Minutes of the Meeting of the COUNCIL held at the Council Chamber, Epsom Town Hall on 10 February 2026

PRESENT -

Councillor Robert Leach (Chair); Councillor Lucie McIntyre (Vice-Chair); Councillors Arthur Abdulin, Chris Ames, John Beckett, Steve Bridger, Kate Chinn, Christine Cleveland, Alex Coley, Neil Dallen, Hannah Dalton, Julian Freeman, Liz Frost, Bernice Froud, Tony Froud, Rob Geleit, Shanice Goldman, Graham Jones, Alison Kelly, Rachel King, James Lawrence, Steven McCormick, Phil Neale, Peter O'Donovan, Kieran Persand, Humphrey Reynolds, Kim Spickett, Chris Watson, Alan Williamson and Clive Woodbridge

Absent: Councillor Christine Howells, Councillor Jan Mason, Councillor Julie Morris, Councillor Bernie Muir and Councillor Darren Talbot

Officers present: Jackie King (Chief Executive), Cagdas Canbolat (Director of Corporate Services (S151)), Sue Emmons (Chief Accountant) and Tim Richardson (Democratic Services Manager)

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33 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made by Councillors regarding items on the agenda.

34 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 9 December 2025 were agreed as a true record and the Mayor was authorised to sign them.

35 MAYORAL COMMUNICATIONS/BUSINESS

The Mayor informed the Council of the recent publication of the Local Plan Site Allocation SA8 document, relating to land at East Ewell Station and that the developers were holding a display at Bourne Hall on 24 February which would be open to the public.

The Mayor provided his congratulations to Councillor Clive Woodbridge, who had won the 2025 Clarence Barrett award for contributions to local government.

Members were reminded of the date of the upcoming Civic Dinner on 13 March.

36 BUDGET REPORT 2026/27

The Council gave consideration to its 2026/27 budget, comprising both revenue and capital expenditure plans and Council Tax amounts for each band of dwelling. The report took account of the recommendations of the Community & Wellbeing, Environment, Licensing and Planning Policy and Strategy & Resources Committees (appertaining to fees and charges, the revenue budget and capital programme).

The Mayor informed the Council that a correction to the table included at Recommendation 1.7 of the report had been published prior to the meeting.

In moving the recommendations of the report, the Chair of the Strategy and Resources Committee, Councillor Neil Dallen, made a statement to the Council on the budget for 2025/26 and informed the Council of the following corrections to the report:

- *Recommendation 1.6.3 (page 16 of the agenda pack) – the wording "£8,174,856 being the amount by which the aggregate at 1.**5**.1above" is corrected to: "£8,174,856 being the amount by which the aggregate at 1.**6**.1above"*

- *Recommendation 1.6.4 (page 16 of the agenda pack) - the wording "£239.85 being the amount at 1.**5**.3" is corrected to "£239.85 being the amount at 1.**6**.3"*

- *Table 12.8 (page 28 of the agenda pack) - the 2nd subtotal, should read "Subtotal - Reserves **Un**available for general use", corrected from the wording "Available for general use".*

In response, Councillors Kate Chinn, James Lawrence, Kieran Persand and Alex Coley spoke on behalf of their respective political groups.

An amendment to the report was **MOVED** by Councillor James Lawrence and **SECONDED** by Councillor Alex Coley. The proposed amendment was as follows:

Additional recommendation:

"Transfer all non-earmarked funds allocated for priorities 2, 3, 5 and 6 from the Strategic Priorities Reserve to the General Fund Working Balance."

The amendment was not accepted by the proposer of the original motion and accordingly was debated by the Council. Upon being put to the vote the amendment was **LOST** with 10 votes for, 19 votes against and the Mayor not voting.

An amendment to the report was **MOVED** by Councillor Alex Coley and **SECONDED** by Councillor James Lawrence. The proposed amendment was as follows:

Additional recommendation:

"That the minimum balance on the capital receipts reserve is removed and £1m of the reserve funds be used to fund the Bourne Hall heating & ventilation capital project, as recommended by FSAG."

The amendment was not accepted by the proposer of the original motion and accordingly was debated by the Council. Upon being put to the vote the amendment was **LOST** with 10 votes for, 19 votes against and the Mayor not voting.

