



**000000MINUTES of
STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE
19 MARCH 2026**

PRESENT

Chairperson	Councillor J Driver
Vice-Chairperson	Councillor J C Stilts
Councillors	M F L Durham, CC, A Fittock, P L Spenceley, M E Thompson, W Stamp, CC (Substitute for K M H Lagan) and J C Hughes (Substitute for R H Siddall)

1. CHAIRPERSON'S NOTICES

The Chairperson welcomed everyone to the meeting and went through some general housekeeping arrangements for the meeting.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTION NOTICE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J R Burrell-Cook, S Dodsley, K M H Lagan, A M Lay and R H Siddall. In accordance with notice duly given, Councillor W Stamp was attending as a substitute for Councillor Lagan and Councillor J C Hughes as a substitute for Councillor Siddall.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 29 January 2026 be approved and confirmed.

4. DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST

There were none.

5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No requests had been received.

6. PROJECT MANAGEMENT OFFICE AND PROCESS IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Strategy and Improvement presenting the Corporate Project Management Office (PMO) and Improvement Framework (the Framework) attached as Appendix 1 to the report, for review and adoption.

The Head of Performance, Improvement and LGR presented the report reminding Members that the Council had adopted a Process Improvement Framework in 2021 which set out how it would use improvement methodologies to improve productivity as a Council. The Framework document at Appendix 1 was an update to the 2021 and 2024 documents and built on the learning and achievements of the last five years. The Head of Performance, Improvement and LGR outlined the changes following the recent transformation programme and the support that the improvement team would be giving across the whole of the Council. It was noted that the new Strategic Framework highlighted how there would be a likely impact on team resources as a result of the upcoming LGR work. The report highlighted the tools and templates in place to ensure consistency and how this was supported by the internal governance of project management. As well as approving the framework, Members were requested to make a referral to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for awareness of the team as a resource as this linked to the work carried out by this Committee.

The Chairperson moved the recommendations set out in the report and these were duly seconded.

Councillor W Stamp raised a query regarding 'Stakeholder Engagement: active communication and involvement throughout the project life cycle' and in response the Head of Performance, Improvement and LGR explained that from the start each project defined the stakeholder(s) and what their communications plan would be. This would be signed off as part of the business case sign off and monitored throughout the project. The Head of Performance, Improvement and LGR explained that the associated risk would be if a project had not gone through the process and advised that she could not comment on a specific project without looking into the details. Councillor Stamp asked that it be noted she had raised this query and confirmed she would speak to the Officer outside of the meeting regarding a related matter.

In response to a question, the Director of Finance drew Members attention to section 8 of the framework which highlighted the expectations in respect of programme reporting and benefit realisation. He would expect that the project work seen through the PMO would have a clear tangible benefit as being derived for residents in some measurable manner.

The Chairperson then put the recommendations which were duly agreed.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the PMO and Improvement Strategic Framework (Appendix 1 to the report) be adopted;
- (ii) That the Framework is presented to Overview and Scrutiny Committee for awareness and to highlight the resource that can support improvements.

7. LEASE EXTENSION AND CONSOLIDATION OF UNIT 2 SPRINGFIELD INDUSTRIAL ESTATE, BURNHAM-ON-CROUCH

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Assets, Coast and Countryside requesting an extension to a lease for a business unit at Unit 2, Unit 2A and additional land at Springfield Business Park, Burnham-on-Crouch.

The report provided background information relating to the leases for units on Springfield Road Business Park and set out the number of years remaining on the three areas of land the subject of this report.

The Head of Assets, Coast and Countryside presented the report and advised that the Council had received a request from the leaseholder of the three leases requesting that they be combined and extended for a term of 90 years. It was noted that as the leases were not contracted out of the Landlord and Tenant Action 1954 the Tenant had an automatic right to review their agreements when they expired. Granting one lease would allow the terms to be aligned and reduced the administrative burden.

Members were reminded of a similar extension agreed in October 2025 and the delegation also agree at that time to approve such leases where the remaining lease term was less than 40 years. In this case, as one of the remaining leases was over 40 years the requested extension was being brought to the Committee for consideration.

The Chairperson moved the recommendations as set out in the report and these were duly seconded.

