

**MINUTES AND REPORT OF THE POLICY & MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
HELD ON 12 MARCH 2026**

- * Councillor Follows – Chair
- * Councillor Weightman – Vice Chair

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Councillor Adam * Councillor Crowe 0 Councillor C Downey 0 Councillor S Downey * Councillor Duce * Councillor Heagin * Councillor Holliday * Councillor Kiehl | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Councillor Marshall * Councillor Martin * Councillor PMA Rivers * Councillor PS Rivers 0 Councillor Steel * Councillor Thomson * Councillor Williams |
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* Present # Absent & No Apology Received 0 Apology for Absence L Late

602. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 19 February 2026, having been previously circulated were signed by the Chair as a true record.

603. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and recorded as above.

604. DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND OTHER REGISTERABLE INTERESTS

Members made no declarations of interest in relation to any item on the agenda for this meeting, which is required to be disclosed by the Localism Act 2011 and the Godalming Members' Code of Conduct.

605. PETITIONS/STATEMENTS/QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

No petitions/statements/questions had been received from members of the public in accordance with Standing Order No 4.

606. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS

No questions from Councillors were submitted in accordance with Standing Order 6.

607. ACCOUNTS PAID SINCE LAST MEETING & SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS

	£
Godalming Town Council	
Accounts paid from 19 February to 11 March 2026	135,070.70
Receipts received from 19 February to 11 March 2026	125,399.71
Balance held in HSBC Current Account	
Balance as of 11 March 2026	114,934.29
Balance held in the HSBC Business Deposit Account	
Balance as of 11 March 2026	96,281.30
CCLA Deposit Account	
Balance as of 11 March 2026	1,150,000.00

A schedule of the accounts paid was tabled for the information of Members and a copy is attached to record minutes. The vouchers relating to these payments were also tabled at the meeting for inspection. All payments made were in line with the agreed budget or other resolution of this Committee or Full Council.

Members agreed that the Chair should sign the schedule of accounts paid.

608. BUDGET MONITORING

Members noted the budget monitoring report to 28 February 2026 (detailed report attached to record minutes) and raised no concerns.

609. TENANCY AGREEMENTS – RENTERS’ RIGHTS ACT 2026

Members noted that, in response to the Renters’ Rights Act coming into force on 1 May 2026, the Council has updated its residential tenancy agreements to assured periodic tenancy agreements for its Lodge properties to ensure full legal compliance and sound governance.

Background

The Renters’ Rights Act introduces significant reforms to residential letting arrangements in England, effective from 1 May 2026.

The principal changes include:

- abolition of the Assured Shorthold Tenancy (AST) model;
- removal of Section 21 “no-fault” possession;
- introduction of assured periodic tenancies as the default form of tenancy; and
- rent increases governed by statutory procedure rather than contractual review clauses.

The Council lets its Lodge properties on the open market and therefore falls within the scope of this legislation.

Although existing tenancies will transition under the new statutory framework, it is considered prudent and in keeping with good governance for the Council to proactively update its tenancy documentation to ensure clarity, legal compliance and administrative consistency.

610. REVIEW OF COMMITTEE STRUCTURE – REVISED GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE, TERMS OF REFERENCE AND SCHEME OF DELEGATION – SERVICE COMMITTEE MODEL

Members considered a report presenting a revised governance structure and Scheme of Delegation to support the introduction of a Service Committee model of governance.

During debate a number of questions regarding governance arrangements and reporting lines were raised.

Members sought clarification regarding reporting lines and expressed concern that the proposed Management Committee might become a de facto Executive Committee. The Chief Executive Officer advised that the Audit & Governance Committee and the Staffing Committee would report directly to Full Council in order to ensure independent assurance and oversight. It was further noted that forthcoming amendments to Standing Orders would reinforce this independence by preventing the Mayor, Leader of the Council or Chair of the Management Committee from serving on these governance committees, thereby avoiding any perception of Members “marking their own homework”.

