



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF EAST LoTHIAN COUNCIL

TUESDAY 9 DECEMBER 2025
COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HOUSE, HADDINGTON
AND VIA HYBRID MEETING FACILITY

Committee Members Present:

Councillor S Akhtar	Councillor C McFarlane
Councillor R Bennett	Councillor C McGinn (R, pm)
Councillor L Bruce (R)	Councillor G McGuire
Councillor D Collins	Councillor S McIntosh (R)
Councillor F Dugdale	Councillor K McLeod
Councillor J Findlay	Councillor J McMillan (Provost and Convener)
Councillor A Forrest	Councillor L-A Menzies (from Item 4b) (R)
Councillor N Gilbert (R)	Councillor B Ritchie
Councillor N Hampshire	Councillor T Trotter
Councillor L Jardine	Councillor C Yorkston

Council Officials Present:

Mr L Rockey, Chief Executive
Ms L Brown, Depute Chief Executive – Communities and Children
Ms S Fortune, Depute Chief Executive – Resources and Economy
Ms F Wilson, Director of Health and Social Care (R)
Ms H Barnett, Head of Corporate Support
Ms L Byrne, Head of Children's Services (R)
Mr K Dingwall, Head of Development
Ms E Dunnet, Head of Finance
Mr E John, Head of Communities and Partnerships (R)
Ms N McDowell, Head of Education
Ms W McGuire, Head of Housing (R)
Ms E Barclay, Democratic Services Assistant
Ms A Cameron, Service Manager – Early Years and Childcare
Mr S Cooper, Service Manager – Communications
Mr P Forsyth, Project Manager – Growth and Sustainability
Ms A-M Glancy, Service Manager – Corporate Accounting (R)
Mr C Grilli, Service Manager – Governance (R)
Mr A Stubbs, Service Manager – Roads

(R) = remote participant

Visitors Present:

Mr J Boyd, Audit Scotland (R)
Mr D MacDonald, Stantec

Clerk:

Mrs L Gillingwater

Apologies:

Councillor L Allan

Councillor C Cassini

Councillor L-A Menzies (for Items 1–4a)

The Convener advised that the meeting was being held as a hybrid meeting, as provided for in legislation; that the meeting would be recorded and live streamed; and that it would be made available via the Council's website as a webcast, in order to allow public access to the democratic process in East Lothian. He noted that the Council was the data controller under the Data Protection Act 2018; that data collected as part of the recording would be retained in accordance with the Council's policy on record retention; and that the webcast of the meeting would be publicly available for five years from the date of the meeting.

The clerk recorded the attendance of Members by roll call.

Note: at Councillor Allan's request, the Clerk read the following statement out on her behalf: *'I need to submit my apologies for the Council meeting on 9 December as I am unwell and unable to attend. For the purposes of the record, I would also like to note that, had I been present, I would have withdrawn from Item 4 relating to parking management proposals, as I have previously expressed public views on this issue.'*

Declarations of Interest/Transparency Statement:

Item 5: Transparency statement – Councillor Bennett noted that his partner is employed by a funded early years provider.

Announcements

The Provost shared the news that Douglas Buttenshaw, former District Secretary of East Lothian District Council, had died recently. He paid tribute to the contribution made by Mr Buttenshaw to the Council and, on behalf of the Council, conveyed his condolences to the family.

The Provost also announced that the artist Richard Demarco had recently been named 2025 Scottish European of the Year.

1. MINUTES FOR APPROVAL

The minutes of the following meetings of East Lothian Council were approved: 28 October 2025.

2. ACTION LOG

The Council agreed to note the list of actions and to close those actions recommended for closure.

As regards Action 25/19 (Energy Report and LHHES Delivery Plan Update), Keith Dingwall, Head of Development, reported that Council officers would be meeting with Lothian Heat CIC in December with the aim of agreeing the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). In response to a question from Councillor McIntosh, Mr Dingwall advised that there had not been sufficient

time since the October Council meeting to get the MoU finalised and agreed. He added that Lothian Heat CIC would still be in a position to apply for funding, given that the Council was supportive in principle.

As regards Action 25/22 (Motion on Supporting Head Teachers to Develop a Phone-free Learning Environment in East Lothian Schools), Nicola McDowell, Head of Education, reported that since the October Council meeting, she had met with the Secondary and Primary Schools Executive Team, and it had been agreed to run a pilot scheme of lockable containers for mobile phones in primary schools. For secondary schools, she noted that the pilot scheme at Dunbar Grammar School was proving effective in reducing phones in classrooms, and that this scheme would be rolled out more widely. There would be a consultation with stakeholders on this matter in January 2026, and the updated Digital Learning and Teaching Policy would be presented to the Education and Children's Services Committee in March 2026.

3. SUBMISSIONS TO THE MEMBERS' LIBRARY SERVICE, 13 OCTOBER TO 23 NOVEMBER 2025

A report was submitted by the Executive Director for Council Resources noting the reports submitted to the Members' Library since the meeting of the Council in October 2025.

With reference to report 114/25, Councillor McGinn congratulated the Council's Library Service on their recent success at the Scottish Library and Information Council Awards.

Decision

The Council agreed to note the reports submitted to the Members' Library Service between 13 October and 23 November 2025, as listed in Appendix 1 to the report.

4. PARKING MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS

A suite of reports was submitted by the Depute Chief Executive – Resources and Economy presenting parking management proposals for Dunbar, Haddington, Musselburgh and Tranent.

The Head of Development, Keith Dingwall, provided a detailed report on the rationale for the parking management proposals, namely, promoting vibrant town centres by ensuring the turnover of parking spaces and reducing indiscriminate and poor parking by way of parking enforcement; promoting the safety, health and wellbeing of town centre users; supporting the Council's commitment to the climate emergency; and providing increased investment to town centres through income generation. He made reference to the significant engagement undertaken with the affected communities, and thanked all those who had submitted their views.

