

# Public Document Pack



**Service Director – Legal, Governance and  
Commissioning**

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Thursday 8 January 2026

## Notice of Meeting

Dear Member

### Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

The **Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee** will meet in the **Council Chamber - Town Hall, Huddersfield** at **10.30 am** on **Friday 16 January 2026**.

This meeting will be webcast live and will be available to view via the Council's website.

The items which will be discussed are described in the agenda and there are reports attached which give more details.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S Lawton".

**Samantha Lawton**

**Service Director – Legal, Governance and Commissioning**

Kirklees Council advocates openness and transparency as part of its democratic processes. Anyone wishing to record (film or audio) the public parts of the meeting should inform the Chair/Clerk of their intentions prior to the meeting.

## **The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee members are:-**

### **Member**

Councillor Cahal Burke (Chair)

Councillor Itrat Ali

Councillor Zarina Amin

Councillor Andrew Cooper

Councillor Jo Lawson

# Agenda

## Reports or Explanatory Notes Attached

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**Pages**

**1: Membership of the Committee**

To receive apologies for absence from those Members who are unable to attend the meeting.

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**2: Minutes of Previous Meeting**

1 - 10

To approve the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2025.

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**3: Declaration of Interests**

11 - 12

Members will be asked to say if there are any items on the Agenda in which they have any disclosable pecuniary interests or any other interests, which may prevent them from participating in any discussion of the items or participating in any vote upon the items.

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**4: Admission of the Public**

Most agenda items take place in public. This only changes where there is a need to consider exempt information, as contained at Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. You will be informed at this point which items are to be recommended for exclusion and to be resolved by the Committee.

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**5: Deputations/Petitions**

The Committee will receive any petitions and/or deputations from members of the public. A deputation is where up to five people can attend the meeting and make a presentation on some particular issue of concern. A member of the public can also submit a petition at the meeting relating to a matter on which the body has powers and responsibilities.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 10, members of the public must submit a deputation in writing, at least three clear working days in advance of the meeting and shall subsequently be notified if the deputation shall be heard. A maximum of four deputations shall be heard at any one meeting.

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## **6: Public Question Time**

To receive any public questions.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11, the period for the asking and answering of public questions shall not exceed 15 minutes.

Any questions must be submitted in writing at least three clear working days in advance of the meeting.

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## **7: Budget 2026/27 - Pre-Decision Scrutiny**

13 - 16

The Committee will be invited to consider the draft budget proposals for 2026/27, as agreed by Cabinet on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2025, so that the comments can be included within the consultation response and reported to Cabinet when it considers the budget at its meeting on 10th February 2026 and Council at its meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2026.

Contact: Sheila Dykes – Governance Manager

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Contact Officer: Sheila Dykes

## KIRKLEES COUNCIL

### OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

**Friday 14th November 2025**

Present: Councillor Cahal Burke (Chair)  
Councillor Zarina Amin  
Councillor Andrew Cooper  
Councillor Jo Lawson

In attendance: Councillor Carole Pattison, Leader of the Council  
Councillor Nosheen Dad, Corporate Portfolio Holder  
Rachel Spencer-Henshall, Deputy Chief Executive/  
Executive Director for Public Health and Corporate  
Samantha Lawton, Service Director for Legal Governance  
and Commissioning Support  
Ruth Calladine, Head of Procurement and  
Commissioning  
Laura Chamberlain-Powell, Service Development  
Manager  
Martin Gonzalez, Public Health Manager  
Jill Greenfield, Service Director, Communities and Access  
Services  
Jaime Nalson, Head of Culture and Tourism  
Adele Poppleton, Service Director, Culture and Visitor  
Economy  
Richard Smith, Creative Development Manager  
Lucy Wearmouth, Head of Improving Population Health

Apologies: Councillor Itrat Ali

**37 Membership of the Committee**

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor Itrat Ali.

**38 Minutes of Previous Meetings**

**RESOLVED –**

That the Minutes of the meetings held on 25<sup>th</sup> July and 12<sup>th</sup> September 2025 be approved as a correct record.

**39 Declaration of Interests**

No interests were declared.

**40 Admission of the Public**

All agenda items were considered in public session.

**41 Deputations/Petitions**

No deputations or petitions were received.

### 42 Public Question Time

No public questions were received.

