BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK

CORPORATE PERFORMANCE PANEL

Minutes from the Meeting of the Corporate Performance Panel held on Tuesday, 10th November, 2026 at 4.30 pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn PE30 5DQ

PRESENT: Councillors A Beales, S Bearshaw, J Bhondi, P Bland, B Jones, B Long, C Morley, C Rose, D Sayers and Mrs V Spikings

PORTFOLIO HOLDERS:
Councillor C Morley, Portfolio Holder for Finance
Councillor A Beales, Leader of the Council

PRESENT UNDER STANDING ORDER 34B (remotely):
Councillors Blunt, Dickinson and Nash

OFFICERS PRESENT:
Debbie Ess, Senior Corporate Governance Officer
Stuart Ashworth, Assistant Director for Environment and Planning (remotely)
Duncan Hall, Assistant Director for Regeneration, Housing and Place (remotely)
Siobhan Cleeve, Interim Assistant Director for Leisure and Culture
Jo Stanton, Revenues and Benefits Manager
Michelle Drewery, Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer
Carl Holland, Assistant Director for Finance and Deputy Section 151 Officer

CP61 APPOINTMENT OF VICE - CHAIR FOR THE MEETING

RESOLVED: Councillor Spikings was appointed Vice – Chair for the meeting.

CP62 APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Kirk.

CP63 MINUTES

RESOLVED: The minutes from the previous meeting were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

CP64 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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Councillors Blunt and Dickinson declared an interest in Item 10 – Cabinet Report: Council Tax Discounts, Levies and Premiums for Empty and Second Homes for 2027/2028.

The Revenues and Benefits Manager advised that a dispensation had previously been granted to enable Members to participate in the debate on this item.

CP65 **URGENT BUSINESS UNDER STANDING ORDER 7**

There was none.

CP66 **MEMBERS PRESENT PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 34**

Councillors Blunt, Dickinson and Nash were present under Standing Order 34b, on Teams.

CP67 **CHAIR'S CORRESPONDENCE (IF ANY)**

There was none.

CP68 **CALL INS (IF ANY)**

There were no call-ins to consider.

CP69 **CABINET REPORT - CORPORATE PERFORMANCE MONITORING QUARTER 2**

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The Senior Corporate Governance Officer presented the Quarter Two 2026/27 Corporate Performance Report and advised that 85% of current projects were on track, with the remaining 15% experiencing minor issues or delays which had been identified and were being managed. Of the key performance indicators, 83% had met or exceeded their targets, with the remaining 17% below target and subject to ongoing monitoring.

Members were advised that the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund programmes had been completed, securing more than £3 million across over 120 projects. Engagement with the devolution programme had recommenced. Reporting relating to Local Government Reorganisation had been paused during Quarter Two and was due to recommence in Quarter Three. Additional resources were also being directed towards the Care Leavers Covenant and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion actions.

The Vice – Chair, Councillor Spikings sought clarification and requested that actual numerical figures and clearer reporting periods be provided alongside percentages, particularly in relation to business performance, affordable homes and new homes delivered. The Assistant Director for Environment and Planning and the Senior

Corporate Governance Officer clarified that the percentages reported are based on national targets but agreed to insert the housing delivery target in future reports to give a clearer understanding of performance against the intended level.

Under Standing Order 34, Councillor Blunt sought clarification on whether changes to national planning policy and processes would require revised targets or performance indicators. The Assistant Director for Environment and Planning confirmed that the existing national targets would remain. The revised scheme would be reviewed separately after six months to assess its impact on delivery, rather than solely on the speed of determining applications.

Councillor Jones sought clarification on the additional staffing required within the Customer Information Centre to reduce call-answering times and requested further information regarding two reported cyber incidents. The Senior Corporate Governance Officer advised that recruitment and training were underway and that more complex enquiries required additional time to resolve. In relation to the cyber incidents, it was advised that specific details would not be discussed in open session but could be provided separately outside of the meeting.

RESOLVED: The Panel supported the recommendations to Cabinet.

Cabinet Resolves to:

1. To review the Performance Management Report and comment on the delivery against the Corporate Strategy.

Councillor Sayers joined the meeting at 4:46pm.

CP70 **CABINET REPORT – COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME FOR WORKING AGE PEOPLE FOR 2027/2028**

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The Revenues and Benefits Manager presented the proposed Working Age Council Tax Support Scheme for 2027/28 and recommended that the existing scheme continue, subject to minor amendments to reflect wider welfare reforms and provide clarification to the wording.

Members were advised that the scheme could provide support of up to 100% of a claimant's Council Tax liability and currently provided approximately £12 million of support to around 9,500 households, with an average award of approximately £1,300.

