

Dear Councillor

CABINET - TUESDAY, 10 FEBRUARY 2026

I am now able to enclose for consideration at the above meeting the following reports that were unavailable when the agenda was printed.

**Agenda Item
No.**

- 3. 2025/26 REVENUE BUDGET & MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY (2026/27 TO 2029/30); INCLUDING THE CAPITAL PROGRAMME**(Pages 3 - 4)
To receive a report providing the detail of the final Revenue and Capital Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- 4. CIL GOVERNANCE - PHASE 2 - STRATEGIC ALLOCATION**(Pages 5 - 6)
To receive a report confirming the Council's updated approach to the strategic allocation and use of CIL, ensuring decisions remain evidence-based, aligned with strategic priorities, and responsive to planning reform and Local Government Reorganisation.
- 5. LETTINGS POLICY REVIEW**(Pages 7 - 8)
To receive a report advising of necessary changes to the Lettings Policy in light of changes made to legislation and statutory guidance by the Secretary of State.
- 7. HABITAT BANKING**(Pages 9 - 10)
To receive a report setting out the design, delivery and overall process that officers will use to deliver, launch and implement the Habitat Banking Programme in Phase 1 and Phase 2.
- 9. ONE LEISURE INDEPENDENT REVIEW UPDATE**(Pages 11 - 12)
To receive a report informing and updating that One Leisure and the Council have either completed, are in the process of completing, or have deferred some of the actions due to Local Government Reorganisation, providing Councillor's an opportunity to review, consider and respond on One Leisure's and the Council's progress since the 12-month update (July 2025) of the One Leisure Independent Review recommendations, and seeking approval of the newly created One Leisure Vision, Customer Charter, and the new structure of One Leisure's 3-year business plan

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2026/27 Revenue Budget & Medium-Term Financial Strategy (2027/28 to 2029/30); including the Capital Programme

Comments of Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Performance & Growth)

4.1 The Overview & Scrutiny (Performance & Growth) Panel discussed the report at its meeting on 4th February 2026.

4.2 Councillor Jennings sought clarification on the proposed 5% salary increase, noting that this appeared high compared with private sector trends and inflation forecasts. He further queried the overall 12.3% increase in salary costs and requested additional information on employee numbers, seeking to understand the factors contributing to the increase across Council departments.

4.3 Councillor Martin asked whether the internal audit budget bid proposed continuing with an external provider or moving the service in-house, noting that an in-house model might offer greater efficiency and cost-effectiveness.

4.4 Councillor Jennings referred to Appendix 7 on Reserves and queried the absence of the £3 million allocated for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), suggesting that a single consolidated table of all Reserves would be helpful. He also asked what contributions were being made by other Local Authorities with whom the Council may be aligned following LGR, and how fairness in those contributions would be ensured.

4.5 Councillor Martin enquired about the assessments undertaken to determine the financial impact of the current planning fees on the Council.

4.6 Councillor Martin expressed the view that the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) should cover the standard timeframe rather than a reduced period, noting that Local Government Reorganisation may not proceed and that it would be more prudent to await a confirmed Government timetable.

4.7 Councillor Jennings asked whether the earmarked reserves were being reviewed by Cabinet or the Section 151 Officer, suggesting reserves showing no movement over the MTFS period could be released and redirected to more productive use.

4.8 The S151 Officer advised at various points that where needed, additional clarity or corrections would be picked up prior to Council, or matters implemented once the overall budget framework was agreed by Council.

4.9 Following the discussion, the Panel were informed that their comments would be added to the Cabinet report in order for an informed decision to be made on the report recommendations.

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CIL Governance - Phase 2 - Strategic Allocation

Comments of Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Performance & Growth)

4.1 The Overview & Scrutiny (Performance & Growth) Panel discussed the report at its meeting on 4th February 2026.

4.2 Councillor Martin asked what the decision-making process for the proposal would entail. He questioned the purpose of the new plan in comparison with existing arrangements and why the current approach could not continue. He also expressed concern regarding the potential creation of a two-tier system between external applicants and the Council's own applications.

