

Minutes of the Meeting of the FINANCIAL STRATEGY ADVISORY GROUP held on 30 January 2026

PRESENT -

Councillors: Neil Dallen (Chair), Liz Frost, Kate Chinn, Alex Coley, Clive Woodbridge.

Apologies: Peter O'Donovan.

Councillors in attendance: James Lawrence.

Officers present: Cagdas Canbolat (Director of Corporate Services & Chief Finance Officer (S151), Sue Emmons (Chief Accountant).

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made by councillors regarding items on the agenda for the meeting.

2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS METING

The minutes of the Financial Policy Panel meeting held on 21 November 2025 were agreed as a true record to be signed by the Chair.

3 Budget and Council Tax Report 2026/27

The Group received a report providing an update on the preparation of the budget for 2026/27. The report seeks final guidance from the group prior to the finalisation of the Budget and Council Tax report for Full Council on 10 February 2026.

Members discussed the following issues:

- The impact of national changes to local business rates bills.
- How the finance settlement will impact funding of temporary accommodation pressures.

Following consideration of the report's contents, the Group moved to consider the report recommendations, which were voted on individually, and agreed as follows:

With five votes for:

- 1. Provide the Chief Finance Officer with any further feedback needed to finalise the 2026/27 Budget and Council Tax report before the paper is taken to Full Council.**

With five votes for:

- 2. Note the provisional Local Government Financial settlement for 2026/27 announced on 17 December 2025.**

With five votes for:

- 3. Support that any surplus/deficit on 2025/26 business rates income, and any change in projected business rates income for 2026/27, will be offset by a transfer to / from the Collection Fund Equalisation Reserve.**

With three votes for and two against:

- 4. Support a recommendation to Council of a council tax increase of 2.98% (£6.93 per annum for a Band D equivalent property) for 2026/27**

4 Treasury Management and Investment Strategy 2026/27

The Group received a report outlining the treasury management and investment strategy for 2026/27, which includes prudential indicators for 2026/27 to 2028/29, the minimum revenue provision (MRP) policy, and the investment and borrowing strategy. It is a legislative requirement that these items be approved by Full Council.

Members discussed the following issues:

- An explanation of the figures within table 3.1 which sets out the treasury investments as at 31 March and 31 December 2025.
- A missing figure in the second table under section 2.1 for the CIL and S106 funding for 2026/27 which should have listed the figure £3,695 and will be corrected in the document presented to Full Council in February.
- Whether any amendments should be made to the list of countries in section 7. No countries were removed from the list.
- Whether the Epsom & Ewell Treasury Management and Investment Strategy aligns with the other districts due to become part of East Surrey.

Following consideration of the report's contents, the Group moved to consider the report recommendations, which were agreed as follows:

- 5. Recommend to Full Council that the treasury management and investment strategy, which includes the following, be approved:**

- 5.1. The treasury management strategy and the treasury prudential indicators contained therein;**

- 5.2. The capital prudential indicators and limits;**

- 5.3. The borrowing strategy contained within the treasury management statement;**
- 5.4. The annual investment strategy;**
- 5.5. The minimum revenue provision policy statement;**
- 5.6. The treasury management practices.**
- 6. Advise whether any countries should be considered for removal from the list of approved investable countries at section 7 of the treasury management and investment strategy in the appendix.**

The meeting began at 2.00pm and ended at 2:35pm.

Councillor Neil Dallen (Chair)