4a. PARKING MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS – DUNBAR

A report was submitted by the Depute Chief Executive – Resources and Economy advising Council of the outcome of the public consultation on the parking interventions proposed in Dunbar; presenting the resultant amendment made to improve the scheme and to mitigate public concerns raised; and recommending that the Council progresses to the next stage of the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) process, the intent to make the Order.

Peter Forsyth, Project Manager for Growth and Sustainability, presented the report. He highlighted the current parking issues in Dunbar, summarised the outcome of the consultation

process, and drew attention to the proposals and mitigations relating to the introduction of parking charges in the town.

Mr Forsyth responded to a series of questions from Members on various aspects of the proposals (some of which related specifically to Dunbar and others that were more general), including: the statutory TRO process, including further opportunities for people to submit their views and for changes to be made to the scheme; the rights of the Council to implement parking charges on common land; the maintenance contract for parking meters; the deployment of Parking Attendants across each of the towns; income projections and the financial methodology used; the impact of charges on Dunbar harbour users; engagement with local businesses; opportunities for amending the detail of the schemes, such as parking time limits; and the positive impact of enforcement on indiscriminate parking and other contraventions.

An amendment was submitted by Councillors Jardine and Gilbert:

- i. That any implemented parking management scheme in East Lothian be subject to a formal one-year post-implementation review reported to Council, consistent with the Council decision of 10 December 2024 for the North Berwick TROs:
 - This review will summarise what worked well, what did not, and recommend necessary adjustments
 - That officers review income and enforcement against seasonal variance
 - That the parking management programme be aligned with relevant Council strategies as they are next refreshed.
- ii. That the formal one-year post-implementation review for North Berwick must be received and considered by Council before final implementation decisions are taken in other towns, while allowing preparatory work (including TRO advertisement, design refinement, engagement and technical modelling) to proceed.
- iii. That the principles relating to traffic logic, exemptions, Blue Badge and accessibility provision, enforcement expectations, and monitoring and reinvestment arrangements be clearly set out alongside the TRO proposals and incorporated into the next scheduled update of the Local Parking Strategy.
- iv. That officers strengthen plain-English communication and engagement during the TRO stage, appreciating that the formal TRO notice is a prescribed legal document, by providing clear explanatory materials that set out what is being proposed, what is not, and how public feedback will influence the final design.
- v. That officers ensure parking management proposals in Dunbar clearly demonstrate how they support or enhance Safer Routes to School, including through the work of the Road Safety Working Group, to improve safer walking, wheeling and cycling for children and families.
- vi. That officers articulate how existing seasonal enforcement flexibilities will be used to respond to Dunbar's distinct peak-season pressures, particularly in coastal and harbourside areas.
- vii. That set out clearly, within the TRO documentation, how the existing consideration of access for harbour users, water users, coastal businesses and tourism operators has been reflected in the proposals for Dunbar.

Councillor Jardine presented the amendment, indicating that it (and also those proposed for the Haddington, Musselburgh and Tranent) provided transparency, consistency and clarity,

and was focused on process. She made reference to issues particular to Dunbar, mainly around the coastal and harbour areas, and suggested that some flexibility may be required during peak periods and that the proposals should take account of access requirements for users of these areas.

Councillor Gilbert seconded the amendment.

There followed a debate, with Members acknowledging that communities wanted greater enforcement to prevent indiscriminate parking. It was pointed out that the required level of enforcement could only be provided through the introduction of parking charges, and that the proposals would also result in a greater turnover of parking spaces, thereby increasing footfall in the town centre. Safety issues due to increased traffic and inappropriate parking around schools was also raised as an issue. However, other Members spoke out against the introduction of charges, with concerns being raised about the affordability of charges and lack of public transport between Dunbar and rural areas. The ongoing impacts of COVID-19 and the cost-of-living crisis on town centre businesses were highlighted, as was the impact of free parking at out-of-town retail parks. The experiences of towns in other areas where parking charges had been introduced was also referenced.

Councillor McIntosh, concerned that supporting Councillor Jardine's amendment in its entirety may result in a lengthy delay in the process, proposed a further amendment, namely, to support Councillor Jardine's amendment but with the deletion of the second point. This was seconded by Councillor Hampshire.

The Provost then moved to the roll call vote on the recommendations versus amendment 1 (as proposed by Councillor Jardine) and amendment 2 (as proposed by Councillor McIntosh):

In favour of recommendations (1): Councillor McLeod
In favour of amendment 1 (3): Councillors Gilbert, Jardine, Trotter
In favour of amendment 2 (11): Councillors Akhtar, Bennett, Dugdale, Forrest,
Hampshire, McFarlane, McGinn, McIntosh, McMillan,
Ritchie, Yorkston
Against (4): Councillors Bruce, Collins, Findlay, McGuire
Abstentions (0)

Amendment 2 was therefore carried.

Decision

The Council agreed:

- i. to note the extensive consultation exercise carried out between 11 March and 9 June 2025, the level of community engagement, the welcome receipt of varied and detailed responses to the survey questionnaire, and the explanation as to how these have influenced the proposals for Dunbar;
- ii. to approve the proposals shown in Appendix B to the report and summarised in paragraphs 3.76 and 3.77 of the report, noting the amendments made to improve the scheme and mitigate public concerns raised through the consultation and engagement exercise;
- iii. to note the completion of the consultation stage of the Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedures) (Scotland) Regulation 1999 (as amended), and that the intent to make the Order, will allow opportunity for the public to raise further representations and objections to the proposals as amended, following which a report will be brought back to Council;

