

AGENDA

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING

Date: Wednesday, 8 February 2023

Time: 7.00 pm

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

Membership:

Councillors Mike Baldock (Chair), Monique Bonney (Vice-Chair), Lloyd Bowen, Derek Carnell, Mike Dendor, Tim Gibson, Mike Henderson, Alan Horton, Julian Saunders, David Simmons, Bill Tatton, Roger Truelove, Tim Valentine, Mike Whiting and Corrie Woodford.

Quorum = 5

Pages

Information about this meeting

*Members of the press and public can listen to this meeting live. Details of how to join the meeting will be added to the website by 7 February 2023.

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 - (d) Anyone unable to use the stairs should make themselves known during this agenda item.
2. Apologies for Absence
3. 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.

4. Minutes

To approve the [Minutes](#) of the meeting held on 14 December 2022 (Minute Nos. 523 – 532) and the [Extraordinary Meeting](#) held on 4 January 2023 (Minute Nos. 549 - 553) as correct records.

(Re the minutes of the meeting held on 14 December, an officer has raised that the recommendation for minute no. 527 be amended for clarity:

34-hour working week

Resolved:

- (1) That a formal staff consultation on the introduction of a 34-hour working week be commenced from 1 April 2023 if the 2023/24 budget proposal is agreed at Full Council in February 2023.***

Suggested wording:

Resolved:

(1) That a formal staff consultation commences in January 2023 on the introduction of a 34-hour working week to commence on 1 April 2023, if the 2023/24 budget proposal is agreed at Full Council in February 2023.)

Part A reports for Recommendation to Council

5.	Final Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan including fees and charges	5 - 120
6.	Adoption of the new code of conduct	121 - 150
7.	Treasury Management Strategy 2023/24	151 - 168
8.	Pay Policy Statement	169 - 206

Part B Reports for Decision by the Policy and Resources Committee

9.	Procedure for appointing persons to inquorate parish councils under s91 of the Local Government Act 1972	207 - 212
10.	Recommendations from the South Thames Gateway Building Control Joint Committee held on 1 December 2022	

Please see the reports below (exempt).

South Thames Gateway Building Control Business Plan 2023-2026

Resolved:

(1) That the updated version of the Business Plan, incorporating any comments received, be approved and it be referred to the Cabinet or relevant Committee of each partner authority to approve the Final Draft Business Plan.

South Thames Gateway Building Control Memorandum of Agreement

Resolved:

(1) That the changes to STG Building Control Partnership's Memorandum of Agreement be approved and it be referred to the respective Councils to affix their Common Seals.

11.	Forward Decisions Plan	213 - 214
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 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act:

1. Information relating to any individual.

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|
| 13. Senior Management Restructure | 215 -
226 |
| 14. Exclusion of the Press and Public | |

To decide whether to pass the resolution set out below in respect of the following items: That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 3 and 5 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act:

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

5. Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| 15. South Thames Gateway Building Control Business Plan 2023-2026 | 227 -
266 |
| 16. South Thames Gateway Building Control Memorandum of Agreement | 267 -
426 |

Issued on Tuesday, 31 January 2023

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 DEMOCRATIC SERVICES on 01795 417330**. To find out more about the work of this Committee, please visit www.swale.gov.uk

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

Policy and Resources Committee Meeting	
Meeting Date	8 th February 2023
Report Title	2023/24 Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan and Capital Strategy
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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To approve the 2023/24 revenue budget proposals. 2. To approve the proposed Council Tax Band D increase for 2023/24 to £194.94, or £199.26 should legislation allow districts to increase by £10.00. 3. To note the Medium Term Financial Plan. 4. To approve the Capital Strategy. 5. To approve the capital programme proposals. 6. To note the additional amount of Council Tax for Parish Precepts. 7. To approve the minimum revenue provision statement. 8. To delegate authority to the Director of Resources to adjust charge out rates within fees and charges as appropriate, where they are based on costs incurred. 9. To approve the use of reserves statement as detailed in appendix VI as to ensure reserves are valid and support the assumptions in the MTFP.

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the Council's Revenue and Capital budget proposals for 2023/24, the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and the Capital Strategy.
- 1.2 Policy and Resources committee received a budget report on 30 November 2022 prior to the provisional local authority grant settlement announced on 19 December 2022. This report reflects the implications of the settlement, along with any other changes identified since the committee meeting.

- 1.3 This report, if agreed by Policy and Resources committee, will then go forward to Council on 22 February.

2 Background

Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement 2023/24

- 2.1 Despite previous indications coming from central government, the settlement is once again for one year only for district councils such as Swale.
- 2.2 The draft settlement published on 19 December announced some additional grant funding and a further year's allocation of New Homes Bonus. Some funding has also been rolled up into a single grant from 2023/24.
- 2.3 A new grant (one-off) was introduced, to ensure that local authorities received a 3% increase in core spending power before any increase in Council Tax levels. However, the 3% increase is predicated on councils increasing council tax by the maximum allowed under the referendum principles.
- 2.4 The main changes to the draft budget, arising from the settlement are shown in the table below:

Funding source	Amount £'000 () = increase in grant	Comments
Revenue Support Grant	(197)	Local Council Tax Support rolled into RSG
Local Council Tax Support	169	Rolled into RSG
Family Annex Grant	16	Rolled into RSG
Lower Tier Services Grant	195	Grant removed
New Homes Bonus	36	Allocation lower than anticipated
Services Grant	129	Reduced by more than anticipated
Funding Guarantee	(504)	New grant
Total	(156)	

- 2.5 Revenue Support Grant will remain into 2024/25, however no other grants are guaranteed beyond 2023/24. The government have announced that it will review New Homes Bonus ahead of the 2024/25 settlement to help council's plan for the future.
- 2.6 As part of the provisional funding settlement the government have announced a significant new funding stream from 2024/25, subject to the successful delivery of the Extended Producer Responsibility for packaging (pEPR) scheme. As a result government assume that local authorities can expect to receive additional income from the scheme whilst being asked to submit data relevant to their waste collection services. Alongside His Majesty's Treasury and the Department for

Environment, Food and Rural Affairs DLUHC will be assessing the impact of additional pEPR income on the relative needs and resources of individual local authorities in the coming year.

Staff Pay

- 2.7 The budget assumes no increase in staff pay other than increments that are due and the increase in the real living wage. This is on the basis of moving to a reduced number of hours as our standard contract, to 34 hours per week.

Capital Strategy

- 2.8 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. It provides a high-level overview of capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the provision of local public services.
- 2.9 The proposed Treasury Management Strategy was reported to the Audit Committee on 30 January 2023 and is also reported separately to this meeting. The proposed Capital Programme and its funding are detailed in Appendix V to this report.
- 2.10 Councils are required to balance their revenue budget annually and cannot borrow to achieve a balanced position. However, they have very far reaching powers to borrow to fund capital expenditure. This has historically been funded from borrowing from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB), which is part of the Debt Management Office which is part of the Treasury. Borrowing can be for up to 50 years at rates which are below commercial rates. The decision to borrow externally is ultimately a treasury one, and is made closer to the time when expenditure is actually incurred, taking into account available cash balances, the opportunity cost of investments and the exposure to interest rate and credit risks.
- 2.11 Council in February 2020 agreed the following principles:
- Investing in sustainable, affordable and social housing to increase overall supply,
 - Using the ability to borrow at lower 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.
- 2.12 Council also agreed that in future specific capital projects will have a borrowing limit associated. This limit can be varied by Policy & Resources Committee.

- 2.13 The Council has not made and will not make any direct commercial investments outside of the Borough. Capital funds will be used for the benefit of local residents.
- 2.14 Looking ahead to 2023/24 there will be four major capital projects which are reflected in the draft Capital Budget:
- 2.14.1 Housing company - in October 2020 Cabinet agreed to establish Swale Rainbow Homes Ltd. The outline business case envisaged the Council providing up to £23m of funding through loans to support the delivery of new homes. The exact arrangements for the drawdown of this funding will follow the detailed planning and procurement phases. The cost of the borrowing will be wholly met by the company. Because the company is a wholly owned by the Council its accounts will need to be incorporated into those of the Council requiring the company to have the same financial year as the Council. The spend on this project has been profiled so that spend is spread across a number of years to more accurately represent the likely spend pattern.
 - 2.14.2 Purchase of temporary accommodation – the Housing and Health Committee on 17 January 2023 agreed a budget of £11m to purchase up to 50 properties within the borough to accommodate households in need of housing. The purchase of properties will happen over time, as properties become available, so the spend has been profiled over two years. The funding for this project will be a reallocation of temporary accommodation spend to cover the capital financing costs.
 - 2.14.3 Levelling Up Scheme – the council has been successful in its bid for funding from the Levelling Up scheme. This project will use funding to improve health, education, leisure and employment opportunities in Sheerness through the Sheerness Revival project. This is expected to be a two year capital project, with the spend profiled across 2023/24 and 2024/25.
 - 2.14.4 Purchase of waste vehicle fleet – as agreed by Council on 4 January 2023, £7m of council funding will be used to purchase a fleet of vehicles for the new waste collection and street cleansing contract. This is the most economically advantageous method for securing the vehicles, and provides resilience in the delivery of the contract.
- 2.15 Debt is only a temporary source of finance, since loans must be repaid, and this is therefore replaced over time by other financing, usually from revenue which is known as Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP). MRP is a charge to the revenue budget which then accrues on the Balance Sheet; it is not an external payment. Alternatively, capital receipts may be used to replace debt finance. The Council's policy on MRP is set out in Appendix VII.

- 2.16 There are a number of sources of funding available to the Council for capital schemes (capital grants/contributions, capital receipts, borrowing etc). Revenue funding is also available however it should be noted that the scope for using revenue resources for capital purposes is limited.
- 2.17 The current Capital Programme is funded from grants and contributions, capital receipts from the disposal of assets and from the Council's own reserves, internal and external borrowing. Whilst capital funding is available to invest in new assets or in improving existing assets, the impact on the revenue account due to the loss of investment income is always a key consideration.
- 2.18 All organisations need to manage their cash flow. For most Councils their cash flow level is much larger than their reserves as they take in funds through sources such as Business Rates and Council Tax which they hold before making payments to other bodies such as Kent County Council (KCC). The Council's daily cash balances averaged £28.2m in the 6 months to 30 September 2022. Where a Council is investing in a capital project, it can fund this capital investment from cash flow and this is known as internal borrowing. Internal borrowing defers the financial commitment to external borrowing. MRP still has to be made. The Finance Department closely monitors cash flow to ensure that there is no adverse impact.
- 2.19 For any significant investment the Council will supplement the expertise of Members and Officers with appropriate external specialist advice to ensure that proposals are fully tested and risks considered.
- 2.20 The Director of Resources believes that the Capital Strategy and Capital Programme proposed are sustainable.

3 Proposals

Medium Term Financial Plan

- 3.1 The updated Medium Term Finance Plan is attached in Appendix I.

Balanced Budget Proposals

- 3.2 The 30 November Policy and Resources report showed a balanced position with £2.045m being used from reserves within 2023/24 to achieve that position.
- 3.3 Along with the changes from the local government settlement, there have been a number of other variations since the 30 November report. These changes are neutral overall, so the budget remains balanced whilst still using reserves to the extent of £2.045m.
- 3.4 The table below shows a summary of all changes to the revenue budget as reported to Policy and Resources committee on 30 November 2022:

Budget heading	Amount £'000 () = improved position
Grant funding (per table in 2.4)	(156)
Drainage levy increase	14
Council Tax collection fund deficit	45
Insurance contract estimated increase	47
Increase in NNDR on council buildings	50
Total	0

3.5 Detailed revenue budget proposals are attached in Appendix II.

3.6 An analysis of the budget risks is detailed in Appendix VIII.

Council Tax

3.7 The proposals assume an increase of £5.67 in the Band D Council Tax to £194.94, or £199.26 should legislation allow districts to increase by £10.00.

3.8 The Collection Fund and Council Tax base are set out in Appendix III.

3.9 The Council Tax base was set at 49,673.46 by the Director of Resources.

3.10 Parish precepts are shown in Appendix IV.

3.11 The Regeneration & Levelling-Up Bill ('the Bill') is currently passing through Parliament and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing, and Communities (DLUHC) is aiming for Royal Assent in Spring 2023. The Bill proposes, amongst other things, two important changes to council tax, as follows:

- A change in the application of a council tax premium on 'long term empty' properties. Currently, if a property has been unoccupied and unfurnished for 2 years but less than 5 years, then a 100% council tax premium can be applied to the property (Swale Borough Council currently applies this premium in line with the relevant regulations). The Bill is proposing to shorten that 2-year period to 1 year. 'Long term empty' premiums are applied to encourage owners to bring properties back into use so they are not left empty for extended periods.
- The implementation of a council tax premium on 'second homes'. 'Second homes' are properties which are unoccupied but furnished. For some years now local councils have been able to apply a full council tax charge to second homes. This charge is applied in Swale. The Bill proposes the councils may apply a 100% council tax premium on second homes (this

would mean an owner of a second home in the borough would pay double the normal council tax charge).

- 3.12 Both of these changes can only come into effect if the Bill receives Royal Assent, and even then, the earliest that both of these changes can come into effect is 1 April 2024 if the assent is granted by 31 March 2023.
- 3.13 The Bill states that to apply these changes approval to do so must be given at least 12 months before the implementation date. Therefore, this report is notice that, should the Bill receive Royal Assent we have the required 12 months lead-in period, in order to apply the premiums from 1 April 2024 should the decision be taken to do so.

Fees and Charges

- 3.14 Proposed fees and charges were set out as part of the draft budget report on 30 November 2022, and these are set out in Appendix X.
- 3.15 Fees and charges have been updated to reflect the increase in Legal recharge rates and an information line regarding the recharge of kennel costs for dogs returned to owners where a kennel stay has been necessary. Delegated authority is sought for the Director of Resources to adjust charge out rates to ensure full cost recovery.

Capital Programme

- 3.16 The capital budget is attached in Appendix V.
- 3.17 There have been some amendments to the budget previously presented. These are the inclusion of the purchase of the waste fleet at £7.035m as agreed by Council on 4 January, the addition of £11m to purchase Temporary Accommodation and the Local Authority Housing Fund bridging allocation of £464k as recommended to the Housing and Health Committee on 17 January,
- 3.18 The Temporary accommodation project is an invest to save project to purchase up to 50 properties within the borough to accommodate households in council owned properties rather than in private provision. This would enable savings to be made in the cost of nightly lets, and these savings would be used to cover the costs of financing the capital spend. This would therefore be cost neutral to the revenue budget.
- 3.19 The table below illustrates the level of investment required to purchase 50 properties, based upon 20 1 bed properties and 30 2 bed properties. The table also outlines the revenue income and costs the Council can expect from the investment, as well as the level of costs the Council will avoid by not having to place the households in privately provided TA. The Council would also own the Capital asset and therefore hold the value of the asset.

Table 1 – Summary of TA purchase model

Item	Annual Summary		25-year Profile	
Rent	-£	348,267	-£	8,706,677
Expenditure	£	1,108,419	£	29,484,608
Net Cost	£	739,352	£	20,257,932
Cost of NL TA	£	832,200	£	26,655,615
Net Saving	-£	72,048	-£	5,877,684

Main Assumptions

1. Based upon a portfolio of 20 x 1 bed and 30 x 2 bed properties
2. Average purchase price @£200k across the whole portfolio
3. Stamp Duty @ 6%
4. Annual Interest @ 4.8%
5. LHA Rate claimed @ 90%
6. Voids @ 6%
7. Individual allowances made for maintenance, management, and repairs in the model.

- 3.20 The Rural England Prosperity Fund revenue and capital split is still being worked on, and at this point has been included in the capital programme in full. Amendments will be made to the reporting of this grant through regular budget monitoring reporting.

Reserves

- 3.21 The estimated use of reserves is shown in Appendix VI which shows the budget forecast, but all in-year changes will be reflected in closedown and in the Council's financial accounts.
- 3.22 The key principles for the management of reserves moving forward are:
- Maintain reserves to support the Council's budget position and to deal with unexpected one-off events;
 - Funding the Council's strategic priorities; and
 - Fund one-off items of expenditure to support service delivery.
- 3.23 When the Council is considering its budget requirement, it is the Director of Resources' due under S25 of the Local Government Act 2003 to report on the adequacy of reserves. These have been reviewed in line with guidance from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy.

- 3.24 The Council seeks to maintain a minimum of £1.5m as its General Fund balance and this position will be reviewed in 2023/24. The balance at 1 April 2022 was £3.073m. The Council holds earmarked reserves for specific purposes and the remaining unallocated funds form the General Reserve. The Director of Resources' view is that the level of reserves and balances held by the Council are at a reasonable level overall, and will remain so throughout 2023/24. However, a robust savings plan will need to be established to ensure that the council continues to be able to deliver a sustainable balanced budget from 2024/25 onwards. Earmarked reserves are proposed to be rationalised to transfer uncommitted balances to the budget contingency reserve to support a balanced budget position for future years, alongside a deliverable savings programme.
- 3.25 Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 requires the Chief Financial Officer (Section 151 Officer) to report formally on the adequacy of proposed reserves when setting a budget. The Council's Section 151 Officer (Director of Resources), in accordance with the Local Government Act 2003, has hereby confirmed her opinion that the 2023/24 budget is robust, and the reserves are reasonable for the coming financial year. However, the medium term savings requirement will need to be addressed in future budget rounds, as based on the information included in the MTFP, the reserves will not be sufficient to support the council's financial position.
- 3.26 Reserve balances have been reviewed as part of this budget round with some earmarked reserves now rationalised and uncommitted balances transferred to the budget contingency reserve to support the assumptions in the Medium Term Financial Strategy. Where 2022/23 expenditure is committed but remains unspent at the end of the financial year, the committed amounts will be allowed to slip into future years.

4 Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

- 4.1 Do nothing – this is not recommended as the Council is legally required to set a balanced budgets.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 The budget proposals were reported to Policy and Resources Committee on the 30th of November 2022.
- 5.2 An online budget consultation exercise took place from 2nd December 2022 to 13th January 2023, and the results are summarised in Appendix IX.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
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Corporate Plan	The budget proposals support the achievement of the Council's corporate priorities.
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.
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

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

- Appendix I: Medium Term Financial Plan
- Appendix II: Detailed Revenue Budget Proposals
- Appendix III: Collection Fund and Council Tax Base
- Appendix IV: Parish Precepts
- Appendix V: Capital Programme and Funding
- Appendix VI: Estimated Use of Revenue Reserves 2023/24 – 2025/26
- Appendix VII: Minimum Revenue Provision Statement
- Appendix VIII: Budget Risks
- Appendix IX: Budget Consultation
- Appendix X: Fees and Charges
- Appendix XI: Proposed Savings Schedule

8 Background Papers

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Medium Term Financial Strategy

Contents

1. Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)
2. Corporate Plan 2020-2023
3. Context
4. Global and national Pressures
5. Local Pressures
6. Inflation
7. Funding changes
8. Income
9. Links to other strategies
10. Looking forward
11. Closing the budget gap
12. Risk assessment
13. Conclusions

Tables and Charts

- Chart 1: Staff Survey Question 1 (Ranking Options)
 Chart 2: Staff Survey Question 2 (Who Will Get a Pay Increase?)
 Chart 3: Inflation Forecasts November 2022
 Chart 4: Revenue Support Grant (RSG) reductions
 Chart 5: New Homes Bonus (HNB) Payments
 Chart 6: Council Tax Shares
 Chart 7: Reserve Balance Projections
 Chart 8: Capital Programme 2023/24

- Table 1: Projected Council Tax Income Growth
 Table 2: Deficit Forecasts as per 2022/23 Budget
 Table 3: Updated Deficit Forecasts Based on Updated Settlement Assumptions

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. It is the method by which the Council plans translates its long-term 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 long-term 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 long-term financial success.

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 a number of local and national factors. These will include known spending pressures and commitments, along with forecast future funding reductions 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, a summary of which can be found on the Council's website [here](#).
- 1.4 The Council is currently projecting a deficit position from 2023/24 onwards. Forecasting the deficit allows the Council time to plan mitigating actions more effectively, meaning we are more likely to be successful, enabling us to reduce the reliance on reserves to plug any budget gaps which is not a sustainable position. This strategy will explore some of the Council's plans for addressing this deficit and consider some of the assumptions included. The future year projections can be found within Appendix I.

2. Corporate Plan 2020 - 2023

'Working together for a better borough'

- 2.1 In May 2019 a new Coalition Council was elected adopting a new Corporate Plan which set out the intent and ambition of the authority for the period 2020 – 2023. The Plan details the Council's vision for the next four years, providing the framework and context for the Council's service provision, project interventions and resource allocation (financial and staffing) for the period through to 2023. It reflects the essential needs and aspirations of our customers and communities and how we feel the Council can best use its resources to deliver services and outcomes that make a positive difference for everyone who lives in, works in or visits the borough of Swale.
- 2.2 However, despite the borough having a number of very positive attributes we also have some big challenges: – responding to environmental change, increasing affordable housing supply, supporting economic growth and decent jobs, tackling deprivation and ensuring the council is fit to deliver the best possible services within current budget constraints.

- 2.3 The Corporate Plan identifies four key priorities, each of which contain a number of objectives and actions to respond to the challenges our district faces in the years to come;
- Building the right homes in the right places and supporting quality jobs for all
 - Investing in our environment and responding positively to global challenges
 - Tackling deprivation and creating equal opportunities for everyone
 - Renewing local democracy and making the council fit for the future
- 2.4 Planning is challenging, especially given the broad range of services we provide, and the competing demands for increasingly scarce resources. All our services are committed to making improvements and finding savings, so that the Council remains efficient, effective and meets the day to day needs of the communities we serve. The purpose of the Corporate Plan is to focus on those priorities where we need to give specific attention. It will help us target better our dwindling capital and revenue resources and help direct and focus any bids for external grant support. The Plan also provides a framework against which we can assess our progress to support the needs of our customers and communities.
- 2.5 Underpinning the Corporate Plan is the day-to-day business that departments undertake, and which will be reflected in departmental Service Plans. All Service Plans are linked to the Corporate Plan. These plans also include the performance measures by which the delivery of wider improvement activity can be managed. The priorities within the Corporate Plan were developed by talking with, and listening to the community, Elected Members, staff and other key stakeholders all of whom have helped to shape the content of the Plan.

Investment in Priority Areas

- 2.6 Whilst the overall level of the Council's resources is reducing it is important that a clear focus is maintained on matching funding to priorities. This will remain a key focus over the coming years to ensure the aspirations contained within the Corporate Plan are realised.

