

BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET COUNCIL

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING

Tuesday 24th February 2026

Present:- **Councillors** Michael Auton, Tim Ball, David Biddleston, Colin Blackburn, Alison Born, Anna Box, Stuart Bridge, Paul Crossley, Chris Dando, Jess David, Mark Elliott, Sarah Evans, Fiona Gourley, Kevin Guy, Alan Hale, Ian Halsall, David Harding, Liz Hardman, Gavin Heathcote, Steve Hedges, Saskia Heijltjes, Oli Henman, Joel Hirst, Lucy Hodge, Duncan Hounsell, Shaun Hughes, Dr Eleanor Jackson, Grant Johnson, Samantha Kelly, George Leach, John Leach, Hal MacFie, Ruth Malloy, Lesley Mansell, Paul May, Matt McCabe, Simon McCombe, Sarah Moore, Ann Morgan, Robin Moss, Michelle O'Doherty, Bharat Pankhania, June Player, Manda Rigby, Dine Romero, Sam Ross, Onkar Saini, Toby Simon, Shaun Stephenson-McGall, George Tomlin, Malcolm Treby, Karen Walker, Chris Warren, Sarah Warren, Tim Warren CBE, Andy Wait and Joanna Wright

Apologies for absence: **Councillors** Alex Beaumont and Paul Roper

53 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chair drew attention to the emergency evacuation procedure, as set out on the agenda.

54 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Monitoring Officer issued a general dispensation for all Councillors who pay Council Tax, are Parish Councillors or School Governors and therefore had an interest in these items, to enable them to take part in the debate and vote on agenda item 8 - Budget & Council Tax 2026/27.

In addition, specific dispensations were granted for the below Councillors who have a family member in receipt of Council SEND support, social care support or are working for B&NES;

Sarah Warren
Saskia Heijltjes
Sarah Moore
Steve Hedges

55 MINUTES - 20TH NOVEMBER 2025

On a motion from Councillor Sarah Moore, seconded by Councillor Tim Ball, it was

RESOLVED that the minutes of 20th November 2025 are confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

56 ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIR OF THE COUNCIL OR FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Chair made the usual announcements regarding phones, mic units and webcasting. She reminded Councillors that Annex 13 of the Budget report was circulated and is available on the website, as are the amendments received.

She then invited the new Chief Executive, Sophie Broadfield, to address the meeting following her recent appointment.

57 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

There were no items of urgent business.

58 QUESTIONS, STATEMENTS AND PETITIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

The Chair made reference to the Public Q&A document that had been circulated.

Statements were made by the following members of the public;

Dominic Taylor made a statement calling into question the Council's support to Ukraine, a copy of which has been added to the online record and the Minute book.

Jem Hovil made a statement calling for a Residents' Parking Zone (RPZ) for the Firs, Combe Down, a copy of which has been added to the online record and the Minute book. In response to a question from Councillor Kevin Guy about whether Jem and fellow residents would like to meet with the Cabinet Member to discuss this, Jem confirmed that he would.

Mark Shelford presented a petition of 113 signatures from residents of Milton Avenue and Chaucer Road requesting that the recently installed cycle hangar on Chaucer Road be relocated to a safer location away from the uphill crossroads junction with Milton Avenue. A copy of Mark's statement has been added to the online record and the Minute book. Councillor Eleanor Jackson asked Mark if he considered the same principles he'd raised in his request applied to the one outside the library in Radstock, to which Mark replied that he couldn't comment on that. In response to a question from Councillor June Player about whether the residents had been told that the hangar can be moved, Mark replied that it had been agreed and so he was requesting the process could be expedited. Councillor Tim Warren asked Mark what consultation had taken place, to which he replied that no direct consultation, in terms of letters or email to residents had been sent, nor had the Bear Flats Residents Association been contacted about the location. Councillor Joanna Wright asked if Mark was aware that a Traffic Regulation Order was needed for the location of hangars, to which Mark confirmed that he was.

Ed Browning made a statement about funding for public toilets following the motion unanimously agreed at Council in July 2025. Ed was disappointed to see a potential funding cut in the budget and called for proactive steps to put into place those measures outlined in the motion. Councillor Robin Moss asked if anyone had contacted Ed to identify the gaps on provision since he had raised issues in his statement to Council in July, to which Ed replied they had not.

The Chair thanked the speakers for their statements, which will be forwarded to the relevant Cabinet Member.

