



STOCKPORT

METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

Meeting of the Council Meeting held in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Stockport on 27 February 2025 at 6.00 pm.

PRESENT

The Mayor (Councillor Suzanne Wyatt) in the chair; Deputy Mayor (Councillor Kerry Waters); Councillors Geoff Abell, Shan Alexander, Jake Austin, Joe Barratt, Rosemary Barratt, Grace Baynham, Rachel Bresnahan, Jon Byrne, Christine Carrigan, Asa Caton, Anna Charles-Jones, Angie Clark, Laura Clingan, Liz Crix, Peter Crossen, Dickie Davies, Will Dawson, Dean Fitzpatrick, Colin Foster, Helen Foster-Grime, James Frizzell, Sue Glithero, Graham Greenhalgh, Steve Gribbon, Dominic Hardwick, Helen Hibbert, Keith Holloway, Ian Hunter, Mark Hunter, Dallas Jones, Mark Jones, Jilly Julian, Huma Khan, Gary Lawson, Carole McCann, Holly McCormack, Jeremy Meal, Micheala Meikle, Wendy Meikle, David Meller, Mike Newman, Dan Oliver, Mark Roberts, Dena Ryness, David Sedgwick, Frankie Singleton, Catherine Stuart, Leah Taylor, John Taylor, Aron Thornley, Sue Thorpe, Claire Vibert, Karl Wardlaw, Pete West, Wendy Wild, David Wilson, Rachel Wise, Paul Wright, Alex Wynne and Matt Wynne.

1. FORMALITIES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

(i) Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor extended her thanks to all those members that had supported her charity during her Mayoral year.

The Mayor then reported that she had attended the British Empire Medal investiture ceremony at The Monastery, Manchester. The Mayor highlighted that of the seven recipients, three were from Stockport.

(ii) Declarations of Interest

Councillors and officers were invited to declare any interests which they had in any of the items on the summons for the meeting.

The following interests were declared:

Personal interests

Councillor

Interest

Karl Wardlaw and Matt Wynne	Summons items 3(ii) 'Housing Revenue Account Budget and Rent Levels for 2025/26' and 3(iv) '2025/26 Cabinet Revenue Budget' as Stockport Homes Group tenants.
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Aron Thornley Summons item 3(iv) '2025/26 Cabinet Revenue Budget' as a Director of Marple Youth Project which received funding from the council.

It was noted that the Standards Committee had approved a wide dispensation to enable any member with a personal and prejudicial interest or a disclosable pecuniary interest in any item under consideration as part of the budget and Council Tax setting to take part and vote at the meeting.

2. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

(i) Public Question Time

Members of the public were invited to put questions to the Mayor and councillors on matters within the powers and duties of the Council.

Four public questions were submitted as follows:-

- Relating to the proposal to go ahead and introduce charges for garden waste collections in the light of the outcome of a public consultation in which a majority of respondents opposed them.

The Leader of the Council (Councillor Mark Hunter) responded that there were a number of unpalatable choices that councils across the country were facing. It was further stated that the government had made it clear that considering measures, such as charging for garden waste collections, was part of the range of options that local authorities would need to consider in order to set a balanced budget.

The Cabinet Member for Climate Change & Environment (Councillor Mark Roberts) further responded that as part of the consultation, it was highlighted that the collection of garden waste was not a statutory service, and that difficult decisions were necessary to protect key frontline services like libraries, pools, parks and social care. It was commented that the Council recognised the strength of public opinion that came through the consultation process, however that needed to be placed in the wider context of being required to agree a balanced budget. It was stated that the Council remained committed to providing the best possible service within this budget and to do so in a way that was fair and sustainable, while mitigating the impact on residents as much as possible. This included measures such as offering an enhanced discount for compost bins starting at £10 for those who preferred to compost at home, and all residents were able to swap their 180 litre blue bin for a larger 240 litre bin at a discounted rate.

- Relating to whether the leaders of the Liberal Democrat and Labour Groups would be willing to propose a joint motion for the next Council Meeting, reiterating the need for the Greater Manchester Pension Fund to divest from fossil fuels and calling for divestment from arms companies supporting global conflicts.

The Leader of the Council (Councillor Mark Hunter) responded that he would be happy to work with other political groups with regard to ethical investment policies at the Greater Manchester Pension Fund. It was noted that the Council's representatives on the Pension Fund Management Panel had consistently raised questions about this issue and would continue to do so.

