NOTICE OF DECISIONS TAKEN (PART 1 – FOR PUBLICATION)

MEETING: Cabinet
DATE: Thursday, 19 November 2026
PLACE: Council Chamber
MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillors: Richard Henry (Chair), Myla Arceno, Rob Broom, Coleen DeFreitas, Tom Plater, Loraine Rossati and Nazmin Chowdhury

THE DEADLINE FOR CALL-IN OF ANY OF THE DECISIONS BELOW IS FRIDAY 27 NOVEMBER 2026.
SUBJECT TO THERE BEING NO CALL-IN THE ATTACHED DECISIONS MAY BE IMPLEMENTED WITH EFFECT FROM MONDAY 30 DECEMBER 2026.

1.	**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**	

There were no apologies for absence and no declarations of interest.

At this juncture, the Leader of the Council reported that Stevenage Borough Council had been successful in securing funding for a VALOUR Centre, which was expected to open in January 2027.

Members were advised that the Centre would serve as a central hub for veterans and their families and would provide outreach services across North Hertfordshire, Welwyn Hatfield, East Hertfordshire and Broxbourne.

It was noted that VALOUR formed part of a £50 million Government programme aimed at improving access to support for veterans and their families. The Centre would help connect individuals to services relating to housing, health and wellbeing, welfare, employment and skills, while strengthening existing networks and partnerships rather than replacing current provision.

The Leader thanked Council officers, The Muster Point, the Royal British Legion and all local and regional partners who had contributed to the successful funding bid. Particular recognition was given to Councillor Claire Parris, Armed Forces Champion, for her commitment and support throughout the process.

2.	**MINUTES - CABINET 8 OCTOBER 2026**	

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 18 October 2026 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chair.

3.	**MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY AND SELECT COMMITTEES**	

Cabinet received a summary of the issues covered at the most recent meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny and Select Committees including:

- Environment and Economy Select Committee - The Committee noted updates on the Council's skills agenda and cost-of-living support. Members heard that partnership working continued to support skills development, apprenticeships, employment opportunities and the reduction of NEET figures. Members also noted ongoing cost-of-living support, including financial assistance, advice services, community cafés and energy-efficiency improvements to Council homes. Practical support and signposting for residents and businesses would continue.

- Overview and Scrutiny Committee - The Committee reviewed Cabinet decisions on Fees and Charges and the Climate Change Annual Update. Members noted the financial implications of free parking proposals and received an update on progress towards the Council's 2030 net-zero target.

- Community Select Committee - The Committee continued its review of support for young people, receiving updates from partner organisations on programmes promoting education, wellbeing and engagement. Members emphasised the importance of a holistic approach to young people's wellbeing, effective promotion of available services, and noted the annual safeguarding update for 2025/26.

Members expressed their appreciation to Scrutiny Members and officers for their work during the year, particularly recognising the collaborative approach taken by the Committees in working with partner organisations to support the scrutiny process.

4.	**2ND QUARTER REVENUE AND CAPITAL MONITORING REPORT 2026/27 – GENERAL FUND AND HRA**	

Cabinet received a report updating Members on the projected General Fund (GF), Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and Capital 2026/27 net expenditure and seek approval to amend the General Fund, HRA and Capital budgets as part of the quarterly revenue monitoring review.

The Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance advised of forecast year-end budget pressures of £425,000 on the General Fund and £374,000 on the HRA, arising from increased costs and reduced income in specific areas. Updates were also received on council tax and business rates performance, capital programme reprofiling, and changes to the timing of capital receipts, with overall funding projections remaining broadly unchanged.

It was **RESOLVED:**

General Fund

1. That the 2026/27 second quarter projected net increase in General Fund expenditure of £425,290 be approved as set out in section 4.1 of the report.

2. That the proposed movement on reserves as detailed in paragraph 4.3.1 of the report be noted.

Housing Revenue Account

3. That the 2026/27 second quarter projected net increase in HRA expenditure of £373,570 be approved.

Capital Programme

4. That the General Fund capital budget re-phasing of £4Million from 2026/27 to future years be approved.

5. That the Housing Revenue Account capital budget re-phasing of £394K to/from 2026/27 to future years be approved.

6. That General Fund capital virements of £216K in paragraph 4.11 be approved.

7. That the proposed changes to the funding of the General Fund and HRA capital budgets in section 4.12 of the report be approved.