59 BUDGET AND COUNCIL TAX 2026/27 AND FINANCIAL OUTLOOK

The Council considered a report presenting the revenue and capital budgets together with proposals for increases in Council Tax and the Adult Social Care Precept for 2026/2.

An amendment was moved by the Labour Group (attached to the online record) calling for an exemption for public conveniences contracts, and all charity and voluntary sector contractors, from the list of “top 25 contracts” targeted for savings and a business case for a Discovery card. This was lost on a vote.

An amendment was moved by the Green Group (attached to the online record) calling for additional software to accurately model changes to the Council Tax Support Scheme. This was lost on a vote.

On a motion from Councillor Kevin Guy, seconded by Councillor Robin Moss and **RESOLVED** that, in accordance with rule 3.1.15 (Suspension of rules), rule 3.1.34 be suspended to allow the length of speeches for the Budget debate to be varied (NB: unless otherwise stated, all mover speeches 5 minutes, all others 3 minutes).

On a motion from Councillor Mark Elliott, seconded by Councillor Kevin Guy, it was

RESOLVED that

1. The Council approves:

- The General Fund net revenue budget for 2026/27 of **£193.17m** and the individual service cash limits for 2026/27 as outlined in Annex 1.
- The savings and income plans outlined in Annex 2(i), funding requirements 2(ii), in conjunction with the Equalities Impact Assessment Report in Annex 3.
- An increase in general Council Tax of 2.99% in 2026/27 (an increase of £54.51 per Band D property or £1.05 per week).
- An increase of 2.00% to Council Tax for the Adult Social Care Precept in recognition of the current demands and financial pressures on this service. This is equivalent to an increase of £36.46 on a Band D property or £0.70 per week.
- The movement in reserves outlined in Section 5.6 and the adequacy of Un-earmarked Reserves at £12.58m within a risk assessed range requirement of £12.00m - £13.20m.
- To note the Children’s Services management plan update set out in paragraphs 5.2.65 to 5.2.66 of the report.
- The Efficiency Strategy attached at Annex 4.

- The Capital Programme for 2026/27 of £110.219m including new and emerging capital bids outlined in Annex 5(i), planned sources of funding in 5.8.10, and notes the programme for 2027/28 to 2030/31 and that any wholly funded projects coming forward during the year will be added to the Capital Programme in line with the Budget Management Scheme.
 - The delegation of implementation, subject to consultation where appropriate, of the capital programmes set out in Annex 5(i) to Annex 5(vi) to the relevant Director in consultation with the appropriate Cabinet Portfolio Holder.
 - The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) allocations and amendments outlined in Annex 5(vii).
 - The Capital & Investment Strategy attached at Annex 6.
 - The Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy attached at Annex 7.
 - The Capital Prudential Indicators outlined in 5.8.17.
 - The Annual Pay Policy Statement at Annex 8.
 - The Community Contribution Fund extension outlined Section 5.5.
 - The Council Tax Support Scheme for 2026/27 shown in the following link, and referred to in 5.3.10:

https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2026-01/Council_Tax_reduction_scheme_April_1_2026_to_March_31_2027.pdf
 - The Fees and Charges schedule for 2026/27 at Annex 11 and support its publication following approval of the budget, with delegation to amend individual costs within the schedule in line with market needs, to the Director of Place Management, in consultation with the appropriate Cabinet Portfolio Holder.
2. The Council approves the technical resolutions that are derived from the budget report, and all the figures in that report, including the precepts for towns, parishes and other precepting bodies as set out in Annex 13.
 3. The Council notes the S151 Officer's report on the robustness of the proposed budget and the adequacy of the Council's reserves outlined in Section 5.7; and
 4. The Council notes the budget consultation responses in Annex 10, and the Policy Development and Scrutiny (PDS) Panel feedback in Annex 12.

[Notes;

1. *An amendment from the Labour Group was moved by Councillor Robin Moss and seconded by Councillor Lesley Mansell, as set out above. This was lost on a named vote;*

Councillors in favour (7): - Councillors David Biddleston, Shaun Hughes, Eleanor Jackson, Lesley Mansell, Ann Morgan, Robin Moss, June Player.

