

Dear Members

Resources Scrutiny Committee

A meeting of the Resources Scrutiny Committee will be held on **Tuesday 24 March 2026** at **7pm** in the **Craddock Room, Civic Centre, Riverside, Stafford** to deal with the business as set out on the agenda.

Please note that this meeting will be recorded.

Members are reminded that contact officers are shown at the top of each report and members are welcome to raise questions etc in advance of the meeting with the appropriate officer.



Head of Law and Governance

RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

24 MARCH 2026

Chair - Councillor M J Winnington

AGENDA

- 1 Minutes of 20 January 2026 as previously published on the Council's website.
- 2 Apologies
- 3 Public Question Time - Nil
- 4 Councillor Session - Nil

Page Nos

5	Members' Items - Nil		
6	Officers' Reports		
	ITEM NO 7(a) Q3 Performance Report	3	- 12
	HEAD OF TRANSFORMATION AND ASSURANCE		
	ITEM NO 7(b) Conclusion of Task and Finish Working Group - Collection of Revenues and Benefits Arrears	13	- 33
	REVENUES AND BENEFITS MANAGER		
	ITEM NO 7(c) Conclusion of Task and Finish Working Group - Review of the Constitution	34	- 62
	HEAD OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE		
	ITEM NO 7(d) Work Programme	63	- 66
	HEAD OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE		

Membership

Chair - Councillor M J Winnington

K M Aspin	A M Loughran
E L Carter	A Nixon
M G Dodson	J S Powell
R A James	J P Read
P A Leason	M J Winnington

Priority Delivery Plan for 2025-26

Priority 3 - Extract re Climate Change for Resources Scrutiny

Summary of Progress as at end of Quarter 3

				N/A	Total Number of Projects
Action completed	Work on target	Work < 3 months behind schedule	Work > 3 months behind schedule	Action not yet due	
1	1			1	3

Summary of Successes as at Quarter 3
Workshops have been held in 6 schools.

Summary of Slippage as at Quarter 3
None

Project	Actions and Milestones	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Progress Update	Symbol
Delivery of Climate Change Action Plan	Training to be carried out for Senior Officers and Elected Members	X				Keele University delivered three training workshops in the first quarter to senior service managers and elected members	
	Delivery of the Climate Change School Engagement Project	X	X	X	X	Active engagement with 16 schools and 20 teachers. Workshops have been held in 6 schools.	
	Decarbonisation Plans for SBC owned Sites will be commissioned that will provide options for the decarbonisation of our buildings.				X		

Priority Delivery Plan for 2025-26

Priority 4 - Effective Council

Summary of Progress as at end of Quarter 3

				N/A	Total Number of Projects
Action completed	Work on target	Work < 3 months behind schedule	Work > 3 months behind schedule	Action not yet due	
1	2		3	1	7

Summary of Successes as at Quarter 3

The Council's proposal for Local Government Reorganisation for Southern Staffordshire was completed and submitted to the Government in November 2025.

Summary of Slippage as at Quarter 3

Whilst initial discussions have taken place, the development of a work programme to provide more services online is behind schedule. This is due to other work having taken precedence. Meetings with managers to progress this work will take place during Q4 with the aim of having the work programme in place for the start of 2026/27.

The review of the Code of Conduct has now been completed and will go through the approval cycle in Q4.

Priority 4 - Effective Council

Project	Actions and Milestones	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Progress Update	Symbol
Provide more services online and improve accessibility	Work with services to produce a work programme		X			Initial discussions to scope the work needed and some data gathering has taken place. Meetings with managers has been delayed and will now commence in Q4	
	Delivery of the work programme (key actions will be added once the plan has been developed and approved)			X	X	This has been impacted by the delay in developing a work programme. Delivery will now commence in Q1 26/27	
Delivery of the Value for Money Improvement Plan (now referred to as the Governance Improvement Plan)	Complete delivery of the actions set out in the VFM improvement plan (this is reported on separately to Cabinet and the Audit and Accounts Committee)	X	X	X	X	Working is ongoing to deliver the actions set out in the improvement plan - this is the subject of a separate report	N/A
Code of Governance	Review and update the Code of Governance	X				The review of the Code has been completed. Updated Code to be reported to Leadership Team and onto Cabinet for approval in Q4.	
Consultation	Undertake consultation/engagement with the public and stakeholders on key projects that affect our communities eg the production of the local plan.	X				Work is ongoing with regard to undertaking consultation for specific projects.	

Project	Actions and Milestones	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Progress Update	Symbol
	These will be determined each year as part of the development of the annual priority delivery plans.						
Local Government Reorganisation	Develop an action plan to respond to the Government's Proposals for Local Government Reorganisation.	X				The final proposal for submission to government has been drafted and was considered by Council and Cabinet in November.	★
	Delivery of the action plan (key actions will be added once the plan has been developed and approved)		X	X	X	A report was approved by Cabinet in November setting out a number of key areas for preparation for LGR. This will be developed into an action plan in due course.	✓

Summary of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) - Quarter 3 2025/26

KPIs for Priority 3 - Extract re Climate Change

Indicator	Year End 24/25	Target 25/26	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Year End 25/26	Rating Symbol	Comments
Climate Change									
Climate Action Plan progress is monitored via the Climate Action Board and reported quarterly to Cabinet.	New measure							N/A	Data has been collected to enable review of the Action Plan but delays in recruiting to Climate Change roles has affected officer capacity in this part of the service.

KPIs for Priority 4 - Effective Council

Symbol	Description	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	End of Year
	Performance exceeds target	3	4	5		
	Performance on target	2				
	Performance < 5% below target	2	3	2		
	Performance > 5% below target					
N/A	Reported Annually/Not Applicable	4	4	4		
	TOTAL	11	11	11		

Priority 4: Effective Council

Indicator	Year End 24/25	Target 25/26	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Year End 25/26	Rating Symbol	Comments
Good Customer Experience									
Days taken to process new Housing Benefit and Council Tax Claims	19.3	20 days	20	23	13.0			★	
Days taken to process new Housing Benefit and Council Tax change of circumstances	4.9	9 days	2.1	2.4	3.1			★	
% of calls answered	96.7%	95%	97.1%	97.5%	97.5%			★	
Number of calls answered			15,036	14,644	14,433			N/A	This is not a measure but gives context to the performance in call handling
Average call wait time	59 seconds	90 seconds	44 seconds	35 seconds	43 seconds			★	
Number of services (forms) available online	New	N/A	55	85	85			N/A	This year will be used to establish a baseline
Number of online transactions	New	N/A	10,218	13,030	22,386			N/A	This year will be used to establish a baseline

Indicator	Year End 24/25	Target 25/26	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Year End 25/26	Rating Symbol	Comments
Funding Council Services									
% of Council Tax collected annually	97.8%	98% at end of year	28.6%	55.7%	82.8%				The collection rate is marginally below the equivalent period in 2024-25, which was 83.1%. This small dip seems to be consistent with most other Staffordshire authorities and not specific to particular issues in Stafford. We continue to follow our firm but fair recovery policy.
% National non-domestic rates (NNDR) collected	98.6%	98% at end of year	28.9%	57.1%	81.8%				A dip in collection rate was predicted this year as many businesses in the retail, hospitality and leisure industries face significant increases in their bills. The equivalent collection rate in 2024-25 was 83%. The amount of business rates collectable this year has increased by £4.2m or 8%.

Indicator	Year End 24/25	Target 25/26	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Year End 25/26	Rating Symbol	Comments
Good Governance									
Freedom Of Information requests within time i.e. 20 working days	79.4%	85%	83%	90.2%	88.1%			★	
Number of public consultations/engagement exercises undertaken		New						N/A	Annual measure

Agenda Item 7(b)

Review of the Revenues and Benefits Service Debt Collection Process

Committee: Resources Scrutiny Committee
Date of Meeting: 24 March 2026
Report of: Deputy Chief Executive (Resources)
Portfolio: Resources

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To receive the report of the Task and Finish Group which reviewed the policies and processes involved in the Collection and Recovery of Council Tax and Business Rates.
- 1.2 To forward the recommendations of that group to Cabinet at its meeting on 21 May 2026.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That this report be noted and accepted
- 2.2 That the results of the review be reported to Cabinet on 21 May. (with updated arrears figures being included for the end of year performance).
- 2.3 That no significant change be made to the Billing, Collection and Recovery Policy at this time.
- 2.4 That any statutory changes to the Council Tax and Business Rate collection process be included in an updated policy, and reported Cabinet, as necessary.
- 2.5 That officers continue to identify those debts which are irrecoverable and when necessary, process them for write-off in accordance with the Council's Constitution.
- 2.6 That the project to review older debts be continued into the 2026-27 financial year and that the effectiveness of continued action be reviewed on a 6-monthly basis by the Section 151 Officer.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.7 The group was convened with the following remit:
- To ensure that debt collection arrangements are effective and proportionate in approach.
 - To ensure that the Council's policies to support residents who are unable to pay are adequate.
 - To review the results of the increased resource, dedicated to collection of prior year arrears.
- 2.8 The Council must balance the need to use its recovery powers, which are considerable and sometimes unpopular, and the need to keep the write offs as low as they can be, with an acceptance that some of our older debts cannot be recovered.
- 2.9 Having received extensive information about the process undertaken and the challenges facing the service, members of the group feel that that they now much better understand the issues and are satisfied that the Council is using its resource and its powers appropriately.
- 2.10 The creation of the group coincided with Cabinet approval of £175K of additional resource to the Revenues Team to be used specifically to review old debts with a view to identifying what is recoverable and what is not. Members received regular updates of the progress of this work and are satisfied with the progress that has been made.
- 2.11 The Council's share of the revenue recovered has exceeded the cost of the project and members feel that a continuation of the project is appropriate.

