

# DRAFT

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## RESOURCES AND PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 3 FEBRUARY 2026

**Councillors Present:** Carolyn Culver (Chairman), Ross Mackinnon (Vice-Chairman), Erik Pattenden, Christopher Read and Alan Macro (Substitute) (In place of Antony Amirtharaj)

**Also Present:** Councillor Jeff Brooks, Councillor Richard Somner (attending remotely), Sarah Clarke (Executive Director (Resources)), Paul Coe (Executive Director – Adult Social Care), Shannon Coleman-Slaughter (Service Director for Finance, Property and Procurement, Section 151 Officer), Gabrielle Mancini (Service Lead - Cust Engagement & Transformation), Stacey Bradshaw (Service Lead – Projects), Stephen Chard (Democratic Services Manager) and Gordon Oliver (Principal Policy Officer (Scrutiny & Dem Services))

**Apologies for inability to attend the meeting:** Councillor Antony Amirtharaj, Councillor Jeremy Cottam, Councillor Laura Coyle and Councillor Howard Woollaston

#### PART I

##### 1 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were received.

##### 2 Transformation Return on Investment

The Committee considered the report (Agenda Item 3) which provided an overview of transformation funding allocated between 2023 and 2025.

The report sought to provide a summary of how total investment had translated into organisational improvements, service enhancements, and measurable financial returns. The report focused on the most significant qualitative and quantitative benefits delivered by the transformation programme.

It was reported that transformation funding had supported major changes to systems, workforce capability, processes, and asset use, enabling the Council to improve service efficiency, strengthen resilience, and deliver better outcomes for residents.

It was noted that a Transformation Policy Development Group would be formed with Members asked to prioritise those projects that should be progressed in order to improve service provision and achieve savings.

The following points were raised in the debate:

- Members queried why the care homes were not included in the current report. It was confirmed that they remained an ongoing project but were excluded from the table as no savings had yet been realised. However, it was stressed that efforts were ongoing to transfer the care homes to the private sector. Unfortunately, market appetite had been limited.
- It was noted that there had been just one expression of interest to take on the care homes from the initial market testing exercise, which had been rejected. The offer was amended for the second round, but again this was unsuccessful. It was noted

## RESOURCES AND PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 3 FEBRUARY 2026 - MINUTES

that providers preferred to build new facilities rather than take over existing ones, which would require investment to meet their standards.

- Members asked whether a risk-averse approach was being taken to avoid adverse impacts on service capacity if care homes were transferred or closed. It was confirmed that the Council would put people first and it would not pursue any deal that risked service quality, even if it meant continuing to pay a premium.
- The Committee welcomed the savings achieved by repurposing Walnut Close for homeless families and noted the planned use of Chestnut Walk for a similar purpose, highlighting the benefits for families' access to schools and social networks.
- It was confirmed that a potential savings target of £1.2M p.a. had been identified from the care homes. Consultancy work had been commissioned to inform a further tender process. Currently, the care homes were showing as a deficit in the Adult Social Care Budget. This was because the budget included an expectation of delivering a saving.
- Members discussed the importance of including social value benefits in future reports, in addition to financial savings. It was agreed to explore how social value could be evaluated and included in future reports. Recent work around using volunteers in libraries was cited as an example.
- Officers were asked about grant funding. It was clarified that grant funding was included in the table for completeness, as it represented real money that could have been allocated elsewhere, but it was not a direct cost to council taxpayers.
- Clarification was sought on the presentation of officer costs in the report. It was explained that the £3.22M for officer costs were not included within the 'additional funding allocated' column.
- Members asked about mechanisms used to track the benefits of transformation projects. It was confirmed that benefits realisation processes had been tightened in response to previous reviews - an update would be provided later in the meeting.
- It was suggested that future reports should clearly separate grant funding from other funding sources to provide transparency for residents.
- The Committee queried whether the projected savings of £4.21M were recurring. Officers confirmed these were recurring savings, cost avoidance, and additional income, as set out in approved business cases.
- It was highlighted that the £3.91M in "additional funding allocated" was a one-off cost, and that the projected savings this would deliver represented good value.
- In relation to Children's Social Care placements, it was noted that in the past, the Council had not achieved value for money. However, a new, dedicated Commissioning Team would help address this. The team's ongoing costs would be incorporated into the revenue base budget, while savings would be recurring.
- Members suggested that, in future, an extra appendix be added to the revenue budget showing transformation savings from the last five years that were still recurring.
- In relation to children's commissioning, it was confirmed that most of the £1.8M would be used to employ officers within Children's Services, but monitoring of benefits realised would sit within Transformation.
- The Committee queried the payback period for the TVI projects. Officers stated that the conservative estimate for savings from the Adult Social Care Project was £120,000 per year. It was noted that there was potential for higher savings, so the

## RESOURCES AND PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 3 FEBRUARY 2026 - MINUTES

payback period could be shorter than seven years. The project would also deliver significant social benefits for service users, with improved quality of life, reassurance, and a reduced need for conventional care.