In relation to the four Service Committees, Members were advised that these committees would operate within their approved Terms of Reference and delegated budgets, with all minutes and activity reports submitted to Full Council. A reporting relationship with the

Management Committee would exist to ensure coordination of corporate finances and the budget-setting process. Service Committees would therefore provide budget monitoring information to the Management Committee and refer requests for expenditure beyond their delegated authority, ensuring that the Council's overall financial position remained properly coordinated and that inadvertent overspend across multiple committees could be avoided. Members were advised that the Service Committee model was intended to enable more detailed scrutiny of individual service areas and budgets.

The Chief Executive Officer also reminded Members that legislation prevents Town and Parish Councils from operating an executive system and that authority cannot be delegated to individual councillors. Decisions may only be taken by resolution of the Council, its committees, or by an authorised Officer acting under the approved Scheme of Delegation.

Members also discussed the allocation of Members to committees. It was noted that nominations would continue to be made by Group Leaders in accordance with political proportionality, as under the existing arrangements, and that this process could not be prescribed through Standing Orders nor determined by Officers.

In reviewing the proposed Committee Terms of Reference and Scheme of Delegation, Cllr Heagin, seconded by Cllr Follows, **PROPOSED** an amendment to the Planning Committee Terms of Reference to provide the Deputy Chief Officer with delegated authority, in consultation with the Chair of the Planning Committee, to deal with planning matters requiring action between scheduled meetings. Members **AGREED** the amendment.

Members also raised concerns that environmental responsibilities were not clearly reflected in the titles of the proposed committees. Officers advised that the intention was that all committees would take account of the Council's Climate Emergency declaration and Climate Action Plan when making decisions. It was noted that the Management Committee would oversee the built environment within the Council's estate through its asset management responsibilities, while the Cemeteries & Open Spaces Committee would oversee the natural environment and biodiversity of the council's estate.

Members remained concerned that the absence of an identifiable committee responsible for environmental matters could be perceived as a weakening of the Council's environmental commitment.

Cllr Duce, seconded by Cllr Marshall, **PROPOSED** that:

- the Cemeteries & Open Spaces Committee be renamed Cemeteries, Open Spaces & Sustainability Committee;
- the Committee's Terms of Reference include oversight of the Council's carbon reduction and Climate Action Plan; and
- future amendments to Standing Orders include a provision requiring all Council committees to recognise the Council's Climate Emergency declaration and ensure that decisions align with the Council's environmental objectives.

Members voted **IN FAVOUR** of the amendment.

Members then considered the report as amended. Cllr Adam, seconded by Cllr Williams, **PROPOSED** that authorisation of Service Level Agreement (SLA) and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) awards (up to £50,000) be removed from the Management Committee and determined by Full Council.

Following debate Members voted **AGAINST** the amendment.

Members then voted **IN FAVOUR** of the recommendations as amended and it was **RESOLVED** to:

- a. approve the revised Scheme of Delegation (12 March 2026 version) to support the implementation of the Service Committee model of governance; and
- b. approve that consequential amendments to Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and other governance policies and procedures be brought forward as necessary to implement the Service Committee model
- c. note that the next stage of implementation will include:
 - amendments to Standing Orders to designate the Deputy Chief Officer as Deputy Proper Officer and to incorporate cross-references to the Call-In mechanism;
 - updates to Financial Regulations to align with the revised virement thresholds and reserve control provisions; and
 - revisions to Committee Terms of Reference to reflect the allocation of cost centres under the Service Committee model.

611. POLICY DOCUMENT REVIEW

Members reviewed the Exercise of Employer's Discretions, noted that there were no amendments and **RESOLVED** to recommend adoption by Full Council.

612. LGR & COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFERS – UPDATE

Members received an update from Cllr Heagin, Chair of the LGR Working Group, regarding progress with Local Government Reorganisation and Community Asset Transfers.

Cllr Heagin reported that the LGR CAT Status Grid had been updated. Members were advised that, although Waverley Borough Council's Executive had approved a number of Community Asset Transfers in January and February, the conveyancing process was progressing slowly and was unlikely to be completed by 1 April 2026.

