**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CABINET,
HELD ON FRIDAY, 23RD OCTOBER, 2026 AT 10.30 AM
TOWN HALL, STATION ROAD, CLACTON-ON-SEA, CO15 1SE**

Present: Councillors M Stephenson (Chairman), Baker, Barry, Kotz, Placey, Scott and Smith

Group Leaders Present by Invitation: Councillors M Bush (Leader of the Reform UK Group), J B Chapman (BEM) (Leader of the Independent Group) and P B Honeywood (Leader of the Conservative Group)

Also Present: None.

In Attendance: Ian Davidson (Chief Executive), Lisa Hastings (Corporate Director (Law & Governance) & Monitoring Officer), Richard Barrett (Corporate Director (Finance and IT) & Section 151 Officer), Damian Williams (Corporate Director (Operations and Delivery)), Katie Wilkins (Director (People)), James Dwan (Communications Officer), Maddie Adger (Leadership Support Manager) and Katie Moss (Democratic Services Officer)

41. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor I J Henderson (Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Regeneration & Tourism).

42. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

It was moved by Councillor Stephenson, seconded by Councillor Baker and:-

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet, held on Friday 25 September 2026, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

43. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made by Members on this occasion.

44. ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

Special Urgency – Council's Insurance Arrangements

The Leader of the Council made the following announcement:-

"At the recent meeting of Council on 13th October, I presented a report for Council to note that the "Special Urgency" procedure rule was recently relied upon, to make a decision to modify the Council's existing insurance arrangements, based upon

information set out within the Officer's report and Appendix demonstrating the reasons for the proposal.

The Chairman of the Resources and Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee, agreed for the special urgency provisions to be relied upon and that the "call-in" procedure would not apply, as it was reasonable in all its circumstances that any delay likely to be caused by the call-in process would seriously prejudice the Council's or the public's interests.

The modification was to extend the contract for a period of one year to 30 September 2027 and to make the necessary arrangements to implement the decision and to undertake a full competitive procurement exercise as soon as reasonably practicable.

Whilst this has already been reported to all Members, I am required by the Constitution to make a public statement at the next formal meeting of the Cabinet. The report to Council set out the reasons in more detail and is available on the Council's website."

45. ANNOUNCEMENTS BY CABINET MEMBERS

Connect Tendring

The Portfolio Holder for Arts, Culture & Heritage (Councillor Scott) made the following statement:-

"Earlier this year, we launched 'Connect Tendring - Where Culture and Community Meet', a new creative and cultural newsletter designed to connect artists, organisations, educators and residents with opportunities across the district. I am pleased to report that it already has around 450 subscribers. The latest edition was distributed this week and included highlights from Arts Council England's recent visit to Tendring, a call for artists to respond to exciting public art opportunities on the seafront micro venue, information on wider funding opportunities, updates from the Creative Teachers Network, and details of Arts Council England's new National Portfolio Investment Programme for 2028 to 2033.

Following their visit to Tendring, Arts Council England highlighted that National Lottery Project Grants investment in Tendring has increased six-fold, from £85,000 in 2020/21 to more than £505,000 in 2025/26, which alongside the launch of Creative Tendring, represents a significant achievement and demonstrates the growing strength of our creative sector and the impact of partnership working across the district.

I would like to encourage fellow Councillors to sign up to Connect Tendring. If you would like to receive future editions, you can do so via the newsletter sign up page on the Tendring District Council website. This growing engagement is a real positive for Tendring, and I look forward to seeing the sector continue to flourish."

Waste and Recycling Service

The Portfolio Holder for Environment & ICT (Councillor Smith) made the following statement:-

"I would just like to take a moment to recognise the successful introduction of an important improvement to our waste and recycling service.

Over recent weeks, we have seen the rollout of around 70,000 additional green recycling boxes across Tendring, followed by the introduction of our expanded kerbside recycling service from 5 October.

Residents can now recycle glass bottles and jars, alongside a wider range of materials, directly from their homes, making recycling easier and more convenient.
The move from distributing those boxes to successfully collecting the additional recycling from households is an important milestone. During the first two weeks of the new service, we collected more than double the weight of material from green boxes than we were collecting previously.

That is a really encouraging start and demonstrates that residents are making good use of the expanded service.

We should also recognise the scale of what has been achieved. Introducing such a significant change to waste and recycling services across tens of thousands of households is a considerable logistical exercise, involving everything from planning and communications to distributing containers and putting the new collection arrangements into operation.

So, on behalf of Cabinet, I would like to place on record our thanks to our officers and the teams at Veolia for the tremendous amount of work that has gone into delivering this important improvement for our residents.

