

Appendix 1

Financial Strategy Task and Finish Group – Actions 2025/26 - Update to Panel

Portfolio	Action	Details
Leaders	To ensure the MTFP reflects the current investment profile and realistic delivery of savings regarding Transformation.	Transformation savings removed from budget in light of LGR timescales and the ability to deliver on the business case. A revised transformation strategy and updated business case position was presented to R&T panel in June and Cabinet in August.
Finance and Corporate	To ensure the implementation of the new planning software is concluded in a timely manner and that the MTFP reflects the budget required.	Ongoing project with oversight achieved via the Transformation Board. Latest discussions with the incumbent supplier have been positive, but not yet finalised in terms of a solution that sees an upgrade from the existing platform version.
Finance and Corporate	To ensure the Council is best placed to derive benefit from the Solent Freeport retained rates pool, when appropriate.	The Council retains it's place on the various Freeport boards and remains actively engaged in decision making. Totton Masterplanning work ongoing to ensure a sound business case is ready when the retained rates pool is sufficient to invite LA project bids.
Finance and Corporate	To ensure there is full confidence in the forecast salary budgets considering the pay award implications and the direction of travel in terms of the national living wage	Estimating pay awards over the Medium-term is always going to be an assumption, never a science. The Council's budget retains a pay award contingency going into 2025/26 which was sufficient to cover the cost of the agreed award for 2025/26. The forward looking MTFP will be updated in October, and will reflect latest sentiment in terms of anticipated national living wage levels.
Housing and Homelessness	To update the MTFP regarding the current savings expected associated with the homelessness budget, particularly in light of potential changes to grant	As of the end of June, Emergency Accommodation (EA) expenditure is £177,570 over profile. This overspend is primarily due to sustained demand, reduced availability of Private Sector Leased (PSL) properties, and extended EA placements despite robust prevention efforts.

	<p>funding and growing demand.</p>	<p>At present, there are no alternative funding streams available to offset this overspend. We are actively working to mitigate future costs through the deployment of additional Homelessness Prevention Floating Support Workers (grant funded) and ongoing weekly reviews of all EA placements to support timely transitions to longer-term accommodation.</p> <p>We will continue to monitor the budget closely and provide updates on progress and any emerging risks.</p> <p>We will also look strategically for more opportunities to move families out of both EA and TA more quickly to reduce demand and costs. This includes the review of our own allocations policy to improve our approach to achieve better VFM for the council and life outcomes for homeless households.</p>
<p>Housing and Homelessness</p>	<p>To explore the potential to repurpose our Garage sites given the decreasing trend in income</p>	<p>Following two successful mobilisation site survey pilots, our commissioned provider has now surveyed 867 garages, equating to (48%) of the council's housing garage stock. The contractor is on target with the approved delivery programme. Following completion of the surveys, further assessment of the findings will be carried out to assess options for next steps.</p>
<p>Environment and Sustainability</p>	<p>To bring forward a funding plan to support the significant costs associated with our Coastal strategy, including recognising the role and contributions required from external partners in addition to our own commitments as a first responder and minority landowner</p>	<p>There are two coastal strategies that cover the western side of the district. The Christchurch Bay & Harbour Strategy that is complete, this will be progressing through NFDC adoption in the Autumn of 2025 and the Hurst Spit to Lymington Strategy, due for completion early 2027.</p> <p>The national funding mechanism for FCERM activities is currently being reviewed by Defra with an expected implementation date of April 2026. Once the outcome of the review is known we will be in a better informed position to understand funding requirements and to commence developing an investment plan.</p>

Environment and Sustainability	To ensure the Parking Strategy gave a greater understanding regarding the approach to pricing	It was agreed by Cabinet that the Parking Strategy would be given a lower level of priority in the refresh of the Corporate Plan earlier this year. However, work on a smaller number of key recommended actions relating to car parks is still being progressed, and will be ready for Member consideration, via an existing task and finish group, early in 2026.
Environment and Sustainability	To provide reassurance regarding the timely implementation of the Waste Strategy including comprehensive communications, and the Council's ability to recover the associated new burdens funding, particularly in light of the considerable risks associated with this project and unknown dependencies regarding third parties	A full report on the status of the waste Roll out was presented to a meeting of the Council on the 28 August 2025. At this stage, DEFRA / MHCLG are yet to confirm new burdens from 2026/27 in accordance with the statutory requirement to implement separate food waste collection.
Planning and Economy	To ensure a review of the Planning and Building Control income is conducted given the pressures placed on the current income budget expectations. Consideration to be given as to whether our charging structure is appropriate, and clarity as to whether are we recovering all chargeable elements.	Pre-application enquiry fees have been reviewed and introduced alongside a National review of planning application fees in April 2025. Other fees, such as compliance fees for S106 and street naming and numbering charges were reviewed at this time as well. The income against these fees, and the officer time taken will continue to be reviewed over the course of the year.
Planning and Economy	To ensure all S106/CIL income is received and spent in a timely manner	An Infrastructure Funding Statement is published annually highlighting the income and spend from both S106 and CIL. Robust systems are in place to monitor income with a new Compliance

		<p>Officer post also introduced and funded via S106 income. A CIL expenditure Framework, first adopted in 2023 and reviewed in 2024 continues to be followed with a 3rd round of local infrastructure bids having just been completed. 5 strategic CIL projects continue to be progressed with a report due to be presented to O&S in September.</p>
<p>Planning and Economy</p>	<p>To ensure that costs within Planning were benchmarked with other local authorities, and that all resources linked to income were budgeted for accordingly</p>	<p>Monthly meetings are held with Service Accountant to ensure that all resources associated with income are recorded appropriately.</p>