

Council – 14 April 2025

Report of Cabinet – [2 April 2025](#)

Part I – Items Resolved by Cabinet

1. Allocation of community infrastructure levy (CIL) to local infrastructure projects

Portfolio – Planning and Economy

Cabinet Resolution:

1. That the list of 31 projects be approved for inclusion in the capital programme for 2025/26 with a total budget of £998,100.87;
2. That the opening of the local infrastructure bid windows be approved, for bids up to £100,000, for the 2026/27 financial year for two-months during Spring 2025;
3. That the opening of a two-month expression of interest window be approved to explore the potential for further local and strategic infrastructure projects within the district; and
4. That the Strategic Director for Place, Operations and Sustainability, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Economy, be authorised to make such amendments as they deem appropriate to the approved project lists within 10% of the total budget. Any such amendments will be in accordance with financial regulations and reported to Cabinet via the financial monitoring reports.

Cabinet Discussion:

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Economy reported that he felt privileged to be able to recommend the approval of CIL funding to the projects in and around the District. The assessment process had been rigorous, with scrutiny by both officers and members, through a task and finish group. 79 bids, had been received totalling £2.8 million and 31 were recommended for approval, spending just under £1 million of CIL funding.

The Portfolio Holder highlighted the range of projects would benefit the community through the award of this funding. Projects included improvements to playgrounds, sport facilities, village halls and footpaths / bridleways. Thanks was expressed to members of the Task

and Finish Group for their valuable work and to officers for overseeing the assessment process.

The Portfolio Holder also reported that Cabinet were asked to approve an opening window for local infrastructure bids up to £100,000 for expenditure in 2026/27 as well the opening of an expression of interest window to explore further local and strategic infrastructure projects. This was in addition to the five strategic projects currently approved in October 2024.

The Service Manager – Planning, Policy Infrastructure and Delivery highlighted that a collaborate approach had been taken with members when considering the bids and thanked members for their involvement. If the projects were approved, work would be carried out at pace to release the next tranche of funding to the CIL projects.

A non-Cabinet Member spoke in support of the recommendations contained in the report, recognising the importance of spending the CIL funding in the District, as well as the opening window for local and strategic infrastructure projects. The Hythe Ferry pontoon project was highlighted. It was hoped that if a bid was submitted which met the criteria, that it could be supported due to benefits it would bring, including taking congestion away from the A326 and improved tourism.

2. UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) 25/26 allocations

Portfolio: Planning and Economy

Cabinet Resolution:

1. That the continued purpose of the UK SPF be noted;
2. That the allocation of 25/26 UKSPF funding towards specific projects as set out in the report be supported; and
3. That delegated authority is given for future decision making associated with the finalisation of the project programme for 25/26 UKSPF spend to the Strategic Director for Place Operations and Sustainability, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Economy.

Cabinet Discussion:

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Economy presented the report, highlighting that it was an opportunity for the Council to support to the local economy. Funding was proposed to support projects for start up businesses, apprenticeships, digital skills, business growth and those not in education employment or training (NEET). In addition to this,

three capital projects were proposed. The total funding was for £313,000 towards the projects detailed in Table 1 of the report, as well as a small management fee. The full list of projects which had been considered was detailed in Appendix 1.

The Assistant Director for Place Development, expressed thanks to the member engagement which had taken place through the democratic process. The recommendations proposed, had been mindful that there was a predominant focus on revenue expenditure to support the development of skills and to support local businesses. Funding needed to be spent by 31 March 2026 and therefore it would be a challenge to ensure this work was completed.

A number of non-Cabinet members spoke in support of the recommendations within the report.

The issue of NEET and digital skills was raised by a non-Cabinet member recognising that might be based around the educational facilities and highlighted that the District had poor public transport links, which might be a barrier for some residents to access these courses. It was suggested that the provision of this could be delivered in the community which would be more accessible. The Assistant Director of Place Development acknowledged this as an issue and reported it would be considered when engaging with educational providers.

A number of non-Cabinet Members spoke about the reconnection of Calshot bus services, which had been identified as a potential project which had not been recommended to receive funding. The value of this project was recognised, and a non-Cabinet member highlighted that discussions were taking place regarding funding with for example, Hampshire County Council and Community First. Further detailed information was requested regarding the reasons behind why the project was not being supported at the current time and it was agreed this would be provided outside of the meeting, directly to the councillor.

3. Community Lottery Scheme

Portfolio: Community, Safety and Wellbeing

Cabinet Resolution:

That Cabinet:

Part A

1. Approved the proposal of adopting a Community Lottery scheme to provide additional financial support to local organisations.

