

Agenda

Policy and Resources Committee Meeting

Date: Wednesday, 26 November 2025

Time 7.00 pm

Venue: Council Chamber, Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, ME10 3HT

Membership:

Councillors Mike Baldock, Lloyd Bowen (Vice-Chair), Charles Gibson, Tim Gibson (Chair), Alastair Gould, Angela Harrison, James Hunt, Elliott Jayes, Mark Last, Ben J Martin, Kieran Mishchuk, Richard Palmer, Julien Speed, Ashley Wise and Dolley Wooster.

Quorum = 5

Pages

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1. Emergency Evacuation Procedure

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the car park. Do not leave the assembly point or re-enter the building until advised to do so. Do not use the lifts.

- (d) Anyone unable to use the stairs should make themselves known during this agenda item.

2. Apologies for Absence

3. Minutes

To approve the Minutes of the Meeting held on 5 November 2025 (Minute Nos. to-follow) as a correct record.

4. Declarations of Interest

Councillors should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their families or friends.

The Chair will ask Members if they have any disclosable pecuniary interests (DPIs) or disclosable non-pecuniary interests (DNPIs) to declare in respect of items on the agenda. Members with a DPI in an item must leave the room for that item and may not participate in the debate or vote.

Aside from disclosable interests, where a fair-minded and informed observer would think there was a real possibility that a Member might be biased or predetermined on an item, the Member should declare this and leave the room while that item is considered.

Members who are in any doubt about interests, bias or predetermination should contact the monitoring officer for advice prior to the meeting.

5. Matters Arising

Update from the Chair on any matters from the previous meeting or upcoming agenda items relating to this committee.

Items for Noting

6. Recommendations from the Planning and Transportation Policy Working Group held on 4 November 2025 - to-follow

7. Forward Decisions Plan 5 - 6

Items for Decision by the Committee

- | | | |
|-----|--|----------|
| 8. | Financial Management Report – Mid Year 2025/26 | 7 - 18 |
| 9. | Draft Budget 2026/27 | 19 - 88 |
| 10. | Area Committees Review | 89 - 116 |
| 11. | South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership - Draft Business | 117 - |

12. Exclusion of the Press and Public

To decide whether to pass the resolution set out below in respect of the following item:

That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3.

3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). See note below.

13. Exempt Appendix I - South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership Business Plan 2026 - 2029

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Issued on Tuesday, 18 November 2025

The reports included in Part I of this agenda can be made available in alternative formats. For further information about this service, or to arrange for special facilities to be provided at the meeting, please contact democraticservices@swale.gov.uk. To find out more about the work of this meeting, please visit www.swale.gov.uk.

**Chief Executive, Swale Borough Council,
Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 3HT**

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Policy and Resources Committee Forward Decisions Plan – 26 November 2025

Report title, background information and recommendation(s)	Date of meeting	Open or exempt	Lead Officer and report author
2026/27 Budget	4 February 2026	Open	Lead Officer: Claire Stanbury Head of Service: Lisa Fillery
Treasury Management Strategy 2026/27	4 February 2026	Open	Lead Officer: Claire Stanbury Head of Service: Lisa Fillery
Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2026/27	4 February 2026	Open	Lead Officer: Zoe Kent Head of Service: Lisa Fillery
Pay Policy Statement	4 February 2026	Open	Lead Officer: Bal Sandher Head of Service: Larissa Reed
Graveney Bridge – Conservation Area Appraisal	4 February 2026	Open	Lead Officer: Jhilmil Kishore Head of Service: Joanne Johnson
Graveney Church – Conservation Area Appraisal	4 February 2026	Open	Lead Officer: Jhilmil Kishore Head of Service: Joanne Johnson
Goodnestone Graveney – Conservation Area Appraisal	4 February 2026	Open	Lead Officer: Jhilmil Kishore Head of Service: Joanne Johnson
Newington Church – Conservation Area Appraisal	4 February 2026	Open	Lead Officer: Jhilmil Kishore Head of Service: Joanne Johnson
Newington High Street – Conservation Area Appraisal	4 February 2026	Open	Lead Officer: Jhilmil Kishore Head of Service: Joanne Johnson

Newington Manor – Conservation Area Appraisal	4 February 2026	Open	Lead Officer: Jhilmil Kishore Head of Service: Joanne Johnson
Local Heritage List – Recommendations from 2025 Call	4 February 2026	Open	Lead Officer: Jhilmil Kishore Head of Service: Joanne Johnson
Reducing Permissive Environments Policy – sign off	4 February 2026	Open	Lead Officer: Stephanie Curtis Head of Service: Charlotte Hudson
Bexon – Conservation Area Appraisal	4 February 2026	Open	Lead Officer: Jhilmil Kishore Head of Service: Joanne Johnson
Pride in Place Impact Fund	4 February 2026	Open	Lead Officer: Kieren Mansfield Head of Service: Joanne Johnson
Pride in Place Fund - role of the Council and next steps	4 February 2026	Open	Lead Officer: Joanne Johnson Head of Service: Joanne Johnson
Domestic Abuse Policy Refresh – sign off	11 March 2026	Open	Lead Officer: Stephanie Curtis Head of Service: Charlotte Hudson
Risk Management Update – Q3 & Q4	11 March 2026	Open	Lead Officer: Georgia Harvey Head of Service: Kathy Woodward
Annual Risk Management Report – 2025/2026	TBC	Open	Lead Officer: Georgia Harvey Head of Service: Kathy Woodward
Award of Contract - CCTV Control Room Expansion	TBC	Open	Lead Officer: Stephanie Curtis Head of Service: Charlotte Hudson

Policy & Resources Committee	
Meeting Date	26 November 2025
Report Title	Financial Management Report – Mid Year 2025/26
EMT Lead	Lisa Fillery, Director of Resources
Head of Service	Claire Stanbury, Head of Finance & Procurement
Lead Officer	Caroline Frampton, Principal Accountant
Classification	Open
Recommendations	1. To note the projected revenue position, which is balanced through a reduction of £26k in the amount to be taken from reserves. 2. To note the capital expenditure of £6.551m against the budget as detailed in Table 2 and Appendix II.

1. Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the quarter 2 revenue and capital budget monitoring forecast for 2025/26. The report is based on service activity for April – September 2025 and is collated from monitoring returns from budget managers.
- 1.2 The purpose of the report is to forecast the estimated outturn position for 2025/26 compared to the budget approved at Council in February 2025 and subsequently amended by virements, made under delegated authority during the year.
- 1.3 The headline figures are:
 - revenue underspend on services of £26k which will reduce the value of reserves used in year to balance the finances – Table 1;
 - capital expenditure of £6.551m – Table 2 and Appendix II.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Council operates a budget monitoring process at Head of Service level, with regular reports to the Policy and Resources Committee and the Executive Management Team.
- 2.2 Departments work alongside their Finance colleagues to produce the forecasts, using information within last year's outturn position and actual income and expenditure within the year as a guide.

3. Proposals Revenue Outturn

Table 1 - Variance by Service

	Working Budget £'000	Projected Outturn £'000	Projected Variance £'000
Chief Executive	814	826	12
Communications & Policy	376	373	(3)
Elections, Democratic Services & Information Governance	1,175	1,193	18
Housing & Community	4,428	4,768	340
Planning	1,168	1,409	241
Environment & Leisure	8,982	9,485	503
Regeneration & Economic Development	(370)	(232)	138
Finance & Procurement	783	746	(37)
Revenues & Benefits	539	469	(70)
Environmental Health	686	675	(10)
Information Technology	1,451	1,566	114
Internal Audit	165	165	0
Human Resources	493	493	0
Legal	702	705	3
Drainage Board Levy	1,049	1,018	(31)
Corporate Overheads & Capital Financing	4,634	3,392	(1,242)
NET REVENUE SERVICE EXPENDITURE	27,076	27,051	(24)
Financed by:			
Budget Contingency Reserve	(1,140)	(1,115)	26
Revenue Support Grant	(362)	(362)	0
Other Grants	(2,088)	(2,087)	0
Business Rates	(12,104)	(12,104)	0
New Homes Bonus	(988)	(988)	(0)
Collection Fund Surplus	45	44	(1)
Council Tax Requirement	(10,439)	(10,439)	0
TOTAL FINANCING	(27,076)	(27,051)	24
NET EXPENDITURE (Contribution (to)/from General Fund)	0	(0)	(0)

- 3.1 Table 1 shows the forecast position at service level, with a further breakdown provided at Appendix I.
- 3.2 The variances with brackets are underspends, i.e. income received was greater than the budget or the spend was less than budget; variances with no brackets are overspends, i.e. the income was less than the budget, or the spend was more than budget.
- 3.3 Significant variances from budget (£20,000 or more) are explained below.

3.4 Elections, Democratic Services & Information Governance projected overspend £18,000

Electoral Services £39,000 projected overspend

This is due to the printing costs of the yearly canvass, and has been included as a growth consideration in the draft proposed budget for 2026/27.

3.5 Housing & Community Services £340,000 projected overspend

Private Sector Housing £30,000 projected overspend

The overspend comes from an increase in licences for software, purchase of additional tools and equipment, and a reduction in housing enforcement fines. There is an overspend on agency staff, but this is being funded by additional grants, so has no overall impact.

Homelessness £358,000 projected overspend

There are a number of contributing factors to this overspend. It is expected that there will be an overspend of £30,000 on the rough sleeper initiative, as government grant funding is insufficient.

The cost of temporary accommodation is still forecast to be above budget. It is possible that grants will again be received late in the year, as was the case last year, but we have not yet been informed of any further grants, so they are not included within the forecast at this time.

It is anticipated that the cost of temporary accommodation will be further managed by the use of our own properties, but the first year is seeing void levels as we prepare each property for use.

The cost of our own properties is the third area of projected overspend. This is down to costs incurred to prepare the properties, covering repairs and maintenance as well as the purchase of some furniture. Some of these costs could be covered by the TA property maintenance reserve if required at year end. It is anticipated that the level of costs incurred this year will not be repeated in future years, as the houses become a routine tool of managing the temporary accommodation need, but these costs will be closely monitored.

Community Services £31,000 underspend

The underspend in Community Services is primarily down to the Loneliness project, as that is being funded in year by UK SPF grants.

3.6 Planning £241,000 projected overspend

Building Control £33,000 projected underspend

The team are actively trying to recover a number of costs relating to work carried out on private dangerous structures, and this has created the underspend position.

Appeals £38,000 projected overspend

This relates to fees incurred dealing with appeals.

Planning £251,000 projected overspend

Much of this relates to agency costs as we continue to fill the permanent vacancies created by the planning restructure, which came into effect on 1 April 2024. Attempts are ongoing to recruit to vacancies with some success,

but there are still problems recruiting to more senior posts. As a result, various options are being explored such as the use of recruitment agencies, and a temporary structure change to help grow talent internally. A temporary growth request has been included in the draft proposed budget for 2026/27 to allow for mentoring to take place so that staff can be promoted to the senior posts internally, and the lower posts can then be recruited to.

3.7 Environment & Leisure £503,000 projected overspend

Environmental Services £183,000 projected overspend

The projected overspend on environmental services is primarily down to the cost of replacement and garden waste bins, as well as a reduction in garden waste subscriptions. Both of these areas have been fed into the draft budget proposals for 2026/27, as this is considered to be more than a one year issue.

Parking & Highways £34,000 projected overspend

This is primarily down to the need for some additional maintenance in the multistorey car park this year.

Leisure Services £288,000 projected overspend

There are two factors contributing to this projected overspend. The first is an expected overspend for leisure centres due to the utility tariff increase that is currently borne by SBC, causing a forecast overspend of £150,000. There is also a forecast overspend of £162,000 on grounds maintenance which is primarily due to the savings target of £175,000 that was set, but not achieved. A reduction of £75,000 has been achieved for 2026/27, and is partially being achieved in 2025/26. Growth of £100,000 has been included in the draft proposed budget for 2026/27 to reflect the level of savings that could be achieved.

3.8 Regeneration & Economic Development £138,000 projected overspend

Buildings Maintenance £31,000 projected overspend

Building maintenance costs across the estate are expected to overspend by £31,000. This primarily relates to maintenance of Swallows Leisure Centre and public conveniences. If required, this overspend can be met from the buildings maintenance reserve at the end of the year.

Asset Management £170,000 projected overspend

The overspend primarily relates to NNDR on empty properties and service charges on public realm at Bourne Place, along with rental incomes that will not be achieved in year. The commercial rent budgets, along with service charge liabilities, are being reviewed as part of budget setting for 2026/27.

Economic Development £67,000 projected underspend

The underspend in Economic Development is primarily down to vacant posts, that are proving incredibly difficult to recruit to. This is not a new situation, and various attempts have been made to recruit. Another one year growth bid has been included in the draft proposed budget to continue the use of interim staff until a permanent solution is found. There is also an increase in the funding this year from the UK SPF grant for staff input, but this is not an ongoing grant and so should be considered as an in-year windfall.

- 3.9 Finance & Procurement £37,000 projected underspend**
Financial Services £36,000 projected underspend
 The underspend is due to vacancies within the team, along with a reduction in staffing costs due to maternity leave. Some vacant hours are being carried, which will be reviewed as the team settles and the new financial management system is introduced.
- 3.10 Revenues & Benefits £70,000 projected underspend**
Revenues & Benefits Administration £57,000 projected underspend
 The projected underspend is primarily due to additional grants received from government.
- 3.11 Information Technology £114,000 projected overspend**
IT Service £66,000 projected underspend
 This is due to vacant posts being held within ICT Development, Network and Support and GIS teams.
- IT Maintenance & Licences £181,000 projected overspend
 The overspend is due to major systems moving to the cloud. As part of budget setting for 2026/27, we will need to make sure that sufficient budget is available. In some cases, this has already been built in for later years.
- 3.12 Human Resources overall breakeven**
HR Service £26,000 projected underspend
Corporate Training £82,000 projected overspend
Apprenticeships £56,000 projected underspend
 Currently forecasting an underspend on HR Service, Health and Welfare and apprenticeship vacancies, but the underspend here will go towards supporting the increased corporate training provision.
- 3.13 Corporate Overheads & Capital Financing £1,242,000 projected underspend**
Interest & Capital Financing £460,000 projected underspend
 With interest rates being slow to drop, interest on investments is still forecast to be above budget, and therefore contribute to reserves. Excess income on interest has previously been transferred to the investment smoothing reserve, but the balance on the reserve is currently considered to be at an appropriate level, so any excess income can now be used to balance the overall position or reduce the take from the budget contingency reserve.
- Corporate Costs/Provisions £755,000 projected underspend
 This underspend is a result of centralising excess service budgets that have built up over time predominantly due to inflation calculations., The biggest contributor being the waste and street cleansing contract, which required significant reconciliation following the introduction of the new contract . This position is being taken into consideration during the budget build for 2026/27, when assessing the required inflation for increases to pay and contracts, along with the pension contribution required following the recent triennial revaluation, and appropriate savings are being put forward from this.

Capital Expenditure

3.14 This section of the report details actual capital expenditure to end of quarter 2 and highlights any variations between the 2025/26 capital budget and the projected outturn. The revised budget includes the 2024/25 roll forwards as agreed by the Policy and Resources Committee 12 June 2025.

3.15 Further breakdown is provided in Appendix II to this report.

3.16 Actual expenditure is £6.551m which is 29% of the budget. A summary is set out in Table 2 below and further details are shown in Appendix II. Some projects are currently showing negative spend this year, as we are awaiting invoices to clear year end adjustments from 2024/25.

3.17 The main areas of slippage are the Disabled Facilities Grants, and the costs associated with Rainbow Homes.

3.18 The Beachfields project is currently forecast to spend £141,000 more than the original budget, however this is within the borrowing limit for which additional contingency funding was agreed.

Table 2 – Capital Expenditure to end of September 2025

	2025/26 Net Budget £'000	Actuals April to September £'000	2025/26 Net Forecast £'000	Possible Slippage £'000	Projected Variance £'000
Housing & Community Services	21,799	2,055	1,653	20,146	0
Regeneration & Economic Development	341	4,461	0	341	0
Environment & Leisure	545	(0)	511	115	81
Information Technology	0	35	0	0	0
Total Capital Programme	22,685	6,551	2,163	20,602	81

4. Alternative Options

4.1 None identified – this report is largely for information.

5. Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

5.1 Heads of Service and Strategic Management Team have been consulted in preparing this report.

6. Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	Good financial management is key to supporting the Corporate Plan objectives.

Issue	Implications
Financial, Resource and Property	As detailed in the report. Budget holders will need to review the current forecast position to identify savings to address the forecast overspend.
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	The monitoring report is not a statutory requirement, but it is a requirement of the Council's Financial Regulations.
Crime and Disorder	None identified at this stage.
Environment and Climate/ Ecological Emergency	The report identifies a wide range of expenditure headings which support the Council's Climate and Emergency Action Plan.
Health & Wellbeing	None identified at this stage.
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	None identified at this stage.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	The Council's overall financial position is a key risk in the Council's Corporate Risk Register.
Equality and Diversity	None identified at this stage.
Privacy and Data Protection	None identified at this stage.

7. Appendices

7.1 The following documents are published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix I: Detailed Revenue Monitoring position
- Appendix II: Capital Expenditure to end of September 2025

8. Background Papers

- Policy & Resources Committee 5 February 2025
- Council Meeting 19 February 2025

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Revenue Forecast Position Quarter - Forecast as at Qtr 2 2025/26				
	Budget	Actual	Forecast	Variance
Strategic Management Team	743,870	404,303	750,868	6,998
Mayoral Activities	70,450	43,424	75,620	5,170
Chief Executive	814,320	447,727	826,488	12,168
Communications & Policy	375,790	179,540	372,670	(3,120)
Electoral Services	252,590	178,311	291,257	38,667
Transformation	150,810	0	150,810	0
Information Governance	106,410	53,196	106,410	0
Democratic Services - Team	203,010	98,407	198,417	(4,593)
Democratic Services - Members	462,080	230,320	446,087	(15,993)
Elections, Democratic Services & Information Governance	1,174,900	560,234	1,192,981	18,081
Private Sector Housing	282,250	360,799	312,101	29,851
Customer Services	801,140	380,407	788,676	(12,464)
Homelessness	2,359,190	173,710	2,717,541	358,351
Housing Development	0	69,580	0	0
Licensing	(77,425)	(16,973)	(82,152)	(4,727)
Resilience	100,610	54,625	100,310	(300)
Community Services	962,180	558,075	931,285	(30,895)
Housing & Community	4,427,945	1,580,223	4,767,761	339,816
Building Control	160,110	143,311	126,917	(33,193)
MKS Planning	126,800	(6,354)	112,190	(14,610)
Appeals	88,280	5,631	126,120	37,840
Highsted Park	343,000	285,477	343,030	30
Planning	450,280	(43,490)	701,233	250,953
Planning	1,168,470	384,575	1,409,490	241,020
Environmental Services	7,231,250	3,680,950	7,414,779	183,529
Parking & Highways	(1,981,930)	(1,042,305)	(1,948,048)	33,882
Climate Change	158,110	37,954	154,918	(3,192)
Leisure Services	3,574,970	1,048,351	3,863,442	288,472
Environment & Leisure	8,982,400	3,724,951	9,485,091	502,691
Swale House Operations	728,890	447,455	732,572	3,682
Buildings Maintenance	240,500	137,066	271,316	30,816
Asset Management	(1,927,850)	(774,424)	(1,757,961)	169,890
Economic Development	588,880	452,610	522,032	(66,848)
Regeneration & Economic Development	(369,580)	262,707	(232,041)	137,539
Procurement	82,240	39,957	81,905	(335)
Accountancy	489,110	252,224	488,204	(906)
Financial Services	211,530	81,500	175,737	(35,793)
Finance & Procurement	782,880	373,681	745,846	(37,034)
Housing Benefits	109,590	10,714,101	96,500	(13,090)
Revenues & Benefits Administration	429,320	(268,818)	372,625	(56,695)
Revenues & Benefits	538,910	10,445,283	469,125	(69,785)
Environmental Health	685,510	179,158	675,091	(10,419)
IT Service	737,550	158,681	671,131	(66,419)
IT Maintenance & Licences	713,790	499,140	894,524	180,734
Information Technology	1,451,340	657,821	1,565,655	114,315
Internal Audit	165,430	42,520	165,430	0
HR Service	352,130	81,073	326,520	(25,610)
Corporate Training	51,700	32,228	133,511	81,811
Apprenticeships	88,780	16,573	32,733	(56,047)
Human Resources	492,610	129,873	492,764	154
Legal	702,200	737,403	704,917	2,717
Drainage Board Levy	1,049,000	499,758	1,018,361	(30,639)
Interest & Capital Financing	2,160,460	1,376,079	1,700,194	(460,266)
Contributions to Reserves	15,000	15,000	15,000	0
Non Distributed Pension Costs	1,076,620	954,354	1,060,000	(16,620)
Corporate Overheads	626,785	24,461	616,459	(10,326)
Corporate Costs/Provisions	754,740	0	0	(754,740)
Corporate Overheads & Capital Financing	4,633,605	2,369,893	3,391,653	(1,241,952)
TOTAL	27,075,730	22,575,349	27,051,283	(24,447)
Financed By:				
Use of Reserves	(1,140,340)	(1,357,340)	(1,114,737)	25,603
Revenue Support Grant	(362,450)	(362,717)	(362,450)	0
Business Rates	(12,104,000)	(21,750,583)	(12,104,000)	0
New Homes Bonus	(987,600)	(493,811)	(987,620)	(20)
Other Grants	(2,087,510)	(369,084)	(2,087,490)	20
Collection Fund Deficit	45,000	43,841	43,841	(1,159)
Council Tax Requirement	(10,438,830)	(10,439,081)	(10,438,827)	3
Total Financing	(27,075,730)	(34,728,775)	(27,051,283)	24,447
Net Total	0	(12,153,426)	0	0

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	Working Budget			Actuals YTD			Forecast			Slippage Net £	Projected Variance £
	Expenditure £	Income £	Net £	Expenditure £	Income £	Net £	Expenditure £	Income £	Net £		
Disabled Facilities Grants	8,660,750	(8,660,750)	0	473,689	0	473,689	1,000,000	(1,000,000)	0	0	0
Housing Renovation Grants	0	0	0	15,812	0	15,812	30,000	(30,000)	0	0	0
Local Housing Company	21,062,660	(968,750)	20,093,910	0	0	0	0	0	0	20,093,910	0
Land Regeneration/Improvement	52,060	0	52,060	0	0	0	0	0	0	52,060	0
Temporary Accommodation	1,694,630	(325,000)	1,369,630	1,565,810	0	1,565,810	1,833,824	(464,194)	1,369,630	0	0
Capital expansion of CCTV service	282,900	0	282,900	0	0	0	282,900	0	282,900	0	0
Housing & Community Services	31,753,000	(9,954,500)	21,798,500	2,055,312	0	2,055,312	3,146,724	(1,494,194)	1,652,530	20,145,970	0
Faversham Creek Basin	200,000	0	200,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	200,000	0
Swale House Refurbishment	0	0	0	(8,121)	0	(8,121)	0	0	0	0	0
High Streets	57,000	(57,000)	0	0	0	0	57,000	(57,000)	0	0	0
Rural England Prosperity Fund	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
UK SPF	13,240	(13,240)	0	31,625	(1,386)	30,239	31,625	(31,625)	0	0	0
Levelling Up Scheme	15,656,333	(15,515,333)	141,000	4,585,945	0	4,585,945	12,316,108	(12,316,108)	0	141,000	0
REPR Rural Prosperity Fund	461,720	(461,720)	0	0	(146,660)	(146,660)	0	0	0	0	0
Regeneration & Economic Development	16,388,293	(16,047,293)	341,000	4,609,448	(148,046)	4,461,402	12,404,733	(12,404,733)	0	341,000	0
Gunpowder Works Oare Faversham	26,240	(26,240)	0	1,750	0	1,750	26,240	(26,240)	0	0	0
The Forum Public Conveniences	42,000	(42,000)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Beach Huts	143,000	0	143,000	0	0	0	223,589	0	223,589	0	80,589
Play Areas & Improvements	519,000	(519,000)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Leisure Centre Contingency	287,180	0	287,180	0	0	0	287,180	0	287,180	0	0
Lynsted Churchyard Walls	120,000	(120,000)	0	0	0	0	120,000	(120,000)	0	0	0
Coach Parking	35,000	(35,000)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Waste Vehicle Fleet	114,920	0	114,920	(31,393)	0	(31,393)	0	0	0	114,920	0
Barton's Point Drainage Project	51,640	(51,640)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tennis Court Improvements	1,150	(1,150)	0	0	0	0	1,039	(1,039)	0	0	0
Milton Rec Changing Pavilion	0	0	0	29,418	0	29,418	29,418	(29,418)	0	0	0
Environment & Leisure	1,340,130	(795,030)	545,100	(225)	0	(225)	687,466	(176,697)	510,769	114,920	80,589
Finance & Procurement	120,800	(120,800)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Information Technology	147,920	(147,920)	0	34,669	0	34,669	137,000	(137,000)	0	0	0
Resources	268,720	(268,720)	0	34,669	0	34,669	137,000	(137,000)	0	0	0
	49,750,143	(27,065,543)	22,684,600	6,699,205	(148,046)	6,551,159	16,375,923	(14,212,624)	2,163,299	20,601,890	80,589

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Policy and Resources Committee	
Meeting date	26 November 2025
Report Title	Budget 2026/27 and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) Forecasts
EMT Lead	Lisa Fillery, Director of Resources
Head of Service	Claire Stanbury, Head of Finance and Procurement
Lead Officer	Claire Stanbury, Head of Finance and Procurement
Classification	Open
Recommendations	The Policy and Resources Committee is asked to; 1. Note the draft 2026/27 revenue and capital budget forecasts; 2. Note the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) projections; 3. Note the proposals for the fees and charges increases; 4. Approve the proposed budget consultation; 5. Note the cessation of the Kent Business Rates Pool for 2026/27.

1. Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the draft 2026/27 revenue and capital budgets and the draft Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). The MTFS is a strategic document, supporting delivery of the Corporate Plan outcomes and helping to ensure a focus on the Council's medium term budget position. It establishes how the Council's priorities will be achieved by setting out the framework within which resources are available over the medium term and the financial challenges facing the Council in terms of funding gaps. The context within which these budget forecasts remains complex with the ongoing service pressures, continuing cost-of-living crisis, and an uncertain future for local government funding, all of which make forecasting challenging.
- 1.2 The results of the long awaited Fair Funding Review and Business Rate Reset are due to be published before Christmas and so are not reflected in this report. The variations on the assumed outcomes of the review range from
 - a neutral position where changes to grants and business rate income are balanced
 - a position where grants are lost, but business rate position is neutral
 - a model reducing both grants and business rates significantly
 - a model reducing business rates but compensating with additional grant
- 1.3 This report currently assumes the risk of grant losses in 2026/27 but a neutral business rate position. This will be updated for the final budget proposal when the Fair Funding 2.0 details will have been published.
- 1.4 This report details the position for Swale Borough Council and makes no assumption of the financial implications of the outcome of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) proposals to be implemented from 1 April 2028. As such the future year assumptions estimate the position for Swale Borough Council and the costs to deliver the services that are currently within our budget framework. As the LGR work progresses and decisions are made on the future, the assumptions and financial planning reports will be amended accordingly.
- 1.5 The updated high level funding forecasts in this strategy build on previous figures from the 2025/26 budget setting exercise, which were forecasting future year deficits in the region of £2.1m in 2026/27 (excluding the uncertainty around government grant funding of £1.9m). The updated budget gap now differs from this peaking at £5.1m

(again excluding government grants) in 2028/29, in the main this is due to economic inflationary pressures, delays to funding reviews and some key service pressures, all of which are impacting on the medium term projections (Appendix I).