Our Purpose

- 2.7 To develop a long-term plan, every organisation needs to set an aspiration of where the organisation is aiming to be in the future. This enables everyone to be united in a shared direction and purpose. The Council's aspiration is as follows:

Swale Borough Council – working together for a better borough

Our purpose is supported by our corporate priority themes which are as follows;

Priority 1: Building the right homes in the right places and supporting quality jobs for all

Priority 2: Investing in our environment and responding positively to global challenges

Priority 3: Tackling deprivation and creating equal opportunities for everyone

Priority 4: Renewing local democracy and making the council fit for the future

Our leadership qualities

In order to deliver our priorities and objectives the Council needs strong, positive leadership and this is embodied within our leadership qualities as follows;

- Leadership at all levels
- Performance
- Ambition
- Customer Care
- Teamwork

Our Values

Our values represent the beliefs and expected behaviour of everyone working for Swale. Our values, which aim to support quality services, we;

- **Fairness** - being objective to balance the needs of all those in our community
- **Integrity** - being open, honest and taking responsibility
- **Respect** - embracing and valuing the diversity of others
- **Service** - delivering high quality, cost effective public service
- **Trust** - delivering on our promises to each other, customers and our partners

‘One Team’ Team Approach

In order to deliver high quality services, we need to have excellent teams to deliver them. We recognise that our staff are our most important resource at the heart of the services we provide. We are committed to investing in staff and their development so that we have well trained and supported employees, providing professional services and who are happy and motivated in their work. The One Team approach also includes Members to ensure we work closely together to deliver our priority outcomes and that their training needs are also met as part of their ongoing development.

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, which in recent years has been the focus of major council-led redevelopment. These 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 and were last published in 2019. Compared to the previous time the figures were calculated in 2015, Swale’s overall position on the indices deteriorated relative to other places, with the borough now the 69th most disadvantaged of 317 shire districts in England, and the second most disadvantaged in Kent.

- 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 Pressures

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. The war in Ukraine is impacting significantly on energy prices which is in turn feeding into the huge increases in inflation which we have experienced.

Political

- 4.2 Following Liz Truss' resignation Rishi Sunak was announced as the new Prime Minister in October 2022. During a period of instability and change, resources are redirected to other areas, particularly within the civil service and other priorities are reduced. There has been little progress with the Fair Funding Review and business rates retention has been further postponed.

Central Government Funding

- 4.3 We were hoping this year for a multi-year settlement but despite headlines suggesting local government funding has been announced for the next 2 years, this relates predominantly to top tier councils, leaving a high level of uncertainty for district councils beyond 2023/24. The revenue support grant has been combined with council tax support and family annex grants, which on the face of it look like an increase in RSG, but the total increase in funding for all three grants is minimal. Government have promised an early review on new homes bonus ahead of the 2024/25 funding announcement to allow time for councils to plan, the potential loss of this grant remains a significant risk to the Swale budget. A one off funding guarantee grant has been awarded for 2023/24 with the aim to ensure that all authorities will see at least a 3% increase in their Core Spending Power before any decision they make about organisational efficiencies, use of reserves, and council tax levels.
- 4.4 As part of the provisional funding settlement the government have announced that 2024-25 brings with it a significant new funding stream which will be subject to successful delivery of the Extended Producer Responsibility for packaging (pEPR) scheme. As a result government assume that local authorities can expect to receive additional income from the scheme whilst being asked to submit data relevant to their waste collection services. Alongside His Majesty's Treasury and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, DLUHC will be assessing the impact of additional pEPR income on the relative needs and resources of individual local authorities in the coming year.

Inflation

- 4.5 CPI rose by 9.0% in the 12 months to April 2022, the highest 12-month rate since the statistics started back in 1997, with CPI at 10.5% in December and the equivalent RPI rate at 13.4%. This puts pressure on the Council's finances and erodes spending power with several of the Council's largest contracts increasing in line with indices that are often index linked to inflation, so we are effectively having to pay more money just to stand still.

Covid-19 Recovery

- 4.6 We are still recovering both nationally and globally from the impacts of Covid and the country is working out what it's 'new normal' is. The recovery does however offer opportunities as well as local government has demonstrated how well we are able to continue to operate services and indeed in a number of examples improve them during Lockdown. New Ways of Working can provide further opportunities in terms of efficiencies and working differently in the future, with more flexibility around remote and home working and less reliance on office space, travelling to meetings etc which also supports the Council's Net Zero ambitions.

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 Waste management currently represents a significant pressure. A contract extension has been agreed due to the lead in times for the new waste vehicles which will take the current contract through to the end of March 2024. The estimated additional cost of this due to the impact of inflation and the extension itself is in the region of £1.8m.
- 5.3 Environment Committee approved the award of the new waste and street cleansing contract in December 2022, Full Council approved the funding to acquire the fleet vehicles at an extraordinary meeting in January 2023 and this is now included in the capital programme for expenditure in 2023/24. This represents a significant cost pressure as market conditions have changed substantially since the contract was last let and coupled with the current inflationary pressures the additional cost anticipated in 2024/25 is around £1.7m including the annual costs of the new vehicle fleet.

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: three 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 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 last year's deficit being £0.352m and current forecasts for the end of this financial year at c£1m. Whilst officers are working hard to try and reduce the requirement for temporary accommodation, we are at the present time still anticipating budget pressures in future years as a result of this demand led pressure.

- 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 54 households that have been in TA for over 2 years).
- 5.7 A Housing Options transformation project has been initiated to look at a whole system approach to the service, seeking efficiency improvements and focusing how we can move residents through the service quicker and ensure that stays in TA are as short as possible.
- 5.8 A financial assessment of the income and costs associated with the Council purchasing TA has been completed. The assessment undertaken includes an illustration of the costs which can be avoided by being able to accommodate households in Council owned TA rather than in private provision. The model utilised has been developed by neighbouring local authorities delivering similar temporary accommodation schemes.
- 5.9 The table below illustrates the level of investment required to purchase 50 properties, based upon 20 1 bed properties and 30 2 bed properties. The table also outlines the revenue income and costs the Council can expect from the investment, as well as the level of costs the Council will avoid by not having to place the households in privately provided TA. The Council would also own the Capital asset and therefore hold the value of the asset.

Table 1 – Summary of TA purchase model

Item	Annual Summary		25-year Profile	
Rent	-£	348,267	-£	8,706,677
Expenditure	£	1,108,419	£	29,484,608
Net Cost	£	739,352	£	20,257,932
Cost of NL TA	£	832,200	£	26,655,615
Net Saving	-£	72,048	-£	5,877,684

Main Assumptions

1. Based upon a portfolio of 20 x 1 bed and 30 x 2 bed properties
2. Average purchase price @£200k across the whole portfolio
3. Stamp Duty @ 6%
4. Annual Interest @ 4.8%
5. LHA Rate claimed @ 90%
6. Voids @ 6%
7. Individual allowances made for maintenance, management, and repairs in the model.

Local Council Tax Support Schemes (LCTS)

- 5.10 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).
- 5.11 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. The local scheme means that those of working age previously entitled to 100% maximum council tax benefit are required to pay a minimum of 20% of their council tax liability.
- 5.12 However, with the changes made as a result of the rollout of Universal Credit there were implications for the cost of LCTS schemes and a review was undertaken to ensure the scheme remained affordable. As a result of this work the Council consulted on a revised scheme which was approved, to be implemented from April 2023. The new income banded / grid based council tax reduction scheme for working age applicants aims to simplify the scheme for claimants, reduce the administrative burden placed on the Council by the introduction of Universal Credit and to improve the targeting of support for the lowest income families. The proposed changes to the schemes are anticipated to be broadly cost neutral so no additional allowance has been made within the budget forecasts at the current time.

Lower Medway Internal Drainage Board Precept

- 5.13 The levy for 2023/24 has been increased by 5% to £0.951m, the Council has no control over the setting of this levy and the Chief Executive has raised the issue of drainage board levies with the government officials. They are aware of the position that local councils are in with regards to having to fund increases in excess of the amount that we are able to raise from council tax.

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 260 full time equivalent posts and 300 actual members of staff. Our pay bill is our most significant area of direct spend and stands at £14.4m including pension contributions of £2.9m as per the 2023/24 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 18.5%, plus an annual fixed sum.
- 5.15 The Fund is valued once every three years and the valuation as at 31 March 2019 disclosed a net deficit of £15.5m on Swale's share of the fund, a reduction of £4.6m from the 2016 valuation deficit of £20.1m due largely to increases in annual investment returns. The last actuarial valuation took place on 31 March 2022 and the change in contribution rates because of that valuation will take effect from 1 April 2023. The

Council has now received these results, the contribution rate will be increasing from 18.5% to 20.5% but the back funding element is decreasing for next year, the combined impact of which is an additional cost pressure of around £100k.

5.16 On Friday 28 October, staff on Swale payroll were sent a survey to ask their views on different ideas relating to staff pay and potential savings. The survey was linked to work accounts so people could only respond once, but no names were recorded to make sure people could respond honestly without risk to anonymity. The survey closed at 5pm on Wednesday, 9 November, with 164 responses submitted out of a total of 296 staff on the payroll (55.4%).

5.17 The two main questions asked were:

1. Please rank the below options in order with your preferred option at the top and least preferred at the bottom. (Options displayed randomly for each user)
 - No annual pay increase for 2023/24, reducing the working week to 34 hours with no reduction in pay (equivalent to an 8% pay increase per hour), closing the office at 13:30 on Friday and making the closure between Christmas and New Year permanent.
 - 2% pay increase for 2023/24, then permanent 4 day working week from 2024/25, with pay then being reviewed annually as normal.
 - 2% pay increase with the £275,000 cost needing to be found from other savings
 - 4% pay increase with the £550,000 cost needing to be found from other savings
 - 5% pay increase with the £675,000 cost needing to be found from other savings
2. Which of the following options for pay increases would you be in favour of?
 - All staff
 - Grade 7 and under only
 - Grade 9 and under only
 - Grade 11 and under only – wouldn't apply to heads of service, directors or chief executive
 - Grade 12 and under only – wouldn't apply to directors or chief executive
 - All staff except chief executive

5.18 The results were as follows;

Chart 1 – Staff survey question 1 (Ranking options)

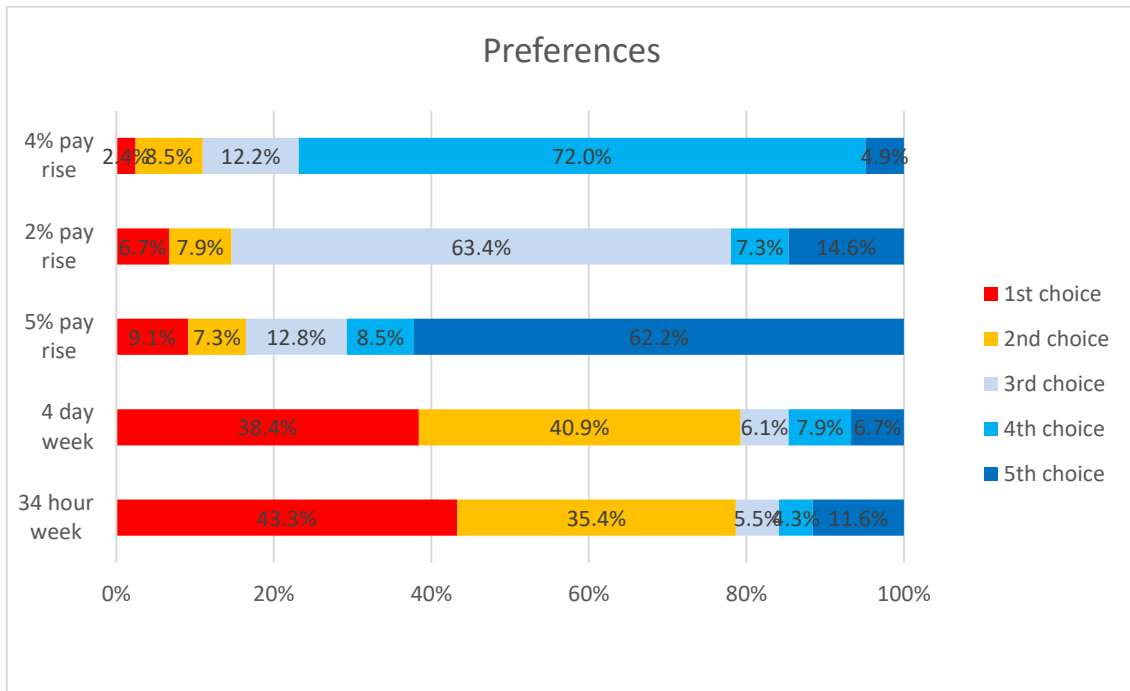
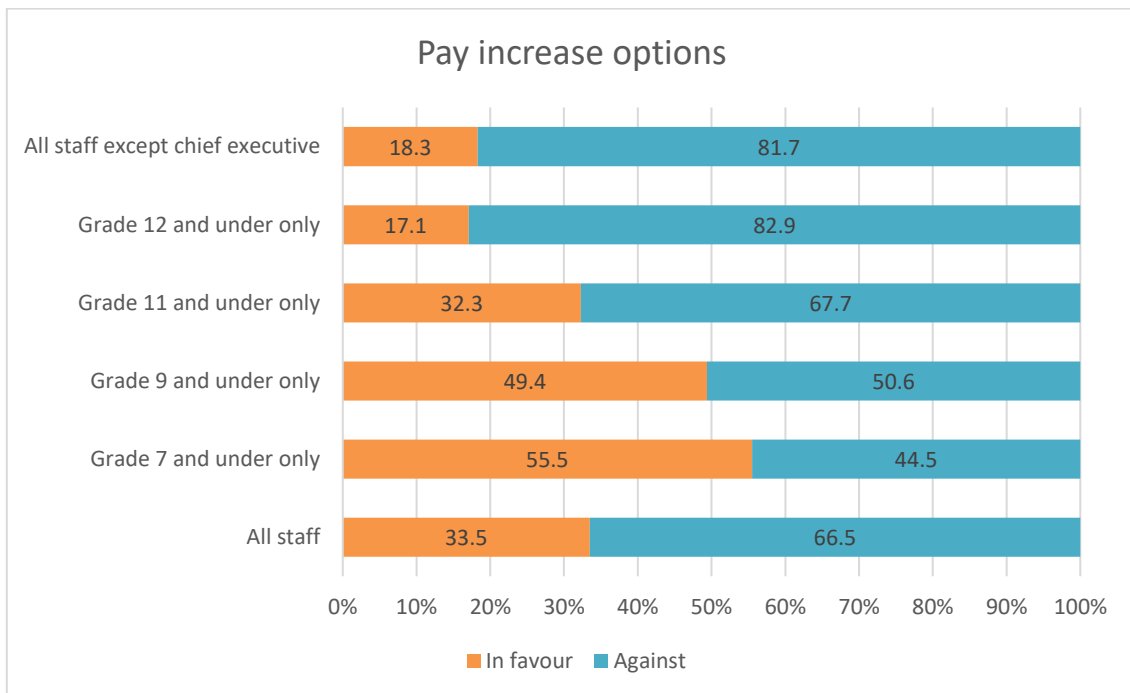


Chart 2 – Staff survey question 2 (Who gets a pay increase?)



5.19 As can be seen from the ranking of options (question 1) the 34-hour week with no pay award was the most popular first choice (43.3%). The budget does not assume any inflationary pay award, the only increases currently forecast are due to the Real Living Wage which is now £10.90 per hour (outside of London) and any annual increments. It should be noted that this does not constitute the final pay agreement for next year and that the normal negotiations will need to be held with the Union prior to any formal final pay proposal coming through separately to Full Council. The council launched a formal consultation on the proposed change to working hours and at the time of drafting there have been 65 responses from staff. The main area of concern arising from the proposed

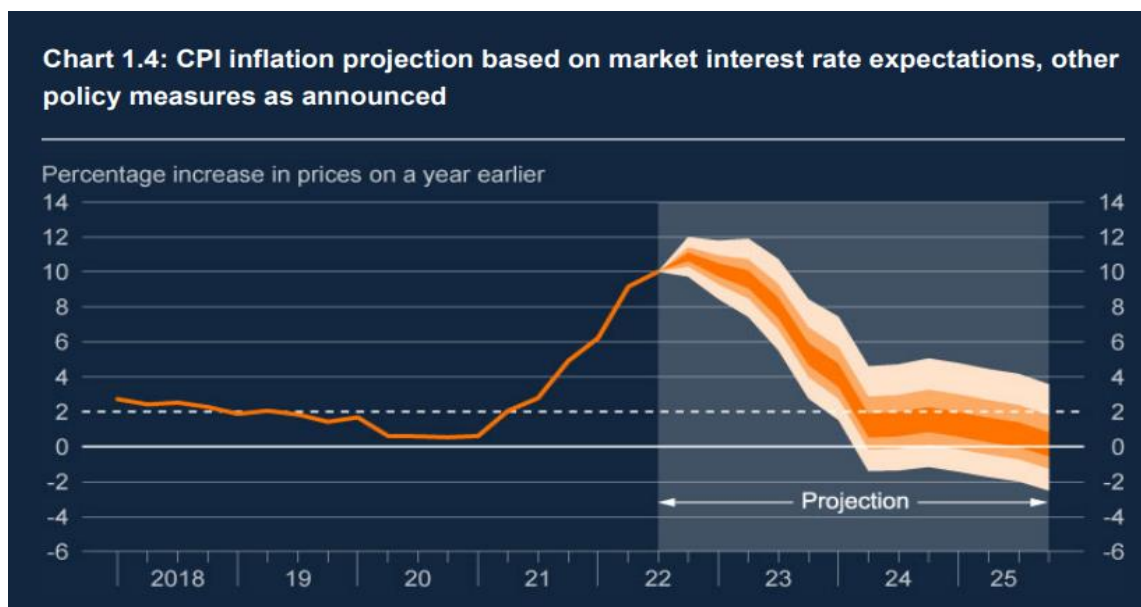
reduction in working hours is that staff will be expected to continue with the same level of workload. Heads of Service are working with teams, alongside the formal consultation to assess what changes can be made if the proposal is agreed.

6. Inflation

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

- 6.1 Inflation is significantly eroding the Council's spending power, the Retail Price Index (RPI) was at 13.4% at the end of December. The Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) met on 14 December and increased the bank base rate by a further 0.50% to 3.50% to help control inflation. CPI inflation is projected to fall sharply to around 5% by the end of next year, as fading external factors outweigh domestic pressures. Inflation is projected to fall to 1.4% in two years' time, below the 2% target, and to 0.0% in three years' time, as energy prices make a negative contribution and as domestic pressures weaken further.
- 6.2 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 10% for 2023/24 but reducing significantly thereafter in line with these projections. 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 3 – MPC Forecasts November 2022



- 6.3 Staff Pay – as discussed above the current forecasts do not assume an annual pay award next year but do include turnover savings (for staff leaving and temporarily vacant posts etc) of 2%. 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. As a guide a 1% increase equates to approximately £135,000 annually. Therefore, should a pay award be agreed there will be an additional cost to be factored in.

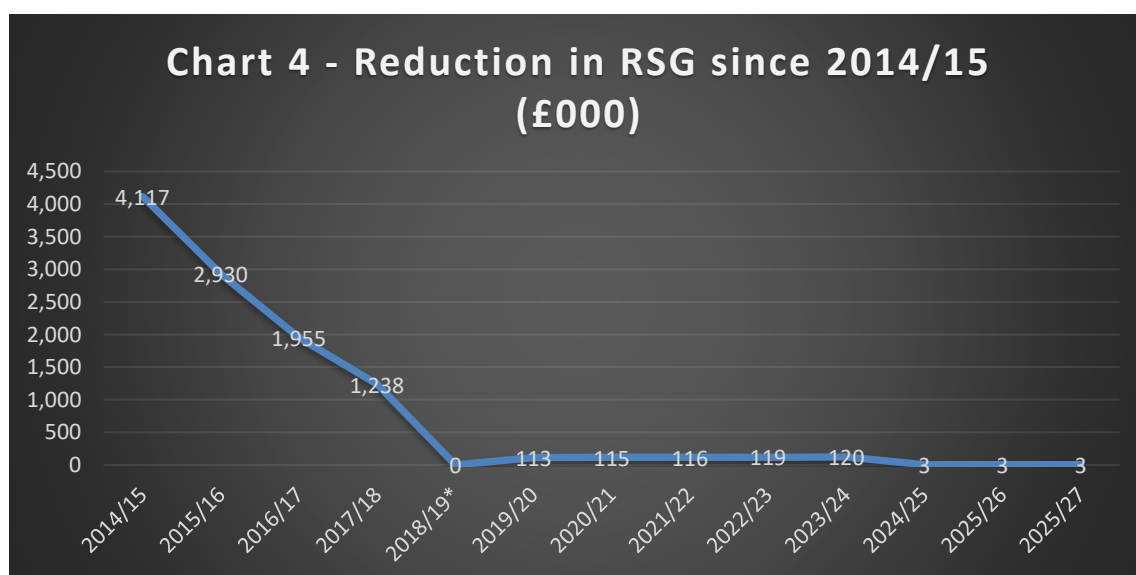
- 6.4 Income (fees and charges) – In recent years’ budgets for fees and charges have included a 2% increase unless there have been specific reasons for higher or lower increases or alternatively the Council is not able to influence them. Due to the current budgetary and inflationary pressures being experienced fees and charges for 2023/24 are being recommended for an increase in the region of 10%. As part of the Council’s financial planning processes, and to address the pressures on future year’s budgets, the finance team will be working with service managers next year in the run up to the 2024/25 budget setting process to undertake a more fundamental review of fees and charges. This will involve more detailed work to ensure that we fully understand our cost base so that we can ensure our charges are covering this as a minimum.

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 Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) 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 Lower Tier Grant and Services Grant. The Settlement confirmed some additional one-off grant funding for 2022/23 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 multiyear settlement. RSG is an un ring-fenced grant which can be spent on services at Swale’s discretion. This has reduced drastically over past years and 2019-20 was expected to be the last year of receipt of this grant. The allocation for 2022/23 was just £0.1m compared to £4.1m back in 2014/15 representing a reduction of 98%.



- 7.2 The Lower Tier Services Grant continued from 2021/22 and is a district level grant based on an assessment of relative need. The Services Grant was supposed to be a one-off grant proposed in the 2022/23 finance settlement to provide funding to all tiers of local government in recognition of the vital services provided. For Swale these represented just under £0.2m and £0.3m respectively.