Part B

1. Requested officers to approach Gatherwell to be the External Lottery Manager (ELM) to run the operational side of the lottery;
2. Agreed the criteria for which good causes should participate in the lottery, as detailed in sections 6 to 9;
3. Agreed the set-up costs of £5,200; and
4. Authorised the Chief Executive to agree named licence holders and to approve the appropriate policies and procedures.
5. Agreed that a report be presented to Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel after 1 year for an update and a review of the scheme.

Cabinet Discussion:

The Portfolio Holder for Community, Safety and Wellbeing reported he was aware that the subject had had mixed responses within Cabinet, however he was delighted to see the report seeking approval of a community lottery scheme. There had been detailed discussions at a Member Task and Finish Group and at Scrutiny Panel enabling questions and concerns to be raised and addressed by officers and the proposal had been supported. The lottery scheme would give people a choice of good causes to support in the District in a fun and responsible way. It would generate additional funding to local groups when funding streams were difficult to sustain.

The Service Manager Revenues, Benefits and Customer Service highlighted the report provided an overview of how the lottery scheme would operate and that safeguards would be in place to ensure it was managed responsibly. Officers would work with an experienced External Lottery Manager, who was responsible for over 120 local authority community lottery schemes. These authorities had spoken positively about their lottery scheme and the benefits it brought. The scheme would enable income to be raised to support local community organisations in a sustainable way in the long term. If approval was granted, officers would work as quickly as possible to arrange implementation of the scheme.

A number of non-Cabinet members expressed their support to the scheme. A concern was raised regarding the possible saturation of the lottery market, and it was noted that a review was proposed to be carried out a year after operation. A question was also asked about the possible impact of devolution, given the time involved in setting

up the scheme. In response, the Service Manager Revenues, Benefits and Customer services, recognised that work would be required to set it up, however once the lottery was in operation, it would require minimal officer input. It was reported to be a longer term legacy to support local groups. It was known that other authorities had gone through devolution and the lottery schemes had continued.

4. Domestic Abuse Strategy 2025-2028

Portfolio: Community, Safety and Wellbeing

Cabinet Resolution:

That Cabinet approve the draft Domestic Abuse Strategy 2025-2028 for formal consultation.

Cabinet Discussion:

The Portfolio Holder for Community, Safety and Wellbeing presented the Domestic Abuse Strategy. This recognised the high prevalence of domestic abuse and acknowledged that it was a matter often underreported and it had a devastating impact on individuals, families and the community. The Strategy had been aligned to the priorities in the Corporate Plan to help those in greatest need. Staff would be trained to help them identify domestic abuse as well enhance their response to any reports. Some council departments would have domestic abuse champions embedded within the services. It was anticipated this would help residents to live healthy lives in the community and to feel safe and supported.

The Service Manager – Community Safety & Support highlighted that the strategy identified four strategic priorities. Officers would be trained and there would be procedures and protocols in place to ensure that support could be provided to victims and appropriate action taken.

Non-Cabinet members welcomed the strategy and following points were made:

- Concern was raised about the ability of teams and different organisations involved to ensure that the support was available at the point it was identified for those who needed it;
- Early intervention and prevention was essential. More could be done to tackle the underlying issue;
- Domestic abuse was a complex issue. Misogynistic behaviours and attitudes could be developed, particularly with young people with

information being readily available online which needed to be addressed

The Service Manager – Community Safety and Support responded to the above points. It was confirmed that there were wrap around services to ensure that victims were protected and supported. It was acknowledged that there were various strands towards the prevention and early intervention of domestic abuse. Education was one area, and it was being provided through educational services in schools. This included working with the charity Yellow Door, which had delivered sessions in schools around healthy relationships and this work would continue for years to come.

Finally, in response to a non-Cabinet Member regarding the monitoring of the Strategy it was confirmed an Action Plan had been included as an Appendix, detailing the work which had been identified to deliver the key priorities. This would be monitored and updated and a report would be presented to the relevant panel to consider the progress of the strategy.

5. Corporate Plan: Key Performance Data for Quarters 1,2 and 3 2024-25

Portfolio: Leader

Cabinet Resolution:

That the Corporate Plan dashboards be approved.

Cabinet Discussion:

The Leader presented the report which detailed the performance against the Key Performance Indicators to support delivery of Corporate Plan for first 3 quarters of 2024/25. The report included feedback from each of the scrutiny panels. It was noted the good areas of delivery had been highlighted as well as targets which had been missed with a narrative to explain the reasons behind this as well as the proposed action to improve performance. This was key to how performance was managed to ensure that the council was on track to deliver its key priorities.

