consider whether the annual evaluation for the AGS fairly concludes that governance arrangements are fit for purpose, supporting the achievement of the authority's objectives.

### **Financial reporting**

- a. To monitor the arrangements and preparations for financial reporting to ensure that statutory requirements and professional standards can be met.
- b. To review the annual statement of accounts. Specifically, to consider whether appropriate accounting policies have been followed and whether there are concerns arising from the financial statements or from the audit that need to be brought to the attention of the council.
- c. To consider the external auditor's report to those charged with governance on issues arising from the audit of the accounts.

### **Arrangements for audit and assurance**

To consider the council's framework of assurance and ensure that it adequately addresses the risks and priorities of the council.

### **External audit**

- a. To support the independence of external audit through consideration of the external auditor's annual assessment of its independence and review of any issues raised by PSAA or the authority's auditor panel as appropriate.
- b. To consider the external auditor's annual letter, relevant reports and the report to those charged with governance.
- c. To consider specific reports as agreed with the external auditor.

- d. To comment on the scope and depth of external audit work and to ensure it gives value for money.
- e. To consider additional commissions of work from external audit.
- f. To advise and recommend on the effectiveness of relationships between external and internal audit and other inspection agencies or relevant bodies.
- g. To provide free and unfettered access to the audit committee chair for the auditors, including the opportunity for a private meeting with the committee.

### **Internal audit**

- a. To approve the internal audit charter.
- b. To review proposals made in relation to the appointment of external providers of internal audit services and to make recommendations.
- c. To approve the risk-based internal audit plan, including internal audit's resource requirements, the approach to using other sources of assurance and any work required to place reliance upon those other sources.
- d. To approve significant interim changes to the risk-based internal audit plan and resource requirements.
- e. To make appropriate enquiries of both management and the head of internal audit to determine if there are any inappropriate scope or resource limitations.
- f. To consider any impairments to the independence or objectivity of the head of internal audit arising from additional roles or responsibilities outside of internal auditing and to approve and periodically review safeguards to limit such impairments.
- g. To consider reports from the head of internal audit on internal audit's performance during the year, including the performance of external providers of internal audit services. These will include:
  - updates on the work of internal audit, including key findings, issues of concern and action in hand as a result of internal audit work
  - regular reports on the results of the QAIP
  - reports on instances where the internal audit function does not conform to the PSIAS and LGAN, considering whether the non-conformance is significant enough that it must be included in the AGS.
- h. To consider the head of internal audit's annual report, including:
  - the statement of the level of conformance with the PSIAS and LGAN and the results of the QAIP that support the statement (these will indicate the reliability of the conclusions of internal audit)
  - the opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the council's framework of governance, risk management and control, together with the summary of the work supporting the opinion (these will assist the committee in reviewing the AGS).
- i. To consider summaries of specific internal audit reports as requested.
- j. To receive reports outlining the action taken where the head of internal audit has concluded that management has accepted a level of risk that may be unacceptable to the authority or there are concerns about progress with the implementation of agreed actions.

- k. To contribute to the QAIP and in particular to the external quality assessment of internal audit that takes place at least once every five years.
- l. To consider a report on the effectiveness of internal audit to support the AGS where required to do so by the accounts and audit regulations
- m. To provide free and unfettered access to the audit committee chair for the head of internal audit, including the opportunity for a private meeting with the committee.

### **Accountability Arrangements**

- a. To report to those charged with governance on the committee's findings, conclusions and recommendations concerning the adequacy and effectiveness of their governance, risk management and internal control frameworks, financial reporting arrangements and internal and external audit functions.
- b. To report to full council on a regular basis on the committee's performance in relation to the terms of reference and the effectiveness of the committee in meeting its purpose.
- c. To publish an annual report on the work of the committee, including a conclusion on the compliance with the **CIPFA Position Statement**
- d. To operate the overall scheme in respect of the local determination of Code of Conduct complaints against Council and Parish/Town Members (this role is largely delegated by the Constitution to a Standards Hearings Sub-Committee and the Monitoring Officer as set out in greater detail in the Constitution).
- e. To overview the Council's whistle blowing policy.
- f. To review, monitor and consider reports from the Monitoring Officer.

### **Human Resource Functions**

To receive and consider reports relating to workforce policies and related performance. Where there is a specific requirement a Sub Committee can be appointed which shall deal with disciplinary matters relating to relevant officers.

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### **Standards Sub-Committee Terms of Reference**

- a) To consider investigation reports, in respect of Code of Conduct complaints, that are referred to it by the Monitoring Officer.
- b) To conduct a hearing into an allegation that a Member or co-opted Member of the Council or Town/Parish Council has breached the relevant code of

conduct. At such hearing, the Member against whom a complaint has been made may respond to the investigation report.

