

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE POLICY, FINANCE & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
HELD AT CIVIC SUITE 2, BROCKS HILL COUNCIL OFFICES, WASHBROOK LANE, OADBY,
LEICESTER, LE2 5JJ ON TUESDAY, 3 FEBRUARY 2026 COMMENCING AT 7.00 PM**

PRESENT

I K Ridley
S S Athwal

Chair
Vice-Chair



Meeting ID: 2966

COUNCILLORS

N Alam
L A Bentley
G A Boulter
M H Charlesworth
M L Darr
J K Ford
C S Gore
S Z Haq
P Joshi
J Kaufman
K J Loydall

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

S A E Ball	Finance Manager
A E Court	Chief Executive / Head of Paid Service
D Gill	Legal Consultant / (Acting) Monitoring Officer
A Thorpe	Head of Built Environment
C Warren	Chief Finance Officer / Section 151 Officer
S Wheeliker	Senior Democratic & Electoral Services Officer
B Wilson	Head of Neighbourhood Services

119. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

120. APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTES

None.

121. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors M H Charlesworth and C S Gore declared non-pecuniary interests with regard to item 10 of the agenda, insofar as they both rented allotments in the Borough.

122. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

By affirmation of the meeting, it was

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 2 December 2025 be taken as read, confirmed and approved.

123. ACTION LIST ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

None.

124. PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS

None.

125. GREEN SPACES STRATEGY (2025 - 2035)

The Committee gave consideration to the report and appendices (as set out at pages 7 – 29 of the agenda reports pack) which sought approval of the Green Spaces Strategy (2025 – 2035).

It was moved by Councillor K J Loydall, seconded by Councillor S Z Haq and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:

- i) The feedback from the consultation be noted; and**
- ii) The Green Spaces Strategy (2025 – 2035) (at Appendix 1) be adopted.**

126. CEMETERY AND BURIAL STRATEGY (2026 - 2036)

The Committee gave consideration to the report and appendices (as set out at pages 30 – 75 of the agenda reports pack and pages 3 – 7 of the second agenda update) which sought approval of the Cemetery and Burial Strategy (2026 - 2036).

It was moved by Councillor L A Bentley, seconded by Councillor S Z Haq and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:

- i) The contents of the report, appendices and consultation responses be noted; and**
- ii) The Cemetery and Burial Strategy (2026 - 2036) be adopted.**

127. TREASURY MANAGEMENT POLICY AND STRATEGIES AND PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS (2026/27)

The Committee gave consideration to the report and appendices (as set out at pages 76 – 125 of the agenda reports pack) which sought approval of the Treasury Management Policy, Strategies and Prudential Indicators (2026/27).

It was moved by the Chair, seconded by the Vice-Chair and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:

- i) The Capital Strategy 2026/27 including the Prudential Indicators (as set out in Appendix 1) be approved;**
- ii) The Treasury Management Policy, Treasury Strategy and Plan 2026/27 (as set out in Appendices 2 & 3) be approved;**
- iii) The Minimum Revenue Provision Statement 2026/27 (as set out in Appendix 4) be approved;**
- iv) The Investment Strategy 2026/27 (as set out in Appendix 5) be approved; and**

v) The Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy (as set out in Appendix 6) be approved.

128. 2025/26 REVENUE BUDGETS, MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN AND 2026/27 - 2030/31 CAPITAL PROGRAMMES

The Committee gave consideration to the report and appendices (as set out at pages 126 – 164 of the agenda reports pack and 3 – 15 of the first agenda update) which presented the 2026/27 Revenue Budget, Medium Term Financial Plan and 2026/27 – 2030/31 Capital Programmes for recommendation to Full Council.

Councillor G A Boulter proposed an amendment to recommendation B to only increase the council tax rate by 2.5% instead of 2.99%, and not to increase garden waste or car park fees to be fair to residents in light of the cost-of-living crisis, and the unfairness of making local residents pay for the costs of local government reorganisation. Councillors queried what the impact of this proposal would be and whether the Council would be able to deliver a balanced budget.

The Chief Finance Officer / S151 Officer advised the overall impact would be £546K over the entire period for the MTFP and that while the budget for the 2026/27 financial year would be balanced, it may not be possible to balance the budget for future years. The Chief Finance Officer / S151 Officer and the Legal Consultant / (Acting) Monitoring Officer advised that these effects would be cumulative and with unavoidable future costs around homelessness and the impact of rent reform, then the Council could go into deficit. The Officers also advised that residents may face much more significant increases to council tax once rates are equalised following local government reorganisation as the majority of authorities would be increasing the rates by the recommended amount of 2.99%. The Chief Finance Officer / S151 Officer stated explicitly that she opposed this amendment in her professional opinion.

Councillors stated that the arguments raised were speculative and that residents needed support. Councillors also commented on the fact that the Borough's town centres had bucked the national trend in seeing increased footfall, and that increases to parking fees could jeopardise this. Councillors also raised objections to the requirement that local authorities be made to front the bill for local government reorganisation, stating that this reorganisation was not wanted by local Councils or by residents, that the costs should be covered by central government and expressed their dissatisfaction with the imposition of local government reorganisation.

It was moved Councillor G A Boulter, seconded by Councillor N Alam and

RESOLVED THAT:

Recommendation B ii be amended to read "to increase Council Tax by 2.5%" and recommendation B vi be amended to read "The Scale of Fees and Charges as set out in Appendix 4 and approves an ongoing annual increase by the September CPI rate, *except for garden waste and car park fees.*"

For 11
Against 0
Abstentions 2

It was moved by the Chair, seconded by Councillor K J Loydall and

RESOLVED THAT:

- i) The content of the report and appendices be noted;
- ii) The below recommendations as amended be recommended to Full Council for approval:
 - 1. The General Fund Revenue Budget for 2026/27 as set out in Appendix 1;
 - 2. To increase Council Tax by 2.5%;
 - 3. A housing rent and service charge increase of 4.8%;
 - 4. The HRA budget for 2026/27, as detailed in Table 4 and notes the HRA MTFP;
 - 5. The adoption of rent convergence at up to £3 per week when legislation allows;
 - 6. The Scale of Fees and Charges as set out in Appendix 4 and approves an ongoing annual increase by the September CPI rate, except for garden waste and car park fees;
 - 7. The Capital Schemes of the General Fund and HRA as set out in Appendix 5;
- iii) The below recommendations be recommended to Full Council to note:
 - 1. The MTFP for 2026/27 to 2030/31 as set out in Table 7; and
 - 2. The S151 Officer's statement on the robustness of the budget and the adequacy of reserves as set out in Section 13 of the report.

For 12
Against 1
Abstentions 0

129. LEICESTER & LEICESTERSHIRE AUTHORITIES - STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND RELATING TO HOUSING DISTRIBUTION FOLLOWING NPPF AND NEW STANDARD METHOD PUBLISHED DECEMBER 2024

The Committee gave consideration to the report and appendix (as set out at pages 165 – 191 of the agenda reports pack) which sought approval of the Leicester and Leicestershire Statement of Common Ground relating to Housing Distribution.

Councillor M L Darr left the meeting at 8:35pm.

It was moved by the Chair, seconded by Councillor G A Boulter and

RESOLVED THAT:

The signing of the Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) which has been prepared by the Leicester and Leicestershire authorities be approved.

For 10
Against 1
Abstentions 1

THE MEETING CLOSED AT 8.37 pm