- iv. that any implemented parking management scheme in East Lothian would be subject to a formal one-year post-implementation review reported to Council, consistent with the Council decision of 10 December 2024 for the North Berwick TROs:
 - This review would summarise what worked well, what did not, and recommend necessary adjustments
 - That officers review income and enforcement against seasonal variance
 - That the parking management programme be aligned with relevant Council strategies as they are next refreshed
- v. that the principles relating to traffic logic, exemptions, Blue Badge and accessibility provision, enforcement expectations, and monitoring and reinvestment arrangements be clearly set out alongside the TRO proposals and incorporated into the next scheduled update of the Local Parking Strategy;
- vi. that officers strengthen plain-English communication and engagement during the TRO stage, appreciating that the formal TRO notice is a prescribed legal document, by providing clear explanatory materials that set out what is being proposed, what is not, and how public feedback will influence the final design;
- vii. that officers ensure parking management proposals in Dunbar clearly demonstrate how they support or enhance Safer Routes to School, including through the work of the Road Safety Working Group, to improve safer walking, wheeling and cycling for children and families;
- viii. that officers articulate how existing seasonal enforcement flexibilities will be used to respond to Dunbar's distinct peak-season pressures, particularly in coastal and harbourside areas; and
- ix. that officers set out clearly, within the TRO documentation, how the existing consideration of access for harbour users, water users, coastal businesses and tourism operators has been reflected in the proposals for Dunbar.

4b. PARKING MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS – HADDINGTON

A report was submitted by the Depute Chief Executive – Resources and Economy advising Council of the outcome of the public consultation on the parking interventions proposed in Haddington; presenting the resultant amendment made to improve the scheme and to mitigate public concerns raised; and recommending that the Council progresses to the next stage of the Traffic Regulation Order process, the intent to make the Order.

Mr Forsyth responded to questions from Members regarding: financial assumptions and the potential for costs to increase should the proposals be delayed; the proposed future use of the car park at John Muir House; the evaluation of the impact of parking management on town centre businesses; improved parking enforcement; the provision of permits for care workers; the potential impact of parking at the Aubigny Centre on users of that facility; and the divergence between the outcome of the public engagement survey and the data provided in the appendices to the report.

An amendment was submitted by Councillors Trotter and Gilbert:

- i. That any implemented parking management scheme in East Lothian be subject to a formal one-year post-implementation review reported to Council, consistent with the Council decision of 10 December 2024 for the North Berwick TROs:

- This review will summarise what worked well, what did not, and recommend necessary adjustments
 - That officers review income and enforcement against seasonal variance
 - That the parking management programme be aligned with relevant Council strategies as they are next refreshed.
- ii. That the formal one-year post-implementation review for North Berwick must be received and considered by Council before final implementation decisions are taken in other towns, while allowing preparatory work (including TRO advertisement, design refinement, engagement and technical modelling) to proceed.
- iii. That the principles relating to traffic logic, exemptions, Blue Badge and accessibility provision, enforcement expectations, and monitoring and reinvestment arrangements be clearly set out alongside the TRO proposals and incorporated into the next scheduled update of the Local Parking Strategy.
- iv. That officers strengthen plain-English communication and engagement during the TRO stage, appreciating that the formal TRO notice is a prescribed legal document, by providing clear explanatory materials that set out what is being proposed, what is not, and how public feedback will influence the final design.
- v. That officers ensure parking management proposals in Haddington clearly demonstrate how they support or enhance Safer Routes to School, including through the work of the Road Safety Working Group, to improve safer walking, wheeling and cycling for children and families.
- vi. That officers bring forward, ahead of implementation decisions, a transparent set of options for John Muir House parking that:
- recognises operational and statutory requirements for mobile/frontline staff,
 - ensures fairness and consistency with public long-stay provision
 - sets out criteria for determining staff vs. public space allocation, and
 - integrates the final approach into the Parking Management Principles Framework
- vii. That officers prepare a clear plan for safeguarding access to public-facing Council services at and around John Muir House as part of the TRO process.

Councillor Trotter presented the amendment, highlighting points (vi) and (vii) in particular. He acknowledged the concerns raised by the public in relation to the proposals. He urged Members to be open-minded when considering this matter and he welcomed the further opportunity for consultation.

Councillor Gilbert seconded the amendment.

Councillor McIntosh, seconded by Councillor Hampshire, proposed a further amendment to Councillor Trotters' amendment, which confirmed support for that amendment but with the deletion of the second point. The same amendment would also apply to Items 4c and 4d.

A debate on the proposals for Haddington then took place. It was recognised that this was an emotive subject within the community, with many objections being submitted by both the business community and residents. Concerns were raised that the introduction of parking charges would have a detrimental impact on the town centre, as well as commuters incurring additional costs to drive to work. However, other Members took the view that with a growing population and the resultant increase in traffic, action had to be taken, and without the income

from charges additional enforcement could not be provided. It was commented that there was no evidence to suggest that parking charges would deter people from coming to Haddington.

The Provost then moved to the roll call vote on the recommendations versus amendment 1 (as proposed by Councillor Trotter) and amendment 2 (as proposed by Councillor McIntosh):

In favour of recommendations (1): Councillor McLeod
In favour of amendment 1 (3): Councillors Gilbert, Jardine, Trotter
In favour of amendment 2 (11): Councillors Akhtar, Bennett, Dugdale, Forrest, Hampshire, McFarlane, McGinn, McIntosh, McMillan, Ritchie, Yorkston
Against (4): Councillors Bruce, Collins, Findlay, McGuire
Abstentions (0)

Amendment 2 was therefore carried.

