

COUNCIL MEETING HELD THURSDAY 12 FEBRUARY 2026

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No	Item	Decision	
1.	Apologies	<i>Alderman Brown Stewart, Callan, Fielding, John McAuley, Councillor Bateson, Kennedy, Kyle, McGlinchey</i>	
2.	Declarations of Members' Interests	<i>None</i>	
3.	Minutes of Finance Committee (Rates Estimates) meeting held Thursday 22 January 2026	<i>That Council considers the amended rates estimates as presented and strike the rate at 3.35%.</i>	
3.1	Addendum to the Minutes of Finance Committee (Rates Estimates) meeting held Thursday 22 January 2026		
3.2	General Estimate of Rates return for Department for Communities		<i>That Council approve the General Estimate of Rates return for submission to the Department for Communities</i>
3.3	Chief Executive report on Adequacy of Reserves		<i>That Council approves the Chief Financial Officer's report on the adequacy of reserves</i>
3.4	Chief Executive report on Robustness of Estimates		<i>That Council approves the Chief Financial Officer's report on the robustness of the estimates</i>
3.5	MRP Policy Statement	<i>That Council reviews the policy detailed in</i>	

		<i>Appendix 1 and approve the statement</i>
3.6	Prudential Indicators	<i>That Council approves the Prudential indicators as tabled in the appendix</i>
3.7	Treasury Management Strategy	<i>That Council approves the Treasury Management Strategy for 2026/27 as tabled in the appendix</i>

**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING OF THE
COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER ON
THURSDAY 12 FEBRUARY 2026 AT 7.00 PM**

In the Chair : The Mayor, Councillor McMullan

Members Present : Alderman Boyle, Coyle, Hunter, Knight-McQuillan,
S McKillop, Scott

Councillors Anderson, C Archibald, N Archibald,
Callaghan, Chivers, Elder, Holmes, Huggins, Kane,
Mairs, Jonathan McAuley, McCully, McGurk, MA
McKillop, McQuillan, Peacock, Schenning, Storey,
Wallace, Watton, Wisener

Officers Present : D Jackson, Chief Executive
D Wright, Chief Finance Officer
L Clyde, Financial Accountant (R)
L Irwin, Acting Corporate Communications and Public Relations
Manager
J Keen, Committee & Member Services Officer

In Attendance: L Boyd, ICT Operations Officer
C McTaggart, ICT Operations Officer

Press 2 No. (R)

Key – R = Attended Remotely

The Mayor advised Council of its obligations and protocol whilst the meeting was being audio recorded; and with the remote meetings protocol.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were recorded for Alderman Brown Stewart, Callan, Fielding, John McAuley, Councillor Bateson, Kennedy, Kyle, McGlinchey.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

**3. MINUTES OF FINANCE COMMITTEE (RATES ESTIMATES) MEETING
HELD THURSDAY 22 JANUARY 2026**

Copy, previously circulated, presented as read.

The Chief Finance Officer advised there has been changes since the Finance Committee held Thursday 22 January 2026 considered the rates estimates, most notably the cancellation of the revaluation 2026. The consequence of this is that the figures since this Finance Committee have been altered which are outlined in 3.1 below.

This item was considered in conjunction with Item 3.1.

3.1 Addendum to the Minutes of Finance Committee (Rates Estimates) meeting held Thursday 22 January 2026

Report, previously circulated presented as read by The Chief Finance Officer.

Purpose of Report

Councils are required to consider their budgetary position annually and agree these budgets which are then converted into a domestic rating factor and non-domestic rating factor by 15 February annually.

Background

A report and appendices to the Finance Committee (Rates Estimates) meeting on 22 January 2026 set out the budgetary requirements of Council services for the 2026/2027 financial year. The appendices included the various reports tabled by the Directorates at Finance Committee during the autumn which detailed the majority of cost pressures and their effect on the budgets. Committee agreed to recommend the report to Council for the purpose of setting the rate for the ensuing year.

Update

Since that meeting, a decision by the Minister for Finance has rendered the report presented to Committee obsolete and therefore there is a need for this addendum to address that issue.

Addendum

The Minister's decision was to suspend the revaluation of all non-domestic properties for 2026, the consequence of which means that the figures upon which Council's estimates were based have now changed. The key elements of change are the Estimated Penny Product (EPP) and the conversion factor, due to both now reverting to a pre-revaluation basis.