3 Key Issues

- 3.1 Traditionally the Council's performance on the collection of Council Tax and Business Rates is good with around 98% of what is due being collected within the year that it relates to. Action continues after the financial year has ended with much of the remaining 2% also being recovered.
- 3.2 The value of Council Tax and Business Rates collectable is very high (£111m and £60m per year respectively) and so even the small proportion of uncollected amounts becomes significant.
- 3.3 The Council has traditionally been reluctant to write off arrears balances and so the indebtedness of defaulters has increased incrementally over a period of many years. The balance between keeping write offs low and accepting that some balances are irrecoverable needed to be reviewed.

4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities

None.

5 Report Detail

- 5.1 The Task and Finish Group met 4 times between 2 September 2025 and 26 March 2026 with meeting content as follows:

Meeting 1 considered the problems facing the Revenues Team and their frustrations relating to weaknesses in legislation and loopholes that are being exploited. The Council's response to a Government consultation paper was also discussed.

Meeting 2 examined the Billing, Collection and Recovery Policy in detail (see 5.2 below and **APPENDIX 1**) It also discussed plans to increase the degree to which traditional 'paper' communications can be moved onto electronic platforms to achieve quicker responses to the customer and save money for the Council. (5.6 below)

Meeting 3 looked at certain scenarios whereby debts should be recognised as irrecoverable and therefore be written off. (5.3)

Meeting 4 agreed the content of the final report.

5.2 Billing, Collection and Recovery Policy

- 5.2.1 The policy, which is attached at **APPENDIX 1** was last updated in 2023. No process changes are needed at this time, though the group recognised that some changes to national legislation were alluded to in the Government consultation process. The consultation sought views on whether councils ought to issue more reminders, than is currently the case, before taking court action and whether a minimum time limit ought to be prescribed before court action can be taken.

- 5.2.2 Should any changes be enacted in legislation, officers will revise our practices immediately and bring a revised policy to Cabinet.

5.3 Write Off Process

- 5.3.1 The Council's Constitution requires that any irrecoverable debts of £10,000 or more are considered for write off by Cabinet. Authority is delegated to the Section 151 Officer to write off debts below this amount. No change is proposed to this policy, which enables members to review the most significant debts with more operational matters being dealt with by officers.

5.3.2 The circumstances in which debts are traditionally written off include:

- The debtor has died and insufficient estate exists
- The debt is subject to bankruptcy of winding up orders and cannot be recovered.
- The debt is subject to the debt relief instruments such as Debt Relief Orders or Individuals Voluntary arrangements.
- The debtor has absconded and cannot be traced.

5.3.3 The group discussed the Council's traditional reluctance to write off debts, in other circumstances and the consequences of that.

5.3.4 A significant piece of work is ongoing to try to recover outstanding arrears and this has established some categories of cases whereby we do not expect to achieve payment and so write off will be expedited. The types of case are summarised below.

- Deceased Estates owing under £1,000
- Petty balances under £10
- Small balances - under £100 and over 2 years old
- Statute barred debts, 6 years old not having progressed to court.
- Debts over 10 years old for which all reasonable recovery action has been taken, without success.
- Debts under £500 for which all reasonable recovery action has been taken, without success

5.4 Arrears Summary

5.4.1 During the period from 1 April 2025 to 28 February 2026.

- Council Tax arrears have been reduced by around £2.3m, of which £1.56m was payment, of which over £125K is retained by Stafford Borough Council
- £1.7m in payments have been collected against arrears balances. Our share of the payments received equates to around £493K.

5.4.2 The £175K invested in staffing resource, would therefore appear to be justified.

5.5 Continuing Project

5.5.1 The results summarised above are pleasing and justify the investment, but more work is needed. The £175k investment, which was matched by Cannock Chase Council paid for 6fte agency staff, to support the shared Revenues team.

- **4fte** had been identified as needed to support the processing of day-to-day billing and recovery work, which had developed a significant and increasing backlog. That work is now up to date and progressing as it should. The assessment of resource needed appears to be accurate.
- **2fte** was committed to reviewing prior year debts. This is going well but progressing slower than hoped in some areas. The work to review the arrears will not be completed by the end of the financial year and repayment of the debts which we put into recovery will happen over a period of several years.

5.5.2 Efficiencies across the Revenues and Benefit Service, resulting from improved processing, automation and system usage have enabled us to generate vacant posts via natural wastage and so the 4fte required to deal with day-to-day Revenues work, of the shared service, can be accommodated by the re-designation of these vacant posts. Recruitment to these posts will begin shortly and we would expect that the new recruits will be recruited and trained by October 2026.

5.5.3 Whilst recruitment and training is ongoing, it is proposed that the 6fte agency staff that are currently engaged, by the shared service, be extended until 30 September. A decision can be made at that time as to whether continued agency support is needed to deal with the arrears project. It is proposed that the ongoing business case for continuation be reviewed by the Section 151 Officer on a 6-monthly basis.

5.6 Electronic Communications

5.6.1 During the consideration of the strengths and weaknesses of the Revenues Service, particular discussion took place about the relatively low numbers of Council Tax and Business Rates payers who have chosen to receive their bill by email. This facility has existed for several years with only 20% take up by Council Tax payers and 31% of Business Rate payers receiving e-bills at the time of meeting 2 on 2 October.

5.6.2 E-billing take up as at end of February was

- 22% on Council Tax
- 46% on Business Rates

- 5.6.3 With postal charges increasing and Royal Mail's delivery times increasingly being the subject of complaints to our service, we will proactively seek to increase our electronic communications across the whole of our service. This process has begun with an active e-billing campaign beginning in January and recipients of paper bills being encouraged to go digital by an enclosure with the 2026 annual bills.
- 5.6.4 Technology exists to use SMS/text messaging to prompt contact from residents for whom we hold mobile telephone numbers. Officers are testing this technology with a view to implement it in the most appropriate way, in the coming year. We anticipate this reducing the number of formal reminders that need to be issued and again reducing our costs.

6 Implications

6.1 Financial

The review itself has no financial implications. If implemented, the recommendations will involve initial financial outlay in the region of £88,000 for each council which is expected to be greatly exceeded by increased receipts. The continuing project will be subject to regular review of its cost effectiveness.

6.2 Legal

As a Billing Authority, for Council Tax and a Charging Authority, for business rates, the council has a duty to collect as much of the local taxes due to it as it reasonably can. The legal powers to do so are contained in the Local Government Finance acts of 1992 and 1988 respectively.

6.3 Human Resources

The redesignation of vacant posts to increase the Revenues Team is included in the report.

6.4 Risk Management

None

6.5 Equalities and Diversity

None

6.6 Health

None

6.7 Climate Change

None

7 Appendices

Appendix 1 - Billing, Collection and Recovery Policy

8 Previous Consideration

None

9 Background Papers

None

Contact Officer: Rob Wolfe - Revenues and Benefits Manager

Telephone Number: 01543 464397

Ward Interest: None

Report Track: Resources Scrutiny Committee 24 March 2026
Cabinet 21 May 2026

Key Decision: No



**STAFFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL
REVENUES AND BENEFITS SERVICES**

Billing, Collection and Recovery Policy

March 2026

Council Tax and Business Rates Collection and Recovery Policy

1.	Introduction.....	10
2.	Statement of Objectives	10
3.	Background	11
4.	The Policy.....	11
5.	Dealing with Vulnerable People.....	12
6.	Bill and Reminder Stages.....	13
6.1.	Bills.....	13
6.2.	Joint and Several Liability	14
6.3.	Missed Payments – Reminders	14
6.4.	Final Notices	14
6.5.	Summons and Liability Orders.....	14
7.	Liability Orders and Enforcement Stages	15
7.1.	Overriding Aims	15
7.2.	Attachment of Earnings (Council Tax Debts only).....	15
7.3.	Deductions from Benefits (Council Tax Debts Only)	16
7.4.	Taking Control of Goods (formerly known as Levy of Distress)	16
7.5.	Bankruptcy, Liquidation and Charging Orders.....	17
8.	Insolvency (Bankruptcy and Winding Up proceedings)	18
8.1.	Legal Requirements.....	18
8.2.	Use of Specialists	18
8.3.	Circumstances where Insolvency Proceedings may be appropriate	18
8.4.	Special Circumstances	19
8.5.	Consideration of Insolvency and Officers’ Actions	19
9.	Charging Orders.....	20
9.1.	Legal Requirements	20
9.2.	Use of solicitors.....	20
9.3.	Circumstances where a Charging Order may be appropriate	20
9.4.	Decision Making.....	21
10.	Committal Proceedings	21
11.	Policy Review	21

Billing Collection and Recovery

1 Introduction

Stafford Borough Council is fully committed to ensuring that all aspects of the collection and recovery processes are delivered in the most efficient and effective ways, to the highest standards of customer care and having regard to the individual needs of customers and the interests of the residents and businesses that we serve.

The Council is also committed to ensuring that its taxpayers' interests are properly protected by maximising the income that can be generated for receipts of Council Tax and Business Rates.

This document sets out the policy guidelines that the Council will follow, in the billing, collection and recovery of Council Tax and Business Rates.