The successful introduction of kerbside glass collection is a very positive milestone for our new waste contract. Most importantly, it is making recycling easier for residents and helping us recycle more across Tendring.

Thank you."

46. MATTERS REFERRED TO THE CABINET BY THE COUNCIL

There were no matters referred to the Cabinet by Full Council on this occasion.

47. MATTERS REFERRED TO THE CABINET BY A COMMITTEE

There were no matters referred to the Cabinet by a Committee on this occasion.

48. LEADER OF THE COUNCIL'S ITEMS

There were no matters referred to the Cabinet by the Leader of the Council on this occasion.

49. CABINET MEMBERS' ITEMS - REPORT OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR CORPORATE FINANCE & GOVERNANCE PORTFOLIO HOLDER - A.1 - FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2026/27 - GENERAL UPDATE AT THE END OF JUNE 2026

It was reported that the regular financial performance reports had presented the overall financial position of the Council by bringing together in-year budget monitoring

information and timely updates on the development of the forecast and had been split over two distinct sections as set out in the Portfolio Holder's report (A.1). In terms of the in-year position, the report had covered the first four months of 2026/27.

Section 1 – In-year financial position as at the end of July 2026

Members were informed that a number of adjustments had been made to the 2026/27 budget as part of the development of the detailed estimates approved by Full Council in February 2026.

The financial position at the end of July 2026 was reported as being broadly in line with the underlying budgetary position, with no major adverse issues having emerged. A limited number of budgets remained subject to ongoing monitoring and review, with further updates to be provided through future quarterly financial performance reports.

A limited number of items requiring action had been identified and were detailed within Appendix 1H. Any longer-term financial implications arising from those matters would be considered as part of the development of the financial forecast, with the necessary delegations included within the recommendations.

The General Fund Revenue Account was reported as being £3.669m underspent against the profiled budget at the end of July 2026. Members were advised that this position continued to reflect, in part, the timing of expenditure across a number of budgets and the timing of Government reimbursement to the Council for the cost of meeting housing benefit claims.

It was acknowledged that expenditure and income trends could continue to emerge during the remainder of the financial year and would be reflected in future financial performance reports as appropriate.

In respect of the Housing Revenue Account, capital programme, collection performance and treasury activity, no other major issues had been identified at that stage, apart from those matters detailed elsewhere within the report.

Section 2 – Updated Long-Term Financial Forecast

Members were reminded that, from 2026/27, the Council had adopted a two-year financial planning approach. This, together with key priorities and the proactive management of cost pressures and business plans, provided an integrated approach covering the period leading up to 1 April 2028, which had originally been proposed as the vesting day for the new Unitary Authority under the Government's original timetable for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR).

The financial plans considered by Full Council in February 2026 had also established an in-principle/notional approach to meeting the Council's obligations to the incoming Unitary Council, with the underlying principles and further details set out within Section 2 of the report.

Following the Government's announcement on 7 September 2026 that it would pause and review its current LGR programme, a significant degree of uncertainty had been introduced into the financial forecasting arrangements of affected councils.

Notwithstanding that uncertainty, Members were advised that the Council's two-year financial planning approach continued to provide a positive basis from which to consider the forecast for 2027/28 and beyond, irrespective of the outcome of the Government's LGR review.

Pending the outcome of that review, it was proposed that the financial forecast be refreshed over an initial four-year period, reflecting the possibility that the Council could remain in existence beyond April 2028. This was considered to provide a prudent basis for financial planning while retaining sufficient flexibility for the forecast to be refocused on the previously established in-principle/notional arrangements should the LGR programme proceed on a revised timetable.

The development of the financial forecast remained ongoing, with the intention of presenting the updated position to Cabinet in November 2026.

In relation to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), Members were reminded that a significant factor affecting the budget and longer-term Business Plan remained the ongoing financial implications arising from the new social housing regulatory framework introduced following the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023.

The HRA Business Plan and associated budget remained under development and were due to be presented to Cabinet later in the year as part of the 2027/28 budget-setting cycle. The Business Plan would continue to balance optimism and caution across its various assumptions whilst reflecting the developing impact of social housing regulation.

Members were further advised that, similarly to the General Fund, the HRA budget-setting and forecasting process remained broadly unaffected by the Government's announcement concerning LGR, given the long-term nature of the HRA Business Plan, which would continue irrespective of the outcome of the Government's review.

The Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Corporate Finance and Governance made the following statement:-

"Perhaps a pragmatic starting point for my introduction to this report is the uncertainty created by the Government's pause and review of the Local Government Reorganisation programme.