Updated funding forecasts	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Internal Drainage Board Levy	1,037	1,089	1,089	1,089	1,089
Base budget & reserve contributions	26,475	27,111	28,187	29,587	29,587
Revenue Support Grant (RSG)	(362)	(369)	(376)	(376)	(376)
Extended Producer Responsibility Grant	(1,349)	0	0	0	0
Business Rates	(12,104)	(12,379)	(12,379)	(12,379)	(12,379)
New Homes Bonus	(988)	0	0	0	0
National Insurance Contribution Grant	(200)	(200)	(200)	(200)	(200)
Recovery Grant	(539)	0	0	0	0
Uncertain Government Grants		(2,876)	(2,876)	(2,876)	(2,876)
Kent Pool Growth Fund (Business Rates)	(855)	(855)	(855)	(855)	(855)
Council Tax	(10,439)	(10,856)	(11,289)	(11,740)	(12,208)
(Surplus)/deficit	677	665	1,301	2,250	1,782

1.6 A detailed budget review has taken place over previous months to identify efficiencies and additional income to help support frontline services and to balance the Council's financial position. For next year this totals around £1.2m (Appendix II) and is supported by various increases to fees and charges (Appendix V), service reviews, and savings agreed in previous years' Medium Term Financial Plans. There is also a plan to continue to use Business Rate income within the Kent Pool Growth Fund, to recharge costs that meet the criteria of the pooled fund. Based on current forecasts this still leaves a deficit of £665k which will need to be supported from reserves if further savings cannot be identified. Based on the projections above and the spending estimates and use of reserves in the current year the earmarked reserves are forecast to be insufficient to address any budget gap after 2029/30.

1.7 The capital spending projections for future years (Appendix IV) are included and assume borrowing of £24.3m between 2025/26 and 2028/29. The main borrowing will be in relation to Rainbow homes. However, with the recent instability of the financial markets and increases to borrowing costs it will continue to be necessary to fundamentally review schemes with borrowing requirements to ensure they remain affordable and still deliver the anticipated benefits. In summary the key messages are as follows;

- Estimated budget gap of £665k for 2026/27 even with current savings and fee increases
- We can deliver our statutory services with current income levels but nothing more
- To fund non-statutory services we need to find more income/savings/reserves
- Our reserves will help set a balanced budget for the next 3 years but not after 2029/30
- Funding from reserves is not a sustainable way to manage our budget
- We need to identify more efficiencies and income to make the budget sustainable
- The current projections are based on a number of assumptions which can and do change.

Kent Business Rate Pool

1.8 MHCLG have confirmed that business rates pools will continue in 2026/27. Authorities wishing to have a business rates pool in 2026/27 will need to register their interest by

- 1.9 The reset of the Business Rate system will remove all the growth accumulated since 2013/14. Swale has benefited significantly from business rate growth with our current budget assuming income in excess of £12m from retained business rates. The creation of the Kent Business Rate Pool meant that we maximized the retention of business rates raised within the county. The proposed changes to the system mean that the options for growth will be limited, at least in the first year following the reset and the unknown position of our reset baseline funding positions means that there is a much higher chance of one or more of the pool members finishing the financial year below their baseline funding – meaning that the pool would have to cover this “loss” position.
- 1.10 In 2025/26, pool members want a top-up pool (i.e. one with no levy) combined with the highest amount of business rates growth. The selection of pool members is based on each authority’s tariff (or top-up) and their likely business rates growth. This calculation changes for 2026/27 with the new levy arrangements. Levy payments are based on the relationship between Baseline Funding Level (BFL) and growth (rather than top-up/ tariff and growth). Furthermore, all authorities will pay some levy on their growth outside the pool.
- 1.11 Given the uncertainty around BFLs and the growth assumption for Kent districts, it is proposed that the pool is closed in its current form and that no expressions of interest are registered with MHCLG. Although we are able to withdraw an expression of interest once funding details are confirmed, we are unable to change the membership and so the risk of the unknown is considered too high as at this stage we do not know enough about the pattern of growth to identify the optimum membership of the pool.
- 1.12 Kent Finance Officers propose that the pool arrangement is reviewed once the new system has been in place for a year or two and the impact on growth, tariffs and levies is clearer.
- 1.13 Accounting for business rates for 2026/27 will be for Swale Borough Council only with any growth or reductions in the collection fund position being attributable to Swale only.
- 1.14 Delegation to decide on continuing to be a member of the pool has been given to the Director of Resources in consultation with the Chair of P&R if there are no significant changes to the arrangement. The situation that we find ourselves in for the coming year, is the disbandment of the pool given the change in system and so there is not technically a decision to be taken, however this committee needs to be made aware of the position.

2. Proposals

- 2.1 Given the timing of this report this is an interim step in the development of fully balanced budget proposals. The updated Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) is attached at Appendix I. It currently shows a gap of £665k which needs to be addressed to balance the 2026/27 budget. To reduce the gap to this level, it is currently proposed to use £855k from Business Rates Growth Fund reserve as was agreed as part of the 2024/25 MTFS.
- 2.2 The savings, efficiencies and increases to income totalling £1.2m that the Council has identified to help support the 2026/27 budget can be found within Appendix II, (£218k of these savings were agreed as part of the budget process for 2025/26). The draft capital budget is included within Appendix IV while the fees and charges proposals for next year are covered by Appendix V. Appendix VI includes a risk assessment for next year’s budget.

- 2.3 The MTFS and budget forecasts include the latest information available. It should however be noted that some of the assumptions that have currently been made will not be confirmed until the outcomes of the Fair Funding Review 2.0 and Business Rate reset are announced, the date of which is currently anticipated to be during the week commencing 15 December 2025. This includes whether there will be any changes to the level of increase in Council Tax is allowed for district councils.
- 2.4 The 2025/26 budget includes an allocation for the roll out of the Extended Producer Responsibility initiative that aims to transfer the cost of collecting and disposing of recycling waste to the organisations that are responsible for producing it. Local authority payments were due to start in 2024/25 but this had been delayed until 2025/26. The funding is to support the delivery of our waste collection service which has required significant growth to the base budget, this funding will help cover those costs.

Kent Business Rate Pool

- 2.5 To acknowledge the disbandment of the Kent Business Rate Pool given the changes to the retained business rates system and the uncertainty around how pooling arrangements can be set up, which councils should be included and the impact of changes to the levy payments due on any future growth.

3. Alternative Options

- 3.1 Budget Build - Do nothing – This is not recommended as the Council is legally required to set a balanced budget. A further budget report will be submitted to Policy & Resources and Council in February 2026.
- 3.2 Kent Business Rate Pool - Given the position of the other Kent Business Rate Pool members on the need to disband for 2026/27 there is not another option for pooling at this time.

4. Consultation undertaken or proposed

- 4.1 Formal consultation of the proposed budget will be undertaken. The Budget proposals contained in this report will be made available for comment on the Council's website from 27 November to 8 January.

6. Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	The budget proposals support the achievement of the Council's corporate priorities, and contribute directly to the running of the Council.
Financial, Resource and Property	The report sets out the Council's resourcing position.
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	The Council is required to set a Council tax and a balanced budget.
Crime and Disorder	Any potential implications will be addressed by service managers in their budget proposals.

Issue	Implications
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	The proposals support the Climate Change and Ecological motion previously agreed.
Health and Wellbeing	Any potential implications will be addressed by service managers in their budget proposals.
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	Any potential implications will be addressed by service managers in their budget proposals.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	Any potential implications will be addressed by service managers in their budget proposals.
Equality and Diversity	Any potential implications will be addressed by service managers in their budget proposals.
Privacy and Data Protection	Any potential implications will be addressed by service managers in their budget proposals.

7. Appendices

The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix I: Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) – General Fund Summary Forecasts 2026/27
- Appendix II: Detailed Budget Position 2026/27
- Appendix III: Budget Change Summary 2026/27
- Appendix IV: Capital Programme 2026/27
- Appendix V: Fees and Charges 2026/27
- Appendix VI: Risk Assessment 2026/27

8. Background papers

7.1 None.

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Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2026/27 to 2029/30

Swale Borough Council

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9. Links to other strategies
10. Looking forward
11. Closing the budget gap
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1. Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)

The document that guides the Council's strategic financial planning and forecasting

- 1.1 Swale Borough Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) is a strategic document that supports the delivery of the Corporate Plan outcomes and helps ensure a focus on the Council's medium term budget position. The MTFS establishes how the Council's priorities will be achieved by setting out the framework within which resources are available over the medium term and the financial challenges facing the Council in terms of future funding gaps and now includes the preparedness for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). It is the method by which the Council translates its goals into action by considering;

- Where the Council is now
- Where the Council wants to be
- What the Council's plans are to get there

- 1.2 The MTFS helps to ensure that the Council is 'doing the right thing' while taking account of internal strengths/weaknesses and external threats/opportunities. It also provides a link between the Council's service objectives and its financial capacity, which effectively asks the question 'can the strategic objectives be achieved within the available financial envelope?' The aim should be to provide a framework to support and inform the medium-term planning considerations and the budget setting process. Essentially the MTFS should include consideration of a broad range of factors that influence the Council's financial sustainability, which now includes supporting the transition process for Local Government Reorganisation.

The MTFS Aims to:

- Provide a high-level assessment of the resources available to support the Corporate Plan outcomes, outlining the high-level funding projections for the following four financial years (beyond the current year);
 - Explore the financial context in which the Council operates, considering local and national factors. These will include known spending pressures and commitments, along with the implications of local government financial reform, Local Government Reorganisation and the impact of the national economic outlook;
 - Explore the demands on the capital programme both in terms of ambition and resources along with the impact on the revenue account and reserve levels held by the Council;
 - Highlight how the Strategy links in with and supports other Council strategies and policies;
 - Assess the risks on which the Plan is based;
 - Provide preparatory work for the following year's budget;
 - Address the sustainability of the Council's financial position.
- 1.3 The MTFS is fundamentally linked to the Corporate Plan 2023-2027 that was adopted by full council on 4 April 2024.
- 1.4 The Council is currently projecting a deficit position from 2025/26 onwards. Forecasting the deficit highlights the growing gap between the Council's expenditure requirements and the income that can be generated. At this stage the outcomes of the local government funding reforms and the business rate reset are unknown. The future year projections can be found within Appendix II.

2. Corporate Plan 2023 - 2027

'Learning from the past, focusing on the future'

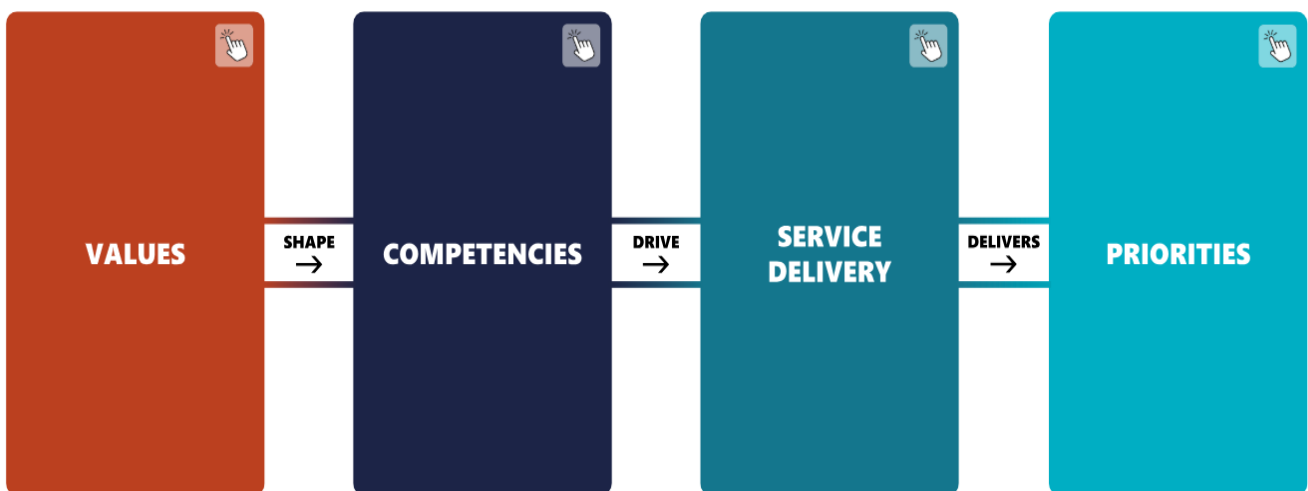
2.1 The corporate plan was adopted in April 2024, following consideration by service and area committees and a public consultation exercise. The plan states the vision of the council to learn from the past and focus on the future. It showcases the achievements of the council over the past few years and documents the priorities for the period to 2027.

2.2 Our priorities

- Community – To enable our residents to live, work and enjoy their leisure time safely in our borough and to support community resilience
- Economy – Working with our businesses and community organisations to work towards a sustainable economy which delivers for local people.
- Environment - Working with our businesses and community organisations to work towards a sustainable economy which delivers for local people.
- Health and Housing - To aspire to be a borough where everyone has access to a decent home and improved health and wellbeing.
- Running the Council - Working within our resources to proactively engage with communities and outside bodies to deliver in a transparent and efficient way

2.3 Our values and competencies

The council has developed a new framework for our values and competencies. These are our guiding principles for delivering excellent service and form the foundation for service delivery and how the strategic priorities are achieved, all of which align to realise the overall vision for the council.



Our Values are the guiding principles that shape the culture and behaviours of the council. They influence decision making and how we interact with others and underpin the development of our competencies. The new values adopted during 2025/26 are as follows:

- **Honest** – Truthful and take responsibility. To act with integrity and keep commitments. Build trust through fairness and transparency.
- **Empathetic** – Listen actively and with care. To respond with compassion and create a supportive environment for all.
- **Adaptable** – Stay open to change. To learn from challenges and adjust with a positive mindset.
- **Respectful** – Treat everyone with fairness and dignity. To listen to diverse perspectives. Create an environment where all voices are heard.
- **Together** – Work collaboratively for shared goals. To support one another effectively and build strong and trusting relationships.

3. Context

Demographic and landscape issues that set the scene for the budget and financial strategy

- 3.1 For such a relatively small area, the borough is a remarkably diverse place, including the historic market town of Faversham, the traditional seaside resort of Sheerness and the more industrial market town of Sittingbourne. In recent years Sittingbourne has been the focus of major council-led redevelopment, with current schemes the Levelling Up Fund project, being focused on Sheerness. The Council's urban centres are connected both physically and culturally by the borough's extensive and important rural areas, accounting for around a quarter of the population, which take in several protected wildlife habitats and part of the Kent Downs area of outstanding natural beauty.
- 3.2 Swale's demographic make-up is no less diverse than its geography, including a mix of affluent and less affluent communities, but in general the area is less well-off than is typical for the south-east, and there are some concentrated pockets of severe socioeconomic disadvantage to be found in locations across the borough. While the causes of this are deep-rooted and complex, the outcome is that a proportion of our residents suffer from entrenched inequality and a lack of opportunities which the council needs to do what it can to address.
- 3.3 The indices of multiple deprivation are calculated by government based on a range of measures of poverty and associated disadvantage. The latest data we have on deprivation is from the 2021 census. Previously published data from 2019 reported that the borough was the 69th most disadvantaged of 317 shire districts in England, and the second most disadvantaged in Kent. The 2021 census data shows no change to that position.
- 3.4 Over recent decades, Swale has seen a successful diversification of its economy, which now has key strengths in manufacturing and distribution, as well as high-skilled activities including cutting-edge technology and life sciences. However, it remains the case that much of the borough's employment, including employment created in the last few years, is at the lower end of the skills spectrum.

4. Global and National Issues

Some financial pressures are driven nationally and indeed globally and are beyond the control of the Council. Some of these which impact Swale are shown below

Global issues

- 4.1 The Net Zero agenda represents a significant global issue, not just a national or local one and at the present time some of the emerging green technologies, which are undoubtedly the way to go for the future, can be significantly more expensive to deliver at the current time. Energy prices remain high, and this continues to impact on costs for some of our service areas.

Political

- 4.2 The general election in July 2024 resulted in election of the first Labour led government since 2010. The local government finance policy statement 2025 to 2026 published in late November 2024 laid out the new government's proposals to fundamentally improve the way councils are funded, including a 'reset' of the business rate retention scheme. Details were consulted on early in 2025, with implementation of the reforms beginning through a multi-year settlement for 2026-27. Details of the reforms are yet to be published and are not reflected in this draft budget report.

Central Government Funding

- 4.3 We were hoping this year for a multi-year settlement, but following the publication of the local government policy statement and the draft local government finance settlement we have another one year settlement for 2025/26 with a promise of multi-year settlements from 2026/27.
- 4.4 The 2025/26 draft settlement published on 18 December 2024 detailed the central government grant allocations for 2025/26. The settlement included the continuation of the New Homes Bonus for one final year, the abolishment of the services grant, reduction of the Funding Guarantee grant to zero and the introduction of a Recovery Grant. A further grant was awarded to compensate for the cost arising from the increased employer National Insurance Contributions (NICs), however the amounts allocated did not cover the additional cost.
- 4.5 As part of the funding settlement for 2025/26 the government confirmed the new funding stream, subject to the successful delivery of the Extended Producer Responsibility for packaging (pEPR) scheme. As yet we do not have any further details on the burdens arising from the allocation of the grant and again this is an indicative one year allocation.
- 4.6 The position for Swale with regards to the business rates reset remains unclear, however as previously reported there is a significant risk to the council around the potential loss of business rate growth within our base budget. Indications are that transitional funding will be available to councils that are negatively impacted by the reset and so the current budget assumes a neutral position for business rates.

Inflation

- 4.7 Inflation has increased slightly since April 2025 with September CPI sitting at 3.8%. Wage inflation has started to reduce in recent months, but it is still trending at a higher rate than CPI. Many of the Council's contracts are linked to inflation indices, so we are

having to pay more just to stand still. Given that contracts costs are reviewed annually, it also means there is a lag before the increases are applied. This means that there is a delay in terms of cost increases, but also a delay in seeing the effects of falling inflation.

- 4.8 This Medium-Term Financial Plan assumes inflation increases at between 3 and 4% for the coming financial year, remaining at 3% from 2027/28. Future year assumptions will be updated annually as part of the review of our plan over the medium term.
- 4.9 Inflation is difficult to predict in the current situation, and the table below demonstrates the impact that changes in these assumptions for contracts and staffing costs could have on the budget assumptions.

Year	-1%	Estimated increase	1%
2026/27	1,643,400	1,660,000	1,676,600
2027/28	1,545,390	1,561,000	1,576,610
2028/29	1,585,980	1,602,000	1,618,020
2029/30	1,627,560	1,644,000	1,660,440

Interest Rates

- 4.10 After a period of increasing interest rates, these are now starting to decrease, albeit at a much slower rate, with forecasts suggesting that rates will continue to fall slowly throughout 2025.
- 4.11 The current level of interest rates is having a positive impact on the council's treasury management position, with interest receipts on cash holdings being higher than the cost of the current borrowing position.
- 4.12 However, the downside to the higher interest rates is that it has meant assumptions on the cost of financing our capital programme have increased, and we need to keep this position under review to ensure that capital schemes remain affordable. Any changes that impact on the budget framework will be reported to committee for further decisions to be taken on whether to continue with the current scheme.

Local Government Reorganisation

- 4.13 Following the publication of the English Devolution White Paper in December 2024, all councils in Kent and Medway were invited in February 2025 by the Secretary of State to submit proposals for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) for the region of Kent.
- 4.14 On 19 November 2025, Full Council are meeting to consider the options for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) for submission to government on 28th November. The government's decision on the unitary configuration for Kent is expected in the early summer of 2026.
- 4.15 This budget reports the position for Swale Borough Council for the next few years in the run up to the proposed reorganisation changes expected to be implemented in 2028/29. Any changes to that assumption will be updated in future budget reports.

5 Local Pressures

These arise from local circumstances and demand for services. The financial effects of these must be dealt with by the Council, as there is often no external funding

Local Economic changes

- 5.1 Swale derives significant sums of income from fees and charges for services such as car parking and planning. These will be affected by factors outside the Council's control, such as consumer confidence, the general health of the economy and the cost-of-living crisis.

Waste Management

- 5.2 As Members will be aware the new waste contract started in March 2024. The budget position includes provision for the new contract price and the capital financing of the vehicle fleet.
- 5.3 The government have announced the funding for the Extended Producer Responsibility initiative that aims to transfer the cost of collecting and disposing of recycling waste to the organisations that are responsible for producing it. Local authority payments were due to start in 2024/25 but this has been delayed until 2025/26. As reported above the grant allocations have been published but the position regarding any new burdens resulting from the scheme are still to be determined.

Temporary accommodation

- 5.4 The council has a duty to provide emergency/temporary accommodation (TA) for homeless households whilst assessing their case and/or ahead of securing more permanent accommodation. A range of accommodation is currently used to cover this duty: some units owned by Swale, some units owned by housing associations, nightly let self-contained and shared accommodation and rooms in hotels/bed and breakfast accommodation.
- 5.5 Whilst some of the costs of this accommodation are covered by housing benefit this is only payable up to 90% of the 2011 Local Housing Allowance (LHA) which is the amount set by government that can be covered by housing benefit. The difference between the actual cost and housing benefit levels is borne by the council. This has been increasing over recent years, with growth having been built into the current budget assumptions. Officers are working hard to reduce the requirement for temporary accommodation with the number of households in TA as at the end of September 2025 being 282 compared to 273 at the end of December 2024. Despite the success of the team in reducing the number of households in TA over recent years, the impact of higher interest rates is being seen in significant price increases from landlords.
- 5.6 As well as the costs to Swale, demand for TA in Kent is exceptionally high and often there are limited options, placements regularly occur outside the Borough. Many of the current TA options are not ideal for what are vulnerable households, accommodation that is not self-contained, not within Borough and is used for increasingly lengthy periods (we currently have 74 households that have been in TA for over 2 years).
- 5.7 Members agreed a project for the Council to purchase a number of properties that can be used to house those in need of TA. This will help to control the spiraling costs, although it is not a panacea for this problem. The project has been progressing well, with 50 properties now purchased, and a further 2 due to complete.

Supported Accommodation

- 5.8 A further pressure to the budget position is the loss of housing benefit subsidy on placements in certain types of supported accommodation. Where the placement is made to a landlord that is not a registered charity or a registered social landlord, the council is only able to reclaim 60% of the housing subsidy awarded to tenants. The growing number of placements in this type of accommodation is adding significant pressure to the budget.

Local Council Tax Support Schemes (LCTS)

- 5.9 The LCTS scheme was implemented in April 2013 as a replacement to Council Tax Benefit. This change was part of wider welfare reforms to reduce expenditure, giving responsibility of the replacement scheme to Local Councils. LCTS schemes should encourage people into work and be based on the ability to pay. Previously the Council Tax Benefit scheme was 100% funded through subsidy paid to the Council from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).
- 5.10 From April 2013 each billing authority was given the discretion to set their own scheme, although at the outset the government did stipulate that the scheme would not change the 100% maximum support for low-income pensioners i.e. they would receive the same level of support as they did under the system of Council Tax Benefit. Funding for LCTS is no longer received as a separate subsidy grant but is now within the overall Local Government Funding system as non ring-fenced funding within the Revenue Support Grant (RSG) and baseline funding level. The local scheme (for Swale) has changed several times since the introduction of LCTS in 2013/14.
- 5.11 In April 2023 the Council introduced a banded council tax reduction scheme which aimed to simplify the understanding and processing of the previous scheme. During the summer of 2025 the council consulted on changes to the current Council Tax support scheme with proposals to increase the current level of support from 80% to 90% or 100%. Feedback on the consultation is still being reviewed and a report will follow to committee for members to decide on the level of changes to be made. Full council will then approve the scheme for 2026/27 in due course.

Lower Medway Internal Drainage Board Precept

- 5.12 The Internal Drainage Board Levy has been estimated for 2026/27 with an increase of 3%, plus a property adjustment. The levy position is just over £1m for Swale, and the Council has no control over the setting of this levy. Following significant lobbying from local government colleagues, the impact of increases to internal drainage board levies was acknowledged by the Government in 2023/24 with the introduction of the Internal Drainage Board Levies grant. This grant was awarded to 15 local authorities to provide additional and exceptional one-off funding to councils most affected by increases in Internal Drainage Board Levies. Swale received £40k of this grant in 2023/24. A further one-year grant was announced for 2024/25, but Swale were not awarded an allocation from this round of funding. For 2025/26 we received an allocation of £40,000. Government have indicated that there is no additional grant funding available to support the cost of Drainage Board Levies, but the level of funding may be maintained.
- 5.13 Government is now recognising that the pressure these levies apply to collection authorities is an ongoing issue and MHCLG will work with DEFRA and the local government sector to implement a long-term solution, although no plans have yet been released. The Leader and the Director of Resources continue to represent Swale on an LGA Special Interest Group that are hoping to change the way that the current drainage board levy precept process impacts on the local government financial position.

Workforce

- 5.14 We recognise that our staff are our most important resource at the heart of the services we provide. We currently have around 256 full time equivalent posts and 310 actual members of staff. Our pay bill is our most significant area of direct spend and stands at £14.2m including pension contributions of £2.8m as per the 2025/26 budget. The pension fund is administered by Kent County Council (KCC), employee contribution rates are set by Government and range from 5.5% to 12.5%. The fund actuary Barnett Waddingham sets the employer contribution rate, currently 20.5%, plus an annual fixed sum.
- 5.15 The Fund is valued once every three years and the valuation as at 31 March 2022 disclosed a net deficit of £8.46m on Swale's share of the fund, a reduction of £7m from the 2019 valuation deficit of £15.5m due largely to increases in annual investment returns. The change in contribution rates because of the March 2022 valuation took effect from 1 April 2023. The contribution rate increased from 18.5% to 20.5% but the back funding element decreased. The fund is due its triennial valuation as at 31 March 2025 with changes to the valuation rates effective from 1 April 2026. The final outcome of the valuation position will be reflected in the final budget position, but at this stage an increase in contributions is not expected.
- 5.16 The chancellor's budget announced increases to National Insurance contributions for employers, however the announcement also included an offset for public service organisations indicating that this increase will be covered by funding from central government. However the level allocated did not cover the full cost of the increase so the 2025/26 budget was amended to cover the shortfall.

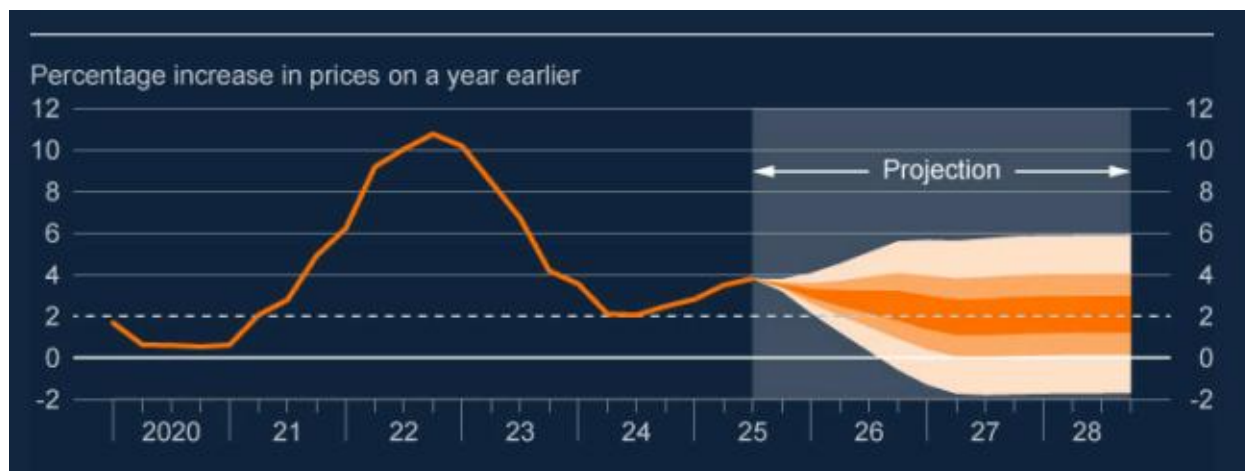
6. Inflation

Inflation is the rate prices for goods and services that the Council buys are expected to rise.

- 6.1 Inflation has significantly eroded the Council's spending power over the past few years. Although inflation has stabilised, with the last 3 months to September 2025 reporting CPI at 3.8% there is a long-lasting impact from the high levels of inflation experienced over the recent years. The current position of 3.8% is in excess of the increase that can be levied on council tax and so costs continue to outpace our tax raising power.
- 6.2 The Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) are slowly reducing the bank base rate of interest as inflation falls and stabilises, but the reduction in the interest rate is slow in order to monitor the impact of other shocks to the economy or increases in energy or import prices.
- 6.3 The Council assumes in this financial strategy that inflation will broadly follow the pattern in the graph below as outlined by the Bank of England with general price increases being assumed at around 3-4% for 2026/27. There are also some areas and contracts, such as the waste contract, which use different indices to calculate annual increases, and these are taken account of where appropriate.