- c) Following the hearing the Sub-Committee can make one of the following findings:
  - i) That the Member has not failed to comply with the Code of Conduct and no further action needs to be taken in respect of the matters considered at the hearing
  - ii) That the Member has failed to comply with the Code of Conduct but no further action needs to be taken in respect of the matters considered at the hearing; or
  - iii) That the Member has failed to comply with the Code of Conduct and a sanction and/or an informal resolution should be imposed.
- d) The Sub-Committee may impose any action or combination of actions available to it, or impose any informal resolution or combination of informal resolutions as are available to it either by law or policy.
- e) After making a finding the Sub-Committee shall, as soon as reasonably practicable, provide written notice of its findings and the reason for its decision to the Member and the complainant.
- f) To apply the Council's Standards Complaints Procedure and Complaints Standards Sub-Committee Procedure to hearings before the Sub-Committee.

#### **Human Resource Sub-Committee terms of reference**

The Human Resources Sub-Committee will be responsible for the Council's Human Resources function where not delegated under the Scheme of Delegation. This includes:

- a) All disciplinary matters relating to specified officers that are required to have Member or Committee involvement. This is elaborated in the Officer Employment Procedure Rules later in this Constitution.
-

REPORT TITLE: AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT  
2025/26

2 JUNE 2026

REPORT OF COUNCILLOR MORRIS, CHAIRPERSON OF THE AUDIT AND  
GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Contact Officer: Nancy Graham Tel No: 01962 848 235 Email:  
ngraham@winchester.gov.uk

WARD(S): ALL

## PURPOSE

This is the first annual report of Audit and Governance Committee and follows a CIPFA recommendation for the committee to report annually to full Council. The report provides an overview of the work undertaken by the Audit & Governance Committee during the 2025/26 municipal year.

In future years, it is intended that this report be considered by Audit and Governance Committee prior to submission to Council. However, due to the scheduling of meetings this was not possible this year. However, the chair has agreed its contents and the report has been share with all committee members in advance of publication for the Council meeting.

## RECOMMENDATIONS:

That Council note the Annual Audit and Governance Committee report for 2025/26.

# Audit and Governance Committee Annual Report 2025/26

## Introduction

This is the first year of an annual report to be received by for Full Council.

The purpose of this report is to set out a brief factual review of the Committee's work during the 2025/26 municipal year.

The meetings of the Committee are held in public with agenda packs and minutes available through the [Council's website](#), with a webcast available on a live and subsequently recorded basis. Members of the public can register to speak at any of the meetings in accordance with the council's agreed [public participation procedure](#). Other councillors who are not members of the committee (i.e. "invited councillors") can also register to speak.

The draft agendas are received by the Executive Leadership Board (ELB) as part of the usual process for committees, and a Chair's Briefing is arranged prior to the committee meeting date.

The Committee is supported at each meeting by the following Senior Officers: Liz Keys, Director (Finance) / Section 151 Officer and Gareth John, Director (Legal) / Monitoring Officer.

Further Council officers, including the Senior Policy and Programme Manager & the Service Lead (Human Resources) attend the meetings on an as required basis depending on the items being considered.

Representatives from the following external organisations also attend to present their reports to the Committee:

- Antony Harvey (the council's Chief Internal Auditor from the Southern Internal Audit Partnership)
- Simon Mathers (a Partner from the council's external audit firm, EY)
- Gemma Farley, Daniel O'Rourke (from the Investments & Borrowing Team at Hampshire County Council who provide the council's Treasury Management function)

## Membership of the committee

Members are appointed at annual council in May. The membership for 2025/26 was from the Liberal Democrat, Conservative and Green party groups as follows: Councillors Morris (Chairperson), Chamberlain (Vice-Chairperson), Bailey-Morgan, Brophy, Godfrey, Pinniger and Power. The following councillors were appointed as deputies (two for each political group): Councillors Aron, Bennett, Bolton, Lee, Miller and Wallace.

### **Meeting dates and attendance**

Four meetings were scheduled for 2025/26 on 17 July 2025, 25 September 2025, 27 November 2025 and 5 March 2026. However, with the agreement of the chairperson, the September meeting was cancelled due to the amount of other additional meetings required at the time to consider reports on both Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and Community Governance Review (CGR). The work programme only included two items which could be deferred to the 27 November meeting without any issues. An additional meeting was subsequently arranged for 29 January 2026 to receive the External Auditors annual reports for 2024/25 (as the audit was not completed by EY in time for the scheduled November meeting).

### **Attendance table**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Meeting Date</b>				<b>Total</b>
	<b>17/07/25</b>	<b>27/11/25</b>	<b>29/01/26</b>	<b>05/03/26</b>	
Councillor Morris (Chair)	x	x	x	x	4/4
Councillor Chamberlain (Vice Chair)	x	x	x	x	4/4
Councillor Bailey-Morgan	x	x	x	A*	3/4
Councillor Brophy	x	x	A	x	3/4
Councillor Godfrey	x	x	x	x	4/4
Councillor Pinniger	x	x	x	x	4/4
Councillor Power	x	x	x	x	4/4
<u>Deputies:</u>					
Councillor Lee				x	1/1

**X** – present at meeting

**A** – Apologies (no deputy)

**A\*** - Apologies (sent deputy)

The committee meetings have also been regularly attended by the Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance and the Cabinet Member for Healthy Communities (in her governance role).