As set out within the report, the Council had sensibly aligned its financial planning with the original timetable for the creation of a new unitary authority along with how it could meet its obligations during the "change-over" period.

Although that timetable is now uncertain, the financial forecast approach already adopted leaves the Council in a sound position to respond as necessary.

I am however proposing that the financial forecast is refreshed over a longer planning period.

This will provide a robust basis for financial decision-making while retaining the flexibility to respond as necessary once we know the outcome of the Government's LGR review.

In terms of the LGR review, it is worth me acknowledging the good discussion we had at Full Council last week around the motion that was proposed concerning costs incurred to date.

Due to the closeness of that decision to the publication of the Cabinet agenda for this meeting, I will be providing a full response to the resolution agreed as part of our next financial update that will be considered by Cabinet next month.

The financial forecast will continue to be developed alongside the Council's priorities and will be brought back to Cabinet through the established budget process over the coming months.

Turning to the current year, the Council's financial position is broadly performing in line with the underlying budget, with no major adverse issues identified at this stage.

However, a small number of budgets and emerging pressures remain under review and will be updated through future financial performance reports.

The report proposes a limited number of adjustments to support service delivery and manage identified risks and priorities. These include strengthening capacity within the Housing Service where the proposed approach to funding the associated additional cost is based on a flexible and actively managed basis via the Housing Revenue Account and Business Plan. This demonstrates that we are always prepared to invest in the management of our tenants' homes when it is timely and appropriate to do so, all within a sound financial framework.

The report also seeks the acceptance of external funding to improve local playgrounds and to agree the associated allocation and delegations.

I am also proposing further timely interventions with associated investment in public conveniences, additional project delivery capacity and a reallocation of funding within the existing regeneration programme.

The latter reflects the need to manage delivery risks and funding deadlines while protecting the Council's ability to progress improvements to seafront facilities and continue exploring options for the Martello Tower project.

Although we will be bringing forward more proposed investment within future financial reports, the above is based on our aim to keep delivering for our residents, communities and our District.

Across the wider position, the Housing Revenue Account, capital programmes, collection performance and treasury activity remain relatively stable and in line with the budget.

There are no other major issues requiring action at this point, although fuel costs, income performance, debt recovery and capital investment will continue to be monitored.

Overall, this report continues to demonstrate a prudent and adaptable approach.

It protects the Council's financial sustainability, responds to immediate service pressures and maintains flexibility while the future of local government reorganisation remains under review.

I therefore move the recommendations as set out which ask Cabinet to note the financial position, approve the proposed adjustments and delegations, and support the continued development of the forecast alongside the Council's priorities."

To set out the latest financial position for the Council and to respond to emerging issues in 2026/27 and to develop the budget and forecast from 2027/28.

It was moved by Councillor Baker, seconded by Councillor M E Stephenson, and:-

RESOLVED that Cabinet –

(a) notes the Council's in-year financial position at the end of July 2026;

(b) approves the proposed adjustments to the 2026/27 budget as set out in Appendix 1H and:

(i) requests Officers to review the potential on-going impact from 2027/28 and beyond where necessary as part of developing the forecast and detailed estimates for further consideration by Cabinet later in the year;

(ii) that in respect of the budget adjustment of £0.540m in 2026/27 relating to Housing Capacity / Restructure, acknowledges and supports the underlying principle / approach set out within this report and requests Officers to provide the necessary updates within future financial performance and budget reports;

(iii) agrees to accept the £0.270m of grant funding awarded to this Council from the Government's Playground Fund along with its initial allocation set out within this report and agrees a delegation to the Corporate Director Operations and Delivery, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Public Realm, to confirm or amend the proposed allocations via the application of the requirements set out in the associated MOU and/or in consultation with MHCLG as may be necessary.

(iv) that in respect of the budget adjustment of £0.100m in 2026/27 relating to the Investment in Public Conveniences as set out within Appendix 1H, approves a delegation to the Corporate Director Operations and Delivery in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Assets and Community Safety to allocate / prioritise the total funding available within the scheme across the various sites;

(v) that in respect of the budget adjustment of £0.400m in 2026/27 relating to project delivery capacity as set out within Appendix 1H, approves a delegation to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Finance and Governance, to allocate this funding as necessary; and

(vi) that in respect of the reallocation of funding within the existing CRP2 schemes, approves a delegation to the Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Regeneration and Tourism to undertake any necessary governance activities within the Council's existing CRP 2 framework and processes.

