

## CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – THURSDAY, 19 MARCH 2026

### ITEM 6 – CABINET RESPONSE TO SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS

Date considered by Cabinet: 3 February 2026

Scrutiny comments made on: 2026/27 Robustness of Budget Estimates

	Comments/recommendations from scrutiny	Advice provided by officers at the meeting	Cabinet response
<b>C1</b>	It was noted that there was an error in the table at paragraph 4.14. There was a casting error on the totals.	Officers agreed to update, noting that last-minute changes to the General Fund likely caused the table error.	Noted.
<b>C2</b>	Paragraph 6.2 in respect of Transformation references that it needs to be flexible to adapt to potential local government changes. Suggestion that it should also say that it can also look to improving services if the financial position improves.	Agreed to add this additional narrative.	Noted.
<b>C3</b>	Rare position where there is headroom and we should look at investing whilst be careful not to squander reserves, but also not to squander the opportunity to make a difference to the Council. It's important to engage with the community and local economy so there needs to be a balance between prudence and forward thinking, and we do the very best for our constituents.	Nothing from officers.	Noted.

**Scrutiny comments made on: Capital Strategy, Treasury Strategy And Prudential Indicators 2026/27**

	<b>Comments/recommendations from scrutiny</b>	<b>Advice provided by officers at the meeting</b>	<b>Cabinet response</b>
<b>C1</b>	Capital financing costs are less than 15% as a proportion of the general fund net revenue budget – does that just apply to the general fund?	Yes	Noted.
<b>C2</b>	Why are capital receipts for Stenson House not shown in the forward plan when right to buy receipts are included in the HRA.	The written detail will be provided to Members of the Scrutiny Committee.	Noted.
<b>C3</b>	Page 37, paragraph 3.2 references the Council will need to significantly improve its performance. This was not achieved with Marlborough Centre. The Council should be taking it more seriously in terms of due diligence on its capital projects.	The council has put in place governance arrangements for capital schemes and we remind officers of these regularly. There is an e-learning programme available to officers for the capital programme. Officers are also required to produce outline business cases for major capital schemes. We have learned from previous experience and continue to improve our approach.	Noted.
<b>C3</b>	Are the right to buy receipts in the capital programme going towards the new supply and we don't want to see the right to buy receipts funding being lost i.e. returned to Government.	While the receipts from right to buy are included, it's important to note that we can't provide absolute certainty over the next five years, as future circumstances are unpredictable. The replacement process is not simply a like-for-like swap; much of our housing stock dates from the 1950s, 60s, or 70s and tends to sell at lower market values, which often differs from members'	Noted.

		<p>expectations, especially regarding upgrades like improved EPC ratings. For instance, we might sell an older property for around £85,000 but need to purchase a modern replacement at approximately £235,000.</p> <p>Additionally, the situation is complicated by the fact that most of our current properties are three-bedroom homes, whereas the current demand is mainly for one-bedroom units. Therefore, our approach to replacing stock is guided by meeting present housing needs rather than direct replacement.</p>	
<b>C4</b>	Is it not just a question of how many years you count before you've made the return on investment?	Any proposals for capital expenditure in the HRA uses net present value, which is the calculation based on what the Council will receive as market rent versus the amount of income we would make. As such there will be a point in time known as the payback period.	Noted.
<b>C5</b>	The graphs on pages 53 and 54 of the report look positive but it would be helpful to understand more about what they are saying.	A briefing note will be issued to Members of the Committee to provide clarity on the graphs.	Noted.

**Scrutiny comments made on: General Fund Budget and Council Tax 2026/27**

	<b>Comments/recommendations from scrutiny</b>	<b>Advice provided by officers at the meeting</b>	<b>Cabinet response</b>
<b>C1</b>	Car parking remains a major topic of concern, particularly in Ashby where local businesses have highlighted ongoing issues. There was support expressed for freezing car parking charges, as well as a call to review the technology used for payments. Multiple members raised concerns about the fairness of the current system, specifically the provision of free parking in Coalville but not in Ashby, and the potential for the new technology to result in more fines for users. The committee expressed the view that a council-wide review of car parking arrangements and payment methods is needed to ensure equity and support local economic activity.	No comments from officers.	The review across the district will take place, but we'd like to include a temporary two hours free parking at Money Hill car park in Ashby whilst the review is in progress.
<b>C2</b>	The Committee welcomed the Legacy Grant but questioned why funding is limited to £2m, noting that future increases are possible. Members preferred a Task and Finish Group to set assessment criteria for bids, emphasising transparency and equity. It was noted that 40% of the current capital programme supports Coalville regeneration and opined that something drastic needs to be done in Ashby.	The grant amount can be increased if necessary. Assessment criteria will be developed and submitted to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet.	£2m is a prudent figure.

<b>C3</b>	The Committee noted that there are no estimated costs for Moira Furnace restoration works.	Officers are preparing detailed cost estimates that will be presented to Cabinet for review.	The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate will ensure this is done.
<b>C4</b>	Concern was expressed at the costs of Marlborough Centre which appear to have doubled.	Officers explained that there has been time to bring it through the planning stages and get it to a stage where the Council is able to bring a contractor on board. It has taken some time. The planning process took nearly two years due to a number of issues outside the control of this Council. There have been inflationary costs. It will cost £5.3m to complete the works. The additional funding being added to the capital programme ensures sufficient funding to meet the costs.	The costs haven't doubled. The costs presented to Cabinet on 7 September 2021 was £4.4m and the current cost is £5.3m, an increase of approximately £0.7m.
<b>C5</b>	A member questioned the unavoidable expenditure particularly with regard to refuse and recycling.	The Head of HR has been working closely with the service to review agency costs and identify ways to reduce them. These costs are expected to decrease once the waste service review is implemented and improved bins are introduced. Additionally, we can provide analysis on sickness levels and the various types of sickness affecting staff.	Noted.
<b>C6</b>	Why does the Local Plan Examination cost £85k? Is this extra spending, and why has it increased so much?	Officers will provide additional detail.	The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate will ensure this is done.
<b>R1</b>	<b>Recommendation:</b> That the costs of Moira Furnace are reflected in the capital programme development pool.		It will appear in the capital development pool.

