

Minutes of the **Cabinet**  
of the **Test Valley Borough Council**  
held in The Annexe, Crosfield Hall, Broadwater Road, Romsey  
on 15 January 2025 at 5.30 pm

Attendance:

**Councillor P North (Chairman)**  
Councillor N Adams-King  
Councillor P Bundy  
Councillor D Drew

**Councillor M Flood (Vice-Chairman)**  
Councillor N Lodge  
Councillor K North  
Councillor T Swain

Also in attendance:

Councillor S Gidley

Councillor N Gwynne

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**Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor A Johnston.

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**Public Participation**

No members of the public had registered to speak.

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**Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Adams-King declared a personal interest in agenda item 12: Introduction of Weekly Food Waste Collection Service, as Hampshire County Council Cabinet Member.

Councillor Kirsty North declared a personal interest in agenda item 12: Introduction of Weekly Food Waste Collection Service, as a Hampshire County Council Cabinet Member and Executive Lead Member for Universal Services.

Councillor Adams-King declared a personal interest in agenda item 13: Appointment to South East Councils, as a Test Valley Borough Councillor currently appointed to South East Councils.

Councillor Phil North declared a personal interest in agenda item 13: Appointment to South East Councils, as a prospective appointee from Test Valley Borough Councillor to South East Councils.

In relation to agenda item 14, Councillor Champions, Councillor Drew noted that he was a Trustee of Test Valley Arts Foundation and a Trustee of Chapel Arts Studio.

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**Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

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**Minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 20 November 2024 were proposed by Councillor P North and seconded by Councillor Flood.

**Resolved:**

**That the minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2024 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.**

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**Recommendations of the Audit Committee**

Consideration was given to a recommendation from the Audit Committee meeting held on 16 December 2024. The Council's Risk Management Strategy had been updated to support the management of risk in accordance with good practice and sound governance principles.

Having considered the options and for the reasons set out in the report, the recommendation was proposed by Councillor Flood, seconded by Councillor P North and Cabinet agreed to the following:

**Resolved**

**That the updated Risk Management Strategy, as presented in the Annex to the report, be approved.**

345 **Recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee were incorporated in agenda item 8: Council Tax Support Scheme 2025/26.

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**Council Tax Support Scheme 2025/26**

Consideration was given to the report of the Finance and Resources Portfolio Holder which presented a Council Tax Support Scheme for 2025/26.

The proposed scheme has been reviewed by an Overview and Scrutiny Task and Finish Panel to examine the complexities of the current scheme and explore a simpler and more accessible scheme. Consultation with stakeholders and the public had been undertaken in the autumn of 2024, with comments received, taken into account in the proposed scheme.

Cabinet thanked the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for their work in reviewing the Council Tax Support Scheme and resulting in a more accessible and straightforward scheme to support residents in the borough.

Having considered the options and for the reasons set out in the report, the recommendations were proposed by Councillor Flood, seconded by Councillor P North and Cabinet agreed to the following:

**Recommended to Council:**

1. **That the Council Tax Support scheme for 2025/26, as shown in Annex 1 to the report, be approved.**
2. **That the Council Tax Exceptional Hardship scheme, as shown in Annex 2 to the report, be approved.**
3. **That the Head of Finance and Revenues, in consultation with the Finance and Resources Portfolio Holder, be authorised to make any necessary changes to the Scheme that are required by the Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements) Regulations 2025 when they are confirmed by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.**
4. **In the event that any new government initiatives are introduced that result in receipt of a grant or an increase in Universal Credit or other government benefits, that the Head of Finance and Revenues, in consultation with the Finance and Resources Portfolio Holder, be authorised to disregard these awards as income in accordance with government guidelines.**
5. **That the Council continues to exercise its discretion to disregard income from war widow pensions in the calculation of Council Tax Support entitlement for pension age recipients.**

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**2025/26 Budget Process Update**

Consideration was given to the report of the Finance and Resources Portfolio Holder which presented an update on the budget setting process for the 2025/26 financial year.

The report set out the impact of the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement, saving options, income generation proposals and revenue pressures. The report also provided an updated Medium Term Financial Forecast covering 2025/26 to 2027/28.

Assuming no changes to the figures presented in the report, the Council was in a position to set a balanced budget for 2025/26. The final budget report would be presented to Cabinet at its meeting on 27 February 2024.