Decision

The Council agreed:

- i. to note the extensive consultation exercise carried out between 3 March and 30 June 2025, the level of community engagement, the welcome receipt of varied and detailed responses to the survey questionnaire, and the explanation as to how these have influenced the proposals for Haddington;
- ii. to approve the proposals shown in Appendix B to the report and summarised in paragraphs 3.74 and 3.75 of the report, noting the amendments made to improve the scheme and mitigate public concerns raised through the consultation and engagement exercise;
- iii. to note the completion of the consultation stage of the Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedures) (Scotland) Regulation 1999 (as amended), and that the intent to make the Order, will allow opportunity for the public to raise further representations and objections to the proposals as amended, following which a report will be brought back to Council;
- iv. that any implemented parking management scheme in East Lothian would be subject to a formal one-year post-implementation review reported to Council, consistent with the Council decision of 10 December 2024 for the North Berwick TROs:
 - This review would summarise what worked well, what did not, and recommend necessary adjustments
 - That officers review income and enforcement against seasonal variance
 - That the parking management programme be aligned with relevant Council strategies as they are next refreshed
- v. that the principles relating to traffic logic, exemptions, Blue Badge and accessibility provision, enforcement expectations, and monitoring and reinvestment arrangements be clearly set out alongside the TRO proposals and incorporated into the next scheduled update of the Local Parking Strategy;
- vi. that officers strengthen plain-English communication and engagement during the TRO stage, appreciating that the formal TRO notice is a prescribed legal document, by providing clear explanatory materials that set out what is being proposed, what is not, and how public feedback will influence the final design;

- vii. that officers ensure parking management proposals in Haddington clearly demonstrate how they support or enhance Safer Routes to School, including through the work of the Road Safety Working Group, to improve safer walking, wheeling and cycling for children and families;
- viii. that officers bring forward, ahead of implementation decisions, a transparent set of option for John Muir House parking that:
 - recognises operational and statutory requirements of mobile/frontline staff
 - ensures fairness and consistency with public long-stay provision
 - sets out criteria for determining staff vs public space allocation
 - integrates the final approach into the Parking Management Principles Framework; and
- ix. that officers set prepare a clear plan for safeguarding access to public-facing Council services at and around John Muir House as part of the TRO process.

Sederunt: Councillor Menzies joined the meeting during the debate on Item 4b. It was noted by the Provost that with Item 4 (including 4a-4d) being of a quasi-judicial nature, Councillor Menzies would not be able to take part in the remainder of the item due to her not being present in its entirety.

4c. PARKING MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS – MUSSELBURGH

A report was submitted by the Depute Chief Executive – Resources and Economy advising Council of the outcome of the public consultation on the parking interventions proposed in Musselburgh; presenting the resultant amendment made to improve the scheme and to mitigate public concerns raised; and recommending that the Council progresses to the next stage of the Traffic Regulation Order process, the intent to make the Order.

In response to a question on the provision of additional disabled parking bays, Mr Forsyth advised that increased provision could be considered, noting that Blue Badge holders could also park on double and single yellow lines (subject to conditions). On the reinvestment of funds raised through parking charges, this would be considered at a later stage in the process.

An amendment was submitted by Councillors Menzies [to be presented and moved by Councillor Jardine] and Gilbert:

- i. That any implemented parking management scheme in East Lothian be subject to a formal one-year post-implementation review reported to Council, consistent with the Council decision of 10 December 2024 for the North Berwick TROs:
 - This review will summarise what worked well, what did not, and recommend necessary adjustments
 - That officers review income and enforcement against seasonal variance
 - That the parking management programme be aligned with relevant Council strategies as they are next refreshed.
- ii. That the formal one-year post-implementation review for North Berwick must be received and considered by Council before final implementation decisions are taken in other towns, while allowing preparatory work (including TRO advertisement, design refinement, engagement and technical modelling) to proceed.

- iii. That the principles relating to traffic logic, exemptions, Blue Badge and accessibility provision, enforcement expectations, and monitoring and reinvestment arrangements be clearly set out alongside the TRO proposals and incorporated into the next scheduled update of the Local Parking Strategy.
- iv. That officers strengthen plain-English communication and engagement during the TRO stage, appreciating that the formal TRO notice is a prescribed legal document, by providing clear explanatory materials that set out what is being proposed, what is not, and how public feedback will influence the final design.
- v. That officers ensure parking management proposals in Musselburgh clearly demonstrate how they support or enhance Safer Routes to School, including through the work of the Road Safety Working Group, to improve safer walking, wheeling and cycling for children and families.
- vi. That officers articulate how current seasonal enforcement flexibilities will be used in Musselburgh to manage peak-season coastal pressures, including those linked to known anti-social behaviour patterns.
- vii. That officers clearly set out, as part of the TRO process, the engagement undertaken with residents in existing permit zones and how this has informed the proposals for Musselburgh.
- viii. That officers clearly set out, within the Musselburgh TRO documentation, how the parking management proposals complement and support the town's ongoing active travel improvements, including along the High Street and river corridor.
- ix. That nothing in this amendment prevents officers progressing at pace with Musselburgh's proposals, recognising strong local interest in moving forward promptly, provided statutory processes remain open-minded and compliant.

Presenting the amendment, Councillor Jardine drew attention to parking pressures around Queen Margaret University, which had had an impact on other areas of Musselburgh. She suggested that measures implemented in particular places would need to be considered in the context of the wider area.

Councillor Gilbert seconded the amendment.

Councillor McIntosh and Councillor Hampshire had indicated at Item 4b that they were proposing a further amendment to Councillor Jardine's amendment for 4c, which confirmed support for that amendment but with the deletion of the second point.

During the debate, Members highlighted the impact of the lack of parking management on Musselburgh town centre businesses, and commented that with better management footfall would improve and the town centre would be more vibrant. It was noted that there was currently insufficient parking provision for disabled people; further consideration of this issue was welcomed.

The Provost then moved to the roll call vote on the recommendations versus amendment 1 (as proposed by Councillor Jardine) and amendment 2 (as proposed by Councillor McIntosh):

In favour of recommendations (1): Councillor McLeod
In favour of amendment 1 (3): Councillors Gilbert, Jardine, Trotter

In favour of amendment 2 (11): Councillors Akhtar, Bennett, Dugdale, Forrest, Hampshire, McFarlane, McGinn, McIntosh, McMillan, Ritchie, Yorkston
Against (4): Councillors Bruce, Collins, Findlay, McGuire
Abstentions (0)

Amendment 2 was therefore carried.