### 43 Tourism Strategy

Councillor Carole Pattison, the Leader of the Council introduced the item and Richard Smith, Creative Development Manager provided a presentation covering the following key areas;

- The Tourism Strategy was one of three key interlinked strategic documents. The Heritage Strategy had been approved in April 2024 and the third, the Cultural Strategy, would be brought forward in 2026. The strategies centred on telling the story of Kirklees with the intention that they were interdependent but also distinct, supporting growth and creating a sense of pride for communities.
- Collectively, the three strategies would provide a framework linking to the opening of the Cultural Heart and regional alignment with West Yorkshire.
- This was the Council's first Tourism Strategy and the need for a strategic approach to support growth and resilience in tourism, hospitality and visitor attractions had been reinforced by the post-pandemic recovery period.
- The Council had commissioned research and development support from a specialist agency and this had included reviewing tourism trends and local consultation.
- This work had identified the district's strengths, as presented in the strategy.
- Work had also been done to ensure alignment with the West Yorkshire Local Visitor Economy Partnership and associated Destination Management Plan.
- The draft strategy had been presented to this Committee in February. It focused on improving visitor experience, supporting local businesses, regional positioning, celebration of strengths and benefits to residents and the community.
- A public consultation had taken place for six weeks in May and June 2025, through an online survey and two in-person drop-in sessions. 258 responses had been received (with 93% being from people who identified as Kirklees residents). The majority of respondents supported or strongly supported the six identified areas of strength and the plans to develop them. Landscape and wellbeing had been ranked the highest, followed by heritage, music/festivals/culture, food and drink, sport and screen tourism.
- Key themes from the feedback included; improving communications and promotion, improving venues and facilities, increasing inclusion and accessibility, strengthening travel infrastructure, promoting local businesses, developing green spaces and active tourism, community and regional engagement, diversification of cultural and screen tourism, development of accommodation, and town centre management and regeneration.
- An outline was given of how each of these themes was referenced within the strategy and would influence future actions. It was noted that some elements fell outside the scope of the strategy but had been shared with the relevant Council services.
- In respect of the potential impact of financial constraints on the delivery of the strategy, it was explained that delivery would be supported through working with the West Yorkshire Combined Authority and the Local Visitor Economy

## Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee - 14 November 2025

Partnership to bring investment into Kirklees, the redirection of resources to create a focused tourism role and strengthened funding bids.

- The Committee were advised that the consultation feedback would be considered and the final Tourism Strategy submitted to Cabinet for approval in January 2026.
- The Tourism Strategy would provide Kirklees with a clear direction for tourism development, strengthening the visitor economy and positioning the district with greater confidence in the regional offer.

Questions and comments were invited from Committee Members, with the following issues being covered:

- The contribution of voluntary and community sector organisations to local tourism activity was acknowledged and the promotion of events such as the Newsome Centre Local Festival and Lindley Band Oktoberfest on the Kirklees Council's "What's On" webpage was welcomed.
- It was queried under what circumstances a new Tourist Information Centre (TIC) might be considered viable in Huddersfield town centre. Whilst the current priority was to fully understand the district's tourism offer and identity, TICs were being developed in areas across the district and opportunities might potentially arise through the development of the spaces associated with the Cultural Heart.
- In respect of the financial value of investing resources into the strategy in terms of revenue for local businesses. This work was at an early stage and recognised models, such as STEAM (Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity Monitor) would be used to measure the economic impact going forward.
- The inclusion of town and village names within the strategy was welcomed, it was important that local identity and historical context were recognised.
- In respect of how the impact of the strategy would be measured; it was explained that the next step would be to use the strategy to produce deliverable action plans, co-produced with local communities with progress monitored against deliverable actions and supported by recognised evaluation tools.
- The feedback from the previous visit to the Committee had been incorporated into the draft strategy, alongside the results of the public consultation.

### **RESOLVED –**

- (1) That the Leader and the officers from Culture and Visitor Economy be thanked for presenting the draft Kirklees Tourism Strategy 2026-29 to the Committee.
- (2) That the consideration given to the input of scrutiny in the development of the latest version of the strategy be welcomed.
- (3) That the principles and objectives of the Tourism Strategy be supported.
- (4) That it be noted that the final strategy will be submitted to Cabinet for approval within the next few months.