The Performance and Insight Manager further commented that the layout of the performance dashboards had been updated following feedback from the panels, with new headings and colour coding to make them more user friendly. The review of the Corporate Plan dashboards provides a sense check against the Corporate Plan commitments. It was noted that following approval the dashboards would be published on the Council's website. The dashboards provided

very detailed information within them, however, it was summarised that overall there was a pattern of an onward improvement journey which was encouraging to see.

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability spoke about ID 25 relating to the number of fly tipping incidents reported in the District, which had received a green RAG rating. This was positive, however the Portfolio Holder felt that the number of incidents remained was too high and wanted to see it reduced further.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Homelessness welcomed the performance dashboards with details of targets and performance. He reported that work would continue to ensure that the amber targets, in particular were improved.

A non-Cabinet Member acknowledged that the performance monitoring was a tool to drive up improvement but felt that more could be done. This was acknowledged by the Performance and Insight Manager and it was reported that a Performance Management Framework had been developed with this in mind to ensure that performance was embedded within the organisation. Against each KPI there was a clear narrative around performance with mitigation controls in place. The performance was regularly reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team, followed by consideration at the Overview and Scrutiny Panels.

A non-Cabinet Member reported that the figure for the number of businesses in receipt of the newsletters was no longer a KPI. It was felt that it was important to measure this, particularly with devolution to ensure there was regular contact with local businesses and seek their views on matters of importance. The Chief Executive responded and explained the investment in the economic development service, which was a discretionary service, would address the Corporate Plan prosperity priority. A new member of staff, Jeannie Satchell had been appointed as the Economic Development Manager and her wealth of experience was highlighted at the meeting. She would be supported by another member of staff. It was therefore felt that the team would be able to ensure that there was good business engagement moving forwards.

Part II – Recommendations to Council

6. People Strategy

Portfolio – Leader and Finance and Corporate

Recommended:

That Council adopt the People Strategy.

Cabinet Discussion:

The Leader presented the People Strategy regarding how staff would be attracted work for the authority, how they would be retained and grown in order to support the ambition to be an employer of choice. Four themes had been identified: grow, connect, empower and strong roots. The Strategy would support a culture centred around the values of learning, empathy, ambition and fairness. It was recognised that the strategy had always been intended to be considered alongside the transformation programme and modernisation plans, however this was even more critical with local government review to ensure that staff were in a positive position with good skills for the future. An Action Plan had been developed and the timescales for delivery would be shorter with LGR, but the outcomes would continue with the aim of providing staff with opportunities for the future.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate acknowledged that the purpose of the District Council was to serve the residents and wider community and spoke about the greatest asset being that of staff and recognised the positive impact staff had on the local community and its residents. He was delighted to see the People Strategy being considered which would support staff in the exceptional work they carry out.

Non-Cabinet Members spoke in support of the People Strategy recognising the challenges staff would face in the uncertainty of LGR and the impact this could have on them and felt that all staff should have support during this time.

Appendix 1 – Background Report to Cabinet

7. Digital Strategy

Portfolio: Finance and Corporate

Recommended:

That Council adopt the Digital Strategy 2025-2028.

Cabinet Discussion:

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate introduced the item, acknowledging that digital services and ICT underpinned everything the council does; in how it operates and delivers services. One of the six principles was highlighted being, secure by design in order to protect the council's data, systems, people and residents against the risk of any cyber attack. The previous Digital Strategy had come to an end and the new Strategy had been reviewed in the light of LGR to ensure that it was robust and that it fits within the timeframe for the operation of the District Council.

The Data, Development and Delivery Manager thanked staff and members who had helped to shape the strategy. There was strong confidence in the six digital principles to help modernise and support digital skills in the delivery of other strategies. LGR had been considered and it would be necessary to remain agile moving forwards. The views expressed by the Portfolio Holder were echoed in relation to the cyber security threat and it was noted this would continue to evolve as the landscape changed. Proactive work would continue to ensure that data was protected and people were kept safe.

A non-Cabinet Member spoke in support of the Digital Strategy. The need to support and protect members of the community was highlighted, particularly those who were not digitally astute. It was acknowledged that some residents would not want to engage in the digital process and would require additional support, particularly as the council transforms and with the prospect of LGR. In response, it was confirmed that this had been considered as part of the strategy, not just through the introduction of new technology but to ensure that there were procedures in place to meet the needs of residents.

Appendix 2 – Background Report to Cabinet

8. Corporate peer challenge report and action plan

Portfolio: Leader

Cabinet Resolution:

1. That the LGA's feedback report be noted;
2. That the action plan be approved at Appendix 2 in response to the recommendations and observations contained within the feedback report;
3. That the revised key deliverables be approved at Appendix 3; and

Recommended:

4. That having considered the views of the Resources and Transformation Overview and Scrutiny Panel, with regard to the motion, Cabinet recommend to Council that the process for selecting Chairmen and Vice-Chairman of Committees and Panels remain unchanged.