Reason for Decision: As contained in the report
Other Options Considered: As contained in the report

5.	**MID YEAR TREASURY MANAGEMENT REVIEW 2026/27 AND PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS**	

Cabinet received a report updating Members on the Treasury Management activities in 2026/27 and review effectiveness of the 2026/27 Treasury Management and Investment Strategy including the 2026/27 prudential and treasury indicators.

The Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance advised that treasury management activities during the first half of 2026/27 remained compliant with approved strategies and prudential limits.

Members also received updates on reduced borrowing requirements, strong investment performance, proposed amendments to the Minimum Revenue Provision policy, and the continued risks arising from inflation and interest rate uncertainty.

The Portfolio Holder expressed his appreciation to Council officers and service teams for their continued work and commitment in supporting the delivery of the Council's priorities and services.

It was **RESOLVED** that the 2026/27 Mid-Year Treasury Management Review, revised Minimum Revenue Provision Policy and Prudential indicators report be recommended to Council for approval.

Reason for Decision: As contained in the report
Other Options Considered: As contained in the report

6.	**HOMELESSNESS & ROUGH SLEEPER STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN 2025-2030**	

Cabinet received a report seeking approval for updates to the Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2025–2030 and its associated action plans, following a review of the Strategy to reflect recent legislative changes, including the Renters' Rights Act 2025, developments in the Council's approach to homelessness prevention, rough sleeping and support for vulnerable residents, and the Government's National Plan to End Homelessness, published in December 2025.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing advised that the refreshed Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy strengthened the focus on prevention, early intervention and support for vulnerable groups. She stated that the strategy was supported by Government funding and would be monitored annually through the Executive Housing Working Group to ensure progress in preventing homelessness, reducing rough sleeping and improving housing outcomes for residents.

The Portfolio Holder advised that she would be joining the National Rough Sleeper Count which was taking place the following morning, involving officers from Stevenage Borough Council and partner organisations undertaking surveys across the town before dawn to identify individuals sleeping rough. She would also gain an understanding of the challenges faced by rough sleepers and the work undertaken by officers and partner agencies in supporting them.

Members also heard that the review reflected the Council Motion agreed in October and strengthened the Council's focus on prevention and early intervention. Members also agreed that the approach aligned with Government priorities to prevent homelessness and end rough sleeping.

It was **RESOLVED:**

1. That the proposed amendments to the Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2025–2030 (Appendix A), the Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Action Plan 2026/27 (Appendix B), and the draft Ending Rough Sleeping Action Plan 2026/27 (Appendix C) be approved.

2. That the updated approach to homelessness prevention and support, including arrangements relating to care leavers and the Temporary Accommodation Notification Duty (TAND) be approved.

3. That the Council's ring-fenced Rough Sleeping Programme grant allocation of £328,346 over three years, supporting the Government's ambition to end rough sleeping by enabling rapid access to accommodation and support, clear pathways into settled housing, and the wraparound support needed to help people sustain their accommodation and prevent a return to rough sleeping be noted.

4. That the Strategy outcomes and associated Action Plans be reviewed annually by the Executive Housing Working Group.

5. That delegated authority be given to the Strategic Director after consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Housing Development, to approve any amendments to the strategy and action plans.

Reason for Decision: As contained in the report
Other Options Considered: As contained in the report

7.	**STEVENAGE BOROUGH NEW LOCAL PLAN**	

Cabinet received a report seeking agreement to formally begin preparing a new Local Plan for Stevenage under the reformed plan-making system introduced by the Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025 and the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026.

The Portfolio Holder for Environment. Planning and Transport advised that preparation of a new Local Plan was required to provide an up-to-date framework for future growth and development in Stevenage. The Plan would be developed through community engagement, evidence-led decision-making and partnership working with neighbouring authorities and Hertfordshire County Council.