2 Statement of Objectives

- We will issue a prompt, correct bill that is understandable and easy to pay
- We will collect monies outstanding quickly and efficiently
- We will treat all liable persons with courtesy, respect and sensitivity.
- We will ensure any person experiencing legitimate difficulty in paying has the opportunity to agree flexible payment arrangements.
- We will attempt to contact the tax payer as early as possible after payment default occurs to avoid formal recovery action where possible.
- At all stages of our recovery action are an attempt to contact the tax payer to arrange mutually acceptable payment arrangements.
- We will ensure those who attempt to avoid paying without legitimate reason will be pursued using all legal means.
- We will recover all costs incurred in recovery action from the relevant tax payer.
- We will provide clear advice at every stage of recovery including tax payers' rights and responsibilities and also sources of independent advice.
- We will promote regular Direct Debit payments and other regular payment schemes that ensure all amounts due are collected in the year due.
- We will ensure that any exemptions, discounts and reductions are paid only to those who are genuinely entitled to them.

3 Background

The collection and recovery of Business Rates and Council Tax is prescribed by the Local Government Finance Acts of 1988 and 1992 respectively, and subsequent regulations.

The Council must undertake collection and recovery within this legal framework, but it does allow for some degree of discretion regarding the manner and emphasis of administering the procedures.

Procedures are designed to take account of several basic principles, which are crucial to ensure a successful process and make sure that there is a fair and equitable service to the taxpayers of the Council.

Maximising the Council's income through receipts of Council Tax and Business Rates is essential to facilitate the services provided by this Council, and by other preceptors. We will achieve this by:

- Ensuring that all chargeable property is brought into the rating list or valuation list promptly.
- Ensuring that only legitimate claims for reductions are accepted.
- Ensuring that "scams" designed to avoid liability for charges are countered.
- Ensuring that Bills are issued promptly and collected.
- Promoting efficient collection methods.
- Taking swift, but fair and proportionate action against defaulters.
- Ensuring that any discretionary reliefs granted, support the Council's priorities, comply with our policy and are supported by the appropriate business justification.

4 The Policy

Prevention is the first essential step in a sensitive and cost-effective recovery process. There are several measures that can be taken to minimise indebtedness at an early stage which reduce the necessity for costly enforcement action which not only reduces costs but works towards avoiding potential hardship for taxpayers. Our main priority is to make early contact with taxpayers to establish the correct amount that is payable and make a mutually acceptable arrangement to pay, which does not increase indebtedness.

We will endeavour to distinguish between those who have genuine difficulty in paying their debts and those who are deliberately withholding, delaying or giving false evidence in respect of payment of debt. All taxpayers will be given the opportunity to make arrangements to pay and any sanctions will only be taken after attempts to make satisfactory arrangements have failed.

We will ensure that those who have the means to pay are required to do so on the due date specified on their bill and procedures will be in place to ensure that recovery action is taken uniformly against anyone who fails to pay for no good reason, thereby ensuring that all taxpayers are treated equitably.

We will ensure that all available allowances, discounts, rebates and reliefs are granted in appropriate cases at the earliest possible time in order to ensure the amount owed is correct. We will make all reasonable attempts at all stages of recovery to identify taxpayers who may be entitled to claim discounts or other reductions. Taxpayers will be encouraged and assisted to make appropriate applications.

We will identify payment default as early as possible and will then contact the taxpayer, to attempt to make arrangements to pay.

We will ensure that all of our documentation is clear and easy to understand, and that appropriate publicity is undertaken to encourage people to pay early or to contact us promptly in order to avoid their debt building up.

We will consider the taxpayer's financial and personal circumstances at every stage of contact, particularly as early as possible after the debt is established to allow reasonable timescales in which to settle the outstanding debt.

All statutory notices will be issued as early as possible within the legal framework to ensure maximum cash flow (having taken account of the various exceptions within this policy document).

Whilst in general payments will be required in accordance with the regulations, where taxpayers pay regularly, but not in accordance with the statutory instalment scheme, we will be as flexible as possible to their needs of when it is suitable for them to pay. Our policy aim is to ensure payment of the full bill for the year, within the year.

We will monitor outstanding debts and take appropriate recovery action. Where there is default on an arrangement, we will attempt to contact the taxpayer in order to either review the arrangement or to take further recovery action.

We will make all reasonable attempts to identify and bill partners and other individuals (where they exist) who may be jointly liable for a charge in order to recover against the person who has the greatest ability to pay.

This policy will be available on the Council's website and in appropriate circumstances, the Council will issue press releases on specific cases.

5 Dealing with Vulnerable People.

The Council recognises and takes very seriously its duty to support vulnerable people, to ensure that our services are provided fairly and equitably to all. This responsibility is of particular importance, when considering the actions that we take in terms of issuing bills and the actions needed to enforce unpaid debts.

Vulnerability takes several different forms and there can be no single solution that can be applied in all circumstances. All instances of vulnerability that are brought to the attention of the Revenues Team will be considered on their own merits and where specific actions are considered necessary and are reasonable, they will be taken. It is often the case that an individual's particular vulnerability will not remove their liability to pay or the necessity of recovery action, but help will be given when appropriate.

Ordinarily, the Council would expect specific actions and adjustments to be made in the case of vulnerability caused by disability, old age, illness or an inability to deal with financial matters, though this list is not exhaustive.

The actions that the Council would ordinarily expect to take include but are not exclusive to:

- Noting the vulnerability, to enable identification of it when dealing with ongoing issues, with a particular resident.
- Issuing bills and correspondence in alternative formats or languages other than English.
- Having bills and correspondence directed to an agreed third party such as family member, friend appointee or attorney.
- Contacting and/or discussing issues with those third parties as they arise.
- Ensuring, as far as is reasonably practicable, that the individual is receiving any discounts or reductions that they may be able to claim.
- Referring individuals to voluntary organisations or other third-party agencies when specialist help may seem to be needed.
- Individual consideration of specific circumstances prior to the commencement of Enforcement action.
- Notifying enforcement agents of known vulnerabilities when they are engaged to enforce debts against vulnerable people.
- Ensuring that Enforcement Agents have in place adequate measures to deal appropriately with vulnerabilities that they become aware of.

Dependant upon the point at which a potential vulnerability is brought to the attention of the Revenues Team, the actions previously taken or ongoing, it may be appropriate for the Council to seek proof of the vulnerability being claimed, before embarking on a specific or form of action.

6 Bill and Reminder Stages

6.1. Bills

- We will issue bills and revised bills, where necessary, as early as possible.
- We will encourage Council Tax and Business rate payers to receive their bill electronically in preference to paper bills.
- We will promote and encourage Direct Debit as the easiest, most effective method of payment but all other methods will be made freely available.

- Direct Debit payers will be offered a choice of alternative payment dates within the month.
- Monthly instalments are the preferred method of payment frequency but any reasonable method of payment within the instalment period will be considered.

6.2. Joint and Several Liability

- A bill may be addressed to one or more joint taxpayers in respect of an amount for which they are jointly and severally liable.
- The recovery procedures may be applied to one or more than one of the joint taxpayers.
- Different recovery proceedings cannot be applied simultaneously to more than one joint taxpayer for the same debt.

6.3. Missed Payments - Reminders

- Taxpayers are required to pay in accordance with the regulations. We will aim to issue reminders within one calendar month of an instalment being missed in accordance with the regulations.
- The reminder will inform the taxpayer of the amount in arrears and that if payment is not received within 7 days the facility to pay by instalments will be withdrawn and will result in further recovery action for the full years charge.
- If the instalments are brought up to date within the statutory period or we make an agreement with the taxpayer, we will not take any further action providing future payments are made correctly.

6.4. Final Notices

Final Notices, requiring payment of the full amount within seven days, will be issued when:

- The overdue amount represents the whole balance of the charge for a year, i.e. no future instalments will become due. Or
- The required number of Reminder Notices have already been served and complied with for a particular debt (one reminder is required for Business Rates, two are required for Council Tax).

6.5. Summons and Liability Orders

- If payments are not made as required or agreed, the Council will make complaint to the Magistrates' Court and in accordance with the regulations, a summons will be issued giving at least 16 days notice before the hearing date.

- At the hearing, if the court is satisfied that the charge is legally payable and remains unpaid, the Magistrates are required to issue a Liability Order, together with an order for reasonable costs.
- Taxpayers who do not attend Court will usually be dealt with in their absence.
- Unless alternative arrangements for payment have been made, or a course of recovery action decided upon, in the case of Council Tax debts, a notice will be sent to the taxpayer when a Liability Order has been granted by the Magistrates. The notice may be issued either directly by the Council or by agents acting on our behalf.
- This notice will include the statutory requirement for information regarding the taxpayer's financial circumstances and employment, so that arrangements to recover the debt may be made from earnings or Income Support/Job Seekers Allowance as appropriate.
- In addition to the statutory requirement for financial information, this notice will emphasise the need to make an acceptable arrangement to pay based on the taxpayer's financial circumstances.
- Where a defaulter is known to be in receipt of Local Council Tax Reduction, more than one notice will be issued before Enforcement Agents visit the taxpayer.
- In the case of Business Rate default, debts may be issued to Enforcement Agents without a warning notice being issued.

7 Liability Orders and Enforcement Stages

7.1. Overriding Aims

- The Council's aim is always to collect any outstanding debt as efficiently and effectively as possible and will base any discretion as to methods of enforcement on this overriding aim.
- This aim will be balanced with ensuring that debtor's individual circumstances, where available, are considered.
- The previous conduct of a debtor will be taken into consideration when exercising discretion.
- The regulations only allow for one method of enforcement to be taken at any one time in relation to a single Liability Order. The Council will aim to use the most effective method at any point that debts remain outstanding.

7.2. Attachment of Earnings (Council Tax Debts only)

- If the details of the taxpayer's employment are known and an Attachment of Earnings Order is considered appropriate, we will make an Attachment of Earnings Order and serve it on the debtor's employer.