Settlement Funding – Spending Round 2022

- 7.3 On 17 November 2022, the Chancellor delivered [his Autumn Statement](#), alongside the Office for Budget Responsibility's (OBR's) new set of [Economic and Fiscal Outlook forecasts](#). The Autumn Statement responds to the OBR forecasts and sets out the medium term path for public finances. A number of announcements were made in relation to taxation plans and social care funding but the key issues for Swale and district authorities in general are as follows;

Business Rates

- 7.3.1 A package of reliefs and support to help businesses was announced and is worth £14bn over two years. The 2023 Revaluation will go ahead as planned, and the measures are designed to help offset the impact of the revaluation as well as other financial pressures on businesses as follows;

- **Transitional relief scheme** (government funded) for 2023 Revaluation (£1.2bn in 2023/24). This has no effect on billing authorities (like Swale), it simply makes the transitional support scheme more generous
- **75% relief for Retail, Hospitality and Leisure (RHL) sectors** in 2023/24 (£2.3bn in 2023/24). Local authorities will be compensated in the usual way through section 31 grants.
- **3-year support for small businesses** (scheme for properties losing Small Business Rates Relief or Rural Rates Relief) equating to £190m per year for 3 years. Again, local authorities will be fully compensated.

- 7.3.2 From a local authority perspective, the decision to freeze the multiplier in 2023/24 is the most important one. Normally, the multiplier is uprated every year in line with the September CPI but with a 10.1% increase in the CPI in September 2022 this will be expensive and is anticipated to cost £1.8bn in 2023-24. This is now the third year in a row that the multiplier has been frozen.

- 7.3.3 For local government, the key financial concern about the multiplier is whether local authorities will be compensated for the lost income. Business rates income, baselines (including Baseline Funding Level), and tariffs and top-ups are usually uprated in line with the multiplier. When the multiplier is capped or frozen, the Government pays compensation to local authorities via a section 31 grant. This has now become a very important part of funding to local authorities and is included within Core Spending Power (CSP). It is also the only element of CSP that is formally linked to inflation.

- 7.3.4 Thankfully, the Chancellor has announced the cost of the freeze will be fully funded: Para 5.25: ... "English Local Authorities will be fully compensated for the loss of income as a result of these business rates measures and will receive new burdens funding for administrative and IT costs."

District Council Band D Increases

- 7.4 The Chancellor is using council tax increases to help manage the funding gap within local government. Changes to the council tax referendum limits for non-metropolitan districts (like Swale) mean that we now have the ability to raise local council tax by 3% or £5 (whichever is greater) on a band D property, without the need for a referendum. The cash limit increase of £5 remained unchanged in the provisional financial settlement, however if this position is reviewed as part of the final settlement, this council will reserve the right to increase the council tax by the maximum amount

available. The narrative from central government assumes that councils will increase council tax by the maximum when calculating their analysis of core spending power. Indications are that future funding from central government will somehow be linked to local decisions.

- 7.5 Prior to these announcements the forecasts assumed a council tax increase of £4.95 for modelling purposes and coupled with growth forecasts in the tax base resulted in income projections of around £9.648m for 2023/24, which is growth of £385k based on the 2022/23 position. These changes have been reflected in the final budget with the council tax increase for Swale set at 2.99% as opposed to £4.95 which equates to £5.67 and this has generated an additional £36k per annum in the base budget. This charge equates to an increase of just under 11p a week for Swale's element of the council tax.
- 7.6 While the statement has been made regarding the additional 1% increase nothing has yet been announced in relation to the £5 cash limit. There has been speculation that the £5 cash limit could increase to perhaps £10 when the final settlement is confirmed.
- 7.7 If the £5 cap was also increased, the following additional income could be generated;

Band D increase	£ increase	Council Tax estimate	Increased estimate
2.62%	£4.95	£245,884	
2.99%	£5.68	£282,042	£36,158
3.96%	£7.50	£372,552	£90,510
5.28%	£10.00	£496,736	£124,184

- 7.8 Just for information a £10 increase would equate to 19p a week or 2.7p a day.
- 7.9 The provisional settlement was published on 19 December and until the Final Settlement figures are confirmed the figures remain provisional and subject to change..

8. Income

The Council derives a limited and reducing 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. As part of a manifesto commitment, the Government pledged to allow Councils more control locally over their finances, and as part of this began to plan for an eventual system of 100% local retention of business rates growth. In exchange for this, Councils would have to forgo certain grants received from Central Government. Following the snap General Election in 2017 and a period of uncertainty around the new Business Rates Retention Scheme, MHCLG (as was) had previously confirmed a local 75% share from April 2020, however these potential changes continue to slip, and we are still no closer to having a revised scheme.
- 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 £23.4m (£24.0m 2021/22),

after the tariff and levy payments are made the net income to Swale reduces to around £9.1m for 2022/23 (£8.6m 2021/22) and just under £10.1m for 2023/24. This is based on the assumptions contained with the Chancellors Autumn Statement.

- 8.3 We still do not know the timing of the business rates reset, and while we anticipate this will have a negative impact for Swale, we would expect 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

- 8.4 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 DLHUC each year for the arrangements to continue. There is still be an option for the pool not to proceed up to 28 days after the Local Government Finance Settlement is received. At the Performance and Resources Committee meeting held on 28 September it was agreed to re-enter the pool for the 2023/24 financial year.

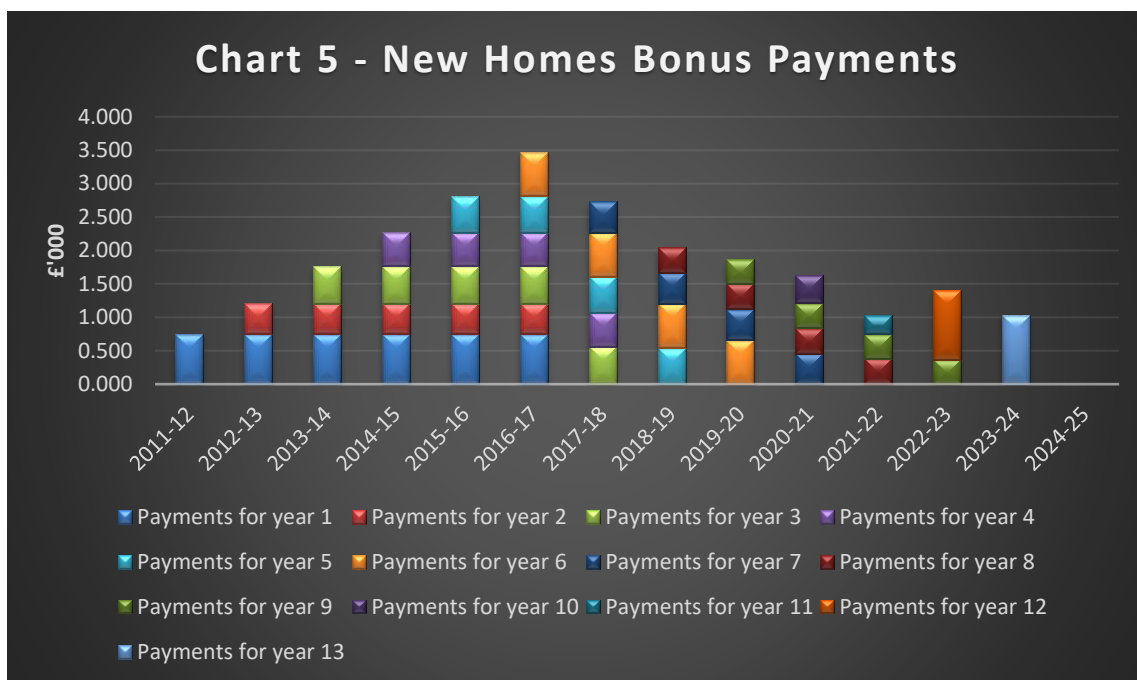
Revaluation Proposals

- 8.5 Business rates revaluations update rateable values, and therefore rates bills to reflect changes in the rental market. This helps ensure that shifts in economic activity which have driven changes in market values are fairly reflected in business rates liabilities. The final report of the government's Review of Business Rates announced that the frequency of revaluations would be increased to 3 yearly starting from the next revaluation in 2023. The next revaluation of properties for business rates will, therefore, take effect from 1 April 2023 based on the rental market at 1 April 2021. The move to 3 yearly revaluations will make the system fairer and more responsive for all ratepayers, meaning bills will more closely reflect current rental values. Some stakeholders in the Business Rates Review also suggested that more frequent revaluations could reduce the need for and scope of future transitional arrangements.
- 8.6 DLUHC's consultation on the proposed revaluation changes was completed in September 2022, new RV's will be introduced from 1 April 2023 and updates to local lists have now been made, replacing the previous lists from September 2017. Support for businesses and the freezing of the multiplier as announced as part of the Chancellors Autumn Statement are discussed above.

New Homes Bonus (NHB)

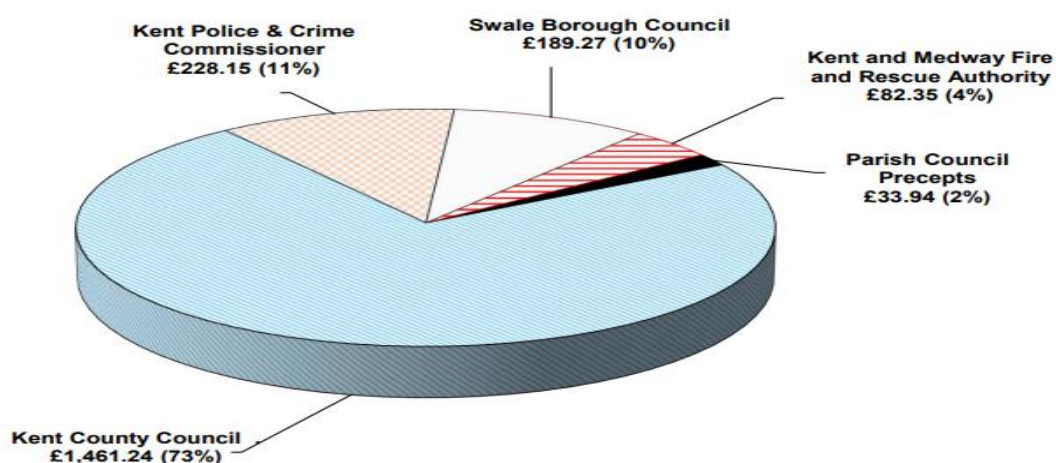
- 8.7 The New Homes Bonus was introduced in 2011/12 to incentivise and reward Councils and Communities that build new homes in their area. The bonus was originally paid as an un-ringfenced grant for six years and was paid based on the net additional homes plus an additional supplement of £350 per affordable dwelling. The payment is then split between local authority tiers: 80% to lower tier (Swale) and 20% to upper tier (KCC).
- 8.8 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

chart below shows the current projections. Due to the current funding pressures whilst there is the potential to receive income for 2024/25 we have not at the current time included this within our forecasts as the provisional settlement only confirmed the funding position for 2023/24.



Council Tax

- 8.9 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.
- 8.10 The charge on a Band D property which is retained by Swale is currently £189.27 (£184.23 2021/22) based on a tax base of 48,939.46 (48,040.12 2021/22). Any increases on this amount are restricted by a cap put in place by the Government, but as discussed above this has now increased from 2% or £5 to 3% or £5, whichever is the greater, without undertaking a referendum on the proposals. This generates an extra £421k (including tax base growth) over the 2022/23 income levels.

Allocation of Council Tax:

- 8.11 Within the MTFs, it is assumed that Swale will increase its precept by 2.99% for the next few years as was confirmed in the provisional settlement. This table highlights the impact of the assumed increases within the charts below.

Table 1 – Projected council tax income growth

Council Tax	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
Council Taxbase (for council tax setting purposes)	49,673.46	50,170.19	50,671.89	51,178.61
Band D standard Council Tax £	£194.94	£200.79	£206.73	£212.85
Council Tax (standard)	£9.683m	£10.074m	£10.475m	£10.894m

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 c£7.0m gross income forecast for 2023/24, the most significant areas include waste and recycling (£1.1m) which includes things such as garden bins and bulky waste collection, car parking income (£2.5m) and planning and building control income (£1.6m). 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 we will be undertaking a fundamental review of the fees and charges structure within our control as part of the 2024/25 budget setting process. This is to ensure that we are at least covering our costs in all areas while looking to develop and increase income streams wherever possible to help make the budget position more sustainable in the medium to long term and to protect frontline services.

9. Links to other strategies

The MTFs is fundamentally linked to and underpins several 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 2022 included £27.0m investment in 2022/23 with £2.1m in 2023/24 and 2024/25. This is funded through a mixture of capital receipts and reserves (£0.1m) internal/external borrowing (£24.9m) and s106 contributions and other grants (£2.1m). The existing programme has been reprofiled in line with forecast spend, with a significant amount of the planned investment now expected to be spent in future years.
- 9.6 The capital programme for 2023/24 has been updated to include the provision to acquire the waste and street cleansing fleet vehicles in line with the re-procurement of the current contract and the temporary accommodation project as detailed above. As referenced above the revenue implication of acquiring the fleet is included within the MTFS assumptions for 2024/25.

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

- 9.7 The Council's Treasury Management Strategy Statement is intrinsically linked with the Capital Strategy and the capital programme, the latest report is included in the agenda for this committee meeting. 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 the following reports each year;

- Before the start of the financial year, the updated Treasury Management Strategy Statement, the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) policy statement; how investments and borrowings are to be organised (including prudential indicators); and an Investment Strategy;
- In year 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 full Strategy was approved by Full Council in March 2018 and can be accessed on the Council's website [here](#).

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. It is anticipated that the Strategy will be updated during 2023.

Commissioning and Procurement Policy

9.13 The Commissioning and Procurement Policy establishes the Council's strategic approach to procurement and can be accessed [here](#). 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 [here](#). 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.

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 a one-year settlement is anticipated and although this has had a positive impact on the financial position for 2023/24 the Council is experiencing significant spending pressures which have more than offset this.

Table 2 – Deficit forecasts as per the 2022/23 budget

Funding forecasts as at Feb 2022	2022/23 £'000	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000
Base budget & reserve contributions	22,000	22,947	23,921
Revenue Support Grant (RSG)	(119)	(119)	(2)
Business Rates	(9,072)	(9,322)	(9,576)
Local Council Tax Scheme Grant	0	0	0
Lower Tier Services Grant	(192)	0	0
Covid grant allocation	0	0	0
New Homes Bonus (assuming not just legacy payments)	(1,407)	(983)	(983)
Services Grant	(296)	0	0
Council Tax	(9,263)	(9,648)	(10,042)
Projected use of reserves/savings	1,651	2,875	3,318

- 10.2 Following the Autumn Statement, the table below has been updated to show the revised funding position, with the future year's deficit peaking at £4.7m in 2026/27.

Table 3 – Updated deficit forecasts

Updated Funding forecasts	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Base budget & reserve contributions	21,094	22,990	24,432	24,992	25,913
Drainage board levy	906	951	983	1,032	1,084
Net cost of services	22,000	23,941	25,415	26,024	26,997
Revenue Support Grant (RSG)	(119)	(317)	(317)	(317)	(317)
Business Rates	(9,072)	(10,122)	(10,736)	(10,897)	(11,060)
Lower Tier Services Grant	(192)	0	0	0	0
New Homes Bonus	(1,407)	(1,103)	0	0	0
Services Grant	(296)	(167)	0	0	0
Funding Guarantee Grant	0	(504)	0	0	0
Council Tax	(9,263)	(9,683)	(10,074)	(10,475)	(10,894)
(Surplus)/deficit	1,651	2,045	4,289	4,335	4,727
Deficit analysis					
Uncertain Government Grants	0	0	1,654	1,654	1,654
Cummulative Savings required	1,651	2,045	2,635	2,681	3,073
Total Deficit	1,651	2,045	4,289	4,335	4,727

10.3 Additional cost pressures of c£3.5m in 2023/24 relate mainly to the waste contract extension (£1.7m), additional cost of temporary accommodation and supporting homeless applications (£1.0m) and other additional inflationary pressures that are being experienced. This is partly offset through grant allocations and savings of £2.8m which can be found within Appendix XI.

10.4 For 2024/25 the additional pressures in the main come from the new waste contract including the fleet purchase (£1.7m), anticipated loss of central government funding (£1.6m) and continuing inflationary pressures. The additional income relates mainly to business rates growth and again the savings breakdown can be found within Appendix XI.

10.5 This year officers have 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 statutory and income generating services cost around £21m and the Council's grants and income (from business rates, council tax etc) is around the same level. The non-statutory non-fee earning areas then account for around a further £5m which puts significant pressure on the affordability of the Council's medium term financial position. The savings exercise that has been undertaken has however taken account of savings potential and efficiencies across the Council's entire budget.

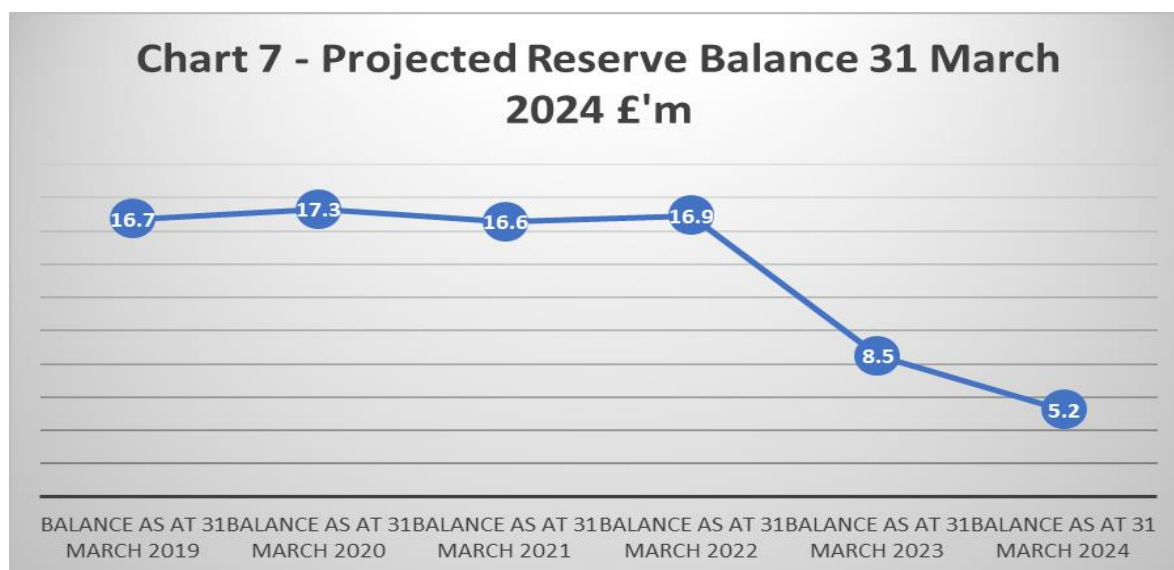
Reserves

10.6 The Council holds several 'useable' reserves both for revenue and capital purposes which fall within one of the following categories:

- General Reserve
- Earmarked Reserves
- Ringfenced Reserves
- Capital Receipts Reserve

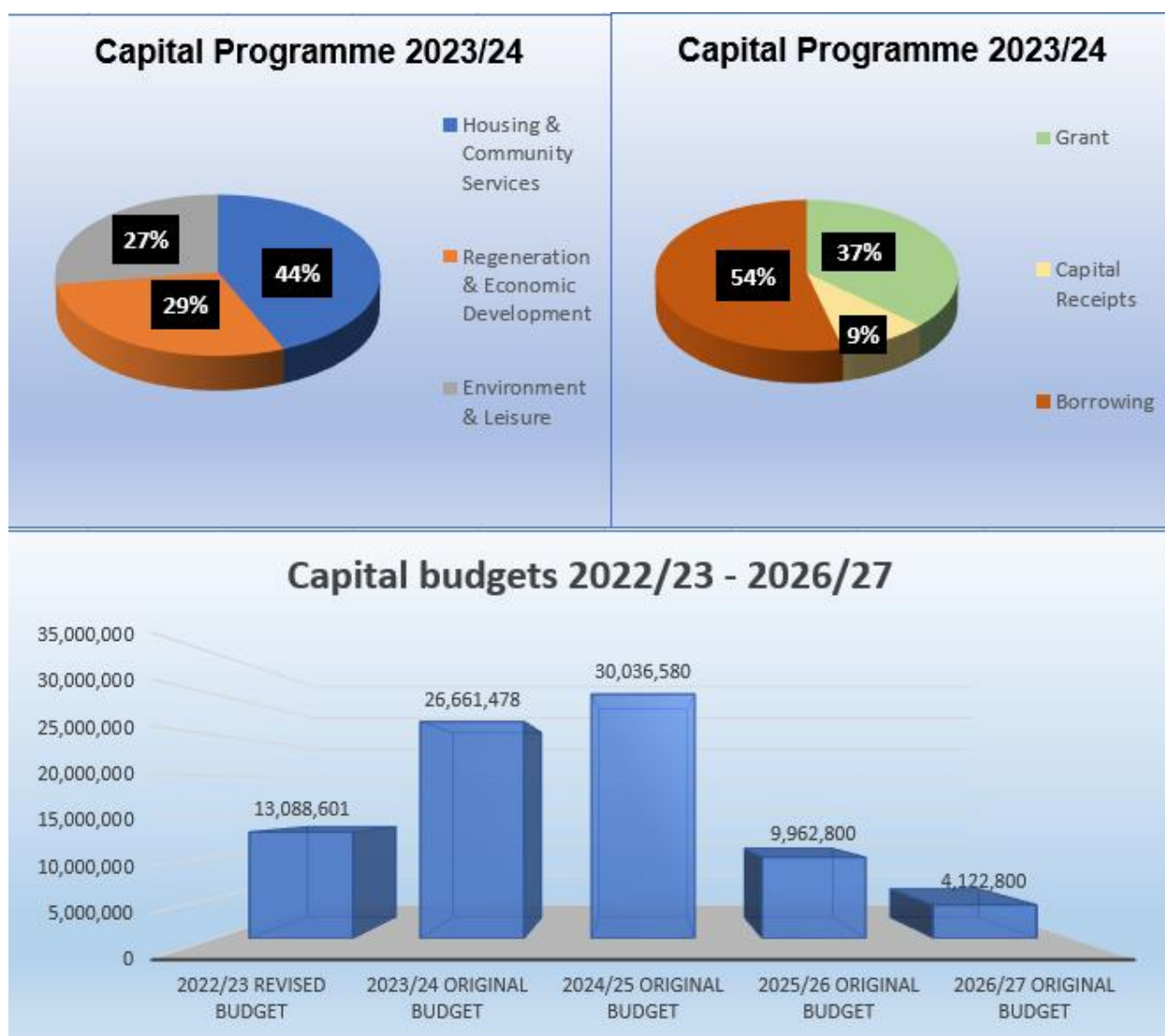
10.7 The *General Reserve* is held for two main purposes:

- 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.
- 10.8 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.
- 10.9 *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.
- 10.10 *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.
- 10.11 All reserves, general and earmarked, have been reviewed as part of setting the budget for 2023/24, and where commitments have not been identified and funds or reserve balances are no longer required these have been re-allocated to specific reserves to support the overall budget position.
- 10.12 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.
- 10.13 The available earmarked reserves balance as at 1 April 2022 stood at £16.9m, the budgeted use of reserves for the 2022/23 financial year is £8.4m which leaves a forecast balance as at 1 April 2023 of £8.5m. A £1.1m transfer from the General Reserve is assumed in 2023/24 to the budget contingency reserve. Based on the current medium term budget projections the Council will not have sufficient reserves to help address the budget gap after 2024/25.