Members agreed that the emerging Local Plan would help support the delivery of employment opportunities, new housing, high-quality green spaces and infrastructure, with the aim of creating a healthy, well-connected, inclusive and thriving community for current and future residents.

The Leader of the Council stressed the importance of ensuring that the delivery of new homes and employment opportunities was

supported by appropriate infrastructure, including education, healthcare, transport networks and green spaces. He recognised that, given the limited availability of land, a balanced approach would be required to accommodate competing needs and priorities.

Members emphasised the importance of continuing to work collaboratively with neighbouring councils in planning for future growth and infrastructure provision.

The Portfolio Holder expressed thanks to officers for their work and support in preparing the report.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That it be noted that the new Local Plan system introduced by Government, approves the new Local Plan Timetable (Appendix A) to replace the Local Development Scheme, approves the Notice of Intention to commence work on a new Local Plan for Stevenage (Appendix B) and delegates authority to the Director of Planning and Regulation, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment, Transport and Planning, to amend the Local Plan Timetable if required to align with any timetable changes and to ensure legal compliance.

2. That authority be delegated to the Director of Planning and Regulation, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment, Transport and Planning, to prepare and publish a Scoping Consultation and the Gateway 1 Self-Assessment , formally commencing the new Local Plan process on 31 March 2027.

3. That authority be delegated to the Director of Planning and Regulation, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment, Transport and Planning, to put in place the necessary governance arrangements with adjacent authorities to support the development of the Local Plan.

4. That authority be delegated to the Director of Planning and Regulation, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment, Transport and Planning, to continue to work with Hertfordshire County Council as it progresses the Spatial Development Strategy, and as proposals for a new Mayoral Strategic Authority emerge, to explore opportunities as the Local Plan develops.

5. That the feedback from Members on the content of this report be noted.

Reason for Decision: As contained in the report
Other Options Considered: As contained in the report

8.	**SHARED ICT STRATEGY 2027–2029**	

Cabinet received the Shared ICT Strategy 2027–2029 (attached at Appendix A to the report for approval.

The Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance advised that the Shared ICT Strategy 2027–2029 set priorities for cyber resilience, data and AI, and future-ready technology. He stated that the Strategy built on recent investment in ICT infrastructure and would support service improvement, digital transformation and preparations for Local Government Reorganisation, with delivery overseen by the Joint ICT Committee.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That it be noted that the Joint Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Committee has considered and agreed the Shared ICT Strategy 2027–2029.

2. That the Shared ICT Strategy 2027–2029, including the High-Level Action Plan (2027/28), attached at Appendix A to the report be approved and adopted.

3. That it be noted that the Shared ICT Strategy 2027–2029 and its High-Level Action Plan will be formally reviewed by the Joint Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Committee, ensuring the Council can adapt priorities promptly once the Government confirms its position on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR).

Reason for Decision: As contained in the report
Other Options Considered: As contained in the report

9.	**BALANCING THE BUDGET GENERAL FUND 2027/28**	

Cabinet received a report updating Members on the Balancing the Budget priority and the 2027/28 onwards options that met the required General Fund requirement.

Members were advised of the updated medium-term financial projections, including increased inflationary pressures and a projected draw on balances to support Local Government Reorganisation. It was noted that additional savings targets were proposed to reduce future reliance on reserves, and that the draft budget would be presented to Cabinet in January 2027.

The Strategic Director and Chief Financial Officer advised that the Council's financial position had improved, enabling additional investment in priorities such as fly-tipping enforcement and woodland management. She stated that future savings requirements would be significantly lower than in previous years.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That the Balancing the Budget options as set out in the report and Appendix A, totalling £609,417 (saving) for the General Fund 2027/28 (and £20,942 for the HRA) be approved and incorporated into the Council's budget setting processes.

2. That the inflation and budget pressures as set out in section 4.1 of the report be noted and the £5,000 budget per annum for defibrillators repair and maintenance be approved.

3. That the proposed approach for Local Government Reform (LGR) funding as set out in paragraphs 4.1.4-4.1.5 be approved.