## **44 Increasing Physical Activity in North Kirklees**

The Committee received a report in respect of proposals to develop a new sport and leisure facility in Dewsbury and to support wider improvement of physical activity levels in North Kirklees.

## Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee - 14 November 2025

To supplement existing knowledge and insight, engagement work had been commissioned in respect of the barriers and enablers to physical activity, with a particular focus on Batley and Dewsbury, with the final report being received in early October.

On 21<sup>st</sup> October, Cabinet had approved proposals to progress plans for a new sports and leisure facility in Dewsbury to supplement existing leisure provision in North Kirklees.

Councillor Carole Pattison, Leader of the Council, introduced the item and highlighted the following:

- The proposals were at an early stage and input from Scrutiny was welcomed.
- The research had indicated a strong demand for a replacement leisure facility, with a swimming pool, in Dewsbury.
- Further work was required to determine the full scope of the facilities.
- The importance of improving health outcomes and supporting people in North Kirklees to become healthier and live more active and longer lives was recognised.

Rachel Spencer-Henshall, Deputy Chief Executive, was present for the item and Martin Gonzalez, Public Health Manager, presented the report and advised:

- Activity levels in North Kirklees had been significantly lower than other parts of the district and lower than the national average when the previous facilities had been operating so it was important to ensure that a new facility was useful and welcoming to as many people as possible and would better meet the needs of the greater part of the population. An options appraisal was therefore being prepared to establish how this could best be achieved.
- It was acknowledged that delivery of a new facility would be a lengthy process so, in the interim, work would be undertaken to try and address physical activity inequalities alongside partners. KAL which would operate from community bases to expand capacity, broaden the offer and provide physical activity opportunities within the area, without duplicating work undertaken at grassroots level by communities and the voluntary sector.
- A number of barriers to physical activity had also been identified in the consultation, including public safety in open spaces and affordability. Work was ongoing with partners to look at the wider systemic issues and how barriers could be overcome. As an example, a multi-stakeholder project under the Place Partnerships Expansion Programme, with Sport England specifically focussed on these issues.

Questions and comments were invited from Committee Members, with the following issues being covered:

- In terms of the timescale for delivery and managing expectations, reference was made to the Spenn Valley Leisure Centre which had taken approximately six and a half to seven years from concept to completion. Work would be undertaken in the interim to increase capacity and support the community.

## Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee - 14 November 2025

- In respect of budgetary provision, the Administration intended to propose inclusion in the Council's Capital Plan and it was hoped that all political groups would support this.
- The funding for the feasibility study had already been identified within the Public Health Grant, alongside that required for the outreach work with Kirklees Active Leisure (KAL).
- Opportunities for co-location, such as with health services, would be explored and this may assist in attracting NHS investment. The options appraisal phase was very important to ensure that a quality offer was developed which worked for residents of North Kirklees.
- 998 survey responses had been received, supplemented by 59 focus group participants and 69 face-to-face engagements.
- The cost of accessing leisure provision/swimming was raised and the impact on families that did not have that disposable income. It was acknowledged that affordability had been highlighted by the consultation as a key issue, alongside perceptions of safety and the desire for social participation in activities.
- This issue would be considered as part of the modelling as the scheme progressed, whilst balancing the need to be manageable and sustainable. Swimming pools were costly to operate, particularly in terms of energy requirements, but consideration would be given to the available technology to ensure as efficient an operation as possible and also to income-generating facilities that could operate alongside to help offset costs and maintain an affordable price point.
- There was an intention for KAL to deliver a new physical activity offer from two sites, from early 2026, one in the Batley area and one in Dewsbury. The format and schedule were still to be finalised but might include services such as exercise referral, with one-to-one consultations, and group activities. It could evolve over time to react to demands and needs and would be designed to complement existing provision.
- In response to questions about long-term sustainability and how future facilities would maintain sufficient user numbers, in light of the previous issues affecting Dewsbury Sports Centre, it was explained that this had been, in part, due to the age, condition and inefficiency of the building. In terms of footfall and income generation, the new facility would not be a stand-alone offer but would complement facilities at Batley Sports and Tennis Centre and Spen Valley Leisure Centre. The feasibility study would examine both capital and ongoing revenue costs, to achieve a balance between costs and income generation. KAL would be involved to contribute operational expertise and ensure a functional and sustainable model.
- The importance of considering detailed design issues at an early stage was noted. The new facility would include a pool, but details on size and specification would be determined through the options appraisal process.
- In terms of the timescale for the feasibility study, it was explained that a timeline was in development. The hope was to produce the options appraisal fairly quickly to ensure that residents were informed and understood the position.
- This was a fantastic opportunity to be able to build something for the future and to appeal to all the different parts of the community and it was questioned whether models from other local authorities had been reviewed. It was confirmed that examples from across the country had already been examined and that the

## Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee - 14 November 2025

options appraisal would include further consideration of co-location models and varied facility provision to ensure decisions were based on the best available intelligence.

- The Cabinet was fully committed to delivery of the proposal and the scheme would be incorporated into the forthcoming budget proposals, which would be subject to approval at the Council's budget meeting in February. Budget discussions and engagement with other political groups were already underway.

### **RESOLVED –**

- (1) That the Leader and officers be thanked for attending to present the report to the Committee.
- (2) That the engagement with scrutiny and ward councillors at an early stage of the process be welcomed.
- (3) That it be noted that an independent options appraisal and feasibility study for the provision of a new sport and leisure facility for Dewsbury are to be progressed and it be requested that regular updates be brought to the Committee, to include the work being proposed, alongside partners, to supplement existing provision to support people across North Kirklees to be more active.
- (4) That it be recommended that a clear timeline be established, as a priority, to ensure that all interested parties are kept informed.
- (5) That it be recommended that the Committee's feedback be considered in the commissioning process for the options appraisal.
- (6) That the Committee's comments in relation to the potential outreach work be considered in the further development of these proposals.

### **45 Procurement Strategy - Proposed Ethical Procurement Policy and Supplier Code of Conduct**

A report was submitted which provided an overview of proposed updates to the Procurement Strategy and outlined the proposal to introduce an Ethical Procurement Policy and Ethical Code of Conduct for Suppliers.

Samantha Lawton, Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning and Ruth Calladine, Head of Procurement and Commissioning Support introduced the report, highlighting the issues below.

Councillor Nosheen-Dad, the Corporate Portfolio Holder, was also present for the item.

- Further to the introduction of the new Procurement Act 2023, which came into effect on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2025, and a recommendation from the external auditor, the opportunity had been taken to review and refresh the Council's Procurement Strategy.
- The refreshed strategy continued to be structured around five strategic key themes, which were:
  - Delivering social value
  - Promoting inclusive procurement
  - Developing a category-led approach

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- Innovation and improvement
- Good governance
- Significant progress had been made since 2022 in implementing the original strategy and improving processes and further work was ongoing.
- It was proposed that an Ethical Procurement Policy and an Ethical Code of Conduct for Suppliers be introduced. This was a key aspiration under the 'good governance' theme.
- The Ethical Procurement Policy set out the Council's commitment to ensuring that all procurement and contractual activities were conducted in accordance with ethical standards. It set out the legal framework, including measures to prevent modern slavery and defined the procedures for maintaining high levels of professional conduct within the Council when undertaking procurement.
- The Ethical Code of Conduct for Suppliers would apply to all suppliers/individuals and subcontractors acting on behalf of the Council, for all contracts valued over £25,000 (excluding VAT) where the procurement commenced on or after January 2026.
- Both documents had been developed in line with those of other authorities in the UK and benchmarking had been undertaken against similar policies adopted by other local authorities including Oxford, North Somerset, Rotherham, Doncaster, and Sheffield.

Questions and comments were invited from Committee Members, with the following issues being covered:

- In relation to the proportion of the Council's expenditure directed to local providers/suppliers and how this was monitored year-on-year, the Procurement Team monitored the top 300 spend suppliers and, during the 2024/25 financial year, the local spend had been 59% with these suppliers. Work was ongoing with the Council's Data and Insight Team to extend analysis to the whole of Council spend, with the aim of producing more comprehensive data during the next financial year. Procurement colleagues had also started working more closely with the Council's Business Team to increase understanding and knowledge of local suppliers who could be encouraged and supported to bid for Council contracts and to provide those links.
- The Council had started publishing its procurement pipeline. The Procurement Act required the publication of contracts valued above £2 million but Kirklees had chosen to publish details of lower-value procurements, up to 18 months in advance, with this information also being shared with the Business Team, to help local suppliers prepare to bid.
- The work being done on this was welcomed and it would be interesting to see the progress being made; it would also be useful to capture the reasons why local suppliers could not be used in some cases.
- In terms of the limitations on the Council in implementing ethical procurement policies assurance was given that the approach taken had gone as far as was reasonable. If approved by Cabinet, the Ethical Procurement Policy would be considered when contracts came up, or for renewal; it would not apply retrospectively. Consideration would also have to be in line with the exemption criteria set out in the Procurement Act.