Chart 1 – MPC Forecasts November 2025

Bank of England CPI projection



Source: Bank of England Monetary Policy Report November 2025

- 6.4 **Staff Pay** – The Council is not part of a National Joint Council (NJC) national pay agreement, so any increases are set and agreed locally in negotiation with the Union. The current financial plan makes provision for a pay award next financial year and pay negotiation discussions with the union are due to commence shortly. The budget also includes provision for turnover savings (for staff leaving and temporarily vacant posts etc) of 2%. As a guide a 1% increase equates to approximately £126,000 annually.
- 6.5 **Income (fees and charges)** – As in the previous year, increases in the fees and charges for 2026/27 are being recommended for an increase in line with our inflationary and cost of living increases.

7 Funding changes

Local Government is currently going through a significant period of change in terms of the way it is funded and the way the funding elements are to be calculated for the future

Local Government Funding Settlement Funding – last year's forecasts

- 7.1 The settlement is issued by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and for Swale comprises several elements including Revenue Support Grant (RSG), New Homes Bonus (NHB), Baseline Funding Level (via the Business Rates Retention Scheme) and Council Tax (through the setting of referendum principles) but has more recently also included the Services Grant, a Funding Guarantee Grant and a Recovery Grant. The 2025/26 Settlement confirmed some additional one-off grant funding, and a further year's allocation of New Homes Bonus. Unfortunately, the settlement was once again for one year only, despite some indications that there would be a return to a multi-year settlement. RSG is an un ring-fenced grant which can be spent on services at Swale's discretion.

Settlement Funding

- 7.2 At the time of writing, the Chancellor has yet to deliver her Autumn Statement which is expected to be announced on 26 November 2025. The Autumn Statement responds to the OBR forecasts and sets out the high level position for the medium-term path for

public finances. A number of predictions are being made in relation to taxation plans, and further changes to National Insurance contributions. The key issues for Swale and district authorities will be the impact of the Fair Funding Review coupled with any decisions arising from the budget.

- 7.3 As reported previously this year's local government finance settlement was once again a single year allocation. The Fair Funding Review 2.0 consultation paper set out the government's proposals for local government finance reform which includes the introduction of multi-year settlements from 2026/27. Early indications of the outcomes of the reform suggested that Swale would receive a fairer allocation of funding, however the industry analysis showed that some Inner London Boroughs would lose funding. Given the size and the influence of London boroughs, it is suggested that the final position may include measures that lessen the reductions for those councils. This will mean there will be less for the rest, but until we have the details of the size of the grant allocations it is impossible to include an estimate of the detailed position for Swale.
- 7.4 The government policy statement including the strategic outcomes of the Fair Funding review is expected to be published in mid November, this will give the high level position for Local Government but not the specific allocations for Swale.

District Council Band D Increases

- 7.3 The previous settlement saw increases to the core Band D threshold remaining at 2.99%. Indications are that the £5 cash threshold will also still apply, although this is now lower than the 2.99% increase allowed for most authorities.
- 7.4 The forecasts within this MTFP assume council tax increase of 2.96% for modelling purposes and coupled with growth forecasts in the tax base result in income projections of around £10.856m for 2026/27, which is growth of £417k based on the 2025/26 position. This charge equates £212.76 for an average Band D property, which is an increase of just under 12p a week for Swale's element of the council tax. It should be noted that, while this information would be used at this point for modelling purposes now, the council tax will not actually be agreed and set until the Full Council budget setting meeting in February 2026.
- 7.5 Lower tier councils continue to highlight the need to increase the cash limit, as the £5 increase is now lower than the percentage increase for almost all authorities, and as such is becoming irrelevant.

8 Income

The Council derives a limited amount of funding from Central Government, the main sources of income are locally raised taxes, fees and charges and specific grants. This section focuses on how the Council is funded and how this will continue to change over the coming years

Business Rates Retention

- 8.1 Since the 2013/14 financial year, local government has been able to retain 50% of the growth in the local business rates income to support services. The long awaited reset of the business rate system was consulted on over the summer with the results expected to be reported as part of the Fair Funding review outcomes.
- 8.2 The income from the current system is shared based on 50% being returned to Central Government, 40% being retained by Swale with 10% going to the County. However,

while technically Swale's share is projected to be around £24m, after the tariff and levy payments are made the net income to Swale reduces to just over £12.1m for 2025/26. Business Rates growth has now been built into the base budget, creating this increase, but this does create a greater risk when Business Rates reset finally takes place.

- 8.3 The budget position for 2025/26 includes the proposal to maximise the use of the Business Rates Growth Fund element of the business rates pool as the annual contributions from this element of the pool can be used to support existing council expenditure.
- 8.4 The government have announced that their reform of local government finances will include a 'reset' of business rate system early in 2025. Given the level of growth achieved in business rates for Swale, it is anticipated that this will have a negative impact. We are expecting some form of transitional grant relief which again at the current stage is unknown, so this issue continues to be monitored until we have greater clarity.

Kent Business Rates Pooling Arrangements

- 8.5 Local authorities can enter arrangements with other Councils to pool their business rates. Legislation allows councils to voluntarily enter a business rates retention pool. Councils within a pool are treated as a single entity with tariffs and top ups netted off and a single levy rate applied. In two tier areas this creates the potential for the levy paid by Borough Councils being reduced thus retaining more resources in the local area. Swale has been a member of the Kent Business Rates Pool since 2015/16, the pool must reapply to MHCLG each year for the arrangements to continue. There is still an option for the pool not to proceed up to 28 days after the Local Government Finance Settlement is received. At the Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on 28 September 2022 delegation was given to the Leader and the Director of Resources in consultation with the opposition group leaders to continue membership of the pool unless there was a significant change in circumstances. Given the position with the Fair Funding Review and the reset of business rates the Kent Pool will cease to exist. The inability to amend the pool membership position once the final funding information is known poses too much of a risk to register the interest for Kent councils, and so current pool members are not going to apply for pool membership for 2026/27. Any growth for council's business rate position for 2026/27 will be retained locally and the position will be reviewed in a year's time once the reset position is known.

New Homes Bonus (NHB)

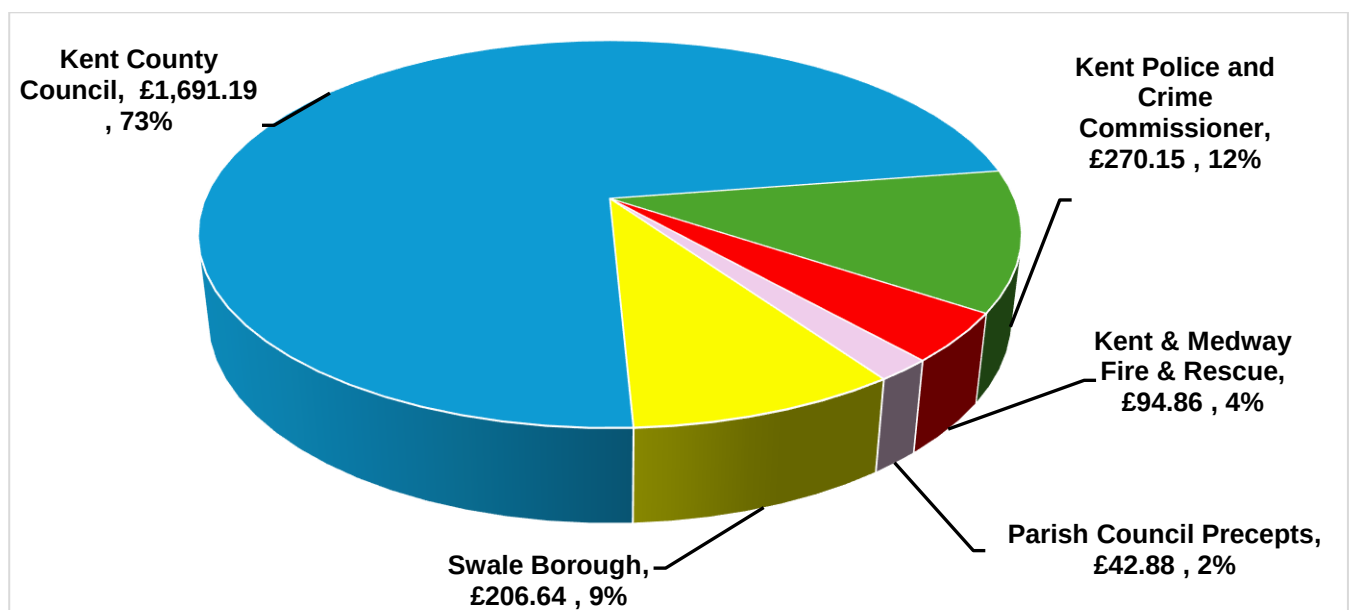
- 8.6 The New Homes Bonus was introduced in 2011/12 to incentivise and reward Councils and Communities that build new homes in their area. The bonus was originally paid as an un-ringfenced grant for six years and was paid based on the net additional homes plus an additional supplement of £350 per affordable dwelling. The payment is then split between local authority tiers: 80% to lower tier (Swale) and 20% to upper tier (KCC).
- 8.7 Since its initial introduction the payment mechanism has undergone two fundamental changes which have significantly impacted on the income received by Swale. The first was the transition from payments rolled up over a 6-year period up to 2016/17 (for which the Council received £12.3m) to 5 years in 2017/18 to the new 'floor' of 4 years from 2018/19 onwards. The second was in 2017/18 when a national baseline of 0.4% (based on borough property numbers) was introduced which attracted no bonus funding. The allocation of New Homes Bonus Grant for 2025/26 is to be the last, with this grant being subsumed within Fair Funding Allocations.

Council Tax

8.8 Swale is the billing authority for the borough, this means that Swale send out the Council Tax bills to residents and collect the Council Tax, but most of this is then distributed to the County Council and Kent Police Authority with a further element then going to town and parishes councils. The relative splits are shown within the chart below.

8.9 The charge on a Band D property which is retained by Swale is currently £206.64 (£200.70 2024/25) based on a tax base of 50,518.20 (50,367.85 2024/25). Any increases on this amount are restricted by a cap put in place by the Government, but as discussed above this amount is 3% or £5, whichever is the greater, without undertaking a referendum on the proposals. This generates an extra £417k (including tax base growth assumptions) over the 2025/26 income levels.

8.10 **Chart 2 – Council Tax split 2025/26**



8.11 Within the MTFs, it is assumed that Swale will increase its precept by 2.96% annually from next year. This table highlights the impact of the assumed increases within the charts below.

Table 1 – Projected council tax income growth

Council Tax	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
Tax Base	51,023.38	51,533.62	52,048.96	52,569.45
Band D Council Tax	£212.76	£219.06	£225.55	£232.23
Council Tax	£10.856m	£11.289m	£11.740m	£12.208m

Fees and charges

8.12 The Council has limited means to charge for some of the services it provides. Some of these charges are set by central government, but the Council has discretion over the levels of others. Of the income budgeted for 2025/26, the most significant areas include waste and recycling (£1.7m) which includes things such as garden bins and bulky waste collection, car parking income (£3.6m), commercial rents (£2.3m) and planning and building control income (£2.4m). It should however be noted that there are also

significant costs associated with generating some of this income, such as the car park maintenance and enforcement, the waste contract etc.

- 8.13 As part of the Council's drive to close the budget gap fees and charges have been reviewed. Where feasible, and within our control, inflationary increases have been applied. However, where it is felt that market forces allow, there are some above inflation increases proposed. A more comprehensive review will take place to ensure that we are covering our costs where possible.
- 8.14 It is important that the fees and charges are structured in such a way that they support the sustainability of the budget position in the medium to long term, and protect the vital frontline services.

9 Links to other strategies

The MTFS is fundamentally linked to and underpins several of the Council's key strategy and policy documents

- 9.1 The most significant linkage with the MTFS is with the Council's Corporate Plan and this is discussed in detail above. There are however several other strategies and policies supported by the MTFS.

Capital Strategy

- 9.2 The Capital Strategy sets out the Council's approach and process to the deployment of capital resources in meeting the Council's overall aims and objectives. It also provides a strategic framework for the effective management and monitoring of the capital programme, within which the Council will work in formulating the strategies for individual services. It is a primary document for all capital decision making, together with the Corporate Plan and other strategies.
- 9.3 The Strategy is reviewed on an annual basis to reflect the changing needs and priorities of the Council including residents, businesses and places. The aim of the Strategy is to provide a framework within which the Council's capital investment plans will be prioritised and delivered. The Strategy is the foundation of proper long-term planning of capital investment and how it is to be delivered.
- 9.4 The Strategy's principal objective is to deliver an affordable programme that is consistent with the Council's priorities and objectives. This Strategy is intended to be used by all stakeholders to show how the Council prioritises and makes decisions on capital investment and how this investment supports the Council's priorities and ambitions.
- 9.5 The capital programme approved by Full Council in February 2025 included investment of £21.8m 2025/26, £5m in 2026/27 and £3m in 2027/28, This is funded through a mixture of capital receipts and reserves, internal/external borrowing and s106 contributions and other grants. The timing of projects will be monitored, and the budget reprofiled as appropriate at the end of each financial year.
- 9.6 The capital programme for 2025/26 includes the continuation of the Sheerness Revival project which is being primarily funded by the Levelling Up Fund, and the purchase of properties to use for temporary accommodation. Any revenue implications of these are already included in the MTFS assumptions for 2025/26 and future years as appropriate.

The key principles of the Strategy are;

- Investing in sustainable, affordable and social housing to increase overall supply,
- Using the ability to borrow at low rates of interest for the benefit of the physical and social infrastructure of the borough and for broader social value, and
- Ensuring that the costs of borrowing are manageable long term within the Revenue budget.

Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2025/26

- 9.7 The Council's Treasury Management Strategy Statement is intrinsically linked with the Capital Strategy and the capital programme, the 2025/26 strategy was approved by Audit committee in January 2025 and amended in October 2025. The strategy manages the Council's investments, cash flows, banking, money market and capital market transactions.
- 9.8 The treasury management budget supports the funding of the Council's capital plans. These capital plans provide a guide to the borrowing need, essentially the longer-term cash flow planning, to ensure that the Council can meet its capital spending obligations and understands the revenue implications of all capital decisions.
- 9.9 This management of longer-term cash may involve arranging long or short-term loans or using longer-term cash flow surpluses. When it is prudent and economic, any debt previously incurred may be restructured to meet the Council's risk or cost objectives.
- 9.10 The Council receives and approves reports throughout the year;
- Before the start of the financial year, the updated Treasury Management Strategy Statement which includes the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) policy statement; how investments and borrowings are to be organised (including prudential indicators); and an Investment Strategy;
 - Quarterly treasury management assurance reports to update Council with the progress of the capital position; adherence to the treasury management strategy and whether any policies require revision and;
 - At the end of the financial year, a treasury management outturn report to provide details of actual indicators compared to the estimates within the strategy.

Property Asset Strategy

- 9.11 The Property Asset Strategy is set within the wider context on the Council's strategic priorities and seeks to align and review the asset base with the Council's corporate goals and objectives. The current Strategy was approved by Regeneration and Property Committee on 14 November 2023. The strategy can be found [here agenda item 5 on page 5](#).
- 9.12 The Strategy provides the framework that will guide the Council's future strategic property decisions and ensure there is a consistent way of managing the Council's land and assets. The Strategy is likely to make recommendations regarding the rationalisation of the property portfolio, and to secure additional investment income from the let estate and property investments, and future budgets will reflect this.

Commissioning and Procurement Policy

- 9.13 The Commissioning and Procurement Policy establishes the Council's strategic approach to procurement. The Policy should be read in conjunction with the Finance Code of Practice, Contract Procedure Rules and Scheme of Delegation within the Council's Constitution. It emphasises the increasing importance of using procurement to support wider social, economic and environmental objectives, in ways that offer real long term benefit.
- 9.14 The Council recognises the importance of a strong and vibrant local economy and the role it can play in stimulating local markets. The website has been developed to provide potential suppliers with a host of information in relation to the Council's procurement processes, which includes a portal advertising all current tender opportunities. To deliver an agile service the Council uses an electronic tendering system.
- 9.15 The strategy provides a corporate focus for procurement, embracing the Council's commitment to strategic procurement and its alignment with corporate objectives and values. The document is not intended to be a "user manual", although the principles contained within the strategy should be applied to all facets of procurement activity. Additional detail regarding the Council's procurement processes can be found within the Contract Procedure Rules and there are user guides available on the intranet.
- 9.16 Social value is the positive impact an organisation has further to the activities it carries out. These can be economic, social and environmental impacts. The Council recognises that Social Value can significantly help it in meeting its priorities and aspirations for the borough by supporting good jobs, better incomes and wellbeing, increased skill levels, higher value economy and higher productivity levels. The Commissioning and Procurement Policy is one of the underpinning strategies that supports the Council's priorities.
- 9.17 The Commissioning and Procurement policy has been updated to reflect the new Procurement Act, which became law in February 2025. The new policy was approved by the Policy and Resources committee in November 2024.

10 Looking forward

In the context of these pressures and reduced funding, the Council has produced a forecast for spend for Capital and Revenue purposes and anticipated use of Reserves

- 10.1 The resources position has been updated with the best information currently available against the previous budget forecasts below. The business rates and Fair Funding reviews have been further delayed and the Council is experiencing significant spending pressures in future years which is further compounded with the uncertainty around central government funding. The following table identifies a level of uncertain grant funding from 2026/27, the absence of which will increase the use of reserves/savings requirement by £2.9m per year.

Table 2 – Deficit forecasts as per the 2025/26 budget

Updated funding forecasts November 2025	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Internal Drainage Board Levy	1,037	1,089	1,089	1,089	1,089
Base budget & reserve contributions	26,475	27,111	28,187	29,587	29,587
Revenue Support Grant (RSG)	(362)	(369)	(376)	(376)	(376)
Extended Producer Responsibility Grant	(1,349)	0	0	0	0
Business Rates	(12,104)	(12,379)	(12,379)	(12,379)	(12,379)
New Homes Bonus	(988)	0	0	0	0
National Insurance Contribution Grant	(200)	(200)	(200)	(200)	(200)
Recovery Grant	(539)	0	0	0	0
Uncertain Government Grants		(2,876)	(2,876)	(2,876)	(2,876)
Kent Pool Growth Fund (Business Rates)	(855)	(855)	(855)	(855)	(855)
Council Tax	(10,439)	(10,856)	(11,289)	(11,740)	(12,208)
Projected use of reserves/savings	677	665	1,301	2,250	1,782

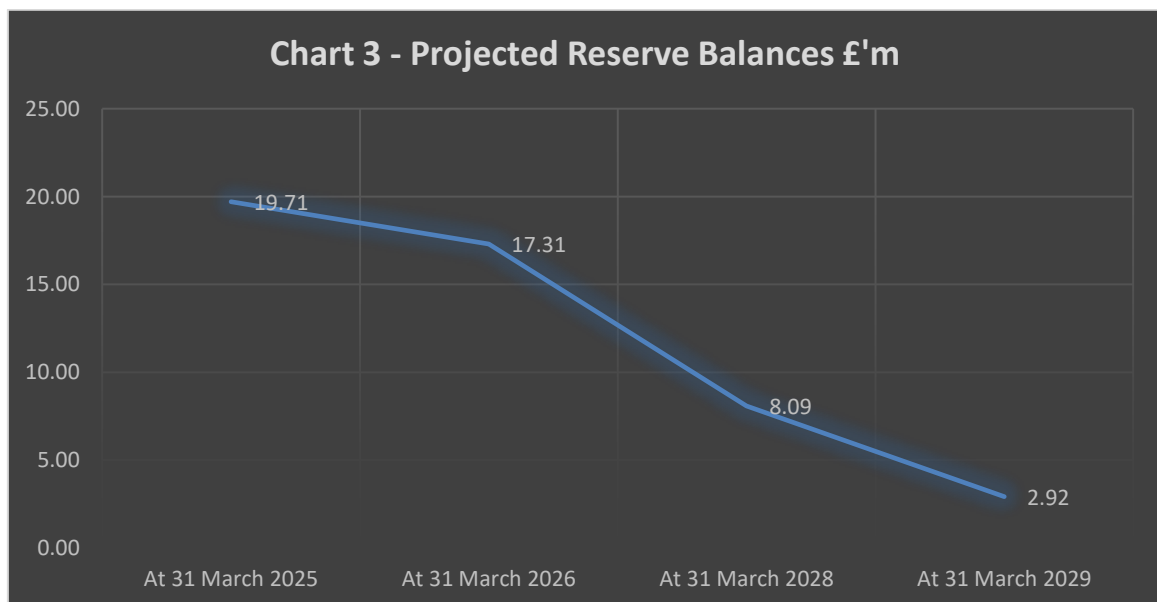
- 10.2 The additional cost pressures in 2026/27 relate mainly to inflationary pressures on pay and contracts. This is partly offset through savings proposals, increased income forecasts, assumptions on the continuation of central government funding and use of reserves. The savings breakdown can be found within Appendix III.
- 10.3 It should be noted that the grant and business rate projections for 2026/27 will be determined by the outcome of the Fair Funding Review, but it is the best information currently available.
- 10.4 Officers have previously undertaken high level analysis of the cost of the statutory and non-statutory functions which the Council undertakes. Statutory functions include things such as waste collection and the payment of benefits, non-statutory areas include things such as the provision of public conveniences and leisure facilities. Very roughly the cost of statutory services is matched by the Council's grants and income from business rates, council tax etc.

Reserves

- 10.5 The Council holds several 'usable' reserves both for revenue and capital purposes which fall within one of the following categories:
- General Reserve
 - Earmarked Reserves
 - Ringfenced Reserves
 - Capital Receipts Reserve
- 10.6 The *General Reserve* is held for two main purposes:
- to provide a working balance to help cushion the impact of uneven cashflows and avoid temporary borrowing and;
 - a contingency to help cushion the impact of unexpected events or emergencies.
- 10.7 As part of setting the budget each year the adequacy of all reserves is assessed along with the optimum level of General Reserve that we should hold. The optimum level of the General Reserve considers a risk assessment of the budget and the context within which it has been prepared.
- 10.8 *Earmarked Reserves* provide a means of building up funds to meet known or predicted liabilities and are typically used to set aside sums for major schemes, such as capital

developments or asset purchases, or to fund restructuring. A number of contingency reserves are also held by the Council to reduce the impact on Council Tax payers of future uncertain events such as business rate appeals or claw back of benefit subsidy.

- 10.9 *Ringfenced Reserves* are reserves where funding is allocated for a specific or technical accounting purpose and can only be spent in line with the purpose of that funding and cannot be used to support wider council expenditure unlike our earmarked reserves.
- 10.10 All reserves, general and earmarked, are reviewed and balances rationalised as part of setting the budget. The review of reserve balances is an ongoing process as reserve funded projects are progressed.
- 10.11 Use of reserves to balance a budget provides only a short-term solution as the funds can only be used once. They can however be used to smooth the impact of funding gaps over the short to medium term and to allow for planning and implementing projects and work streams that will deliver a longer-term financial benefit through reduced costs and/or additional income.
- 10.12 The available earmarked reserves balance, including the General Fund, as at 1 April 2025 stood at £17.2m, the planned use of reserves for the 2025/26 financial year is £2.4m which leaves a forecast balance as at 1 April 2026 of £17.3m. Based on the current medium term budget projections the Council will not have sufficient reserves to help address the budget gap after 2028/29.



Capital

- 10.13 The capital programme (Appendix IV) shows what the Council intends to spend on purchasing new assets and improving its existing ones over the next three years. As capital expenditure is incurred, a source of finance must be identified through capital receipts, grants and other revenue resources or alternatively through borrowing.
- 10.14 Any expenditure that is financed through borrowing increases the Council's 'Capital Financing Requirement' (CFR). Each year a revenue charge called the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) is made to reflect the funding of the CFR by the taxpayer, it is required to be set aside to cover the repayment of debt caused by the need to borrow for capital purposes. As the need to borrow increases, the CFR and MRP also increase.

If the Council has sufficient cash resources to meet the expenditure, it will not be necessary to borrow externally, and cash balances can be used to cover the expenditure. This is referred to as 'internal borrowing' and attracts an MRP charge in the same way that external borrowing does.

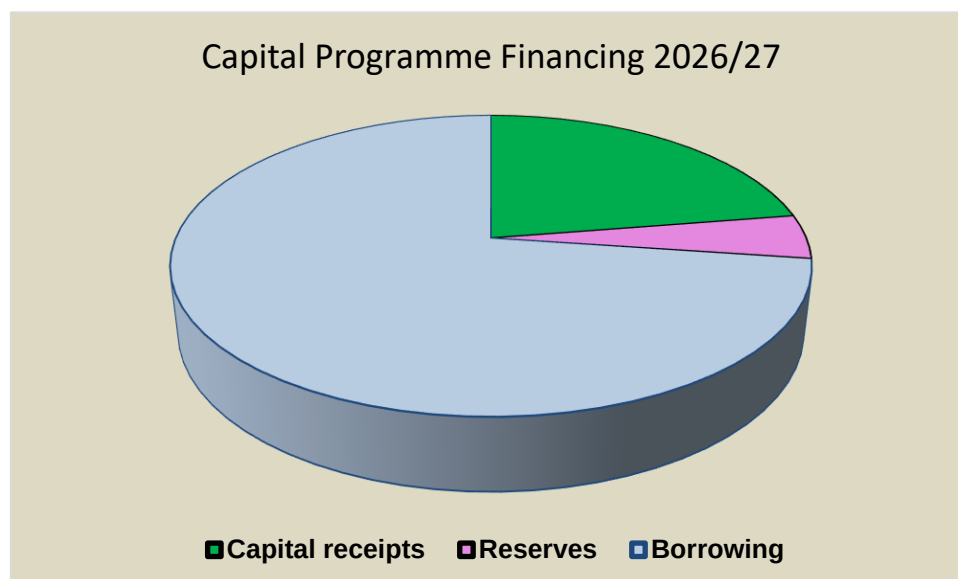
10.15 New projects, which are included in the programme in the future, will need to be financed by MRP if no capital resources such as capital grants or capital receipts from future asset sales are available. Alternatively existing revenue reserves could be used to finance these projects through a revenue contribution to capital (RCCO) which would avoid the need to make an MRP charge.

10.16 External borrowing is assumed to finance a portion of the waste vehicle fleet purchase and also the funding for the Rainbow Homes housing provision. The cost of borrowing has increased significantly over recent years, and although the position has stabilised recently and started to slowly reduce, borrowing rates remain high and are forecast to only reduce slowly and to a higher level than recent years. What this does mean is that any business cases which include borrowing will need to be fundamentally reviewed before any borrowing takes place to ensure the schemes remain affordable and still able to deliver the anticipated benefits. This includes schemes that have previously been assessed as affordable based on earlier costs of borrowing. Next year's budget is shown below (£29.8m) along with the forecasts to 2028/29.

10.17 Capital Programme 2026/27 to 2028/29

	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
Service Area	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Housing & Community Services	10,505	24,172	2,725	2,725
Regeneration & Economic Development	9,928	3,339	0	0
Environment & Leisure	1,097	2,129	0	114
Resources Total	269	150	20	20
Grand Total	21,798	29,790	2,745	2,859

10.18 Chart 5 – Capital Programme Funding 2026/27



11. Closing the Budget gap

The Council's strategy for reducing the budget gap covers several work streams as outlined below.

- 11.1 Due to the budget pressures being experienced for not only the 2026/27 financial year but also the years following, the Council has had to fundamentally review what services it provides and how they are provided to try and identify savings to help achieve a balanced sustainable budget in future years. The main workstream areas are summarised below.