4.3 Councillor Jennings sought clarification on whether any remaining Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds at the point of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) could be ring-fenced to ensure that CIL raised within the District is spent on projects benefiting the local area.

4.4 Councillor Corney queried whether the criteria for awarding CIL funding were set too high and whether the scheme was being sufficiently publicised. He also asked whether, at the point of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), the option of passing CIL funds to Town Councils had been considered.

4.5 Following the discussion, the Panel were informed that their comments would be added to the Cabinet report in order for an informed decision to be made on the report recommendations.

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Lettings Policy Review

3.0 COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

- 3.2 The Overview and Scrutiny (Environment, Communities and Partnerships) Panel discussed the report at its meeting on 5th February 2026.
- 3.3 Councillor Bywater expressed his gratitude for the inclusion of Care Leavers into the Policy, a sentiment which was echoed by the Panel. Following a further enquiry from Councillor Hassall, the Panel were advised that the number of care leavers on the Housing list was low and potential in single figures, however the Panel were assured that Officers worked with Care Leaving Team colleagues to identify care leavers who would be applying for social housing and were able to plan and accommodate for them. It was noted that the very low numbers of care leavers against the total number of households registered to the list meant that this group had a minimal impact on the list overall but that the support provided was invaluable.
- 3.4 In response to a question from Councillor Shaw, the Panel were advised that victims of domestic violence were identified by Officers and case workers through investigative and liaison work and that priority was awarded accordingly.
- 3.5 It was observed by Councillor Criswell that the report identified a future review during the next municipal year of the Policy and requested involvement of Councillors and Overview and Scrutiny within that process. This sentiment was shared by the Panel, the Chair and the Executive Councillor as an action to take forward.
- 3.6 Following an enquiry from Councillor Pitt, it was clarified to the Panel that the minor amendments referenced in the recommendation for Officer delegation were small amends such as clarification of wording. Further concern was expressed by Councillor Hassall as to whether the term minor amendment could be defined. Following discussion, the Panel were reassured that any decisions taken under this recommendation would be between the Corporate Director Communities and the Portfolio Holder. It was further suggested that the Overview and Scrutiny Chair be apprised of these decisions so that they could report back to the Panel if deemed necessary.
- 3.7 Following the discussion, the Panel were informed that their comments would be added to the Cabinet report in order for an informed decision to be made on the report recommendations.

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Habitat Banking Programme

6.0 COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

- 6.2 The Overview and Scrutiny (Environment, Communities and Partnerships) Panel discussed the report at its meeting on 5th February 2026.
- 6.3 Councillor Criswell praised the sentiment of the project but expressed concern that the Council as custodians of the public realm were tying up parcels of land for extended periods which may be required for other purposes for the benefit of the public interest in the future. In addition Councillor Hunt queried whether legal contracts would be put in place to protect both the land and the public interest. The Panel were assured that legal agreements would be in place for this purpose and that there would be break clauses to take scenarios such as natural disasters and extreme weather into consideration. It was also assured that the programme would look to enhance existing spaces rather than redefine them. An example was given of sites with recreational sports pitches where the programme would keep the pitches but look to enhance the surrounding areas working with what would be feasible and practical.
- 6.4 Following an enquiry from Councillor Pitt in relation to the Priory Park site, the Panel heard that communications were ongoing with the Friends of Priory Park group who were open to the concept of the programme and that the team would be working closely with internal colleagues and external partners to ensure that the end result would enhance the space and not impact recreational use and enjoyment of the space.
- 6.5 In response to a question from Councillor Pitt relating to the inclusion of interest within the financial calculations, the Panel were advised that the figures had been developed in collaboration with Finance colleagues and that the modelling for the programme did not include the interest. The Panel were assured that a fluid case by case approach would be adopted with a further option to increase the number of credits available should the resulting habitats be of a more improved quality than anticipated.
- 6.6 Following an observation from Councillor Hassall in relation to the management of private estates and environments, with the example of Buckden Towers being given, the team advised that the programmes focus would be on the sites identified within the report, however they were aware of further opportunities and although a balanced approach would be undertaken initially this would be reevaluated and opportunities developed in the future if scope allowed.