Impact

The initial impact of these changes was to reduce the increase on the domestic rate factor from 3.99% to 3.68%. The -domestic rate factor now matches the

domestic at 3.68%, from previously having been a reduction of 8.47%. In a further amendment to the budgets, officers have recommended a reduction in the pay award assumption of 0.5%, reducing the overall estimated budget by approximately £220,000. This results in an updated rates increase of 3.35% on both the domestic and non-domestic rate factors as detailed in the tables circulated within the report.

Proposed by Councillor Peacock
Seconded by Councillor Kane

The proposer and seconder agreed to include the addendum as an amendment to the Finance Committee (Rates Estimates) recommendation to Council therefore the amended recommendation was to approve the Rates Estimates and strike the rate at a 3.35% increase.

RESOLVED – That Council considers the updated rates estimates as presented and strikes the rate at a 3.35% increase.

Councillor Huggins requested a recess.

In response to questions, the Chief Finance Officer stated that based on a house with the average rateable value of £124k the increase in rates will be 40p per week.

The Mayor declared a recess at 7:04pm.

The meeting reconvened at 7:09pm.

3.2 General Estimate of Rates return for Department for Communities

Report, previously circulated presented as read by The Chief Finance Officer.

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to approve the General Estimate of Rates return for submission to the Department of Communities (DfC).

Background

Council must annually consider its Rates Estimates and agree a budget on or before 15 February.

A general estimate of rates return must be agreed, signed and returned to DfC for this purpose by 15 February in line with legislative requirements.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Council approves the General Estimate of Rates return for submission to the Department for Communities.

Proposed by Alderman Scott
Seconded by Councillor Huggins and

RESOLVED - that Council approves the General Estimate of Rates return for submission to the Department for Communities.

3.3 Chief Executive report on Adequacy of Reserves

Report, previously circulated, presented as read by The Chief Finance Officer.

Purpose of Report

This report provides Members with an update in relation to the adequacy of Council's projected reserves for 2026/27.

Background

This report is prepared to facilitate Council's duty under Section 6 of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 which states:

- (1) Regulations may make provision requiring a council to maintain financial reserves in accordance with the regulations.
- (2) The Chief Financial Officer of a council shall submit to the council a report on the adequacy of any proposed financial reserves for a financial year – it should be noted that the Chief Executive is the Council's nominated Chief Financial Officer in accordance with Section 2 of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.
- (3) A council shall have regard to that report when considering the estimates for that year under section 3(2)(a).

Report of the Chief Financial Officer on the adequacy of reserves

At 31st March 2025 the General Fund balance of Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council amounted to £8.284m (2024 - £5.164m) equating to 13.60% (2024– 8.33%) of the Net Operating Expenditure.

Department for Communities (DfC) guidance indicates that the General Fund Level should be between 5% and 7.5% (£3.045m and £4.568m) of the Net Operating Expenditure.

Although the 2025/26 financial outturn is not yet known, the officers estimate that when the financial commitments that the 2025/26 Rate income was

intended to fund are accounted for, Council's General Fund Balance and other usable reserves will be increased with overall favourable variances against budget. This will allow the level of the General Reserve to remain comfortably above the required minimum level of 5% of Net Operating Expenditure.

There continues to be significant cost pressures on Council revenue budgets, and this is expected to continue, economic and inflationary pressures have improved recently but there is still a high degree of uncertainty in the short to medium term. It is vital, therefore, that a Rate estimate budget is approved that allows Council to minimise the use of reserves in that period.

In year forecasts of the Actual Penny Product for 2025/26, produced by Land & Property Services, show a projected positive outturn in the region of £913k.

After considering all the information above, I am of the opinion that Council reserves will be adequate.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Council approves the Chief Financial Officer's report on the adequacy of reserves.

In response to questions, the Chief Finance Officer stated that Council reserves have increased to £34.5million over the last 2 years.

Proposed by Alderman Scott
Seconded by Councillor Huggins and

RESOLVED - that Council approves the Chief Financial Officer's report on the adequacy of reserves.

3.4 Chief Executive report on Robustness of Estimates

Report, previously circulated, presented as read by The Chief Finance Officer.

Purpose of Report

This report provides Members with an update in relation to the robustness of the 2026/27 Rate estimates.

Background

This report is prepared to facilitate Council's duty under Section 4 of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 which states:

- (1) The Chief Financial Officer of a council shall submit to the council a report on the robustness of the estimates. It should be noted that the Chief

Executive is the Council's nominated Chief Financial Officer in accordance with Section 2 of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.

- (2) A council shall have regard to that report when considering the estimates under section 3(2)(a).
- (3) In this section "the estimates" means the estimates submitted to the council under section 3(1).