Efficiency Review

- 11.2 As part of the production of these forecasts a detailed budget review continues to identify efficiencies and additional income to help support frontline services and to balance the Council's financial position. For next year these savings and additional non grant income total around £1.2m (Appendix II), however based on current forecast growth as well, this still leaves a total deficit of £665k which will need to be supported from reserves. An Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) will be undertaken on the proposals where relevant and the council will consult on the draft budget proposals throughout December 2025.
- 11.3 Once the budget position is approved, work will commence on delivering savings proposals at the earliest opportunity.
- 11.4 The efficiencies and savings identified have come from a number of areas and include the following;

- Increased fees and charges
- A freeze in Members Special Responsibility allowances
- Reductions in some 3rd party grants
- Review of pension and establishment costs to identify savings across service areas
- Continued use of Kent Growth Fund to support base budget
- Reduction in the number of public conveniences
- Alternative funding methods for service delivery
- Service review of historic budgets
- Review of allowance previously included for contract inflation
- Various operational savings – minor budget lines

Fees & Charges Review

- 11.5 A further review of the existing fees and charges was carried out as part of the budget build process for 2026/27 budget report. As detailed above this strategy is recommending an inflationary increase as a minimum in line with the increase in costs that the council is experiencing.
- 11.6 During 2023/24 the council produced a Parking Policy. This was subject to public consultation, and final proposals recommend by the Community Committee. The Policy agreed the principles under which the parking service will operate with fees and charges continuing to be reviewed annually as part of the budget setting process. Proposed changes included in the policy were a review of the evening charging policy and a 10p increase in the hourly rates. The current budget allows for a further 10p increase in the hourly rate and recommendations from Environmental Services Committee on 12 November 2025 that charges should be levied at the standard rate of car park charges at 6 car parks that are currently free and that the 30 minute tariff for all car parks is removed

from 1 April 2026.

- 11.7 Proposals for higher increases to some fees and charges have been included where the underlying cost to the council has significantly increased; where previous charges have been below the statutory maximum charge and where market conditions indicate a higher charge. The proposed fees and charges for 2026/27 can be found within Appendix V.

Financial sustainability

- 11.8 Financial sustainability and reducing reliance on central government grants is one of the five key themes within the existing Corporate Plan (Running the Council) and is fundamental to this strategy and setting balanced budgets in future years. One of the initiatives will include a review of the way we currently budget for fees and charges structures to ensure we are fully covering our costs. The aspiration is to have a balanced medium-term budget which does not rely on reserves to balance the position.

Our investment approach

- 11.9 There is an ever increasing need for Councils to take a more commercial and business-like approach to all elements of their business. A more commercial approach will directly support the Council's objective of becoming financially sustainable. Part of the strategy development process will involve the identification and prioritisation of a number of internal and external projects which will consider income generation, efficiency and doing things differently. The focus will be on making every pound count for our residents, improving efficiency, investment and increasing social value.
- 11.10 The Local Government Association (LGA) are encouraging Councils to move towards a more commercial culture as a way of developing sustainable self-funding streams that reflect Council's individual priorities and place shaping aspirations. Consequently, the Council needs to think about how it can maximise revenue and efficiencies moving forwards. Swale can already evidence its commercial approach through the delivery of the Bourne Place development and will continue to develop these opportunities.

Property Investment and New Ways of Working

- 11.11 Opportunities for investment in property, whether direct or indirect, continue to be considered to achieve either a direct income stream from the asset or improved returns on investment. A programme of asset valuations and condition surveys has taken place and the results will help us better understand the challenges faced in terms of maintaining and improving our asset base over the medium to long term to ensure that it remains fit for purpose, delivering income for the Council where appropriate.
- 11.12 Opportunities for the most efficient utilisation of the Council's assets and maximising returns where appropriate are vital. Indirect property investments via treasury instruments, such as the purchase of pooled property funds, can potentially provide a return in terms of a regular income and growth in the value of the investment. Under the Treasury Management Strategy, the Council has made the LAMIT Pooled Property Fund, which invests exclusively in various property assets with the aim of achieving a regular income and growth in the value of the investment.
- 11.13 The Council can choose to use its capital resources to finance a programme of asset investment which aims to deliver long-term revenue streams for the Council and work on an ongoing basis is required to identify the most appropriate projects. This strategy of direct property investment can ensure a secondary benefit to the district as it is possible to generate an economic growth benefit when the investment is located within the borough. This is, however, more resource intensive to manage than externalising these

investments.

- 11.14. With the development of hybrid working, we have taken the opportunity to rationalise office space. Work is ongoing to rent out our surplus office space and work with other partner organisations and indeed the private sector. There may also maybe opportunities to work with other partners under the government's [One Public Estate](#) agenda.

Digital Transformation

- 11.15 The Council needs to consider how digital transformation can support the business in the future and deliver more for our residents, identifying changes to service delivery from the implementation of new technology and changes to business processes. It is anticipated that the overall programme will be delivered over a number of years and as projects are rolled out there will be changes to working practices which will help to deliver efficiencies.
- 11.16 The key to this work in the future should really focus on 'putting our customers at the heart of everything we do'. This will undoubtedly lead to efficiencies and potential cashable savings but the direction of travel should be to improve our services for our customers first and foremost because that's the right thing to do. It will also mean that staff can spend longer prioritising 'added value activities' rather than getting bogged down with inefficient paper-based processes.

Shared Services, collaboration and selling services

- 11.17 Creating efficiencies through shared services or joint working continues to be a priority. Identifying such opportunities must therefore continue at a local level, ensuring that realistic and deliverable benefits can be achieved. Again this is an avenue which Swale is already heavily involved in, including activities like the joint waste procurement but could involve a range of other joint procurement opportunities. The council is now working with Maidstone on a shared Emergency Planning resource which provides significant resilience to this vital area of work.

Growing Business Rates

- 11.18 Swale has seen a significant growth in Business Rates since the introduction of the localised scheme in 2023/14 and working as part of the Kent Business Rate Pool has maximised the retention of business rate growth across the county. The business rate reset is likely to remove the growth from district councils, resetting our baselines and changing the levy process for future growth. Business rate growth will continue to have a direct impact on the income that is retained locally, but the details are not yet available and will be published with the Fair Funding Settlement .

Council Tax

- 11.19 The increased flexibilities around council tax discounts provides a further potential income stream. Further review of the current level of discounts can also provide additional income, recommendations on the level of council tax discounts will be reported for approval as part of the budget reports for 2026/27.

New opportunities

- 11.20 Given the current uncertainties around the cost-of-living crisis, global events and the economy in general, as well as the current landscape of local councils reporting financial difficulties, Local Government funding and funding mechanisms are overdue

for review and the outcome from this remains a significant risk for the Council's medium term financial assumptions. It will be essential to identify new opportunities to either increase income, increase efficiency through the redesign of services, explore new partnership models for service delivery etc and this will be one of the main challenges over the medium term.

- 11.21 While the Council's reserves do provide some level of comfort over the short term and could be used to address budget deficits this is not a sustainable financial strategy for the medium to long term. As mentioned earlier within the report the reserves are forecast to be depleted by 2029/30 so this would not even be an option.

Lobbying and consultation

- 11.22 The Council will continue to lobby central government in terms of increased funding allocations and continued relaxation/increased flexibility in terms of the council tax referendum principles which will be one of the things required if income raising and decision making is ever to be truly local. We will also continue to respond to all relevant consultations and surveys, in particular in relation to the business rates and local government finance reform.

- 11.23 Members will need to support the efficiency agenda in future years and support officers to deliver a balanced budget position over the medium term as use of one-off reserves to balance the budget deficit is not sustainable.

12. Conclusions

How will this help shape our future budget and financial projections?

- 12.1 While the Council's reserves do provide some level of comfort over the short term and could be used to address budget deficits this is not a sustainable financial strategy for the medium to long term, and as mentioned earlier within the report the earmarked reserves will be fully depleted by 2029/30 if ongoing savings are not found for the base budget.
- 12.2 Previous budget forecasts were made at a time of significant uncertainty in terms of future Government finances due to the Fair Funding and Business Rates Review. This uncertainty remains for the 2026/27 draft budget position along with additional levels of complexity in terms of future inflation forecasts and potential impacts on the economy, suppliers, and contracts. Although multi-year settlements are expected, that is reported this will be in the form of a 1 year confirmed settlement for 2026/27 with indicative budget allocations for year 2 and 3. This is due to the limitations of legislation around a formal multiyear settlement position.
- 12.3 The updated high level funding forecasts within the strategy build on previous figures from the 2025/26 Budget setting exercise in February which were made within this context, at which time we were forecasting future year deficits which were increasing year on year to around £5.4m by 2028/29.
- 12.4 The MTFS and budget forecasts include the latest information available and it should however be noted that some of the assumptions will need to be reviewed when the Fair Funding 2.0 announcement is made and final settlement figures are confirmed.
- 12.5 As part of the production of these forecasts a detailed budget review has taken place over previous months to identify efficiencies and additional income to help support frontline services and to balance the Council's financial position. For next year these total around £1.2m (Appendix II), and are supported by a number of increases to fees

and charges (Appendix V), however based on current forecasts this still leaves a deficit of £665,000 which will need to be supported from reserves.

- 12.6 The Council is still projecting a deficit position from 2026/27 onwards but due to the funding changes, forecasting the future years deficits remains difficult. Use of reserves does however allow the Council time to plan mitigating actions more effectively, meaning we are more likely to be successful, however this is not a sustainable position if permanent savings are not identified.
- 12.7 A comprehensive financial risk assessment is undertaken for the revenue and capital budget setting process to ensure that all risks and uncertainties affecting the Council's financial position are identified as far as is reasonably practical. These are reviewed each year as part of the refresh of the MTFS and future year's budget forecasts and are included within Appendix VI.
- 12.8 At the current time the key messages are as follows;
- Estimated budget gap of £665,000 for 2026/27 even with current savings and fee increases
 - We can deliver our statutory services with current income levels but nothing more
 - To fund non-statutory services we need to find more income/savings/reserves
 - Our reserves will help set a balanced budget for the next few years after which LGR will be implemented.
 - Funding from reserves is not a sustainable way to manage our budget
 - We need to identify more efficiencies and income to make the budget sustainable
 - The current projections are based on a number of assumptions which can and do change
- 12.9 In conclusion, it is still not clear how the various reviews and the ongoing economic pressures will impact on local government funding, but officers will continue working on the forecasts between now and the point at which the council tax is set in February 2026, by which time the Fair Funding Review will have been finalised.

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Detailed Revenue Budget Proposals

Appendix II

Service	2025/26	Growth	Savings	Income Changes	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Chief Executive	817	100	0	0	917	917	917	917
Communications & Policy	377	0	0	0	377	377	377	377
Elections, Democratic Services & Information Governance	1,195	156	0	0	1,351	1,351	1,351	1,351
Housing & Community	5,085	39	(53)	(50)	5,021	4,991	4,991	4,991
Planning	1,402	(717)	(14)	(75)	596	447	447	447
Environment & Leisure	9,454	1,150	(638)	(380)	9,586	8,771	8,571	8,571
Regeneration & Economic Development	(464)	180	(67)	(51)	(402)	(440)	(440)	(440)
Finance & Procurement	778	75	(5)	0	848	848	848	848
MKS Revenues & Benefits	540	75	0	0	615	615	615	615
MKS Environmental Health	687	23	0	0	710	710	710	710
MKS Information Technology	1,453	192	0	0	1,645	1,645	1,645	1,645
MKS Internal Audit	166	7	0	0	173	173	173	173
MKS Human Resources	649	21	0	0	670	670	670	670
MKS Legal	722	128	0	0	850	850	850	850
Corporate Overheads & Capital Financing	3,543	(89)	(450)	0	3,004	3,562	3,562	3,562
Collection Fund Surplus/Deficit	45	30	0	0	75	75	75	75
Pay & Inflation	12	1,008	0	0	1,020	2,570	4,170	4,170
Fees & Charges	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sub Total Base Budget	26,460	2,378	(1,228)	(556)	27,055	28,131	29,531	29,531
Grants								
Drainage Board	1,037	52	0	0	1,089	1,089	1,089	1,089
Contribution to Reserves	15	41	0	0	56	56	56	56
Contribution from Reserves	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Uncertain Government Grants	0	0	0	(2,876)	(2,876)	(2,876)	(2,876)	(2,876)
Use of Business Rates Pool Reserve	(855)	0	0	0	(855)	(855)	(855)	(855)
Cumulative Savings Required	(677)	(2,471)	1,228	1,256	(665)	(1,301)	(2,250)	(1,782)
Grants								
Revenue Support Grant	(362)	0	0	(7)	(369)	(376)	(376)	(376)
Extended Producer Responsibility Grant	(1,349)	0	0	1,349	0	0	0	0
Business Rates - Gross	(12,104)	0	0	(275)	(12,379)	(12,379)	(12,379)	(12,379)
Services Grant	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
New Homes Bonus	(988)	0	0	988	0	0	0	0
Funding Guarantee Grant	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
National Insurance Contribution Grant	(200)	0	0	0	(200)	(200)	(200)	(200)
Recovery Grant	(539)	0	0	539	0	0	0	0
Council Tax requirement	10,439	0	0	417	10,856	11,289	11,740	12,208

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Growth assumptions 2026/27	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
Assumptions previously agreed	963,300	1,345,000	1,500,000	0
Utility increases	360,300	(340,000)	0	0
Increased cost of services	112,360	0	0	0
Increased cost of capital	11,000	158,000	0	0
Staffing costs	227,200	(108,800)	0	0
Reduction in garden waste subscriptions	50,000	0	0	0
Unachievable income targets	82,830	(48,000)	0	0
Pay and inflation	34,459	150,000	100,000	0
Member pension costs	65,000	0	0	0
System cost of cloud hosting	127,000	0	0	0
Homelessness	20,000	0	0	0
Professional services	122,850	0	0	0
Non achievement of savings	100,000	0	0	0
Cost of election canvass	40,000	0	0	0
Postage cost increases	25,000	0	0	0
Local Government Reorganisation costs	100,000	0	0	0
Council Tax Deficit	30,000	0	0	0
Total Growth	2,471,299	1,156,200	1,600,000	0

Savings Assumptions 2026/27	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
Assumptions previously agreed	25,000	(410,000)	(200,000)	0
Public Toilet Review	(100,000)	0	0	0
Staff saving	(20,000)	20,000	0	0
Efficiency and Service Review	(162,686)	0	0	0
Pension Revaluation	(200,000)	0	0	0
External Grant Review	(20,000)	(30,000)	0	0
Reprofile Borrowing Costs	(250,000)	250,000	0	0
Pay and Inflation	(500,000)	0	0	0
Total savings	(1,227,686)	(170,000)	(200,000)	0

Income assumptions 2026/27	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
Assumptions previously agreed	(243,295)	(67,033)	0	0
Building Control Income	(5,000)	0	0	0
Planning Income	(10,000)	0	0	0
Car Park Income	(335,000)	0	0	0
Waste Income	(31,800)	0	0	0
Cost Recovery	(7,000)	0	0	0
Investment Income	(150,000)	150,000	0	0
Additional Income	(56,500)	0	0	0
Total income	(838,595)	82,967	0	0

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Scheme	Funding Source	2025/26 Budget			2026/27 Budget			2027/28 Budget			2028/29 Budget		
		Spend £'000	Income £'000	Net £'000	Spend £'000	Income £'000	Net £'000	Spend £'000	Income £'000	Net £'000	Spend £'000	Income £'000	Net £'000
CCTV Replacement	Reserves	0	0	0	60	(60)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CCTV Expansion	Borrowing	283	0	283	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Disabled Facilities Grants	Grant	8,661	(8,661)	0	2,725	(2,725)	0	2,725	(2,725)	0	2,725	(2,725)	0
Local Housing Company	Borrowing/reserves	0	0	0	21,062	(969)	20,093	0	0	0	0	0	0
Community Asset Spend	Capital receipts	52	(52)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Purchase of Temporary Accommodation	Borrowing	1,370	0	1,370	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Local Authority Housing Fund (Bridging)	Grant	139	(139)	0	325	(325)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Housing & Community Services		10,505	(8,852)	1,653	24,172	(4,079)	20,093	2,725	(2,725)	0	2,725	(2,725)	0
Faversham Creek Basin Regeneration	Capital receipts	200	(200)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
High Streets	Reserves	57	(57)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rural England Prosperity Projects	Grant	462	(462)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
UKSPF	Grant	13	(13)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Levelling Up Scheme	Grant/reserves	9,196	(9,196)	0	3,339	(3,198)	141	0	0	0	0	0	0
Regeneration & Economic Development		9,928	(9,928)	0	3,339	(3,198)	141	0	0	0	0	0	0
Waste Vehicle Fleet	Borrowing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	114	0	114
Beach Huts	Capital receipts	143	(143)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Gunpowder Works Oare Faversham	Reserves	26	(26)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The Forum Public Conveniences	Reserves	0	0	0	42	(42)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lynsted Churchyard Walls	Capital receipts	120	(120)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Coach Parking	Reserves	0	0	0	35	(35)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Barton's Point	Reserves	0	0	0	52	(52)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Leisure Centre Improvements	Borrowing	287	0	287	2,000	0	2,000	0	0	0	0	0	0
Open Spaces Play Equipment	Reserves	519	(519)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
King George V Tennis Courts	Grant	1	(1)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Environment & Leisure		1,097	(809)	287	2,129	(129)	2,000	0	0	0	114	0	114
ICT Replacement	Reserves	148	(148)	0	150	(150)	0	20	(20)	0	20	(20)	0
Finance System Upgrades	Reserves	121	(121)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Resources Total		269	(269)	0	150	(150)	0	20	(20)	0	20	(20)	0
Grand Total		21,798	(19,858)	1,940	29,790	(7,556)	22,234	2,745	(2,745)	0	2,859	(2,745)	114

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	2025/26			2026/27			Increase	Fee Structure
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge		
	£	£	£	£	£	£		
Housing Services								
Home Inspection for Immigration Application Fee								
Requests received to inspect and provide report on suitability of proposed home in connection with immigration applications	150.33	30.07	180.40	157.08	31.42	188.50	4.49%	Market rate
Staying Put Handyperson Rates								
Hourly rate for a handyperson	14.63	2.93	17.55	15.29	3.06	18.35	4.56%	Market rate
Subsidised hourly rate for a handyperson – client in receipt of benefits	5.42	1.08	6.50	5.83	1.17	7.00	7.69%	Market rate
Private disabled works (household not eligible for Disabled Facilities Grant)	135.17	27.03	162.20	141.25	28.25	169.50	4.50%	Market rate
Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) fee (statutory % charge)	12.50%			12.50%				Externally set
Alleygate Key								
Fee	19.83	3.97	23.80	20.75	4.15	24.90	4.62%	Market rate
Town Centre Licence								
Licence for large events of 10,000 people or more	495.83	99.17	595.00	518.33	103.67	622.00	4.54%	Market rate
Planning								
Planning Performance Agreements (PPA)								
Central government encourages the use of planning performance agreements (PPA's) for large or complex planning proposals. These are voluntary agreements between us and the applicants which helps to: •bring together the developer, the Local Planning Authority and key stakeholders to work in partnership throughout the planning process •ensure complex proposals progress through the process to mutually-agreed timescales •ensure appropriate resources and expertise are provided to advise on complex proposals •provide greater opportunity for dialogue through the planning process and help deliver high-quality development								Market rate
The cost of the PPA will be calculated based on the complexity and size of the scheme using the relevant officer day rates. Please contact the Planning Department to discuss your requirements and obtain an estimate.								
Amendment fees are also discounted at a rate of 10% for large major and strategic major developments when part of a PPA								
50 to 100 homes or 1,000 to 4,999 sqm commercial floorspace	16,586.00	3,317.20	19,903.20	16,586.00	3,317.20	19,903.20	n/a	Market rate
101 to 199 homes or 5,000 to 9,999 sqm commercial floorspace	23,612.00	4,722.40	28,334.40	23,612.00	4,722.40	28,334.40	n/a	Market rate
200+ homes or 10,000+ sqm commercial floorspace	40,059.00	8,011.80	48,070.80	40,059.00	8,011.80	48,070.80	n/a	Market rate
Pre-application / Pre-decision presentation to Members (this option is only available as part of a PPA in relation to sites of significance)	2,050.00	410.00	2,460.00	2,050.00	410.00	2,460.00	n/a	Market rate
Note. A £1,000 administration fee is included in the fees quoted above								
Pre Application Advice								
Strategic major development (250+ houses or flats)	5,416.67	1,083.33	6,500.00	5,416.67	1,083.33	6,500.00	n/a	Cost recovery
Strategic major development (commercial 10,000 sqm or more)	5,416.67	1,083.33	6,500.00	5,416.67	1,083.33	6,500.00	n/a	Cost recovery
Strategic major development (covers more than 5 hectares)	5,416.67	1,083.33	6,500.00	5,416.67	1,083.33	6,500.00	n/a	Cost recovery
Large major (50-249 houses or flats)	4,495.83	899.17	5,395.00	4,495.83	899.17	5,395.00	n/a	Cost recovery
Large major (commercial between 5,000 to 9,999 sqm)	4,495.83	899.17	5,395.00	4,495.83	899.17	5,395.00	n/a	Cost recovery
Large major (covers between 2.1 to 5 hectares)	4,495.83	899.17	5,395.00	4,495.83	899.17	5,395.00	n/a	Cost recovery
Major (10-49 houses or flats)	2,954.17	590.83	3,545.00	2,954.17	590.83	3,545.00	n/a	Cost recovery
Major (commercial 1,000 to 4,999 sqm)	2,954.17	590.83	3,545.00	2,954.17	590.83	3,545.00	n/a	Cost recovery
Major (covers between 0.51 to 2 hectares)	2,954.17	590.83	3,545.00	2,954.17	590.83	3,545.00	n/a	Cost recovery
Minor (1-9 houses or flats)	824.58	164.92	989.50	823.75	164.75	988.50	n/a	Cost recovery
Minor (commercial less than 1,000 sqm)	824.58	164.92	989.50	824.58	164.92	989.50	n/a	Cost recovery
Minor (covers up to 0.5 hectares)	824.58	164.92	989.50	824.58	164.92	989.50	n/a	Cost recovery
Householder - site visit at officer discretion	300.00	60.00	360.00	300.00	60.00	360.00	n/a	Cost recovery
Heritage & urban design attendance at meeting per hour	216.67	43.33	260.00	216.67	43.33	260.00	n/a	Cost recovery
Listed building (householder) - written advice only	125.00	25.00	150.00	125.00	25.00	150.00	n/a	Cost recovery

	2025/26			2026/27			Increase	Fee Structure
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge		
	£	£	£	£	£	£		
Local not-for-profit charities	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00		Cost recovery
Others not in categories above, charged at an hourly rate	Price on application			Price on application				Cost recovery
Parish Councils, voluntary organisations, national charities or charities that are not 'not-for-profit' will be charged at 50% of the above pre-application advice fee								
Design Review - To be advised at time of request.								
Admin Fee - An admin fee of £75 will be applied to any refund that may have been agreed due to exceptional circumstances								
Advice								
Follow up advice - minor amendments to a proposal following initial advice	Hourly rate - to be calculated on submission and worked out depending on the amendment or can be invoiced after and could be charged at an hourly rate or part thereof			Hourly rate - to be calculated on submission and worked out depending on the amendment or can be invoiced after and could be charged at an hourly rate or part thereof			n/a	Cost recovery
Post decision advice - refusal	50% of relevant pre-app fee			50% of relevant pre-app fee			n/a	Cost recovery
Amendments to the approved scheme	Hourly rate - to be calculated on submission and worked out depending on the amendment or can be invoice after and could be charged at an hourly rate or part thereof			Hourly rate - to be calculated on submission and worked out depending on the amendment or can be invoice after and could be charged at an hourly rate or part thereof			n/a	Cost recovery
Discharge of conditions	Hourly rate - to be calculated on submission and worked out depending on the number of conditions and what they cover or can be invoiced after and could be charged at an hourly rate or part thereof			Hourly rate - to be calculated on submission and worked out depending on the number of conditions and what they cover or can be invoiced after and could be charged at an hourly rate or part thereof			n/a	Cost recovery
Hourly Rates								
Planning Assistant	108.00	0.00	108.00	108.00	0.00	108.00	n/a	Cost recovery
Planning Officer	140.00	0.00	140.00	140.00	0.00	140.00	n/a	Cost recovery
Principal Planner	162.00	0.00	162.00	162.00	0.00	162.00	n/a	Cost recovery
Team Leader	182.00	0.00	182.00	182.00	0.00	182.00	n/a	Cost recovery
Planning Manager	215.00	0.00	215.00	215.00	0.00	215.00	n/a	Cost recovery
Urban Design	260.00	0.00	260.00	260.00	0.00	260.00	n/a	Cost recovery
Heritage	170.00	0.00	170.00	170.00	0.00	170.00	n/a	Cost recovery
Council officers from other departments providing advice such as affordable housing, greenspaces	170.00	0.00	170.00	170.00	0.00	170.00	n/a	Cost recovery
Amendments / Additional information Fee Schedule								
Lawful Development Certificate (existing and proposed) Householder - Householder alterations and extensions only	129.00	0.00	129.00	129.00	0.00	129.00	n/a	Cost recovery
Lawful Development Certificate (existing and proposed) Other - Development involving establishing lawful use of properties	210.00	0.00	210.00	210.00	0.00	210.00	n/a	Cost recovery
Householder - Householder development (affecting a single home) including extension, outbuildings and other works within the property boundary	240.00	0.00	240.00	240.00	0.00	240.00	n/a	Cost recovery

	2025/26			2026/27			Increase	Fee Structure
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge		
	£	£	£	£	£	£		
Minor development - includes between 1-9 dwellings, covers up to 0.5 hectares, commercial development less than 1000 square metres	300.00	0.00	300.00	300.00	0.00	300.00	n/a	Cost recovery
Major development - includes between 10-49 dwellings, covers up to 0.51 to 2 hectares, commercial development between 1,001 to 4,999 square meters	600.00	0.00	600.00	600.00	0.00	600.00	n/a	Cost recovery
Large major development - includes 50-249 houses or flats, covers between 2.1 to 5 hectares, commercial development between 5,000 to 9,999 square metres (10% discount when part of a PPA)	750.00	0.00	750.00	750.00	0.00	750.00	n/a	Cost recovery
Strategic major development - includes 250+ houses or flats, covers more than 5 hectares, commercial development of 10,000 square metres or more (10% discount when part of a PPA)	1,000.00	0.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	0.00	1,000.00	n/a	Cost recovery
Listed building consent - development of a listed building including extensions and internal alterations	240.00	0.00	240.00	240.00	0.00	240.00	n/a	Cost recovery
Discharge of conditions - applications for the discharge of planning conditions	210.00	0.00	210.00	210.00	0.00	210.00	n/a	Cost recovery
Advertisements and shopfronts and any other proposals not listed above	210.00	0.00	210.00	210.00	0.00	210.00	n/a	Cost recovery
Planning Photocopying Charges								
	Charges per page			Charges per page				
A4 Blace/white	0.21	0.04	0.25	0.21	0.04	0.25	n/a	Cost recovery
A3 Black/white	0.33	0.07	0.40	0.33	0.07	0.40	n/a	Cost recovery
A2 or larger	4.17	0.83	5.00	4.17	0.83	5.00	n/a	Cost recovery
A4 Colour	2.08	0.42	2.50	2.08	0.42	2.50	n/a	Cost recovery
A3 Colour	3.17	0.63	3.80	3.17	0.63	3.80	n/a	Cost recovery
Biodiversity Net Gain Monitoring Fees								
All development that is not Major development qualifies for Small Sites Metric and results in Significant Biodiversity Gain	5,489.73	0.00	5,489.73	5,489.73	0.00	5,489.73	n/a	Cost recovery
Major developments up to 10 biodiversity units	7,868.71	0.00	7,868.71	7,868.71	0.00	7,868.71	n/a	Cost recovery
Major developments between 11 and 20 biodiversity units	13,596.97	0.00	13,596.97	13,596.97	0.00	13,596.97	n/a	Cost recovery
Major developments over 21 biodiversity units	17,413.72	0.00	17,413.72	17,413.72	0.00	17,413.72	n/a	Cost recovery
Complaints made under the High Hedges Legislation								
Standard fee	511.00	102.20	613.20	534.00	106.80	640.80	4.50%	Cost recovery
Removal of an enforcement notice	0.00	0.00	0.00	90.00	0.00	90.00	n/a	Cost recovery
Planning Portal								
The Planning Portal will be charging a £20 (£16.67 + VAT) service charge payable by applicants on any planning application that attracts a fee. Applications that do not attract a fee will not incur this service charge.								

