
Item Called-in following an Executive Decision: Assets Optimisation Plan

Committee considering report:	Resources and Place Scrutiny Committee
Date of Committee:	29 June 2026
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Tom McCann
Report Author:	Stephen Chard

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This report presents the call-in request submitted on 18 June 2026 for the Resources and Place Scrutiny Committee to review the Executive decision of 11 June 2026 to approve the Assets Optimisation Plan as the Council's framework for the review, optimisation and disposal of its asset portfolio, and to delegate authority to progress asset optimisation and disposal proposals in accordance with the governance framework set out in the Plan and in accordance with the Constitution.
- 1.2 The call-in has been submitted in accordance with Part 6.9, Paragraph 13 of the Council's Constitution.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 In accordance with the call-in request dated 18 June 2026, it is recommended that Members of the Scrutiny Committee review the Executive's decision of 11 June 2026 in relation to the approval of the Assets Optimisation Plan.
- 2.2 The Resources and Place Scrutiny Committee may determine:
 - (a) To let the decision stand; or
 - (b) To state its views on the matter and refer the decision back to the Executive.

3 Supporting Information

- 3.1 At the Executive meeting on 11 June 2026, the Executive considered a report setting out the Assets Optimisation Plan. The Executive resolved to:
- (a) Approve the Assets Optimisation Plan as the Council's framework for the review, optimisation and disposal of its asset portfolio.
 - (b) Note that the Plan forms a core component of the Finance Improvement Plan approved in December 2025.
 - (c) Delegate authority to progress asset optimisation and disposal proposals in accordance with the governance framework set out in the Plan and in accordance with the Constitution.
- 3.2 On 18 June 2026, Councillors Ross Mackinnon, Dominic Boeck, Paul Kander, Richard Somner and Howard Woollaston put the Monitoring Officer on notice that they wished to call in this decision. They stated:

We are calling in the following decision on the grounds that it breaches the Council's constitutional principles of decision-making, specifically the requirement for clarity of aims and desired outcomes, the presumption in favour of openness, and the requirement that decisions be based on adequate evidence.

Grounds for call-in: In the current financial climate, the disposal or "repurposing" of public assets is a highly sensitive issue. The Executive is adopting a framework for asset disposal without publishing the list of the assets currently under consideration. Members are effectively being asked to write a blank cheque for future sell-offs.

Approving this strategy before ward Members and the public are aware of which specific community assets are at risk prevents any meaningful pre-decision scrutiny or consultation.

Alternative proposal: Refer the decision back to the Executive with a requirement to publish the schedule of targeted assets as an appendix to the strategy, allowing full transparency before the overarching framework is approved.

Background - legal and constitutional points

- 3.3 The role of a Scrutiny Committee includes both developing and reviewing policy and holding the Executive to account. A Scrutiny Committee may not however discharge any functions other than those conferred on it, and whilst it is perfectly proper for a Scrutiny Committee to offer advice and recommendations to an Executive decision maker, in law, responsibility for an Executive decision is that of the Executive.
- 3.4 Statutory Guidance confirms that pre-scrutiny of a proposed Executive decision might consist of (inter-alia) seeking the views of local stakeholders and interested parties, and advises that the Executive should take into account any views expressed by an Overview and Scrutiny Committee when determining their final decision. The Executive is not however limited to consideration only of the views of a Scrutiny Committee, and

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may take into account other factors in its decision making process and make other determinations as it thinks fit.

- 3.5 Legal provisions in respect of Call-in are set out at Section 9F of Part 1A of the Local Government Act 2000 and reflected within the Constitution (Part 6.9). The options available to the Resources and Place Scrutiny Committee are:
- (a) To let the decision stand; or
 - (b) To state its views on the matter and refer the decision back to the Executive.
- 3.6 The Resources and Place Scrutiny Committee may make other recommendations as a result of the Call-In to relevant bodies, which shall be considered **after** a decision has been reached on the Call-In.

4 Appendices

- 4.1 Appendix A – Executive Report (11 June 2026) – Assets Optimisation Plan.