

**PLEASE NOTE THAT THE MINUTE REQUIRES TO BE APPROVED AS A
CORRECT RECORD AT THE NEXT COUNCIL MEETING AND MAY BE
AMENDED**

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET

**MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 25 FEBRUARY 2026 AT 1000
HOURS IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS, COUNCIL HEADQUARTERS, LONDON
ROAD, KILMARNOCK/BY VIDEO CONFERENCE**

MEMBERS PARTICIPATING: Councillors Douglas Reid, Jim McMahon, Elaine Cowan, Iain Linton, Graham Barton, Barry Douglas, Neal Ingram, Clare Maitland, Linda Mabon, Neill Watts and Drew Filson; Religious Representative: Dr David Lewis; and Parent Representative: John Semple.

OFFICERS PARTICIPATING: Eddie Fraser, Chief Executive; Richard Grieveson, Depute Chief Executive; Craig McArthur, Depute Chief Executive and Director of Health and Social Care; Linda McAulay-Griffiths, Director of Education and Skills and Chief Education Officer; Joe McLachlan, Director of Finance and Digital and Chief Financial Officer; David Mitchell, Chief Governance Officer; Iain Tough, Head of Corporate Support; Andrew Kennedy, Head of Facilities and Property Management; Blair Millar, Head of Housing and Communities; Erik Sutherland, Head of Locality Health and Care Services; Amanda Lowe, Head of People and Culture; Ian Burgoyne, Assistant Director of Education (Equity, Inclusion and Employability); Colin Hastings, Assistant Director of Finance; Simon Bell, Strategic Lead: Asset Investment; Fiona Hart, IJB Finance Service Manager; Julie McCulloch, Strategic Education Manager: Inclusion; and Lynn Young, Democratic Services Team Leader.

APOLOGIES: Religious Representative Babs Mowat; and Teacher Representative Hazel Malakoty.

CHAIR: Councillor Douglas Reid, Leader of the Council.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

1. No declarations of interest were intimated by the Members participating in relation to the items of business on the Agenda at this point.

**MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY SETTING THE 2026/27 REVENUE
BUDGET**

- 2E. There was submitted a report (circulated) by the Director of Finance and Digital which presented Members with recommendations for the General Services Revenue Budget and the Council Tax levels for 2026/27, and provided details of the outcome of the budget engagement and sought approval of the expenditure reduction measures required to balance the budget.

Cabinet agreed to recommend to Council on 26 February 2026:-

- (i) the expenditure reduction measures at Appendix 1 of the report be approved;
- (ii) the Resource Allocations shown at paragraph 63 of the report be approved;
- (iii) that Service plans be updated accordingly to reflect management actions and the updated Resource Allocations;

- (iv) the impact on Grant Aided Expenditure for 2026/27 was noted, and to approve that appropriate reductions were included against service budgets with the exception of the reduction in Secondary Teaching Staff to Education as noted in paragraphs 50-57 of the report;
- (v) the Financial Resilience Indicators at paragraphs 73–76 of the report is noted;
- (vi) that Band D Council Tax level for 2026/27 be increased by 8% as noted at paragraph 77 of the report, with other bandings increased accordingly;
- (vii) a meeting to discuss and progress the Council’s Early Intervention and Prevention Initiative would take place later in 2026 as noted at paragraph 25 of the report;
- (viii) that fees and charges budgets be increased by 3% with service proposals for increases detailed at Appendix 2 of the report other than those previously approved as part of service reviews or are set nationally or by partners;
- (ix) the Reserves and Balances Strategy set out in Appendix 3 of the report be approved;
- (x) the outcome and views arising from the budget engagement events at paragraphs 65-69 of the report and the full detail which was attached at Appendix 4 of the report is noted; and
- (xi) otherwise, to note the contents of the report.

BUILDING A FUTURE EAST AYRSHIRE ASSET MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK AND CAPITAL INVESTMENT

3E. There was submitted a report (circulated) by the Depute Chief Executive which updated Cabinet on the Asset Management Framework and Capital Investment Programme in line with the strategic plan and within the current challenging financial climate.

Cabinet agreed to recommend to Council on 26 February 2026:-

- (i) that the strategic principles of the Asset Management Framework remain the basis for future investment priorities linked to the Strategic Plan priorities;
- (ii) to note the positive progress being made with project delivery and development within challenging financial constraints and market volatility;
- (iii) to request officers to review the priorities and requirements for the learning estate and provide further details to a future Cabinet as part of the Learning Estate Management Plan, including requirements to be presented within the ASN review;
- (iv) to reallocate the Education Contingency budget to cover additional costs for the St Sophias and Kilmaurs Primary School projects and free school meal expansion;
- (v) to note the position in relation to population change and current LDP2 housing growth and that further changes to the learning estate to meet these requirements would be considered at a future Cabinet;
- (vi) to increase the affordability cap for the Cultural Kilmarnock project to £34.000m including incorporating £1.000m previously agreed funding for public realm improvements to link into future links to the road layout;