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- It was noted that the Government had previously issued a Procurement Policy Note (PPN) to advise that authorities stop contracting with Russian suppliers where it was reasonable and practicable to do so but had not done so in respect of suppliers from any other countries. The Authority had to comply with the legislation. If Government guidance changed, then Kirklees would apply it as appropriate.
- The Council was contracted with Barclays Bank until 2032.
- With contracts valued above the procurement threshold, any decisions must comply with guidance 'to the letter' to avoid exposing the Council to significant risk.
- It was noted that the pool of financial institutions who dealt with local government finance had been very limited at the time of contracting. When the contract approached renewal, work would be undertaken to explore the viable options.

### RESOLVED –

- (1) That the Corporate Portfolio Holder and the officers be thanked for attending to update the Committee.
- (2) That it be noted that the updates to the Procurement Strategy and the proposals for the implementation of an Ethical Procurement Policy and Code of Conduct for Suppliers will be submitted to Cabinet for approval on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2025.
- (3) That it be noted that the Council's current procurement approach is in line with that of other local authorities and will continue to be regularly reviewed and as and when further government guidance is received.
- (4) That the work being undertaken to increase the amount of Kirklees spend going to local businesses be welcomed.

## 46 Corporate Safeguarding Update

Jill Greenfield, Service Director for Communities and Access Services and Laura Chamberlain-Powell, Service Development Manager introduced a report which provided an overview of the 2025 Statutory Organisational Safeguarding Assessment. The presentation highlighted:

- The adoption of a whole-Council approach to safeguarding, Kirklees being one of the few local authorities to do so.
- Although the overall RAG rating for the OSA was Amber, for statutory services it was Green. Good practice from these areas had been shared across other service areas.
- The robust approach around safeguarding demonstrated a strong commitment to ensuring safeguarding was everybody's business.
- The Corporate Safeguarding Policy, agreed in 2024 was updated annually.
- The OSA informed the continued development of the Corporate Safeguarding Action Plan.
- A summary of strengths, areas in development and next steps.
- The responsibility for safeguarding arrangements would continue through the Corporate Safeguarding Oversight Group, led by Service Directors from all service areas.

## Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee - 14 November 2025

- The Organisational Safeguarding Assessment had been submitted to the Kirklees Safeguarding Children's Partnership. This body would analyse and collate submissions into a comprehensive report to help shape further development activities and learning events. in preparation for the next submission which was due in 2027.

Questions and comments were invited from Committee Members, with the following issues being covered:

- The presentation was welcomed and the positive approach and progress made was commended.
- The rollout of safeguarding training beyond statutory services was noted and that staff across the Council who interact with the public would be better equipped to recognise and report concerns which was essential as it could help identify risks at an early stage.
- It was important to acknowledge the context in respect of the overall Amber rating.
- The breadth and depth of Council functions and services and the challenge of ensuring safeguarding was relevant and proportionate to each area. The 'toolbox talks' approach had been reported as a useful by colleagues in Place. Further work was required to develop training into suitable formats for different services and roles.
- There had been strong commitment and keenness across services, time and resource constraints had been the main barrier.
- Safeguarding practice was increasingly becoming embedded into business-as-usual processes.
- The Safeguarding Champions Group was now well established with representatives from across different service areas. Positive feedback had been received about the work of the group, which had played a key role in shaping training materials to ensure accessibility and applicability.

### **RESOLVED –**

1. That the officers from Communities and Access be thanked for attending to update the Committee.
2. That the Operational Safeguarding Assessment 2025 and the Corporate Safeguarding Action Plan be endorsed.
3. That the work being undertaken to strengthen safeguarding across all services be welcomed.
4. That it be noted that the Operational Safeguarding Assessment 2025 will be submitted for consideration by the Kirklees Safeguarding Children's Partnership.
5. That it be noted that the Corporate Safeguarding Action Plan will be reviewed by the Corporate Safeguarding Oversight Group, with the aim of continuously improving safeguarding practice across the Council.

