OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on Wednesday, 18 March 2026 in the Council Chamber - Council Offices at 9.30 am

Committee Members Present:	Cllr P Bailey	Cllr C Cushing
	Cllr A Fletcher	Cllr M Hankins
	Cllr P Heinrich	Cllr V Holliday (Chairman)
	Cllr M Gray (Vice-Chairman)	Cllr C Rouse
	Cllr K Bayes	Cllr K Leith
	Cllr T Adams	Cllr L Shires
	Cllr J Toye	Cllr L Withington

Officers in Attendance: Director for Resources
Deputy Monitoring Officer
Assistant Director of Finance
Democratic Services Manager
Democratic Services Governance Officer

1 SUBSTITUTES

Apologies had been received from Cllr S Penfold and Cllr N Housden.

There were no substitutes.

2 PUBLIC QUESTIONS & STATEMENTS

There were no public questions or statements

3 MINUTES

Cllr Cushing proposed and Cllr C Rouse seconded that the revised minutes of the 28th January 2026, and separately that the minutes of 11th February 2026, be approved as a true and correct record.

Resolved unanimously to approve these minutes.

4 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None

5 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

6 PETITIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

None

7 CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTER REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE BY A MEMBER

None received

8 RESPONSES OF THE COUNCIL OR THE CABINET TO THE COMMITTEE'S REPORTS OR RECOMMENDATIONS

None received

9 BUDGET MONITORING P10 2025-2026

Cllr Gray joined the meeting.

Cllr L Shires presented the report noting that the significant change from period 6 related to the extended responsibility producer grant which had previously been held in reserves. This had now been released to cover service costs with the balance being available to offset the anticipated cost of food waste recycling. In response to a question from Cllr Hankins, the Director for Resources provided further detail noting that during the earlier budgeting process there had been a lack of clarity available as to how the grant could be spent and therefore a prudent approach had been taken. This clarity was now available and therefore this reserve could be released.

Cllr Cushing asked for clarification of the impact of the anticipated savings of £420k noted on page 39 section 4.2, and whether those savings where embedded into future activities. Cllr Shires referred to the budget monitoring savings and income paper on page 71 of the report which outlined the differences and confirmed she had no concerns, save for the impact of unknown matters. Cllr Fletcher queried the variance on page 57, paragraph 3, relating to the kennelling costs that were associated with an enforcement case. Cllr Shires confirmed she would ask the relevant portfolio holder to respond.

Cllr Fletcher also asked for further information regarding efficiencies and savings during staff recruitment and investment in apprenticeships within the organisation. Cllr Shires confirmed that vacancies could be held open if it was believed there was capacity but otherwise the delays were often out of the Council’s control but had a beneficial financial impact. Cllr Shires noted she was proud of the investment in apprenticeships which allowed individuals into different jobs and a route into local government. Following a question from Cllr K Bayes, Cllr Shires indicated she would respond separately with the number of apprentices and whether the Council maximised its levy in this regard.

Cllr Cushing asked for clarification, following a response Cllr Vickers had received from the Chief Executive, regarding the removal of the staff from the Connect building in Fakenham, he clarified he was not questioning the operational decision, but whether the item was identified within the budget setting process. Cllr Shires confirmed that this service change was not specifically highlighted within budget setting process and she was not aware of the change until after the conclusion of that process. Cllr L Withington informed the Committee that this was something that had been proposed as a potential cost saving and would not have been a specific item in the budget.

Cllr Cushing asked for clarification as to whether it would be possible to have year on year likely spend in terms of the capital programme, particularly, for example, the FLASH project, as well as an indication of whether the spend was funded by central government grant or NNDC funds. Cllr Shires referred to the line by split of funding at the base of the capital programme in the report. The Director for Resources explained that when this capital programme was originally put together it would have been in December 2024 and a simple and prudent approach would have been taken as it would have impacted on necessary borrowing and cash flow exposure and therefore it would have been important to consider all possible outflows in the year. The Director for Resources suggested that it might be possible to include a note of where funding was originating from but would complicate the report. Cllr Shires suggested that perhaps once per year this information could be provided with the outturn report.

Cllr Hankins asked about the reference to housing s.106 enabling fund, what was being enabled and he recalled comments about s.106 funding arrangements. in audit reports. The Assistant Director of Finance stated this money was connected to affordable homes contributions from developers. He confirmed there had been audit recommendations relating to s.106 funds and there was a programme of work to close those actions and the potential for clawback was being closely monitored.

The Chair noted the shortfall in rent of beach huts (Page 37) but queried on page 97 in the action plan a further £30k income was anticipated. Cllr Shires explained that the decision to change the length of leases resulted in a drop in income but that leases were also being reviewed commercially, leading to rent increases which would result in this additional income.

The Chair asked for clarification on page 38 of the interest rates and charges connected with public works loan of £5m. The ADF, confirmed that one loan lasted for a whole year, the other lasted less than one month which gave rise to the difference. The Chair also noted that on Page 37 there was a season ticket income reduction and asked for information as to why this was the case. Cllr Shires confirmed the team would investigate the data on this and report back to the Committee.