Decision

The Council agreed:

- i. to note the extensive consultation exercise carried out between 13 March and 28 July 2025, the level of community engagement, the welcome receipt of varied and detailed responses to the survey questionnaire, and the explanation as to how these have influenced the proposals for Musselburgh;
- ii. to approve the proposals shown in Appendix B of the report and summarised in paragraphs 3.68 and 3.69 of the report, noting the amendments made to improve the scheme and mitigate public concerns raised through the consultation and engagement exercise;
- iii. to note the completion of the consultation stage of the Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedures) (Scotland) Regulation 1999 (as amended), and that the intent to make the Order, will allow opportunity for the public to raise further representations and objections to the proposals as amended, following which a report will be brought back to Council;
- iv. that any implemented parking management scheme in East Lothian would be subject to a formal one-year post-implementation review reported to Council, consistent with the Council decision of 10 December 2024 for the North Berwick TROs:
 - This review would summarise what worked well, what did not, and recommend necessary adjustments
 - That officers review income and enforcement against seasonal variance
 - That the parking management programme be aligned with relevant Council strategies as they are next refreshed
- v. that the principles relating to traffic logic, exemptions, Blue Badge and accessibility provision, enforcement expectations, and monitoring and reinvestment arrangements be clearly set out alongside the TRO proposals and incorporated into the next scheduled update of the Local Parking Strategy;
- vi. that officers strengthen plain-English communication and engagement during the TRO stage, appreciating that the formal TRO notice is a prescribed legal document, by providing clear explanatory materials that set out what is being proposed, what is not, and how public feedback will influence the final design;
- vii. that officers ensure parking management proposals in Musselburgh clearly demonstrate how they support or enhance Safer Routes to School, including through the work of the Road Safety Working Group, to improve safer walking, wheeling and cycling for children and families;
- viii. that officers articulate how existing seasonal enforcement flexibilities will be used in Musselburgh to manage peak-season coastal pressures, including those linked to known anti-social behaviour patterns;

- ix. that officers clearly set out, as part of the TRO process, the engagement undertaken with residents in existing permit zones and how this has informed the proposals for Musselburgh;
- x. that officers set out clearly, within the Musselburgh TRO documentation, how the parking management proposals complement and support the town's ongoing active travel improvements, including along the High Street and river corridor; and
- xi. that nothing in this amendment prevents officers progressing at pace with Musselburgh's proposals, recognising strong local interest in moving forward promptly, provided statutory processes remain open-minded and compliant.

4d. PARKING MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS – TRANENT

A report was submitted by the Depute Chief Executive – Resources and Economy advising Council of the outcome of the public consultation on the parking interventions proposed in Tranent; presenting the resultant amendment made to improve the scheme and to mitigate public concerns raised; and recommending that the Council progresses to the next stage of the Traffic Regulation Order process, the intent to make the Order.

In response to a question about the affordability of resident parking permits, Mr Forsyth confirmed that this had been covered in the Integrated Impact Assessment.

An amendment was submitted by Councillors Menzies [to be presented and moved by Councillor Jardine] and Gilbert:

- i. That any implemented parking management scheme in East Lothian be subject to a formal one-year post-implementation review reported to Council, consistent with the Council decision of 10 December 2024 for the North Berwick TROs:
 - This review will summarise what worked well, what did not, and recommend necessary adjustments
 - That officers review income and enforcement against seasonal variance
 - That the parking management programme be aligned with relevant Council strategies as they are next refreshed.
- ii. That the formal one-year post-implementation review for North Berwick must be received and considered by Council before final implementation decisions are taken in other towns, while allowing preparatory work (including TRO advertisement, design refinement, engagement and technical modelling) to proceed.
- iii. That the principles relating to traffic logic, exemptions, Blue Badge and accessibility provision, enforcement expectations, and monitoring and reinvestment arrangements be clearly set out alongside the TRO proposals and incorporated into the next scheduled update of the Local Parking Strategy.
- iv. That officers strengthen plain-English communication and engagement during the TRO stage, appreciating that the formal TRO notice is a prescribed legal document, by providing clear explanatory materials that set out what is being proposed, what is not, and how public feedback will influence the final design.
- v. That officers ensure parking management proposals in Tranent clearly demonstrate how they support or enhance Safer Routes to School, including through the work of the Road Safety Working Group, to improve safer walking, wheeling and cycling for children and families.

- vi. That officers provide detailed mapping and signage proposals to safeguard access to the Loch Centre and GP practices, ensuring these remain easily accessible during any changes.
- vii. That officers set out clearly, as part of the Tranent TRO process, how monitoring of streets previously considered for potential permit schemes has informed the proposals and how any displacement issues will be kept under review.
- viii. That officers review the position on Sunday charging in light of feedback from community groups and churches.
- ix. That officers may proceed at pace with development of Tranent's TRO proposals, reflecting strong community interest in progressing promptly, while maintaining open-minded statutory decision-making when TROs return for determination.

Councillor Jardine presented the amendment, highlighting the parking pressures in Tranent, particular as regards people parking in the centre of the town and commuting to Edinburgh by bus.

Councillor Gilbert seconded the amendment.

Councillor McIntosh and Councillor Hampshire had indicated at Item 4b that they were proposing a further amendment to Councillor Jardine's amendment for 4d, which confirmed support for that amendment but with the deletion of the second point.

There followed a debate, with Members commenting on the increased traffic levels and indiscriminate parking in Tranent town centre in recent years. There were concerns raised about the introduction of parking permits outwith the High Street area. Some Members were of the view that the proposed parking management arrangements would create safer streets, reduce instances of poor parking, provide easier access to buses for those with mobility issues, and ensure that the town centre remains vibrant. There was an alternative view put forward, namely that there was enough business for parking attendants to be funded through existing enforcement measures without having to apply parking charges. This view was disputed on the grounds that there was insufficient budget to employ the additional parking attendants required to carry out enforcement.