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### **Lead Members Updates**

The Lead Members for each of the Scrutiny Panels gave an update in relation to the work currently being undertaken by their Panel:

- Environment and Climate Change
- Health and Adult Social Care
- Growth and Regeneration

## **Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee - 14 November 2025**

The Chair also provided an update in respect of the Committee's visit to 'Project Search' which had given Members an insight into the valuable work being undertaken.

### **48 Work Programme**

The latest version of the Committee's Work Programme for 2025-2026 was submitted for consideration.

<b>KIRKLEES COUNCIL</b>			
<b>COUNCIL/CABINET/COMMITTEE MEETINGS ETC</b>			
<b>DECLARATION OF INTERESTS</b>			
Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee			
Name of Councillor			
Item in which you have an interest	Type of interest (eg a disclosable pecuniary interest or an "Other Interest")	Does the nature of the interest require you to withdraw from the meeting while the item in which you have an interest is under consideration? [Y/N]	Brief description of your interest

Signed: ..... Dated: .....

## NOTES

### Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

If you have any of the following pecuniary interests, they are your disclosable pecuniary interests under the new national rules. Any reference to spouse or civil partner includes any person with whom you are living as husband or wife, or as if they were your civil partner.

Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain, which you, or your spouse or civil partner, undertakes.

Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from your council or authority) made or provided within the relevant period in respect of any expenses incurred by you in carrying out duties as a member, or towards your election expenses.

Any contract which is made between you, or your spouse or your civil partner (or a body in which you, or your spouse or your civil partner, has a beneficial interest) and your council or authority -

- under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and
- which has not been fully discharged.

Any beneficial interest in land which you, or your spouse or your civil partner, have and which is within the area of your council or authority.

Any licence (alone or jointly with others) which you, or your spouse or your civil partner, holds to occupy land in the area of your council or authority for a month or longer.

Any tenancy where (to your knowledge) - the landlord is your council or authority; and the tenant is a body in which you, or your spouse or your civil partner, has a beneficial interest.

Any beneficial interest which you, or your spouse or your civil partner has in securities of a body where -

- (a) that body (to your knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of your council or authority; and
- (b) either -

the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or

if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which you, or your spouse or your civil partner, has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.



**TITLE: BUDGET 2026/27 – PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY**

<b>Meeting:</b>	Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee
<b>Date:</b>	16 <sup>th</sup> January 2026
<b>Cabinet Member</b> (if applicable)	Councillor Carole Pattison
<b>Key Decision Eligible for Call In</b>	No No – pre-decision scrutiny
<p><b>Purpose of Report</b> The Committee is invited to consider the Council’s draft budget proposals for 2026/27, as agreed by Cabinet on 2nd December 2025, so that the comments made can be included within the consultation response and reported to Cabinet when it considers the budget at its meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2026 and Council at its meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2026.</p>	
<p><b>Recommendations</b> The Committee is asked for its response to the draft budget proposals for 2026/27 in the context of the four areas of focus below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) To what extent are the budget proposals in line with Central Government policy, pressures and directives.</li> <li>(ii) To what extent will the budget proposals ensure that the Council is able to contribute to the outcomes detailed within the Council Plan bearing in mind the identified constraints.</li> <li>(iii) To what extent do the budget proposals demonstrate that the results of any engagement, research or other evidence have been taken into account.</li> <li>(iv) To what extent are the challenges in delivering the savings within the timescales and the capacity to deliver services with reduced resources being addressed.</li> </ul> <p><b>Reasons for Recommendations</b> The Committee’s response will be reported to Cabinet and Council when these bodies consider setting the budget for 2026/27.</p>	
<p><b>Resource Implications:</b> Not applicable</p>	
<b>Date signed off by <u>Executive Director</u> &amp; name</b>	Rachel Spencer-Henshall – Deputy Chief Executive/Executive Director for Public Health and Corporate 6-1-26
<b>Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance?</b>	Not applicable
<b>Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal and Commissioning (Monitoring Officer)?</b>	Samantha Lawton 31-12-25

**Electoral wards affected:** All

**Ward councillors consulted:** Not applicable

**Public or private:** public

**Has GDPR been considered?** No personal data is included in this report.

## **1. Executive Summary**

1.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee is invited to consider the draft budget proposals for 2026/27, as considered by Cabinet on 2nd December 2025, so that its response can be reported to Cabinet when it considers the budget at its meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2026 and to Council at its meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2026.