### **Remit of the Committee**

The Audit and Governance Committee responsibilities cover audit, governance and human resources functions. This includes considering both the Internal Audit Manager's annual report and opinion and reports of the Council's external auditor. It also reviews and approves the Council's Annual Statement of Accounts and monitors the governance framework of the Council. The Committee has delegated authority to undertake the Council's Standards and human resources functions and can appoint two Sub-Committees: a Standards Sub-Committee and a Human Resources Sub-Committee. However, there was no requirement for either Sub-Committee to be appointed in 2025/26.

The Terms of Reference of the Committee are contained within the Council's Constitution under Part 2 Article 9. The terms of reference were amended following a report to the 5 March 2026 meeting of the committee. This was in response to the CIPFA Code of Practice for the Governance Internal Audit. Arising from this assessment, there were two requirements where the council's existing arrangements achieved partial compliance. To achieve full compliance, the council was recommended to update the terms of reference to conform with the CIPFA model terms of reference.

The amended terms of reference are included within report CL178 elsewhere on this agenda.

The previous Terms of Reference (ie those applicable for the 2025/26 Municipal Year) are attached as Appendix 1.

### **Training provided for Committee Members**

- 16 July 2025 – Committee members signposted to LGA virtual event: Understanding local government audit committees.
- 17 July 2025 - All Committee members (including existing members) required to attend a short familiarisation session in advance of the first meeting of committee of municipal year.
- 16 October 2025 - Arlingclose briefing – online briefing provided by the council's external Treasury Management advisers and open to all councillors.
- 23 October 2025 - Understanding your council's financial statements – in person training provided by the CIPFA Finance Advisory Network, primarily for committee members but open to all councillors.

## **Committee Meeting Activity**

A summary of the agenda items received at each meeting of the Committee is set out below.

### 17 July 2025

1. Work programme 2025/26
2. External Auditor's report 2023/24 (AG168)
3. External Audit Plan 2024/25 (AG169)
4. Treasury management outturn 24/25 (AG166)
5. Workforce Report 24/25 (AG163)
6. Annual Internal Audit Conclusion 2024/25 (AG164)
7. Internal Audit Charter and Risk Based Plan 2025/26 (AG165)
8. Q4 Governance monitoring 24/25 (AG160)
9. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion - Annual Equality Report 2024/25 (AG161)
10. Annual Governance Statement 24/25 (AG162)
11. Annual Financial Report 24/25 (AG167)

### 25 September 2025

This meeting was cancelled with the chair's agreement due to the amount of other additional meetings required at this time to consider reports on both LGR and CGR. The work programme only included two items which both could be deferred to the 27 November meeting without any issues.

### 27 November 2025

1. Updated Work Programme 25/26
2. Final Report and Pay Policy Statement 2026/27 (AG170)
3. Treasury management mid-year report 25/26 (AG179)
4. External auditors verbal update (on timings of the 2024/25 annual audit reports)
5. Internal Audit Progress Report 2025/26 (AG172)
6. External Quality Assessment (AG176)
7. Internal Audit Strategy 2025-2028 (AG177)

8. Q1 /Q2 Governance Monitoring 25/26 (AG171)

29 January 2026

1. Updated work programme 2025/26
2. Certification of claims & returns annual report 2024/25 (AG178)
3. 24/25 Auditor's Annual Report (AG175)
4. 2024/25 Auditors Annual Results Report (AG174)
5. Audited Annual Financial Report 2024/25 (AG173)
6. Internal Audit Progress Report 2025-26 (December 2025) (AG180)
7. External Quality Assessment – Final Report (AG181)

5 March 2026

1. Internal Audit Charter and Risk Based Plan 2026-27 (AG185)
2. Annual review of Risk Management Policy 2026/27 (AG183)
3. Local Code of Corporate Governance 2026/27 (AG184)
4. Q3 Governance Monitoring 25/26 (AG182)

## **Report of the chairperson of the Audit and Governance Committee, Councillor Jonny Morris.**

I am pleased to present this first annual report of the Audit and Governance Committee. It follows a CIPFA recommendation for the committee to report annually to full council, to comment on where it has added value.

This report provides an overview of the work undertaken by the Audit and Governance Committee during the 2025/26 municipal year. Throughout the year, the committee held four formal meetings to provide oversight of the council's financial reporting, internal control environment, and risk management frameworks. Meetings included the regular quarterly governance monitoring report from the council, in addition to a separate quarterly monitoring report from Internal Audit. The Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance attended all meetings, together with the Cabinet Member for Healthy Communities where applicable. The committee also welcomed contributions from the public and other members of the council not appointed to the committee (i.e. "invited councillors").

The impact of the Government's "audit backstop" requirements, designed to clear the national backlog of public sector audits, was still apparent. Our 2023/24 and 2024/25 external audit opinions were adversely affected by the lack of audit on the 2022/23 accounts; resulting in a "disclaimer" audit opinion for all years. Whilst the council remains on track with progress towards full assurance from the auditor, opinions are not expected to be based on full assurance until the 2026/27 accounts.

The year also saw changes to the internal audit reporting arrangements as a result of the of the new Global Internal Audit Standards which came into force from 1 April 2025.