	2025/26			2026/27			Increase	Fee Structure
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge		
	£	£	£	£	£	£		
Local Land Charges								
Official Searches								
LLC1 only	15.00	0.00	15.00	15.00	0.00	15.00	0.00%	Externally set
LLC1 only - additional parcel	4.80	0.00	4.80	4.80	0.00	4.80	0.00%	Externally set
Con 29	150.67	30.13	180.80	158.21	31.64	189.85	5.01%	Cost recovery
Con 29 - additional parcel	22.04	4.41	26.45	23.14	4.63	27.77	4.99%	Cost recovery
Standard search (LLC1 & Con29)*	165.67	30.13	195.80	173.21	31.64	204.85	4.62%	Cost recovery
Standard search (LLC1 & Con29) - additional parcel*	26.84	4.41	31.25	27.97	4.63	32.60	4.32%	Cost recovery
Part II enquiry - Con29 questions 4-21	14.88	2.98	17.85	15.63	3.13	18.75	5.04%	Cost recovery
Part II enquiry - Con29 question 22	27.58	5.52	33.10	29.00	5.80	34.80	5.14%	Cost recovery
Additional questions	21.00	4.20	25.20	22.08	4.42	26.50	5.16%	Cost recovery
*VAT applicable only to the Con29 part of the charge.								
Personal Searches								
Enhanced Personal Search								
1.1 (a-l) (Planning)	7.71	1.54	9.25	8.13	1.63	9.75	5.41%	Cost recovery
1.1 (J, K, L) (Building Regulations)	7.71	1.54	9.25	8.13	1.63	9.75	5.41%	Cost recovery
2.1 (b-d)	3.83	0.77	4.60	4.04	0.81	4.85	5.43%	Cost recovery
3.1 Land for public purpose	3.83	0.77	4.60	4.04	0.81	4.85	5.43%	Cost recovery
3.3 Drainage matters	3.83	0.77	4.60	4.04	0.81	4.85	5.43%	Cost recovery
3.5 Railway schemes	3.83	0.77	4.60	4.04	0.81	4.85	5.43%	Cost recovery
3.7 Outstanding Notices	11.04	2.21	13.25	11.63	2.33	13.95	5.28%	Cost recovery
3.8 Building Regulations Contravention	3.83	0.77	4.60	4.04	0.81	4.85	5.43%	Cost recovery
3.9 Enforcement	7.71	1.54	9.25	8.13	1.63	9.75	5.41%	Cost recovery
3.10 CILs	5.25	1.05	6.30	5.54	1.11	6.65	5.56%	Cost recovery
3.12 Compulsory purchase	3.83	0.77	4.60	4.04	0.81	4.85	5.43%	Cost recovery
3.13b Contaminated land	3.83	0.77	4.60	4.04	0.81	4.85	5.43%	Cost recovery
3.13c Contaminated land	3.83	0.77	4.60	4.04	0.81	4.85	5.43%	Cost recovery

	2025/26			2026/27			Increase	Fee Structure
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge		
	£	£	£	£	£	£		
Environment and Leisure								
Car Parks and Season Tickets								
Short Stay (maximum stay 4 hours) 7am - 7pm								
Faversham: Central car park (season tickets for business only), Institute Road car park (no season tickets)								
Sittingbourne: Albany Road, Central Avenue, Crown Quay Lane, Milton High Street(maximum stay 2 hours), The Forum, The Swallows, Swale House (weekends only), The Forum (season tickets business only), Grafton Road								
Sheerness/Sheppey: Rose Street (including land adjacent to Wood Street), Trinity Place, Beachfields, Library Car Park Queenborough, Halfway Car Park								
Up to 30 minutes	0.67	0.13	0.80	n/a	n/a	n/a	0.00%	Deleted Charge
Up to 1 hour	1.25	0.25	1.50	1.33	0.27	1.60	6.67%	Market rate
Up to 2 hours	2.50	0.50	3.00	2.67	0.53	3.20	6.67%	Market rate
Up to 3 hours	3.75	0.75	4.50	4.00	0.80	4.80	6.67%	Market rate
Up to 4 hours	5.00	1.00	6.00	5.33	1.07	6.40	6.67%	Market rate
Fixed evening fee (7pm - 10pm)	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.08	0.42	2.50	0.00%	Market rate
Season ticket per quarter (for business only Central car park, Faversham/ Forum, Sittingbourne)	258.33	51.67	310.00	275.00	55.00	330.00	6.45%	Market rate
Season ticket refund admin fee	0.00	0.00	0.00	8.33	1.67	10.00	0.00%	Market rate
Electric vehicle parking/charging per kilowatt hour (kWh)	variable	variable	variable	variable	variable	variable		Market rate
Sittingbourne: East Street car park, Albany Service Road car park								
Maximum stay 1 hour (cashless transactions only)	1.25	0.25	1.50	1.33	0.27	1.60	6.67%	Market rate
Bourne Place Multi-Storey Car Park								
The charge is for ALL parking bays including disabled and parent/child bays between 7am and 7pm.								
Patrons of Light Cinema will have free parking all day on Sundays and after 6pm Mon-Sat. Ticket must be validated at the Light before payment at car park machine								
Infinity Fitness users must validate their ticket within the gym to exit the car park.								
Up to 30 minutes	0.67	0.13	0.80	n/a	n/a	n/a	0.00%	Deleted Charge
Up to 1 hour	1.25	0.25	1.50	1.33	0.27	1.60	6.67%	Market rate
Up to 2 hours	2.50	0.50	3.00	2.67	0.53	3.20	6.67%	Market rate
Up to 3 hours	3.75	0.75	4.50	4.00	0.80	4.80	6.67%	Market rate
Up to 4 hours	5.00	1.00	6.00	5.33	1.07	6.40	6.67%	Market rate
Over 4 hours (in one calendar day)	8.75	1.75	10.50	6.67	1.33	8.00	-23.81%	Market rate
Fixed Evening Fee (7pm - 10pm)	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.08	0.42	2.50	0.00%	Market rate
Lost ticket	8.75	1.75	10.50	9.33	1.87	11.20	6.67%	Market rate
Season ticket per month	0.00	0.00	0.00	104.17	20.83	125.00	0.00%	Market rate
Season ticket per quarter (subject to a maximum capacity)	258.33	51.67	310.00	275.00	55.00	330.00	6.45%	Market rate
Season ticket per year	0.00	0.00	0.00	958.33	191.67	1,150.00	0.00%	Market rate
Season ticket refund admin fee	0.00	0.00	0.00	8.33	1.67	10.00	0.00%	Market rate
Replacement for lost, stolen or destroyed season tickets	10.83	2.17	13.00	11.67	2.33	14.00	7.69%	Market rate
Travelodge (Preferential rate for hotel guests (for 24 hours))	2.50	0.50	3.00	2.50	0.50	3.00	0.00%	Externally set

	2025/26			2026/27			Increase	Fee Structure
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge		
	£	£	£	£	£	£		
Long Stay Car Parks								
Standard tariff 7am - 7pm								
Faversham: Partridge Lane, Queens Hall, Front Brents								
Sittingbourne: Spring Street, Bell Road, Cockleshell Walk								
Sheerness/Sheppey: Albion Place, Beach Street, Cross Street, Trinity Road, Park Road Queenborough, Little Oyster Minster On Sea								
Ship on Shore (9am to 7pm only, no evening fee).								
Up to 30 minutes	0.67	0.13	0.80	n/a	n/a	n/a	0.00%	Deleted Charge
Up to 1 hour	1.25	0.25	1.50	1.33	0.27	1.60	6.67%	Market rate
Up to 2 hours	2.50	0.50	3.00	2.67	0.53	3.20	6.67%	Market rate
Up to 4 hours	5.00	1.00	6.00	5.33	1.07	6.40	6.67%	Market rate
Over 4 hours	6.25	1.25	7.50	6.67	1.33	8.00	6.67%	Market rate
Fixed evening Fee (7pm - 10pm)	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.08	0.42	2.50	0.00%	Market rate
Season ticket per month (long stay car park)	97.50	19.50	117.00	104.17	20.83	125.00	6.84%	Market rate
Season ticket per quarter (long stay car park)	258.33	51.67	310.00	275.00	55.00	330.00	6.45%	Market rate
Season ticket per year (long stay car park)	0.00	0.00	0.00	958.33	191.67	1,150.00	0.00%	Market rate
Season ticket refund admin fee	0.00	0.00	0.00	8.33	1.67	10.00	0.00%	Market rate
Seasonal Car parks								
Leysdown: Promenade (all day between 1 March and 31 October)								
Up to 1 hour	1.25	0.25	1.50	1.33	0.27	1.60	6.67%	Market rate
Up to 2 hours	2.50	0.50	3.00	2.67	0.53	3.20	6.67%	Market rate
Up to 4 hours	5.00	1.00	6.00	5.33	1.07	6.40	6.67%	Market rate
All day (7am - 7pm)	6.25	1.25	7.50	6.67	1.33	8.00	6.67%	Market rate
Fixed evening Fee (7pm - 10pm)	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.08	0.42	2.50	0.00%	Market rate
Parking Other								
All pay and display car parks – closure of parking bays through events or other activities	Price on application dependent on car park location, type of event (commercial – enthusiast – voluntary/community) and local impact			Price on application dependent on car park location, type of event (commercial – enthusiast – voluntary/community) and local impact			n/a	Market rate

	2025/26			2026/27			Increase	Fee Structure
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge		
	£	£	£	£	£	£		
Residents Only Parking Permits (off street) (5pm-9am evenings, weekends and bank holidays)								
Faversham: Central car park (residents of Cross Lane and Bank Street), Queens Hall (residents of Victoria Place and Dorset Place) Sheerness: Albion Place (residents of Harris Road, Portland Terrace and Albion Place), Cross Street (Sheerness town centre residents), Trinity Road (residents of Trinity Road only)								
Per quarter	21.08	4.22	25.30	22.00	4.40	26.40	4.35%	Market rate
Sheerness: Delamark Road car park (residents only).								
Per quarter	15.92	3.18	19.10	16.67	3.33	20.00	4.71%	Market rate
Residents' Parking Permits (on street)								
Per annum (administration charge - no refund)	46.00	0.00	46.00	48.10	0.00	48.10	4.57%	Cost recovery
Visitors permit book (10 days) - for resident permit holders only	11.25	0.00	11.25	11.80	0.00	11.80	4.89%	Cost recovery
Visitors parking permits (per day) - for resident permit holders only	1.10	0.00	1.10	1.10	0.00	1.10	0.00%	Cost recovery
Hourly scratchcards (per hour) - for all others	1.10	0.00	1.10	1.10	0.00	1.10	0.00%	Cost recovery
Hourly scratchcards (per book of 10 hours) - for all others	10.20	0.00	10.20	10.70	0.00	10.70	4.90%	Cost recovery
Business per annum (administration charge - no refund)	46.00	0.00	46.00	48.10	0.00	48.10	4.57%	Cost recovery
Nativity Close (exemption permit concession admin fee - no refund)	30.65	0.00	30.65	32.00	0.00	32.00	4.40%	Cost recovery
Residents/Business/Exemption permit concessions. Replacement permit for lost, stolen or destroyed permits	10.20	0.00	10.20	10.70	0.00	10.70	4.90%	Cost recovery
Dispensation / Waivers								
Maximum 1 day	12.25	0.00	12.25	12.80	0.00	12.80	4.49%	Cost recovery
Maximum 1 week	36.80	0.00	36.80	38.50	0.00	38.50	4.62%	Cost recovery
Maximum 2 weeks	46.00	0.00	46.00	48.10	0.00	48.10	4.57%	Cost recovery
Maximum 1 month	61.30	0.00	61.30	64.10	0.00	64.10	4.57%	Cost recovery
Over 1 month (to a maximum of 3 months) - per month (or part month)	51.10	0.00	51.10	53.40	0.00	53.40	4.50%	Cost recovery
Suspension admin fee	102.20	0.00	102.20	106.80	0.00	106.80	4.50%	Cost recovery

	2025/26			2026/27			Increase	Fee Structure
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge		
	£	£	£	£	£	£		
Sports Facilities								
Tennis Courts								
Unlit court (hourly rate)	5.17	1.03	6.20	5.33	1.07	6.40	3.23%	Market rate
Court with floodlighting (hourly rate)	7.75	1.55	9.30	7.92	1.58	9.50	2.15%	Market rate
Season ticket (3 court bookings of up to 2 hours per session per week)	34.58	6.92	41.50	35.83	7.17	43.00	3.61%	Market rate
With changing facilities and showers								
- Senior	73.58	14.72	88.30	76.88	15.38	92.25	4.47%	Market rate
- Under 18s	24.54	4.91	29.45	25.67	5.13	30.80	4.58%	Market rate
- Under 16s & mini soccer	18.00	3.60	21.60	18.00	3.60	21.60	0.00%	Market rate
With changing facilities only								
- Senior	61.33	12.27	73.60	64.08	12.82	76.90	4.48%	Market rate
- Under 18s	20.46	4.09	24.55	21.38	4.28	25.65	4.48%	Market rate
- Under 16s & mini soccer	16.75	3.35	20.10	16.75	3.35	20.10	0.00%	Market rate
With no facilities								
- Senior	41.92	8.38	50.30	43.79	8.76	52.55	4.47%	Market rate
- Under 18s	18.21	3.64	21.85	19.04	3.81	22.85	4.58%	Market rate
- Under 16s & mini soccer	11.00	2.20	13.20	11.00	2.20	13.20	0.00%	Market rate
If your booking meets all of the rules below, you can choose to save money and not pay VAT on the booking.								
VAT exemption rules								
The booking consists of 10 or more dates.								
Each booking is for the same sport.								
Each booking is in the same place. This condition is still met where a different pitch, court or lane is used (or a different number of pitches, courts or								
The gap between each session is at least 1 day but not more than 14 days (for a gap to be at least 1 day, 24 hours must elapse between the start of each								
The booking is to be paid for as a whole and there is written evidence to the fact. This must include evidence that payment is to be made in full whether or								
The facilities are booked out to a school, club, association or an organisation representing affiliated clubs or constituent associations, such as a local								
The person to whom the facilities are booked has exclusive use of them during the bookings.								
If you want your booking to be VAT exempt, you must make sure that it meets all of the rules above. Because the rules are given to us by the government,								
we cannot change them.								
All bookings must be paid for in full before the start of the booking. You cannot change VAT exempt bookings once they have been paid for, so you must								
make sure the dates and times are right for you.								
Allotments								
Plots of 10 rods & pro rata	71.55	0.00	71.55	74.75	0.00	74.75	4.47%	Market rate
Plots of 10 rods & pro rata (OAPs/Disabled)	35.75	0.00	35.75	37.35	0.00	37.35	4.48%	Market rate
Refundable keys deposit	5.10	0.00	5.10	5.35	0.00	5.35	4.90%	Market rate
King George's Pavilion & Faversham Rec Community Room								
Main hall/tea room (hourly rate) (minimum hire 1 hour)								
Mon-Sun (9am-midnight)	12.25	0.00	12.25	12.80	0.00	12.80	4.49%	Market rate
Playgroups (per morning)	30.65	0.00	30.65	32.05	0.00	32.05	4.57%	Market rate
Tea room (for children's parties only) & Faversham Rec Ground	10.20	0.00	10.20	10.65	0.00	10.65	4.41%	Market rate
Community Room (per hour) minimum 1 hour hire								
Caretaking services – set up and clear away: standard tables and/or chairs	12.75	0.00	12.75	13.30	0.00	13.30	4.31%	Market rate
Refundable deposits	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00%	Market rate
Bank Holidays, New Year's Eve	Double the standard rate			Double the standard rate			n/a	Market rate

	2025/26			2026/27			Increase	Fee Structure
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge		
	£	£	£	£	£	£		
Cemeteries Burial Fees <i>Includes Exclusive Right of Burial for 50 years, Interment, Memorial & Re-inscription Permits</i>								
1 st Burial Sittingbourne, Faversham & Murston	2,760.00	0.00	2,760.00	2,885.00	0.00	2,885.00	4.53%	Market rate
1 st Burial Sheppey and Iwade	2,530.00	0.00	2,530.00	2,645.00	0.00	2,645.00	4.55%	Market rate
1 st Burial if no use of previously purchased grave Sittingbourne, Faversham & Murston	1,380.00	0.00	1,380.00	1,440.00	0.00	1,440.00	4.35%	Market rate
1 st Burial if no use of previously purchased grave Sheppey	1,110.00	0.00	1,110.00	1,150.00	0.00	1,150.00	3.60%	Market rate
2 nd Burial Sittingbourne, Faversham & Murston	1,110.00	0.00	1,110.00	1,150.00	0.00	1,150.00	3.60%	Market rate
2 nd Burial Sheppey and Iwade	920.00	0.00	920.00	960.00	0.00	960.00	4.35%	Market rate
3 rd Burial Sittingbourne, Faversham & Murston	920.00	0.00	920.00	960.00	0.00	960.00	4.35%	Market rate
Extended right of burial extension – 10 years	280.00	0.00	280.00	292.00	0.00	292.00	4.29%	Market rate
Extended right of burial extension – 20 years	560.00	0.00	560.00	584.00	0.00	584.00	4.29%	Market rate
Extended right of burial extension – 30 years	840.00	0.00	840.00	876.00	0.00	876.00	4.29%	Market rate
Extended right of burial extension – 40 years	1,110.00	0.00	1,110.00	1,157.00	0.00	1,157.00	4.23%	Market rate
Cremated Remains (all sites) <i>(includes Exclusive Rights to Burial for 50 years, Interment, Memorial & Re-inscription Permit)</i>								
1 st Burial	745.00	0.00	745.00	780.00	0.00	780.00	4.70%	Market rate
1 st Burial (where no use has been made of previously purchased grave)	275.00	0.00	275.00	285.00	0.00	285.00	3.64%	Market rate
2 nd Burial	275.00	0.00	275.00	285.00	0.00	285.00	3.64%	Market rate
3 rd Burial	275.00	0.00	275.00	285.00	0.00	285.00	3.64%	Market rate
4 th Burial	275.00	0.00	275.00	285.00	0.00	285.00	3.64%	Market rate
Burial of loose ashes	140.00	0.00	140.00	145.00	0.00	145.00	3.57%	Market rate
Extended right of burial extension – 10 years	98.00	0.00	98.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	2.04%	Market rate
Extended right of burial extension – 20 years	190.00	0.00	190.00	200.00	0.00	200.00	5.26%	Market rate
Extended right of burial extension – 30 years	290.00	0.00	290.00	300.00	0.00	300.00	3.45%	Market rate
Extended right of burial extension – 40 years	380.00	0.00	380.00	400.00	0.00	400.00	5.26%	Market rate

	2025/26			2026/27			Increase	Fee Structure
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge		
	£	£	£	£	£	£		
Child Burial								
Under 18 years of age	Covered by Children's Funeral Fund for England. Subject to criteria.			Covered by Children's Funeral Fund for England. Subject to criteria.				
Ancillary Services								
Issue of letter of confirmation where deed is lost	77.00	0.00	77.00	80.00	0.00	80.00	3.90%	Market rate
Use of chapel in Sittingbourne	110.00	0.00	110.00	115.00	0.00	115.00	4.55%	Market rate
Use of chapel in Faversham	150.00	0.00	150.00	160.00	0.00	160.00	6.67%	Market rate
Turfed grave	At cost			At cost			n/a	Market rate
Transfer of deed ownership	77.00	0.00	77.00	80.00	0.00	80.00	3.90%	Market rate
Record search & certificate (each grave)	39.00	0.00	39.00	41.00	0.00	41.00	5.13%	Market rate
Extra cost of large coffin or casket (measuring 30 inches or more)	104.00	0.00	104.00	104.00	0.00	104.00	0.00%	Market rate
Exhumation of coffin	2,860.00	0.00	2,860.00	2,990.00	0.00	2,990.00	4.55%	Market rate
Exhumation of cremated remains	385.00	0.00	385.00	400.00	0.00	400.00	3.90%	Market rate
Other services (vatable)	At cost			At cost			n/a	Market rate
Non-residents of Swale (not living in Swale at time of death or have not been a resident of Swale for at least 15 consecutive years) required to pay double the costs set out above (except child burials)								
Memorial Bench (Seafronts & Green Space, Excludes Cemeteries)								
Memorial bench with basic installation	995.83	199.17	1,195.00	1,041.67	208.33	1,250.00	4.60%	Market rate
Memorial bench with concrete installation	1,245.83	249.17	1,495.00	1,300.00	260.00	1,560.00	4.35%	Market rate

	2025/26			2026/27			Increase	Fee Structure
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge		
	£	£	£	£	£	£		
Travelling Fairs								
Pitch premium for days open to the public only (per day)	1,125.00	0.00	1,125.00	1,175.00	0.00	1,175.00	4.44%	Market rate
Pitch premium for days open to the public only (per day) Local Operator	375.00	0.00	375.00	390.00	0.00	390.00	4.00%	Market rate
Use of Council Land – Travelling Fairs								
On site fee payable whether or not open to the public (including arrival and departure days)	74.00	0.00	74.00	77.50	0.00	77.50	4.73%	Market rate
On site fee payable whether or not open to the public (including arrival and departure days) Local Operator	24.50	0.00	24.50	25.50	0.00	25.50	4.08%	Market rate
Refundable deposit	751.00	0.00	751.00	785.00	0.00	785.00	4.53%	Market rate
Use of Council Land – Travelling Shows								
On site fee for days open to the public	250.50	0.00	250.50	262.00	0.00	262.00	4.59%	Market rate
On site fee payable when not open to the pubic (including arrival and departure days)	74.00	0.00	74.00	74.00	0.00	74.00	0.00%	Market rate
Refundable deposit	751.00	0.00	751.00	785.00	0.00	785.00	4.53%	Market rate
Use of Council Land – Events								
On site fee for small commercial events – day usage of open space	255.50	0.00	255.50	267.00	0.00	267.00	4.50%	Market rate
On site fee for large commercial events – day usage of open space	Price on application			Price on application			n/a	Market rate
On site fee for enthusiast event – day usage of open space	128.00	0.00	128.00	134.00	0.00	134.00	4.69%	Market rate
On site fee for community/voluntary event – day usage of open space	0.00			0.00			0.00%	Market rate
Refundable deposit	250.50	0.00	250.50	262.00	0.00	262.00	4.59%	Market rate
Beach Hut Charges								
Locations now at Minster Leas and Leysdown								
Ground rental – beach hut owned	550.00	0.00	550.00	570.00	0.00	570.00	3.64%	Market rate
Annual rental	1,333.33	266.67	1,600.00	1,375.00	275.00	1,650.00	3.13%	Market rate
Weekly rental	100.00	20.00	120.00	104.17	20.83	125.00	4.17%	Market rate
Refundable keys deposit	35.00	0.00	35.00	35.00	0.00	35.00	0.00%	Market rate
Transfer of an owned beach hut licence	A fee of three times the ground rent or 10% of the sale value whichever is greatest			A fee of three times the ground rent or 10% of the sale value whichever is greatest			n/a	Market rate
Purchase of beach hut	Market price			Market price			n/a	Market rate
Access Over Open Space Licence								
Used for residential properties requiring access over our land to undertake works/deliveries etc.								
Standard fee	87.00	0.00	87.00	91.00	0.00	91.00	4.60%	Market rate

	2025/26			2026/27			Increase	Fee Structure
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge		
	£	£	£	£	£	£		
Traffic Regulation Order Applications								
On application (yellow lines and changes to existing orders - advice and scheme design)								
Small (1-30 properties consulted)	1,360.00	0.00	1,360.00	1,400.00	0.00	1,400.00	2.94%	Market rate
Medium (31-50 properties consulted)	1,600.00	0.00	1,600.00	1,650.00	0.00	1,650.00	3.13%	Market rate
Large (51+ properties consulted)	2,000.00	0.00	2,000.00	2,060.00	0.00	2,060.00	3.00%	Market rate
On application (loading bays, single bays)								
Small (1-30 consultations)	650.00	0.00	650.00	670.00	0.00	670.00	3.08%	Market rate
Medium (31-50 consultations)	1,000.00	0.00	1,000.00	1,030.00	0.00	1,030.00	3.00%	Market rate
Large (51+ consultations)	1,350.00	0.00	1,350.00	1,400.00	0.00	1,400.00	3.70%	Market rate
TRO drafted (yellow lines and changes to existing orders)								
All size consultations	660.00	0.00	660.00	680.00	0.00	680.00	3.03%	Market rate
TRO drafted (loading bays, single bays)								
All size consultations	340.00	0.00	340.00	350.00	0.00	350.00	2.94%	Market rate
Formal objections received and reported to Swale Joint Transportation Board								
All size consultations	330.00	0.00	330.00	350.00	0.00	350.00	6.06%	Market rate
Progress/implement TRO (yellow lines and changes to existing orders)								
Small (1-30 consultations)	650.00	0.00	650.00	680.00	0.00	680.00	4.62%	Market rate
Medium (31-50 consultations)	800.00	0.00	800.00	830.00	0.00	830.00	3.75%	Market rate
Large (51+ consultations)	950.00	0.00	950.00	980.00	0.00	980.00	3.16%	Market rate
Progress/implement scheme (loading bays, single bays)								
Small (1-30 consultations)	140.00	0.00	140.00	150.00	0.00	150.00	7.14%	Market rate
Medium (31-50 consultations)	140.00	0.00	140.00	150.00	0.00	150.00	7.14%	Market rate
Large (51+ consultations)	140.00	0.00	140.00	150.00	0.00	150.00	7.14%	Market rate
Fixed Fee for including new or amended waiting restrictions into planned TRO								
Inclusion of new or amended waiting restrictions into Traffic Regulation Order	1,400.00	0.00	1,400.00	1,500.00	0.00	1,500.00	7.14%	Market rate
White Bar Markings								
Installation of new white bar marking across vehicle crossing	158.33	31.67	190.00	166.67	33.33	200.00	5.26%	Market rate
Re-painting existing white bar marking across vehicle crossing	133.33	26.67	160.00	141.67	28.33	170.00	6.25%	Market rate
Installation of Advisory Bays on Private Lane (e.g. Disabled Bay in Housing Association Car Park)								
Installation of Advisory Parking Bay on Private Land	125.00	0.00	125.00	150.00	0.00	150.00	20.00%	Market rate
Street Naming & Numbering								
Changing or requesting new property (up to and including 4 units)	95.00	0.00	95.00	95.00	0.00	95.00	0.00%	Cost recovery
New street name	186.00	0.00	186.00	186.00	0.00	186.00	0.00%	Cost recovery
New street developments per property/unit (4 or more properties/units, first 4 charged at full price)	65.00	0.00	65.00	65.00	0.00	65.00	0.00%	Cost recovery
Provision of historical information relating to street naming & numbering	40.00	0.00	40.00	40.00	0.00	40.00	0.00%	Cost recovery
Changing street name	870.00	0.00	870.00	870.00	0.00	870.00	0.00%	Cost recovery

	2025/26			2026/27			Increase	Fee Structure
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge		
	£	£	£	£	£	£		
Garden Waste Subscription (brown bins – domestic)								
Fortnightly collection of garden waste (excluding Christmas where service is suspended for 2 weeks). Fee includes hire of bin. Price is per annum	62.00	0.00	62.00	62.00	0.00	62.00	0.00%	Market rate
Garden waste new/replacement wheeled bin admin fee	0.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	10.00	0.00%	Market rate
Bulky Waste Collections								
Charge covers up to 4 bulky items. If white goods, charge covers only one item.	33.20	0.00	33.20	34.70	0.00	34.70	4.52%	Market rate
Additional surcharge for upholstered item	0.00	0.00	0.00	6.00	0.00	6.00	0.00%	Market rate
Clinical Waste Collection								
Residents receive up to 2 free collections per annum then any subsequent collections will be charged at the following rates per collection	3.60	0.00	3.60	3.80	0.00	3.80	5.56%	Cost recovery
Wheeled Bins for new developments								
Wheeled bins 140 litre	49.00	0.00	49.00	51.20	0.00	51.20	4.49%	Cost recovery
Wheeled bins 180 litre	55.40	0.00	55.40	57.90	0.00	57.90	4.51%	Cost recovery
Wheeled bins 240 litre	55.40	0.00	55.40	57.90	0.00	57.90	4.51%	Cost recovery
Wheeled bins 1,100 litre	537.50	0.00	537.50	561.70	0.00	561.70	4.50%	Cost recovery
Food waste container 23 litre	12.90	0.00	12.90	13.50	0.00	13.50	4.65%	Cost recovery
Kitchen caddy 5 litre	6.50	0.00	6.50	6.80	0.00	6.80	4.62%	Cost recovery
Bin repairs	15.50	0.00	15.50	16.00	0.00	16.00	3.23%	Market rate
Replacement domestic 180 litre or 240 litre refuse or recycling bin if damaged, lost or stolen (unless damaged during emptying by contractor). This fee includes delivery of new bin and removal/ disposal of old bin.	32.70	0.00	32.70	34.20	0.00	34.20	4.59%	Market rate
Note: Wheeled bins are non-vatable when supplied directly to a householder for domestic/household waste								
Additional Litter Bins (each)								
145 litre galvanised (fee does not include emptying the bin)	541.67	108.33	650.00	565.83	113.17	679.00	4.46%	Market rate
Annual emptying cost	168.00	0.00	168.00	176.00	0.00	176.00	4.76%	Cost recovery
Bin Store Clearance								
Per occasion	204.00	0.00	204.00	213.00	0.00	213.00	4.41%	Market rate
Wheeled Bins for Community Events								
Provision of wheeled bins for events (cost per occasion) – delivery/ collection charge	125.00	0.00	125.00	131.00	0.00	131.00	4.80%	Market rate
Wheeled bin hire (cost per bin)	16.00	0.00	16.00	16.50	0.00	16.50	3.13%	Market rate
Servicing of bins during event	Price on application			Price on application			0.00%	Market rate