Capital

- 10.14 The capital programme (Appendix V) shows what the Council intends to spend on purchasing new assets and improving its existing ones over the next four 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.
- 10.15 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.
- 10.16 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.
- 10.17 Future external borrowing is assumed to finance a portion of the waste vehicle fleet purchase, the temporary accommodation project and also the funding for the Rainbow Homes housing provision. The cost of borrowing has fluctuated significantly over recent months from around 2% back in June for 8-year annuity loans from the Public Works Loans Board (PWLB) to over 5% in September but these have settled more recently and are now just over 4%. What this does mean however 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 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 (£26.6m) along with the forecasts to 2026/27 (Chart 8).



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 2023/24 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 has taken place over the summer and autumn 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 £2.8m (Appendix XI), however based on current forecasts this still leaves a deficit of £2.0m which will need to be supported from reserves. An Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) has been undertaken on the proposals where relevant and the council consulted on the draft budget proposals from 1 December 2022 until 13 January 2023.

11.3 The efficiencies and savings identified have come from a number of areas and include the following;

- Various operational savings – travel, subsistence, conferences etc
- Contract savings from retendered contracts
- Additional income from increased annual demand – car parks, planning etc
- Increased fees and charges
- Savings and a freeze in Members allowances
- Charging for Members parking
- Reductions in some 3rd party grants
- Staff restructure savings across service areas
- Investment income
- Shared services
- Digital transformation – ebilling etc

Fees & Charges Review

11.4 A full review of the existing fees and charges was carried out as part of the budget build process for 2023/24. As detailed above this strategy is recommending an increase of 10% for most charges which is in line with the inflationary increase in costs that the council is experiencing.

11.5 There is an assumption that the increase in planning fees included in the government's planning reform proposals in May 2022 will be implemented in 2023/24. The proposals will be subject to government consultation and are intended to increase major and minor application fees by 35% and 25 % respectively.

11.6 Proposed changes to car parking fees include extending the charging period in our car parks (proposed to operate between 6am and 12 midnight), and a 10p increase in the hourly rates.

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 2023/24 can be found within Appendix X.

Financial sustainability

11.8 Financial sustainability and reducing reliance on central government grants is one of the four key themes within the Corporate Plan (Priority 4) 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 for the future. 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 are currently underway. This 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 The Council continues to progress its New Ways of Working strategy off the back of the Covid pandemic which again will bring opportunities in the future for new operating models and how the Council conducts its business in the future. With more staff working from home there will also be potential opportunities to rationalize office space and potentially share space 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 continues to be a priority for central government. Identifying such opportunities must therefore continue at a local level, ensuring that realistic and deliverable benefits can be achieved. Again this is an which Swale is already heavily involved in, including activities like the joint waste procurement but could involve a range of other joint procurement opportunities.
- 11.18 Identifying opportunities to work alongside other public sector partners and organisations to deliver services, such as through our successful Mid Kent Services shared service arrangements, will continue to form an important part of our efficiency strategy. Opportunities for further sharing arrangements continue to be explored and include potential arrangements for the Revenues and Benefits teams.

Growing Business Rates and NHB

- 11.19 Under the previous allocation method of New Homes Bonus (NHB) there was a direct financial benefit to the Council from growth in homes through the NHB funding and through increasing the council tax base and additional income generated from council tax. Whilst new housing growth has had an impact on the demand for local services, there will still be a net gain in terms of overall income for delivery while the NHB remains. We do however know that the NHB system is due to be replaced although at the present time it is not clear what with or when it will be introduced so the life of any ongoing funding from NHB remains unclear.
- 11.20 For similar reasons growing the business rates base will have a direct impact on the level of business rates income retained locally. Equally, maintaining existing business rates remains a priority in that decline in business rates will reduce the amount of income retained. However as with the NHB the reform and any localisation of business rates continues to be delayed along with the Fair Funding review.

Council Tax

- 11.21 The increased flexibilities around council tax discounts and increases following the removal of the tax freeze grant in 2016/17 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 2023/24.
- 11.22 The Regeneration & Levelling-Up Bill ('the Bill') is currently passing through Parliament and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing, and Communities (DLUHC) is aiming for Royal Assent in Spring 2023. The Bill proposes, amongst other things, two important changes to council tax, as follows:
- i. A change in the application of a council tax premium on 'long term empty' properties. Currently, if a property has been unoccupied and unfurnished for 2 years but less than 5 years, then a 100% council tax premium can be applied to the property (Swale Borough Council currently applies this premium in line with the relevant regulations). The Bill is proposing to shorten that 2-year period to 1 year. 'Long term empty' premiums are applied to encourage owners to bring properties back into use so they are not left empty for extended periods.
 - ii. The implementation of a council tax premium on 'second homes'. 'Second homes' are properties which are unoccupied but furnished. For some years now local councils have been able to apply a full council tax charge to second homes. This charge is applied in Swale. The Bill proposes the councils may apply a 100% council tax premium on second homes (this would mean an owner of a second home in the borough would pay double the normal council tax charge).

- 11.23 Both of these changes can only come into effect if the Bill receives Royal Assent, and even then, the earliest that both of these changes can come into effect is 1 April 2024 if the assent is granted by 31 March 2023. The Bill states that to apply these changes approval to do so must be given at least 12 months before the implementation date. On the basis that the Bill receives Royal Assent we are proposing to review the inclusion of the premiums from 1 April 2024.

New opportunities

- 11.24 Given the ongoing uncertainties around Covid recovery, the cost-of-living crisis, global events and the economy in general following the political upheaval, 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.
- 11.25 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 fully depleted by 2025/26 so this would not even be an option.

Lobbying and consultation

- 11.26 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, in particular in relation to the business rates and Fair Funding reviews.
- 11.27 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 reserves will be fully depleted in 2025/26 if ongoing savings are not found for the base budget.
- 12.2 Previous budget forecasts made back in February 2022 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 was further heightened by the ongoing recovery from Covid which added an additional level of complexity in terms of future forecasts and potential impacts on the economy, inflation, suppliers, contracts, Brexit implications etc.
- 12.3 The updated high level funding forecasts within the strategy build on previous figures from the 2022/23 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 £3.3m by 2024/25.

- 12.4 The updated forecasts now differ significantly from this, in the main this is due to the significant spending pressures which the Council is experiencing in relation to the waste contract and homelessness, inflationary pressures and increasing uncertainty around future funding levels.
- 12.5 The MTFS and budget forecasts include the latest information as in the Provisional Financial Settlement on 19 December 2022.
- 12.6 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 £2.8m (Appendix XI), and are supported by a number of increases to fees and charges (Appendix X), however based on current forecasts this still leaves a deficit of £2.0m which will need to be supported from reserves.
- 12.7 The Council is still projecting a deficit position from 2023/24 onwards but due to the funding changes, forecasting the future years deficits does however allow the Council time to plan mitigating actions more effectively, meaning we are more likely to be successful.
- 12.8 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 VIII.
- 12.9 At the current time the key messages are as follows;
- budget gap of £2.0m for 2023/24 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 2 years but not after 2024/25
 - 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
- 12.10 In conclusion, it is still not clear how the various reviews and the ongoing economic pressures will impact on local government funding in the medium term. We have delivered a balanced budget for 2023/24 with a substantial reliance on reserves, this position will need to be addressed by the provision of a robust savings programme for future years' budgets to continue to meet our statutory obligations.

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Detailed Revenue Budget Proposals

Service	2022/23	Growth	Savings	Income changes	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Chief Executive	579	0	(100)	0	479	479	479	479
Director of Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	198	0	(28)	0	170	170	170	170
Environment & Leisure	6,513				8,401	10,044	10,424	11,024
		2,691	(755)	(49)				
Planning	765	38	(308)	0	495	296	296	296
Housing & Community Services	3,557	1,067	(633)	0	3,992	3,751	3,551	3,351
Regeneration & Economic Development	(561)	329	(293)	0	(525)	(731)	(767)	(818)
Policy, Governance & Customer Services	2,352	25	(80)	0	2,297	2,297	2,297	2,297
Finance & Procurement	931	48	(15)	0	964	970	970	970
Corporate Overheads/Capital Financing	3,057	211	(122)	0	3,146	3,330	3,323	3,317
Revenues & Benefits	343	185	(10)	(43)	475	281	281	281
Environmental Health	528	0	0	0	528	554	577	600
MKS Legal	550	0	0	0	550	578	601	625
MKS Audit	189	0	(18)	0	171	180	187	194
MKS Human Resources	477	0	0	0	477	501	521	542
MKS Information Technology	1,377	0	(122)	0	1,255	1,318	1,370	1,525
Below the Line Items	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Collection Fund Surplus/Deficit	0	45	0	0	45	45	45	45
Additional fees and charges	0	0	(154)	0	(154)	(154)	(154)	(154)
Pay and inflation	0	306	(126)	0	180	480	777	1,085
Grants paid	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sub Total Base Budget	20,855	4,945	(2,764)	(92)	22,945	24,388	24,947	25,828
Drainage Board	906	45	0	0	951	983	1,032	1,084
Historic contribution to reserves	93	0	(48)	0	45	45	45	86
Contribution from reserve	146	54	0	(200)	0	0	0	0
Uncertain government grants		0	0	0	0	(1,654)	(1,654)	(1,654)

Detailed Revenue Budget Proposals

Cummulative Savings required	(1,651)	(3,671)	2,667	611	(2,045)	(2,635)	(2,681)	(3,073)
Grants								
Revenue Support Grant	(119)	0	0	(198)	(317)	(317)	(317)	(317)
Business Rates - Gross	(9,163)	0	0	(959)	(10,122)	(10,736)	(10,897)	(11,060)
Less NNDR share of homelessness funding	91	0	0	(91)	0	0	0	0
Local Council Tax Scheme Grant	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lower Tier Services Grant	(192)	0	0	192	0	0	0	0
Services Grant	(296)	0	0	129	(167)	0	0	0
Covid grant allocation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
New Homes Bonus (assuming not just legacy payments)	(1,407)	0	0	304	(1,103)	0	0	0
Funding Guarantee Grant		0	0	(504)	(504)	0	0	0
Council Tax requirement	9,263	1,373	(145)	(807)	9,684	10,074	10,476	10,894

Service	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Chief Executive	579	479	479	479	479
Director of Neighbourhoods & Regeneration	198	170	170	170	170
Environment & Leisure	6,513	8,401	10,044	10,424	11,024
Planning	765	495	296	296	296
Housing & Community Services	3,557	3,992	3,751	3,551	3,351
Regeneration & Economic Development	(561)	(525)	(731)	(767)	(818)
Policy, Governance & Customer Services	2,352	2,297	2,297	2,297	2,297
Finance & Procurement	931	964	970	970	970
Corporate Overheads/Capital Financing	3,057	3,146	3,330	3,323	3,317
Revenues & Benefits	343	475	281	281	281
Environmental Health	528	528	554	577	600
MKS Legal	550	550	578	601	625
MKS Audit	189	171	180	187	194
MKS Human Resources	477	477	501	521	542
MKS Information Technology	1,377	1,255	1,318	1,370	1,525
Collection Fund Surplus/Deficit	0	45	45	45	45
Additional fees and charges	0	(154)	(154)	(154)	(154)
Pay and inflation	0	180	480	777	1,085
Grants paid	0	0	0	0	0
Sub Total Base Budget	20,855	22,945	24,387	24,947	25,828
Drainage Board	906	951	983	1,032	1,084
Historic contribution to reserves	93	45	45	45	86
Contribution from reserve	146	0	0	0	0
Uncertain Government Grants	0	0	(1,654)	(1,654)	(1,654)
Cummulative Savings required	(1,651)	(2,045)	(2,635)	(2,681)	(3,073)
Grants		0	0	0	0
Revenue Support Grant	(119)	(317)	(317)	(317)	(317)
Business Rates - Gross	(9,163)	(10,122)	(10,736)	(10,897)	(11,060)
Less NNDR share of homelessness funding	91	0	0	0	0
Lower Tier Services Grant	(192)	0	0	0	0
New Homes Bonus (assuming not just legacy payments)	(1,407)	(1,103)	0	0	0
Services Grant	(296)	(167)	0	0	0
Funding Guarantee Grant	0	(504)	0	0	0
Council Tax requirement	9,263	9,683	10,074	10,475	10,894

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COLLECTION FUND AND COUNCIL TAX BASE

Tax Base

The tax base for 2023/24 is 49,673.46.

Collection Fund

As the Billing Authority, Swale Borough Council had to make an estimate of the surplus or deficit on the Collection Fund for Council Tax and Business Rates in January 2023, notifying Kent County Council, the Police and Crime Commissioner for Kent and the Kent & Medway Towns Fire & Rescue Authority of their proportions. The declared surplus of £538,000 is shared as follows:

	£'000
Central Government	462
Kent County Council	(199)
The Police and Crime Commissioner for Kent	(42)
Kent & Medway Towns Fire & Rescue Authority	(8)
Swale Borough Council	325
Total	538
Swale Borough Council pooling adjustment	(345)

There is also a pooling adjustment relating to 2021/22 that will impact Swale, reducing the surplus by £345,000

These amounts are not added to precepts or budgets but must be taken into account by each Authority when setting their basic Council Tax.

Other Preceptors

Kent County Council, the Kent & Medway Fire Authority and the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner will set their own precepting for all valuation bands. These tax levels will form part of the overall Council Tax to be set by full Council on 22 February 2023.

Parish Council Precepts

Parish Council precept demands have been submitted during January 2023 as and when the Parish Councils met to set their precepts. These will be expressed as an additional precept.

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Parish Precepts

Parish / Town Council	Additional Council Tax for Band D 2022/23 £	Tax Base 2023/24	Parish Precept (rounded) 2023/24 £	Additional Council Tax for Band D 2023/24 £	Additional Council Tax for Band D 2023/24 % change
Bapchild	28.60	492.42	13,780	27.98	-2.17%
Bobbing	19.25	985.80	18,980	19.25	0.00%
Borden	58.09	1,101.54	70,052	63.59	9.47%
Boughton-under-Blean	92.99	704.68	70,000	99.34	6.83%
Bredgar	36.56	291.04	11,870	40.78	11.54%
Doddington	38.20	230.76	8,815	38.20	0.00%
Dunkirk	32.56	524.45	27,418	52.28	60.57%
Eastchurch	55.84	854.12	47,232	55.30	-0.97%
Eastling	35.00	148.46	5,196	35.00	0.00%
Faversham Town Council	80.39	7,189.88	595,322	82.80	3.00%
Graveney & Goodnestone	60.47	186.07	13,685	73.55	21.63%
Hartlip	21.93	368.77	8,000	21.69	-1.09%
Hernhill	46.81	319.34	15,212	47.64	1.77%
Iwade	35.36	1,460.02	51,620	35.36	0.00%
Leysdown	30.82	1,155.30	30,000	25.97	-15.74%
Lower Halstow	82.52	457.38	37,740	82.51	-0.01%
Luddenham	0.00	44.05	0	0.00	0.00%
Lynsted	39.24	478.39	26,854	56.13	43.04%
Milstead	69.72	93.26	6,300	67.55	-3.11%
Minster	35.00	5,677.01	198,695	35.00	0.00%
Newington	55.40	1,061.11	57,926	54.59	-1.46%
Newnham	34.29	156.62	5,371	34.29	0.00%
Norton & Buckland	36.62	190.94	7,496	39.26	7.21%
Oare	60.38	174.57	11,068	63.40	5.00%
Ospringe	27.62	287.48	11,015	38.32	38.74%
Queenborough Town Council	76.64	911.35	70,000	76.81	0.22%
Rodmersham	47.53	239.48	11,500	48.02	1.03%
Selling	34.74	377.01	14,000	37.13	6.88%
Sheerness Town Council	49.38	2,828.37	139,962	49.49	0.22%
Sheldwich, Leaveland & Badlesmere	24.48	353.18	9,995	28.30	15.60%
Stalisfield	29.14	100.38	2,925	29.14	0.00%
Teynham	64.61	994.77	60,240	60.56	-6.27%
Throwley	25.64	146.45	3,749	25.60	-0.16%
Tonge	7.20	444.51	6,400	14.40	100.00%
Tunstall	31.30	694.87	7,500	10.79	-65.53%
Upchurch	35.72	1,050.06	38,655	36.81	3.05%
Warden	29.82	502.97	15,000	29.82	0.00%
TOTAL			1,729,573		

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Capital Programme and Funding

Scheme	Funding	Scheme Total Current Estimate £'000	Prior Year Spend £'000	2022/23 Revised Budget £'000	2023/24 Original Budget £'000	2024/25 Original Budget £'000	2025/26 Original Budget £'000	2026/27 Original Budget £'000
CCTV Total	Reserves	60	0	0	0	0	0	60
Disabled Facilities Grant Mandatory & Discretionary Total	Grant	0	0	5,720	2,063	2,063	2,063	2,063
Local Housing Company Total	Borrowing/Reserves	23,250	90	360	5,000	8,000	7,800	2,000
Dolphin Barge Museum & Skatepark Total	Reserves	104	52	52	0	0	0	0
Forstal Community Association Total	Reserves	45	0	45	0	0	0	0
Purchase of Temporary Accommodation Total	Borrowing/Grant	11,000	0	0	4,400	6,600	0	0
Local Authority Housing Fund Bridging Element	Grant	464	0	0	139	325	0	0
Housing & Community Services Total		34,923	142	6,177	11,602	16,988	9,863	4,123
Sittingbourne Town Centre Total	Borrowing	39,858	39,216	641	0	0	0	0
Faversham Creek Basin Regeneration Project (Swing Bridge) Total	Capital Receipts	200	0	0	200	0	0	0
High Streets Total	Reserves	624	376	248	0	0	0	0
St Micheal's Church Boundary Wall Total	S106	120	0	120	0	0	0	0
Coronation Clock Tower Sheerness Total	Reserves	247	103	144	0	0	0	0
Master's House Total	Reserves	1,603	284	1,319	0	0	0	0
Swale House Refurbishment Total	Borrowing	2,100	145	1,955	0	0	0	0
Rural England Prosperity Projects Total	Grant	503	0	0	126	377	0	0
UKSPF Total	Grant	200	0	14	37	149	0	0
Levelling Up Scheme Total	Grant/Reserves	20,509	0	638	7,349	12,523	0	0
Central House Lift Refurbishment Total	Reserves	20	0	20	0	0	0	0
Regeneration & Economic Development Total		65,984	40,126	5,099	7,711	13,049	0	0
Waste Vehicle Fleet Total	Capital Receipts/Borrowing	7,035	0	0	7,035	0	0	0
Barton's Point - replacement bridge Total	Capital Receipts	237	198	39	0	0	0	0
Beach Huts Total	Capital Receipts	143	0	0	143	0	0	0
Coach Parking Total	Capital Receipts	35	0	35	0	0	0	0
Gunpowder Works Oare Faversham Total	S106	30	0	30	0	0	0	0
Sheerness Public Toilets Total	Reserves	120	0	120	0	0	0	0
Barton's point drainage project Total	Reserves	70	0	70	0	0	0	0
Leisure Centres Total	Borrowing	294	0	294	0	0	0	0
Lynsted Churchyard Walls Total	Capital Receipts	120	0	0	120	0	0	0
Milton Creek Access Road Total	Reserves	75	0	75	0	0	0	0
Open Spaces Play Equipment Total	S106	456	0	456	0	0	0	0
Play Improvements Total	Reserves	200	0	200	0	0	0	0
The Forum public toilets Total	Reserves	50	8	42	0	0	0	0

Scheme	Funding	Scheme Total Current Estimate	Prior Year Spend	2022/23 Revised Budget	2023/24 Original Budget	2024/25 Original Budget	2025/26 Original Budget	2026/27 Original Budget
Barton's point shower & toilets Total	Reserves	184	4	180	0	0	0	0
Changing Places Total	Grant	154	0	54	0	0	100	0
Environment & Leisure Total		9,202	210	1,594	7,298	0	100	0
ICT Replacement	Reserves	Annual programme	0	219	0	0	0	0
Council Chamber IT Equipment Total	Reserves	50	0	0	50	0	0	0
Resources Total		50	0	219	50	0	0	0
Grand Total		110,160	40,478	13,089	26,661	30,037	9,963	4,123
S106		606	0	606	0	0	0	0
Grant		21,758	0	6,425	9,845	15,233	2,163	2,063
Capital receipts		2,735	198	74	2,463	0	0	0
Reserves		4,212	918	2,894	50	509	0	60
Borrowing		80,850	39,362	3,090	14,304	14,294	7,800	2,000
		110,160	40,478	13,089	26,661	30,037	9,963	4,123

Estimated Use of Reserves 2022/23 -2024/25							
	Balance 2022/23	Est use 2022/23	Balance 2022/23	Est use 2023/24	Balance 2023/24	Est use 2024/25	Balance 2024/25
General Fund Balance	(3,073,000)	0	(3,073,000)	1,075,000	(1,998,000)	243,569	(1,754,431)
Earmarked Reserves							
Building Maintenance Fund	(680,075)	150,000	(530,075)	100,000	(430,075)	430,075	(0)
Repair & Replacement Reserves	(700,937)	261,615	(439,321)	139,448	(299,873)	299,873	(0)
Civil Parking Enforcement Reserve	(284,782)	250,000	(34,782)	15,000	(19,782)	19,782	(0)
General Reserve A/C	(1,035,386)	793,977	(241,410)	118,399	(123,011)	123,011	0
Performance Fund	(216,426)	216,426	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
Local Plan Reserve	(211,065)	55,000	(156,065)	30,000	(126,065)	126,065	0
Stay Put Grants Reserve	(237,894)	150,000	(87,894)	0	(87,894)	87,894	0
Staffing costs Reserve	(143,357)	(126,264)	(269,621)	150,000	(119,621)	119,621	0
Homeless/Housing Reserve	(77,729)	0	(77,729)	0	(77,729)	77,729	0
Communities Fund	(338,781)	338,781	0	0	0	0	0
Council Tax/Housing Benefits Reserve	(930,778)	450,000	(480,778)	250,000	(230,778)	230,778	0
Refuse and Recycling Reserve	(108,318)	50,000	(58,318)	58,318	0	0	0
Business Rates Volatility Reserve	(1,393,803)	350,000	(1,043,803)	300,000	(743,803)	743,803	0
Electoral Registration Reserve	(101,021)	0	(101,021)	101,021	0	(25,000)	(25,000)
Preceptors CT Support Reserve	(225,520)	0	(225,520)	0	(225,520)	225,520	0
Waste Scheme Promotion Reserve	(111,596)	20,000	(91,596)	91,596	0	0	0
Financial Services Reserve	(160,000)	70,000	(90,000)	50,000	(40,000)	40,000	0
Tree Surveys & Works in Churchyard Reserve	(63,000)	15,000	(48,000)	15,000	(33,000)	33,000	0
Kent Pool Economic Development Business Rates Reserve	(1,739,423)	850,000	(889,423)	250,000	(639,423)	639,423	0
Milton Creek Access Road Reserve	(74,740)	74,740	0	0	0	0	0
Housing & Commercial Growth Business Rates Fund	(1,579,843)	250,000	(1,329,843)	250,000	(1,079,843)	1,079,843	0
Special Projects Reserve	(1,408,147)	1,408,147	0	0	0	0	0
Environmental Initiatives Reserve	(156,165)	30,000	(126,165)	126,165	0	0	0
Heritage Strategy Reserve	(172,704)	73,000	(99,704)	99,704	(0)	0	(0)
Visitor Economy Strategy Reserve	(148,368)	50,000	(98,368)	50,000	(48,368)	48,368	(0)
High Street Funding Reserve	(423,736)	423,736	0	0	0	0	0
Improvement and Resilience Reserve	(794,148)	794,148	0	0	0	0	0
Covid Recovery	(818,129)	450,000	(368,129)	0	(368,129)	368,129	0
Budget Contingency Reserve	(2,000,000)	522,081	(1,477,919)	970,000	(507,919)	423,736	(84,183)
Other earmarked reserves	(568,729)	470,245	(98,484)	61,384	(37,099)	37,100	0
Total Earmarked (Excl General Fund)	(16,904,598)	8,440,632	(8,463,967)	3,226,035	(5,237,931)	5,128,750	(109,182)
Total earmarked plus general fund	(19,977,598)	8,440,632	(11,536,967)	4,301,035	(7,235,931)	5,372,319	(1,863,613)
Ring Fenced/accounting/collection fund							
Collection fund & grants in advance	(5,632,778)	5,632,778	0	0	0	0	0
Accounting adjustments & smoothing	(1,203,347)	209,000	(994,347)	186,324	(808,023)	220,118	(587,905)
	(6,836,125)	5,841,778	(994,347)	186,324	(808,023)	220,118	(587,905)

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Minimum Revenue Provision Statement

Where the Council finances capital expenditure by debt, it must put aside resources to repay that debt in later years. The amount charged to the revenue budget for the repayment of debt is known as Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP), although there has been no statutory minimum since 2008. The Local Government Act 2003 requires the Council to have regard to the former Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's "Guidance on Minimum Revenue Provision" (the MHCLG Guidance) most recently issued in 2018. Please note that this guidance is still referred to as MHCLG guidance despite the name change of the department to Department of Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC).