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The Leader of the Opposition (Councillor David Meller) further responded that his priority for the management of the Greater Manchester Pension Fund was that it made a return for public sector workers. However, Councillor Meller confirmed that he would be willing to discuss the matter within the Labour Group along with broader issues such as how pension fund investments could be used to deliver more social housing.

- Relating to apparent contradictions within the Sixth Assessment Report of the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and whether this would be raised with the Economy, Regeneration & Climate Change Scrutiny Committee and further whether external experts would be allowed to challenge the evidence behind the Council's net zero policy.

The Cabinet Member for Climate Change & Environment (Councillor Mark Roberts) responded that scrutiny in Stockport was in the control of opposition groups and that the determination of the programme of work of the scrutiny committees was a matter for the members of those committees alone.

- Relating to whether the Council would participate in an externally funded public debate involving scientists and experts to explain the Council's science to voters.

The Cabinet Member for Climate Change & Environment (Councillor Mark Roberts) responded that the Council would not use public money to promote climate change conspiracies.

Two further public question were submitted where the questioners were not in attendance at the meeting and, in accordance with the Code of Practice, the Chief Executive was requested to respond to the questioners in writing.

(ii) Petitions and Presentations

There were no petitions or presentations.

3. POLICY FRAMEWORK AND BUDGET

(i) Council Plan 2024-2027 Refresh

The Leader of the Council (Councillor Mark Hunter) submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) which sought approval for the refresh of the 2024-2027 Council Plan

RESOLVED – That the refresh of the 2024-2027 Council Plan be approved and adopted.

(ii) Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget Report 2025/26

The Leader of the Council (Councillor Mark Hunter) submitted a report of the Cabinet Member for Economy, Regeneration & Housing (copies of which had been circulated) requesting the Council Meeting to set the level of rent and service charges in the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and approve the HRA budget for 2025/26.

RESOLVED – (56 for, 5 abstentions) That approval be given to:

- (a) An increase of 2.7% for social rent and affordable rent.

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- (b) An increase of 3.2% for rent of shared ownership properties.
 - (c) Service charge increases as outlined in Section 5, with authority delegated to the Director of Finance, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economy, Regeneration & Housing, to agree a lower increase should this be necessary.
 - (d) The Housing Revenue Account Budget for 2025/26 as set out in Appendix 1.
- (iii) Medium Term Financial Plan – Financial Landscape and Forecasts 2025/26 to 2028/29

The Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources (Councillor Jilly Julian) submitted a joint report of the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member (copies of which had been circulated) providing an update on the council's 2025/26 to 2028/29 Medium-Term Financial Plan forecasts and assumptions as part of setting a robust and resilient budget and financial plan for the council.

RESOLVED – That the Medium-Term Financial Plan forecasts for the council's finances for the period 2025/26 to 2028/29 be noted.

- (iv) 2025/26 Cabinet Revenue Budget

The Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources (Councillor Jilly Julian) submitted a joint report of the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member (copies of which had been circulated) which sought approval for the cabinet's proposed 2025/26 revenue budget.

RESOLVED – (32 for, 27 against, 3 abstentions) (1) That the budget for 2025/26 described in the report and set out in Appendix 2 and 3 be approved.

(2) That the risk assessment of the 2025/26 Budget at Appendix 5 and the report of the Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer on the adequacy of proposed financial reserves and robustness of the estimates also included at Appendix 5 be noted.

(3) That the required Council General Fund Balance to reflect the Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer's assessment of risks be approved.

(4) That the financial forecasts and assumptions for 2025/26 to 2028/29 at Appendix 6, and the key issues to be addressed in formulating a response to the future financial challenges facing the council be noted and approved.

(5) That the appropriate Council Tax resolutions should be passed which produce a Council Tax increase of 4.99% in 2025/26 (2.99% General Increase, 2% Adult Social Care Precept increase) as illustrated in Appendix 7.