At the start of the municipal year in July 2025, the committee appointed Councillor Chamberlain as Vice-Chairperson. During this meeting, we considered the External Auditor's Report for 2023/24, noting that a disclaimer of opinion was issued due to unresolved issues regarding opening balances from the previous year. We queried the audit fee and requested that a representative from the Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) be invited to a future meeting<sup>1</sup>. We also reviewed the External Audit Plan for 2024/25, where the committee raised concerns about the impact of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) on staff resources. Public participation highlighted concerns regarding the collection of street market fees in cash and it was noted that there was a scheduled internal audit review of these processes due in 2025/26. Additionally, the committee noted a "reasonable" annual internal audit conclusion for 2024/25 and approved the Internal Audit Charter and Risk-Based Plan for the following year. The Director (Finance) agreed to provide an update on the management action plan in relation to CIL and S106 monies to a future committee<sup>2</sup>.

In November 2025, the committee recommended the Pay Policy Statement 2026/27 to the Council for adoption, following discussions on staff retention and the use of

<sup>1</sup> The Director (Finance) extended the invite to the PSAA which was declined.

<sup>2</sup> Verbal updates were provided by the Director (Finance) and the Corporate Head of Planning and Regulatory Services to both the November 2025 and January 2026 meetings.

agency staff during LGR. We received a Treasury Management Mid-Year Report, confirming full compliance with the council's strategy. External auditors provided an update on the 2024/25 audit, noting that while work was progressing, judgemental differences regarding property valuations remained a challenge. During public participation, concerns were raised regarding high build costs in the New Homes Programme, which members discussed alongside the Internal Audit Progress Report.

An additional meeting was held in January 2026 to consider the 2024/25 Auditor's Annual Report and Results Report. The committee noted that another disclaimer of opinion was anticipated for the 2024/25 accounts. The Committee requested that EY provide granular information on their methods of valuations in order that the council could work with their officers and EY to resolve the situation prior to the next audit. The committee approved the Audited Annual Financial Report 2024/25, acknowledging the council's stable financial position. The committee received and noted the annual report providing assurance on the council's Housing Benefits subsidy claims. A verbal update was provided on the management action plan created following an internal audit of Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levies. We also considered an internal audit update that issued a "no assurance" opinion regarding housing asset management repairs and maintenance, leading to the development of a Housing Property Services Improvement Plan. Public participation was heard regarding the management of Section 106 payments, the value for money of the council's new homes programme, and the continued collection of market pitch fees in cash.

At our final meeting in March 2026, the committee approved the Internal Audit Charter and Risk Based Plan 2026-27 and the Local Code of Corporate Governance. We also reviewed the Annual Review of Risk Management Policy, suggesting that risks related to the Nature Emergency be further considered when the report was discussed by Cabinet. The committee considered the regular Q3 governance monitoring report and congratulated officers on the fact that there were no outstanding code of conduct complaints. The committee adopted updated Terms of Reference following an assessment against new Global Internal Audit Standards, ensuring our governance framework remains aligned with best practices (the revised terms of reference are included within report CL178 elsewhere on this agenda). We also noted that progress was being made between the council and external auditors to resolve valuation assumption differences.

All committee members contributed constructively to these critical issues, and I am grateful to them and the officer team for their support throughout the year.

## **Audit & Governance Committee – Terms of reference (prior to March 2026)**

### **1.1 Terms of Reference**

The Committee will have the following terms of reference relating to audit, governance and human resources functions.

### **1.2 Audit**

- a Act as the Council's Audit Committee for internal and external audit.
- b Agree and oversee the Council's Internal Audit Plan and monitor progress against this Plan.
- c Receive, and consider the work of the external auditor.
- d Ensure that there are effective relationships between external and internal audit, inspection agencies and other relevant bodies, and that the value of the audit process is actively promoted.
- e Overview the Council's risk management arrangements to provide independent assurance of the adequacy of the risk management framework.
- f Seek assurance that action is being taken on risk-related issues identified by auditors and inspectors.
- g Approve the Governance and Assurance Statements, Statement of Accounts and anti-fraud and anti-corruption arrangements.
- h To notify, report or recommend to Cabinet and Council as appropriate.
- i Have continued due regard for all conduct and governance requirements that include the CIPFA (Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy) guidance.
- j To review, monitor and consider reports from the Section 151 Officer on Treasury management, functions and activities.

### **1.3 Governance functions**

- a Promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Councillors and any co-opted members.
- b To operate the overall scheme in respect of the local determination of Code of Conduct complaints against Council and Parish/Town Members (this role is largely delegated by the Constitution to a Standards Hearings Sub-Committee and the Monitoring Officer as set out in greater detail in the Constitution).
- c Approve, and review relevant codes of conduct, protocols and other arrangements that relate to the governance of the Council.

- d Promote and ensure training of Councillors and co-opted members in the relevant governance aspects.
- e Grant dispensations, where referred by the Monitoring Officer and in accordance with the Localism Act 2011 or other legislation.
- f To monitor the use of dispensations.
- g To appoint a Sub-Committee which will have delegated responsibility to consider investigation reports, in respect of Code of Conduct complaints, that are referred to it by the Monitoring Officer and conduct hearings into allegations that a Member or co-opted Member of the Council or Town/Parish Council has breached the relevant code of conduct.
- h To overview the Council's whistle blowing policy.
- i To review, monitor and consider reports from the Monitoring Officer.

