

HINCKLEY AND BOSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

SCRUTINY COMMISSION AND FINANCE & PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY

JOINT BUDGET MEETING

5 FEBRUARY 2026 AT 6.30 PM

PRESENT: Cllr C Lambert - Chair
Cllr MJ Surtees and Cllr P Williams – Vice-Chairs
Cllr CM Allen (for Cllr C Harris), Cllr DS Cope, Cllr MJ Crooks, Cllr J Moore,
Cllr A Pendlebury, Cllr P Stead-Davis and Cllr BE Sutton

Also in attendance: Councillor KWP Lynch

Officers in attendance: Ilyas Bham, Julie Kenny, Rebecca Owen, Sharon Stacey and Ashley Wilson

325. Apologies and substitutions

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors R Allen, Glenville, Harris, Smith, Webber-Jones and Weightman with the substitution of Councillor C Allen for Councillor Harris authorised in accordance with council procedure rule 10.

326. Minutes

It was moved by Councillor Crooks, seconded by Councillor Pendlebury and

RESOLVED – the minutes of the meeting held on 18 December be confirmed as a correct record.

327. Declarations of interest

No interests were declared.

328. Scrutiny Commission Work Programme

The chair highlighted the addition of several housing policies to the work programme and stated that local government reorganisation and the community governance review for Hinckley would also be added. Reference was made to a report on an Article 4 Direction being considered by the Executive on 9 February which sought approval to consult, after which time a report would be taken through the decision making processes, including Scrutiny Commission, to make a final decision.

A member asked that consideration be given to inviting Severn Trent Water to return to a future meeting due to recent problems with leaks and resulting road closures in the area.

329. Forward plan of Executive and Council decisions

In response to a member's question about the forward plan, it was reported that updates on implementation of the food waste collection service would be brought to the Scrutiny Commission at an appropriate time.

330. Budget reports

(a) Medium term financial strategy 20225/26 to 2027/28

Members were updated on the medium term financial strategy for 2025/26 to 2027/28. Members queried the use of reserves and what would happen when all reserves had been used. In response it was noted that the reserves were being used to achieve a general fund balance of 15% of net expenditure, so even through earmarked reserves would be used there would still be up to £2m of general reserves left based on the current forecast. Concern was expressed about the national homelessness problem and the ever increasing demand.

In relation to the council's forecast position of being able to sustain a balanced budget until 2028 when the new unitary authorities created as part of local government reorganisation would take effect, a member asked what the financial position of the council would be if reorganisation was delayed. In response, it was noted that the government was certain it would adhere to the current timetable, however there would be some advance notice should there be a delay, at which time savings and income plans would need to be implemented – such options were already being prepared.

The medium term financial strategy was noted and it was agreed that the comments made would be included in the report to Council.

(b) General fund budget 2026/27

Consideration was given to the 2026/27 general fund revenue budget. The government grant received for food waste was queried and it was explained that the government had provided a slightly increased revenue support grant which contained various elements although this was not broken down so it wasn't clear how much of the grant was for food waste or for any of the other items towards which the government provided funds. It was clear, however, that the financial pressures due to government policy and decisions amounted to more than had been accounted for in the increased grant.

A member highlighted the expectation that implementation of the food waste collection service would reduce the amount of waste in refuse bins and asked whether it was therefore intended to reduce the frequency of refuse collections. In response, it was noted that the waste bin and collection policy had recently been approved and had not included any change to frequency of collection.

The report was noted and it was agreed that comments would be included in the report to Council.

(c) Housing revenue account budget 2026-27

Members received the housing revenue account (HRA) budget which included the housing repairs account. In response to a member's question, it was noted that the regeneration reserves mostly covered improvements to existing properties. It was also noted that the £54,000 referred to in paragraph 3.4 of the report to cover rent for new properties related to 12 or 13 properties.

Following further discussion, it was explained that the HRA budget covered a longer period than the two years until local government reorganisation as it was part of a 30 year plan.

The report was noted and it was agreed that comments raised be included in the report to Council.

(d) Fees and charges 2026/2027

The proposed scale of fees and charges for 2026/27 was presented to members. The layout of the section under 'stray dogs' on page 111 was queried, particularly with reference to home visits for microchipping.

A member questioned the increase in hire costs for the bandstand in Hollycroft Park as it was often used by voluntary groups and schools which should be encouraged. The presence of any discretionary reductions or waived fees was queried, and it was agreed that this information would be sought and provided to members.

The report was noted and it was agreed that the comments be included in the report to Council.

(e) Capital programme 2025-26 to 2028-29 and capital strategy

Members received the capital programme for 2025/26 to 2028/29 and the capital strategy. Members welcomed the comprehensive report and noted the significant changes.

The report was noted.

(f) Treasury management strategy 2025-26 to 2028-29 and prudential indicators 2025-26 to 2028-29

The prudential indicators for 2025/26 to 2028/29 were reported to members. In response to members' concerns, it was noted that the council was historically under-borrowed and that cash flows were monitored month by month. Members were advised that officers were prudent in their predictions.

The report was noted and it was agreed that comments be reported to Council.

331. Pay Policy Statement

The council's pay policy statement for 2026/27 was presented to members.

It was moved by Councillor Cope, seconded by Councillor Crooks and

RESOLVED –

- (i) The pay gap between the top and median average earner be noted as the same as the previous year;
- (ii) The minor increase in the gender pay gap at 4.4% (significantly lower than the national average of 11.2%) be noted;
- (iii) The pay policy statement be endorsed and RECOMMENDED to Council.

(The Meeting closed at 7.48 pm)

CHAIR