The broad aim of the MHCLG Guidance is to ensure that capital expenditure is financed over a period that is either reasonably commensurate with that over which the capital expenditure provides benefits, or, in the case of borrowing supported by Government Revenue Support Grant, reasonably commensurate with the period implicit in the determination of that grant.

The MHCLG Guidance requires the Council to approve an Annual MRP Statement each year and recommends a number of options for calculating a prudent amount of MRP. The following statement incorporates options recommended in the Guidance as well as locally determined prudent methods.

For 2023/24 it is recommended that:

- for supported expenditure, and for all capital expenditure incurred prior to 1 April 2008, MRP will, under delegated authority, be calculated using the Annuity Method over 50 years;
- MRP for all self-financed capital expenditure incurred from 1 April 2008 will, under delegated authority, be calculated under the Asset Life (Equal Instalments of Principal) Method;
- Where former operating leases have been brought onto the balance sheet due to the adoption of the IFRS 16 Leases accounting standard, and the asset values have been adjusted for accruals, prepayments, premiums and/or incentives, then the annual MRP charges will be adjusted so that the total charge to revenue each year remains unaffected by the new standard;
- MRP in respect of leases and Public Finance Initiative (PFI) schemes will match the element of the rent or charge that goes to write down the balance sheet liability, to ensure that the impact on the revenue account is neutral; and
- where loans are made to other bodies for their capital expenditure, no MRP will be charged but the Council would apply the capital receipt arising from the principal repayments to reduce the Capital Financing Requirement instead. In years where there is no principal repayment, MRP will be charged in accordance with the MRP policy for the assets funded by the loan, including where appropriate, delaying MRP until the year after the assets become operational.

Capital expenditure incurred during 2023/24 will not be subject to a MRP charge until 2024/25 or later. MRP is not required until an asset is operational.

The budget implications of MRP are detailed elsewhere in this report and the estimated Capital Financing Requirement is detailed in the Annual Treasury Strategy.

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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, the ongoing recovery from Covid 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), the hyperinflation the country is currently experiencing, uncertainty regarding the ongoing recovery from the Covid pandemic and the future funding position for local government following ongoing delays with things such as the Fair Funding Review. All of these issues are placing further pressure on the council to deliver balanced budgets, without impacting on frontline services.
- 1.3 Brexit continues to impact, we have seen issues with some areas of the Council's business with things like the new waste fleet expected to take a year to deliver and increasing costs in terms of areas such as labour supply for certain areas, particularly in respect of the Council's capital programme.
- 1.4 A recession would present further risk, in particular significant areas of income such as lettings income, planning fees and car park income that are linked directly to economic demand.
- 1.5 Beyond this, further policy announcements from the Government under the leadership of the new Prime Minister and Cabinet will undoubtedly affect our finances in the coming years, but hopefully this will also bring some certainty in terms of medium term announcements from the Spending Review for local government finances as a whole.
- 1.6 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.

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 2023/24 and beyond are based on best estimates at this time following the Autumn Statement. A prudent approach has been adopted based on previous years' experience as well as using regional network contacts to inform modelling.

Efficiency programme not delivered	Possible	High	The MTFS is currently forecasting significant budget gaps, peaking at £4.1m in 2024/25. Use of one-off reserves to help plug these gaps is not sustainable.
Covid-19 recovery continues you to adversely impact on the Council's budgets.	Possible	High	The MTFS seeks to address any known budget impacts as they are currently estimated. Ongoing budget monitoring of the position will help identify any issues.
Overreliance on reserve contributions supporting base budget deficits which is not a sustainable position.	Likely	High	Early preparation of 2023/24 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.
Anticipated savings/ efficiencies not achieved.	Possible	High	Regular monitoring and reporting takes place but the size of the funding cuts increase the likelihood of this risk. Non-achievement of savings would require compensating reductions in planned spending within services.
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	Current economic climate likely to impact. Regular monitoring and reporting takes place. Full review of fees and charges scheduled for 2024/25 along with an annual review 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 2023/24 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.
Financial budget impacts of UK's vote to leave the European Union (Brexit).	Likely	Medium/High	Continue to work collaboratively with treasury advisors and central government departments to assess potential budget impacts.
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.

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Budget consultation survey results

Background

Following the agreement of the Policy and Resources Committee on 30 November, a consultation was launched on draft proposals for the council's budget for the financial year 2023/24.

This consultation ran for 6 weeks, and responses were encouraged through news release, social media posts, the council website, and direct emails to stakeholders.

There were:

- 450 views of the consultation page on the council's website
- Social media activity promoting the consultation reached 8,901 people

The consultation asked people to read key budget documents and then respond to nine questions.

The consultation closed at 5pm on Friday 13 January, having received 64 responses, and four email submissions which have been included in the below summary.

Results – summary

Q1

The council needs to prepare a balanced budget so that its costs are met by income. Currently our costs are forecast to exceed the income we are able to generate. In order to be able to deliver a balanced budget what services would you support reducing?

There were 45 responses to this question, of which

- 2 said “pass” or they had insufficient information to answer
- 8 said there should be no cuts to services
- 3 said reduce spending on councillor allowances
- 4 said reduce spending on senior staff
- 4 said reduce non-statutory services
- 5 were suggestions purely related to non-Swale services (streetlights, school transport, road schemes, Police and Crime Commissioner, road schemes)
- Other suggestions for reductions, were waste collections, leisure, and regeneration

Q2

The council also intends to increase its income. How would you suggest we might do that?

There were 39 responses to this question:

- 4 explicitly supported increasing parking fees
- 2 explicitly opposed increasing parking charges
- 3 supported increasing fees and charges generally
- There were several suggestions that the council should be more entrepreneurial, such as:
 - Renting out Swale House
 - Renting out homes at market rates

- Setting up a LATCO to charge for services
 - Chargeable events/concerts
- Other suggestions included:
 - Increasing fines for enforcement
 - Charging developers more for planning applications

Q3

Do you believe the council should reduce its spending on some services to be able to spend more on others?

There were 52 responses to this question, of which:

- 32 (62%) responded “yes”
- 20 (38%) responded “no”

Q4

Which services would you reduce spending on, and which services would you spend more on?

There were 47 responses to this question:

- 14 supported increased spending on the voluntary and community sector
- Other suggestions for increased spending included:
 - Litter, enforcement, environmental improvements, cleansing
- Suggestions for reducing spending included:
 - Discretionary services, leisure, housing, senior staff, grounds maintenance, councillors, mayor, green initiatives, town centre improvements.

Q5

Please use the box below to let us have any views on the proposed increases to the fees and charges.

There were 30 responses to this question, including:

- 6 agreeing with proposals overall
- 4 disagreeing with increased parking charges explicitly
- 1 agreeing with increased parking charges explicitly
- 8 comments disagree with increases in various waste charges:
 - 3 bulky
 - 2 household
 - 2 garden
 - 1 garden and bulky

Q6

The Band D Council Tax for Swale Council for this year is £189.27 and the suggested increase for 2023/24 is £5.67. In the current financial circumstances do you think that this is an appropriate amount to charge?

There were 54 answers to this question of which:

- 30 said yes,
- 14 said no

- 2 said yes, with caveats (equitable share between rural and urban services, and listen to residents' views and take action)
- 1 said it should increase more
- 1 n/a
- 1 suggested a referendum on increasing
- The remainder made general comments about the cost and council services

Q7

If the government gave us more flexibility to increase the charge by £10.00 to help support the council's budget would you be supportive?

There were 57 responses to this question, of which:

- 31 (54%) said yes
- 26 (46%) said no

Q8

Please use the box below to let us have any views on the capital programme proposals.

- Several comments were unsure what Levelling Up Funding involved
- 3 comments were generally supportive
- Other comments include:
 - Both opposition to, and support of, funding for Faversham Pools and the Swing Bridge
 - Letting out offices
 - Get residential rental income

Q9

Please use the box below to let us have any views on the savings proposals.

There were 53 responses to this question, with a range of views, including:

- 8 support them overall
- 6 support reducing member allowances, 1 opposes
- 11 oppose removal of dog waste bins
- 18 said not to cut voluntary and community service funding
- Several organisations affected by proposed cuts submitted their opposition to the proposals and these have been incorporated in the above

Results - detailed

The results of each question is set out below, followed by four separate direct submissions from organisations impacted by the proposals.

Where the number of comments does not add up to the number reported this is due to comments being entered with no information eg "XXX", "n/a", or "none".

Q1

The council needs to prepare a balanced budget so that its costs are met by income. Currently our costs are forecast to exceed the income we are able to generate. In order to be able to deliver a balanced budget what services would you support reducing?

There were 45 responses to this question

Suggestions were:

- Anything that's an absolute waste. There are people who just sit around doing nothing. You need to be making redundancies.
- Councillors drawings. Money wasted on climate change rubbish.
- Councillors wages
- Decoration and gardening, leaf & litter cleaning (residents responsible), lights on at night, no more signs of the new housing developments all around Faversham, painting and resurfacing roads that are still ok,
- The number of senior management positions
- Housing
- I believe that housing development should be limited because the construction of large houses with inadequate facilities exacerbates the inequalities and deprivation that exist in Swale. The Council should invest in renewable energy across council estates to reduce energy costs; increase investment in LED lighting to offset the costs of fuel support for residents in the long run; offer staff a cash alternative to opt out of the LGPs at half the cost of the Council contribution; promote salary sacrifice schemes to help reduce Council ENICs contributions; and use community organisations in the delivery of community services (for instance, outsource the Council's community development services, training and development, monitoring and evaluation, etc.) to reduce locum staff and expensive outside consultants; review VFM of consultancy contracts; extend use of dynamic purchasing systems to help ensure VFM.
- I think the reductions should be spread across all services including the statutory ones but don't reduce spending on charitable and voluntary organisations.
- I would think about 3 weekly waste collection if food and nappies could be collected weekly.
- Implement efficiency improvements for waste collections. Bring it back in house if need be. Example: I live a building with 3 other properties inside, next door there are a number of flats. We all have separate bins lined up for collection. Why not just a large waste disposal bin for apartments that is easier to collect? Seen this in Europe.
- Consolidate ICT services, customer experience and contact centres with other local authorities to create one large service between multiple authorities. This can be done with other services such as communications, strategy/change/projects and even resident facing services such as enforcement too.
- Utilise private sector innovation to improve procurement processes and enter negotiations with more industry knowledge. There are companies that support local councils with this.
- There are probably many areas where efficiency savings can be found but I'm not an officer at Swale so I can't see internally.
- Improving administration amongst all services. Working closely with charitable sectors to increase early interventions in areas such as council tax collections processes for both the council and residents. Increase possible local temporary housing opportunities and more affordable rented properties via housing developments , reducing the need to source more expensive out of borough arrangements and benefit applications costs reduced
- In reaching your decisions, please do not penalise those in rural areas who already have vastly reduced services compared to those in the towns - we are

always an easy target for spending cuts on Council services but things should be more balanced and equitable.

- Invest in renewable power generation across the council estate to reduce energy costs; invest in LED lighting; offer staff a cash alternative to opt out of the LGPS at 50% of the cost of council contributions; promote salary sacrifice schemes to help reduce council ENICs contributions; outsource to save e.g. community services to the VCS; reduce reliance on agency staff; review VFM of consultancy contracts; extend use of dynamic purchasing systems to help ensure VFM;
- Leisure facilities
- Leisure services and increase charges to cover to realistic levels
- Members grants, expenses and services
- New housing estates. Crime Commissioner's salary!
- Perhaps review the types of work each service does because I'm sure there are cross-overs in the type of work carried out so there's more opportunity for shared services. There are also very expensive I.T systems that each service is paying for. There must be an opportunity for 'deals' to be done if split across Maidstone, T.Wells and SBC
- Not the voluntary sector
- Reducing the amount of managers/supervisors at top levels. There seems to be a lot of duplication of people doing the same job but one paid as a manager and the other paid as a supervisor
- Reduction in Executive staff
- Regeneration and Economic Development, grants to community and voluntary groups and members grants.
- Regeneration of expensive council buildings
- Stop wasting money on stupid road schemes ie. wooden boxes full of dirt, narrowing of roads etc.
- The budget for waste collections seems extremely high and feel this could be reduced and put towards other things. The budget needs to be spread out across other things that most communities need.
- The management at the councils bonus's, services need improving not cutting
- You need to remove the layers of directors and senior management which would provide savings on wages and on-costs like national insurance and pension contributions. The staff on the front line do the work, not those at the top of the chain.

Q2

The council also intends to increase its income. How would you suggest we might do that?

- Change planning charging scheme to be a sliding scale so the more houses in a development the more that should be paid. Why should 8000 houses pay same as 200 houses.
- Charge more for Developer planning process
- Charging for replacement bins, if lost or damaged deliberately.
- Creating a local authority trading company is a good start. Finding ways to generate income outside of council tax. This could be business waste that is sold to business paying rates, repairs services, events management. Creating a business portfolio that generates income could relieve some of the desire to raise council taxes and parking charges.

- It could also mean investing in property to rent. We have lots of private rental accommodation for profit. Why not build and then rent properties at market rates? No problem with the Council being business focused. You have the skill in house already.
- Crowd funding?
- Double yellows in areas that really need them. Reducing business taxes in the town so we have something to go into town more. More footfall more money from car parks etc
- Ensure investment income on reserves is maximised; increase rental/fees from income generating assets such as property;
- Fund raising events, concerts etc.
- Get outside investors to invest in the area. Example EV charging companies who would install rapid chargers and SBC can rent out unused land to them
- If you increase parking charges for example, the High Street's will suffer. Ultimately risking businesses closing and a reduction in business rates. I think the biggest opportunity is to rent out a larger amount of Swale House. Maintain a small 'hub' IF staff want to come into the offices or have meetings.
- Increase car parking charges, brown bin charges, fees for statutory functions such as planning applications.
- Increase car parking charges, hall hire, pest control etc.
- Increase fees across the board and build your own houses.
- Increase in council tax, increases in rent, review of under-occupied properties, increase in fees for charged services
- increase parking fines, litter charges, flytipping charges and parking charges. By changing the hours that the enforcement officers work to give more cover around school times then i'm sure you would see your income increase dramatically just on school parking alone
- Increase rents and build more beach huts
- Increase wherever you can.
- Increasing car parking fees will damage high street shopping and extending car park times will impact householders. You should look to increase income through paid advertising in the newsletter, website, on street and car parks. Redevelop Swale House into flats and employees continue to work from home. Invest in property for rent, use car park land see Zed Pods. Energy generation - installation of solar panels in all the car parks with spaces under.
- Install more cameras to catch flytippers, take them to court/fine them/stop repeat offenders this reducing clean up bill in the longer term.
- Increase fines for all activities that the council has to rectify, ie picking up litter, parking on verges etc.
- Increase business rates for large corporations.
- invest in climate technology, adaptation and green energy
- Lobbying Govt for more funding; partnership working;
- Looking for efficiency savings. Reconsidering the circumstances in which council tax benefit is applied. All residents in the Borough should make a contribution.
- Means tested charges for waste collection
- Offer paid for services - flic so waste, those that the private sector buy.
- OK to increase fees for use of leisure facilities and swimming pools
- Pay and display on shingle bank and shellness road, especially all the camper vans who are getting a free holiday.

- Renting office space in council buildings
- Run the Borough like a business.
- Slight increase in fees and charges. Charging for overnight usage of car parks, small increase to garden waste/bulky waste collections.
- The Council should maximise reserve income by increasing rental/fees from income-generating assets such as property.
- They could stop giving money to developers for starters or fighting planning appeals you've got no chance of winning. I remember the notes of the wises lane appeal giving the impression that the council acted incompetently and failed to follow protocol
- work with the prison for prison workers and social value
- Working collaboratively with local charitable organisations to deliver a single point of access service, ensuring effective referrals to appropriate services but reducing the amount of duplicated work that is currently evident throughout the borough. Providing this type of service could help reduce expenditure and therefore maximise income to the council ,available by fairer distribution of monies to other organisation but improving services to clients and residents in the area.
- Working with the public sector or with charities and local organisations will help increase your income and by working in partnership. These sectors are crucial at this time and are what communities need. This will help generate more income but will also be helping others.

Q3

Do you believe the council should reduce its spending on some services to be able to spend more on others?

There were 52 responses to this question, of which:

- 32 (62%) responded "yes"
- 20 (38%) responded "no"

Q4

Which services would you reduce spending on, and which services would you spend more on?

There were 47 responses to this question, and those relating to Swale services said:

- As mentioned above, improving administration and working closely with charitable services who can offer early intervention support to residents to achieve earlier collection rates. Look at increasing social housing stock to reduce high rental costs. More should be given to local charitable sectors who can collectively support local people in a more collaborative way .
- Cut down on your heating in council run buildings, when all these new homes you allow to be built make the builders build the services first ie doctors, local shop on new estate BEFORE they build any houses ,
- Discretionary services and senior leadership team
- Excessive housing development and cutthroat consultancies, with additional spending on agency staff, should be curtailed, while the Council should proactively put its money where its mouth is, that is, by investing in infrastructure (Swale CVS). Due to the local government's withdrawal of core funding, this vital umbrella organisation is being squeezed out of its critical role in the third sector. Swale CVS is

now primarily a project delivery organisation rather than an infrastructure organisation. It is now competing for funding with other community organisations. Medway and other districts in Kent and elsewhere fund organisations similar to Swale CVS, which reduces their investment in community development and services. Swale CVS is critical to bringing together and sustaining voluntary sector organisations in the Borough. Its role during the global pandemic, as well as the roles of the various voluntary sector organisations in Swale, should not be underestimated or forgotten.

- Executive staff costs
- Devolve services to parish councils like other areas have done - toilets, parks, cemeteries
- Faversham Swimming Pool
- Grounds maintenance, economic development, leisure and tourism
- housing - there seems to be alot of people who make themselves intentionally homeless by not paying their rent, causing damage to property and anti social behaviour but then the council pick them up and put them in a hotel which is costing a fortune
- I feel the budgets are extremely for the items shown in your plan. It would make more sense to reduce these budgets and use more money for other sectors. Swale CVS have been very beneficial to a lot of charities and organisations including ourselves. They have not only helped us with the operational side but have also helped us develop.
- I think you should not reduce spending on discretionary grants to community and voluntary groups, because they provide valuable services to the community. I also doubt that you will be able to make savings on homelessness provision.
- I understand you intend to cut the grant to Faversham swimming pool. I strongly recommend maintaining or increasing the grant for this vital facility.
- In reaching your decisions, please do not penalise those in rural areas who already have vastly reduced services compared to those in the towns - we are always an easy target for spending cuts on Council services but things should be more balanced and equitabl
- Increase core grants to the VCS as they are under significant financial pressure too and a relatively small contribution from SBC can help ensure their survival; Swale CVS in particular, should see an increase to its core grant, as the contribution it makes towards holding together voluntary sector infrastructure is critical to supporting the sustainability of the sector at a time like this;
- Just need more money
- leisure
- Leisure reduce, look at all non statutory functions, spend more on housing
- Less on IT and overheads
- Less on street cleaning, festive lights, street upkeep & maintenance
- More affordable housing, NHS and community service grants such as Citizens' Advice, Age UK
- Literally everything non essential and woke. All staff benefits cut and no Christmas party. Every council employee is lazy and 20% should be encouraged to move on and work somewhere else.
- Medway Puzzles believes that Swale CVS (SCVS) should have increased funding and not have it stripped. Puzzles and its members rely on the SCVS services which is right in the heart of the community. Without SCVS Medway Puzzles and its members would lose the support in Swale and force many of our members into

harder times, pushing them into isolation and taking away even more opportunities for the Autism community.