4. That the 2027/28 changes to the administration of Council Tax as set out in paragraph 4.2.8 be noted.

5. That it be noted that the future revision of the Council's Council Tax Support (CTS) scheme will be dependent on the Governments timeline for LGR as set out in paragraphs 4.2.6-4.2.9.

6. That the use of the Hertfordshire Business rates pooling gains of £107K as set out in paragraphs 4.3.7-4.3.8 of the report be approved.

7. That the completion of the Business rates pro-forma for 2027/28 (NDR 1) be delegated to the Strategic Director (S151) after consultation with the Resources and Performance Portfolio holder (paragraph 4.3.6 refers).

8. That the growth options as set out in the report and Appendix B totalling £296,683 for the General Fund 2027/28 (and £20,942 for the HRA) be approved and incorporated into the Council's budget setting processes.

9. That it be noted that the future savings target in the main can be met from Fees and Charges as set out in paragraph 4.7.6 of the report.

10. That the revised GF MTFS financial summary, as shown in section 4.9 to this report be noted.

11. That the Equalities Impact Assessment for the Savings and Growth options (Appendix C) be noted.

12. That the Council's recognised unions be consulted regarding the proposed budget package.

13. That key partners and other stakeholders be consulted, and their views considered as part of the 2027/28 budget setting process.

Reason for Decision: As contained in the report
Other Options Considered: As contained in the report

10.	**BALANCING THE BUDGET HRA 2027/28**	

Cabinet received a report updating Members on the Balancing the Budget priorities and the options from 2027/28 onwards that meet the required financial projections for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

The Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance advised of the significant financial pressures facing the HRA and the proposed savings package, which would deliver savings exceeding the 2027/28 target.

While welcoming the progress made, Members recognised that further savings would be required in future years and noted the ongoing risks arising from inflation, borrowing costs and investment requirements. Officers advised that subject to approval, the proposals would be incorporated into the 2027/28 draft budget.

The Strategic Director advised that the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) continued to face financial pressures arising from increased construction, repair and borrowing costs, resulting in higher savings targets than in previous years. She reported that the savings requirement for 2027/28 had been met; however, further efficiencies would be required in future years. Members agreed that a continuous review of HRA costs and efficiencies would be necessary to ensure value for.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That the Balancing the Budget options, as set out in the report and Appendix A, totalling £1.204 Million (savings) for the HRA 2027/28, be approved and incorporated into the Council's budget setting processes.

2. That the need for further savings as set out in section 4.5 of the report be noted.

3. That the revised HRA MTFS financial summary, as shown in section 4.8 to the report be noted.

4. That the Council's recognised unions be consulted regarding the proposed budget package.

5. That key partners and other stakeholders be consulted, and their views considered as part of the 2027/28 budget setting process.

6. That the HRA Balancing the Budget savings options as set out in Appendix A and the overarching Equalities Impact Assessment at Appendix B of the report be noted.

Reason for Decision: As contained in the report
Other Options Considered: As contained in the report

11.	**URGENT PART 1 BUSINESS**	

There was no Urgent Part I Business.

12.	**EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**	

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That, under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in paragraphs 1 to 7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, as amended by SI 2006 No. 88.

2. That having considered the reasons for the following item being in Part II, it be determined that maintaining the exemption from disclosure of the information contained therein outweighed the public interest in disclosure.

13.	**APPROVAL OF PROCUREMENT ROUTE FOR VOID WORKS CONTRACT.**	

Cabinet received a Part II report seeking approval of the proposed procurement approach for the award of a contract for void works via a mini competition through the Procurement for Housing: Responsive Repairs, Disrepair Works and Void Services Framework.

It was **RESOLVED** that the recommendations set out in the report be approved.

Reason for Decision: As contained in the report
Other Options Considered: As contained in the report

14.	**HIGH RISE STOCK INVESTMENT AND DEVELOPMENT ANALYSIS**	

Cabinet received a Part II report relating to the Council's five high-rise residential buildings.

It was **RESOLVED** that the recommendations set out in the report be approved.

Reason for Decision: As contained in the report *Other Options Considered: As contained in the report*		
15.	**URGENT PART II BUSINESS**	
There was no Urgent Part II Business.		