

CHIGWELL PARISH COUNCIL
OFFICER REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY SERVICES AND ASSETS COMMITTEE
COMMUNITY HUB CLEANING STANDARDS

Date: 24 September 2026

Members will recall that significant governance concerns relating to cemetery administration were reported through the Council's governance framework during 2026. These matters were initially considered by the Finance and Governance Committee under Minute Reference FG031/26 (Sensitive Matters) on 9 July 2026 and were subsequently reported to Full Council on 23 July 2026 under Minute Reference FC043/26. As part of the Council's response, officers were required to prioritise operational resources to ensure that statutory records, processes and associated governance controls were reviewed and strengthened.

Given the sensitive nature of the matters involved, including ongoing personnel and governance processes, it would not be appropriate to provide further detail within this report. However, Members can be assured that operational decisions taken by officers were necessary to protect the interests of the Council, safeguard the Council's reputation and minimise any associated organisational risk.

Against this backdrop of increased operational pressures, Full Council considered the future use and management arrangements for the Community Hub. Members noted current staffing pressures and the need for finite officer resources to be prioritised appropriately. Accordingly, Full Council agreed that an interim arrangement should be established with the Limes Farm Community Group whilst longer-term proposals for the building and associated refurbishment works continue to be progressed.

An Interim User Agreement was subsequently entered into between the Council and the Limes Farm Community Group with effect from 6 August 2026 for an initial period of three months, expiring on 6 November 2026. The arrangement permits continued community use of the facility for agreed activities, including community pantry services, wellbeing initiatives, food distribution sessions and the monthly Memory Café, whilst preserving the Council's ability to undertake building inspections, refurbishment works and operational reviews.

The interim agreement further clarifies expectations regarding housekeeping, storage, building access, health and safety arrangements and cooperation with contractors and surveyors. Whilst the Council continues to provide a routine cleaning service through the Caretaker, users are responsible for ensuring that the premises are left in a clean, safe and satisfactory condition following each period of use.

Members should note that the current cleaning arrangements are an operational measure introduced to support continued use of the facility during a period of exceptional operational demand. Full details of the circumstances leading to this decision cannot appropriately be reported within this Committee. However, officers are satisfied that the

arrangements are necessary, proportionate and in the best interests of protecting both the Council and its Members.

As refurbishment proposals progress and the future use of the building becomes clearer, a review of cleaning and caretaking requirements will be undertaken. Members should be aware that, should the Council's aspiration to increase community use and hire of the facility be realised following refurbishment works, additional cleaning and maintenance resources may be required. Any future resource implications will be assessed, costed and reported through the appropriate committee structure for consideration as part of the Council's budget-setting and operational planning processes.

The interim arrangements will continue to be monitored by officers and reviewed alongside the wider Community Hub refurbishment programme and future occupancy arrangements.

Prepared by:

Jason Selvarajah MSc

Clerk and Proper Officer