In response to a question regarding the proposed new valuation of the combined area to allow the new agreement to be agreed at current market value, Officers provided reassurance of the current delegation arrangements and how officers would seek to negotiate with the leaseholder. However, if a lease under market value was sought this would be brought back to the Committee as Officers did not have delegated authority to approve such leases.

The Chairperson then put the recommendation which was duly agreed.

RESOLVED that the Council agrees for a new lease for Unit 2 Springfield Industrial Estate for a term of 90 years.

8. BUDGET MONITORING REPORT - PERIOD 9 (END DECEMBER 2025)

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Finance providing an updated financial position for the period ended 31 December 2025 (Period 9). Members noted that this was not the standard quarterly update but helped to provide background information regarding planning for future years budgets.

The Director of Finance presented the report which provided an update on a number of areas including the following:

- **Revenue Budget Monitoring (Period 9)**, including the underspend against the 2025 / 26 budget for operating activities. It was reported that operating costs were forecast to be below the net expenditure estimates in the budget and combined with additional unbudgeted grant expenditure the planned use of £572k from general reserves included in the budget was not expected to be required. A nil forecast was therefore being shown. This meant that the general fund reserves would be retained at a higher level than previously estimated and Appendix 1 to the report provided further details.
- **Capital budget monitoring (Period 9)** Appendix 2 to the report provided details of the main projects which was substantially unchanged from period 8. The report detailed a list of projects completed during the year to December 2025.
- The report also provided an update **delivery against the five largest projects up to 31 December**
- **General Fund Creditors and Debtors** – Payments to suppliers were usually taken as soon as the payment was authorities and a table at paragraph 3.7.1 highlighted the percentage of invoices paid within 30 days.

Outstanding debt for general fund activities at as 31 December 2025 was set out at paragraph 3.7.2 and Members' attention was drawn to the level of debt being pursued (over 55 days). It was noted that of this debt £88k has been based to a debt collection agency, £44k had a payment plan in place and £30k had been paid since 31 December 2025. All debt was actively pursued, and write-offs only took place where all options had been pursued.

- **Reserves** – Appendix 3 to the report detailed the movements on Earmarked Reserves for 2025 / 26.
- **Revenue Budget Reconciliation** – Appendix 4 to the report provided detail of the revenue budget reconciliation between the opening and closing budget.

The Chairperson moved the recommendations as set out in the report. This was duly seconded.

In response to questions raised, the Director of Finance provided the following information:

- details of monies passed to debt collectors, the level of collection and how the related costs were taken from the amounts collected. Along with the Finance Team, the Director sought to ensure that all debt was collected in a timely way. In response to the discussion the Director agreed to bring back further detail on debt including debt more than two years old and the related costs to the Council.
- the Council's budget provided a contingency relating to the cost for setting up Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). Members' attention was drawn to Appendix 3 which detailed Earmarked Reserves and provided some commentary in respect of 'used costs incurred relating to LGR'. The 2026 / 27 budget papers contained provision to top-up this reserve if required. The Director informed the Committee that he was comfortable with the current position, explaining that if there were costs that transpired and accounted for within the current financial year, they would be met by a drawdown from reserves, as appropriate. The Director advised he would highlight this information in the outturn report due to be considered by the Committee in June 2026.

The Chairperson put the recommendations set out in the report and upon a vote being taken these were duly agreed.

RESOLVED that the Committee:

- (i) notes that the forecast revenue expenditure outturn as at 31 December 2025 is £20k over budget against the net service budget of £14.114m; also that the improved income position in a number of areas means that use of general reserves can be avoided. Further information can be found at section 3 and Appendix 1 to the report along with reasons for significant variances.
- (ii) notes the forecast capital expenditure outturn as at 31 December 2025 which is for a total capital programme delivery of £5.654m against revised budget of £6.980m, and the details of schemes completed in the year so far (paragraph 3.3.4 to the report). Further information can be found at Appendix 2 to the report along with reasons for significant variances.
- (iii) approves the movements in Earmarked Reserves set out in Appendix 3 to the report;

- (iv) notes the revenue budget reconciliation between the opening and current budget in Appendix 4 to the report.

There being no other items of business the Chairperson closed the meeting at 8.08 pm.

J DRIVER
CHAIRPERSON