Upon being put, the motion to agree the recommendations of the report was **CARRIED**, as detailed below.

Accordingly, it was resolved:

With 19 votes for, 6 votes against, 4 abstentions and the Mayor not voting:

1.1 The Revenue estimates for 2026/27 (as included in Section 8 and Appendix 2).

1.2 The Capital programme for 2026/27 and the provisional programme for 2027/28 to 2030/31, as summarised in the capital strategy statement (as included in Section 12 and Appendix 9 of the report).

1.3 That it be noted that, under delegated powers, the Chief Finance Officer calculated the amount of the Council Tax Base as 34,083.20 (Band 'D' equivalent properties) for the year 2026/27, in accordance with the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended (the "Act"). (as attached at Appendix 4 of the report).

1.4 That the fees and charges recommended by the policy committees be approved for 2026/27 as attached in appendix 14 to the report.

1.5 That the Council Tax Requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2026/27 is £8,174,856 as attached in Appendix 4 to the report.

1.6 That the following amounts be calculated for the year 2026/27 in accordance with sections 31 to 36 of the Act:

1.6.1 £61,895,893 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in section 31A(2) of the Act.

1.6.2 £53,721,037 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in section 31A(3) of the Act.

1.6.3 £8,174,856 being the amount by which the aggregate at 1.6.1above exceeds the aggregate at 1.6.3 above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with section 31A(4) of the Act, as its council tax requirement for the year.

1.6.4 £239.85 being the amount at 1.6.3 above divided by the amount at 1.3 above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with section 31(B) of the Act, as the basic amount of its council tax for the year.

1.7 To note that Surrey County Council and Surrey Police Authority have issued precepts to the Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 for each category of dwellings in the Council's area as indicated in the table below.

Authority	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Surrey County Council	1,292.28	1,507.66	1,723.04	1,938.42	2,369.18	2,799.94	3,230.70	3,876.84
Police Authority (TBC)	235.05	274.22	313.40	352.57	430.92	509.27	587.62	705.14
EEBC	159.90	186.55	213.20	239.85	293.15	346.45	399.75	479.70
Total	1,687.23	1,968.43	2,249.64	2,530.84	3,093.25	3,655.66	4,218.07	5,061.68

With 19 votes for, 10 votes against and the Mayor not voting:

1.8 That the Council, in accordance with Section 30 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the aggregate amounts shown in the tables above as the amounts of council tax for 2026/27 for each of the categories of dwellings.

With 19 votes for, 6 votes against, 4 abstentions and the Mayor not voting:

1.9 That members note the delay in receiving the final precept information from Surrey Police, expected at the end of February, and delegate authority to finalise the Budget Book and to make any amendments to the Council Tax demands as might prove necessary as the result of changes to the estimated demands issued by preceptors on the Council's Collection Fund to the Director of Corporate Services (Section 151 officer), once this information has been received.

1.10 That the Council agrees the Treasury Management and Investment Strategy and prudential indicators and authorised limits for 2026/27 as set out in Appendix 10 including:
1.10.1 Affordability prudential indicators;
1.10.2 The actual and estimated Capital Financing Requirement;
1.10.3 The estimated levels of borrowing and investment;
1.10.4 The authorised and operational limits for external debt;
1.10.5 The liability benchmark;
1.10.6 The treasury management prudential indicators.

1.11 That the Council receives the budget risk assessment at Appendix 11 to the report and notes the conclusion of the Chief Finance Officer in Appendix 12 to the report that these budget proposals are robust and sustainable as concluded in the report.

1.12 That the Council receives the Chief Finance Officer Statement on the Reserves as attached at Appendix 12 to the report.

With 19 votes for, 10 votes against and the Mayor not voting:

1.13 Council approves the annual indexation of Councillors Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances in line with the 'cost of living' percentage increase in staff salaries for the 2026-27 financial year.

With 19 votes for, 6 votes against, 4 abstentions and the Mayor not voting:

1.14 Approve the recommended changes to how Council Tax is levied on Empty properties, as set out in Appendix 13 to the report, with effect from 1 April 2026.

1.15 Approve the recommended changes to how Council Tax is levied on Second Homes in the Borough, as set out in Appendix 13 to the report, with effect from 1 April 2027.