Councillors against (37) - Councillors Michael Auton, Tim Ball, Colin Blackburn, Alison Born, Anna Box, Stuart Bridge, Mark Elliott, Fiona Gourley, Kevin Guy, Ian Halsall, Dave Harding, Steve Hedges, Saskia Heijltjes, Oli Henman, Joel Hirst, Lucy Hodge, Duncan Hounsell, Samantha Kelly, George Leach, John Leach, Hal MacFie, Ruth Malloy, Paul May, Matt McCabe, Simon McCombe, Sarah Moore, Michelle O'Doherty, Bharat Pankhania, Manda Rigby, Sam Ross, Onkar Saini, Shaun Stephenson-McGall, George Tomlin, Malcolm Treby, Andy Wait, Sarah Warren, Joanna Wright

Councillors abstaining (7): - Councillors Sarah Evans, Alan Hale, Gavin Heathcote, Grant Johnson, Karen Walker, Chris Warren, Tim Warren

2. *An amendment from the Green Group was moved by Councillor Saskia Heijltjes and seconded by Councillor Joanna Wright, as set out above. This was lost on a named vote;*

Councillors in favour (5): - Councillors Colin Blackburn, Saskia Heijltjes, Shaun Hughes, Sam Ross and Joanna Wright

Councillors against (46) - Councillors Michael Auton, Tim Ball, Alison Born, Anna Box, Stuart Bridge, Paul Crossley, Jess David, Mark Elliott, Sarah Evans, Fiona Gourley, Kevin Guy, Alan Hale, Ian Halsall, Dave Harding, Gavin Heathcote, Steve Hedges, Oli Henman, Joel Hirst, Lucy Hodge, Duncan Hounsell, Grant Johnson, Samantha Kelly, George Leach, John Leach, Hal MacFie, Ruth Malloy, Paul May, Matt McCabe, Simon McCombe, Sarah Moore, Ann Morgan, Michelle O'Doherty, Bharat Pankhania; June Player, Manda Rigby, Dine Romero, Onkar Saini, Toby Simon, Shaun Stephenson-McGall, George Tomlin, Malcolm Treby, Andy Wait, Karen Walker, Chris Warren, Sarah Warren, Tim Warren.

Councillors abstaining (4): - Councillors David Biddleston, Eleanor Jackson, Lesley Mansell, Robin Moss.

3. *The above successful resolution was carried on a named vote;*

Councillors in favour (46): - Councillors Michael Auton, Tim Ball, Colin Blackburn, Alison Born, Anna Box, Stuart Bridge, Paul Crossley, Jess David, Mark Elliott, Fiona Gourley, Kevin Guy, Alan Hale, Ian Halsall, Dave Harding, Gavin Heathcote, Steve Hedges, Oli Henman, Joel Hirst, Lucy Hodge, Duncan Hounsell, Shaun Hughes, Grant Johnson, Samantha Kelly, George Leach, John Leach, Hal MacFie, Ruth Malloy, Paul May, Matt McCabe, Simon McCombe, Sarah Moore, Michelle O'Doherty, Bharat Pankhania; June Player, Manda Rigby, Dine Romero, Onkar Saini, Toby Simon, Shaun Stephenson-McGall, George Tomlin, Malcolm Treby, Andy Wait, Karen Walker, Chris Warren, Sarah Warren, Tim Warren.

Councillors against (6): - Councillors David Biddleston, Sarah Evans, Eleanor Jackson, Lesley Mansell, Robin Moss, Tim Warren.

Councillors abstaining (3): - Councillors Saskia Heijltjes, Sam Ross, Joanna Wright]

60 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT 2026/27

The Council considered its Treasury Management Strategy statement for 2026/27, fulfilling its legal obligation under the Local Government Act 2003 to have regard to the CIPFA Code which requires this.

On a motion from Councillor Mark Elliot, seconded by Councillor Robin Moss, it was unanimously

RESOLVED to

1. Approve the actions proposed within the Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2026/27 (**Appendix 1**); and
2. Note the Treasury Management Indicators detailed in **Appendix 1**.

61 PROPORTIONALITY REVIEW

The Council considered a report regarding proportionality, following a change in political group membership.

On a motion from Councillor Kevin Guy, seconded by Councillor Karen Walker, it was unanimously

RESOLVED to

1. note the required revised totals in the proportionality table; and
2. note that actual place changes to achieve the new totals will be considered by the political groups concerned and notified in due course.

62 QUESTIONS, STATEMENTS AND PETITIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

The Chair made reference to the Councillor Q&A document that had been circulated.

The meeting ended at 8.52 pm

Chair

Date Confirmed and Signed

Prepared by Democratic Services