#### **1.4 Human Resource Functions**

To receive and consider reports relating to workforce policies and related performance.

Where there is a specific requirement a Sub Committee can be appointed which shall deal with disciplinary matters relating to relevant officers.

REPORT TITLE: DRAFT ANNUAL SCRUTINY REPORT 2025/26

26 MAY 2026

REPORT OF CHAIRPERSON: COUNCILLOR CAROLINE BROOK

Contact Officer: Matthew Watson Tel No: 01962 848 317 Email  
[mwatson@winchester.gov.uk](mailto: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 2025/26 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**

## **2025/26**

## **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 - Focusing 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 2025/26 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 Eve, Councillor Morris, Councillor Murphy, Councillor Gordon-Smith, Councillor Bolton, Councillor White, Councillor Lee, Councillor Westwood, Councillor Brophy, Councillor Horrill.

The following cabinet members attended the committee to address the meeting: Councillor Tod (Leader and Cabinet Member for Regeneration), Councillor Mark Reach (Cabinet Member for Good Homes), Councillor Lucille Thompson (Cabinet Member for Business and Culture), Councillor Neil Cutler (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Transformation)

**Health and Environment Policy Committee:** The following Councillors attended the committee during the year: Councillor Bennett, Councillor Brophy, Councillor Eve, Councillor Horrill, Councillor Latham, Councillor Lee, Councillor Miller, Councillor Pett, Councillor Power, Councillor Warwick, and Councillor Westwood.

The following cabinet members attended the committee to address the meeting: Councillor Becker (Cabinet Member for Healthy Communities), Councillor Cramoysan (Cabinet Member for Recycling and Public Protection), Councillor Cutler (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Transformation), and Councillor Learney (Cabinet Member for the Climate and Nature Emergency).

**Scrutiny Committee:** The following Councillors have attended the committee during the year: Councillor Batho, Councillor Bolton, Councillor Brook, Councillor Clear, Councillor Godfrey, Councillor Gordon-Smith, Councillor Horrill, Councillor Laming, Councillor Lee, Councillor Murphy, Councillor Pett, Councillor Power, Councillor Wallace.

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

Councillor Becker (Cabinet Member for Healthy Communities), Councillor Cramoysan (Cabinet Member for Recycling and Public Protection), Councillor Cutler (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Transformation), Councillor Learney (Cabinet Member for the Climate and Nature Emergency), Councillor Porter (Cabinet Member for Place and Local Plan), Councillor Reach (Cabinet Member for Good Homes), Councillor Tod (Leader and Cabinet Member for Regeneration)

## **Items considered during 2025/26**

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

### **Scrutiny Committee.**

#### **5 June 2025**

1. Q4 Finance & Performance Monitoring
2. Appointments Of External Bodies Related to Scrutiny
3. Annual Scrutiny Report 2024/25
4. Annual Report - Exceptions to Forward Plan 2024/25

#### **8 September 2025**

1. Housing Revenue Account Outturn 2024/2025
2. General Fund Outturn 2024/2025
3. Q1 Finance & Performance Monitoring
4. Work Request from A Committee Member: The Planning Enforcement Service

#### **13 November 2025**

1. General Fund Budget Options & Medium-Term Financial Strategy
2. HRA Business Plan & Budget Options
3. Hobbs View, Southbrook Cottages, Micheldever - Lessons Learned
4. Q2 Finance & Performance Monitoring

#### **19 January 2026**

1. Central Winchester Regeneration Scheme Update

#### **10 February 2026**

1. Treasury Management Strategy 2026/27
2. Planning Enforcement - Task and Finish Group - Feedback to Scrutiny Committee
3. Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget 2026/27
4. General Fund Budget 2026/27
5. Capital Investment Strategy 2026-2036

#### **4 March 2026**

1. Annual Community Safety Update
2. Planning Enforcement - Task and Finish Group - Feedback to Scrutiny Committee
3. Q3 Finance & Performance Monitoring

#### **17 March 2026**

1. Adoption Of the Winchester District Local Plan 2040 And the Preparation of The Local Plan 2044

In addition, at each meeting the committee was provided with the latest Forward Plan of Key Decisions.

## **Health and Environment Policy Committee**

### **3 July 2025**

1. Nature Improvement Plan (HEP043)

### **18 September 2025**

1. Future Of Waste Project (Presentation)
2. Air Quality Strategy (Presentation)

### **2 December 2025**

1. Climate Adaptation - HEP045 And Presentation
2. Community Resilience Strategy - HEP044

### **25 February 2026**

1. Enhanced Biodiversity Duty (HEP046)
2. Support Creation of Local Carbon Credits (Presentation)
3. Public Spaces Protection Order and Enforcement (Presentation)
4. Building A Resilient Waste Service for the Future (Presentation)

## **Economy and Housing Policy Committee**

### **2 July 2025**

1. Social Housing Regulation Consumer Standard Improvement Plan.
2. Review of the Economy and Housing Policy Committee Resolutions for 2024/25.