- More investment in local infrastructure services to support the Community and Voluntary Services.
- More on climate and environmental. Not sure what you would cut. This survey needs accessible data for the user to help decide
- None should be reduced. Increase services to help people insulate their home
- Non-regulatory services should all be reduced to help pay for the essential ones.
- Reduce amount spent on Councillors, Mayor and Crime Commissioner.
- Increase amount spent on the investment of charitable infrastructure, so that charities are able to continue developing. and take the load/pressure off the council. Swale Community & Voluntary Services (SCVS) has been involved in supporting an employability project, helping those of 45+ to return to the workplace, to date, this project has helped over 90 local people in the Swale area back into work, training or going self-employed. Investment for charities from the council, is needed to help these organisations to continue to support projects such as this in the future. "
- Reduce on green initiatives, members grants, corporate services, increase on litter dumping, reduce fees for under 16 leisure.
- Reduce the amount of time you operate street lighting, it's NIT needed ALL night, cut the hours by two thirds!!!
- retain adequate resources within the conservation and design team. The heritage within Swale is diverse and unique due to its history and geographical location. any reduction in heritage services will have a long term adverse impact on the built environment within swale.
- reduce services supporting people who don't help themselves. Increase spending on care for the elderly but only for those who have contributed financially in their working lives.
- Sittingbourne and faversham improvements. Not cost effective and not even spread amongst the three towns
- Spend less on building new houses and spend more on improving the current housing stock and environment
- Spend more on enforcement, this would inturn generate income to the council
- Spend more on social care, local facilities essential services. Spend less on vanity projects.
- Spend more on the environment, invest in cameras to catch fly tippers and rescue the clean up bill.
- Swale CVS has been invaluable to me. I have had several hospital appointments all over the country Kent and London - on the island we do not have easy access to hospitals and without them what options do I have ?? CVS have also put on a panto with the children and how that was appreciated, the children and parents and grandparents brought together was fantastic. CVS is the only organisation that involves my age group and salary . PLEASE DO NOT CUT THEIR FUNDING this would have a dreadful impact mentally and for me physically.
- Try to keep spending up on voluntary and charitable organisations as these can produce benefits of many times the money spent. Reductions should be spread across all other services.
- less parking charges
- We recommend the sustained, and in some cases increased, spending on voluntary and community services, to best address the welfare of the large number of people within Swale living in households with low income, and poorer levels of education

and employment attainment. Evidence that these wider determinants of health impact significantly on the health and well-being of residents is clear, and VCSE organisations are best placed to work in and with these communities. The cost of living crisis will only amplify the need for such services. The voluntary sector can provide services at a reduced cost as compared to statutory organisations, and it is therefore recommended that this stays within the voluntary and community sector, as opposed to this being done at a statutory level.

- With 30,908 children in Swale living in low-income families, we recommend that voluntary organisations working specifically with children be funded, with increasing funds, to prevent significant impacts on services in future.
- Yes and no. It depends on what service. As a resident, I'd like to see my town centre of Faversham cleaned up. The pavements need jet washing down and graffiti needs cleaning off. I've lived here since 2020 and it's never been done. Whilst it might not seem like a priority, a clean environment is more attractive to tourism.
- Mentioned above regarding consolidating services, including frontline services. This should generate savings that can be reinvested. Could be done via your own LATCO.
- You need to remove the layers of directors and senior management which would provide savings on wages and on-costs like national insurance and pension contributions. The staff on the front line do the work, not those at the top of the chain.

Q5

Please use the box below to let us have any views on the proposed increases to the fees and charges.

There were 30 responses to this question:

- Accept the % increase in parking but the change in times is appalling. This will impact decent people who need parking to go to work.
- agree with these
- agree with those increases above
- Bulky waste increase will lead to more items being dumped, it's bad enough now !!
- car parks, extend the hours, put the price up, and then wonder why the local businesses fail. Surely reduce the hours, maybe one hour free parking, and then see what happens to the local economy. Everyone complains that the high street is dying, who can be bothered to go there when driving and parking is so awful in town. If you put up the cost of waste collections, it will cost the council more in clearing up after fly tipping.
- Charging for household bins is wrong when they are the only way to get rubbish taken away when you have paid council tax for the service
- Definitely not car parking!!
- extending the hours car parks operate would increase your expenditure with the employment of more parking wardens, could you ensure their safety at night. As the only authority in Kent to make a loss would increasing staff costs balance the budget.
- Garden waste increases then people will stop paying
- Garden waste should fee should not be raised.
- Given the financial situation there seems little option. The increase in the cost of burials seems excessive and risks additional stress for the families.
- How can you justify cutbacks after spending £24m on SBC busing refurb?
- I agree with these proposals

- I do agree there will need to be increases in fees and charges but money also needs to be spent on the community and voluntary sectors. We have received so much support from this sector that it's a shame for these to be reduced.
- I know these cannot be helped, but with the cost of living at the moment people need help with everyday things. Any increases are going to push some over the edge. With mental health and wellbeing such a high priority this could spiral even more. If car parking was free like in most of the big shopping centres, it would attract more people to the towns. The vulnerable and those in need will be pushed out which in the modern world is totally unacceptable.
- If waste bins become chargeable, residents will not bother to have them, therefore fly tipping will increase. As car park charges were recently increased, extending the time to midnight, it simply hitting out at motorists even more. Also, care park tickets wardens will have to have their pay increased, if they are expected to work until midnight, meaning the council will be spending more on staff salaries.
- I'm the CEO of Medway Puzzles, an Autism Charity across Kent. We are disappointed that you have taken away the core funding of Swale CVS (SCVS). SCVS in their 50th year of helping the community of Swale. SCVS have not only helped Puzzles with training and bid writing but also helped our members with employability, support and volunteering opportunities.
- increase to level budget
- Increasing bulky waste collection fees will just result in more flytipping.
- Increasing the cost of burials? That's insane right! Increase charges and fines for anti social behaviour, fly tipping etc
- Is the council sure that an increase in garden waste and bulky will just lead to increase in fly tipping. Should these not be reduced to include higher take up of service. With the decrease in bus services then it seems unfair to increase car park charges and by increasing does that create less demand.
- No further fees to residents should be increased. Planning and business services could be increased as these are not everyday resident costs
- Pre-planning advice charges is okay as far as charitable organisations are exempted from such charges; buying household waste bins is a good source of income; however, the Council should make allowance for free waste bins for community organisations that are helping the Council most especially during this period of deepened austerity; car park should remain operational from 8am to 6pm, considering that Swale operate one of the highest car park charges across Kent and Medway; we are animal lovely society and we need to support stray, abandoned animals; pest control should continue as the current rate to avoid public health outbreak (it should be noted that Swale counts as one of the dirtiest borough after Medway);
- Should you increase by 15% and have a hardship scheme
- The council should start charging for pre-application consultation for alterations to listed buildings. two layers of charges- for written report and site visit. alterations to listed buildings are challenging and a site visit is usually required- the council should charge for the service.
- these sound ok
- Whilst I can see the need to increase some fees, there is concern that increasing fees for waste collections, runs the risk of increased possibilities for fly tipping etc. Increased parking costs may affect people's affordability shop locally and encourage shoppers to travel elsewhere outside the borough which would directly impact local economy and businesses.

- Why is there no fee for charities, voluntary groups and parish councils for pre application planning advice - meetings and works/ repairs to listed buildings? Do other councils charge for this? If so, I think a nominal fee should be introduced, the same for pre application advice - letters. Why have many local land charges reduced? Why is there no charge for motorcycles in car parks? Replacement of domestic refuse bins fee should be increased by rate of inflation. Fee for radar keys should be increased by rate of inflation. Legal charges for third parties should be increased by rate of inflation.

Q6

The Band D Council Tax for Swale Council for this year is £189.27 and the suggested increase for 2023/24 is £5.67. In the current financial circumstances do you think that this is an appropriate amount to charge?

- Absolutely not!! More houses are being built and services are still not being improved where is that money going? Stop taxing people that can barely afford to cover there bills.
- Given the current state of affairs and the discretionary schemes that are available this seems a reasonable increase
- hold a referendum to explain why you need extra, you shouldn't be scared of the democratic process
- I agree with this proposal.
- I agrww
- I don't agree with these increases. Households are paying out enough each month for utilities and having an increase in this will make people struggle when some are already struggling.
- I think council tax should be increased more
- I think we need to justify the increase and demonstrate where savings have been made first. I also think KCC need to cut back on services they provide and ensure Swale gets a fairer share. An increase of £5.67 is probably manageable for many residents but I think it's important to demonstrate where savings have been made before announcing this.
- It's always been a contentious thing to pay. Taxing people to live in their own home will always be a sore point. I begrudge paying it each month. By paying this I have cut back on other things. For those who don't work full time or have other more important things to pay, it must be harder.
- No I do not. Council should be disgusted. You should sack staff before forcing the families in swale to pay for you to spaff it all up the wall. Stop playing the victim about only betting 10p for every £1 when you barely provide any service at all in the first place. It doesn't all just go to central government it goes to KCC and the parish councils. Maybe give us some quality delivery and people might hate you less.
- No more than this
- No should be frozen
- No should be frozen
- No we don't get services for the money we pay now!
- No, because many people are already struggling with either heat or eat. Interest rates have gone up again today and there is only so much money people have got. I think you should reduce the exemptions given in council tax such as a one month exemption on empty properties when Canterbury Council and Thanet Council give no discount. Reduce the major works exemptions to 6 months instead of one year. If you

increase council tax then you are putting more pressure on people already struggling to survive, especially seeing as you are not even increasing the wages of your own staff which is ludicrous, where are they meant to find the extra money from?

- No, with the cost of living already crippling Puzzles members, we believe you should freeze the council tax
- "No. I think it is unrealistic.
- Charge more in order to keep services and jobs in line.
- Constant reduction in services and employees means that everything is undermined"
- No. It is extortionate. Considering the extra new houses now paying.
- No. Unemployment, poverty and social deprivation are rife in our borough. Increases costs for people already in financial pain is nonsense
- Only if there is an equitable share of Council services in rural and urban areas, those of us living in rural areas are bearing a much greater brunt of Council service cuts and cost of living as the public transport is virtually non-existent (following County cuts) meaning we have to rely on private vehicles.
- Only if you listen to residents views and take action
- The council delivers a number of very important services and supports the local economy and VCS through it's work as well, so I would be prepared to pay more as a local council tax payer. Many on the lowest incomes will receive support that will mitigate the effect of any increase but I would be concerned about those who don't receive support and are just about managing. Having said that, across a whole year it is still a very small increase and people have been hit much harder by energy and food cost increases, compared with which, the proposed increase to council tax here, is essentially negligible.
- The increase of 2.99% is reasonable depending on where it ends up being spent.
- This is great value for the bin service alone
- we cant afford it and we are both earning . My husband full salary only covers the mortgage and council tax and our mortgage is going up by £350 so with that and the suggested cost that the council wants is more than £500 from where ?
- We pay well over £2.4k a year just to empty bins and provide scant streetlighting while you approve 750 new homes on the Lower Road. Scandalous. Farm land gone forever.
- Why is Band D always hit the hardest, all bands should pay more.
- Yes. Those who can't afford it are likely to be able to get a Council Tax benefit of some sort anyway, I presume. We mustn't shy away from increasing Council Tax as it's been used as a political weapon for too many years.
- Yes but I can't believe how steep the increase is between Band D and the higher bands. I pay around £ 2000 per year. I think the costs should be shared more equally.
- Yes, and even more.
- Yes, providing it remains at £5.67 and does not increase to £10 or more in the future.

Q7

If the government gave us more flexibility to increase the charge by £10.00 to help support the council's budget would you be supportive?

There were 57 responses to this question, of which:

- 31 (54%) said yes
- 26 (46%) said no

Q8

Please use the box below to let us have any views on the capital programme proposals.

There were 33 comments responses, of which, the comments were:

- Capital increase on Swale house should be shelved, waste contract increases seem to be down to very poor management of current contract"
- Although I agree with raising council tax where appropriate and for those who can afford it cutting any services or funding elsewhere is just madness in the current climate. Especially where little is done to address anti social issues and environmental issues! Where are the fines for the water companies polluting this part of Kent and where is the money. Fly tipping fines etc. Better services bring people to the area are you seriously trying to drive people away from this part of Kent??
- As long as we can actually see where the money is going, we're constantly told how much is being spent but nothings improving
- CCTV good, but a deal needs to be made with the likes of Kent Police etc who benefit from this most. No idea what dolphin barge and skatepark is. It's probably not a priority so I'd cut it. Town centre and high streets spending is good. Faversham Creek bridge is a waste of time. Residents should not be paying to install a bridge that lifts so a minority of wealthy people can dock their boats closer to Morrisons. I'm not sure if it's a viable business plan and the campaigns around it seem to be quite selfish. Wouldn't spend it. We shouldn't be paying for a church wall. Church of England or relevant faith groups must fund it. Only historically important features should be supported as a special measure. Swale House. Close it and convert to housing for rent. It's right near the station and could provide a decent income. Move council offices further out of town, into a new economical building that is on cheaper land too. There should be no need for town centre council offices. They could be put to better use. Think of the rental income made from nice apartments right near the station... for London workers. £££. Leisure centres and play equipment. The centres need to be profitable, we are past the need to entertain people now they have online access etc... so they should be making money. Investment is okay as long as it pays for itself. Play equipment should be scaled back, it's expensive and we can't afford it right now. There are plenty of options for kids in 2022. Access Road: Roads are the responsibility of KCC, why are we paying for this? Borrowing levels obviously need to be massively reduced to avoid interest payments. Otherwise everything else seems ok.
- Council owned listed buildings should be included, and proposals developed to refurbish them for community use and income generation for the council. Council needs to start thinking like a private landlord for all the heritage assets owned by them. These assets can generate money for the council. an overview/ framework program should be developed.
- Do not reduce faversham pool budget! It's a very popular pool throughout the year. It's not cheap and people might be reluctant to pay more for the swim. Ensure that the monies are spent and spread evenly across the borough. The recent fiasco for Sheerness and mini golfgate underlines this. Don't try to hide costs by cutting services and expecting residents and volunteer groups to pick up the slack. Support those with continuation of the grants system to help out. This enables those already pressurised groups to be able to provide services and events that the Council can't and or won't.
- I don't have enough detail to comment on the specifics but understand that capital investment is needed to prevent longer-term issues around maintaining assets etc.

- I don't think the Council should spend money on Dolphin Barge Museum and Skatepark, Forstal Community Association, Faversham Creek Basin Regen Project (Swing Bridge), High Streets, Coronation Clock Tower Sheerness, Barton's Point - replacement bridge, Council Chamber IT equipment.
- I don't trust whatever this coalition administration does with money. I wouldn't be at all surprised if they haven't invested in vhs players in every house.com I don't even know why I'm wasting my time filling this in. I don't think for one moment the coalition administration Will believe anything except the answers that they want to hear.
- I think borrowing that much money is unwise but a huge chunk of it is prior year; given the current economic climate, I would be looking to delay as much of this programme as possible for two years and only focus on absolutely essential capital spending
- I think we need to be careful on this and make sure what you spend on brings growth to the local economy not just vanity projects
- i would stop giving out tenancy bonds on behalf of tenants as that must cost the council thousands which is just gifting landlords money as the council don't even get this back!
- Investing in charitable organisations.
- Levelling up - unclear what that means locally. But I think it's just a current fad and is better spent elsewhere.
- moratorium on capital spending to enable recovery
- More charging for Ev's
- Only spend money on the most essential needs.
- Really unhappy that Faversham pool is going to be reduced by £20k. Shortsighted for - health, wellbeing,entertainment of all ages of community & brings in visitors into town who bring footfall into shops etc alongside visit to pool as well as jobs, swimming lessons, leadership training/life guarding. 20% reduction is unfair compared with grant given to them over last 10 years
- Some items in your proposal are essential and others could be cut back.
- Stop wasting huge sun's on white elephants.
- The levelling up scheme needs more explanation, otherwise no particular concerns about the proposals.
- The swing bridge replacement should be completed in Faversham. Also help to upgrade Favershams ageing swimming pools.
- These are fine.
- These proposals seem appropriate and fair under the circumstances
- They are reasonable but review if any are vanity projects
- Unimaginative
- What will the levelling up scheme look like? Is it worthwhile spending all that money on it
- Would not support cuts to voluntary sector funding

Q9

Please use the box below to let us have any views on the savings proposals.

There were 53 responses to this question and the comments received were:

- A reduction or cessation to grants for the voluntary sector could be counter productive, many employ local people, they provide essential services to the local community which could close. Then who would provide services such as transport to

hospital, delivery of meals, support for those with mental health issues, the lonely, disabled and other vulnerable members of your community. By giving voluntary services a small grant they can often access additional grants for their service from trusts and grant giving organisations. How would you manage if we had another crisis such as the COVID pandemic without the voluntary sector who delivered essential food supplies, prescriptions and provided other services you did not have the resources to offer for months during lockdown and afterwards when people were isolating.

- Agree
- All attendants from toilets is fine. So are the grants reduction.
- All fine except of dog waste bins. Also decrease members' travelling and subsistence
- All necessary
- All of the above are short sighted and desk top based ideas. The reality is that if you remove and reduce these, there will be more longterm cost. More litter, damage to toilets . Lack of take up by volunteers of services and events that they provide instead of the Council. Not to mention the political and media backlash.
- All of the above except for members allowances freeze are morally wrong
- All ridiculous and asking for trouble, removal of dog bins means more people just won't bother, the toilets will get vandalised costing even more.
- Any decision to remove grants should be justified against value for money in the long term. How does the current grant level help maintain the built environment within Swale. Can council do it cheaper? will council have the resources to do it. is giving grants the most cost effective way of addressing some of the issues in maintaining a safe environment within Swale? removing attendants is fine from the public toilets, but please ensure adequate CCTV coverage is included to prevent crime. Fully support reduction in cost of member allowances. "
- Councillors salaries and pensions. Trim bloated management. Instead your proposals literally make Swale a darker and, pardon my language, [redacted] place.
- Cut grants, Cut support for parish councils, Parish all the borough, Close public loos are fine
- Cut the members allowances by 50%
- Despite their financial difficulties, the voluntary sector organisations have supported and continue to support the local government during this cost of living crisis. Their contributions during the global pandemic, when the council and other government services were shut down, should not go unnoticed or unrewarded. As a result, SBC's proposed saving of £69k will have a disproportionately negative impact on a sector whose goals are broadly aligned with those of the Council. As the Council is aware, the shared community they both serve is struggling to survive the cost of living crisis, and undermining the sustainability of those in the voluntary sector on the frontlines of support will cause significant harm. This is especially true for organisations like Swale CVS (the only infrastructure organisation in Swale) and Diversity House Centre (which supports over 55 nationalities through an intersectional lens); in order to strengthen these organisations and ensure that they can continue to be forces to be reckoned with alongside and in addition to the Council, the reduction in VCS funding should be waived.
- Disagree with all proposed savings except members' allowances.
- Do away with all the various mayors and all the paraphernalia that goes with that pantomime.
- Do not freeze all but the lowest wages. This is unfair to staff as you know their fuel, housing and food costs have increased

- Do not reduce grants to voluntary sector. Do not reduce dog waste and litter bins because the town is too dirty already.
- Dog bins, fine people who don't clean up after their dogs! Reducing bins won't make a difference!!
- Dog waste should not be reduced. These need to be increased. Others I feel are fine.
- From a CIO point of view and having help from Swale CVS starting up, receiving help with accounts, helping us deliver what we intended as a charity and supporting us with all aspects. I feel these sectors need more support than some items on your proposals. Reducing grant to the voluntary sector and community grants is not a sensible move. These are the people out there helping others especially those within the community.
- I agree with the proposals but I think grants to voluntary sector and community groups should be reduced further and members grants should stop completely.
- I don't think reducing grants to the voluntary sector is sensible as the benefits are often many times the money spent.
- I feel strongly, that reducing the amount in grants to community groups should not take place. These groups are very much needed in the Swale area and will cease to function without them.
- I object to any reductions in the grant to Faversham swimming pool
- I support all of the suggested proposals.
- I volunteer regularly 4 days/week for CA, Age UK, Plastic Free Faversham and Faversham and Villages Refugee Solidarity Group - all registered charities. Reducing grants to the voluntary sector will necessarily increase your statutory duties as these charities will need to make paid staff redundant and refer work back to you. For charities that are completely volunteer run and managed, little if any grant support has been available to us. Instead grants seem to go to festivals, events and administration, rather than addressing the actual needs of vulnerable people and responding to the climate catastrophe. Please do not reduce grants to voluntary sector and community groups.
- In favour
- In responding to this question, we are writing on behalf of Swale Community and Voluntary Services (SCVS). SCVS is the membership body for the voluntary and community sector in Swale, enabling the Swale Community Empowerment Network (SCEN) and supporting the development of a wide range of local projects. In addition, we directly deliver a wide range of services relating to community transport, volunteering, befriending and access to health and employment. We are funded through a variety of sources: over time, our financial model has evolved, so that we are now mainly funded through contracts, user payments and a range of charitable contributions. We are entirely focused on the needs of the community in Swale, and we work closely with many local charities. The budget consultation includes a proposal to reduce grants to voluntary and community sector groups, from £249k per year to £180k. The consultation materials do not identify how these proposed savings will be made, although we understand from Council officers that it is proposed that these will partially be funded through the ending of SCVS's current £15k annual grant. We are grateful to the Council for your openness in informing us of this in good time, and for enabling us to respond. We are very sympathetic to the financial challenges that the Council faces, and we appreciate the balance that the Council is seeking to strike between financial sustainability and the maintenance of the essential services that it provides. In that context, we are pleased to have been able to support the Council in recent years in providing a number of services at lower cost

than the Council would otherwise have been able to deliver, including as part of the response to the Covid-19 pandemic. We also regularly support the Council in facilitating consultation and engagement with the voluntary sector, a service which is otherwise unfunded. We would be interested in exploring alternative funding options with the Council. This might include a service level agreement relationship, through which the Council may fund a specific series of activities, at lower cost and with greater transparency. We would be delighted to discuss this with you. We remain grateful for the excellent relationship we have had with the Council over many years, and we assure you that our commitment to collaboration and partnership working remains, regardless of the outcome of the current consultation. Some of the highlights over the past year include; 3560 Essential medical appointments were carried out for those that are unable to make their own way to the hospital. 223 Organisations across Swale have signed up to the Swale Community Empowerment Network (SCEN) which provides groups and organisations resources and information on a fortnightly basis to help their Charity grow and expand their networks of support.

