

SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, 24 FEBRUARY 2026

Present:

Councillor Mick Smith (Chair) (in the Chair)
Councillor Richard Spooner (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Neil Baker
Councillor Carol Lacey
Councillor Derrick Skinner

Councillor Kathy Clegg
Councillor Ross Shipman
Councillor Kevin Tait

Also Present:

J Dethick	Director of Finance and Resources (Section 151 Officer)
J Wells	Corporate Finance Manager / Deputy S151 Officer
A Bashir	Improvement Officer
R Shaw	Improvement Officer
J Hayden	Senior Scrutiny Officer
A Bryan	Governance Manager

SSC/ Apologies for Absence

38/2

5-26 Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Christine Smith.

SSC/ Declarations of Interest

39/2

5-26 There were no declarations of interest.

SSC/ Minutes of Last Meeting

40/2

5-26 RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the Services Scrutiny Committee held on 25 November 2025 were approved and signed by the Chair.

SSC/ Performance Management

41/2

5-26 The Improvement Officer introduced the report, which set out a summary of the progress made towards the strategies underpinning the Council Plan objective 'A great place to access good public services' for the period ending 31 December 2025.

The Committee was updated on progress under the following two strategies – Assist and influence other public partners to improve their services in the District and continually improve Council services to deliver excellence and value for money. Underneath there two strategies sat various tactics, which were the Council's approaches to positively influence the strategies.

The update for this quarter included targeted support for residents, delivery of Healthy NED initiatives, award of three Community Grants, improvements to the

Planning service including a paid pre-application service, opening of a new 3G pitch at Clay Cross, ICT infrastructure upgrades, and progress against the BSL Charter including a residents' survey video. Overall performance was reported as mostly green, with services meeting or exceeding targets.

It was noted that temporary accommodation numbers had increased slightly to eight households over the Christmas period, including one B&B placement due to safeguarding issues. An auction scheduled for February was expected to realise approximately £0.5m in capital receipts. Clarification was sought on debt recovery activity and capital receipts, with officers confirming that further information could be shared. It was noted that the complaints target had been narrowly missed by approximately 1%, with officers agreeing to provide further detail.

RESOLVED – That progress against the Council Plan 'A great place to access good public services' objective, be noted.

SSC/ 42/2 **Medium Term Financial Plan Budget Monitoring Q3 2025/26**

5-26 The Corporate Finance Manager presented the report which set out the budget position for the third quarter of 2025/26. This would then be presented to Cabinet on 26 February 2026.

It was reported that the General Fund was underspent by £751,000, largely due to savings against the pay budget, and there had been a small overspend on mailing costs and income was performing higher than forecast. Within the HRA, a small number of variances were highlighted, included higher than planned voids, which Rykneld were working alongside contractors to address turnaround times.

Capital expenditure variances were noted, primarily relating to the Clay Cross town centre regeneration scheme, with officers confirming that Derbyshire County Council's decision not to relocate the library may have financial implications; however, the project remained within the programme.

Council house void levels were discussed, with officers explaining that voids had been forecast at 2% but were actually currently around 2.7% due to increased notices and contractor changes. The Committee discussed the work undertaken to void properties, including refitting kitchens and bathrooms, and the impact of tenants refusing any upgrades or repairs during a tenancy.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

SSC/ 43/2 **Cabinet Business**

5-26 The Senior Scrutiny Officer presented a digest of Cabinet decisions taken since the last Committee meeting in November 2025. The digest set out key information for each decision.

The Senior Scrutiny Officer also presented the Committee with the Forward Plan of Executive Decisions for the period up to 15 February 2026.

Councillor R Shipman requested further details of the forthcoming Cabinet item – Management of Corporate Debt – Write Off of Outstanding Amounts. It was

stated that this could be presented to the Committee in future, but it would have to be dealt with as an exempt item.

RESOLVED – That the updated be noted.

SSC/ Policy Development

44/2

5-26 The Senior Scrutiny Officer informed the Committee that changes to Taxi Licensing policies were on the horizon and would be presented to the Committee in due course.

RESOLVED – that the update be noted.

SSC/ Work Programme

45/2

5-26 The Senior Scrutiny Officer presented the current work programme and highlighted any changes that had been made.

RESOLVED – That the work programme be noted.

SSC/ Additional Urgent Items

46/2

5-26 None.

SSC/ Date of Next Meeting

47/2

5-26 The next meeting of the Service Scrutiny Committee was scheduled to take place on 12 May 2026 at 10am.