The names of those councillors voting on this resolution, was recorded as follows:

Those councillors who voted for the resolution were:

The Mayor (Councillor Suzanne Wyatt); Councillors Geoff Abell, Shan Alexander, Jake Austin, Grace Baynham, Rachel Bresnahan, Angie Clark, Liz Crix, Will Dawson, Helen Foster-Grime, James Frizzell, Graham Greenhalgh, Steve Gribbon, Dominic Hardwick, Keith Holloway, Ian Hunter, Mark Hunter, Dallas Jones, Mark Jones, Jilly Julian, Huma

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Khan, Gary Lawson, Jeremy Meal, Micheala Meikle, Wendy Meikle, Mike Newman, Dan Oliver, Mark Roberts, Frankie Singleton, Sue Thorpe, Pete West and Alex Wynne.

Those councillors who voted against the resolution were:

The Deputy Mayor (Councillor Kerry Waters); Councillors Joe Barratt, Rosemary Barratt, Jon Byrne, Christine Carrigan, Asa Caton, Laura Clingan, Peter Crossen, Dickie Davies, Dean Fitzpatrick, Colin Foster, Sue Glithero, Helen Hibbert, Holly McCormack, David Meller, Dena Ryness, David Sedgwick, Leah Taylor, John Taylor, Aron Thornley, Claire Vibert, Karl Wardlaw, Wendy Wild, David Wilson, Rachel Wise, Paul Wright and Matt Wynne.

Those councillors who abstained were:

Councillors Anna Charles-Jones, Carole McCann and Catherine Stuart.

(v) Council Tax 2025/26

The Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources (Councillor Jilly Julian) submitted a joint report of the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member (copies of which were circulated) setting out the Council Tax for 2025/26 and the level of precepts for the Mayoral Police and Crime Commissioner Precept and Mayoral General Precept (including fire services) for Greater Manchester.

RESOLVED – (61 for, 1 against) (1) That it be noted that on 16 January 2025, the Council has calculated the Council Tax base for 2025/26 as:

- 99,339.6 for the whole Council area. [Item T in the formula in Section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended (the "Act")]

(2) That the Council Meeting approve the Council Tax Requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2025/26 as being £206,234,970.

(3) That the following amounts be calculated by the Council for the year 2025/26 in accordance with sections 31 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992:

- (a) £867,902,681 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in section 31A(2) of the Act (Appendix Two).
- (b) £661,667,711 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in section 31A(3) of the Act (Appendix Two).
- (c) £206,234,970 being the amount by which the aggregate at 3(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 3(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with section 31A(4) of the Act, as its Council Tax Requirement for the year (Item R in the formula in Section 31B of the Act). (Appendix Two).
- (d) £2,076.06 being the amount at 3(c) above, all divided by Item T (1(a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with section 31B of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year.

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(e) £0 being the aggregate amount of all special items referred to in section 34(1) of the Act.

(f) £2,076.06 being the amount at 3(d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 3(e) above by the amount by Item T (1(a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its council tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no special item relates.

(4) That it be noted that for the year 2025/26 the Mayoral Police and Crime Commissioner precept for Greater Manchester and the Mayoral General precept (including Fire Services) have been issued to the Council in accordance with section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each category of dwellings in the Council's area as indicated in the table below.

(5) That the Council, in accordance with Sections 30 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the aggregate amounts shown in the tables below as the amounts of Council Tax for 2025/26 for each part of its area and for each of the categories of dwellings.

Valuation Bands								
Authority	£							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council	1,384.04	1,614.71	1,845.39	2,076.06	2,537.41	2,998.75	3,460.10	4,152.12
Mayoral Police and Crime Commissioner Precept	180.20	210.23	240.26	270.30	330.36	390.43	450.50	540.60
Mayoral General Precept (including Fire Services)	85.97	100.29	114.62	128.95	157.61	186.26	214.92	257.90

AGGREGATE OF COUNCIL TAX REQUIREMENTS

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council Area	1,650.21	1,925.23	2,200.27	2,475.31	3,025.38	3,575.44	4,125.52	4,950.62

(6) That the Council, in accordance with section 52ZB of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 hereby determines that the Council's relevant basic amount of council tax for 2025/26 is not excessive in accordance with the principles determined by the Secretary of State under section 52ZC of the Act.