Budget 2026/27 recommendations 1.8 & 1.13 (Budget decision)	
Councillor Robert Leach	**Abstain**
Councillor Lucie McIntyre	**For**
Councillor Arthur Abdulin	**For**
Councillor Chris Ames	**Against**
Councillor John Beckett	**For**
Councillor Steve Bridger	**For**
Councillor Kate Chinn	**Against**
Councillor Christine Cleveland	**For**
Councillor Alex Coley	**Against**
Councillor Neil Dallen	**For**
Councillor Hannah Dalton	**For**
Councillor Julian Freeman	**Against**
Councillor Liz Frost	**For**
Councillor Bernice Froud	**For**
Councillor Tony Froud	**For**
Councillor Rob Geleit	**Against**
Councillor Shanice Goldman	**Against**

Councillor Graham Jones	**For**
Councillor Alison Kelly	**Against**
Councillor Rachel King	**For**
Councillor James Lawrence	**For**
Councillor Steven McCormick	**For**
Councillor Phil Neale	**For**
Councillor Peter O'Donovan	**For**
Councillor Kieran Persand	**Against**
Councillor Humphrey Reynolds	**For**
Councillor Kim Spickett	**For**
Councillor Chris Watson	**Against**
Councillor Alan Williamson	**For**
Councillor Clive Woodbridge	**For**
Carried	

Budget 2026/27 recommendations 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.9, 1.10, 1.11, 1.12, 1.14, 1.15 (Budget decision)	
Councillor Robert Leach	**Abstain**
Councillor Lucie McIntyre	**For**
Councillor Arthur Abdulin	**For**
Councillor Chris Ames	**Abstain**
Councillor John Beckett	**For**
Councillor Steve Bridger	**For**
Councillor Kate Chinn	**Abstain**
Councillor Christine Cleveland	**For**
Councillor Alex Coley	**Against**

Councillor Neil Dallen	**For**
Councillor Hannah Dalton	**For**
Councillor Julian Freeman	**Against**
Councillor Liz Frost	**For**
Councillor Bernice Froud	**For**
Councillor Tony Froud	**For**
Councillor Rob Geleit	**Abstain**
Councillor Shanice Goldman	**Against**
Councillor Graham Jones	**For**
Councillor Alison Kelly	**Against**
Councillor Rachel King	**For**
Councillor James Lawrence	**Against**
Councillor Steven McCormick	**For**
Councillor Phil Neale	**For**
Councillor Peter O'Donovan	**For**
Councillor Kieran Persand	**Against**
Councillor Humphrey Reynolds	**For**
Councillor Kim Spickett	**For**
Councillor Chris Watson	**Abstain**
Councillor Alan Williamson	**For**
Councillor Clive Woodbridge	**For**
Carried	

37 MOTIONS

With the agreement of the Council, the Mayor reordered the business on the agenda to consider item 13 (Motions) following the completion of item 4 (Budget Report 2026/27), due to the public interest in this item.

The Mayor informed the Council that Motion 2 listed in the agenda papers had been withdrawn by the councillor that had submitted it and would not be considered at this meeting.

The Council received one Motion submitted under FCR 14 of Appendix 4 of the Constitution.

Motion 1 was **PROPOSED** by Councillor Kieran Persand and **SECONDED** by Councillor Chris Ames.

The Council resolved by a majority vote (with 10 votes for dealing with the motion at the meeting, 19 votes to refer the motion to the relevant committee and the Mayor not voting) to refer the Motion to the Strategy & Resources Committee for consideration.

38 END POVERTY PLEDGE

Council received a report presenting a recommendation from the Community and Wellbeing Committee for the Council to make the End Poverty Pledge (EPP).

Councillor Clive Woodbridge **MOVED** the recommendations in the report.

Upon being put the recommendations were **CARRIED** unanimously.

Accordingly, it was resolved to:

(1) Agree to sign the End Poverty Pledge, including the general statement and the specific commitments set out in sections 2.3 and 2.4 of the report.

(2) Agree to nominate and authorise the Chief Executive to sign the End Poverty Pledge on behalf of the Council.

39 CONTRACT STANDING ORDERS 2025-26 UPDATE

Council received a report presenting the recommendation of the Standards and Constitution Committee in relation to the Council's Contract Standing Orders ('CSOs').

Councillor John Beckett **MOVED** the recommendation in the report.