- member allowances are just extreme and should be reduced a lot more than you are proposing. I don't see how removing dog waste bins is going to help, surely that is just going to increase and encourage flytipping
- my main concern is the reduction in grants to the voluntary sector and community groups. I volunteer for both Citizens Advice and Swale Friends of the Earth and we rely on being able to apply for grants in order to support priority 3 and priority 2 respectively. I'm sure there are other groups that help to support your 4 priorities through these grants.
- No issue with any of the above, except reduction in dog waste bins. People in Swale are already lazy at clearing up after their dog. Any reduction in facilities might result in bags of poo on Swale House doorstep and I wouldn't blame them!
- No view
- Please don't remove dog waste bins as it is likely to result in more waste on the street.
- Parish footway lighting - sounds feasible but will be unpopular - I don't live in an area likely to be affected.
- Removing voluntary group AND discretionary grants may be necessary, but would need to be made clear to residents that this is not a desirable option. Attendants in public toilets. I would agree, but don't use them so don't know if they have been beneficial. Member allowance freeze. Agreed. This would demonstrate solidarity with their voters.
- Reduce grants to £150,000, Yes, remove discretionary grants. We're not a lottery fund. Footway lighting: if the area has potentially high crime rates, then it may be sensible to retain some funding. However, seems like a good move. Public Toilets: Unsure if these are for cleaning. If so, why is it costing so much in the first place. Review needed. Bins: Never understood why dog waste can't go in normal bins, unless you sell it to support bio growth on farms etc. Ideally busy areas such as town centres need more bins. Bin collections should be completed by the same teams who collect household waste bins and they should be done on route. Member Allowances: rates for members are pretty low, encouraging only retired people to stand for election and not bringing about diversity of thought in the councils leadership. You can't live from a members allowance and that means less time is spent working for residents. I would disagree with reductions.
- Reduce lighting and grants to voluntary sector

- Reducing grants to charitable organisations is extremely worrying for those people who need help and can't receive this from council sources. Improving collaborative working in the sector could help improve access to residents and redistribute the costs that these organisation could provide. Many in the sector help to support council services and reducing the grants would reduce the help they can provide at a time when this is desperately needed in the community and would increase pressure on the council's staff who are already overstretched and based on current proposals also looking to reduce their available working hours.
- Reducing litter bins will be counter productive and result in more litter that needs picking up by manual labour.
- reducing support for Parish Councils further exacerbates the divide between rural services and those within the Towns where the bulk of Council services are already concentrated, a fairer, more equitable share of the Council services must be provided for all Council tax payers. Dog fouling and littering is already at unacceptable levels so reducing the number of bins, particularly in the under resourced, under patrolled rural areas will on exacerbate this issue and the health concerns associated with it. It seems appropriate to freeze allowances for members to bring these in line with other public services constraints.
- Reduction of public toilet attendants is not great as this could lead to mis use and dirtier toilets. The district suffers badly from litter and dog waste and so bins should be increased to reduce the ad hoc clean up calls.
- Shocking, you should be ashamed these are my thoughts on your saving proposals in a time local residents are struggling enough!
- Shocking. The real question is how our council has ended up in this mess despite having an experienced chief executive and management team
- some of these are minor and can be found elsewhere
- Stop giving councillors thousands of pounds for them to distribute on vanity projects. The money should go back to being centralised and spent more wisely. Reduce member allowances.
- The council bins are poorly emptied, causing additional litter as a result, but any reduction in the number of bins the council supplies would also add to the litter and dog waste, and be counter productive. Don't reduce the amount of litter and dog waste bins.
- The Parish councils are wasting money constantly like a bandstand that no one uses. As mentioned please do not remove funding from SCVS without their support I would be off sick and not earning and therefore unable to pay the council tax . I use their support to get to and from hospitals after I lost my license through ill health. I can not get to Canterbury or William Harvey Hospital without their support. My last appointment was in Margate . And my last interaction was the panto and what a delight to see the children engaged. Learning and to be aspired so we don't end up with paying for additional support or prison at a later date. Actual prosecute dog fouling. Get rid of Parish councils. if you remove public toilet attendants then you will have to close the toilets or they will be disgusting. We are a tourist area toilets are needed. Removing bins ??? more rubbish on the road side. Freeze all allowances .
- The reduction in grants to the voluntary sector and community groups, as well as the small discretionary grants, would prove to be highly detrimental to the population of Swale, in both the immediate and long term. In 2019, 14.9% of the population of Swale were income deprived, and the impact of Covid, along with the current cost of living crisis would only have increase the number of people that are income deprived. This equates to 21 of the 85 neighbourhoods in Swale being in the 20 percent most

income deprived nationally, with the majority of these being on the Isle of Sheppey. For those living among these neighbourhoods, the voluntary and community sector provide an invaluable contribution to their standard of living, including supporting people with housing, food parcels, and community activities, to name a few. There are particularly relevant on the Isle of Sheppey, where system funded resource is sparse. The Covid response provided by the voluntary and community sector only further evidences the need for such organisations to remain funded. The voluntary and community sector are able to adapt quickly to demand, and have shown themselves indispensable in the face of adversity for the population. The Voluntary and Community Sector are also the closest to people within communities, and are already working alongside system partners to support bottom-up decision making for the communities around them as part of system wide transformation. Reducing, or removing, funding from these groups will prevent this work from taking place, and reduce the huge impact that this would have on the local population. This may initially be unseen, but will have a huge knock-on effect, that will cost far more to address in future years. It is therefore recommended that the funding for this area is not reduced or removed.

- The street lighting and bins cut backs would have a very negative effect. More risk of serious crimes being committed and vulnerable people feeling more isolated. More litter and dog waste being dumped adding to pest infestation and smell.
- The voluntary and community sector are experiencing financial hardship too and the relatively small proposed saving of £69k to SBC, could have a disproportionately negative impact on a sector whose aims are largely aligned with those of the council. As the council will know, the shared community they both serve are trying to survive a cost of living crisis and undermining the sustainability of those in the VCS on the frontline of support, could do much harm. This is particularly the case for organisations such as Swale CVS who have a key role in supporting the sustainability of the sector with infrastructure services, volunteers and more. At a time like this the council should be increasing the investment it makes in organisations like Swale CVS to strengthen the sector and ensure it can continue to be an effective force alongside and in addition to the council.
- Would not support cuts to voluntary sector grants. In particular the grant to Swale CVS who provide an excellent service to the community
- You should remove as many council employees as possible they are all lazy.

Directly submitted responses

Ospringe Parish Council:

I had hoped to be able to speak to you briefly at the recent KALC SAC meeting. Ospringe Parish Council is very concerned at the proposal to cut the lighting grant – it will have severe consequences for our finances given the costs incurred by the council in providing and maintaining its street lighting. We were alerted to the possibility of the cut by a letter from Lisa Fillery dated 24 November 2022. This stated that “the draft budget will be open for consultation following the committee meeting [on 30 November]” but gave no further information.

So I am clear, can you please let me know what form that consultation takes (or took); when the consultation period expires (or expired) and how the details of the consultation have been publicised. Is there detailed data available showing the saving which would be made by cutting the grant, broken down into each parish, and the percentage saving on the overall budget?

I have seen or heard various suggestions as to how parishes may deal with a cut in their lighting grant. These include turning off the lights or getting KCC to take over responsibility. Neither of these is workable. Moreover, any further cut in the lighting grant (from the capping already undertaken some years ago) will result in double taxation for those parishes who have responsibility for street lighting versus those whose lighting costs are the responsibility of a third party. I would also further add that parishes (including Ospringe) are facing huge increases in their lighting costs with inflation of energy costs, standing charges, and maintenance/repair costs, such that any cut in the grant would result in a double detriment – another point which I hope can be passed on along with the other points.

Faversham Pools

Thank you for inviting us to comment on the proposed cut to our annual grant from £100,000 to £80,000.

We understand the financial challenges facing Swale in respect of the cuts in government funding, the continued capping of Council Tax and the various spending pressures facing the Council.

We are also grateful for the support Swale has given us both as freeholder and as our main grant funder. The current annual grant comprises 12.5% of our operating costs and has in the past helped us to provide an affordable swimming experience for our users. Swale also provided us with significant help during the Covid lockdowns and was instrumental in us coming out of the crisis in reasonable shape.

It is worth noting that a reduction of £20,000 reduces the grant back to its 2009/10 level. Of course in that time, inflation has eroded the real value of the grant, and the proposed grant for 2023/24 is equivalent to just over £50,000 at 2009/10 values. We would argue that over the years we have absorbed the impact of inflation.

Going forward we have a number of cost pressures facing us.

These include:

- The impact of the National Minimum Wage which has increased by 9.7% and which we support.
- Energy and chemical price increases.
- The need for significant capital investment in the pools following the commissioning of a condition survey.

On this final point when compared to the Sittingbourne and Sheppey pools, the Faversham pools have been starved of capital investment since the indoor pool was built in 1993.

The reduction of £20,000 will mean that we will have to review our opening times and our prices. We are reluctant to increase ticket prices at a time when many households are facing severe financial pressures and it would be very disappointing to be forced to reduce what we offer to the swimming community in the Faversham area. Our prices are already comparable to other Kent pools. Perhaps most significantly the reduction will reduce our ability to raise capital investment for our rapidly ageing pools.

Whilst we are very sympathetic to the financial situation Swale finds itself in, this reduction and the implied threat of further reductions when, as stated in the budget report, Swale's reserves are extinguished in 2025, severely reduces the ability of the trustees to offer Faversham and its surrounding areas a pool fit for purpose.

We strongly urge you to reconsider the proposed cut in our grant.

Lynsted with Kingsdown Parish Council

I refer to your letter dated 24 November addressed to the Parish Clerk, in which you state that your draft budget includes a proposal to reduce our footway lighting grant in 2023/24 and 2024/25 by 50% - and scrap it altogether after that.

We object strongly to this proposal.

We are responsible for the running and maintenance of over 40 street lights in our Parish.

As you will know, the price of electricity is rocketing. This is no time to be axing our lighting grant.

We are already budgeting for a loss in 2023/24 of around £3,500. We have less than £11,000 in our reserve account.

The reduction and subsequent removal of the lighting grant would place the Parish Council in a precarious financial position.

This year, street lights will account for 47% of our precept. In addition to regular maintenance, tree pruning and electricity costs, we have had to fund numerous repairs - mainly as a result of vandalism.

Without the grant from Swale Council, we may have no alternative but to decommission all the lights. It is not technically possible to turn off some but not others - it's all or nothing.

Plunging the Parish into darkness would have a serious impact on the safety of residents - particularly on the sections of road where there is no footpath for pedestrians.

We would urge Swale Council not to proceed with this proposal.

Citizens Advice Swale

We at Citizens Advice Swale are very aware of the challenges local authorities are facing at the present time in maintaining and funding services for the local community. We therefore understand the wish to review grants to local community and voluntary groups in the current budget consultation.

In response, we have prepared a paper which is attached to this email to remind Members of some of the work we do and its impact for Swale residents – and some of the wider considerations that a significant cut in our core funding may have.

One of these, we would like to expand on in this covering email.

We deliver services that are directly possible because of our Swale BC funding – for example, our generalist advice provided by our extensive team of volunteers. The core funding helps substantially to cover recruitment, training, equipment, premises, quality assurance and management costs. We also locally offer specialist welfare benefits advice solely supported by this funding, in conjunction with an award by Faversham Town Council.

However, we also provide services that are funded by a variety of other means – which can easily involve in the region of eight or ten additional channels in a typical year. These allow us to (for example) provide specialist debt advice locally, help people build financial capability skills, operate our telephone and online advice routes, offer energy awareness support, help clients with mental health considerations, provide on-site support to Foodbank

clients, distribute food and fuel vouchers, develop partnerships and provide referral channels to other agencies.

None of this work is possible without an infrastructure capable of identifying sources and making funding bids, organizing staff and/or volunteers, creating materials and access routes for advisers and clients, reporting back to funders. It is therefore clear that any cut in our core funding can dramatically affect our ability to bring in the full range of services we currently offer in Swale – it is not a simple “x reduction in funding = x reduction in services” equation. We ask decision-makers to bear this in mind when considering any grant award to us in 2023-24 and beyond.

We will continue to provide elected Members with data about their own Ward while we are able to do so, and will follow up this communication with further information over the next few weeks while budget decisions are being finalized in the belief that Members are keen to support their local community and that the value of services provided by Citizens Advice Swale makes a solid case to retain the core grant we receive at its current rate.

We are very happy to discuss any aspects of our work with individuals or groups of Members, and remain continually grateful for the support we receive through Swale Borough Council to allow us to carry on our work for the community.

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	2022/23			2023/24			Comment 2023/24	Increase
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge		
	£	£	£	£	£	£		
Housing Services (C Hudson)								
Home Inspection for Immigration Application Fee								
Requests received to inspect and provide report on suitability of proposed home in connection with immigration applications	126.10	25.20	151.30	139.00	27.80	166.80	The charges reflect officer and the inflationary increase. This is a discretionary service that we offer in line with most other authorities, there is little demand for the service, but it is competitively priced to provide a service for residents who may wish to get independent confirmation of their property's fitness for the immigration authorities.	10.24%
Staying Put Handyperson Rates								
Hourly rate for a handyperson	13.50	2.70	16.20	13.50	2.70	16.20	Need to maintain current fee as costs were agreed in contract with Kent County Council (KCC) supporting people	0.00%
Subsidised hourly rate for a handyperson – client in receipt of benefits	5.00	1.00	6.00	5.00	1.00	6.00	As above	0.00%
Private disabled works (household not eligible for Disabled Facilities Grant)	150.00	0.00	150.00	150.00	0.00	150.00	No price increase. The Council does not undertake much private work due to time available. Rate remains the same to offer vulnerable clients an affordable service.	0.00%
Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) fee (statutory % charge)	12.50%			12.50%			The rate is charged as part of the Disabled Facility Grant where Staying Put act in their capacity as the home improvement agency for the client. The rate is the same as other agencies in Kent, the client is free to choose other agencies if they wish; this keeps us competitive and funds the service.	
Alleygate Key								
Fee	17.92	3.58	21.50	18.33	3.67	22.00	Slight price increase as key price increase. Reimbursement of costs rounded to nearest £	2.31%
Town Centre Licence								
Licence for large events of 10,000 people or more	500.00	0.00	500.00	550.00	0.00	550.00	Inflationary increase	10.00%
Planning (F Churchill)								
Planning Performance Agreements (PPA)								

	2022/23			2023/24			Comment 2023/24	Increase
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge		
	£	£	£	£	£	£		
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:								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •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 								New charge
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.								
Pre Application Advice - Meetings								
Very large major	2916.67	583.33	3,500.00	3250.00	650.00	3,900.00	Increased charge	11.43%
Major	2083.33	416.67	2,500.00	2300.00	460.00	2,760.00	Increased charge	10.40%
Minor	458.33	91.67	550.00	505.00	101.00	606.00	Increased charge	10.18%
Other (excluding householders and listed buildings)	137.50	27.50	165.00	152.00	30.40	182.40	Increased charge	10.55%
Charities, voluntary groups and parish councils	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	No change	0.00%
Works/repairs to listed buildings	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	No change	0.00%
Pre Application Advice - Letters								
Very large major	916.67	183.33	1,100.00	1010.00	202.00	1,212.00	Increased charge	10.18%
Major	458.33	91.67	550.00	505.00	101.00	606.00	Increased charge	10.18%
Minor	229.17	45.83	275.00	253.00	50.60	303.60	Increased charge	10.40%
Other (excluding householders and listed buildings)	68.75	13.75	82.50	76.00	15.20	91.20	Increased charge	10.55%
Householder	45.83	9.17	55.00	51.00	10.20	61.20	Increased charge	11.27%
Charities, voluntary groups and parish councils	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	No change	0.00%
Works/repairs to listed buildings	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	No change	0.00%
Very large major: over 200 dwellings or 4 hectares. Commercial over 10,000m ² or 2 hectares								
Major: 10-199 dwellings or less than 4 hectares. Commercial 1,000m ² - 9,999m ² or less than 2 hectares								
Minor: 1-9 dwellings or less than 0.5 hectares. Commercial less than 1,000m ² or 1 hectare								
Complaints made under the High Hedges Legislation								
Standard fee	565.00	0.00	565.00	565.00	0.00	565.00	No change	0.00%

	2022/23			2023/24			Comment 2023/24	Increase
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge		
	£	£	£	£	£	£		
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.								
Planning Photocopying Charges								
	Charges per page			Charges per page				
A4 Black/white	0.17	0.03	0.20	0.20	0.04	0.24	Increased charge	20.00%
A3 Black/white	0.25	0.05	0.30	0.30	0.06	0.36	Increased charge	20.00%
A2 Or larger	3.33	0.67	4.00	4.00	0.80	4.80	Increased charge	20.00%
A4 Colour	1.67	0.33	2.00	2.00	0.40	2.40	Increased charge	20.00%
A3 Colour	2.50	0.50	3.00	3.00	0.60	3.60	Increased charge	20.00%
Local Land Charges								
Official Searches								
LLC1 only	42.00	0.00	42.00	15.00	0.00	15.00	Reduced charge	-64.29%
LLC1 only - additional parcel	12.00	0.00	12.00	4.80	0.00	4.80	Reduced charge	-60.00%
Con 29	102.50	20.50	123.00	136.67	27.33	164.00	Increased charge	33.34%
Con 29 - additional parcel	17.50	3.50	21.00	20.00	4.00	24.00	Increased charge	14.29%
Standard search (LLC1 & Con29)	144.50	20.50*	165.00	151.67	27.33*	179.00	Increased charge	8.48%
Standard search (LLC1 & Con29) - additional parcel	29.50	3.50*	33.00	24.80	4.00*	28.80	Reduced charge	-12.73%
Part II enquiry - Con29 questions 4-21	13.00	2.60	15.60	13.50	2.70	16.20	Increased charge	3.85%
Part II enquiry - Con29 question 22	25.00	5.00	30.00	25.00	5.00	30.00	No change	0.00%
Additional questions	19.50	3.90	23.40	19.00	3.80	22.80	Reduced charge	-2.56%
*VAT applicable only to the Con29 part of the charge.								
Personal Searches								
Enhanced Personal Search	15.00	0.00	15.00	0.00	0.00	0.00		-100.00%
1.1 (a-l) (Planning)	6.50	1.30	7.80	7.00	1.40	8.40	Increased charge	7.69%
1.1 (J, K, L) (Building Regulations)	6.50	1.30	7.80	7.00	1.40	8.40	Increased charge	7.69%
2.1 (b-d)	5.25	1.05	6.30	3.50	0.70	4.20	Reduced charge	-33.33%
3.1 Land for public purpose	3.25	0.65	3.90	3.50	0.70	4.20	Increased charge	7.69%
3.3 Drainage matters	3.25	0.65	3.90	3.50	0.70	4.20	Increased charge	7.69%
3.5 Railway schemes	3.25	0.65	3.90	3.50	0.70	4.20	Increased charge	7.69%
3.7 Outstanding Notices	10.00	2.00	12.00	10.00	2.00	12.00	No change	0.00%
3.8 Building Regulations Contravention	3.25	0.65	3.90	3.50	0.70	4.20	Increased charge	7.69%

	2022/23			2023/24			Comment 2023/24	Increase
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge		
	£	£	£	£	£	£		
3.9 Enforcement	6.50	1.30	7.80	7.00	1.40	8.40	Increased charge	7.69%
3.10 CILs	4.50	0.90	5.40	4.75	0.95	5.70	Increased charge	5.56%
3.12 Compulsory purchase	3.25	0.65	3.90	3.50	0.70	4.20	Increased charge	7.69%
3.13b Contaminated land	3.25	0.65	3.90	3.50	0.70	4.20	Increased charge	7.69%
3.13c Contaminated land	3.25	0.65	3.90	3.50	0.70	4.20	Increased charge	7.69%
Environment and Leisure								
(M Cassell)								
Car Parks and Season Tickets								
All Swale Borough Council car parks are free to use between midnight and 6am Monday to Sunday								
Short Stay Covering								
Faversham: Central car park (season tickets for business only), Institute Road car park (no season tickets)								
Sittingbourne: Albany Road, Central Avenue, Crown Quay Lane, The Forum, The Swallows, Swale House (weekends only), The Forum (business only), Station Street (up to 2 hours only)								
Sheerness (no season tickets): Rose Street (including land adjacent to Wood Street), Trinity Place, Beachfields								
Up to 30 minutes	0.50	0.10	0.60	0.54	0.11	0.65	Increased charge	8.00%
Up to 1 hour	1.00	0.20	1.20	1.08	0.22	1.30	Increased charge	8.00%
Up to 2 hours	2.00	0.40	2.40	2.17	0.43	2.60	Increased charge	8.50%
Up to 4 hours	4.00	0.80	4.80	4.33	0.87	5.20	Increased charge	8.25%
Season per quarter (for business only Central car park, Faversham/ Forum, Sittingbourne)	200.83	40.17	241.00	220.00	44.00	264.00	Increased charge	9.55%
Electric vehicle parking/charging per kilowatt hour (kWh)	0.21	0.04	0.25	variable	variable	variable	Increased charge to 15p above the energy supplier rate per kWh (reviewed and adjusted monthly)	
Sittingbourne: East Street car park, Albany Service Road car park								
Maximum stay 1 hour (cashless transactions only)	1.00	0.20	1.20	1.08	0.22	1.30	Increased charge	8.00%
Bourne Place Multi-Storey Car Park								
The charge is for ALL parking bays including disabled and parent/child bays between the hours of 6am and midnight.								
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								
Up to 30 minutes	0.50	0.10	0.60	0.54	0.11	0.65	Increased charge	8.00%
Up to 1 hour	1.00	0.20	1.20	1.08	0.22	1.30	Increased charge	8.00%
Up to 2 hours	2.00	0.40	2.40	2.17	0.43	2.60	Increased charge	8.50%
Up to 3 hours	3.00	0.60	3.60	3.25	0.65	3.90	Increased charge	8.33%