- The sums to be deducted are prescribed in the regulations and employers have a statutory obligation to comply with an Order.
- An employer may deduct £1.00 towards administrative costs on each occasion a deduction is made.
- Where the debtor has two or more unpaid liability orders the Council may request a maximum of two Attachment of Earnings Orders be initiated.
- Where alternative arrangements have been made but not adhered to, the recourse to enforce an Attachment of Earnings Order will be taken.
- If it is felt by a debtor that the deductions under the Attachment of Earnings Order will cause hardship, the debtor may apply to the Council for the deductions to be reviewed. This review will be undertaken on the basis of ensuring that any debts are collected as efficiently and effectively as possible.

7.3. Deductions from Benefits (Council Tax Debts Only)

- Where appropriate we will apply to the Department for Works and Pensions for deductions from Jobseeker Allowance or Income Support
- The Council can apply to the Job Centre Plus for deductions to be made from Universal Credit, Jobseeker Allowance, or Income Support but not from any other benefits.
- The Council Tax (Deductions from Income Support) Regulations 1993 specify the fixed weekly amount deductible which is 5% of the Universal Credit, Jobseeker Allowance or Income Support for a single person aged over 25.
- The fixed nature of the rate of deductions may render this method of recovery inappropriate, for example where the ongoing liability is greater than the deduction rate, or other means of recovering the debt are available.

7.4. Taking Control of Goods (formerly known as Levy of Distress)

- We will pass debts to Enforcement Agents (formerly known as bailiffs) to take control of debtors' goods, to enforce payment where it is felt that no alternative enforcement power is available or appropriate.
- Enforcement agents are required by law to undertake a compliance stage to encourage the debtor to engage, prior to visiting the debtor's home or place of business, or charging fees.
- Legislation permits the Enforcement Agent to charge statutory fees directly to the debtor. There is therefore usually no cost to the Council in this process.
- When a debt is referred to an Enforcement agent, we would expect the debtor to resolve payment of his arrears and associated fees with the agent. The Council will only intervene or withdraw a case from the Agent in

exceptional circumstances, for example in the event of a Council error leading to the referral.

- The Council will from time to time, issue operating rules and a Code of Conduct to its Enforcement agents. The aim of these is to ensure that the agents operate fairly, proportionately and within the legal framework.
- We will always try to establish if a debtor is vulnerable, and act accordingly when this is the case. This will not ordinarily require the matter to be returned by the Agent. It is considered reasonable, at this stage for the Agent to require some form of proof or verification of the vulnerability and where this is provided, allow time for the debtor to seek the support needed to be able to deal with the Agent's visit.

7.5. Bankruptcy, Liquidation and Charging Orders

- Any amounts due can be deemed to be debts for the purposes of the Insolvency Act 1986 in relation to winding up limited companies or to petition for the bankruptcy of individual.
- We will engage the assistance of private sector specialists in this type of recovery action, when appropriate.
- We will generally, only consider personal bankruptcy after other recovery methods have failed. However, we will choose it sooner if information is received that suggests that by initiating bankruptcy proceedings, this be a more effective method of collection.
- Insolvency proceedings against companies may be preferable to attempting to take control of their goods, and this method will be deployed where it appears preferable, having regard to the size of the debt and the circumstances and conduct of the debtor.
- We will make reasonable efforts to ascertain if there are assets available prior to making a petition for bankruptcy or insolvency.
- Insolvency and bankruptcy proceedings will only be considered where the overall debt is over £5,000. The debt may be made up of debts other than Council Tax.
- Charging Orders will be applied for where £1,000 or more is owed and it is felt appropriate to do so, having regard for the amount of debt and circumstances of the debtor. These will generally be followed with applications for Orders for Sale. Again, private sector specialism may be procured in these cases.

The procedures to be followed in the case of Bankruptcy, Insolvency and Charging Orders are as below.

8 Insolvency (Bankruptcy and Winding Up proceedings)

Legal Requirements

The legal requirements are contained within the Insolvency Act 1986, as amended. Essentially, bankruptcy action can be taken against any debtor who owes in excess of £5,000 to creditors and who, for whatever reason, is unable to satisfy his creditors' claims in full.

In addition, a debtor may initiate action by petitioning for their own bankruptcy. Winding Up proceedings are used against Limited Companies.

Insolvency frees a debtor from overwhelming debts so they can make a fresh start, subject to some restrictions, and makes sure the assets belonging to the debtor are shared out fairly among all the creditors. However, the consequences can be severe and can involve the loss of the debtor's home or business and considerable legal and Trustee costs. The level of costs will reflect the complexity of the matters involved and the extent to which the debtor cooperates with the Trustee who is administering the estate.

Insolvency action takes place in the County Court or the High Court if the debtor resides in London.

8.1. Use of Specialists.

The Council will refer appropriate cases to a solicitor. Solicitors are fully authorised to deal with all matters connected with insolvency from the issue of the Statutory Demand to dealing with contested matters. Where appropriate a private sector specialist will be engaged to undertake the work on our behalf.

8.2. Circumstances where Insolvency Proceedings may be appropriate

- Where the debt exceeds £5,000 and the debtor has sufficient assets or equity to ensure the debt is recoverable by the Official Receiver or the Trustee.
- Where the debtor is not making regular and mutually agreed payments that are sufficient to clear accruing debt and the arrears within an acceptable timescale.
- Where insolvency action is considered most effective in recovering from a particular debtor.
- Where the debt has arisen as a result of fraud.
- Where specific assets cannot be identified but there are indicators that the debtor is one of high material worth for example, renting high value property/has a high salaried profession.
- Where bankruptcy action would encourage payment from specific groups of debtors where their credit rating is important to them, for example company directors, self-employed people and those people needing finance.

- Where debt is arising as a result of continuing default and facilitating occupation by another party would be beneficial to the Council's future Business Rate or Council Tax income.

8.3. Special Circumstances

If made aware of the following circumstances prior to a Bankruptcy Order being obtained, the Council will consider withdrawing proceedings in favour of alternative enforcement action.

- Where a debtor, as a result of age, severe mental illness, or serious learning difficulties, is vulnerable and cannot deal with their affairs.
- Where the debtor is currently in receipt of 100% Council Tax Reduction with no accruing debt and another method of recovery is considered to be more appropriate.

8.4. Consideration of Insolvency and Officers' Actions

A decision for the Council to begin bankruptcy proceedings will be made by the Principal Revenues Officer, Revenues Services Manager or Revenues and Benefits Manger.

As part of the consideration as to whether insolvency action is appropriate in an individual case, officers will consider the overall debt position, the financial position including income and equity, personal circumstances and the level of engagement including previous payment history.

The more information held about the debtor the more efficient the decision-making process will be in terms of selecting the most effective enforcement option. As part of the decision-making process the Council officer will seek to build a picture of the debtor and their circumstances and will achieve this in various ways, including some or all of the following activities. The list is not exhaustive.

- Demanding financial information in writing following a Liability Order being granted whilst stating bankruptcy is an option to be considered.
- Checking all Council Tax records and if possible, any other records to see if there is any reason bankruptcy would not be appropriate as a result of vulnerability issues.
- Checking with the Benefits Service to ensure that all Council Tax Benefit and Reduction due to the debtor has been posted to the Council Tax account and that their records do not indicate significant vulnerability issues.
- Checking H.M. Land Registry to confirm property assets.
- Checking with a Credit Reference Agency for information on outgoings, requests for finance, mortgages and other financial information.
- Checking known or potential employment details.

- Checking Benefit Overpayment records and Business Rates records (and including all debts in the bankruptcy action).
- Checking Companies House records for business information.

The Council may engage private sector practitioners or solicitors to undertake these checks and/or issue appropriate correspondence to the debtor.

9 Charging Orders

9.1 Legal Requirements

If the aggregated balance on Council Tax Liability Orders for a property is over £1,000 then an application may be made for a Charge to be placed on the same property only, to secure the debt owed to the Council. Charging Orders are not a method of enforcement in that the debt remains unpaid until the property is sold, and the Charge extinguished by the payment of the debt from the proceeds. The property may never be sold or not for a considerable time. If the debt is to be actively recovered then following a Charging Order being obtained, an application must be made to the Court for an Order of Possession and Order for sale.

Charging Orders may only be used for Business Rates debt with the agreement of the ratepayer and therefore such action will not be taken without the written consent of the ratepayer.

9.1. Use of solicitors.

The Council will refer appropriate cases to a solicitor. Solicitors are fully authorised to deal with applications for Charging Orders, Orders for Sale and Possession and contested matters. Where appropriate, private sector specialist assistance will be sought.

9.2. Circumstances where a Charging Order may be appropriate.

- Where the property is currently for sale voluntarily and a Charging Order is used as a way of securing the debt by agreement with the Council.
- Where the property is owned by a debtor who resides outside UK jurisdiction.
- Where a debtor, as a result of age, severe mental illness or serious learning difficulties cannot deal with their affairs.
- Where the debtor's whereabouts are unknown making service to allow bankruptcy action difficult.
- Where a payment arrangement has been agreed on the basis that the debt is secured via a Charging Order.

9.3. Decision Making

The number of cases is very small. The Revenues and Benefits Manager will consider each case on its own merits being mindful of all the facts and the level of arrears.

10 Committal Proceedings

Where Enforcement Agents have attempted to take control of an individual's goods and (for whatever reason) have been unsuccessful, the Council has the power to apply for committal to prison. This requires attendance at the Magistrates Court to enable a means enquiry to be conducted to see whether failure to pay is due to 'wilful refusal' or 'culpable neglect'.

