



Report To: South Holland District Council

Date: Wednesday, 28 January 2026

Subject: Report from Cabinet Meeting on 16 December 2025

Purpose: To consider recommendations of the Cabinet in respect of:

- Proposed Amendments/Updates to the Contract Procedure Rules
- Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2026/27

Key Decision: N

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Paul Redgate, Portfolio Holder for Finance

Report Of: Russell Stone, Director of Finance (S151)

Report Author: Forrest White, Democratic Services Officer

Ward(s) Affected: All Wards

Exempt Report: N

Summary

This report provides Members of the Council with details on issues considered by the Cabinet at its meeting on 16 December 2025, which require decisions by Full Council. Relevant extracts from the Cabinet minute are detailed at Section 2 below, and the relevant Cabinet report and appendices are attached as appendices to this report.

Recommendations

Proposed Amendments/Updates to the Contract Procedure Rules:

1. That Council approves the revised Contract Procedure Rules at Appendix 2.

Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2026/27:

2. That Council approves continuation of the current Council Tax support scheme, updated in line with DWP's annual update of allowances and premiums for 2026/27.

Reasons for Recommendations

The reasons for recommendation are detailed within the individual reports attached and are summarise in the relevant Cabinet minute below.

Other Options Considered

Other options considered are detailed within the individual report attached and are summarised in the relevant Cabinet minute below.

1. Background

- 1.1 Article 4 of the Council's Constitution provides that only the full Council may exercise the functions of approving, adopting or amending the policy framework and budget, adopting or changing the Constitution. Staffing matters are also a Council function. The Cabinet however has responsibility for advising the Council on such matters. At its meeting on 16 December 2025, the Cabinet made recommendations to Council in respect of the above item which may affect budget and policy framework, constitution or compromise staffing issues.
- 1.2 The remainder of this report details the recommendations of the Cabinet which must be read in conjunction with the individual report to Cabinet, a copy of which is attached as appendices.

2. Proposed Amendments/Updated to the Contract Procedure Rules

The Leader introduced the proposed amendments to the Contract Procedure Rules (CPRs), which were brought forward for approval, including the delegation to officers as highlighted in Appendix 2.

Members had previously reviewed the revised set of CPRs, and any comments were considered prior to the final version being circulated to all Council for full approval.

By way of background, the Leader advised that the purpose of these amendments was twofold. Firstly, public procurement legislation had changed following the implementation of the Procurement Act 2023, which had been in place since February 2025. Whilst the current CPRs were compliant with this legislation, the proposed amendments included additions and revisions to further align the CPRs with the Procurement Act 2023.

Secondly, the CPRs had last been updated three years ago, and therefore were due for review. Appendix 3 highlighted the key changes.

The Leader noted that significant work had been undertaken to review and update the rules, and expressed appreciation to officers for their diligence in managing the extensive changes required. The amendments included provisions relating to

frameworks and dynamic markets, in line with the Procurement Act 2023, to ensure officers complied with the new legislation.

In relation to thresholds, the Leader noted that the main change was the increase from the current range of £40,000–£85,000 to £50,000–£100,000. He added that importantly, the requirement for at least five written quotations was proposed to be amended, as sourcing five quotations could be challenging in certain industries. Feedback from suppliers indicated that the current requirement could discourage participation, as they perceived a low chance of success.

The Leader advised that further additions were made regarding contract management and monitoring, ensuring that operational contract managers regularly reviewed contract performance and met with suppliers as required under the terms of the contract. He also confirmed that a named contract manager would be recorded on the contracts register.

Concern was expressed regarding the inclusion of VAT in the figures presented, noting that this was not standard practice and could lead to inaccuracies if VAT rates changed in the future. The Member queried why VAT needed to be included and suggested that it should be removed.

Officers explained that the inclusion of VAT was a statutory requirement under the relevant legislation. They confirmed that thresholds would continue to be calculated exclusive of VAT, as outlined in the accompanying table, but acknowledged that minor adjustments might be necessary to ensure consistency throughout the document.

The Member highlighted that some figures within the text appeared to be exclusive of VAT, while others were inclusive, which caused confusion.

Officers advised that Section 1.5 of the Contract Procedure Rules explained that all figures were inclusive of VAT, except for the table at 13.3.

Members stated that they were extremely satisfied with the work undertaken by the Procurement Team, particularly in relation to improved contract management. They noted that the team had delivered strong outcomes for the Council and expressed full support for the proposed increase in procurement thresholds, citing the challenges of obtaining multiple quotes for specialist areas.

Another Member emphasised the importance of providing opportunities for local businesses to participate in procurement processes, noting that this had been a longstanding priority.