Cabinet Discussion:

The Leader reported that the LGA had been invited to the Council in December to undertake a Comprehensive Peer Challenge (CPC). This took place over three days and included over 40 meetings and the engagement of over 130 people, which involved staff, members and external stakeholders. It was long and comprehensive but was a rewarding process. It gave the opportunity to be open about what we think we do well and the areas for improvement. The feedback report received was positive and there were a number of observations. These had been reviewed and an Action Plan had been developed to embrace the observations as a learning opportunity, and this had been considered in light of LGR.

The Assistant Director – Transformation reported that the CPC gave the council an opportunity to learn. Those involved in the CPC had a wide reaching depth of experience from other authorities. The report identified opportunities for improvement with 10 recommendations as well as observations and these were set out in the report. A draft Action Plan had been prepared to respond to the recommendations and observations in a tangible way. It was highlighted that the Devolution White Paper had been published after the Peer Challenge and therefore the Action Plan had been framed with this in mind. One area which had been identified was the capacity to deliver the Corporate Plan priorities, in a timely way and the level of resources required over the next few years. Appendix 3 set out a review of the Corporate Plan key

deliverables in the new context and these would be kept under review. The next step would be to publish the report by 12 May and a follow up review would be set up for one year after the view, expected in early November.

Finally, the report detailed a motion received by Full Council which had been considered by the Resources and Transformation Overview and Scrutiny Panel and this was detailed in paragraphs 18-21 of the report.

A number of non-Cabinet members made the following comments:

- It was disappointing that the chairmanship role to opposition members for overview and scrutiny panels was not one of the recommendations within the Action Plan, despite it being recognised within the CPC review;
- That scrutiny could be strengthened and improved with an opposition chairman;
- That a requirement for the position of chairman and vice-chairman to be nominated by members not from the ruling party was less democratic. It was not democratic for rules would be placed, so that only certain members would be eligible for these positions;
- That improvements were being made to strengthen scrutiny in a positive way ensuring that important topics were discussed and that they were presented in a comprehensive way.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate highlighted that the CPC had identified potential areas for improvement, including some new and interesting ideas which had not previously been considered. However, consideration needed to be given regarding whether those suggestions were right for the District Council.

The Leader reported that she felt there had been good engagement and discussion at the Panel meeting regarding the motion. This view was supported by the Chairman of the Resources and Transformation Overview and Scrutiny Panel who reported there had been a detailed discussion and that all members at the meeting had been able to express their views and have a fair say during the debate and vote.

Appendix 3 – Background Report to Cabinet

9. Principal Risk and Risk Management Policy

Portfolio: Leader / All

Recommended:

1. That the Principal Risk Register and revised Risk Management Policy be adopted.

Cabinet Discussion:

The Insurance and Risk Officer introduced the report, highlighting that the Risk Management Policy had been updated and a new Principal Risk Register had been developed to be more agile and responsive detailing the key risks faced by the Council. It would require updating as the LGR context evolves and as projects develop. The new Risk Management Policy and Principal Risk Register had been considered by the Audit Committee. Cabinet were asked to consider these and recommend the adoption by Council.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Homelessness commended officers on the updated policy and new risk register which was easy to follow and well structured.

Following a question about the review of the Principal Risk Register, it was confirmed that the Audit Committee would be asked to review it in six months and that this had been written into the supporting policy.

A non-Cabinet Member raised a concern on page 10 of the Risk Management Policy regarding the impact rating within the table, on the matter of morale. It was suggested that the move from low risk (identified as no effect), to moderate (with some hostile relationship and minor non cooperation) was too far apart and that there should be some middle ground between these two risks. It was suggested there needed to be a stage prior to reaching the moderate risk or to amend the text within the low risk.

The Insurance and Risk Officer responded to this point explaining that the rationale had been taken following best practice in risk management in the public sector and considered it to be fit for purpose. However, it was recognised to be ambiguous. The Chief Executive acknowledged the point raised and noted that other descriptions used words such as minor. It was suggested that the point be taken away for further review and consideration by officers.

A non-Cabinet member raised the issue of service provision detailed within the policy and the four levels of risk rating. It was felt that service evolution had not been addressed as services change over time. In response, it was highlighted that this would be expected to be

included within the Principal Risk Register as a risk rather than within the policy, as it related to the specific service risk, rather than the rationale behind it.

Appendix 4 – Background Report to Cabinet