(c) notes the updated context to the financial forecast from 2027/28 as set out in this report and requests Officers, in consultation with Portfolio Holders to develop the financial forecast alongside the delivery of the Council's priorities; and

(d) invites the views of the Resources and Service Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the information set out in this report along with the Council's wider financial position as part of its work programme for the year.

50. CABINET MEMBERS' ITEMS - REPORT OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR HOUSING & PLANNING - A.2 - CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION OF THE HOUSING COMPETENCE AND CONDUCT POLICY

It was reported that the Housing Competence and Conduct Policy had been built upon the strong services already delivered by housing staff and provided a consistent framework to ensure that employees and relevant service providers had the knowledge, skills, experience and behaviours required to deliver high-quality landlord services. The policy embedded the Chartered Institute of Housing Professional Standards and a Housing Code of Conduct for Staff.

Cabinet was informed that the policy would support the development of a competent and professional workforce, supporting improved decision-making and more consistent service delivery, improved tenant experiences and outcomes, and effective governance. The provision of appropriate evidence would provide assurance that the required standards were being maintained.

The policy covered workforce planning, recruitment, induction, learning and development, professional qualifications, appraisal, performance management and tenant oversight. Tenant feedback had been incorporated into the final version of the policy, with tenants being treated respectfully, being listened to, receiving an empathetic response and being kept informed identified as the key themes. The full tenant feedback on the policy was available on the Council's website.

The Code of Conduct appended to the policy was subject to tenant scrutiny and consultation. It was reported that the consultation would close on 28 October 2026 and that any feedback received would be incorporated into the policy in accordance with the delegated power referred to in recommendation 2 of the Portfolio Holder's recommendations.

The policy also supported compliance with the Regulator of Social Housing's Competence and Conduct Standard and associated qualification requirements. Implementation would be monitored through the Competence and Conduct Action Plan, which would provide assurance that development needs were addressed, professional standards were maintained and continuous improvement was embedded across the Council's landlord services.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing & Planning made the following statement at the meeting:-

"Leader, I am pleased to introduce the Housing Competence and Conduct Policy to Cabinet for adoption today.

In September 2025, the Secretary of State gave the Regulator of Social Housing a direction to set a standard for registered housing providers relating to the competence and conduct of relevant individuals, known as the Competence and Conduct standard. The Competence and Conduct Standard require registered providers to take appropriate steps to secure that those of their services providers' staff who are relevant individuals have the necessary skills, knowledge and experience, and exhibit the behaviours needed, for the relevant services provided by those individuals.

The full details of what is required under this standard, and the outcomes, is shown on Pages 82 & 83 of the Agenda.

The policy in front of Cabinet shows how this Council will assure the competence, qualifications, conduct and development of everyone who delivers or oversees our landlord services.

Tenants are at the centre of everything this Council does and they should receive services that are safe, respectful, fair and consistent.

The Policy also provides a clear framework for workforce planning, recruitment, induction, training, professional qualifications, appraisal, performance management and oversight of contractors and service providers.

Consultation has been undertaken with the Tenants Panel, and its Reading Group, and which is still ongoing, and should any further suggestions come forward, they can be dealt with under the second proposed recommendation.

The Policy also includes the responsibilities for each role as well as the action plan and implementation priorities, the Chartered Institute of Housing's professional standards, the roles requiring a professional qualification, together with a Housing Code of Conduct for Staff.

Adoption will allow implementation of the accompanying action plan, identifying relevant roles, skills and qualification needs, supporting staff development, maintaining auditable assurance records and reporting progress through our governance arrangements.

This is about maintaining high professional standards, learning from feedback and complaints, and ensuring tenants can have confidence in the people delivering services on the Council's behalf.

I commend the recommendations to Cabinet which are shown on pages 79-80."

To ensure that the policy was appropriately adopted in accordance with the Council's Constitution and to provide evidence that the Council had a clear, accountable framework for meeting the Competence and Conduct Standard and associated qualification requirements:-

It was moved by Councillor Baker, seconded by Councillor M E Stephenson, and:-

RESOLVED that Cabinet –

1) formally adopts the Housing Competence and Conduct Policy as set out in Appendix A to the Portfolio Holder's report (A.2), for implementation;

2) authorises the Corporate Director (Operations and Delivery) to make future updates or amendments to the policy, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder responsible for Housing; and

3) requires that this policy is reviewed annually during the implementation of the Competence and Conduct Action Plan and no later than October 2027, unless an earlier review is required in response to tenants' feedback.

51. MANAGEMENT TEAM ITEMS

There were no formal items submitted to the Cabinet by the Management Team on this occasion.

The Meeting was declared closed at 10.55 am

Chairman