- Members asked about the Council's capacity to undertake transformation projects without risking operational stability. The need to balance ambition with organisational capacity was acknowledged - the optimal pace of transformation was a matter of judgement.
- The Committee asked about the decision-making process for selecting transformation projects. It was explained that Corporate Programme Board reviewed all projects and business cases before allocating funding.
- Clarification was sought as to whether talent attraction was transformation or HR business as usual. It was confirmed that the employee value proposition was attracting more staff, and agency staff had converted to Council employees, both of which represented a step change rather than BAU activity. The Talent Attraction Team was funded from transformation resources and elements were set up as formal Transformation projects. Funding was part of the £3.22M for officer costs between 2023-2025 – this paid for staff in both Transformation and HR.
- Further detail was requested in relation to the Business Support Review. It was reported that a staff consultation had concluded in December 2025. Work was ongoing with those affected by the review, which involved detailed, personal conversations. However, officers indicated that an update could be brought to a future meeting.
- Members discussed the need for clarity and consistency in reporting all transformation projects, including those ongoing or yet to deliver savings, such as care homes and resource centres. Members requested a consolidated list / tracker of all transformation projects to facilitate effective scrutiny.

**Action: Officers to develop a consolidated list / tracker of transformation projects (including care homes and resource centres), setting out all costs, savings, and opportunity costs of properties sold (including lost income). This should set out what was transformation and what was delivered by services and should be provided as an appendix to future reports.**

- It was noted that £3.9M mentioned in the report related to future savings, while the £3.22M of officer costs had already been accounted for and savings from projects already delivered were ongoing.
- Members discussed the need to clearly distinguish between transformation funding, grants, asset sales, and other sources, and to ensure project management costs were transparently reported. It was confirmed that project management costs for care homes were included within the £3.22M transformation funding, and that care homes would show a zero return on investment to date if included as a line in the table.

**RESOLVED** to note:

- The overall transformation investment made since 2023.
- The significant combination of financial savings, cost avoidance, and service improvements delivered through the 2023–2025 programme.
- The ongoing work required to secure long-term benefits from projects still in delivery.

### 3 Asset Disposals

Shannon Coleman Slaughter, Service Director for Finance, Property, and Procurement, presented the item on Assets Disposal (Agenda Item 4).

The presentation summarised government guidance and the Council's process as applied to transformation funding, specifically the flexible use of capital receipts for transformation expenditure.

It was clarified that not all transformation projects were funded by transformation expenditure, and that a review process was undertaken at year-end to determine whether expenditure satisfied the criteria for transformation funding, with changes applied in the accounts as appropriate.

It was confirmed that, in the last two years, only one asset (a commercial property in Northallerton) had been applied to the transformation reserve, resulting in an annual income foregone of £437,000.

Total expenditure funded by capital receipts for transformation was reported as £3.32 million, primarily covering posts for officers involved in supporting transformational activity. It was noted that not all activity was fully funded by transformation, with some projects having combined funding streams.

The details provided were consistent with the Council's audited accounts for 2023/24, with 2024/25 under audit, and that the final determination for 2025/26 would occur at year-end.

A list of capital receipts allocated to transformation funding was provided. These were mostly assets that were surplus to requirements and no longer in operation.

The following points were raised in the debate:

- Members expressed frustration that the slides were difficult to read and were only presented at the meeting rather than being circulated in advance - this made it challenging for Members to digest the information and ask informed questions.
- The Service Director agreed to share the slides with the Committee after the meeting and offered to answer questions offline or at a future meeting. Members agreed to revisit the item at the next meeting.

#### **Actions:**

- **Officers to share slides with the Committee after the meeting.**

**RESOLVED to review the asset disposals item at the next meeting.**

### 4 Effectiveness of Project Management

Councillor Jeff Brooks, Leader of the Council, and Stacey Bradshaw, Project and Programme Manager, presented the item on Effectiveness of Project Management (Agenda Item 5).

Upon taking over in 2023, the Administration had identified the absence of a central project office to control projects. Historically, individual departments had managed projects using their own project managers, but there had been no central control or standardised methodology. The Council had since established a central Project Management Office (PMO) to provide oversight and consistency across all projects, using recognised methodologies such as PRINCE2.

Opportunities for improvement had been identified through scrutiny, audit, peer review, and the annual governance statement. The focus was on outcomes, particularly:

## RESOURCES AND PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 3 FEBRUARY 2026 - MINUTES

improving delivery, benefit tracking and realisation, building capability and consistency, optimising the project portfolio, and strengthening governance and transparency.

Five key areas of focus were identified:

1. Skills and capability (addressing inconsistency in project sponsorship and delivery quality);
2. Fit-for-purpose methodology (adopting a dynamic approach);
3. Document standardisation and repository (ensuring robust assurance and audit trail);
4. Delivery playbook (embedding consistency and removing fragmented practice);
5. Portfolio prioritisation and return on investment tracking (ensuring corporate oversight and ongoing tracking of project benefits).