1.2 Cabinet approved a five-week public consultation on the proposals starting on 3rd December 2025 and closing on 7th January 2026.

1.3 To help ensure that scrutiny is undertaken at a strategic level and adds value to the budget setting process, it is suggested that the Committee focus on the four lines of enquiry set out below:

- (i) To what extent are the budget proposals in line with Central Government policy, pressures and directives.
- (ii) To what extent will the budget proposals ensure that the Council is able to contribute to the outcomes detailed within the Council Plan bearing in mind the identified constraints.
- (iii) To what extent do the budget proposals demonstrate that the results of any engagement, research or other evidence have been taken into account.
- (iv) To what extent are the challenges in delivering the savings within the timescales and the capacity to deliver services with reduced resources being addressed.

1.4 The Committee's response will be reported to Cabinet and Council when these bodies consider the final budget for 2026/27.

1.5 An indicative order of business/timetable is set out below:

10:30 Introduction to the Budget by the Leader and the Chief Executive

11:00 Presentation by the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Regeneration and the service Director, Finance

The relevant Portfolio Holder(s) and Executive Director will provide an overview of the key pressures and savings for their directorate, including capital expenditure, followed, in each case, by the opportunity for the Committee to ask questions /comment:

11:25 Adults & Health Directorate

11:50 Children & Families Directorate

BREAK

13:00 Place Directorate  
including the Housing Revenue Account

14:00 Corporate Directorate

## **2. Information required to take a decision**

- 2.1 The draft budget proposals for 2026/27 are set out in the report to Cabinet on 2nd December 2025 which can be accessed using the following links:

[Budget 2026/27 - Report to Cabinet 3-12-25](#)

[Appendix A - General Fund Summary](#)

[Appendix B - Directorate Changes](#)

[Appendix C - General Fund Reserves](#)

[Appendix D - 2026/27 Budget Savings Summary](#)

[Appendix E - Capital Plan](#)

## **3. Implications for the Council**

### **3.1 Council Plan**

The Committee is asked to give consideration to the impact of the budget proposals on the priorities and outcomes within the Council Plan so that its comments can be reported to Cabinet and Council.

### **3.2 Financial Implications**

Not applicable to this report.

### **3.3 Legal Implications**

Not applicable to this report.

### **3.8 Other (eg Risk, Integrated Impact Assessment or Human Resources)**

Not applicable to this report.

## **4. Consultation**

Consultation on the draft budget proposals is ongoing and the results will be reported to the Cabinet and Council when the final budget for 2026/27 is considered.

## **5. Engagement**

- 5.1 Cross-party budget meetings have continued to take place monthly during the 2025/26 financial year. These meetings bring group leaders together to receive regular updates on the development and delivery of the Council's budget. The forum provides group leaders with an opportunity to ask questions, and to provide feedback as part of this process. It is attended by the Chief Executive, the Deputy Chief Executive and the Service Director for Finance.

- 5.2 The public consultation to support the 2026/27 annual budget was launched on 3 December 2025 and will run up until 7 January 2026. The consultation was launched following publication of the draft annual budget for the Cabinet meeting on 2 December 2025. The consultation was made available online and was supported by information summarising the budget proposals. The consultation asks the public for their opinions on the proposals, and whether they would be impacted by any of them. Feedback from the consultation will be collated, analysed and used to help inform final decision making related to the budget. A summary of the consultation results will be provided alongside the finalised budget at Cabinet on 10th February, and at Council on 25th February 2026.

## **6. Options**

Not applicable

**7. Next steps and timelines**

The Committee's response will be reported to Cabinet when it considers the budget at its meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2026 and Council at its meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2026.

**8. Contact officer**

Sheila Dykes – Governance Manager

**9. Background Papers and History of Decisions**

Report to Cabinet 3-12-25 – Budget Proposals 2026/27.

**10. Appendices**

None

**11. Service Director responsible**

Samantha Lawton, Service Director Legal, Governance and Commissioning