### **16 September 2025**

1. Winchester District Tourism Strategy 2026-2030 - Baseline Report and Outline Recommendations.
2. Housing Development Strategy.
3. Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping.
4. Housing Compliance Policies.

### **25 November 2025**

1. Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan & Budget Options.
2. The Local Visitor Economy Partnership.

### **23 February 2026**

1. Housing Revenue Account - Future Policy Options.

**Public participation.**

The policy and scrutiny committee welcomes and encourages engagement with residents and other community representatives during its public participation session. During 2025/26 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 2025/26**

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

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

### **Economy**

At the September meeting the Business and Culture team brought forward the Winchester District Tourism Strategy 2026-2030 - Baseline Report and Outline Recommendations. The committee acknowledged the challenges highlighted, including the need to diversify the visitor market, encourage business collaboration, and secure investment to deliver the strategy. The committee supported the progression of the strategy based on the work undertaken but asked for clarification on whether the Foodies Festival at River Park was subsidised by the council and for future, specific festivals, such as Boomtown, to analyse the town centre footfall data to identify any significant differences.

At the meeting in November the Local Visitor Economy Partnership was presented. The district's visitor economy was significant, welcoming over 8 million visitors annually, which supported 5,760 local jobs and contributed £292 million to the local economy and in recognition of this in May, Winchester City Council, alongside Hampshire County Council, Portsmouth City Council, and Southampton City Council, gained Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) accreditation from Visit England.

The committee supported the council's role in facilitating the delivery of the LVEP and realising its benefits, noting it was a timely opportunity for the City Council to work on a wider regional stage, particularly in the context of local government reorganisation (LGR).

### **Housing**

At the first meeting in July the Housing team presented the Social Housing Regulation Consumer Standard Improvement Plan which was in response to a self-referral made to the Social Housing Regulator and the subsequent regulator judgment on 30 April 2025 of C3, indicating serious failings and a need for improvement in safety, quality, transparency, influence, and accountability. The committee made several recommendations, the main points being to ensure that impact on tenants was kept to a minimum, concerns about officer time and resource and that processes were put in place to ensure the condition of properties were regularly checked in the future.

In September the committee looked at the Housing Development Strategy 2025 to 2032. The strategy was updated due to significant economic changes, including increased interest rates, build cost inflation and a slowdown in affordable housing providers acquiring Section 106 units. The 2024 resident survey identified the availability of affordable housing as the most urgent issue facing communities, reinforcing the need for an up-to-date strategy.

The committee agreed that the final strategy should place a strong emphasis on proactively working with and supporting registered providers and other partners to ensure their capacity to deliver affordable housing is maximised and, where appropriate, councillors to promote awareness of Action Hampshire's rural housing enabling service to parish councils.

The committee also considered the draft Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy for 2025-2030 which set out how the council and its partners would respond to the risk of homelessness and the reality of rough sleeping. Despite national pressures, including rising housing costs and a shortage of affordable homes, the council had successfully remained in the top 25% nationally for homeless prevention activities, and the use of bed and breakfast accommodation had been kept to a minimum. The committee commended the officers and partner organisations for their work in preventing homelessness and noted the significant achievements made and acknowledged the external challenges, including funding constraints and demographic changes, and supported the need to ensure council funding provisions continued through any period of local government reorganisation. The committee requested officers to provide data on the average length of stay in temporary accommodation for the previous two years.

The final report for this meeting was Housing Compliance Policies. The report was to seek approval and adoption of six core housing repair, maintenance, and compliance policies covering fire safety, gas and heating, electrical safety, asbestos, water hygiene, and lift safety. There is a business need to navigate a complex framework of statutory obligations to ensure council homes were safe and legally compliant and Pennington's Choice, specialist property and surveying consultants, were commissioned to develop the policies in partnership with the council's technical teams. The presentation was to raise awareness of the policies with committee members, rather than for consultation on the content.

At the November meeting the committee was asked to review and comment upon Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan & Budget Options. The paper presented a balanced and viable HRA business plan that protected tenants' money, The main pressures on the HRA were macroeconomic factors, particularly interest rates and inflation, which impacted the HRA's £200 million debt. Consequently, the interest rate assumption was increased from 5% to 6%.

At the final meeting in February the committee considered the Housing Revenue Account - Future Policy Option. This was dealt with in a more interactive format than for regular committee items. It was felt that this approach would generate a deeper debate and achieve a cross-party understanding and consensus of the key aspects of the HRA. Following an introduction, the committee adjourned to work in three separate groups to attempt to balance a HRA budget before reconvening to discuss their findings. Each group sought to construct a balanced HRA budget, weighing competing priorities such as investing in existing stock, increasing new homes, and redeeming HRA debt. Following the sessions the committee invited officers and the Cabinet Member to consider further work in these areas:

- (a) The feasibility and implications of seeking a 5% saving within the housing management and repairs and maintenance budgets, and whether any resulting insights could be reported back to the committee.
- (b) The potential for alternative delivery models — for example, increased in-house resourcing for work currently delivered by third parties, enhanced partnership working, and improved utilisation of existing assets — and whether any emerging findings could be shared with the committee in due course.
- (c) The importance of taking interest rate exposure into account when developing future plans, given the financial pressures associated with renewing loans.