	2025/26			2026/27			Increase	Fee Structure
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge		
	£	£	£	£	£	£		
Radar Key for Disabled Toilets								
Fee	3.50	0.00	3.50	3.50	0.00	3.50	0.00%	Market rate
Environmental – Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN)								
Fly tipping (level 1)* - single item or black bag, no criteria from level 2 met	600.00	0.00	600.00	600.00	0.00	600.00	0.00%	Externally set
Fly tipping (level 2) - multiple items, or multiple locations, or hazardous waste, or blocking access, or specialist equipment required to clear any item	1,000.00	0.00	1,000.00	1000.00	0.00	1,000.00	0.00%	Externally set
Littering (level 1)** - single item of litter e.g. cigarette butt, no criteria from level 2 met	200.00	0.00	200.00	200.00	0.00	200.00	0.00%	Externally set
Littering (level 2) - repeated offence, multiple items, littering from vehicles, hazardous waste, littering into a watercourse	500.00	0.00	500.00	500.00	0.00	500.00	0.00%	Externally set
Householders/Commercial duty of care – lack of care in disposal of waste*	600.00	0.00	600.00	600.00	0.00	600.00	0.00%	Externally set
Refuse left out inappropriately	80.00	0.00	80.00	80.00	0.00	80.00	0.00%	Externally set
Graffiti	150.00	0.00	150.00	150.00	0.00	150.00	0.00%	Externally set
Fly posting	150.00	0.00	150.00	150.00	0.00	150.00	0.00%	Externally set
Waste carrier offences	300.00	0.00	300.00	300.00	0.00	300.00	0.00%	Externally set
Failure to comply with a Community Protection Notice	100.00	0.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00%	Externally set
Breach of any Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs)	100.00	0.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00%	Externally set
*Reduced to £450 if paid in full within 14 days								
**Reduced to £150 if paid in in full within 14 days								

	2025/26			2026/27			Increase	Fee Structure
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge		
	£	£	£	£	£	£		
Animal Welfare Licensing								
The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018 came into force on 1 October 2018. Charges have been calculated using the Local Government Association guidance document on locally set licence fees ('Open for Business').								
Part A - Covers the application and authorisation process.								
Part B - Is the cost for administering and enforcing the legislative framework.								
Boarding in Kennels for Dogs, Boarding for Cats, Day Care for Dogs, Home Boarding for Dogs, Breeding Dogs and Selling Animals as Pets								
(This fee applies to both arranging the provision of accommodation for other people's dogs and/or host families where dogs are boarded within the Borough.)								
Part A ¹	269.00	0.00	269.00	282.00	0.00	282.00	4.83%	Cost recovery
Part B								
1 Star and 2 Star establishments - 1 year licence (Boarders up to 50 dogs; Breeders with 1 - 5 breeding bitches; Pet shops with up to 3 groups of animals (i.e. fish, reptiles, cats, dogs etc).	217.00	0.00	217.00	227.00	0.00	227.00	4.61%	Cost recovery
1 Star and 2 Star establishments - 1 year licence (Boarders with 51 or more dogs; Breeders with 6 or more breeding bitches)	238.00	0.00	238.00	249.00	0.00	249.00	4.62%	Cost recovery
3 Star and 4 Star establishments - 2 year licence (Boarders up to 50 dogs; Breeders with 1 - 5 breeding bitches; Pet shops with up to 3 groups of animals).	360.00	0.00	360.00	376.00	0.00	376.00	4.44%	Cost recovery
3 Star and 4 Star establishments - 2 year licence (Boarders with 51 or more dogs; Breeders with 6 or more breeding bitches).	396.00	0.00	396.00	414.00	0.00	414.00	4.55%	Cost recovery
5 Star establishments - 3 year licence (Boarders up to 50 dogs; Breeders with 1 - 5 breeding bitches; Pet shops with up to 3 groups of animals).	505.00	0.00	505.00	528.00	0.00	528.00	4.55%	Cost recovery
5 Star establishments - 3 year licence (Boarders with 51 or more dogs; Breeders with 6 or more breeding bitches).	555.00	0.00	555.00	580.00	0.00	580.00	4.50%	Cost recovery
Charge for each additional 'group' of animals being sold as pets (i.e. fish, reptiles, dogs, cats etc)	31.00	0.00	31.00	32.00	0.00	32.00	3.23%	Cost recovery
Hiring of Horses								
Part A ¹	269.00	0.00	269.00	282.00	0.00	282.00	4.83%	Cost recovery
Part B								
1 Star and 2 Star establishments - 1 year licence (1 - 10 horses) ³	217.00	0.00	217.00	227.00	0.00	227.00	4.61%	Cost recovery
1 Star and 2 Star establishments - 1 year licence (11 or more horses) ³	238.00	0.00	238.00	249.00	0.00	249.00	4.62%	Cost recovery
3 Star and 4 Star establishments - 2 year licence (1 - 10 horses) ²	360.00	0.00	360.00	376.00	0.00	376.00	4.44%	Cost recovery
3 Star and 4 Star establishments - 2 year licence (11 or more horses) ²	396.00	0.00	396.00	414.00	0.00	414.00	4.55%	Cost recovery
5 Star establishments - 3 year licence (1 - 10 horses) ²	505.00	0.00	505.00	528.00	0.00	528.00	4.55%	Cost recovery
5 Star establishments - 3 year licence (11 or more horses) ²	555.00	0.00	555.00	580.00	0.00	580.00	4.50%	Cost recovery

	2025/26			2026/27			Increase	Fee Structure
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge		
	£	£	£	£	£	£		
Keeping or Training Animals for Exhibition								
Part A								
For a 3 year licence ¹	270.00	0.00	270.00	282.00	0.00	282.00	4.44%	Cost recovery
Part B								
For a 3 year licence ³	505.00	0.00	505.00	528.00	0.00	528.00	4.55%	Cost recovery
Dangerous Wild Animal Licence								
Part A								
For a 2 year licence ¹	269.00	0.00	269.00	282.00	0.00	282.00	4.83%	Cost recovery
Part B								
For a 2 year licence ³	360.00	0.00	360.00	376.00	0.00	376.00	4.44%	Cost recovery
Zoo Licence								
(Please discuss your application with the Animal Control Officer prior to applying for a licence.)								
Part A								
For a 4 year licence ²	1,215.00	0.00	1,215.00	1,269.00	0.00	1,269.00	4.44%	Cost recovery
Part B								
For a 4 year licence ³	670.00	0.00	670.00	700.00	0.00	700.00	4.48%	Cost recovery
¹ Plus vet fees based upon an hourly rate (including travel time)								
² Plus vet fees for an initial inspection based upon an hourly rate (including travel time)								
³ Plus annual vet fees based upon an hourly rate (including travel time)								
Other Charges								
Licence renewals	charged as new applications			charged as new applications				
Request for re-inspection (for all licences) (plus vet fees if applicable)	114.50	0.00	114.50	119.50	0.00	119.50	4.37%	Cost recovery
Requests for Variations								
Administration amendment only	43.40	0.00	43.40	45.40	0.00	45.40	4.61%	Cost recovery
Inspector visit (if required) (additional to administration charge)	72.00	0.00	72.00	75.00	0.00	75.00	4.17%	Cost recovery
Vet fees	hourly rate plus travel time			hourly rate plus travel time				
Stray Dog Collection								
Statutory charge as per legislation	25.00	0.00	25.00	25.00	0.00	25.00	0.00%	Externally set
Additional fee for collecting/returning stray dogs	43.00	0.00	43.00	45.00	0.00	45.00	4.65%	Market rate
Out of hours additional fee for collecting/ returning stray dogs	55.00	0.00	55.00	57.00	0.00	57.00	3.64%	Market rate
Transport fee for returning dog to owner after a kennel stay	37.00	0.00	37.00	39.00	0.00	39.00	5.41%	Market rate
Kennel stay fee per night	26.00	0.00	26.00	27.00	0.00	27.00	3.85%	Market rate
*If we are unable to return a dog to the owner straight away and the dog is taken to the kennels, then the dog owner will be charged the cost of kennelling the dog.								

	2025/26			2026/27			Increase	Fee Structure
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge		
	£	£	£	£	£	£		
Environmental Health								
Food Export Certificate								
For businesses already in receipt of Export Health Certificate (EHC) issued by Swale BC	149.00	0.00	149.00	156.00	0.00	156.00	4.70%	Market rate
For new businesses applying for export certificates	310.00	0.00	310.00	326.00	0.00	326.00	5.16%	Market rate
Admin charge for changes to certificate	31.00	0.00	31.00	33.00	0.00	33.00	6.45%	Market rate
Sampling associated with Export Health Certificates (per hour)	74.17	14.83	89.00	77.50	15.50	93.00	4.49%	Market rate
EHC for transit to destination country	43.00	0.00	43.00	45.00	0.00	45.00	4.65%	Market rate
Voluntary Surrender of Food								
Charge for food unfit for human consumption or unsuitable for sale	254.00	0.00	254.00	267.00	0.00	267.00	5.12%	Cost recovery
Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) Level 2 Award Training in Food Safety in Catering								
Food Hygiene Rating Scheme								
Fee to food businesses for re-inspection and re-scoring	210.00	0.00	210.00	210.00	0.00	210.00	0.00%	Market rate
Food Business Advice								
Food hygiene advice (per hour)	89.00	0.00	89.00	93.00	0.00	93.00	4.49%	Market rate
Registration Fee under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provision) Act (Relates to establishments offering cosmetic piercing, electrolysis, tattooing or acupuncture)								
Standard fee	362.00	0.00	362.00	380.00	0.00	380.00	4.97%	Cost recovery
Supplementary treatment registration fee (for additional beauty treatment registration inspection either at or after initial registration)	66.00	0.00	66.00	69.00	0.00	69.00	4.55%	Cost recovery
Tattoo and Beauty Treatment Events (falling within the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act)	228.00	0.00	228.00	239.00	0.00	239.00	4.82%	Cost recovery
Tattoo and Beauty Treatment Event charge for Artists (new artist registrations)	36.00	0.00	36.00	38.00	0.00	38.00	5.56%	Cost recovery
Requests for Environmental Information (e.g. Contaminated land)								
Charge per hour	22.50	4.50	27.00	28.00	0.00	28.00	3.70%	Market rate
Requests for Enhanced Environmental Information for Contaminated Land and Professional Opinion								
Charge per hour	74.17	14.83	89.00	93.00	0.00	93.00	4.49%	Market rate
Charges for photocopying apply at 10p per page plus postage								
Pre-Application Consultation for Environmental Health Advice for Acoustics, Air Quality, Contaminated Land Assessments								
Charge per hour	74.17	14.83	89.00	93.00	0.00	93.00	4.49%	Market rate
Private Water Supplies Regulations 2016 & 2018 Amendments								
Risk assessment (hourly rate)	74.17	14.83	89.00	93.00	0.00	93.00	4.49%	Market rate
Sampling (hourly rate)	74.17	14.83	89.00	77.50	15.50	93.00	4.49%	Market rate
Investigation (hourly rate)	74.17	14.83	89.00	93.00	0.00	93.00	4.49%	Market rate
Derogation request	74.17	14.83	89.00	93.00	0.00	93.00	4.49%	Market rate

	2025/26			2026/27			Increase	Fee Structure
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge		
	£	£	£	£	£	£		
Housing & Community Services								
Taxi Licensing								
Vehicle licence for 1 year	290.00	0.00	290.00	290.00	0.00	290.00	0.00%	Cost recovery
Private Hire operator licence valid for 5 years	430.00	0.00	430.00	430.00	0.00	430.00	0.00%	Cost recovery
Licence and plate for temporary hire vehicle	40.00	0.00	40.00	40.00	0.00	40.00	0.00%	Cost recovery
Knowledge test – initial	25.00	0.00	25.00	25.00	0.00	25.00	0.00%	Cost recovery
Knowledge test – re-sit	25.00	0.00	25.00	25.00	0.00	25.00	0.00%	Cost recovery
Dual / Private Hire Drivers Badge for 1 year (for medical or over 70 years of age)	50.00	0.00	50.00	50.00	0.00	50.00	0.00%	Cost recovery
Upgrade Private Hire Drivers Badge to a Dual Badge	35.00	0.00	35.00	35.00	0.00	35.00	0.00%	Cost recovery
Dual / Private Hire Drivers Badge for 3 years	150.00	0.00	150.00	150.00	0.00	150.00	0.00%	Cost recovery
Non-refundable plate fee (plate number only issued once)	50.00	0.00	50.00	50.00	0.00	50.00	0.00%	Cost recovery
Replacement plate	15.00	0.00	15.00	15.00	0.00	15.00	0.00%	Cost recovery
Change of address	10.00	0.00	10.00	10.00	0.00	10.00	0.00%	Cost recovery
Change of ownership licensed vehicle	35.00	0.00	35.00	35.00	0.00	35.00	0.00%	Cost recovery
Dual / Private Hire Drivers badge replacement	10.00	0.00	10.00	10.00	0.00	10.00	0.00%	Cost recovery
Replacement paper licence certificate	10.00	0.00	10.00	10.00	0.00	10.00	0.00%	Cost recovery
Change of vehicle on an existing plate	80.00	0.00	80.00	80.00	0.00	80.00	0.00%	Cost recovery
Street Trading Licensing								
Annual consents (not events)	155.00	0.00	155.00	162.00	0.00	162.00	4.52%	Market rate
6 month consents (not events)	77.50	0.00	77.50	81.00	0.00	81.00	4.52%	Market rate
One off consent	11.00	0.00	11.00	11.00	0.00	11.00	0.00%	Market rate
Assistants Badge	18.00	0.00	18.00	19.00	0.00	19.00	5.56%	Market rate
Gambling Licensing								
New Applications/Applications for Provisional Statement								
Small casino	8,000.00	0.00	8,000.00	8,000.00	0.00	8,000.00	0.00%	Externally set
Large casino	10,000.00	0.00	10,000.00	10,000.00	0.00	10,000.00	0.00%	Externally set
Bingo club	3,500.00	0.00	3,500.00	3,500.00	0.00	3,500.00	0.00%	Externally set
Betting premises	3,000.00	0.00	3,000.00	3,000.00	0.00	3,000.00	0.00%	Externally set
Tracks	2,500.00	0.00	2,500.00	2,500.00	0.00	2,500.00	0.00%	Externally set
Family entertainment centres	2,000.00	0.00	2,000.00	2,000.00	0.00	2,000.00	0.00%	Externally set
Adult gaming centre	2,000.00	0.00	2,000.00	2,000.00	0.00	2,000.00	0.00%	Externally set
Temporary use notice	500.00	0.00	500.00	500.00	0.00	500.00	0.00%	Externally set
Licence Applications (Provisional Statement Holders)								
Small casino	3,000.00	0.00	3,000.00	3,000.00	0.00	3,000.00	0.00%	Externally set
Large casino	5,000.00	0.00	5,000.00	5,000.00	0.00	5,000.00	0.00%	Externally set
Bingo club	1,200.00	0.00	1,200.00	1,200.00	0.00	1,200.00	0.00%	Externally set
Betting premises	1,200.00	0.00	1,200.00	1,200.00	0.00	1,200.00	0.00%	Externally set
Tracks	950.00	0.00	950.00	950.00	0.00	950.00	0.00%	Externally set
Family entertainment centre	950.00	0.00	950.00	950.00	0.00	950.00	0.00%	Externally set
Adult gaming centre	1,200.00	0.00	1,200.00	1,200.00	0.00	1,200.00	0.00%	Externally set

	2025/26			2026/27			Increase	Fee Structure
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge		
	£	£	£	£	£	£		
Annual Fee								
Small casino	5,000.00	0.00	5,000.00	5,000.00	0.00	5,000.00	0.00%	Externally set
Large casino	10,000.00	0.00	10,000.00	10,000.00	0.00	10,000.00	0.00%	Externally set
Bingo club	1,000.00	0.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	0.00	1,000.00	0.00%	Externally set
Betting premises	600.00	0.00	600.00	600.00	0.00	600.00	0.00%	Externally set
Tracks	1,000.00	0.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	0.00	1,000.00	0.00%	Externally set
Family entertainment centres	750.00	0.00	750.00	750.00	0.00	750.00	0.00%	Externally set
Adult gaming centre	1,000.00	0.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	0.00	1,000.00	0.00%	Externally set
Application to Vary								
Small casino	4,000.00	0.00	4,000.00	4,000.00	0.00	4,000.00	0.00%	Externally set
Large casino	5,000.00	0.00	5,000.00	5,000.00	0.00	5,000.00	0.00%	Externally set
Bingo club	1,750.00	0.00	1,750.00	1,750.00	0.00	1,750.00	0.00%	Externally set
Betting premises	1,500.00	0.00	1,500.00	1,500.00	0.00	1,500.00	0.00%	Externally set
Tracks	1,250.00	0.00	1,250.00	1,250.00	0.00	1,250.00	0.00%	Externally set
Family entertainment centres	1,000.00	0.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	0.00	1,000.00	0.00%	Externally set
Adult gaming centre	1,000.00	0.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	0.00	1,000.00	0.00%	Externally set
Copy licence	25.00	0.00	25.00	25.00	0.00	25.00	0.00%	Externally set
Notification of change	50.00	0.00	50.00	50.00	0.00	50.00	0.00%	Externally set
Application to Transfer a Licence								
Small casino	1,800.00	0.00	1,800.00	1,800.00	0.00	1,800.00	0.00%	Externally set
Large casino	2,150.00	0.00	2,150.00	2,150.00	0.00	2,150.00	0.00%	Externally set
Bingo club	1,200.00	0.00	1,200.00	1,200.00	0.00	1,200.00	0.00%	Externally set
Betting premises	1,200.00	0.00	1,200.00	1,200.00	0.00	1,200.00	0.00%	Externally set
Tracks	950.00	0.00	950.00	950.00	0.00	950.00	0.00%	Externally set
Family entertainment centres	950.00	0.00	950.00	950.00	0.00	950.00	0.00%	Externally set
Adult gaming centre	1,200.00	0.00	1,200.00	1,200.00	0.00	1,200.00	0.00%	Externally set
Application for Re-instatement								
Small casino	1,800.00	0.00	1,800.00	1,800.00	0.00	1,800.00	0.00%	Externally set
Large casino	2,150.00	0.00	2,150.00	2,150.00	0.00	2,150.00	0.00%	Externally set
Bingo club	1,200.00	0.00	1,200.00	1,200.00	0.00	1,200.00	0.00%	Externally set
Betting premises	1,200.00	0.00	1,200.00	1,200.00	0.00	1,200.00	0.00%	Externally set
Tracks	950.00	0.00	950.00	950.00	0.00	950.00	0.00%	Externally set
Family entertainment centres	950.00	0.00	950.00	950.00	0.00	950.00	0.00%	Externally set
Adult gaming centre	1,200.00	0.00	1,200.00	1,200.00	0.00	1,200.00	0.00%	Externally set
Sex Establishment Licensing (sex shop, sex cinema and sex encounter venue)								
Application fee and 1 st licence	5,380.00	0.00	5,380.00	5,620.00	0.00	5,620.00	4.46%	Market rate
Annual licence renewal	835.00	0.00	835.00	873.00	0.00	873.00	4.55%	Market rate
Application to vary	965.00	0.00	965.00	1,010.00	0.00	1,010.00	4.66%	Market rate
Transfer of licence	37.00	0.00	37.00	39.00	0.00	39.00	5.41%	Market rate
Duplicate licence	18.50	0.00	18.50	19.50	0.00	19.50	5.41%	Market rate

	2025/26			2026/27			Increase	Fee Structure
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge		
	£	£	£	£	£	£		
Scrap Metal Dealers Licensing								
Site licence	578.00	0.00	578.00	604.00	0.00	604.00	4.50%	Cost recovery
Site licence renewal	552.50	0.00	552.50	577.40	0.00	577.40	4.51%	Cost recovery
Collections licence, grant or renewal	270.00	0.00	270.00	282.00	0.00	282.00	4.44%	Cost recovery
Variation – collector to site	93.00	0.00	93.00	97.00	0.00	97.00	4.30%	Cost recovery
Variation – site to collector	68.00	0.00	68.00	71.00	0.00	71.00	4.41%	Cost recovery
Variation (minor administration, such as change of address)	43.50	0.00	43.50	45.50	0.00	45.50	4.60%	Cost recovery
Change of site manager	130.00	0.00	130.00	136.00	0.00	136.00	4.62%	Cost recovery
Pleasure Boat Licence								
Licence	178.50	0.00	178.50	186.50	0.00	186.50	4.48%	Market rate
Pavement Licence								
Application Fee	500.00	0.00	500.00	500.00	0.00	500.00	0.00%	Externally set
Renewal Fee	350.00	0.00	350.00	350.00	0.00	350.00	0.00%	Externally set
CCTV Services								
Swale Radio Link Annual Charge								
Charities	150.00	30.00	180.00	150.00	30.00	180.00	0.00%	Market rate
Independent Businesses	200.00	40.00	240.00	200.00	40.00	240.00	0.00%	Market rate
Large Organisation	350.00	70.00	420.00	350.00	70.00	420.00	0.00%	Market rate
Third Party Service Charges								
Insurance Company Footage Review	75.83	15.17	91.00	79.17	15.83	95.00	4.40%	Market rate
CCTV Services which may include design, installation, monitoring, maintenance, upgrades and decommissioning	Price on application			Price on application			n/a	Market rate
Legal								
Legal Charges for Third Parties								
Hourly rate (no VAT)	277.00	0.00	277.00	289.00	0.00	289.00	4.33%	Market rate
Hourly rate (when VAT applicable)	276.67	55.33	332.00	289.17	57.83	347.00	4.52%	Market rate
Note: VAT may be chargeable depending on the nature of the transaction. VAT is not payable in relation to most income (as most income is S106 related, which derives from a statutory function) but VAT is payable in certain circumstances, e.g. charging for provision of extra copies of documents.								
Revenues & Benefits								
Council Tax liability orders	67.50	0.00	67.50	70.50	0.00	70.50	4.44%	Cost recovery
Council Tax summons	48.50	0.00	48.50	50.50	0.00	50.50	4.12%	Cost recovery
Business rates liability order	67.50	0.00	67.50	70.50	0.00	70.50	4.44%	Cost recovery
Business rates summons	48.50	0.00	48.50	50.50	0.00	50.50	4.12%	Cost recovery

	2025/26			2026/27			Increase	Fee Structure
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge		
	£	£	£	£	£	£		
Property								
Room Hire of Swale House								
Non-Commercial								
Council chamber (half day)	89.17	17.83	107.00	93.33	18.67	112.00	4.67%	Market rate
Council chamber (full day)	148.75	29.75	178.50	155.42	31.08	186.50	4.48%	Market rate
Committee room (half day)	59.58	11.92	71.50	62.08	12.42	74.50	4.20%	Market rate
Committee room (full day)	89.17	17.83	107.00	93.33	18.67	112.00	4.67%	Market rate
Assembly room (half day)	45.00	9.00	54.00	46.67	9.33	56.00	3.70%	Market rate
Assembly room (full day)	74.58	14.92	89.50	77.92	15.58	93.50	4.47%	Market rate
Commercial								
Council chamber (half day)	178.33	35.67	214.00	186.67	37.33	224.00	4.67%	Market rate
Council chamber (full day)	297.50	59.50	357.00	310.83	62.17	373.00	4.48%	Market rate
Committee room (half day)	119.17	23.83	143.00	124.17	24.83	149.00	4.20%	Market rate
Committee room (full day)	178.33	35.67	214.00	186.67	37.33	224.00	4.67%	Market rate
Assembly room (half day)	89.17	17.83	107.00	93.33	18.67	112.00	4.67%	Market rate
Assembly room (full day)	148.75	29.75	178.50	155.42	31.08	186.50	4.48%	Market rate
Landlord's Consent Fee								
Assignments, subletting, charging *	432.50	86.50	519.00	451.67	90.33	542.00	4.43%	Market rate
Alterations *	432.50	86.50	519.00	451.67	90.33	542.00	4.43%	Market rate
Commercial wayleaves / easements*	945.83	189.17	1,135.00	988.33	197.67	1,186.00	4.49%	Market rate
Parking space licences	204.17	40.83	245.00	213.33	42.67	256.00	4.49%	Market rate
* VAT is only applicable if the rent is subject to VAT.								

