

Member Motion to Council on 18 December 2025.

The following Motion is to be proposed by Cllr Ray Gooding and seconded by Cllr Brian Regan:

This Council notes that:

1. At the extraordinary meeting held on 21st August 2025 the matter of additional borrowing was approved to allow the expenditure of funding for the Chesterford Research Park to bring vacant buildings to a position where they could be offered back to the Market.
2. It was stated at that meeting that the additional borrowing would be at a rate of 3.99%. However, that loan had a term of just two months and has now been repaid. The replacement borrowing is at an interest rate of almost twice the original figure.
3. Whilst it is the case that almost all of the commercial investment by this council is funded by borrowing it is evident that a large proportion of the borrowing (up to 40%) is on short-term loans. It is understood that the borrowing is backed by the investment, but that borrowing is not directly secured by those assets.
4. Short-term borrowing for the purpose of long-term investment always contains significant inherent risk.

Therefore, Council believes:

1. This risk, coupled with the impending transition to a new Unitary Authority (of whatever nature that may be), that the current position, with a significant proportion of short-term borrowing, is untenable and that this should be rectified by one or both of the following measures: -
 - i. That all short-term borrowing is replaced by long term secured borrowing.
 - ii. That where the above is not possible that assets should be sold to reduce the exposure this council faces.
2. The residents of Uttlesford and those of the new Unitary Authority cannot continue to be exposed to this risk and this council must seek an immediate solution to this issue.