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

### **Report of the chairperson of the committee, Cllr Jerry Pett**

#### **Introduction**

The Health and Environment Policy Committee (HEP) met four times during the municipal year, in July, September, December and February. The majority of its business was to receive and comment on papers or presentations of ongoing projects and strategies within its purview rather than scrutinise policy papers before being taken by Cabinet. This was a source of frustration to some members of the committee, but members were, nonetheless, voluble in their willingness to contribute to the debates. It was also agreed to set-up two members-only working groups to 'deep dive' into issues of interest to the committee, these being:

Nutrient Neutrality

Provision of Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Facilities

An agreed paper giving the output of the first of these was passed to the relevant Portfolio holders in March 2026 and their response is awaited.

#### **July 2025 Meeting**

Members of the public addressed the committee on the authority's EV charging strategy and the scheduling of grass and hedge cutting.

The committee reviewed the draft Nature Improvement Plan, presented to the committee by Cllr Learney as the portfolio holder and the Principal Ecologist/Biodiversity Officer. The Plan was intended to build on the extant Biodiversity Action Plan and members showed great interest in the draft, making many constructive suggestions to improve its clarity and efficacy to be addressed before its next iteration, and requested that it be recirculated to members ahead of its submission to Cabinet.

#### **September 2025 Meeting**

A member of the public addressed the committee on their frustrations at the limits of the recycling service offered in the District, the linkage between poor air quality and the limited permeability of the city centre for cyclists and pedestrians, and the low take-up of all-electric vehicles by licensed taxi drivers in the city. The Cabinet Member for Recycling and Public Protection, Cllr Cramoysan, responded, noting the divided responsibility between District and County authorities for waste collection and disposal, the lack of evidence for poor air quality 'hotspots', and measures taken to mitigate the low take-up of electric vehicles among Hackney drivers.

**Future of Waste:** The committee received two informative presentations, introduced by Cllr Cramoysan, from the Corporate Head of Service (Place). The first, an update on collection and recycling capabilities, was timely as the Food Waste Collection scheme had started to be rolled out across the District. The second updated the Committee on the introduction of 'Extended Producer Responsibility', which aims to incentivise suppliers to increase the amount of recyclable packaging in their products.

**Air Quality Strategy:** The Service Lead: Public Protection gave a presentation updating the committee on the evolving Air Quality Strategy. Members were keen to ensure that the scope of the strategy should be seen to be more comprehensive in its coverage of the whole district. They also observed the linkages between the loss of rural buses and the inevitable increase in car use in the city, and other factors beyond the Authority's control, such as the cumulative effect of the activity of Southampton Air and Sea ports on the District's air quality.

### **December 2025 Meeting**

**Climate Adaptation:** The Cabinet lead for Climate Change, Cllr Learney, introduced a paper on Climate Adaptation, reiterating that action on climate change is the Council's overarching priority. The purpose, supported by a presentation from the Sustainability Manager and Sustainability Programme Manager, was to enable the Committee to inform and shape the development of the Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessment. Good engagement from members provided the presenters with several pointers to perceived lacunae in the assessment's coverage of the full District and its stakeholders.

**Community Resilience Strategy:** The portfolio holder for Healthy Communities, Cllr Becker, introduced a report for the committee that outlined this draft strategy, the ultimate aim of which was to develop a publicly accessible document that signposted communities and promoted community engagement. The Service Lead: Communities and Wellbeing presented the draft, emphasising its purposes as the development of social capital and empowering communities to respond to challenges and improving their own well-being. Members were supportive of the strategy and encouraged greater definition of 'what good looks like' in this context.

### **February 2026 Meeting**

**Enhanced Biodiversity Duty:** The Cabinet member for Climate and Nature Emergency, Cllr Learney, introduced a report on the Authority's progress against the Enhanced Biodiversity Duty ahead of a presentation by the Service Lead: Sustainability and Natural Environment and the Ecology/Biodiversity Officer. Members noted that there was much community-led activity in this area and queried the Authority's ability to collate comprehensive data on the delivery of Biodiversity Net Gain across the District, but were keen, individually, to act as conduits for this. It was also noted that the aim would significantly benefit from greater clarity in the units used for reporting BNG

**Creation of Local Carbon Credits:** The same team presented an update on the creation of local carbon credits that led to several questions from members that exposed some difficulty in their ability to judge the effective collation and management of data from schemes delivered by a variety of actors across the District. There was broad consensus that there was a need for better coordination across all who are contributing to the generation of local carbon credits to give greater transparency of delivery.

**Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) and Enforcement:** The Cabinet member for Recycling and Public Protection, Cllr Cramoysan, introduced a presentation by the Service Lead: Public Protection that sought members' views on the use and potential expansion of PSPOs in the District and their enforcement. Members asked for further data on the use of Fixed Penalty Notices within the extant PSPO in Winchester City, suggesting that there was insufficient information immediately available to them to judge its overall efficacy.