Upon being put the recommendation was **CARRIED** with 28 votes for, 1 abstention and the Mayor not voting.

Accordingly, it was resolved to:

(1) Approve the revisions to the Contract Standing Orders, attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

40 UPDATE TO THE CONSTITUTION

Council received a report proposing updates to the Council's Scheme of Delegation and Live Register of Officer Delegations for adoption, as recommended by the Standards and Constitution Committee at its 15 January 2026 meeting.

Councillor John Beckett **MOVED** the recommendations in the report.

Upon being put the recommendations were **CARRIED** with 27 votes for, 2 abstentions and the Mayor not voting.

Accordingly, it was resolved to:

(1) Approve and adopt the updates to the Constitution as set out at paragraph 3.1.1 and Appendix 1 of the report.

41 PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2026/27

Council received a report presenting the draft Epsom & Ewell Borough Council Pay Policy Statement for 2026/27 and seeking approval of the Statement following the recommendation from Strategy and Resources committee.

Councillor Neil Dallen **MOVED** the recommendation in the report.

Upon being put the recommendation was **CARRIED** unanimously.

Accordingly, it was resolved to:

(1) Approve the Pay Policy Statement for 2026/27

42 ATTENDANCE DISPENSATION

Council received a report asking it to consider a waiver of the six month rule for attendance at Council and Committee meetings under the Local Government Act 1972 for Councillor Jan Mason, having regard to the circumstances of her absence from meetings.

Councillor Neil Dallen **MOVED** and Councillor Hannah Dalton **SECONDED** the motion.

Upon being put the recommendations were **CARRIED** with 27 votes for, 2 abstentions and the Mayor not voting.

Accordingly, it was resolved to:

(1) Agree that, having regard to the circumstances of the absence of Councillor Jan Mason from Council meetings, the requirements of Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972 in relation to attendance at meetings be waived for Councillor Mason until the 10 August 2026.

43 AMENDMENT TO CALENDAR OF MEETINGS

Council received a report presenting amendments to the Municipal Calendar of ordinary meetings.

Councillor Neil Dallen **MOVED** and Councillor Hannah Dalton **SECONDED** the motion.

Upon being put the recommendations were **CARRIED** with 19 votes for, 10 votes against and the Mayor not voting.

Accordingly, it was resolved to:

(1) Approve the amendments to the Municipal Calendar of ordinary meetings as set out in paragraph 2.2 of the report.

44 APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY REPRESENTATIVE TO THE EAST SURREY JOINT COMMITTEE

Council received a report proposing the appointment of Councillor Clive Woodbridge as the deputy representative for the East Surrey Joint Committee.

Councillor John Beckett **MOVED** and Councillor Rachel King **SECONDED** the motion.

Councillor James Lawrence **MOVED** and Councillor Chris Ames **SECONDED** a nomination of Councillor Alex Coley to the appointment. Following receipt of this nomination, the Mayor informed the Council that a vote would be held.

The results of the vote were as follows: Councillor Clive Woodbridge, 19 votes, Councillor Alex Coley, 10 votes.

Accordingly, it was resolved to:

(1) Approve Cllr Clive Woodbridge as the appointed deputy representative for Epsom & Ewell Borough Council on the East Surrey Joint Committee (to include any sub-committee and/or informal working group).

45 REVIEW OF PROPORTIONALITY AND APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Council received a report asking it to note the allocation of seats on Committees and Advisory Panels and approve the appointments to Committees following a recent change in political proportionality.

Councillor John Beckett **MOVED** and Councillor Rachel King **SECONDED** the recommendations in the report.

Upon being put, the recommendations were **CARRIED** as follows:

With 20 votes for, 7 votes against, 2 abstentions and the Mayor not voting it was resolved:

(1) To note the allocation of seats based on political balance and proportionality;

(2) To allocate seats on the Committees and Advisory Panels in accordance with the wishes of the political groups set out in Appendix 1 to the report;

With 18 votes for, 9 votes against, 2 abstentions and the Mayor not voting it was resolved:

(3) To appoint all members of the Council as substitutes for their current political group members on all committees, where the appointed political group member is unable to attend a meeting.

The meeting began at 7.30 pm and ended at 9.58 pm

COUNCILLOR ROBERT LEACH (CHAIR)