The Council will only use this as a last resort. There will be many attempts to make arrangements and elicit payment, before reaching this stage, but in some cases, there is no alternative.

In the majority of cases where committal action is taken, there will have been persistent refusal or avoidance of payment and the Magistrates will be asked to impose a suspended sentence and order the taxpayer to make monthly or weekly payments.

Legal precedents exist that state that Magistrates should not commit forthwith without either considering alternatives or having made suspended orders to coerce payment. Once a suspended order has been made, debtors are obliged to pay as required by the order. If the debtor fails to pay, the Magistrates are entitled to remove the suspension and order that the debtor serves the sentence. In these cases, the Council will give debtors an opportunity to attend hearings to show cause why they have not paid. The term of imprisonment will not exceed three months for each Liability Order.

If the Magistrates decide that failure to pay was not due to wilful refusal or culpable neglect, they have the power to remit all or part of the debt. However, they are entitled to remit the debt, on the basis of inability to pay.

If a term of imprisonment is served, the relevant Council Tax will be written off as irrecoverable. Any part payment will reduce the term of imprisonment proportionally.

11 Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed and updated, from time to time, in order to ensure it remains valid, effective, and relevant. Updates that do not materially alter the aims or operation of this policy, for example changes to the underlying legislation, will be approved by the Local Taxation and Benefits manager in consultation with the cabinet Member(s) responsible for Council Tax and Business Rates.

Material changes to the policy will require further approval in accordance with the Council's Constitution.

Agenda Item 7(c)

Review of the Constitution

Committee: Resources Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 24 March 2026

Report of: Head of Law and Governance

Portfolio: Resources

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the Committee with details of the recommended amendments to the Constitution as suggested by the Task and Finish Review Group along with a proposed revised Code of Conduct for Employees.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the amendments detailed in the **APPENDIX** be recommended to Council.
- 2.2 That the revised Code of Conduct for Employees attached as **APPENDIX 2** be recommended to Council for inclusion in the Constitution.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.3 Adoption of the amendments has been recommended by the Constitution Review Task and Finish Working Group as part of the annual review.
- 2.4 The Code of Conduct for Employees is a key policy document setting out the framework for expected behaviour.

3 Key Issues

- 3.1 Article 15.1 of the current Constitution requires the Monitoring Officer to review the Constitution on an annual basis. Accordingly, the Resources Scrutiny Committee agreed to establish a Task and Finish Review Group to undertake a Review of the Constitution.

3.3 The Constitution Task and Finish Review Group have recommended amendments to the Constitution during the course of their review. If agreed by this Committee, the suggested amendments to the Constitution will be reported to the Council meeting on 14 April 2026.

3.4 The Code of Conduct for Employees has been reviewed, updated and restructured to give greater clarity as to the behaviour expected of employees. This has also included updating the Council's values and embedding them into the Code.

4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities

4.1 The Constitution supports all of the Council's Corporate Priorities.

5 Report Detail

5.1 Article 15.1 of the Constitution requires the Monitoring Officer to review the Constitution on an annual basis. Following the last review, the Resources Scrutiny Committee at its meeting held on 16 December 2025 agreed to establish a Task and Finish Review Group in order to undertake the annual Review of the Constitution.

5.2 The aim of the Task and Finish Review was to report any suggested amendments to the Constitution to this Committee, with a view to making formal recommendations to Council on 14 April 2026. The Review Group have recommended amendments to the Constitution during the course of their Review, which are detailed in the **APPENDIX**.

5.3 There is currently no national Code of Conduct for Employees, so it is for the council to determine its own local arrangements. This falls within the remit of the Head of Paid Service.

5.4 The Council has an existing Code of Conduct for Employees, and this has been reviewed, updated and restructured to give greater clarity as to the behaviour expected of employees.

5.5 The Nolan Principles have been used to set the context for the new Code and the Council's values have been updated and embedded into it.

5.6 The new Code of Conduct for Employees is set out in **Appendix 2** and a summary of the key changes is given in **Appendix 3**.

5.7 The Code signposts to a number of other policies to give more detail on expected standards. The new Code of Conduct will be issued to all employees and training is to be organised.

5.8 The trade unions recognised by the Council have been consulted on the Code of Conduct for Employees.

6 Implications

6.1 Financial

None

6.2 Legal

None

6.3 Human Resources

None

6.4 Risk Management

None

6.5 Equalities and Diversity

None

6.6 Health

None

6.7 Climate Change

None

7 Appendices

Appendix 1: Amendments to the Constitution: 2025 Annual Review

Appendix 2: Code of Conduct for Employees

Appendix 3: Summary of Changes to the Code of Conduct for Employees

8 Previous Consideration

None

9 Background Papers

File available in Law and Governance

Contact Officer: Jackie Allen
Telephone Number: 01785 619552
Ward Interest: All
Report Track: Resources 24 March 2026
Council 14 April 2026

Appendix 1

Amendments to Constitution: 2025 Annual Review

[NB. Wording to be added is shown within a grey box and wording to be deleted is shown as ~~struck through~~].

Section 6 Responsibility for Functions

Scheme of Delegations

3.7 Head of Economic Development and Planning

3.7.3 In respect of enforcement action:

- (a) Authority to approve, in appropriate circumstances, entry on the private land under Section 196A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
- (b) Authority not to pursue enforcement action where it is considered that such action would not be expedient.
- (c) Authority to serve a notice under Section 330 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, and authority to prosecute for noncompliance.
- (d) Authority to enforce against breaches of planning obligations including taking proceedings for injunctions and to carry out works in default where it is considered appropriate and expedient.
- (e) To authorise the service of Breach of Condition Notices, Enforcement Notices, Planning Contravention Notices, Stop Notices and Temporary Stop Notices.
- (f) Authorise the service of notice under Section 215 of the Town and Country Planning Act, and carry out work in default and / prosecute when the notice is not complied with by the date of compliance, and to authorise prosecution proceedings where an Enforcement Notice, Listed Building Enforcement Notice, Conservation Area Enforcement Notice, Breach of Condition Notice, Temporary Stop Notice or a Stop Notice has not been complied with by the date of compliance.

- (g) To authorise prosecution proceedings where a Planning Contravention Notice has been served and a response has not been received or false or misleading information has been supplied.
- (h) Authorise where appropriate the serving of a Community Protection Warning, and a Community Protection Notice under The Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.
- (i) Authority to deal with complaints under Part 8 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 (High Hedges) including any resulting notices, appeals, prosecutions and enforcement action arising from those complaints.
- (j) Enforcement of control over advertisements.
- (k) Discontinuation Notices in respect of Advertisements.

Part 4, Section 1: Council Procedure Rules

5.6 Substitution

- (a) The Leader or Secretary of a Political Group may substitute any member of the Group for any other member of the Group on any Committee of the Council other than Planning Committee and Public Appeals Committee by notifying the Head of Law and Governance by 5.00pm on the working day before the day of a meeting to be held before 4.30pm or 12 noon on the day of a meeting to be held at or after 4.30pm. Any such substitute Member shall be a Member of the Committee for the duration of the meeting in respect of which the notification was given and any subsequent meeting convened by resolution of that meeting for the purpose only of determining a matter or matters deferred from that meeting. Substitute Members shall not be Members of the Committee for any purpose other than attendance and voting at the meeting.
- (b) (A Political Group to which seats have been allocated on Planning Committee may nominate substitute members in accordance with rule 5.6(a). However, a member may not be nominated under this rule if they could not be a member of the Committee by reason of rules 5.2 and 5.5.

~~(c) — A Political Group to which seats have been allocated on Public Appeals Committee may nominate substitute members up to the number indicated in the table below. The nominated members may be substituted for a member of Public Appeals on notice being given in accordance with rule 5.6(a). A member may not be nominated under this rule if they could not be a member of the Committee by reason of rule 5.5.~~

~~Number of members of the Group on Public Appeals Committee
Number of nominated substitutes~~

1 to 3	1
4-6	2
7	3

Code of Conduct for Employees

Section	Title	Page Number
1	Purpose, Scope, and Core Principles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nolan principles • Values • Core Principles and Expectations • Speaking Up 	2
2	How We Treat People <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dignity and Equality • Community • Colleagues • Councillors and Political Neutrality 	5
3	Professional Conduct at Work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dress and appearance • Working hours and attendance • Working Safely • Use of the Council's Property • Recruitment and other Employment Matters • Working and the Law 	9
4	Conduct Outside of Work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outside commitments and private work • Being a member of an organisation • Personal Use of Social Media 	12
5	Integrity and Accountability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bribery & Fraud • Financial and other interests • Procurement • Sponsorship and Grants • Gifts & Hospitality 	15
6	Use of Information and the Media <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disclosure of information and confidentiality • Contact with the Media • Use of social media for work 	18
Annexes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Policy Index and Links 2. Declaration of Interests Form 3. Outside Commitments Form 	20 21 22

SECTION 1 – PURPOSE, SCOPE, AND CORE PRINCIPLES

Purpose

- 1.1 This Code of Conduct sets out the Council's expectations of its employees in their conduct and behaviour at work. In certain circumstances this also extends to your actions outside of work. As well as setting out the Council's expectations of your conduct, these policies amongst others are also in place to protect and support you in undertaking your job. Expectations of public sector employees may differ from the private sector due to our services and salaries being funded by taxpayers' money.
- 1.2 The Code of Conduct is based on the work of the Nolan Committee on the Standards in Public Life which sets out the Seven Principles of Public Life:
- (i) **Selflessness** - Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.
 - (ii) **Integrity** - Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.
 - (iii) **Objectivity** - Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.
 - (iv) **Accountability** - Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.
 - (v) **Openness** - Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.
 - (vi) **Honesty** - Holders of public office should be truthful.
 - (vii) **Leadership** - Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour and treat others with respect. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.
- 1.3 The Code outlines the minimum standards that you as a Council employee, must adhere to; the majority are common sense and how most employees would naturally conduct themselves.