	2025/26			2026/27			Increase	Fee Structure
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge		
	£	£	£	£	£	£		
FEES AND CHARGES SET NATIONALLY BY THE GOVERNMENT								
Housing								
Houses in Multiple Occupation Licensing								
New Application								
Non-accredited landlord	857.00	0.00	857.00	896.00	0.00	896.00	4.55%	Cost recovery
Accredited landlord	728.00	0.00	728.00	761.00	0.00	761.00	4.53%	Cost recovery
Renewal of Application								
Non-accredited landlord	671.00	0.00	671.00	701.00	0.00	701.00	4.47%	Cost recovery
Accredited landlord	571.00	0.00	571.00	597.00	0.00	597.00	4.55%	Cost recovery
Mobile Home Site Licence Fee								
New Mobile Home Site Licence Application Fee								
1-5 mobile homes on site	186.00	0.00	186.00	194.00	0.00	194.00	4.30%	Cost recovery
6-24 mobile homes on site	255.00	0.00	255.00	266.00	0.00	266.00	4.31%	Cost recovery
25-99 mobile homes on site	324.00	0.00	324.00	339.00	0.00	339.00	4.63%	Cost recovery
100+ mobile homes on site	372.00	0.00	372.00	389.00	0.00	389.00	4.57%	Cost recovery
Annual Mobile Home Site Inspection Fee								
Relevant sites occupied solely by owners and family members	No charge			No charge				Cost recovery
1-5 mobile homes on site	No charge			No charge				Cost recovery
6-24 mobile homes on site	208.60	0.00	208.60	218.00	0.00	218.00	4.51%	Cost recovery
25-99 mobile homes on site	249.80	0.00	249.80	261.00	0.00	261.00	4.48%	Cost recovery
100+ mobile homes on site	301.60	0.00	301.60	315.20	0.00	315.20	4.51%	Cost recovery
Fee to Transfer or Amend Mobile Home Site Licence								
Transfer or amend mobile home site licence	156.90	0.00	156.90	164.00	0.00	164.00	4.53%	Cost recovery
Fee for the Deposit of Mobile Home Site Rules								
Deposit of mobile home site rules	221.10	0.00	221.10	231.00	0.00	231.00	4.48%	Cost recovery
Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Regulations 2015								
Fine level progresses to maximum fine permitted (1st offence £1,500, 2nd £2,500, 3rd £5,000)								
Penalty charge for non-compliance of Smoke or CO Alarm Regulations	5,406.00	0.00	5,406.00	5,649.00	0.00	5,649.00	4.50%	Cost recovery
The Redress Scheme for Lettings Agency Work & Management Work Order 2014								
Fine level progresses to maximum fine permitted (1st offence £2,500, 2nd £5,000)								
Penalty charge for non-compliance of Redress Scheme for Letting Agents Order	5,406.00	0.00	5,406.00	5,649.00	0.00	5,649.00	4.50%	Cost recovery

	2025/26			2026/27			Increase	Fee Structure
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge		
	£	£	£	£	£	£		
Non-Compliance with Minimum Energy Standards in Private Rented Properties								
Breaching the ban on letting a property with an F or G rating for less than 3 months (Statutory Maximum £2,000)								
First offence £1,000 (or £750 if paid within 21 days)	1,000.00	0.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	0.00	1,000.00	0.00%	Externally set
All other offences £2,000 (or £1,500 if paid within 21 days)	2,000.00	0.00	2,000.00	2,000.00	0.00	2,000.00	0.00%	Externally set
Breaching the ban on letting a property with an F or G rating for more than three months (Statutory Maximum £4,000)								
First offence £2,000 (or £1,500 if paid within 21 days)	2,000.00	0.00	2,000.00	2,000.00	0.00	2,000.00	0.00%	Externally set
All other offences £4,000 (or £3,000 if paid within 21 days)	4,000.00	0.00	4,000.00	4,000.00	0.00	4,000.00	0.00%	Externally set
Registering false or misleading information on the Private Rented Sector Exemptions Register (Statutory Maximum £1,000)								
First offence £500 (or £375 if paid within 21 days)	500.00	0.00	500.00	500.00	0.00	500.00	0.00%	Externally set
All other offences £2,000 (or £1,500 if paid within 21 days)	2,000.00	0.00	2,000.00	2,000.00	0.00	2,000.00	0.00%	Externally set
Failing to provide information to the council demanded by a Compliance Notice (Statutory Maximum £2,000)								
First offence £1,000 (or £750 if paid within 21 days)	1,000.00	0.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	0.00	1,000.00	0.00%	Externally set
All other offences £2,000 (or £1,500 if paid within 21 days)	2,000.00	0.00	2,000.00	2,000.00	0.00	2,000.00	0.00%	Externally set
Planning								
Planning Fees	The full details of current Planning fees can be found https://ecab.planningportal.co.uk/uploads/english_application_fees.pdf							
Environmental Health								
Pollution Prevention Control (PPC)								
A2 Process Application Fees								
A2 New application	3,363.00	0.00	3,363.00	3,363.00	0.00	3,363.00	0.00%	Externally set
Additional fee for operating without a permit (A2 and Standard Part B)	1,188.00	0.00	1,188.00	1,188.00	0.00	1,188.00	0.00%	Externally set
A2 Process Subsistence Fees								
A2 Low	1,447.00	0.00	1,447.00	1,447.00	0.00	1,447.00	0.00%	Externally set
A2 Medium	1,610.00	0.00	1,610.00	1,610.00	0.00	1,610.00	0.00%	Externally set
A2 High	1,747.00	0.00	1,747.00	1,747.00	0.00	1,747.00	0.00%	Externally set
A2 Low (E-PRTR)	1,551.00	0.00	1,551.00	1,551.00	0.00	1,551.00	0.00%	Externally set
A2 Medium (E-PRTR)	1,715.00	0.00	1,715.00	1,715.00	0.00	1,715.00	0.00%	Externally set
A3 High (E-PRTR)	2,438.00	0.00	2,438.00	2,438.00	0.00	2,438.00	0.00%	Externally set
Part B Process Application Fees								
Part B (Standard Process)	1,650.00	0.00	1,650.00	1,650.00	0.00	1,650.00	0.00%	Externally set
Part B Standard Process Subsistence Fees								
Part B Subsistence low	772.00	0.00	772.00	772.00	0.00	772.00	0.00%	Externally set
Part B Subsistence medium	1,161.00	0.00	1,161.00	1,161.00	0.00	1,161.00	0.00%	Externally set
Part B Subsistence high	1,747.00	0.00	1,747.00	1,747.00	0.00	1,747.00	0.00%	Externally set

	2025/26			2026/27			Increase	Fee Structure
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge		
	£	£	£	£	£	£		
Part B Reduced Fee Application Fees (including car re-sprayers)								
Reduced fee application fee	362.00	0.00	362.00	362.00	0.00	362.00	0.00%	Externally set
Part B Reduced Fee Subsistence Fees (including car re-sprayers)								
Reduced fee subsistence low	228.00	0.00	228.00	228.00	0.00	228.00	0.00%	Externally set
Reduced fee subsistence medium	365.00	0.00	365.00	365.00	0.00	365.00	0.00%	Externally set
Reduced fee subsistence high	548.00	0.00	548.00	548.00	0.00	548.00	0.00%	Externally set
Petrol Vapour Recovery I and Dry Cleaners Application Fees								
PVR I & DC New Application	155.00	0.00	155.00	155.00	0.00	155.00	0.00%	Externally set
Petrol Vapour Recovery I and Dry Cleaners Subsistence Fees								
PVR I and DC subsistence fees low	79.00	0.00	79.00	79.00	0.00	79.00	0.00%	Externally set
PVR I and DC subsistence fees medium	158.00	0.00	158.00	158.00	0.00	158.00	0.00%	Externally set
PVR I and DC subsistence fees high	237.00	0.00	237.00	237.00	0.00	237.00	0.00%	Externally set
Petrol Vapour Recovery I & II Combined Application Fees								
PVR I & II Application Fees	257.00	0.00	257.00	257.00	0.00	257.00	0.00%	Externally set
Petrol Vapour Recovery I & II Combined Subsistence Fees								
PVR I & II Subsistence low	113.00	0.00	113.00	113.00	0.00	113.00	0.00%	Externally set
PVR I & II Subsistence medium	226.00	0.00	226.00	226.00	0.00	226.00	0.00%	Externally set
PVR I & II Subsistence high	341.00	0.00	341.00	341.00	0.00	341.00	0.00%	Externally set
Part B Mobile Concrete Crusher Plant – Application Fee per Number of Permits								
1 – 2	1,650.00	0.00	1,650.00	1,650.00	0.00	1,650.00	0.00%	Externally set
3 – 7	985.00	0.00	985.00	985.00	0.00	985.00	0.00%	Externally set
8 or more	498.00	0.00	498.00	498.00	0.00	498.00	0.00%	Externally set
Part B Mobile Concrete Crusher Plant – Subsistence Fee per Number of Permits								
1 – 2 Low	626.00	0.00	626.00	626.00	0.00	626.00	0.00%	Externally set
1 – 2 Medium	1,034.00	0.00	1,034.00	1,034.00	0.00	1,034.00	0.00%	Externally set
1 – 2 High	1,551.00	0.00	1,551.00	1,551.00	0.00	1,551.00	0.00%	Externally set
3 – 7 Low	385.00	0.00	385.00	385.00	0.00	385.00	0.00%	Externally set
3 – 7 Medium	617.00	0.00	617.00	617.00	0.00	617.00	0.00%	Externally set
3 – 7 High	924.00	0.00	924.00	924.00	0.00	924.00	0.00%	Externally set
8 or over Low	198.00	0.00	198.00	198.00	0.00	198.00	0.00%	Externally set
8 or over Medium	316.00	0.00	316.00	316.00	0.00	316.00	0.00%	Externally set
8 or over High	473.00	0.00	473.00	473.00	0.00	473.00	0.00%	Externally set
Late Payment of Subsistence Fee								
All Permits	52.00	0.00	52.00	52.00	0.00	52.00	0.00%	Externally set
Operating without a Permit Fee								
Reduced Fee Activities	71.00	0.00	71.00	71.00	0.00	71.00	0.00%	Externally set
Standard Part B and A2	1,188.00	0.00	1,188.00	1,188.00	0.00	1,188.00	0.00%	Externally set

	2025/26			2026/27			Increase	Fee Structure
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge		
	£	£	£	£	£	£		
Electoral Services								
Purchase of Electoral Register								
<i>Full Register and the Notices of Alteration</i>								
Hard copies (standard charge) plus charge (a) below	10.00	0.00	10.00	10.00	0.00	10.00	0.00%	Externally set
(a) charge for each 1,000 entries	5.00	0.00	5.00	5.00	0.00	5.00	0.00%	Externally set
Data format (standard charge) plus charge (b) below	20.00	0.00	20.00	20.00	0.00	20.00	0.00%	Externally set
(b) charge for each 1,000 entries	1.50	0.00	1.50	1.50	0.00	1.50	0.00%	Externally set
<i>List of Overseas Electors</i>								
Hard copies (standard charge) plus charge (c) below	10.00	0.00	10.00	10.00	0.00	10.00	0.00%	Externally set
(c) charge per 100 entries	5.00	0.00	5.00	5.00	0.00	5.00	0.00%	Externally set
Data format (standard charge) plus charge (d) below	20.00	0.00	20.00	20.00	0.00	20.00	0.00%	Externally set
(d) charge per 100 entries	1.50	0.00	1.50	1.50	0.00	1.50	0.00%	Externally set
<i>Open (Edited) Register</i>								
<i>(Available for purchase by anyone)</i>								
Hard copies (standard charge) plus charge (e) below	10.00	0.00	10.00	10.00	0.00	10.00	0.00%	Externally set
(e) charge per 1,000 entries	5.00	0.00	5.00	5.00	0.00	5.00	0.00%	Externally set
Data format (standard charge) plus charge (f) below	20.00	0.00	20.00	20.00	0.00	20.00	0.00%	Externally set
(f) charge per 1,000 entries	1.50	0.00	1.50	1.50	0.00	1.50	0.00%	Externally set
<i>Marked Polling Station and Absent Voter Registers</i>								
Hard copies (standard charge) plus charge (g) below	10.00	0.00	10.00	10.00	0.00	10.00	0.00%	Externally set
(g) charge per 1,000 entries	2.00	0.00	2.00	2.00	0.00	2.00	0.00%	Externally set
Data format (standard charge) plus charge (h) below	10.00	0.00	10.00	10.00	0.00	10.00	0.00%	Externally set
(h) charge per 1,000 entries	1.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00%	Externally set
Housing and Community Services								
Liquor Licensing								
<i>Main Application Fees for Premises and Personal Liquor Licensing</i>								
Rateable Value B and A	100.00	0.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00%	Externally set
Rateable Value B and B	190.00	0.00	190.00	190.00	0.00	190.00	0.00%	Externally set
Rateable Value B and C	315.00	0.00	315.00	315.00	0.00	315.00	0.00%	Externally set
Rateable Value B and D	450.00	0.00	450.00	450.00	0.00	450.00	0.00%	Externally set
Rateable Value B and E	635.00	0.00	635.00	635.00	0.00	635.00	0.00%	Externally set
<i>Main Annual Charge for Premises and Personal Liquor Licensing</i>								
Rateable Value B and A	70.00	0.00	70.00	70.00	0.00	70.00	0.00%	Externally set
Rateable Value B and B	180.00	0.00	180.00	180.00	0.00	180.00	0.00%	Externally set
Rateable Value B and C	295.00	0.00	295.00	295.00	0.00	295.00	0.00%	Externally set
Rateable Value B and D	320.00	0.00	320.00	320.00	0.00	320.00	0.00%	Externally set
Rateable Value B and E	350.00	0.00	350.00	350.00	0.00	350.00	0.00%	Externally set
Personal licence for alcohol	37.00	0.00	37.00	37.00	0.00	37.00	0.00%	Externally set
Personal licence change	10.50	0.00	10.50	10.50	0.00	10.50	0.00%	Externally set
Premises licence change	23.00	0.00	23.00	23.00	0.00	23.00	0.00%	Externally set
Transfers	23.00	0.00	23.00	23.00	0.00	23.00	0.00%	Externally set
Temporary events	21.00	0.00	21.00	21.00	0.00	21.00	0.00%	Externally set
Register of interests	21.00	0.00	21.00	21.00	0.00	21.00	0.00%	Externally set

	2025/26			2026/27			Increase	Fee Structure
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge		
	£	£	£	£	£	£		
Licensed Premises Gaming Machine Permit								
Grant	150.00	0.00	150.00	150.00	0.00	150.00	0.00%	Externally set
Existing operator grant	100.00	0.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00%	Externally set
Variation	100.00	0.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00%	Externally set
Transfer	25.00	0.00	25.00	25.00	0.00	25.00	0.00%	Externally set
Annual fee	50.00	0.00	50.00	50.00	0.00	50.00	0.00%	Externally set
Change of name	25.00	0.00	25.00	25.00	0.00	25.00	0.00%	Externally set
Copy of permit	15.00	0.00	15.00	15.00	0.00	15.00	0.00%	Externally set
Licenses Premises Automatic Notification Process								
On notification	50.00	0.00	50.00	50.00	0.00	50.00	0.00%	Externally set
Club Gaming Permits								
Grant	200.00	0.00	200.00	200.00	0.00	200.00	0.00%	Externally set
Grant (Club Premises Certificate holder)	100.00	0.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00%	Externally set
Existing Operator Grant	100.00	0.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00%	Externally set
Variation	100.00	0.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00%	Externally set
Renewal fee	200.00	0.00	200.00	200.00	0.00	200.00	0.00%	Externally set
Renewal (Club Premises Certificate Holder)	100.00	0.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00%	Externally set
Annual Fee	50.00	0.00	50.00	50.00	0.00	50.00	0.00%	Externally set
Copy of permit	15.00	0.00	15.00	15.00	0.00	15.00	0.00%	Externally set
Club Machine Permits								
Grant	200.00	0.00	200.00	200.00	0.00	200.00	0.00%	Externally set
Grant (Club Premises Certificate holder)	100.00	0.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00%	Externally set
Existing Operator Grant	100.00	0.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00%	Externally set
Variation	100.00	0.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00%	Externally set
Renewal fee	200.00	0.00	200.00	200.00	0.00	200.00	0.00%	Externally set
Renewal (Club Premises Certificate Holder)	100.00	0.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00%	Externally set
Annual Fee	50.00	0.00	50.00	50.00	0.00	50.00	0.00%	Externally set
Copy of permit	15.00	0.00	15.00	15.00	0.00	15.00	0.00%	Externally set
Family Entertainment Centre Gaming Machine Permits								
Application fee	300.00	0.00	300.00	300.00	0.00	300.00	0.00%	Externally set
Renewal fee	300.00	0.00	300.00	300.00	0.00	300.00	0.00%	Externally set
Transitional application fee	100.00	0.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00%	Externally set
Change of name	25.00	0.00	25.00	25.00	0.00	25.00	0.00%	Externally set
Copy of permit	15.00	0.00	15.00	15.00	0.00	15.00	0.00%	Externally set
Prize Gaming Permits								
Grant	300.00	0.00	300.00	300.00	0.00	300.00	0.00%	Externally set
Renewal	300.00	0.00	300.00	300.00	0.00	300.00	0.00%	Externally set
Existing Operator Grant	100.00	0.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00%	Externally set
Change of name	25.00	0.00	25.00	25.00	0.00	25.00	0.00%	Externally set
Copy of permit	15.00	0.00	15.00	15.00	0.00	15.00	0.00%	Externally set
Annual Fee	20.00	0.00	20.00	20.00	0.00	20.00	0.00%	Externally set
Small Lottery Registration								
Grant	40.00	0.00	40.00	40.00	0.00	40.00	0.00%	Externally set
Annual Fee	20.00	0.00	20.00	20.00	0.00	20.00	0.00%	Externally set

	2025/26			2026/27			Increase	Fee Structure
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge		
	£	£	£	£	£	£		
Environment & Leisure								
Civil Parking Enforcement - Penalty Charge Notices (rate depends on offence)								
Lower Penalty System								
Up to 14 Days	25.00	0.00	25.00	25.00	0.00	25.00	0.00%	Externally set
14 days to 56 days	50.00	0.00	50.00	50.00	0.00	50.00	0.00%	Externally set
57 days to 70 days	75.00	0.00	75.00	75.00	0.00	75.00	0.00%	Externally set
After 70 days	82.00	0.00	82.00	82.00	0.00	82.00	0.00%	Externally set
Higher Penalty System								
Up to 14 days	35.00	0.00	35.00	35.00	0.00	35.00	0.00%	Externally set
14 days to 56 days	70.00	0.00	70.00	70.00	0.00	70.00	0.00%	Externally set
57 days to 70 days	105.00	0.00	105.00	105.00	0.00	105.00	0.00%	Externally set
After 70 days	112.00	0.00	112.00	112.00	0.00	112.00	0.00%	Externally set
Environmental Fixed Penalty Notices								
Anti Idling (failure to turn off engine once requested to do so)	20.00	0.00	20.00	20.00	0.00	20.00	0.00%	Externally set
Abandoning a vehicle	200.00	0.00	200.00	200.00	0.00	200.00	0.00%	Externally set
Repairing vehicles on a road (or) exposing vehicles for sale on a road	100.00	0.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00%	Externally set
Smoking in a smoke free premises or vehicle	50.00	0.00	50.00	50.00	0.00	50.00	0.00%	Externally set
Failure to display no smoking signs in smoke free premises or vehicle	200.00	0.00	200.00	200.00	0.00	200.00	0.00%	Externally set
Smoking in an enclosed vehicle carrying a person under 18	50.00	0.00	50.00	50.00	0.00	50.00	0.00%	Externally set
¹ Increases to £40 if not paid within 28 days ² Reduced to £30.00 if paid within 15 days ³ Reduced to £150.00 if paid within 15 days								

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1. Risk Assessment

The Council takes a measured risk-based approach to the budget setting process

- 1.1 A comprehensive financial risk assessment is undertaken for the revenue and capital budget setting process to ensure that all risks and uncertainties affecting the Council's financial position are identified as far as is reasonably practical. These are reviewed each year as part of the refresh of the MTFS and future year's budget forecasts. The key strategic financial risks to be considered in developing the MTFS are included within the table below.
- 1.2 Medium term financial planning, set against a backdrop of severe reductions in Government funding and unprecedented economic challenges, both nationally and globally, carries with it a significant element of risk. Many factors may impact on the figures presented here and themes have been highlighted where appropriate. Most significant are the spending pressures (waste/homelessness) and the long awaited result of the Fair Funding Review and Business Rate Reset position for local government and the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) . All of these issues are placing further pressure on the council in the delivery of a balanced budget, without impacting on frontline services.
- 1.3 A return to recession would present further risk to the budget position, in particular significant areas of income such as lettings income, planning fees and car park income that are linked directly to economic demand. Although a recession has so far been avoided and interest rates are now beginning to fall there remains a risk to future impact on the council's income streams.
- 1.4 Uncertainty around current and future local government finance policy will undoubtedly affect our finances over the coming years but hopefully this will become more stable following the outcome of the Fair Funding Review.
- 1.5 Despite these risks, we will continue to plan effectively to strengthen our culture of strong financial management so that the Council can continue to meet its Corporate Plan priorities and provide the best possible services to the borough.
- 1.6 As part of strengthening the financial management of the Council, we will be looking to deliver a medium term financial policy that details future savings beyond 2026/27 to show how the budget will remain balanced over the four year period.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Management
Future available resources less than assumed.	Possible	High	Annual review of reserves and reserves policy to identify future resources. Assumptions on funding for 2026/27 and beyond are based on best estimates at this time. A prudent approach has been adopted based on previous years' experience as well as using regional network contacts to inform modelling.

Escalating costs of local plan and planning service	Likely	High	Ongoing recruitment delays are adding significant cost to the service with the use of locums. The additional requirements for evidence to support the local plan is also adding pressure to the budget position.
Efficiency/transformation initiatives not delivered	Possible	High	The MTFS is currently forecasting significant budget gaps, peaking at £5.1m in 2028/29. Use of one-off reserves to help plug these gaps is not sustainable.
Planned savings not delivered	Possible	High	The MTFS contains budget changes resulting from agreed service changes. Ongoing monitoring of the achievement of these, through regular budget monitoring, will help identify any issues.
Uncertainty around government grant and business rate funding	Likely	High	The MTFS is reporting uncertain government grant funding of £2.9m and business rate income of £12.4m in 2026/27. However, the position for 2026/27 remains uncertain due to the settlement review and business rate reset. There may be transitional support available, but this is currently an unknown.
Deadline pressure on capital project funding	Possible	Medium	Delays in funding announcements, without extensions to project end dates creates risk that projects may not receive the full funding award. Project Managers are in constant contact with government to raise the awareness of this issue and to request extensions to the end date where possible.
Overreliance on reserve contributions supporting base budget deficits which is not a sustainable position.	Likely	High	Early preparation of 2027/28 MTFS to address the ongoing budget gap and deliver a sustainable base budget position.
Volatility of business rates funding given uncertainty around impact of appeals.	Likely	High	Volatility of funding stream outside of council control but impact mitigated by establishment of specific earmarked reserve and financial monitoring framework. Modelling of potential impacts is used to inform internal financial planning.

Pay Awards, fee increases and price inflation higher than assumed.	Possible	Medium	Impact of potential increases mitigated by central contingency budget for pay, price increases and fees. Where pay awards have been agreed these will be factored into the future estimates.
Future spending plans underestimated.	Possible	Medium	Service planning process identifies future budget pressures, and these will inform the indicative budget forecasts. An effective budget monitoring framework is in place to identify in year and potential future cost pressures.
Revenue implications of capital programmes not fully anticipated.	Unlikely	Low	Capital bid approval framework identifies revenue implications and links to Council priorities. Full analysis of revenue implications assessed and considered in scenario planning.
Income targets not achieved.	Possible	Medium	Regular budget monitoring and reporting takes place. Review of fees and charges included within the budget build process.
Budget monitoring not effective.	Unlikely	High	Regular monitoring and reporting in line with corporate framework. Action plans developed to address problem areas. Track record of delivering budget.
Exit strategies for external funding ceasing/tapering not met.	Possible	Medium	Regular monitoring and reporting, medium-term planning, review of fixed term funding and posts completed.
Loss of principal deposit.	Unlikely	Medium	Limited by the controls in the Treasury Management Strategy which balance security of deposit over returns. Impact limited due to the strategy of a diverse portfolio with top rated institutions.
Interest rates lower than expected.	Unlikely	Low	Regular review, monitoring and reporting on interest rates. Prudent assumptions on likely interest rates for 2026/27 will be incorporated into the budget.
Collection rates for retained business rates and council tax lower than anticipated.	Possible	High	Impact mitigated by the review of bad debt provisions and availability of reserves. Monitoring of Collection Fund is formally incorporated into the revenue monitoring process.

Unexpected costs arising from Local Government Reorganisation	Likely	High	Details from the LGR business case modelling show that the cost of delivery are significant. We await the outcome of the Government's decision on Kent's unitary geography to fully assess the implications of this risk.
All MTFS risks not adequately identified.	Unlikely	Low	Council's Risk Management Framework ensures all operational and strategic risks are identified as part of the annual service planning process.

Policy & Resources Committee Meeting	
Meeting Date	26 November 2025
Report Title	Area Committees Review
EMT Lead	Larissa Reed - Chief Executive
Head of Service	Philip Sutcliffe - Communications & Policy Manager
Lead Officer	Janet Dart - Policy & Engagement Officer
Classification	Open
Recommendations	1. To discuss and agree the recommendations proposed by the Area Committees Review Member Working Group. 2. To refer recommendation 3.9 on voting arrangements to the Constitution Working Group. 3. To recommend to Council they agree the recommendations proposed by the Area Committees Review Member Working Group.

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 At the Council Meeting on 2 April 2025, it was agreed that the Chief Executive undertake a full review of the effectiveness of Area Committees, working with Area Committees, Parish Councils and the public and report back to the Policy and Resources Committee in the Municipal Year 2025/2026.
- 1.2 An Area Committees Review Member Working Group (ACRMWG) was set up, the membership being the current Chairs of the four Area Committees. Between June and November 2025 they carried out the review with the Chief Executive, supported by the Policy & Engagement Officer, their recommendations are presented in this report.

2 Background

- 2.1 Following the 2019 local elections, one of the objectives of the Swale Borough Council (SBC) administration was to diffuse power among Members and improve public engagement in decision-making. To achieve this, the administration put in place arrangements to set up four Area Committees in Swale and the first round of meetings took place in September 2020. Each year there are four rounds of meetings which take place in February, June, September and December. So, in total 16 meetings take place each year. Membership includes all ward Members in the area and the Committees' boundaries are aligned with those of the wards it covers. Substitute Members are not permitted on Area Committees and only those councillors who are Members of SBC are able to take decisions.

- 2.2 The purpose of Area Committees is “*to enhance the quality of life and of Council services in the relevant area and to bring local insight to bear in Council decision-making*”. The terms of reference agreed by Cabinet in February 2020 are set out in the SBC [Constitution](#), paragraph 2.5.4.
- 2.3 For the first year, meetings took place remotely as the COVID pandemic legislation was still in place which allowed formal meetings to be held virtually. Once restrictions were relaxed, the meetings started to take place face-to-face in village halls and community centres. However, many members of the public and councillors agreed that a lot of people would prefer to continue to be able to attend the meetings remotely, so the meetings became hybrid. This has been very effective and allows for wider engagement with people across the Borough, regardless of their accessibility needs, giving them the choice to participate either in person or remotely.
- 2.4 For the first three years, each Area Committee was allocated funding which equated to each Member receiving an identical amount. This was established at the Annual Council budget meeting each year and to be allocated to projects in consultation and agreement with the Area Committee as a whole and in-line with the terms of reference. A total of £534,000 was allocated by the four Area Committees over the period September 2020 to May 2023 to a wide variety of projects. At the February 2023 Full Council meeting, members agreed that one of the measures to address the budget gap was to stop providing funding to Area Committees.
- 2.5 An important function of Area Committees is to engage with the public, parish/town councils and community groups. This is very much a two-way process with the Council providing information about new and changing Council services and policies, updates on projects, and changes to Government legislation which may have an impact on residents. Area Committees are also a mechanism for the Council to listen to residents. The Council have incorporated provisions in the Constitution for there to be a session for members of the public or local organisations, including parish and town councils, to propose items for future agendas for consideration by the Committees to ask relevant questions and make relevant comments to the Committee.
- 2.6 The resource required to administer and support each round of Area Committees includes hall hire which is on average 4 x £100 = £400 per round. It is estimated that the total amount of time staff spent administering and supporting each round of meetings is 150 hours. Officers involved include the Senior Management Team, the Policy & Engagement Officer, Democratic Services, Communications and a variety of officers from different service areas responding to issues raised at meetings and preparing briefings and presenting updates.
- 2.7 Area Committee Chairs each receive a Special Responsibility Allowance of £2,036.00, the total per annum is £8,144.00.

- 2.8 Since funding for Area Committees to support local projects ceased, there has been a drop in attendance at meetings. This is variable between different areas and dependant local interest for specific agenda items. Appendix I gives a breakdown of attendance at each Area Committee meeting between June 2023 and September 2025. It also provides information on items which generated discussion at the meetings and the number of decisions made.
- 2.9 The ACRMWG consulted widely as part of the review. Details of the consultations carried out can be found in paragraph 5.1 of this report. The feedback was used by the Working Group to develop their proposed recommendations. The different consultations focussed on whether Area Committees, in their current format, achieved their purpose and questioned how they could be improved or if alternative methods of engagement would be more effective.

3 Proposals

- 3.1 The name of Area Committees should be changed to “Councillors and Residents Forum”. This will make the purpose of the meetings clearer.
- 3.2 As the December round of meetings are generally poorly attended, the frequency of the meetings to be reduced from 4 rounds a year to 3 rounds.
- 3.3 The summer round of meetings to provide a networking opportunity with refreshments, which will provide residents with the opportunity to interact with their ward councillor/s.
- 3.4 The Sittingbourne and Western Area Committee meetings should be held in the Committee Room at Swale House. Swale House is easily accessible for those residents and provides a saving on room hire which could be used to fund the summer networking meetings.
- 3.5 The venues for the Eastern and Sheppey Area Committee meetings should not move about as this has caused confusion in the past. Where possible the venue should remain the same for each Area Committee.
- 3.6 Ward councillors to be encouraged to lead on agenda items, this to be in agreement with the Chair in advance of the agenda being published.
- 3.7 Agenda items to be area specific, including items that are of interest to members of the public in their area.
- 3.8 The Public Forum item to be scheduled as early as possible on the agenda.
- 3.9 Voting arrangements to be amended, via the Constitution Working Group, so that for certain items, members of the public and parish/town councils have the ability to vote. It will be agreed by the Chair in advance which item/s this applies to and be made clear on the agenda.