- 6.7 The Panel were reassured following comments from Councillors Shaw and Bywater, that support from the Council's Operations Team had been factored in to be used in the event of extreme weather and that the legal agreements would be in place to protect the scheme from the unpredictability of nature. It was also noted that the richer and more biodiverse a habitat, the more resistant it was to natural disasters.
- 6.8 Concern was expressed by Councillor Mokbul that developers may utilise the credits scheme in place of delivering on development sites thus creating more heavily urbanised environments. The Panel were assured that the team were collaborating with Planning colleagues to develop and monitor habitats and developments across the district to ensure a balanced approach.
- 6.9 Councillor Hunt relayed his experience working with the team in relation to Riverside Park in Huntingdon and that he was impressed with how the suggested changes would enhance the current provision without hindering it's use by residents. He concluded with his belief that the scheme would allow residents to see investment in parks and green spaces for their benefit.
- 6.10 In response to an observation from Councillor Wells, the Panel heard that the team would be working with community groups and residents to develop the scheme and to strengthen community bonds with the Council.
- 6.11 Following a query from Councillor Shaw relating to the omission of Paxton Pits from the scheme, the Panel heard that the existing site was already rich in biodiversity and that the intention of the scheme was to increase the biodiversity of areas. It was noted that the forthcoming expansion of Paxton Pits may create further opportunities and could be included in the programme in the future if appropriate.
- 6.12 It was advised to the Panel that CIL funding would not be appropriate for the scheme due to the potential commercial nature therefore borrowing had been the better option for the programme.
- 6.13 Whilst in support of the scheme in general, Councillor Pitt expressed concern about the timescales within the report, noting that work was anticipated to start in May. The Panel were advised that following the outcome of the Budget through the democratic cycle in February, it was hoped that work would begin immediately to identify and progress the identified sites.
- 6.14 Following the discussion, the Panel were informed that their comments would be added to the Cabinet report in order for an informed decision to be made on the report recommendations.

One Leisure Independent Review Update

3.0 COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

- 3.2 The Overview and Scrutiny (Environment, Communities and Partnerships) Panel discussed the report at its meeting on 5th February 2026.
- 3.3 Councillor Bywater gave his thanks to the Head of Leisure and his team for the great work undertaken in the progress made by the service. The Panel heard that following the improvement works to the swimming pool at One Leisure Sawtry, an open event was planned for the community ahead of the centres reopening to the public.
- 3.4 Councillor Shaw praised the results shown by the service but expressed disappointment at the level of staff engagement. The Panel heard that work had been undertaken over the past twelve months and that the service was confident that this was improving significantly.
- 3.5 Following an enquiry from Councillor Hassall, the Panel heard that following the initial review and restructure significant work had been undertaken to develop income streams as well as concessionary memberships. It was noted that marketing support would be put in place in order to communicate the positive work undertaken by the service. The increase in One Leisure's net promoter score was noted going from below to above the national average. Following a further request from Councillor Hassall, the Officer undertook to review the SWOT analysis from 2025 and to update the Panel with the results of this.
- 3.6 Councillor Alban welcomed the proposed marketing support for One Leisure and noted that the Council's recycling and waste teams did great work on social media. In response to a further question from Councillor Alban, the Panel heard that an increase in teenage customers within the gyms after school has been observed and that centres had ensured sufficient staffing resources over this time to ensure that this increased footfall was supported.
- 3.7 Councillors Hunt and Pitt observed that many Councillors received colloquial feedback from residents on One Leisure and that this word of mouth feedback was unlikely to be fed back through official channels.
- 3.8 Councillor Hunt concluded with his experience on the One Leisure Shadow Board, and advised that it had provided a useful insight into the developments being made in the service and the progress on the identified actions.

- 3.9 Following the discussion, the Panel were informed that their comments would be added to the Cabinet report in order for an informed decision to be made on the report recommendations.