1.4 The Code also reflects the Council's values of:

- **Respect** - treating everyone with dignity, regardless of role, background, or opinion. We want our customers and employees to feel heard and valued.
- **Integrity** - doing the right thing, even when no one's looking. Integrity is about staying honest, accountable, and transparent in every decision and action.
- **Adaptability** - staying flexible when plans shift, challenges come up or there are external pressures. Being adaptable will help us to bounce back and keep moving forward.
- **Collaboration** - working together to make use of varied skills and perspectives, to deliver the best outcomes.

Please refer to "Our Values" for guidance on what they mean and the expected behaviours underpinning them.

1.5 You must comply with this Code as it forms part of your terms and conditions of employment. The Council believes that employees are responsible for their actions. It is the responsibility of all employees to read the Code. If any of the provisions contained within this Code of Conduct, related Codes of Practice or Policies are not fully understood, then you must, in your own interests, seek clarification from your manager, Head of Service or the Human Resources Service.

Core Principles and Expectations

1.6 All employees are expected to perform their duties with honesty, integrity, impartiality and objectivity and in particular to:

- (a) Give the highest possible standards of service.
- (b) Do nothing inside or outside working hours which could damage the Council's reputation.
- (c) Behave honestly and act in good faith in all dealings with others.
- (d) Be aware of and follow the Council's policies and procedures.

1.7 You have a duty at all times to uphold the law and relevant guidance bearing in mind the public's trust placed in Council employees.

1.8 You should never mislead people who use the Council's services or lie about the Council's business.

- 1.9 The people who live in, work in or visit the areas we serve are entitled to high quality services and a high standard of behaviour from all of the Council's employees. Public confidence in employees integrity would be shaken if they suspect we have been influenced by improper motives or we had acted inappropriately. You must not put yourself in a position where your honesty, integrity or professionalism could be called into question. The Council reserves the right to monitor its employees including the use of surveillance, (in accordance with any relevant legislation and Council policies) to ensure that the provisions of this Code of Conduct are being adhered to.
- 1.10 If your actions or behaviour fall below the standards set out in this Code then the Council may take formal disciplinary action against you including the possibility of summary dismissal without notice. Serious misconduct, criminal offences or other acts committed outside working hours including the use of social media which bring the Council into disrepute may also result in formal disciplinary action being taken against you, in accordance with the Council's procedures.
- 1.11 You must comply with the rules and procedures relating to behaviour and conduct as set by the Council in corporate policies such as this and others referred to throughout this document. Further examples are listed in Annex 1.
- 1.12 Your service may also have its own service specific policies that set out standards and behaviours expected in carrying out professional duties.
- 1.13 If you are unsure about the content of any policy or how it affects your role then you should raise the matter with your manager for advice and guidance.
- 1.14 In addition to the Council's Code of Conduct, you may be expected to those from your professional institute or other organisations. If you feel there is a conflict between the Codes, please consult your line manager on how to proceed.

Speaking Up

- 1.15 If you believe that a colleague has breached the Code of Conduct then you should raise this with your line manager, your Head of Service or Human Resources. Alternatively you can report the breach through the Council's Speaking Up Framework.
- 1.16 The Framework is intended to encourage and enable employees to raise concerns safely and without fear of retribution within the Council rather than overlooking a problem.

**In reading this code, always err on the side of caution.
If it feels wrong, it probably is.
If in doubt ask your manager for advice**

SECTION 2 - HOW WE TREAT PEOPLE

Dignity and Equality

- 2.1 Everyone has the right to be treated with dignity at work. You should always respect your colleagues, customers, councillors and treat them how they wish to be treated. Consider what you say and how it might be perceived by others during formal and informal interactions.
- 2.2 The Council will not tolerate an employee's physical, emotional or verbal abuse, harassment, discrimination, victimisation or bullying of service users, members of the public or other employees. Please refer to the Dignity at Work Policy for further information.
- 2.3 All employees are required to follow the Council's policies on equalities and diversity when dealing with customers, colleagues and councillors. All forms of harassment, including racial and sexual harassment, and harassment on the grounds of disability, religion, gender, sexuality, age, political affiliation or membership of a Trade Union are unacceptable.

Working with the Community

- 2.4 You must always remember your responsibilities to the people of the areas we serve and those who use our services and ensure courteous, efficient and impartial service delivery to all groups and individuals within the community.
- 2.5 The Council values its partnership with other public, private and voluntary organisations and employees should create successful relationships when working with these organisations.
- 2.6 The Council believes that all its employees are entitled to be treated with respect, free from any threat or violence from members of the public, service users or others.
- 2.7 If a member of the public is abusive or unreasonable, and you cannot ease the situation, you should try to end the conversation politely and then tell your manager. Do not be rude or offensive in return. You should inform your manager, preferably in writing immediately of any aggressive or offensive customer you have dealt with.
- 2.8 If you feel physically threatened you should remove yourself from the situation and report immediately to your line manager. You have a duty to follow guidance to keep you and your colleagues safe from harm when working with difficult service users.
- 2.9 Your manager will be able to give you details of the policies that operate within your service area for dealing with aggressive or offensive customers and appropriate training will be provided.

- 2.10 Employees working with young people or vulnerable adults are in a particular position of great trust. A breach of that trust, assault or sexual misconduct or breach of policies and procedures meant to safeguard vulnerable service users and other recipients of Council services will be regarded as potential gross misconduct. The lead officer for Safeguarding will advise on good practice and working arrangements for dealing with vulnerable people which aim to ensure an appropriate professional environment and the application of necessary safeguards through risk assessment to address any potentially vulnerable situations. This advice may be supplemented locally by your Head of Service.

Working with other Employees

- 2.11 All employees have a right to be treated with respect and dignity at work. All forms of bullying, including violence, threats or verbal aggression towards colleagues is unacceptable and will be dealt with seriously by the Council. If there are issues that cannot be resolved amicably with a colleague, then you must make the situation known to your Manager and the employee's manager if you feel able to do so. Employees who want to report concerns in confidence should refer to the Council's Speaking Up Framework.
- 2.12 Personal relationships with colleagues who have a line management relationship with the post you hold, must be declared upon appointment. If, subsequent to appointment, you develop a close personal relationship with a colleague with whom you have a line management relationship, then you must inform your Head of Service immediately who will consider whether alternative line management arrangements can be put in place to ensure compliance with the code. Whether or not you are line managed by the person you are in a relationship with, personal relationships should not have an impact on your duties.
- 2.13 There are certain circumstances where close personal relationships can impact on the Council. If you are unsure about the need to inform your Head of Service about a close personal relationship with a colleague, then you should seek advice from your manager, or from the Human Resources Service.

Managers and Employees

- 2.14 It is important that employees have an effective working relationship with their manager. You must always be open with each other. Your manager will tell you what is expected from you, respond to any concerns you may have about your work, assess your performance and give you feedback, in seeking advice on how you can improve.
- 2.15 Your manager and the Human Resources Service should tell you about the Council's personnel policies and arrange for any appropriate training and development. You should help your manager identify what training and development you need and how this can be provided.

- 2.16 You can expect your manager to be reasonable and fair to you. Managers are there to support employees in their job and give them guidance and help, if they need it, to perform their duties. In return your manager is entitled to expect employees to be reasonable and fair and to seek guidance and assistance if required.
- 2.17 Employees have a duty to carry out the tasks assigned to them diligently and in accordance with instructions. You must follow any instructions that your manager gives you to the best of your ability. You must not be negligent in your duties as this may seriously affect the Council or the people who use its services. If there is anything about your job you are unclear about, you should ask your manager.

Working with Councillors and Political Neutrality

- 2.18 Members of the Council and employees have distinct but complementary roles. It is important for the effective operation of the Council that these respective roles are well understood and relationships between Members and employees are constructive. Mutual trust and respect between employees and Members are essential to good Local Government and service delivery.
- 2.19 In carrying out your duties you must ensure that the individual rights of all Councillors are respected. You are expected to be polite and efficient when dealing with Members, as you are with fellow employees, and follow any instructions from your manager. Equally, Members are expected to treat employees with respect. If you consider that a Member has been disrespectful you should raise this with your line manager in the first instance and they may refer the matter to the Monitoring Officer.
- 2.20 You should not discuss any grievances or complaints about your job or your manager with Members but should use the relevant Council procedures relating to grievances etc.
- 2.21 Close personal familiarity between employees and Councillors should be avoided whenever possible, as this can damage the relationship, can be embarrassing to other employees and Councillors and can damage the Council's reputation and probity. If you are in or develop a close personal relationship with a Councillor you should notify your Head of Service who will along with Human Resources, consider whether any steps should be taken to avoid conflicts of interest arising.
- 2.22 You should never directly or indirectly canvass any Councillor when you are making an application for further employment within the Authority.
- 2.23 Employees serve the Council as a whole and not just those in the controlling Group. You must ensure that the rights of all Councillors to information and assistance are respected.

- 2.24 You must not allow your personal or political opinions to interfere with or influence your work. Certain posts are "politically restricted" and subject to statutory requirements. If your post is politically restricted, you will be told of the restrictions that apply. If you require any further information, then ask your manager or the Human Resources Service.
- 2.25 You must not attend meetings of the political groups on the Council without the express consent of the Chief Executive and consideration should be given to attending with another officer.

