

## **CABINET**

MINUTES of a meeting of the Cabinet held on 11 November 2025 at Council Chamber, County Hall, Lewes

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PRESENT Councillors Keith Glazier, OBE (Chair), Nick Bennett (Vice Chair), Bob Bowdler, Penny di Cara, Claire Dowling, Carl Maynard and Bob Standley

Members spoke on the items indicated:

Councillor Bennett	– item 5 (minute 33)
Councillor Collier	– item 5 (minute 33)
Councillor Denis	– item 5 (minute 33)
Councillor Tutt	– item 5 (minute 33)
Councillor Bowdler	– item 6 (minute 34)
Councillor Field	- item 6 (minute 34)

### 29. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 21 OCTOBER 2025

29.1 The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 21 October 2025 were agreed as a correct record.

### 30. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

30.1 There were none.

### 31. DISCLOSURES OF INTERESTS

31.1 There were none.

### 32. REPORTS

32.1 Copies of the reports referred to below are included in the minute book.

### 33. RECONCILING POLICY, PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES (RPPR) - UPDATE ON PLANNING FOR 2026/27 AND BEYOND

33.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Chief Executive.

33.2 It was RESOLVED to:

- 1) note the updated policy context as set out in paragraph 2 of the report;
- 2) note the updated Medium Term Financial Plan as set out in paragraph 3 and appendix 1 of the report;

- 3) note the reserves summary set out in paragraph 3 of the report;
- 4) note the CIPFA Assurance Review report and recommendations at appendix 2 and the proposed response to recommendations at appendix 3 of the report;
- 5) note the capital programme update as set out in paragraph 6 and appendix 4 of the report;
- 6) agree that officers bring forward further savings proposals as part of work towards a balanced budget for 2026/27;
- 7) agree to receive a further update on the planning position, including proposed savings, in December; and
- 8) note recent lobbying activity and agree to continue pressing Government for sustainable funding to meet the needs of the residents of East Sussex.

### Reasons

33.3 The report outlines the substantial challenges we face, including a projected funding gap which means we must seek further savings and service reductions, as well as preparing to request Exceptional Financial Support from Government in order to be in a position to set a balanced budget for the year ahead.

33.4 However, there are some key gaps in our knowledge at this point and crucial further information expected in the coming weeks. We will re-assess our position in light of the additional detail we expect to have soon, which should enable us to model the funding outlook for 2026/27 onwards with more accuracy, alongside refining our own understanding of future levels of demand and the associated costs.

33.5 The analysis will feed into our ongoing business and financial planning, and we expect to update Cabinet again in December, ahead of bringing forward final proposals for the 2026/27 budget and Council Plan to Cabinet in January for consideration, and Council in February for decision.

33.6 Members will continue to be involved in developing plans through Cabinet, County Council, Scrutiny Committees, and specific engagement sessions throughout the 2025/26 RPPR process.

### 34. OFSTED FOCUSED VISIT - JULY 2025

34.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Children's Services.

34.2 It was RESOLVED to:

- 1) note the findings of the Ofsted Focused Visit which were published on 1 September 2025; and
- 2) note that the areas of improvement set out in the 2023 ILACS have been addressed and recognised by Ofsted.

## Reasons

34.3 East Sussex has maintained a focus on the key priority outcome of keeping vulnerable people safe. The response letter recognises the improvements made following the last ILACS in 2023, in relation to the Public Law Outline, private fostering arrangements and neglect.

34.4 Ofsted recognised the work to support many children to remain at home, through our connected families approach.

34.5 The visit and the subsequent response letter were resoundingly positive, including the encouraging recognition of leadership and of ESCC as a reflective and improvement driven local authority.

34.6 The findings of the visit will be considered when planning the next inspection which in line with the three-year cycle for this Ofsted framework, is likely to be an inspection of local authority children's services later next year.

## 35. TO AGREE WHICH ITEMS ARE TO BE REPORTED TO THE COUNTY COUNCIL

35.1 It was agreed that item 6 should be reported to the County Council.

[Note: The item being reported to the County Council refers to minute number 34.]