The names of those councillors voting on this resolution were recorded as follows:

Those councillors who voted for the resolution were:

The Mayor (Councillor Suzanne Wyatt); Deputy Mayor (Councillor Kerry Waters); Councillors Geoff Abell, Shan Alexander, Jake Austin, Joe Barratt, Rosemary Barratt, Grace Baynham, Rachel Bresnahan, Jon Byrne, Christine Carrigan, Asa Caton, Anna Charles-Jones, Angie Clark, Laura Clingan, Liz Crix, Dickie Davies, Will Dawson, Dean

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Fitzpatrick, Colin Foster, Helen Foster-Grime, James Frizzell, Sue Glithero, Graham Greenhalgh, Steve Gribbon, Dominic Hardwick, Helen Hibbert, Keith Holloway, Ian Hunter, Mark Hunter, Dallas Jones, Mark Jones, Jilly Julian, Huma Khan, Gary Lawson, Carole McCann, Holly McCormack, Jeremy Meal, Micheala Meikle, Wendy Meikle, David Meller, Mike Newman, Dan Oliver, Mark Roberts, Dena Ryness, David Sedgwick, Frankie Singleton, Catherine Stuart, Leah Taylor, John Taylor, Aron Thornley, Sue Thorpe, Claire Vibert, Karl Wardlaw, Pete West, Wendy Wild, David Wilson, Rachel Wise, Paul Wright, Alex Wynne and Matt Wynne.

The councillor who voted against the resolution was Councillor Peter Crossen.

(vi) 2025/26 Capital Strategy and Capital Programme

The Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources (Councillor Jilly Julian) submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) detailing the 2025/26 Capital Strategy and Capital Programme that had been set to support the delivery of outcomes and outputs associated with the priorities of the council.

RESOLVED – (62 for) That approval be given to:-

(1) The Capital Strategy at Appendix 1.

(2) The prudential indicators supporting the 2025/26 Capital Programme set out in Appendix 1 (under Appendix A).

(3) The 2025/26 to 2027/28 Capital Programme and the funding arrangements as described in the report and set out at Appendix 2.

The names of those councillors voting on this resolution were recorded as follows:-

Those councillors who voted for the resolution were:

The Mayor (Councillor Suzanne Wyatt); Deputy Mayor (Councillor Kerry Waters); Councillors Geoff Abell, Shan Alexander, Jake Austin, Joe Barratt, Rosemary Barratt, Grace Baynham, Rachel Bresnahan, Jon Byrne, Christine Carrigan, Asa Caton, Anna Charles-Jones, Angie Clark, Laura Clingan, Liz Crix, Peter Crossen, Dickie Davies, Will Dawson, Dean Fitzpatrick, Colin Foster, Helen Foster-Grime, James Frizzell, Sue Glithero, Graham Greenhalgh, Steve Gribbon, Dominic Hardwick, Helen Hibbert, Keith Holloway, Ian Hunter, Mark Hunter, Dallas Jones, Mark Jones, Jilly Julian, Huma Khan, Gary Lawson, Carole McCann, Holly McCormack, Jeremy Meal, Micheala Meikle, Wendy Meikle, David Meller, Mike Newman, Dan Oliver, Mark Roberts, Dena Ryness, David Sedgwick, Frankie Singleton, Catherine Stuart, Leah Taylor, John Taylor, Aron Thornley, Sue Thorpe, Claire Vibert, Karl Wardlaw, Pete West, Wendy Wild, David Wilson, Rachel Wise, Paul Wright, Alex Wynne and Matt Wynne.

(vii) 2025/26 Treasury Management Strategy, Annual Investment Strategy and Minimum Revenue Provision Policy

The Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources (Councillor Jilly Julian) submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) inviting the Council Meeting to consider the 2024/25

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Treasury Management Strategy, Annual Investment Strategy and Minimum Revenue Provision Policy.

RESOLVED – That approval be given to:

- (1) The Minimum Revenue Provision Policy for 2025/26.
- (2) The Capital Expenditure forecasts and Capital Financing Requirement projections.
- (3) The Treasury Management Strategy 2025/26.
- (4) The Treasury and Prudential Indicators and limits 2025/26-2027/28.
- (5) The Annual Investment Strategy 2025/26.
- (viii) Annual Pay Policy Statement 2025/26

The Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources (Councillor Jilly Julian) submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) detailing the Council's Annual Pay Policy Statement for 2025/26 and the Gender Pay Gap figures.

RESOLVED - That the Annual Pay Policy Statement be adopted and approval be given to the publication of the Council's Gender Pay Gap information.

The meeting closed at 8.50 pm