SECTION 3 – PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT AT WORK

Dress and Personal Appearance

- 3.1 Council employees act as ambassadors for services and must maintain a standard of dress and appearance appropriate to their role and to the work being undertaken. Clothes should provide sufficient cover not to be offensive and should not present a risk to health and safety. Within these general guidelines, clothes worn for cultural, religious or traditional reasons, whether on a day to day basis or to mark particular occasions will normally be acceptable.
- 3.2 Whilst at work, employees must be clean, tidy and ensure good personal hygiene. Where particular clothing is provided for health, safety and hygiene and/or uniform purposes, it must be worn and laundered regularly.
- 3.3 Identity passes must be worn whilst on Council premises and must be available at all times when you are on Council business. Employees must have their identity passes visibly displayed so that customers can identify them as council employees. Where lanyards are used these should not carry any slogan, badge or other matter which is or could be construed as a political message or be offensive in any way. Employees must not allow any other person to use their identity badge for access to Council buildings or for purposes of identification of any kind. This includes other employees, contractors/agency workers or visitors. Non-employees who have not been provided with identification should always be escorted in non-public areas.

Working Hours and Attendance

- 3.4 You should always be reliable and on time when you come to work and attend appointments/meetings. This applies to whether you are working in the office, at home or on site.
- 3.5 All employees below Service Manager are expected to record the hours that they work in line with their service process (ie via the corporate excel timesheet or the Capture IT system) and to submit this to their line manager for approval every 4 weeks. This is part of the Council's arrangements to ensure compliance with the Working Time Regulations. If you have more than one role within the Council, you will need to notify your manager so that this can be taken into account.
- 3.6 If you need to ask for leave under any of the Council's leave schemes, for example, maternity, flexible working hours or special leave, you must follow the conditions of the scheme.
- 3.7 If you are not well enough to attend work, you should follow the Managing Sickness Absence reporting procedure.

Working Safely

- 3.8 The Council has a duty to provide a safe and healthy working environment. The Council will also try and protect the health and safety of the people who use our services.
- 3.9 You also have a responsibility for health and safety and are expected to make sure your working environment is safe for yourself, your colleagues and the people who use Council services and that you do not put employees or service users in danger.
- 3.10 Your behaviour and ability to carry out your duties at work must not be impaired due to the use of alcohol, drugs or substances. Please refer to the Drug & Alcohol Policy for further details.
- 3.11 All employees have a duty to report unsafe working practices or working environments to their line manager or through the Speaking Up process.

Use of the Council's property

- 3.12 The Council's property such as stationery, telephones, photocopiers, computers, tools, materials, offices, and facilities should only be used for Council business in accordance with the relevant Council policies and procedures.
- 3.13 The IT Security policy provides for reasonable personal use of your assigned work laptop/mobile phone and the Acceptable Use Policy gives further details on what is permissible.
- 3.14 You must not steal, borrow without authorisation, damage on purpose, or seriously neglect anything that belongs to the Council. You should not steal or damage on purpose anything belonging to the Council's customers, service users, employees, Councillors, partners or anyone else who you come into contact with through your work.
- 3.15 You must return any property or equipment which has been assigned to you for use (eg laptop) by your manager as soon as you leave your job or when your manager tells you to do so. The Council will regard any theft or improper private use involving its money, property, equipment or investments as a serious matter.
- 3.16 Telephone calls and emails/internet logging systems are in operation in the Council and may be used to identify usage for private purposes. Any communications using Council systems, including the use of mobile telephones may be monitored by the Council in accordance with the law and relevant policies.

- 3.17 You must ensure you use public funds entrusted to you in a responsible and lawful manner in accordance with the rules prescribed by the Council to ensure value for money and to avoid legal challenge. All employees are required to comply with the Council's Financial Regulations, administrative procedures relating to financial management and Procurement Regulations.

Recruitment and other Employment Matters

- 3.18 If you are involved in recruitment and selection you are expected to ensure that all appointments are made strictly on the basis of merit in accordance with the Council's recruitment and selection processes.
- 3.19 If you are related to an applicant for a position or have a personal or business relationship with an applicant, you should not be involved in the recruitment process or attempt to influence the decision in any way.
- 3.20 You should not be involved in decisions relating to the discipline, promotion or pay adjustments of any other employee who is a relative, partner or close personal friend of yours.
- 3.21 Any reference that you give in relation to another employee on behalf of the Council whether it is written or verbal, should be factual and/or give an honest representation of the experience, skills, abilities and/or other qualities of that employee. Any comments should be based on substantive evidence and be available for scrutiny at any time.

Working and the Law

- 3.22 You are expected to keep within the law during your employment at all times. The Council cannot act, or require, any employee to act outside or in breach of the law.
- 3.23 You must tell your manager if you are charged with any offence, including driving offences. The manager will decide if the Council's reputation may be damaged as a result, taking account of the job and whether or not the charge might make you unfit to do your job.
- 3.24 You must tell your manager, in writing, if you receive any criminal conviction, binding over or caution, unless it is excluded by the provisions of legislation relating to the Rehabilitation of Offenders.

SECTION 4 – CONDUCT OUTSIDE OF WORK

Outside Commitments and Private Work

- 4.1 You have a right to time off work to undertake public duties such as being a magistrate, governor but you must ensure that in performing these duties your actions do not conflict with the interests of the Council e.g. if you are a magistrate, you should not hear a case brought by the Council's regulatory services.
- 4.2 Employees can give unpaid service to voluntary or other organisations and the Council welcomes this involvement in community affairs. However, it is important that unpaid service does not affect your ability to do your job or the Council's reputation. You should tell your manager and make a formal declaration of an interest where you intend to give any unpaid service to:
- (a) any organisation that receives grant aid from the Council; or
 - (b) any organisation or pressure group which may try to influence the Council's policies.
- 4.3 Employees should not have any other outside employment which could give rise to a conflict of interest or impact on your ability to do your job. You must complete the "Outside Commitments Form" (see Annex 2) and obtain prior consent of your Head of Service before taking up any outside employment or commitments. Consent will not be given if the outside employment could conflict with, or be detrimental to, the Council's interests or weaken public confidence in the conduct of the Council's business.
- 4.4 Your Head of Service will confirm any consent in writing and a copy of this will be passed to Human Resources. Where the consent of a Head of Service is withheld, you will have the right to appeal through the normal grievance procedures.
- 4.5 Outside employment or commitments should be reviewed and updated annually and you must notify your Head of Service of any changes at the earliest opportunity.
- 4.6 Any secondary or other employment carried out by you must be done in your own time, including time when you are on annual leave. The work must not be done during the time the Council employs you and that includes periods of sickness absence. You should be aware of the restrictions on working hours in legislation and not put yourself in a position where the Council would be in breach of legislation to employ you for your normal working hours.
- 4.7 In undertaking any extra employment, unless it is on the Council's behalf, Council facilities, such as telephones, photocopiers, computers, e-mail, internet, vehicles or any other equipment must not be used for that purpose.

- 4.8 You must give to the Council any money you receive for work which you do such as lectures, broadcasts or magazine articles as part of your job. Where this is done in your own time you should seek permission from your Head of Service and ensure that at any such work does not have a negative impact on the Council's reputation. You can keep money for any work which is not done as part of your employment and which is done in your own time.

Being a Member of an Organisation

- 4.9 Employees are free to use their personal time as they wish but there are occasions where being a member of an external organisation may have an impact on employment.
- 4.10 You should ensure that your membership or involvement with any external organisation does not lead to an actual or perceived conflict of interest with your position as an employee of the Council. Paragraph 14 of this Code of Conduct already requires you to declare any financial, non-financial or personal interest which may conflict with the Council's interests. It is important to avoid any perception that advice, guidance, or decisions for which you are responsible could be influenced by your membership of a particular organisation.
- 4.11 You must therefore declare your membership of any organisation whose rules or requirements of membership could be regarded as suggesting a degree of loyalty to that organisation, which could result in a conflict of interest, to your Head of Service. This could arise because of an organisation having an obligation of secrecy about its rules, its membership or conduct and/or a commitment of allegiance or support to that organisation. Such organisations may or may not be charitable concerns and they may also have a local, regional, national or international aspect.
- 4.12 You should make sure that any such membership does not make you liable to act in a way that would conflict with the Council's policies or objectives or damage the Council's reputation or seriously affect your ability to carry out your job.

Personal Use of Social Media

- 4.13 If you are posting or communicating on a social media network in your own time and from your own personal device (whether a PC, smartphone or any other device) you should think carefully about referring to your employment with the Council. If you do state your employment, you must not bring the Council into disrepute by posting or sharing material on any social network that others may find offensive, disrespectful or discriminatory towards council employees, service users or partners or generally
- 4.14 You should not use your Council email address with social media accounts other than for those with a professional connection such as LinkedIn. You should not be active on any personal social media accounts during work hours unless it is a specific part of your job and has been agreed by your Head of Service.

- 4.15 You should never make comments about the Council or Council business which undermine your employment relationship with the Council.

SECTION 5 - INTEGRITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Working with Integrity

- 5.1 You must be fair and equitable when dealing with customers, suppliers and other contractors or sub-contractors. You must make sure you do not give any special favours to current or former employees or your friends, partners, relatives or associates in any work transactions eg processing applications, awarding contracts to businesses run by them or employing them in a senior role.
- 5.2 You should never put yourselves in debt to someone if it may influence your work in any way.
- 5.3 Section 117 of the Local Government Act 1972 prohibits officers from receiving any fee or reward “under the colour of their employment” other than their proper remuneration.