- 3.10 Only ward councillors to vote to refer items to Service Committee Chairs.
- 3.11 The Matters Arising Report to incorporate a “You Said, We Did” section.
- 3.12 Communications to provide fuller explanation of items to be discussed and all ward councillors to take an active role in encouraging attendance
- 3.13 To improve the sound quality for people attending remotely, an expansion microphone to be purchased to use with the Owl Labs device at a cost of £249.
- 3.14 Chairs to meet after each round of meetings to review and forward plan.

4 Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

- 4.1 The alternative to the recommendations proposed by the ACRMWG is to do nothing and to continue with Area Committees in their current format. This is not recommended as the meetings are poorly attended and not fully achieving their purpose which is to “enhance the quality of life and of Council services in the relevant area and to bring local insight to bear in Council decision-making”.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 Consultation was widely undertaken and included the following: a public consultation was carried out between 1 August and 31 August 2025 and 54 responses were received (see Appendix II); an SBC Member survey was carried out between 1 August and 31 August 2025 and 17 responses were received (see Appendix III). The text responses have been summarised using artificial intelligence. Discussions took place at the June/July 2025 round of Area Committee meetings a summary of those discussions are at Appendix IV.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	The proposed recommendations align with the objectives of the corporate plan, in particular the Community objective “ <i>To ensure active and effective engagement mechanisms are in place so that all residents and communities have the opportunity to engage with the Council</i> ”.
Financial, Resource and Property	Administering Area Committees has financial and resource implications. These are estimated in paragraph 2.6 of this report.
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	If the proposed recommendations are agreed, they will require a change to the Constitution and agreement by Council.
Crime and Disorder	None identified at this stage.

Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	None identified at this stage.
Health and Wellbeing	None identified at this stage.
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	None identified at this stage.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	None identified at this stage.
Equality and Diversity	None identified at this stage.
Privacy and Data Protection	None identified at this stage.

7 Appendices

7.1 The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendices Ia to Id: Area Committees Review – data on meetings between June 2023 and September 2025
- Appendix II: Area Committees Review – summary of public consultation responses
- Appendix III: Area Committee Review – summary of SBC Member consultation responses
- Appendix IV: Area Committee Review – summary of discussions held at June/July 2025 round of Area Committee meetings

8 Background Papers

None.

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Eastern Area Committee

APPENDIX 1a

	Decisions Made	Additional substantive items	Noted Reports	Public Forum issues raised	Local issues raised by councillors	Parish Councils in attendance	Public attendees (online and in person)	Recommendations to Committee Chairs made	Apologies Received from SBC councillors	Meeting length (Mins)	Items that generated discussion
Jun-23	2	2	3	0	5	2	1	0	2	100	Achievements report; and Eastern Area Committee priorities.
Sep-23	4	5	1	2	3	4	4	0	4	126	Parking Policy; Report on bus consultation project; Corporate Plan update; Flooding in the Eastern area; and Consultation on the closure of Faversham Household Recycling Centre.
Dec-23	3	4	2	2	2	6	1	1	4	98	Community Safety Priorities; Cellar Hill & Greenstreet Conservation Area; Enhanced Bus Partnership - Swale Local Focus Group; and Flooding in the Eastern area.
Feb-24	2	4	5	1	2	3	5	0	3	56	Flooding in the Eastern Area; Swale Traffic Forum; and Household Support Fund.
Sep-24	4	7	1	0	1	5	4	2	3	108	Kent Local Transport Plan 5; Scrutiny of Waste Contract; Flooding in the Eastern Area; and Swale Traffic Forum.
Dec-24	3	5	2	0	3	4	1	3	7	89	Police & Community Safety update; Empowering You in Swale; Animate Arts Company; and Flooding in the Eastern area.
Feb-25	1	5	2	1	4	2	3	0	7	88	Devolution update; and Waste & Street Cleansing Scrutiny Review update.
Jun-25	5	2	3	6	4	2	2	5	8	113	Customer Access Strategy; and Review of Area Committees.
Sep-25	6	4	2	2	5	3	3	1	6	140	Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan public consultation; Consultation on Public Toilets; Extension of AONB to interconnect Forest Areas; and Community Governance Review.
Total	30	38	21	14	29	31	24	12	44	918	

Median 100 mins

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Sheppey Area Committee

APPENDIX 1b

	Decisions Made	Additional substantive items	Noted Reports	Public Forum issues raised	Local issues raised by councillors	Parish Councils in attendance	Public attendees (online and in person)	Recommendations to Committee	Chairs made	Apologies Received from SBC councillors	Meeting length (Mins)	Items that generated discussion:
Jun-23	0	2	2	0	3	5	5	0	1	102	Achievements report; Sheppey Area Committee priorities;	
Sep-23	0	4	2	1	2	5	4	0	0	145	Engagement with Police; Levelling -up project update; Parking Policy; and Corporate Plan update.	
Dec-23	1	4	3	4	3	3	5	0	4	150	Community Safety Priorities; Sheerness Revival Project update; and Enhanced Partnership Swale Local Focus Group.	
Feb-24	4	7	4	1	4	4	52	1	2	151	Proposed changes to car parking charges; Safer Streets update; Sheerness Revival Project update; Sheerness Clock Tower; Swale Local Bus Focus Group update; Swale Traffic Forum; and Housing Support Fund.	
Sep-24	0	8	2	6	1	2	40	0	3	187	Kent Local Transport Plan 5; Child Centered Policing; Shingle Bank parking issues; KCC Seashells Family Hub consultation; Scrutiny of Waste & Street Cleansing Contract; and Sheerness Revival Project update.	
Dec-24	0	3	2	5	3	3	4	0	6	122	Police update and community safety; Empowering You in Swale; and Sheerness Revival Project update.	
Feb-25	2	3	2	2	3	4	3	2	1	124	Devolution update; Sheerness Revival Project update; Waste & Street cleansing Scrutiny Review update; and CCF (and street lighting (raised during public forum))	
Jul-25	1	6	2	7	3	6	5	0	7	189	Sheerness Revival Project update; Customer Access Strategy; Secondary School Places; Review of Area Committees; Blue Flag and Seaside Awards update; and Barton's Point update.	
Sep-25	2	4	1	3	1	5	7	1	10	135	Consultation on Public Toilets; Sheerness Revival Project Update; Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan public consultation; and Isle of Sheppey Growth Board	
Total	10	41	20	29	23	37	125	4	34	1305		

Median mins 145

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	Decisions Made	Additional substantive Items	Noted Reports	Public Forum issues raised	Local issues raised by councillors	Parish Councils in attendance	Public attendees (online and in person)	Recommendations to Committee Chairs made	Apologies Received from SBC councillors	Meeting length (Mins)	Items that generated discussion:
Jun-23	1	2	2	1	2	N/A	12	0	1	94	Achievements report; and Sittingbourne Area Committee priorities.
Sep-23	0	3	1	2	1	N/A	5	0	1	97	Bus services; Parking Policy; and Corporate Plan update.
Dec-23	1	4	2	0	0	N/A	8	0	2	115	Community Safety; Milton Regis Conservation Area Review; and Enhanced Bus Partnership.
Feb-24	1	4	4	2	2	N/A	9	0	1	70	Safer Streets Scheme update; Swale Traffic Forum; and Household support fund.
Sep-24	3	4	1	4	2	N/A	6	0	3	100	Kent Local Transport Plan 5; Scrutiny of Waste & Street Cleansing contract; Enhanced Bus Partnership; and Sittingbourne Tennis Club.
Dec-24	0	2	1	1	2	N/A	4	0	2	95	Community Safety; Empowering You in Swale; and Rail passenger numbers/transport issues (raised under Public Forum).
Feb-25	0	3	1	1	0	N/A	10	0	2	102	Police update; Devolution update; Waste & Street Cleansng Scrutiny Review update; and Swale Local Bus Focus Group.
Jun-25	3	3	2	3	6	N/A	7	2	5	100	Customer Access Strategy; Review of Area Committees; and Local Government Reorganisation update.
Sep-25	1	3	1	0	3	N/A	10	0	3	135	Public Transport Issues in Sittingbourne; Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan public consultation; and Consultation on Public Toilets.
Total	10	28	15	14	18	N/A	71	2	20	908	

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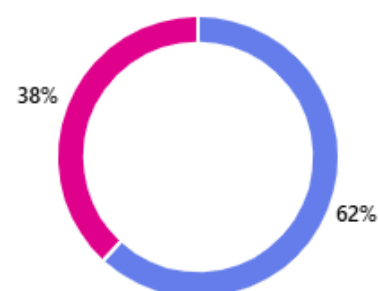
Swale Borough Council Area Committees Review

Results of public survey carried out between 1 August and 31 August 2025

(54 responses received. Text responses have been summarised using AI)

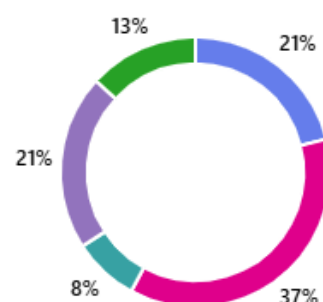
1. Before taking part in this survey, were you aware that area committees take place in Swale?

● Yes	34
● No	21



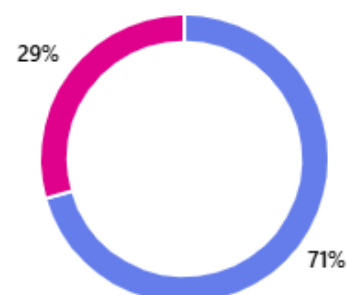
2. Where did you find out about area committees?

● Social Media	8
● Parish/Town Council newsletter/email	14
● Inside Swale	3
● Word of mouth	8
● Other	5



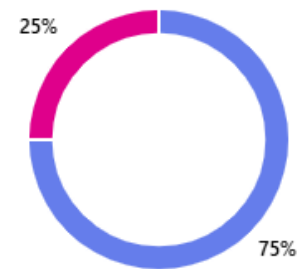
3. Have you ever attended an area committee meeting (either in person or remotely)?

● Yes	24
● No	10



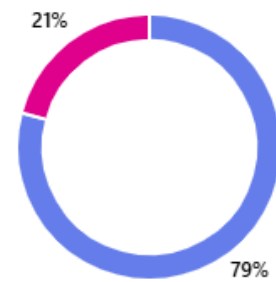
4. If you have ever attended an area committee meeting either in person or remotely, did you feel you were able to take part in the discussions?

● Yes 18
● No 6



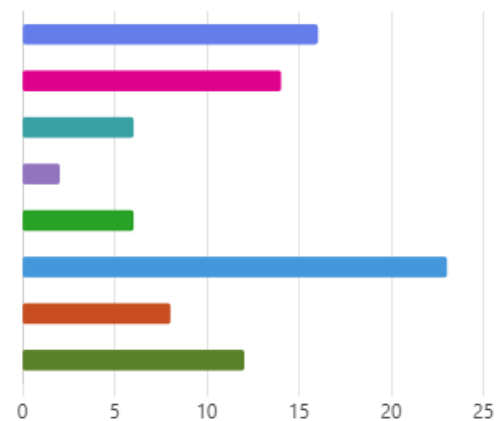
5. If you have ever attended an area committee meeting either in person or remotely, did you find the information provided was of interest and relevant to you?

● Yes 19
● No 5



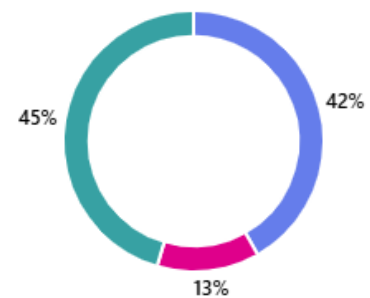
6. What might stop you attending area committee meetings in future? (select all that apply):

● Family commitments 16
● Work commitments 14
● Lack of transport 6
● Internet issues 2
● No interest in the items to be discussed 6
● Not knowing when and where they take place 23
● Can't make evening meetings 8
● Other 12



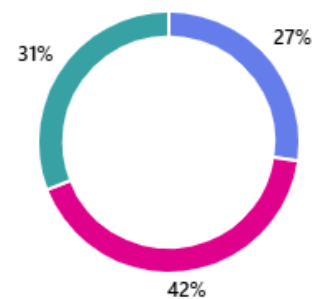
7. Would you be more inclined to attend in person if there was a session before the meetings where you could chat to councillors and representatives from other organisations?

Yes	23
No	7
Maybe	25



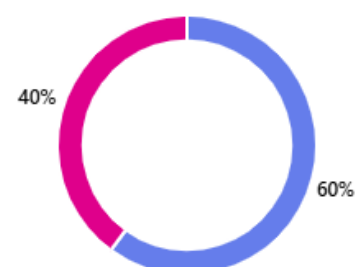
8. Would you be more inclined to attend either in person or remotely if more community/voluntary/faith groups attended?

Yes	15
No	23
Maybe	17



9. All area committees are hybrid meetings (you can either attend in person or remotely), if you were to attend, what would be your preference?

In person	33
Remote	22



10. Do you feel the name "Area Committees" describe what they are for?



11. If you feel "Area Committees" is not the best name for the meetings, what would be a better name?

- Many respondents suggested names that emphasise local engagement and community focus, such as "Local Engagement Forum", "Town Meeting", "Community Action Forum", "Neighbourhood Meetings", and "Residents Forum".
- Some felt the current name is vague and does not clearly communicate the purpose or who should attend.
- There was a desire for names that make it clear the meetings are about local decision-making and encourage wider participation.

12. Do you know the name of the Area Committee for where you live? Please select from the options below:



13. What sort of things would you like discussed at future area committee meetings?

- Key topics included anti-social behaviour, policing, road and transport issues, planning and development, youth activities, litter, infrastructure, and community facilities.
- Many wanted discussions to focus on issues directly relevant to their local area and everyday concerns.
- Some respondents felt meetings were repetitive or not action-oriented, and wanted more strategic, impactful discussions.

14. What could be done to improve area committee meetings?

- Suggestions included better advertising and publicity (local papers, social media, direct mail), improved accessibility (venues, online options), and clearer communication about agendas and outcomes.
- Calls for more public participation, interactive formats, and visible follow-up on decisions.
- Some wanted meetings to rotate venues, use technology better (microphones, live streaming), and provide clearer identification of councillors.

15. If area committees were to be stopped, how would you like the Council to engage with you (seek your views and provide information)?

- Respondents favoured a mix of engagement methods: regular meetings led by councillors, pop-up events, street stalls, online surveys, email newsletters, printed communications, and face-to-face sessions.
- Many stressed the importance of maintaining local forums and not relying solely on digital channels.
- There was concern that stopping area committees would reduce opportunities for genuine engagement and transparency.

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Swale Borough Council Area Committee Review

Results of Member survey carried out between 1 August and 31 August 2025

(17 responses received. Text responses have been summarised using AI)

1. Do you believe that area committees in their current form meet the purpose stated above?



2. Do you encourage residents, parish/town councillors, local groups to attend area committee meetings?



3. Do you find area committees are a good way of engaging with residents in your ward?

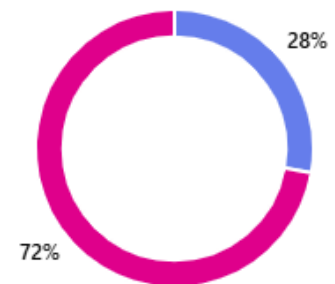


4. If you answered 'No' what do you think would be a better way to engage?

- Members suggested informal meetings, one-off events focused on major issues, direct engagement through door-knocking, attending local forums, and leveraging parish, borough, and county councillors.
- Some felt area committees attract only a narrow demographic and are not effective for wider engagement.

5. Do you feel the name “Area Committees” describe what they are for?

● Yes 5
● No 13



6. If you answered ‘No’ what would be a better name for the meetings?

- Suggestions included “Local Area Forums”, “Community Lead”, “Residents Forum”, “Local Engagement Forums”, and “Town Meetings”.
- Some felt a name change alone wouldn’t solve underlying issues with attendance and relevance.

7. What sort of things would you like discussed at future area committee meetings?

- Members wanted agendas to be resident-driven, focusing on major local issues, community governance, health, education, and urgent local matters.
- There was a desire for more meaningful, locally relevant topics and less repetition of issues covered elsewhere.

8. What could be done to improve area committee meetings?

- Suggestions included social meet-and-greet sessions, increased public participation, better advertising, more accessible venues, less formality, and greater control over local budgets.
- Some advocated for scrapping or radically changing the format.

9. In addition to inviting partner organisations along to area committees, who else would you like to be invited to come along and speak?

- Recommendations included local MPs, police, charities, developers, planning officers, social workers, and community groups.
- Some wanted open invitations to anyone affecting residents’ lives, while others felt attendance should be issue-driven.

10. If area committees were to be stopped, how would you like the Council to engage with residents?

- Members suggested open forums, topic-specific meetings, roadshows, community events, and direct engagement through councillors.
- Emphasis was placed on using multiple communication channels and tailoring engagement to local needs.

11. Do you think area committees should continue in their current format of a formal committee with standard agenda items?



12. If you answered 'No', what format should area committees change to in the future?

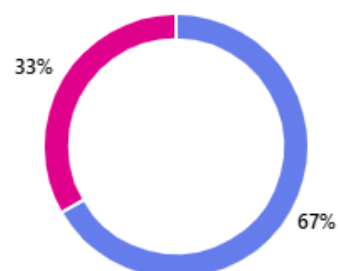
- Ideas included more personal, resident-led formats, single-topic meetings, less formality, and area-specific agendas.
- Some advocated for abolishing committees in favour of more creative, locally driven engagement methods.

13. When decisions are made at area committee meetings, who should be able to vote (select all who you think should vote):



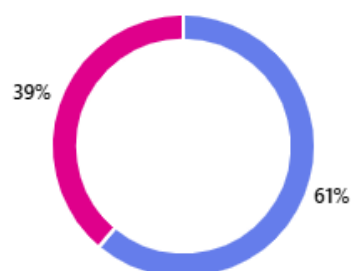
14. Would you be more inclined to attend if there was a networking session before the meetings where you could chat to residents and representatives from other organisations?

● Yes 12
● No 6



15. Would you be more inclined to attend if more community/voluntary/faith groups attended?

● Yes 11
● No 7



16. Do you think the current frequency and timing of area committees should continue (June, September, December and February)?

● Yes 10
● No 8

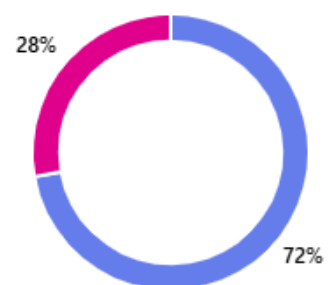


17. If you answered 'No', what frequency and timing do you think they should change to and why?

- Suggestions included stopping the December meetings and holding 3 rounds per year. Others suggested avoiding the winter months or holding 2 a year or one-off meetings to debate big issues.

18. Do you think the division of the areas should stay the same (Eastern, Sheppey, Sittingbourne and Western)?

● Yes 13
● No 5



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Area Committee Review – feedback from June/July round of Area Committees

Eastern:

- The old Local Engagement Fora were well attended, they were led by the community and external partners attended, such as the Police;
- attendance at the Eastern Area Committee meetings seemed very poor;
- they were well publicised, it was useful to have the opportunity to turn up and ask questions;
- the ability to feedback on consultations was good;
- town and parish councils should set the agendas;
- information sharing could be done by email;
- it was the same people who attended each time;
- a lot of people did not have time to attend evening meetings;
- there needed to be things on the agendas that were of interest to residents;
- public participation should not be restricted to the public forum item;
- Faversham Town Council may meet the needs for the Eastern area;
- there could be standing items on town and parish council agendas for issues to be raised at Area Committee meetings;
- Area Committees could provide an independent voice on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR);
- the officer briefings were good; and
- issues that were raised at Area Committee meetings were acted upon.

Sittingbourne:

- More public attendance was needed, councillors could help to promote the meetings;
- encourage external organisations to come and speak about their work/services;
- good work has come out of Area Committees;
- they needed to be accessible to everyone;
- include items on the agenda that residents would be interested in;
- people did not know what they could get from them;
- the name 'Area Committees' could put people off attending;
- consider moving away from only SBC councillors being able to vote;
- maybe change the structure of the meetings and the name to make them more friendly;
- they could be themed;
- networking could take place at the beginning of the meetings;
- consider what challenges there were for residents in their daily lives and make those issues the focus for meetings;
- suggest naming them the 'People's Forum', adopt an appropriate logo and publicise them more;
- invite Kent County Council (KCC) Cabinet Members to come along to talk about their areas of responsibility;
- publicise a 'You said, we did' after the meetings;
- it was important that they were non-political and respectful;
- use online polls for some decisions; and
- promote the online attendance.

Western:

- Very few members of the public attended the Western Area Committee (AC) meetings;
- were AC meetings worth the time of parish councillors and SBC officers when most of the agenda items were also discussed at the Local Councils' Liaison Forum meetings?;
- there were no parish councils in the Sittingbourne area;
- a lot of people were not aware what wards Western covered;
- interest in AC meetings had declined since funding was withdrawn;
- other methods of engagement needed to be considered;
- when workshops were held at previous AC meetings, they were very good but no feedback was provided after;
- more explanation about items was needed;
- AC meetings were a waste of time/money;
- councillors heard the same messages at different meetings;
- there needed to be engagement with parish councils separately on specific issues;
- residents attended more when there was an emotive issue on the agenda; and
- less formal sessions such as a surgery or pop-up café style might be more effective.

Sheppey:

- Sheppey Area Committee was usually well attended, members of the public were more likely to attend area committees instead of other formal Council meetings;
- area committees were a 'talking shop' and a waste of time and money;
- when area committees had funding to allocate, a lot of good came from the projects they supported;
- they were a good opportunity for residents to meet their local councillors, however they should be more easily identifiable at the meetings;
- sound quality at the meetings was poor, could a microphone be provided so everyone in the meeting could hear what was being said?;
- councillors and officers should go on public speaking courses to ensure they could be heard and understood easily, especially for people with hearing problems; and
- PowerPoint presentations should be less wordy and the text large enough for people at the back of the room to read.

Policy and Resources Committee	
Meeting Date	26 th November 2025
Report Title	South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership Business Plan 2026 – 2029
EMT Lead	Emma Wiggins Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods
Head of Service	Joanne Johnson Head of Place
Lead Officer	Joanne Johnson Head of Place
Classification	Part Open / Part Exempt
Recommendations	1. Members are asked to provide comment on the draft South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership (STGBC) Business Plan for 2026 – 2029.

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek comments on the draft South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership (STGBC) Business Plan for 2026 – 2029 as set out in appendix I.
- 1.2 STGBC is a partnership arrangement between the local authorities of Gravesham, Medway, Canterbury and Swale. The partnership was established in 2007.
- 1.3 The STGBC Constitution states that before 1st October each year the STGBC Joint Committee is required to approve and send its draft Business Plan for the following year to each partner authority for comment.
- 1.4 Following consideration by each partner authority, the revised business plan is required to be reviewed at the December STGBC Joint Committee, including the final financial statement. This will then return to each authority for ratifying in the new year. (If the draft is supported and no changes are subsequently made, ratification is deemed to be given and Policy and Resources Committee does not consider the document for a second time).
- 1.5 The appended draft was due to be considered at the STGBC Joint Committee meeting of 18th September 2025, in accordance with the Constitution. Unfortunately, this meeting was not quorate and could not proceed. The replacement meeting was unable to be scheduled within the required timeframe. As a result, members met informally on 30th October 2025. Each partner authority was represented.

- 1.6 Members of the Joint Committee reviewed the draft Business Plan and discussed the two options it contains. Consensus was reached that option 2 would be recommended to each partner authority for approval.
- 1.7 The Joint Committee has a duty under the Memorandum of Agreement to formally adopt the Business Plan at its Annual General Meeting. Given, therefore, that Joint Committee will meet formally to approve the Business Plan, it is considered acceptable for Policy and Resources Committee to consider the draft following an informal recommendation, in order to adhere to the required timescale. All partner authorities have agreed to follow this route.
- 1.8 The Joint Committee to receive and discuss partner comments on the draft is scheduled for 11th December 2025.

2 Background

- 2.1 The South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership (involving Medway, Gravesham and Swale) was formed in October 2007 with Canterbury joining in April 2018. Under the terms of the Memorandum of Agreement between the partner authorities, a rolling business plan needs to be agreed.
- 2.2 Each partner authority is requested to comment on the draft business plan and advise the STGBC Joint Committee of these comments.
- 2.3 STGBC provides statutory services. Much of its operation is subject to competition from approved inspectors within the private sector. The service also has statutory responsibilities ringfenced to the public sector, e.g. dangerous structures.
- 2.4 Over recent years, the service has found itself increasingly competing with approved inspectors within a diminishing market. This has put pressure on income generation within the service, and correspondingly has put pressure on the resourcing of the service itself. This has been exacerbated by the Building Safety Act 2022 which mandated the licensing of all individuals within the profession, placing further pressure on staff resources, with many surveyors opting to leave the profession / not operate at advanced levels, leaving significant vacancies.
- 2.5 The draft Business Plan 2026-2029 outlines how the building control function is proposed to be delivered on behalf of the partnership local authorities up until 2029, and forecasts budget contributions from 2026/27 to 2028/29.
- 2.6 It sets out steps to secure ongoing stability in the face of these resourcing and regulatory challenges. Two future financial and operational model options are considered. At its informal meeting of 30th October 2025, Joint Committee agreed to recommend option 2.
- 2.7 The financial adjustments outlined in the plan are deemed to reflect a realistic assessment of income trends and cost pressures, responding to the ongoing

economic challenges. They result in either an 18.9% or 26.6% increase in partner contributions for the 2026/2027 financial year compared to the current business plan.

- 2.8 The importance of the Building Control service as a statutory service is widely recognised and the work of STGBC is held in high regard by its partners. The benefits of the partnership approach to resourcing the volume and nature of the work (especially in terms of out of hours requirements) are significant.
- 2.9 Given the unexpected increase in contributions, Joint Committee is expected to consider returning the additional uplift from any 2026/27 surplus to the partner authorities rather than allocating it to the STGBC reserve (which is the default position as set out in the Memorandum of Agreement). Partner authorities have been reminded to actively promote the delivery of all relevant workstreams through the partnership, ensuring alignment with strategic objectives and maximising collaborative benefits.

3 Proposals

- 3.1 Members are asked to provide comment on the draft South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership Business Plan for 2026 – 2029.

4 Alternative Options

- 4.1 The Council could consider recommending option 1 within the draft Business Plan. This was considered in detail when Joint Committee met on 30th October. The Committee rejected this, citing the complexity and operational challenges within the building control industry. In particular, the licensing requirements necessitate a sufficient number of qualified surveyors to deliver the service effectively, ensure appropriate supervision, and support economic development through the built environment.
- 4.2 The Council could consider removing itself from the partnership (by giving the requisite one year's notice). However, one of the recognised successes of STGBC is the efficiencies secured by economies of scale. This has been borne out through separate reviews undertaken by the partner authorities. There is considerable value in resilience and risk mitigation through being part of the partnership. As such, this option is not recommended.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 The draft Business Plan was approved at the informal meeting of Joint Committee on 30th October 2025. Councillor Tim Gibson is Swale Borough Council's representative on this Joint Committee.
- 5.2 Officer input had been sought and provided on earlier drafts, from Planning and Finance teams within the partner authorities.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	The Business Plan supports the 'Running the Council' priority of the Corporate Plan, by supporting the operation of a fiscally sound and resilient partnership arrangement.
Financial, Resource and Property	Costs involved in being a partner authority are set out in the appendix. Joint Committee expects to consider a change to the default position that in-year surpluses contribute to the STGBC reserve for 26/27. The Medium Term Financial Plan will reflect the proposed contributions as set out in the appendix. Finance colleagues were consulted on the draft plan.
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	The Partnership and Joint Committee operate under a Memorandum of Agreement signed by each of the partner authorities. Legal colleagues were consulted on the draft plan.
Crime and Disorder	Dealing with dangerous structures efficiently can reduce crime and disorder associated with abandoned / deteriorating structures.
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	None identified at this stage
Health and Wellbeing	None identified at this stage.
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	None identified at this stage.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	The risk of insufficient operational resources is documented in the appendix. The Building Control function makes important contributions to health and safety, many of which are statutory.
Equality and Diversity	None identified at this stage.
Privacy and Data Protection	None identified at this stage.

7 Appendices

- 7.1 The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

Appendix I: Draft STBGC Business Plan 2026 – 2029 (exempt)

8 Background Papers

None

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

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