Whilst one member cited a perception among residents that many people, and particularly women, felt at risk when walking through the city centre in hours of darkness this was not generally accepted by others.

More pertinently, a clear majority of members felt that more evidence would be required to support any future request to expand the role of PSPOs in any part of the District, citing the risk of criminalising those already marginalised in our communities to little, if any, beneficial effect.

**Building a Resilient Waste Service for the Future:** Cllr Cramoysan introduced a presentation by the Corporate Head of Service (Place) that reflected the recent introduction of the food waste collection scheme, which was showing early signs of strong uptake. He also noted that, in future, the capacity for kerbside glass recycling could potentially be increased by bringing glass within the scope of the main recycling bins. He also noted that the instances of fly-tipping had decreased, possibly discouraged by recent successful prosecution of offences in both public and private land.

## **Conclusion**

My thanks to all officers and portfolio holders who have engaged with the committee through the year – the standard of their papers and presentations was uniformly high. Thanks also to the Democratic Services team who have very effectively administered the Committee's business. Finally, my personal thanks to all members who sat on the Committee throughout the year, and in particular my Deputy Chair, Cllr Brophy, who collectively ensured that the standard of debate and engagement remained cordial and constructive.

## **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 2025/26 municipal year in fulfilling its role to review and scrutinise decisions made and actions taken. Throughout the year, the committee held seven formal meetings. Public participation remained a valuable part of our process, and we received questions and deputations from members of the public and non-committee members on a variety of significant issues, including the Central Winchester Regeneration Scheme, the disposal of council assets, and the adoption of the Local Plan.

**June 2025** At our June meeting, we reviewed the Q4 Finance and Performance Monitoring report. We considered feedback from a member sub-group regarding Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and requested that future reports include definitions for carbon emissions scopes and separate gas consumption data for the Guildhall and main offices. We also raised outstanding actions regarding the acquisition process for The Corner House property and the need for more data on local speeding issues from the Community Safety Partnership.

**September 2025** In September, we scrutinised the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and General Fund Outturns for 2024/25, raising questions about progress toward Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) targets for housing stock and the acceleration of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds. While reviewing Q1 Performance, we asked the Cabinet to consider developing an integrated KPI relating to climate change and reviewed fly-tipping clear-up rates. We also agreed to establish a time-limited Task and Finish Group to conduct a focused review of the council's Planning Enforcement Service. This Task & Finish Group subsequently met, and a report was brought back to our March 2026 meeting.

**November 2025** Our November meeting focused heavily on financial planning, as we considered the General Fund Budget Options and the HRA Business Plan. We raised concerns regarding wastewater charges, proposed rent increases for five-bedroom social homes, and the criteria for disposing of surplus HRA assets. We also reviewed the "lessons learned" report from the Hobbs View Passivhaus pilot project in Micheldever, which experienced a cost overspend. We recommended that future projects include a clearer assessment of the council's risk appetite and that the lessons learned from Hobbs View be evaluated upon the completion of the Woodman Close project. Finally, we reviewed Q2 Performance, requesting, amongst other matters, a member briefing on the "Greener Faster" priority to clarify details on nutrient credits and biodiversity net gain.

**January 2026** In January, we held an additional meeting where our primary focus was the Central Winchester Regeneration Scheme. We examined the implications of the consortium partner GKRL withdrawing and PFP Igloo assuming 100% of the consortium responsibilities. Members queried whether this shift altered the project's risk profile or caused a loss of essential skills. To ensure transparency, we recommended that Cabinet provide a visual timeline of the project's predicted milestones for councillors and the public.

**February 2026** At our February meeting, we scrutinised the General Fund and HRA Budgets for 2026/27. We questioned the impact of a worse-than-expected provisional government spending settlement, as well as an annual £1.4 million reduction caused by a government calculation error regarding business rates pooling. We also sought assurances on the funding of digital transformation software and the condition of the Guildhall. Alongside the budgets, we reviewed the Treasury Management Strategy and the Capital Investment Strategy for 2026-2036.

**March 2026** The committee held two meetings in March. At our first meeting, we received the Annual Community Safety Update from Chief Inspector Korine Bishop, focusing on high-harm crime, anti-social behaviour, and rural crime. We recommended that future reports include trend data and clearer breakdowns between the city centre, market towns, and rural areas. We also received the findings of the Planning Enforcement Task and Finish Group, noting that communication with councillors and parishes was the most frequently raised issue, and we requested a progress report on the service improvements in six months.

At our final, additional meeting, we scrutinised the adoption of the Winchester District Local Plan 2040 and the preparation of the Local Plan 2044. We questioned the council's readiness to apply new energy efficiency standards and the challenges posed by a compressed 30-month statutory timeframe for the new 2044 plan. We recommended that Cabinet provide a clear transition timetable for upskilling staff on energy standards and arrange a briefing on how the 30-month deadline will be met while ensuring robust public consultation.

Members of the cabinet attended all our meetings, allowing for direct discussion and questioning concerning policy and progress. 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, Councillor Wallace, for his help and support during the past 12 months.

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