The Chief Executive Officer acknowledged Members' and Officers' frustration at the pace of progress, but also highlighted that, in comparison with many other areas preparing for the formation of new unitary authorities, Community Asset Transfers to Town and Parish Councils within the Waverley area were significantly further advanced.

Members **AGREED** that, if not achieved by 1 April 2026, the Council instruct its solicitors to seek completion of the agreed Community Asset Transfers by 1 July 2026, and if necessary 1 October 2026, should the conveyancing process require additional time.

Cllr Heagin also informed Members that the Local Government Reorganisation pages on the Town Council's website had been updated and that an online survey and leaflet distribution to residents had been launched to gather views regarding potential future Community Asset Transfers.

Members **AGREED** that the statements published on the website regarding Future Considerations of Community Assets represented the agreed position of the Council. It was further agreed that the Council would review its position following the close of the survey on 30 April 2026 and the subsequent analysis of responses.

Members considered a draft letter to Waverley Borough Council seeking clarification on a number of outstanding matters in relation to Holloway Hill Recreation Ground and **AGREED** that the letter be sent.

Members also considered revised Expressions of Interest (EOI) for the Godalming Community Store and Band Room, following the rejection of earlier submissions by Waverley Borough Council. In accordance with the direction of Full Council (Min No. 584-25 refers), Members **AGREED** that the Chief Executive Officer should resubmit the revised EOI documents.

Cllr Heagin further reported that, following the Town Council's letter to the Minister for Housing, Communities and Local Government regarding the potential impact of Government decisions on the cost of the 2027 Town and Parish elections, the response received had been disappointing in that it did not acknowledge that any additional costs arising from changes to election scheduling would fall upon Town and Parish Councils. However, Members were advised that more recent information regarding the likely costs of the 2027 elections appeared to be more closely aligned with the Council's original expectations.

Cllr Follows provided Members with an update on wider West Surrey Local Government Reorganisation matters, including confirmation that the Structural Change Order had been made on 10 March 2026 and that arrangements were moving from Voluntary Joint Committees to Statutory Joint Committees.

Members **NOTED** the updates.

613. UK TOWN OF CULTURE 2028 – EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Members received an update regarding the level of support received from local community, arts, cultural and performing groups following the Council's decision to explore the submission of an Expression of Interest (EOI) for Godalming to be considered as UK Town of Culture 2028.

Members were delighted to note the positive response received to the Council's request for expressions of support from local organisations and stakeholders.

Following consideration of the feedback received, Members **AGREED** that the Chief Executive Officer should proceed with the submission of the Expression of Interest to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

614. UPCOMING EVENTS

Members noted the following upcoming event(s):

Date	Event
Thursday, 19 March	Annual Town Meeting
Saturday, 4 April	Spring Festival

615. TOWN COUNCIL REPRESENTATION ON EXTERNAL BODIES

There were no updates received.

616. COMMUNICATIONS ARISING FROM THIS MEETING

Members considered which matters arising from the meeting should be publicised.

It was **AGREED** that the Council's submission of an Expression of Interest for Godalming to be considered as UK Town of Culture 2028 be highlighted through the Council's communications channels.

617. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Policy & Management Committee is scheduled to be held in the Council Chamber on Thursday, 23 April 2026 at 7.00pm or at the conclusion of the preceding Environment & Planning Committee meeting, whichever is later.

618. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Members were informed that, due to unforeseen circumstances affecting the election of the Mayor scheduled for Thursday 21 May 2026, it is likely that the Annual Meeting of the Council will need to be rescheduled to Wednesday 20 May 2026. Members were advised that this revised date would remain within the statutory period required for the Annual Meeting. A formal amendment to the Council's meeting schedule will be brought forward for consideration at the next meeting.

Members were also informed that, after 30 years of service to Godalming Town Council, Lynne Purnell will be leaving the Council at the end of April. Members were advised that there will be an opportunity for Members to say goodbye to Ms Purnell prior to her departure.