<b>R2</b>	<p><b>Recommendation:</b> That the proposal for two-hour free parking in Coalville is postponed at least until there are full details of the outcome of the full car parking review for the district. There needs to an equitable review.</p>		There will be 2 hours free parking at Money Hill in Ashby pending the parking review.
<b>R3</b>	<p><b>Recommendation</b> That the legacy fund is increased to £1m for 2026/27 to ensure that there is £2m available. The award mechanism is seen to be fair and transparent and covers the whole of the district in an equitable way.</p>	The funding of £2m is available in 2026/27, it is shown as £1m in each of the next two years for cashflow purposes only.	No comment.
<b>R4</b>	<p><b>Recommendation</b> Funding for Ashby Canal should be recognised in the development pool in the capital programme</p>		Awaiting a business case then it will appear in the development pool in due course.

## Scrutiny comments made on: Housing Revenue Account Budget and Rents 2026/27

	Comments/recommendations from scrutiny	Advice provided by officers at the meeting	Cabinet response
<b>C1</b>	Does the use of a debt payment reserve represent the best approach for a well funded HRA and best use of resources.	Work is ongoing with Savills in updating the business plan. This option will be explored as part of that work.	Noted.
<b>C2</b>	Total borrowing over three years is £9m less than last year's budget. Please clarify how this will be funded. Last year, Labour requested a new supply budget closer to £18m compared to this year's £15.1m. The current budget allows for flexibility and monitoring if additional supply becomes available.	The capital programme is based on existing schemes and projected costs. The Council may consider partnerships or acquisitions to boost supply and will address developments as they arise, subject to proper approval.	Noted.
<b>C3</b>	The fleet replacement budget has seen a significant rise this year, reaching £2.7 million. What is the reason for such a substantial increase in this year's allocation?	<p>We are expanding our internal services, which requires us to acquire additional vehicles to accommodate the increased number of staff.</p> <p>Additionally, our current fleet is aging, impacting our ability to deliver services efficiently. Although it may appear that all funding is allocated for the upcoming financial year, in practice, expenditures are likely to be spread over the next two years. Upcoming reports will address whether it is more advantageous to purchase or lease these vehicles. The proposal is nearing final approval, which has enabled us to include detailed plans in the capital program</p>	Noted.

<b>C4</b>	How much of the vehicles budget is going on electric vehicles?	As part of the vehicle review, we will consider various options with an emphasis on reducing carbon emissions. We must also address the infrastructure required to charge electric vehicles. Independent research has already been conducted and will be incorporated into the upcoming proposals.	Noted.
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Date considered by Cabinet: 24 February 2026

Scrutiny comments made on: Council Delivery Plan – Performance Report – 2025/26 Quarter 2

	Comments/recommendations from scrutiny	Advice provided by officers at the meeting	Cabinet response
<b>C1</b>	<b>Annual targets:</b> the lack of annual Key Performance Indicator (KPI) targets was raised as it was felt that progress was difficult to assess without them and funding needs could not be determined, especially for Zero Carbon ambitions.	Portfolio Holder acknowledged the challenge of setting targets due to uncertainties in funding and future decisions, especially with housing stock decarbonization but he agreed to consider the request for annual targets.	Nothing further to add
<b>C2</b>	<b>Performance scoring:</b> It was asked who was responsible for the oversight of the performance table and whether a common methodology was used for scoring across the teams.	Officers clarified that Cabinet had political oversight while the management team was responsible for delivery. Performance scoring used a universal process managed by the performance team not individual services.	Nothing further to add
<b>C3</b>	<b>Staffing:</b> Concerns were raised over staffing shortages, particularly in the planning service, and the impact it has on service delivery.	Officers confirmed that staffing issues were addressed by focusing management attention on areas of risk and underperformance.	Portfolio holder advised impact on service delivery would be part of Q3 update

	<b>Comments/recommendations from scrutiny</b>	<b>Advice provided by officers at the meeting</b>	<b>Cabinet response</b>
<b>C4</b>	<p><b>Housing repairs service satisfaction:</b> Councillors questioned the improvements in customer satisfaction figures and asked what changes had led to recent positive monthly results in comparison to the annual results. Caution was given against over interpreting figures as the current rating was only one step above the lowest possible rating.</p>	<p>Officers and the Portfolio Holder explained that significant work had been undertaken over the past two years to improve the housing repairs service, including responding to the housing regulator feedback following the recent inspection which confirmed the service as one step below the highest grading. Ongoing monitoring and improvements were planned.</p>	<p>Nothing further to add</p>
<b>C5</b>	<p><b>KPI for staffing:</b> It was suggested that a KPI be added for agile manpower planning and staff retention. The importance of maintaining service levels was emphasized, along with supporting staff through upcoming changes.</p>	<p>Officers confirmed that a retention plan was being developed but there was currently no plans to include it as a KPI. However, the suggestion would be taken to Cabinet for consideration.</p>	<p>Cllr Merrie confirmed that a KPI for staffing had been considered but will not be progressed</p>
<b>C6</b>	<p><b>Customer service complaints:</b> It was requested that more detailed breakdowns by department be provided regarding customer service complaints to identify areas needing support and to fairly recognise high performing teams.</p>	<p>Officers confirmed that this data did exist and was already used to target improvements.</p>	<p>No Further comments</p>