The Provost then moved to the roll call vote on the recommendations versus amendment 1 (as proposed by Councillor Jardine) and amendment 2 (as proposed by Councillor McIntosh):

In favour of recommendations (1):	Councillor McLeod
In favour of amendment 1 (3):	Councillors Gilbert, Jardine, Trotter
In favour of amendment 2 (11):	Councillors Akhtar, Bennett, Dugdale, Forrest, Hampshire, McFarlane, McGinn, McIntosh, McMillan, Ritchie, Yorkston
Against (4):	Councillors Bruce, Collins, Findlay, McGuire
Abstentions (0)	

Amendment 2 was therefore carried.

Decision

The Council agreed:

- i. to note the extensive consultation exercise carried out between 12 March and 3 June 2025, the level of community engagement, the welcome receipt of varied and detailed responses to the survey questionnaire, and the explanation as to how these have influenced the proposals for Tranent;
- ii. to approve the proposals shown in Appendix B of the report and summarised in paragraphs 3.62 and 3.63 of the report, noting the amendments made to improve the scheme and mitigate public concerns raised through the consultation and engagement exercise;
- iii. to note the completion of the consultation stage of the Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedures) (Scotland) Regulation 1999 (as amended), and that the intent to make the Order, will allow opportunity for the public to raise further representations and objections to the proposals as amended, following which a report will be brought back to Council;
- iv. that any implemented parking management scheme in East Lothian would be subject to a formal one-year post-implementation review reported to Council, consistent with the Council decision of 10 December 2024 for the North Berwick TROs:
 - This review would summarise what worked well, what did not, and recommend necessary adjustments
 - That officers review income and enforcement against seasonal variance
 - That the parking management programme be aligned with relevant Council strategies as they are next refreshed
- v. that the principles relating to traffic logic, exemptions, Blue Badge and accessibility provision, enforcement expectations, and monitoring and reinvestment arrangements be clearly set out alongside the TRO proposals and incorporated into the next scheduled update of the Local Parking Strategy;
- vi. that officers strengthen plain-English communication and engagement during the TRO stage, appreciating that the formal TRO notice is a prescribed legal document, by providing clear explanatory materials that set out what is being proposed, what is not, and how public feedback will influence the final design;
- vii. that officers ensure parking management proposals in Tranent clearly demonstrate how they support or enhance Safer Routes to School, including through the work of the Road Safety Working Group, to improve safer walking, wheeling and cycling for children and families;
- viii. that officers provide detailed mapping and signage proposals to safeguard access to the Loch Centre and GP practices, ensuring these remain easily accessible during any changes;
- ix. that officers set out clearly, as part of the Tranent TRO process, how monitoring of streets previously considered for potential permit schemes has informed the proposals and how any displacement issues will be kept under review;
- x. that officers review the position on Sunday charging in light of feedback from community groups and churches; and
- xi. that officers may proceed at pace with development of Tranent's TRO proposals, reflecting strong community interest in progressing promptly, while maintaining open-minded statutory decision-making when TROs return for determination.

5. DELIVERY OF EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE

A report was submitted by the Depute Chief Executive – Children and Communities updating the Council on changes to the delivery of Early Learning and Childcare from August 2025.

The Head of Education, Nicola McDowell, presented the report, supported by Alison Cameron, Service Manager for Early Years and Childcare. She confirmed that the Council would continue to meet its statutory duties with the proposed changes, with 48-hour week provision being available in each locality. She confirmed that there were no budget savings or redundancies planned as a result of the changes, adding that interim childcare proposals would be confirmed by the end of January. A further report on this matter would be presented to the Education and Children's Services Committee in March 2026.

In response to questions from Members, Ms McDowell and Ms Cameron provided information on the consultation with stakeholders during December, the mix of nursery provision between Council facilities and private partners, the arrangements for providing care for eligible two-year-olds, the budget situation for early years' services, the update to the Integrated Impact Assessment, the reasons for making changes in certain locations, the introduction of peripatetic early years' cover to provide a reliable service, and the impact of Local Development Plan 2 on future early years' provision.

An amendment (amendment 1) was submitted by Councillors Findlay and McGuire:

The amendment seeks to delete all Recommendations and replace with the following:

[Members are recommended:]

- i. To note the complaints that have been made by parents, the lack of proper consultation by ELC and the impact that the policy outlined in this paper will have on working families;
- ii. To pause the implementation of this policy until the academic year 2026/27;
- iii. To implement further consultation with current parents who are due to use Council-owned nursery facilities in the academic year 2026/27 and those parents who have already indicated that they are likely to use Council-owned nursery facilities in the academic year 2027/28; and
- iv. To come back to Council before the end of this academic year with a report outlining the result of those consultations and the measures put in place to ensure that the delivery of the Early Learning and Childcare Policy in 2027/28 fulfils the needs of parents and children as required by Scottish Government Policy.

Councillor Findlay presented the amendment. He indicated that he understood the need for the changes, but was critical of the consultation process and the timing of the changes. He was concerned about the impact of the changes on working parents, noting that some may have to give up their jobs or reduce their working hours, and he was of the view that the changes would contravene the 1140 hours policy. Councillor Findlay was particularly concerned about the situation in North Berwick, advising that he had received complaints by a number of parents and that there was a petition against the changes circulating. He added that reducing the hours in North Berwick would have a knock-on effect on demand for early years' places at Gullane Primary School.

The amendment was seconded by Councillor McGuire.

A further amendment (amendment 2) was submitted by Councillors Jardine and Menzies:

Delete the recommendations and replace with:

Members are recommended to:

- i. Note the report and the pressures facing early learning and childcare, and agree the following to strengthen transparency, equity and scrutiny of implementation:
 - a. Request that the updated Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA), together with proposed mitigation measures, is published on the Council's website following completion of the January engagement exercise.
 - b. Request that a draft Early Learning and Childcare Sufficiency Statement for 2024–2030 is prepared, setting out the balance of 38- and 48-week provision by locality, projected demand, and any identified risks to equitable access
 - c. Ask officers to review their criteria for admissions, taking into consideration feedback from families across the 7 affected settings.
 - d. Request that officers identify and report options to mitigate disproportionate impacts on low-income households, single-parent families, and those without local support networks — including any transport or time-poverty impacts arising from changes to local provision.
 - e. Call for strengthened engagement with affected families and providers, with a public “What We Heard / What We’re Doing” summary published before the committee cycle in March 2026.
 - f. Request that progress on all of the above is reported for scrutiny to the Education & Children’s Services Committee in March 2026.
- ii. Council further requests assurance that the implementation of these changes maintains clear line of sight to the core purposes of the national 1140 hours policy, within allocated resources — including flexibility, accessibility, equity of access, and support for parental employment.