Cllr Bayes asked for clarification on reprographics amount, Cllr Shires confirmed there had been some tidying up of where costs were held in this area. Cllr Shires also clarified, following an additional question regarding the collector’s cabin roof, that the roofs that were thatched didn’t cost as much as anticipated.

Following a proposal by Cllr Fletcher which was seconded by Cllr Rouse, it was **resolved unanimously** to

a) Note the contents of the report and the current forecast year end position.

b) Seek approval of Full Council to increase the 2025/26 capital budget for Disabled Facilities Grants to £2,317,266. This is to reflect the addition of £118,204 of grant award towards the scheme

c) To use the Extended Responsibility Producer grant of £1,312,840, which was previously forecasted to be an in-year contribution to reserves, to offset relevant in year recycling expenditure.

d) That the resulting underspend of £1,312,840 in the respective recycling revenue budgets be transferred to the General Reserve to mitigate future unfunded new burdens

10 REPORTING PROGRESS IMPLEMENTING CORPORATE PLAN 2023-27 ACTION PLAN- TO END OF Q3

Cllr Adams provided a summary of the information in the report. In respect of LGR, he stated that it wasn't clear when we could expect the minded to decision.

Cllr Cushing asked regarding household waste recycling and noted the legislative requirement for this to be in place by the end of March and given that it would not be achievable – why was this RAG rating amber and not red? Cllr Adams agreed that the requirement would not be met in the way originally intended but that it would still be met. Cllr Adams believed that amber was currently correctly reflected.

Cllr Bayes noted the lack of smart targets in the action plan and believed that the green ratings gave a false sense of security and suggested that some red ratings would be appropriate where there were unknowns. Cllr Adams stated he was satisfied this document was useful and the Corporate Plan was the foundation of actions. Cllr Hankins informed the Committee he had a meeting with the head of project management team and was impressed with the detail backing up information and believed that the Committee would benefit from seeing that detail.

Cllr Bailey asked for consideration on a cash hub for Sheringham given that Nationwide didn't service business customers. Cllr Rouse was encouraged that a second cash point might being considered for Holt, Cllr Adams confirmed that those discussions had not yet started but recognised the existing facility may not meet the needs of the town.

Cllr P Heinrich commented on health and care facilities given the significant proposed development in market towns including North Walsham and that facilities were currently inadequate and there was no visibility over what improvements were being planned. Cllr Adams agreed there were lots of discussions but was increasingly confident that beneficial announcements would be made although it would still take some time. Cllr Withington stated there appeared to be an aim of moving discussions, such as Benjamin Court, forward.

The Chair asked about the rural position statement and whether an amber rating was correct. Cllr Adams confirmed there has been a lack of data availability and a delay but was confident that the target would be met.

The Committee noted the report

11 ANNUAL ACTION PLAN 2026/2027

Cllr Adams introduced the Plan which reflects the current context, noting the conflict between business as usual and government led LGR.

Cllr Adams left the meeting.

The Chair asked whether it was possible to include any more quantifiable targets. Cllr Shires noted this action plan was an additional layer added to show how manifesto promises were being delivered. Cllr Shires suggested a shared understanding of how the RAG rating works would be beneficial. Cllr Cushing expressed the importance of SMART objectives and believed that these were not utilised well at NNDC. Cllr Shires referred to the report given to the Committee by Cllr Hankins and suggested it was unfair to suggest Officers were not working to strict targets.

The Chair wondered whether further action could be included, on for example, apprenticeships or temporary accommodation and whether there would be any additional capacity within the organisation for this. Cllr Shires stated that with LGR it was important that the Council carefully considered its capacity.

The Committee noted the report.

The meeting adjourned at 11.05 and reconvened at 11.20

12 MOBILE CONNECTIVITY REVIEW

The Chair introduced the item and the Committee had a discussion surrounding the work undertaken in this area.

Cllr Hankins left the meeting

The Committee agreed that the actions following this work were (in addition to the items currently identified on the action list), when the update to the NPPF was published, for the Committee to consider the impact on planning for masts, the methodology used by the Committee in this area to be utilised for future work by the Committee, for the other MNO's (and potentially VMNO's and delivery partners) to be followed up with regard to their appearing before the Committee.

13 HOSC REPORT

The Chair brought the following specific issues contained within the report to the attention of the Committee, the removal of weekend pathology testing without a full equality assessment and for cost reasons, the review of palliative care, the medicines support service and the change of supplier of vulnerable person support in Norwich.

14 THE CABINET WORK PROGRAMME

15 OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME AND UPDATE

The Scrutiny Officer updated the Committee on potential items for the April meeting including an updated on the FLASH project, the work setting item, together with an update from the new Assistant Director of People services.

The Scrutiny Officer asked for ideas and suggestions for the work programme setting.

The Committee agreed that given the closeness to the elections the meeting in May would be cancelled.

16 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

The meeting ended at 11.54 am.

Chairman