In response to a question from the Chair, Councillor Long, the Revenues and Benefits Manager advised that the scheme was publicised through Council Tax bills and the Council's website. A specialist recovery team also promoted available support to vulnerable

households and those experiencing difficulty with payments. Residents did not need to be in arrears before contacting the Customer Information Centre for advice and support.

Portfolio Holder, Councillor Morley referred to the postcode analysis within the report and highlighted the significantly higher number of working-age households receiving support in the PE30 area compared with pension-age households. Members noted that this could reflect local household and employment circumstances and that wider Council support remained important.

RESOLVED: The Panel supported the recommendations to Cabinet then Council.

Recommendation to Full Council:

That the draft Council Tax Support Scheme for 2027/2028 is agreed as the final Council Tax Support Scheme for working age people for 2027/2028.

CP71 **CABINET REPORT - COUNCIL TAX DISCOUNTS, LEVIES AND PREMIUMS FOR EMPTY PROPERTIES AND SECOND HOMES FOR 2027/2028**

Click here to view the recording of this item on YouTube.

The Revenues and Benefits Manager presented the annual review of Council Tax discounts, levies and premiums for empty properties and second homes. Members were advised that no changes to the existing arrangements were proposed for 2027/28.

The report recommended retaining the existing discounts, levies and premiums for long-term empty properties, furnished properties, second homes and uninhabitable properties. The arrangements reflected the relevant statutory exceptions and had been incorporated into the Council's financial projections and Financial Plan, with an allowance made for potential changes in behaviour.

Councillor Sayers sought clarification on the criteria for determining whether a property was uninhabitable and whether a 25% discount was appropriate in circumstances such as significant fire damage. The Revenues and Benefits Manager advised that structural works involving walls, floors, ceilings, roofs, foundations or underpinning could meet the relevant criteria. In cases of severe fire damage, a property could be removed from the Council Tax valuation list by the Valuation Office Agency, or the Council could exercise its discretion to reduce the Council Tax liability to nil.

The Chair, Councillor Long, referred to a case involving subsidence and significant structural damage where the presence of protected bats had prevented necessary works from progressing. The Revenues and

Benefits Manager explained that delegated authority was available to remit premiums or Council Tax liability in exceptional circumstances where the owner was genuinely seeking to bring the property back into use, subject to the appropriate approval. Any such remission would be considered on the individual circumstances of the case and would not necessarily be applied indefinitely.

RESOLVED: The Panel supported the recommendations to Cabinet then Council.

Recommendation to Full Council:

The following discounts, levies and premiums are continued for 2027/2028, subject to the Statutory Exceptions:

Class A Second Homes: • 0% discount, i.e. no reduction;

Class B Second Homes:

- 0% discount i.e. no reduction, plus,
- An additional premium of 100% - subject to negotiation with Norfolk County Council, to return to BCKLWN a 25% share of the additional income generated by the second homes premium in line with those arrangements agreed in 2024/25 and 2025/26

Class C Empty / Unfurnished Properties:

- 0% discount, i.e. no reduction, plus,
- The relevant Long-Term Empty Property Levy (as below)

Class D Uninhabitable Properties:

- 25% discount for 12 months starting on the day the property becomes uninhabitable; then:
- 0% discount once the 12-month period has expired, plus
- The relevant Long-Term Empty Property Levy (as below)

Long-Term Empty Properties (following on from Class C and Class D above):

- A premium of 100% where the property has been empty for at least one year but less than five years,
- A premium of 200% where the property has been empty for at least five years but less than ten years, and
- A premium of 300% where the property has been empty for at least ten years.

That authority be delegated to the Leader of the Council, in consultation with the Section 151 Officer, to negotiate and agree with Norfolk County Council the proportion of additional Council Tax income arising from the second homes premium to be returned to the Borough Council for 2027/2028.

Councillor Bearshaw joined the meeting at 5:01pm.

CP72 **CABINET REPORT - COMMUNITY PROJECT FUND**

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The Portfolio Holder introduced and explained that the Community Project Fund had been established as part of the February budget process to provide Ward Members with a means of supporting local improvements and community needs within their wards. The fund was intended to complement, rather than replace, centrally determined expenditure and enabled Members from across the political groups to support projects within their local communities.

The Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer presented the first round of the Community Project Fund and advised that 48 applications had been received, requesting just over £651,000 against an available allocation of £500,000. The applications had a combined project value of approximately £1.863 million.

She explained that Officers had triaged and scored the applications against the published criteria, following which the working panel had considered the applications and made a number of adjustments based on wider considerations. Funding totalling £412,676 was recommended, supporting projects with a combined value of approximately £1.112 million, subject to Cabinet approval.

The Chair, Councillor Long questioned whether the allocation of £500,000 prior to the detailed criteria and projects being known had limited Full Council's opportunity to consider and scrutinise alternative uses of the funding as part of the budget-setting process. The Portfolio Holder explained that the fund had been specifically designed as a ward-based mechanism to support local projects.

The Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer explained that approval of the budget had established the financial envelope and broad purpose of the fund, following which the detailed criteria and governance arrangements had been developed. The criteria had subsequently been considered by the Panel prior to applications opening.

Applicants had been provided with guidance on the evidence required and the scoring process. The maximum awards available were £5,000 for revenue projects and £25,000 for capital projects. The Deputy Chief

Executive and Section 151 Officer confirmed that the criteria had been applied consistently to applications.

Members were advised that the proposed awards would be considered by Cabinet on 17 November 2026, with successful projects required to be completed by 31 March 2028.

The Chair, Councillor Long, abstained from the vote.

RESOLVED: The Panel supported the recommendations to Cabinet.

Cabinet resolves to:

1) approve the grant awards set out in Appendix A, subject to the conditions and assurance requirements identified;

2) note the applications set out in Appendix B that are not recommended for funding;

3) delegate authority to the Assistant Director Finance, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, to finalise grant conditions and make any minor adjustments necessary to ensure that awards remain within the approved £500,000 budget; and

4) require that no grant payment is released until all relevant eligibility, due diligence and assurance requirements have been satisfactorily completed.

Councillor Beales joined the meeting at 5:16pm.

CP73 **CABINET REPORT - BUDGET MONITORING QUARTER 2**

Click here to view the recording of this item on YouTube.

The Assistant Director for Finance and Deputy Section 151 Officer presented the Quarter Two Revenue and Capital Monitoring Report. Members were advised that the original budget had forecast a contribution of £1.189 million to the General Fund Reserve. As at 30 September 2026, the position had improved by £781,000, resulting in a forecast contribution of £1.971 million.

The Assistant Director highlighted the key movements contributing to the revised position, including increased car parking income and reduced fuel and consumables expenditure within gardens and open spaces. Other movements related to business rates on empty industrial units, reduced discretionary housing benefit costs arising from improved temporary and supported accommodation arrangements, and drainage board levy support.

Members were advised that repairs and maintenance costs continued to be monitored as further asset inspections could identify additional

requirements. Costs associated with public event safety requirements were also being reviewed following the completion of the events season.

In relation to savings, the annual target was £2.279 million, with £450,000 of savings banked in Quarter One and a further £677,000 in Quarter Two. The report used a red, amber and green rating system to identify savings according to the level of certainty around their achievement.

The Assistant Director also reported that the forecast capital expenditure had reduced from £75.6 million at Quarter One to £62.83 million at Quarter Two, following a review of anticipated project timescales. Debt recovery activity continued, and investment returns remained ahead of budget as a result of prevailing interest rates.

There was no questions or comments from the Panel.

RESOLVED: The Panel supported the recommendations to Cabinet.

Cabinet resolves to:

1) Note the forecast revenue and revised capital position for 2026/2027.

2) Approve the proposed amendments to the capital programme, including the movement of projects between programme tiers, as set out in the report and appendix 2.

3) Approve the movements between reserves, as set out in the report

4) Notes the updated position on savings and efficiencies, debt recovery and treasury management.

CP74 **PANEL WORK PROGRAMME**

RESOLVED: The Panel Work Programme was noted.

CP75 **CABINET FORWARD DECISIONS LIST**

RESOLVED: The Cabinet Forward Decision List was noted.

CP76 **SHAREHOLDER COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME**

RESOLVED: The Shareholder Committee Work Programme was noted.

CP77 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Corporate Performance Panel was scheduled to take place on 12th January 2027 at 4:30pm in Council Chamber, Town Hall.

CP78 **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

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RESOLVED: That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

CP79 **EXEMPT - CABINET REPORT - CORPORATE INSURANCE CONTRACT ARRANGEMENTS FROM 1 JANUARY 2027**

The Assistant Director for Finance and Deputy Section 151 Officer presented the report, providing an overview of the arrangements for the Council's corporate insurance contract.

The Panel considered the report and asked a number of questions, to which the Assistant Director for Finance and Deputy Section 151 Officer responded.

RESOLVED: The Panel supported the recommendations to Cabinet.

Cabinet resolves to:

1. Approve the continuation of the Council's corporate insurance arrangements with the incumbent supplier for the period 1 January 2027 to 31 December 2027.

2. Delegate authority to the Assistant Director - Finance in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance to approve arrangements for the period 1 January 2028 to 31 December 2028, provided that these remain affordable and represent value for money, supplier performance is satisfactory and a lawful procurement route remains available and all associated procurement requirements are met.

3. Authorise the Assistant Director - Finance to finalise and execute all the necessary contractual documentation.

4. Note that officers are preparing the detailed underwriting information

The meeting closed at 5.56 pm