Further comments highlighted the need for declarations of interest to cover all parties involved, including councillors, officers, and the Procurement Team.

Members acknowledged the difficulties in securing quotes for specialist works within tight deadlines, particularly when external funding imposed strict spending requirements.

Overall, Members agreed that the report was positive and commended the Procurement Team for managing significant pressures effectively.

DECISION:

1. That Cabinet recommends the draft revised Contract Procedure Rules at Appendix 1a to this report to be approved at Council.
2. That Cabinet approves the delegations to Officers that sets out the authorisation for decision making in relation to Contract Procedure Rules at Appendix 2 to this report. This approval will be subject to a Council decision to amend the Contract Procedure Rules.

(Other Options Considered)

- *To do nothing – which would result in the retention of the existing Contract Procedure Rules. This would not be deemed best practice as the Contract Procedure Rules have not been reviewed or updated for 3 years.*

Reasons for Decisions:

- *To ensure that the Council has robust, up-to-date Contract Procedure Rules that provide clarity to officers, members, and potential suppliers.*
- *To ensure a clear and consistent approach in the award of contracts and safeguard the public's trust and confidence and promote public accountability and procurement practice.*
- *To help avoid governance failures in the Council's procurement activity.)*

3. Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2026/27

The Leader introduced the report and advised that by way of background, the Council must review its scheme for working age claimants each year and consult with major precepting authorities and interested parties.

The scheme for pensioners is set by the Government and cannot be changed by the Council.

The Leader advised that after consideration earlier in the year to the current economic challenges and the impact that a reduction in the scheme would have on working age claimant households, Cabinet decided to consult on continuation of the current working age Council Tax Support scheme, providing a maximum level of support of 85% for households with children, and 75% for all other households.

The Leader advised that the consultation ran between 23 September to 8 November 2025 and of the 29 responses received 61% agreed that the council should retain the current level of support. He noted that whilst 29% did not agree, views were divided: some favoured maintaining or increasing support, while others saw the system as unfair or too generous.

The full consultation report was provided at Appendix 1 to the report.

It was noted that the response rate of 29 was disappointing given the size of the district. Members felt that consideration should be given to how future surveys could encourage greater participation and engagement. It was acknowledged that this had always been a challenging area in which to secure responses. The subject matter was not widely understood by the public, which may have contributed to the low

engagement. Members agreed that it was the role of councillors to ensure that information was presented as clearly as possible. Despite efforts to promote the survey through various channels, engagement remained difficult.

Members concluded that, while further work could be explored, the outcome was reflective of the challenges inherent in this area.

DECISION:

1. That Cabinet recommends that Full Council approve continuation of the current Council Tax Support scheme, uprated in line with DWP's annual update of allowances and premiums, for 2026/27.
2. That Cabinet delegates approval for developing the 2026/27 scheme rules in accordance with recommendation 1 above to the Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance as appropriate, including prescribed, administrative and minor changes.

(Other Options Considered)

- *Options were considered previously by Cabinet, leading to consultation on a continuation scheme*

Reasons for Decision:

- *Full Council must make any revision to its scheme, or any replacement, and agree its final scheme no later than 11th March 2026 in respect of the 2026/27 financial year.*
- *The recommendation has regard to the earlier deliberations of the Cabinet, and the outcome of the consultation process for a continuation scheme.*
- *Uprating in line with Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) will ensure the scheme continues to support the most vulnerable and low-income households by using nationally recognised rates of DWP income).*

Appendices

Appendices are listed below and attached to the back of the report:

Appendix 1	Proposed Amendments/Updates to the Contract Procedure Rules (covering report)
Appendix 2	Cabinet Agenda Item 11 - Proposed Amendments/Updates to the Contract Procedure Rules (Appendix 1a)
Appendix 3	Cabinet Agenda Item 11 - Proposed Amendments/Updates to the Contract Procedure Rules (Appendix 1b)
Appendix 4	Cabinet Agenda Item 11 - Proposed Amendments/Updates to the Contract Procedure Rules (Appendix 2)
Appendix 5	Cabinet Agenda Item 11 - Proposed Amendments/Updates to the Contract Procedure Rules (Appendix 3)
Appendix 6	Cabinet Agenda Item 10 – Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2026/27 (covering report)
Appendix 7	Cabinet Agenda Item 10 – Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2026/27 (Appendix 1)

Background Papers

No background papers as defined in Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the production of this report.

Chronological History of this Report

Name of Body

Cabinet

Date

16 December 2025

Report Approval

Report author:

Forrest White, Democratic Services Officer
FWhite@sholland.gov.uk

Signed off by:

The individual report has previously been signed off by the relevant Director and Portfolio Holder

Approved for publication:

As above