A phased approach was being adopted, which involved:

- stabilisation (baseline assessment, centralisation of resources, skills matrix, resource and pipeline management, and escalation routes for risks and issues);
- enablement (making the right way the easy way);
- assurance (improving and evolving processes and methodology).

The guiding principle throughout was to achieve lean, proportionate governance.

Ongoing assurance would be provided through mandatory reporting, routine health checks, a single source of truth (central repository and controlled templates), and benefits and return on investment tracking. Together, these provided clear line of sight, early warning of risk, and confidence in project governance and benefits realisation.

The following points were raised in the debate:

- It was confirmed that the Project Management Service had a team of approximately thirty, including project officers, business analysts, senior project managers, the portfolio management team, and the Project and Programme Manager. There were a number of staff on fixed-term contracts.
- Officers indicated that management of third party suppliers involved in delivering projects would be handled on a case-by-case basis, depending on the project scope. Where third-party resources were utilised, an internal project manager would be assigned to manage the contract through key performance indicators. It was confirmed that project managers were accustomed to matrix management.
- Members welcomed the centralisation and professionalisation of project management and asked about career progression and talent retention. It was explained that officers recruited to these roles were typically qualified project managers rather than junior members of staff. Talent retention was achieved through support for qualifications, involvement in a wide variety of projects, and providing the ability to specialise or shadow others within the PMO. It was felt that the PMO was an exciting place to work, with a high profile within the Council. Also, the multidisciplinary nature of the work and social benefits delivered, were key selling points.
- Recent recruitment campaigns had been very successful, with a high calibre of applicants and the Council seen as an attractive employer for project managers. The PMO included both experienced and newer staff.
- It was noted that there had been a culture shift, so departments were no longer delivering projects, but instead a project manager was assigned from the PMO.

**RESOLVED** to note the presentation.

### 5 Mosaic Briefing Note

Paul Coe, Executive Director for Adult Social Care and Public Health, presented the Mosaic Briefing Note (Agenda Item 6).

## RESOURCES AND PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 3 FEBRUARY 2026 - MINUTES

The presentation provided context regarding the implementation of the Mosaic system, a social care case management system essential for all work undertaken by the Adult Social Care and Children's Social Care departments. This would be used to provide management information, and to make reports to government and inspectors. It was a complicated system that needed to be integrated with a number of other software, including finance systems.

Mosaic had been procured to replace the ageing Care Director v5 software. A previous attempt to upgrade to Care Director v6 had been unsuccessful. It was noted that the supplier was quitting the social care market, which would leave just three suppliers of social care case management systems. The government was considering development of a unified system for the future.

The anticipated advantages of Mosaic were outlined, including improved support, up-to-date functionality, the ability to make changes, and enhanced robustness. New features would include a provider portal for direct engagement with care suppliers and improved payment processes. Also, the supplier was developing AI functionality for Mosaic.

The timeline for implementation of Mosaic was set out:

- Invitation to tender - January 2024
- Contract with The Access Group signed - August 2024
- Project kick-off - September 2024
- BetterGov appointed to provide project management – April 2025
- Initial target for implementation - November 2025
- Revised target for implementation – April 2026.

It was confirmed that the project was currently on track.

The following points were discussed in the debate:

- Officers confirmed that Mosaic was a cloud-based system.
- The Committee was informed that discussions with the supplier were proceeding on the basis of delivering functional releases over time, with incremental rather than major step changes.
- Previous challenges around the integration of Care Director v6 with other Council systems were acknowledged. However, officers confirmed that data migration and interface testing were progressing well and similar issues were not anticipated.
- Members asked about possible integration with NHS systems and the potential for Mosaic to support joint working, particularly in relation to telecare and telehealth. Officers explained that the Council already used Connected Care to share data with health partners and that Mosaic would continue to support such integration. Ongoing challenges in data sharing and collaboration with the NHS were acknowledged, but it was confirmed that opportunities for joint working would be pursued.
- Members challenged whether BetterGov should have been engaged earlier. Officers agreed that, with hindsight, earlier engagement would have been beneficial and noted that the enhanced Project Management Office (PMO) now in place would likely have improved project delivery. It was noted that the PMO was smaller at the outset of the project and that the Council did not frequently undertake projects of this scale.
- The Committee noted the bespoke nature of the Care Director system and the challenges of adapting processes to new software. The urgency of the project was highlighted due to the supplier's withdrawal from the market. Where possible, Council processes were being modified to fit the new system rather than customising the software.
- It was suggested that the Committee should continue to monitor major resource-related projects, possibly on an annual basis.

**RESOURCES AND PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 3 FEBRUARY 2026 - MINUTES**

- Members requested that the slides from this presentation and the preceding ones be added to the agenda pack for future reference.

**Action: Slides presented for the Mosaic Briefing Note and the other agenda items to be added to the agenda pack.**

**RESOLVED** to note the presentation.

*(The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and closed at 8.04pm)*

**CHAIRMAN** .....

**Date of Signature** .....