Bribery & Fraud

- 5.4 If you offer or accept any bribe, money, favours or gifts from an individual or an organisation that provides the Council with goods or services or wants to do so, you may be guilty of corruption.
- 5.5 You must tell your manager if anyone tries to bribe you or another employee or if there is any evidence of corruption or improper behaviour by others.
- 5.6 The Council will not tolerate any of its employees defrauding, stealing or attempting to do so, from the Council. This includes deliberately giving false information on claims, such as timesheets, mileage and travel/subsistence allowances, petty cash forms, self-certification forms or attendance records. You should always complete any document, form or record honestly.
- 5.7 The Council requires its employees to report genuine concerns relating to potential bribery, fraud, theft or unethical behaviour to their manager/supervisor. Please refer to the Anti-Fraud & Corruption Policy and the Anti-Money Laundering Policy for further information. If you cannot discuss the matter with your manager or they do nothing about it, then you should raise the matter either with your Head of Service or directly with one of the officers referred to above. In addition, you can contact any person or organisation named in the Speaking Up Framework.

Financial and other Interests

- 5.8 There may be occasions where you have a financial or other interest in something being done by the Council.

- (a) You will have a financial interest where either you or any member of your family has something to gain or lose financially. Such interest can be direct, such as applying for planning permission or services or grant from the Council, or indirect, such as being a member of an organisation which has made an application to the Council for a grant.
- (b) A personal interest is where you, or any member of your family, friends or organisation to which you belong could gain or lose (other than financially) from an act or decision of the Council.

5.9 You must declare, using the “Declaration of Interests Form” (see Annex 3) to your Head of Service, any financial (including any directorships or equivalent position which you may hold), or personal interests which could conflict with the Council's interests.

Procurement

5.10 Employees involved in any tendering process and dealing with contractors are expected to understand and be aware of the need for accountability and openness and to familiarise themselves with and follow the Council's Procurement Regulations.

5.11 All Council employees have a statutory duty to declare any financial interest that they, or a member of their family has in any contract or potential contract with the Council. If you have a financial or personal interest, you must not take part in any negotiations or preparations for the contract. If you have an interest in a contract and have to monitor it as part of your duties, then you must advise your Head of Service, who will decide whether or not that role can still be undertaken. This also applies in any case where the Council pays or proposes to pay, money, for example a grant, to another organisation, whether or not there is a formal contract with that organisation.

5.12 As part of our standard tendering arrangements, you will be asked to complete a declaration of interests form which is issued as part of the process. However, if you know that you have a financial or personal interest at the outset of the procurement process, you should complete the “Declaration of Interests Form” (see Annex 3 and submit this to your Head of Service immediately.

5.13 You may have access to confidential information, tenders or costs, and must not disclose that information to any unauthorised party or organisation. If you are not sure whether information is confidential or not, you should seek guidance from your manager.

Sponsorship and Grants

5.14 You must apply the basic conventions set out in the Gifts and Hospitality Policy to any involvement you may have with an outside organisation which wishes to sponsor or is seeking to sponsor a Council activity, whether by invitation, tender, negotiation or voluntarily. This also applies to organisations seeking grants from the Council.

- 5.15 You must take particular care when dealing with contractors or potential contractors so as not to leave the Council or yourself open to allegations of impropriety.
- 5.16 You must not accept sponsorship from an individual or organisation that is in a legal dispute with the Council.
- 5.17 Where the Council itself wishes to sponsor an event or service, you must make full disclosure in writing to your manager if either yourself, partner, spouse or close relative stands to benefit from such sponsorship.
- 5.18 In the same way, you must make sure that you give impartial advice and that you have no conflict of interest where the Council gives support to community groups through sponsorship, grant aid whether financial or otherwise.
- 5.19 You should not use your position with the Council to seek sponsorship from contractors for personal activities or to apply for grants.

Gifts & Hospitality

- 5.20 The Council is publicly funded, and it is essential that the Council can demonstrate the highest standards of probity in general, and specifically in relation to its dealings with third parties.
- 5.21 The Council expects the conduct of all of its employees to be of the highest standard. Employees' actions must not be influenced by offers of gifts or hospitality and their actions must not give the impression that they are influenced in this way.
- 5.22 Please refer to the Council's policy on gifts and hospitality for guidance on what you can and can't accept.

SECTION 6 - USE OF INFORMATION AND THE MEDIA

Disclosure of Information and Confidentiality

- 6.1 You should be fair and open when dealing with others and ensure that elected Members and members of the public have access to the information they need and have a legal right to unless you have a good reason not to permit this.
- 6.2 Information held by the Council, especially in relation to individuals, may be subject to the provisions of the Data Protection Act or other legislation. You should never put yourself in the position where the disclosure of such information puts you and/or the Council at the risk of breaking the law. If you are in any doubt you should ask your manager or consult the Council's Data Protection Officer.
- 6.3 A lot of the information held by the Council is confidential, for example, individual case files, employee records or tendering documents. You should not pass these documents to any outside person or organisation unless you have your manager's and/or the appropriate person's permission.
- 6.4 You must not use any information that you get in your job for personal gain or financial benefit or pass it to anyone else. You must not give information to anyone outside the Council about tenders or individual clients either when you are working for the Council or after you have left.
- 6.5 You must ensure that you follow the Council's security procedures in relation to the use of computers and the proper management of computer-held information. Particular care must be taken to observe established procedures when using passwords and logging on and off. You must never share a password or similar security device which may lead to unauthorised access to Council's systems or property.

Contact with the Media

- 6.6 All Council dealings with the media must be handled through the Council's Communications Team in conjunction with Heads of Service. You should therefore not speak, write, give interviews or take telephone calls for "information" relating to Council business unless you have prior permission from the Communications Manager and your Head of Service.
- 6.7 You should pass on all enquiries from the press, radio, television or other media to the Communications Team and your manager.
- 6.8 You may write or give an interview about things that are not connected with the Council, as long as you are not identified as being a Council employee or as representing the Council's views. Where you are writing material for publication which does not refer specifically to the Council, but does relate to your profession/occupation, then you must seek permission from your Head of Service and the Communications Team prior writing and submitting the material.

- 6.9 You must never publicise material which is confidential or against the Council or any employee's interest.
- 6.10 If you are a corporate accredited trade union official recognised by the Council then you may have contact with the media in relation to the activities of your Trade Union without seeking any prior approval of your manager or Corporate Communications.

Use of Social Media for Work

- 6.11 You must ask permission from the Communications Team before you use social media for promoting or communicating on behalf of the Council and your service.
- 6.12 Examples of social media are Facebook, Instagram, Tik Tok, LinkedIn, YouTube, X (formerly Twitter), Nextdoor, Flickr and website forums, but can include other networks.
- 6.13 For guidance on personal use of social media, please see section 4.

List of Related Policies

- Acceptable Use of ICT Facilities Policy
- Anti-Fraud and Bribery Policy and the Anti Money Laundering Policy
- Customer Care Standards
- Dignity at Work Policy
- Equality Policies
- Flexitime Scheme
- Health and Safety Policy
- Policies relating to Smoking, Drug and Alcohol Use
- Speaking Up Framework
- Values & Behaviours

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS FORM

Employee's Name

Post Title

Section

Details of Interest:

Signature

Date

Action Taken by Head of Service (where relevant)

Head of Service's
Signature

Date

OUTSIDE COMMITMENTS FORM

Employee's Name

Post Title

Section

Details of Outside Commitment(s)

Employee's
Signature

Date

Head of Service's Comments:

Head of Service's
Signature

Date

Work Programme - Resources Scrutiny Committee

Committee:	Resources Scrutiny
Date of Meeting:	24 March 2026
Report of:	Head of Law and Governance
Portfolio:	Resources

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the Resources Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 That the report be noted.

3 Key Issues

- 3.1 The first stage in achieving a Member-led Overview and Scrutiny process is to develop a Work Programme for the Members of the Committee to own.
- 3.2 Accordingly, an up-to-date copy of the Resources Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme is provided for Members to consider or amend as appropriate.

4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 This report is most closely associated with the following Corporate Business Objective 1:-

To deliver sustainable economic and housing growth to provide income and jobs.

5 Report Detail

5.1 Members will recall that one of the fundamental philosophies behind the creation of Overview and Scrutiny is that the process should be Member-led and the first stage in achieving this is to develop a Work Programme that is:-

- Owned by all Members of the Scrutiny Committee
- Flexible to allow the Committee to react to urgent items
- Contain aspects of both Overview and Scrutiny

5.2 Therefore, at each scheduled meeting of the Resources Scrutiny Committee, an up-to-date copy of the Work Programme will be provided for Members to consider or amend as appropriate.

5.3 The Work Programme includes provision for the Committee to scrutinise appropriate items delivered through the Council's Service Delivery Plan up to twelve months in advance, whilst maintaining the flexibility to respond to any issues that may arise.

5.4 Accordingly, attached at **APPENDIX** is the Resources Scrutiny Committee's current Work Programme to consider or amend as appropriate.

6 Implications

6.1 Financial

None

6.2 Legal

None

6.3 Human Resources

None

6.4 Risk Management

None

6.5 Equalities and Diversity

The Borough Council considers the effect of its actions on all sections and has addressed all of the following Equality Strands in the production of this report, as appropriate:-

Age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

[SBC]

6.6 Health

None

6.7 Climate Change

None

7 Appendices

Appendix: Work Programme

8 Previous Consideration

None

9 Background Papers

File available in Law and Governance

Contact Officer: Jackie Allen

Telephone Number: 01785 619552

Ward Interest: Nil

Report Track: Resources Scrutiny Committee - 24 March 2026 (Only)

Key Decision: N/A