Councillor Jardine presented the amendment. She recognised that demand for childcare was increasing alongside staffing challenges. She remarked that the Administration should have foreseen this issue arising, and was critical of the lack of a sufficiency assessment and up-to-date impact assessment.

The amendment was seconded by Councillor Menzies.

There followed a debate, with Members commenting on the need for adequate funding to deliver services and the need to make best use of existing funding. The potential impact of the changes on working parents was acknowledged, as was the commitment to engage with those affected in order to find solutions.

The Provost then moved to the roll call vote on the recommendations versus amendment 1 (as proposed by Councillor Findlay) and amendment 2 (as proposed by Councillor Jardine):

In favour of recommendations (1): Councillor McLeod
In favour of amendment 1 (4): Councillors Bruce, Collins, Findlay, McGuire
In favour of amendment 2 (15): Councillors Akhtar, Bennett, Dugdale, Forrest, Gilbert, Hampshire, Jardine, McFarlane, McGinn, McIntosh, McMillan, Menzies, Ritchie, Trotter, Yorkston

Against (0)

Abstentions (0)

Amendment 2 was therefore carried.

Decision

The Council agreed:

- i. to note the report and the pressures facing early learning and childcare, and agree the following to strengthen transparency, equity and scrutiny of implementation:
 - a. Request that the updated Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA), together with proposed mitigation measures, is published on the Council's website following completion of the January engagement exercise.
 - b. Request that a draft Early Learning and Childcare Sufficiency Statement for 2024–2030 is prepared, setting out the balance of 38- and 48-week provision by locality, projected demand, and any identified risks to equitable access
 - c. Ask officers to review their criteria for admissions, taking into consideration feedback from families across the 7 affected settings.
 - d. Request that officers identify and report options to mitigate disproportionate impacts on low-income households, single-parent families, and those without local support networks — including any transport or time-poverty impacts arising from changes to local provision.
 - e. Call for strengthened engagement with affected families and providers, with a public “What We Heard / What We’re Doing” summary published before the committee cycle in March 2026.
 - f. Request that progress on all of the above is reported for scrutiny to the Education & Children’s Services Committee in March 2026; and
- ii. to further request assurance that the implementation of these changes maintains clear line of sight to the core purposes of the national 1140 hours policy, within allocated resources — including flexibility, accessibility, equity of access, and support for parental employment.

Sederunt: Councillor Bruce left the meeting.

6. CONSULTATION RESPONSE: FUTURE OF COUNCIL TAX IN SCOTLAND

A report was submitted by the Depute Chief Executive – Resources and Economy advising of the proposed response to the Scottish Government consultation on the future of council tax in Scotland.

The Head of Finance, Ellie Dunnet, presented the report, noting that the draft response to the consultation had been shared with the cross-party budget working group. She pointed out that, in addition to the consultation response, a letter would be issued to the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government setting out the Council's concerns as regards potential funding allocations.

Ms Dunnet responded to questions from Members in relation to the potential financial impact of the changes on East Lothian and the risk to future service provision, as well as the process for revaluing properties.

An amendment was submitted by Councillors Jardine and Menzies:

Replace Recommendation 2.2 with the following:

Agree that, alongside this response, a letter will be sent to the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government from the Council Leader in consultation with political group leaders, setting out some of the Council's broader concerns regarding the allocation of funding to local authorities as set out in para. 3.4 [of the report]

Add a further recommendation:

Council requests that officers bring forward high-level financial scenario analysis once the Scottish Government publishes detailed proposals, so Members can understand the implications before any final policy position is taken.

Councillor Jardine presented the amendment, noting that cross-party agreement on the letter to the Cabinet Secretary would strengthen the Council's voice on this issue. She also believed it was necessary for the Council to take decisions based on evidence rather than assumptions, hence the proposed further recommendation.

Councillor Menzies seconded the amendment.

The consultation process was welcomed by Members. However, it was stressed that council tax should be used to provide local services and should not be redistributed to other areas.

The Provost then moved to the roll call vote on the recommendations versus the amendment:

In favour of recommendations (1): Councillor McLeod
In favour of the amendment (18): Councillors Akhtar, Bennett, Collins, Dugdale, Findlay, Forrest, Gilbert, Hampshire, Jardine, McFarlane, McGinn, McGuire, McIntosh, McMillan, Menzies, Ritchie, Trotter Yorkston

Against (0)
Abstentions (0)

The amendment was therefore carried.

Decision

The Council agreed:

- i. to approve the proposed consultation response set out within Appendix 1 to the report, to be submitted by 30 January 2025;
- ii. that, alongside this response, a letter would be sent to the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government from the Council Leader in consultation with political group leaders, setting out some of the Council's broader concerns regarding the allocation of funding to local authorities as set out in para. 3.4 of the report; and
- iii. to request that officers bring forward high-level financial scenario analysis once the Scottish Government publishes detailed proposals, so Members can understand the implications before any final policy position is taken.

7. FINANCIAL AND CAPITAL STRATEGIES 2026-31

A report was submitted by the Depute Chief Executive – Resources and Economy providing an update on the financial outlook facing the Council; providing an update on the budget development process, which would inform the setting of budgets for 2026/27 onwards; and seeking approval of the 2026/27 to 2030/31 Financial and Capital Strategies, attached as Appendices 1 and 2 of the report.