Report of the Chief Financial Officer on the 2026/27 estimates

The 2026/27 Rate estimates have been prepared, in so far as possible, on a zero-base basis. This is generally accepted as a more robust method of preparing budgets than the more usual practice of incremental based budgeting.

The amounts included within the Rate estimates have been prepared based on extensive discussions with the relevant Directors and associated budget holders and have regard to the officers' best estimates of known financial pressures and the resource requirements of continuing to deliver Council services in 2026/27.

The recommended rate estimates expressly provide for the:

- Annual pay award of 3.5%
- Projected utility (Gas, electricity, water) costs
- Projected waste management costs
- Capital financing costs of approximately £7.99m
- Additional income as per officer recommendations
- Service adjustments as agreed during the presentations to the Finance Committee during the autumn
- Continued application of £1m Enhance Producer Responsibility funding to offset waste operations' running costs.

Uncertainties

As in all budget estimate processes, senior officers have utilised their professional judgment where appropriate and had regard to market forces in so far as it has been practicable to do so.

The estimation of future financial requirements has also had regard to the projected financial outturn in 2025/26 and the desire to utilise prior period favourable variances, where possible, to deliver outcomes in the Borough as agreed with Council.

Members should note that the proposed estimates have been prepared on the basis of assumptions and information provided to Council by third parties such as the Department for Communities and Land and Property Services previously notified to the Council.

Members will be aware of the continuing uncertainty surrounding the quantum of Rate Support Grant (RSG) which will ultimately be allocated to Council. As previously reported, both the Departmental allocation to this grant and Council's allocation of the grant have reduced meaning the projected income from this source has reduced to £218,055.

The on-going situation with regards to the economy and continuing, albeit reducing, inflationary increases continue to disrupt all facets of daily life including the local economy. It is too early to be able to project the long-term effects this will have but the potential remains high for a longer-term adverse effect on the local economy and consequently the non-domestic rates base in this Borough.

Conclusion

Subject to the ongoing inflationary pressures and on the assumption that Council approves Rate estimates which make provision for the cost pressures as set out in 3.3 above, I am satisfied that the recommended rate estimates as presented are sufficiently robust to allow Council to deliver all its services in 2026/27.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Council approves the Chief Financial Officer's report on the robustness of the estimates.

Proposed by Alderman Scott
Seconded by Councillor Huggins and

RESOLVED - that Council approves the Chief Financial Officer's report on the robustness of the estimates.

3.5 MRP Policy Statement

Report, previously circulated, presented as read by the Chief Finance Officer.

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to review the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy Statement and seek Members' approval of this statement.

Background

Under regulation 6 of the Local Government (Capital Finance and Accounting) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2011, Councils now have a statutory

requirement, to charge to its general fund, an amount of Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) which it considers to be “prudent”. This replaced the previous requirement whereby the revenue charge was broadly equivalent to the amount of loans and leasing principal paid in any one year.

The regulations also state that authorities are required to prepare an annual statement of their policy on making MRP for approval by Council. This report sets out Council’s policy for 2026/27.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Council reviews the policy detailed in Appendix 1 and approves the statement.

Proposed by Alderman Scott
Seconded by Councillor Huggins and

RESOLVED - that Council reviews the policy detailed in Appendix 1 and approves the statement.

3.6 Prudential Indicators

Report, previously circulated, presented as read by the Chief Finance Officer.

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to inform members and review the Prudential Indicators for this Council.

Background

In setting the rate Council should also consider its Prudential Indicators which summarise the cost of servicing its loan finance.

The Prudential Indicators Summary for the period 2025/26 to 2028/29 is attached as an appendix to this report and is for review and adoption.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Council approves the Prudential Indicators as tabled in the appendix.

Proposed by Alderman Scott
Seconded by Councillor Huggins and

RESOLVED - that Council approves the Prudential Indicators as tabled in the appendix.

3.7 Treasury Management Strategy

Report, previously circulated presented as read by the Chief Finance Officer.

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to inform members and review the Treasury Management Strategy for 2026/27.

Background

In setting the rate, Council should also consider its Treasury Management Strategy for the year ahead.

The Treasury Management Strategy for 2026/27 is attached as an appendix to this report.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Council approves the Treasury Management Strategy for 2026/27 as tabled in the appendix.

Proposed by Alderman Scott
Seconded by Councillor Huggins and

RESOLVED - that Council approves the Treasury Management Strategy for 2026/27 as tabled in the appendix.

This being all the business, the Mayor thanked everyone for their attendance and the meeting concluded at 7:11pm.

Mayor