Having considered the options and for the reasons set out in the report, the recommendations were proposed by Councillor Flood, seconded by Councillor P North and Cabinet agreed to the following:

**Resolved**

1. That the savings options, income generation proposals and budget pressures, shown in Annexes 1 and 2 of the report, be noted.
2. That the Medium-Term Financial Forecast, shown in Annex 3 of the report, be noted.

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**Digital Strategy 2025 - 2029**

Consideration was given to a report of the Governance and Democracy Portfolio Holder which presented a digital strategy for 2025-2029.

The digital strategy would guide the Council's approach to the use of new technologies and respond to the changing needs of the borough's residents and communities.

A programme of digital transformation work would be established to enable delivery, underpinned by an action plan which would be developed over the coming three months setting out individual projects and associated resources.

Having considered the options and for the reasons set out in the report, the recommendations were proposed by Councillor Lodge, seconded by Councillor P North and Cabinet agreed to the following:

**Resolved**

**That the Digital Strategy, attached as an Annex to the report, be approved.**

349 **New Forest International Nature Conservation Designations: Recreation Mitigation Supplementary Planning Document**

Consideration was given to the report of the Planning Portfolio Holder which presented the revised New Forest International Nature Conservation Designations: Recreation Mitigation Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) following undertaking public consultation .

The SPD would provide a basis for securing mitigation for relevant developments which were likely to contribute to a significant effect on the named designations. The SPD would replace the Council's 2014 interim mitigation framework.

Having considered the options and for the reasons set out in the report, the recommendations were proposed by Councillor Bundy, seconded by Councillor P North and Cabinet agreed to the following:

**Resolved:**

1. That the New Forest International Nature Conservation Designations: Recreation Mitigation Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), appended as Annex 1, be adopted and replace the New Forest SPA Mitigation – Interim Framework (2014).

- 2. That the Head of Planning Policy and Economic Development be given delegated authority, in consultation with the Planning Portfolio Holder, to make changes of a minor nature to the SPD prior to publication.**

### 350 **Introduction of Weekly Food Waste Collection Service**

Consideration was given to the report of the Recycling and Environmental Services Portfolio Holder recommending the introduction of weekly food waste collections from Monday 13 October 2025.

The Environment Act 2021 required all waste collection authorities to implement weekly food waste collection by no later than 1 April 2026. It was recommended that weekly food waste collection be introduced from October 2025 to enable residents to receive the service sooner and improve the borough's recycling rate.

Having considered the options and for the reasons set out in the report, the recommendations were proposed by Councillor Drew, seconded by Councillor P North and Cabinet agreed to the following:

#### **Recommended to Council:**

- 1. That a weekly kerbside food waste collection service be introduced, boroughwide from Monday 13 October 2025.**
- 2. That the revenue costs be funded as set out in paragraph 8 of the report.**

### 351 **Appointment to South East Councils**

Consideration was given to the report of the Democracy and Governance Portfolio Holder which proposed the appointment of a representative to South East Councils. South East Council's represented the views of local authorities on the south east region aiming to promote and enhance the region.

Councillor Lodge proposed an alteration to the recommendation as set out in the report to add 'in addition to Councillor Adams-King' to clarify appointees to the outside body. The meetings consent was indicated without discussion.

Having considered the options and for the reasons set out in the report, the recommendations were proposed by Councillor Lodge, seconded by Councillor Bundy and Cabinet agreed to the following:

#### **Resolved:**

**That Councillor Phil North be appointed to South East Councils in addition to Councillor Adams-King.**

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### **Councillor Champions**

Consideration was given to the report of the Leader which presented a proposal for an additional Councillor Champion for Culture to be appointed for the remainder of the term of the Council, until May 2027.

The role of a Councillor Champion was to act in an advisory capacity to Cabinet in respect of specific areas of responsibility and allowed for the contribution of knowledge and expertise from non-Cabinet members.

Having considered the options and for the reasons set out in the report, the recommendations were proposed by Councillor P North, seconded by Councillor Flood and Cabinet agreed to the following:

#### **Resolved:**

**That the Councillor, as set out below, be appointed to the following Councillor Champion role:**

**Culture      Councillor S Hasselmann**

(The meeting terminated at 6.15 pm)