In response to questions from Members, Ellie Dunnet, Head of Finance, provided the rationale for rescheduling the budget-setting meeting to 24 February 2026. She advised that the Strategies and resources were aligned to Council Plan objectives and statutory services. For any budget proposals requiring an Integrated Impact Assessment this would be done in advance of the budget-setting meeting. As regards the budget consultation, the results would be shared with the cross-party budget working group before submission to the Members' Library later in December.

Members expressed concern at the challenging financial outlook for the Council, noting that there would be difficult decisions to be made going forward.

The Provost then moved to the roll call vote on the recommendations, which were approved unanimously.

Decision

The Council agreed:

- i. to note the financial outlook, budget projections and key assumptions for financial planning 2026/27 onwards set out within the Financial Strategy in Appendix 1 to the report and summarised in the report;
- ii. to note the changes to the current approved strategy and approve the updated Financial Strategy for 2026/27 to 2030/31 set out in Appendix 1 to the report;
- iii. to note the changes to the current approved strategy and approve the updated Capital Strategy for 2026/27 to 2030/31 set out in Appendix 2 to the report;
- iv. that the Council budget meeting for the 2026/27 budget would take place at the scheduled Council Meeting on 24 February 2026, and that other Council business would be considered at the meeting previously scheduled for the budget on 17 February 2026;

- v. to approve the budget development process set out in paragraph 3.15 of the report, which would inform the development of 2026/27 and future years budget proposals.
- vi. to note that agreeing the process set out in paragraph 3.15 of the report would mean that there will be no option for Elected Members to submit formal amendments to the budget papers for debate at the Council meeting after noon on 6 February, other than for the correction of errors.
- vii. to delegate authority to the Chief Financial Officer and Monitoring Officer, in discussion with Political Group Leaders to make any necessary changes to the timelines set out in paragraph 3.15 of the report.
- viii. to note the indicative timetable for the parliamentary process for Scottish Government's 2026/27 budget, set out paragraph 3.22 of the report; and
- ix. that any funding announced after 17 February 2026 would be held as contingency to offset budget risks and future year pressures in the first instance, with any subsequent decision to commit this funding being considered at a future Council meeting.

8. QUARTER 2 FINANCIAL REVIEW 2025/26

A report was submitted by the Depute Chief Executive – Resources and Economy providing an update on the in-year financial position at the end of September 2025.

Ellie Dunnet, Head of Finance, responded to questions from Members on debt charges, borrowing terms, teacher funding and class contact time, and the IJB funding position.

During the debate, concerns were raised regarding the overspend within social care services; however, it was recognised that this was largely due to demand. The improved financial position for other services was welcomed, as was the progress made on reducing the housing voids backlog.

The Provost then moved to the roll call vote on the recommendations, which were approved unanimously.

Decision

The Council agreed:

- i. to note the outcome of the Quarter 2 financial performance against approved budgets including progress toward delivering agreed budget efficiencies;
- ii. to note the risks and other factors that may impact that position by year-end and the range of ongoing intervention measures approved by Council;
- iii. to note the additional Scottish Government funding received since Council approved the budget in February 2025;
- iv. to note the update on the Integrated Joint Board position (IJB);
- v. to note the changes to the accounting arrangements within Roads Services;
- vi. to approve the changes in services delegated to the IJB;
- vii. to note the key performance information for Council Tax Collection, Rent Collection and Scottish Welfare Fund spending;

- viii. to note the revised General Services Capital budget and forecast spend and the update on Prudential and Treasury Indicators; and
- ix. to note the HRA Revenue and Capital Spend forecast.

9. ANNUAL AUDIT REPORT AND ANNUAL AUDIT REPORT FOR THE DR BRUCE FUND 2024/25

The Council's Annual Audit Report and the Annual Audit Report for the Dr Bruce Fund for 2024/25 were submitted by Audit Scotland.

Given the volume of business on the agenda, and that both reports had been considered by the Audit & Governance Committee in November 2025, with the agreement of John Boyd of Audit Scotland and Sarah Fortune, the Council's Chief Financial Officer, the Provost proposed that both reports be withdrawn from the Council agenda and instead be submitted to the Members' Library. Members signalled their agreement to this course of action, on the basis that the Council had now discharged its duties as regards the 2024/25 audit process.

Decision

The Council agreed that the Annual Audit Report for 2024/25 and the Annual Audit Report for the Dr Bruce Fund for 2024/25 should be submitted to the Members' Library.

10. CORPORATE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

A report was submitted by the Depute Chief Executive – Resources and Economy presenting the East Lothian Council Local Code of Corporate Governance and confirming the approach to the development of the Annual Governance Statement for 2025/26.

The Head of Corporate Support presented the report, advising of the new requirement for local authorities to adopt their own Local Code of Corporate Governance. She advised that the proposed Code, which would support the development of the Annual Governance Statement, had been considered at the recent Audit and Governance Committee meeting, where it was recommended for approval by Council.

The Code was welcomed by Members.

Decision

The Council agreed:

- i. to approve the East Lothian Council Local Code of Corporate Governance; and
- ii. to note the approach to the 2025/26 annual assurance process and the development of the Annual Governance Statement.

11. APPOINTMENT OF A RELIGIOUS REPRESENTATIVE TO THE EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

A report was submitted by the Depute Chief Executive – Resources and Economy seeking approval of the appointment of a religious representative to the Education and Children's Services Committee.

The appointment of Reverend Mills to the Committee was welcomed by Members.

The Provost then moved to the roll call vote on the recommendation, which was approved unanimously.

Decision

The Council agreed to approve the appointment of Reverend Keith Mills of the Baptist Church of Dunbar as a religious representative on the Education and Children’s Services Committee.

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Signed

Provost John McMillan
Convener of the Council

The webcast for this meeting will be available at the link below for five years from the date of the meeting: https://eastlothian.public-i.tv/core/portal/webcast_interactive/1026873

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