- (vii) to note the re-distribution of the Galleon funding that was subject to a further options appraisal and allocate £0.400 in 2026/27 to address initial upgrade works for the ice rink;
- (viii) to allocate £0.500m to the Cemeteries budget to address capacity issues at Cumnock Cemetery;
- (ix) to redirect £1.000m allocated to Wallace Chambers feasibility to meet the anticipated additional cost of the Cultural Kilmarnock Project, noting that alternative funding to support the future bid would be sought;
- (x) to request the Head of Economic Growth to provide a further report providing the rationale and proposals to meet the pressures of the Ayrshire Innovation Park within the current Ayrshire Growth Deal, with a further report being presented to Cabinet in the near future;
- (xi) to note the positive engagement with Transport Scotland to facilitate the redevelopment of the Foregate site as an element of the Kilmarnock town centre masterplan and active travel developments;
- (xii) to note the good progress with implementation of the Waste Services review including infrastructure projects at Garlaff and Western Road Recycling Depots;
- (xiii) to allocate £0.500m to replace the salt dome at Gauchalland Depot;
- (xiv) to note the continued support by Transport Scotland to develop the design of the stage 1a and 2 of the Infinity Loop, and subject to the outcome of the current fundings bids, ask the Head of Ayrshire Roads Alliance to provide a further report to Cabinet;
- (xv) to recognise the challenges and opportunities identified across a range of projects, and to ensure that the overall programme remains within the current 5 year spend level and agree the reduction in budget allocations as set out in paragraph 175 of the report and reprofiling in the appendix to the report;
- (xvi) to remit to officers to prepare a full business case for the upgrade of Bellfield Interchange and its connections with the A76, addressing flooding, safety and capacity concerns and economic growth potential. This business case should also consider potential funding avenues for delivery; and
- (xvii) otherwise, to note the contents of the report.

UPDATE ON REVIEW OF ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS PROVISION

4E. There was submitted a report (circulated) by the Director of Education and Skills and Chief Education Officer which provided an update on the [Review of Additional Support Needs Provision](#), as agreed at Cabinet in June 2025. The paper outlined recommendations designed to support the long-term sustainability of additional support needs (ASN) provision in response to the growing demand for services. The report outlined the rationale underpinning our locality-based approach to supporting children with ASN, demonstrating how this model enables effective, responsive, and inclusive support within local communities.

Cabinet agreed:-

- (i) to the renaming of Grange Hearing Impaired Department to Grange Deaf Education Centre, as detailed in paragraph 8 of the report;

- (ii) to the establishment of 3 new ASL Centres at the following primary schools, ahead of formal consultation for potential permanency, as detailed in paragraph 9 of the report:-
 - Nether Robertland Primary School;
 - Netherthird Primary School; and
 - Newmilns Primary School;
- (iii) to the reprofiling of East Ayrshire Support Team (EAST) as described at paragraphs 13-26 of the report; and
- (iv) otherwise, to note the contents of the report.

Religious Representative Dr David Lewis and Parent Representative John Semple left the meeting at this point.

EAST AYRSHIRE HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE PARTNERSHIP SOCIAL CARE CONTRIBUTION AND CHARGING FRAMEWORK AND APPROVED CHARGES - 2026/27

5. There was submitted a report (circulated) by the Director of East Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership which (i) presented to Cabinet the annual alterations in respect of charges and contributions for Social Care Services for Financial Year 2026/27; and (ii) sought approval of an updated East Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership Social Care Services Contributions and Charging Framework.

Cabinet agreed:-

- (i) to the updated East Ayrshire Social Care Services Contribution and Charging Framework;
- (ii) to the updated charges and thresholds detailed in paragraphs 25 to 34 of the report;
- (iii) to note that rates for social care services were not yet finalised and would be presented to the IJB for approval;
- (iv) to note the significant financial risk detailed in paragraph 48 of the report in respect of the uncertainty around the care home rates uplift; and
- (v) otherwise, to note the contents of the report.

COMMISSIONING AND CONTRACTING ARRANGEMENTS - HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE PARTNERSHIP

6. There was submitted a report dated 26 January 2026 (circulated) by the Director of Health and Social Care Partnership which sought approval for five East Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership (EAHSCP) services in respect of new contractual arrangements, extensions to existing contracts, contracts coming to an end and those coming to an end and being re-tendered over the period 2026-27. This was being requested in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders related to paragraph 21(1).

Cabinet agreed:-

- (i) to approve funding to continue contractual arrangements with providers for 2026/27 as detailed;

- (ii) to receive a Direction in respect of the implementation of the revised contractual arrangements as approved by the Integration Joint Board at its meeting of 4 February 2026; and
- (iii) otherwise, to note the contents of the report.

The meeting terminated at 1104 hours.