	2022/23			2023/24			Comment 2023/24	Increase
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge		
	£	£	£	£	£	£		
Up to 4 hours	4.00	0.80	4.80	4.33	0.87	5.20	Increased charge	8.25%
Up to 5 hours	5.00	1.00	6.00	5.42	1.08	6.50	Increased charge	8.40%
Up to a maximum of 6 hours	6.00	1.20	7.20	6.50	1.30	7.80	Increased charge	8.33%
Over 6 hours (within 24 hour period)	7.00	1.40	8.40	7.58	1.52	9.10	Increased charge	8.29%
Lost ticket	7.00	1.40	8.40	7.58	1.52	9.10	Increased charge	8.29%
Season ticket per quarter (subject to a maximum capacity)	200.83	40.17	241.00	220.00	44.00	264.00	Increased charge	9.55%
Travelodge (Preferential rate for hotel guests (for 24 hours))	2.50	0.50	3.00	2.50	0.50	3.00	No change	0.00%
Long Stay Covering								
Faversham: Partridge Lane, Queens Hall								
Sittingbourne: Spring Street, Bell Road, Cockleshell Walk								
Sheerness: Albion Place, Beach Street, Bridge Road, Cross Street, Trinity Road								
Up to 30 minutes	0.50	0.10	0.60	0.54	0.11	0.65	Increased charge	8.00%
Up to 1 hour	1.00	0.20	1.20	1.08	0.22	1.30	Increased charge	8.00%
Up to 2 hours	2.00	0.40	2.40	2.17	0.43	2.60	Increased charge	8.50%
Up to 4 hours	4.00	0.80	4.80	4.33	0.87	5.20	Increased charge	8.25%
Over 4 hours	5.00	1.00	6.00	5.50	1.10	6.60	Increased charge	10.00%
Season per month (long stay car park)	75.00	15.00	90.00	82.50	16.50	99.00	Increased charge	10.00%
Season per quarter (long stay car park)	200.83	40.17	241.00	220.00	44.00	264.00	Increased charge	9.55%
Leysdown: Promenade (seasonal) (all day between 1 March and 31 October)								
Up to 1 hour	1.00	0.20	1.20	1.08	0.22	1.30	Increased charge	8.00%
Up to 2 hours	2.00	0.40	2.40	2.17	0.43	2.60	Increased charge	8.50%
Up to 4 hours	4.00	0.80	4.80	4.33	0.87	5.20	Increased charge	8.25%
All day	5.00	1.00	6.00	5.50	1.10	6.60	Increased charge	10.00%
Motorcycles	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	No change	0.00%
Season tickets (to be used at any long stay car park throughout the Borough - excluding Bourne Place)								
Season per quarter	213.33	42.67	256.00	234.17	46.83	281.00	Increased charge	9.77%
Replacement for lost, stolen or destroyed season tickets	8.33	1.67	10.00	9.17	1.83	11.00	Increased charge	10.08%
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				

	2022/23			2023/24			Comment 2023/24	Increase
	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	17.08	3.42	20.50	18.75	3.75	22.50	Increased charge	9.78%
Sheerness: Delamark Road car park (residents only)								
Per quarter	12.92	2.58	15.50	14.17	2.83	17.00	Increased charge	9.67%
Residents' Parking Permits (on street)								
Per annum	45.00	0.00	45.00	45.00	0.00	45.00	Income controlled under Section 55 RTRA 1984 change proposed	No 0.00%
Visitors permit book (10 days) - for resident permit holders only	11.00	0.00	11.00	11.00	0.00	11.00	Income controlled under Section 55 RTRA 1984 change proposed	No 0.00%
Visitors parking permits (per day) - for resident permit holders only	1.10	0.00	1.10	1.10	0.00	1.10	Income controlled under Section 55 RTRA 1984 change proposed	No 0.00%
Hourly scratchcards (per hour) - for all others	1.10	0.00	1.10	1.10	0.00	1.10	Income controlled under Section 55 RTRA 1984 change proposed	No 0.00%
Hourly scratchcards (per book of 10 hours) - for all others	10.00	0.00	10.00	10.00	0.00	10.00	Income controlled under Section 55 RTRA 1984 change proposed	No 0.00%
Business per annum	45.00	0.00	45.00	45.00	0.00	45.00	Income controlled under Section 55 RTRA 1984 change proposed	No 0.00%
Nativity Close (exemption permit concession admin fee)	30.00	0.00	30.00	30.00	0.00	30.00	Income controlled under Section 55 RTRA 1984 change proposed	No 0.00%
Residents/Business/Exemption permit concessions. Replacement permit for lost, stolen or destroyed permits	10.00	0.00	10.00	10.00	0.00	10.00	Income controlled under Section 55 RTRA 1984 change proposed	No 0.00%
Dispensation / Waivers								
Maximum 1 day	12.00	0.00	12.00	12.00	0.00	12.00	Income controlled under Section 55 RTRA 1984 change proposed	No 0.00%
Maximum 1 week	36.00	0.00	36.00	36.00	0.00	36.00	Income controlled under Section 55 RTRA 1984 change proposed	No 0.00%
Maximum 2 weeks	45.00	0.00	45.00	45.00	0.00	45.00	Income controlled under Section 55 RTRA 1984 change proposed	No 0.00%
Maximum 1 month	60.00	0.00	60.00	60.00	0.00	60.00	Income controlled under Section 55 RTRA 1984 change proposed	No 0.00%
Over 1 month (to a maximum of 3 months) - per month (or part month)	50.00	0.00	50.00	50.00	0.00	50.00	Income controlled under Section 55 RTRA 1984 change proposed	No 0.00%
Suspension admin fee	100.00	0.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	Income controlled under Section 55 RTRA 1984 change proposed	No 0.00%
Sports Facilities								

	2022/23			2023/24			Comment 2023/24	Increase
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge		
	£	£	£	£	£	£		
With changing facilities and showers								
- Senior	64.58	12.92	77.50	71.50	14.30	85.80	Added inflation and rounded up/down	10.72%
- Under 18s	21.50	4.30	25.80	23.70	4.74	28.44	Added inflation and rounded up/down	10.23%
- Under 16s & mini soccer	16.17	3.23	19.40	17.80	3.56	21.36	Added inflation and rounded up/down	10.08%
With changing facilities only								
- Senior	53.75	10.75	64.50	59.20	11.84	71.04	Added inflation and rounded up/down	10.14%
- Under 18s	17.92	3.58	21.50	19.80	3.96	23.76	Added inflation and rounded up/down	10.49%
- Under 16s & mini soccer	15.08	3.02	18.10	16.70	3.34	20.04	Added inflation and rounded up/down	10.74%
With no facilities								
- Senior	36.75	7.35	44.10	40.50	8.10	48.60	Added inflation and rounded up/down	10.20%
- Under 18s	16.00	3.20	19.20	17.70	3.54	21.24	Added inflation and rounded up/down	10.63%
- Under 16s & mini soccer	9.83	1.97	11.80	10.90	2.18	13.08	Added inflation and rounded up/down	10.89%

If your booking meets all of the rules below, you can choose to save money

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 lanes), as long as these are at the same location.

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 booking). The length of the bookings may be different on different dates. There is no exception for gaps greater than 14 days if the facility is closed for any reason (such as the Christmas period).

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 not the right to use the facility for any specific booking is actually exercised. Provision for a refund given by the provider in the event of the unforeseen non-availability of their facility would not affect this condition.

The facilities are booked out to a school, club, association or an organisation representing affiliated clubs or constituent associations, such as a local league.

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.

	2022/23			2023/24			Comment 2023/24	Increase
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge		
	£	£	£	£	£	£		
Allotments								
Plots of 10 rods & pro rata	45.20	0.00	45.20	65.00	0.00	65.00	Medway £63.25, Maidstone £75.00, Canterbury £86.00	43.81%
Plots of 10 rods & pro rata (OAPs/Disabled)	22.60	0.00	22.60	32.50	0.00	32.50	Pro rated from Full price at 50%	43.81%
King George's Pavilion								
Main hall/tea room (hourly rate) (minimum hire 1 hour)								
Mon-Sun (9am-midnight)	10.30	0.00	10.30	11.40	0.00	11.40	Added inflation and rounded up/down	10.68%
Playgroups (per morning)	25.80	0.00	25.80	28.50	0.00	28.50	Added inflation and rounded up/down	10.47%
Tea room – for children's parties only (per hour) minimum 1 hour hire	8.30	0.00	8.30	9.20	0.00	9.20	Added inflation and rounded up/down	10.84%
Caretaking services – set up and clear away: standard tables and/or chairs	6.20	0.00	6.20	6.90	0.00	6.90	Added inflation and rounded up/down	11.29%
Refundable deposits	150.00	0.00	150.00	165.00	0.00	165.00	Added inflation and rounded up/down	10.00%
Bank Holidays, New Year's Eve	Double the standard rate		Double the standard rate					
Cemeteries Burial Fees								
<i>Includes Exclusive Right of Burial for 50 years, Interment, Memorial & Re-inscription Permits</i>								
1 st Burial Sittingbourne, Faversham & Murston	1982.00	0.00	1,982.00	2500.00	0.00	2,500.00	Review of local LA prices undertaken	26.14%
1 st Burial Sheppey and Iwade	1817.00	0.00	1,817.00	2290.00	0.00	2,290.00	Review of local LA prices undertaken.	26.03%
1 st Burial if no use of previously purchased grave Sittingbourne, Faversham & Murston	982.00	0.00	982.00	1240.00	0.00	1,240.00	Review of local LA prices undertaken	26.27%
1 st Burial if no use of previously purchased grave Sheppey	816.00	0.00	816.00	1000.00	0.00	1,000.00	Review of local LA prices undertaken	22.55%
2 nd Burial Sittingbourne, Faversham & Murston	816.00	0.00	816.00	1000.00	0.00	1,000.00	Review of local LA prices undertaken	22.55%
2 nd Burial Sheppey and Iwade	675.00	0.00	675.00	825.00	0.00	825.00	Review of local LA prices undertaken	22.22%
3 rd Burial Sittingbourne, Faversham & Murston	675.00	0.00	675.00	825.00	0.00	825.00	Review of local LA prices undertaken	22.22%
Extended right of burial extension – 10 years	200.00	0.00	200.00	250.00	0.00	250.00	Review of local LA prices undertaken	25.00%
Extended right of burial extension – 20 years	400.00	0.00	400.00	500.00	0.00	500.00	Review of local LA prices undertaken	25.00%
Extended right of burial extension – 30 years	600.00	0.00	600.00	750.00	0.00	750.00	Review of local LA prices undertaken	25.00%
Extended right of burial extension – 40 years	800.00	0.00	800.00	1000.00	0.00	1,000.00	Review of local LA prices undertaken	25.00%
Cremated Remains (all sites)								
<i>(includes Exclusive Rights to Burial for 50 years, Interment, Memorial & Re-inscription Permit)</i>								
1 st Burial	608.80	0.00	608.80	669.70	0.00	669.70	Review of local LA prices undertaken	10.00%

	2022/23			2023/24			Comment 2023/24	Increase
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge		
	£	£	£	£	£	£		
1 st Burial (where no use has been made of previously purchased grave)	221.40	0.00	221.40	245.00	0.00	245.00	Review of local LA prices undertaken	10.66%
2 nd Burial	221.40	0.00	221.40	245.00	0.00	245.00	Review of local LA prices undertaken	10.66%
3 rd Burial	221.40	0.00	221.40	245.00	0.00	245.00	Review of local LA prices undertaken	10.66%
4 th Burial	221.40	0.00	221.40	245.00	0.00	245.00	Review of local LA prices undertaken	10.66%
Burial of loose ashes	102.50	0.00	102.50	125.00	0.00	125.00	Review of local LA prices undertaken	21.95%
Extended right of burial extension – 10 years	77.50	0.00	77.50	86.00	0.00	86.00	Review of local LA prices undertaken	10.97%
Extended right of burial extension – 20 years	155.00	0.00	155.00	170.50	0.00	170.50	Review of local LA prices undertaken	10.00%
Extended right of burial extension – 30 years	232.40	0.00	232.40	256.00	0.00	256.00	Review of local LA prices undertaken	10.15%
Extended right of burial extension – 40 years	309.90	0.00	309.90	340.90	0.00	340.90	Review of local LA prices undertaken	10.00%
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	63.60	0.00	63.60	70.00	0.00	70.00	Review of local LA prices undertaken	10.06%
Use of chapel in Sittingbourne	89.10	0.00	89.10	98.00	0.00	98.00	Review of local LA prices undertaken	9.99%
Use of chapel in Faversham	120.90	0.00	120.90	133.00	0.00	133.00	Review of local LA prices undertaken	10.01%
Turfed grave	At cost			At cost				
Transfer of deed ownership	63.50	0.00	63.50	69.80	0.00	69.80	Review of local LA prices undertaken	9.92%
Record search & certificate (each grave)	31.70	0.00	31.70	34.90	0.00	34.90	Review of local LA prices undertaken	10.09%
Extra cost of large coffin or casket (measuring 30 inches or more)	164.00	0.00	164.00	180.40	0.00	180.40	Review of local LA prices undertaken	10.00%
Exhumation of coffin	1640.00	0.00	1,640.00	2500.00	0.00	2,500.00	Review of local LA prices undertaken	52.44%
Exhumation of cremated remains	304.40	0.00	304.40	335.00	0.00	335.00	Review of local LA prices undertaken	10.05%
Other services (vatable)	At cost			At cost				
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	675.00	135.00	810.00	900.00	180.00	1,080.00	Proposed increase	33.33%
Memorial bench with concrete installation	854.17	170.83	1,025.00	1130.00	226.00	1,356.00	Proposed increase	32.29%
Travelling Fairs								
Pitch premium for days open to the public only (per day)	930.00	0.00	930.00	1023.00	0.00	1,023.00	Added inflation and rounded up/down.	10.00%
Pitch premium for days open to the public only (per day) Local Operator	310.00	0.00	310.00	341.00	0.00	341.00	Added inflation and rounded up/down	10.00%

	2022/23			2023/24			Comment 2023/24	Increase
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge		
	£	£	£	£	£	£		
Use of Council Land – Travelling Fairs								
On site fee payable whether or not open to the public (including arrival and departure days)	60.00	0.00	60.00	66.00	0.00	66.00	Added inflation and rounded up/down	10.00%
On site fee payable whether or not open to the public (including arrival and departure days) Local Operator	20.00	0.00	20.00	22.00	0.00	22.00	Added inflation and rounded up/down	10.00%
Refundable deposit	615.00	0.00	615.00	676.50	0.00	676.50	Added inflation and rounded up/down	10.00%
Use of Council Land – Travelling Shows								
On site fee for days open to the public	206.20	0.00	206.20	226.90	0.00	226.90	Added inflation and rounded up/down	10.04%
On site fee payable when not open to the public (including arrival and departure days)	59.30	0.00	59.30	65.30	0.00	65.30	Added inflation and rounded up/down	10.12%
Refundable deposit	615.00	0.00	615.00	676.50	0.00	676.50	Added inflation and rounded up/down	10.00%
Use of Council Land – Events								
On site fee for small commercial events – day usage of open space	210.00	0.00	210.00	231.00	0.00	231.00	Added inflation and rounded up/down.	10.00%
On site fee for large commercial events – day usage of open space	Price on Application			Price on Application				
On site fee for enthusiast event – day usage of open space	105.00	0.00	105.00	115.50	0.00	115.50	Added inflation and rounded up/down	10.00%
On site fee for community/voluntary event – day usage of open space	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	Added inflation and rounded up/down	
Refundable deposit	205.00	0.00	205.00	225.50	0.00	225.50	Added inflation and rounded up/down	10.00%
Beach Hut Charges								
Locations now at Minster Leas and Leysdown								
Ground rental – beach hut owned	415.00	0.00	415.00	498.00	0.00	498.00	Increased charge	20.00%
Annual rental	1108.50	221.70	1,330.20	1219.30	243.86	1,463.16	Added inflation and rounded up/down	10.00%
Weekly rental	80.00	16.00	96.00	88.00	17.60	105.60	Added inflation and rounded up/down	10.00%
Refundable keys deposit	25.00	0.00	25.00	25.00	0.00	25.00	No need to increase	0.00%
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				
Purchase of beach hut	Market price			Market price			Currently circa 13k	
Access Over Open Space Licence								
Used for residential properties requiring access over our land to undertake works/deliveries etc.								
Standard fee	67.00	0.00	67.00	73.70	0.00	73.70	Added inflation and rounded up/down	10.00%
Traffic Regulation Order Applications								

	2022/23			2023/24			Comment 2023/24	Increase
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge		
	£	£	£	£	£	£		
On application (yellow lines and changes to existing orders)								
Small (1-30 consultations)	1100.00	0.00	1,100.00	1210.00	0.00	1,210.00	Added inflation and rounded up/down	10.00%
Medium (31-50 consultations)	1300.00	0.00	1,300.00	1430.00	0.00	1,430.00	Added inflation and rounded up/down	10.00%
Large (50+ consultations)	1600.00	0.00	1,600.00	1760.00	0.00	1,760.00	Added inflation and rounded up/down	10.00%
On application (loading bays, single bays)								
Small (1-30 consultations)	520.00	0.00	520.00	575.00	0.00	575.00	Added inflation and rounded up/down	10.58%
Medium (31-50 consultations)	780.00	0.00	780.00	860.00	0.00	860.00	Added inflation and rounded up/down	10.26%
Large (50+ consultations)	1040.00	0.00	1,040.00	1150.00	0.00	1,150.00	Added inflation and rounded up/down	10.58%
No objections received (yellow lines and changes to existing orders)								
All size consultations	520.00	0.00	520.00	575.00	0.00	575.00	Added inflation and rounded up/down	10.58%
No objections received (loading bays, single bays)								
All size consultations	260.00	0.00	260.00	286.00	0.00	286.00	Added inflation and Increased	10.00%
Objections received (Joint Transportation Board report)								
All size consultations	260.00	0.00	260.00	286.00	0.00	286.00	Added inflation and Increased	10.00%
Progress/implement scheme (yellow lines and changes to existing orders)								
Small (1-30 consultations)	520.00	0.00	520.00	575.00	0.00	575.00	Added inflation and Increased	10.58%
Medium (31-50 consultations)	620.00	0.00	620.00	685.00	0.00	685.00	Added inflation and Increased	10.48%
Large (50+ consultations)	730.00	0.00	730.00	810.00	0.00	810.00	Added inflation and Increased	10.96%
Progress/implement scheme (loading bays, single bays)								
Small (1-30 consultations)	110.00	0.00	110.00	122.00	0.00	122.00	Added inflation and Increased	10.91%
Medium (31-50 consultations)	110.00	0.00	110.00	122.00	0.00	122.00	Added inflation and Increased	10.91%
Large (50+ consultations)	110.00	0.00	110.00	122.00	0.00	122.00	Added inflation and Increased	10.91%
Inclusion of new or amended waiting restrictions into Traffic Regulation Order	1100.00	0.00	1,100.00	1210.00	0.00	1,210.00	Added inflation and rounded up/down	10.00%
White Bar Markings								
Installation of new white bar marking across vehicle crossing	128.17	25.63	153.80	141.00	28.20	169.20	Added inflation and rounded up/down	10.01%
Re-painting existing white bar marking across vehicle crossing	106.75	21.35	128.10	118.00	23.60	141.60	Added inflation and rounded up/down	10.54%
Installation of Advisory Bays on Private Lane (e.g. Disabled Bay in Housing Association Car Park)								
Installation of Advisory Parking Bay on Private Land	100.00	0.00	100.00	110.00	0.00	110.00	Added inflation and rounded up/down	10.00%

	2022/23			2023/24			Comment 2023/24	Increase
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge		
	£	£	£	£	£	£		
Street Naming & Numbering								
Changing or requesting new property	75.00	0.00	75.00	82.50	0.00	82.50	Added inflation and rounded up/down	10.00%
New street name	150.00	0.00	150.00	165.00	0.00	165.00	Added inflation and rounded up/down	10.00%
New street developments (4 or more properties/units) per property/unit with minimum charge of £180	50.00	0.00	50.00	55.00	0.00	55.00	Added inflation and rounded up/down	10.00%
Provision of historical information relating to street naming & numbering	30.00	0.00	30.00	33.00	0.00	33.00	Added inflation and rounded up/down	10.00%
Changing street name	700.00	0.00	700.00	770.00	0.00	770.00	Added inflation and rounded up/down	10.00%
Harbour Mooring Fees								
Faversham Town Quay per night	7.75	1.55	9.30	8.60	1.72	10.32	Added inflation and rounded up/down	10.97%
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	45.00	0.00	45.00	55.00	0.00	55.00	Proposed increase.	22.22%
Bulky Waste Collections								
Charge covers up to 4 bulky items. If white goods, charge covers only one item.	26.00	0.00	26.00	30.00	0.00	30.00	Higher inflation added due to waste contract indexation and amendment to simplify criteria including TV's and microwaves no longer being a separate chargeable item and now included in the four items. Ashford BC proposing similar amendments.	15.38%
Wheeled Bins								
Wheeled bins 140 litre	41.10	0.00	41.10	45.50	0.00	45.50	These are the prices for bins for new developments. These bins are provided and paid by the developer prior to new residents moving in.	10.71%
Wheeled bins 180 litre	46.60	0.00	46.60	51.50	0.00	51.50	As above	10.52%
Wheeled bins 240 litre	46.60	0.00	46.60	51.50	0.00	51.50	As above	10.52%
Wheeled bins 1,100 litre	451.80	0.00	451.80	497.00	0.00	497.00	As above	10.00%
Food waste container 23 litre	10.80	0.00	10.80	11.90	0.00	11.90	As above	10.19%
Kitchen caddy 5 litre	5.40	0.00	5.40	5.95	0.00	5.95	As above	10.19%

	2022/23			2023/24			Comment 2023/24	Increase
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge		
	£	£	£	£	£	£		
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.	30.00	0.00	30.00	30.00	0.00	30.00	The nominal charge has been effective at reducing demand for replacement bins. Therefore it is recommended to keep this at £30 for 2023/24	0.00%
Note: Wheeled bins are non-vatable when supplied directly to a householder for								
Additional Litter Bins (each)								
145 litre galvanised (fee does not include emptying the bin)	375.00	75.00	450.00	495.00	99.00	594.00	Increased charge	32.00%
Bin Store Clearance								
Per occasion	129.90	0.00	129.90	175.00	0.00	175.00	These businesses are able to select which contractor they choose to use. The uplift reflects the updated contractor costs and council administration duties.	34.72%
Wheeled Bins for Community Events								
Provision of wheeled bins for events (cost per occasion) – delivery/ collection charge	85.67	17.13	102.80	113.50	0.00	113.50	Increased charge	10.41%
Wheeled bin hire (cost per bin)	10.83	2.17	13.00	14.30	0.00	14.30	Increased charge	10.00%
Servicing of bins during event	Price on application			Price on application				
Radar Key for Disabled Toilets								
Fee	3.00	0.00	3.00	3.00	0.00	3.00	Very few sold.	0.00%
Environmental – Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN)								
Fly tipping*	400.00	0.00	400.00	400.00	0.00	400.00	Already set at maximum permitted.	0.00%
Householders duty of care – lack of care in disposal of waste*	400.00	0.00	400.00	400.00	0.00	400.00	Already set at maximum permitted.	0.00%
Refuse left out inappropriately	80.00	0.00	80.00	80.00	0.00	80.00	Already set at maximum permitted.	0.00%
Littering and graffiti	150.00	0.00	150.00	150.00	0.00	150.00	Already set at maximum permitted.	0.00%
Fly posting	150.00	0.00	150.00	150.00	0.00	150.00	Already set at maximum permitted.	0.00%
Waste carrier offences	300.00	0.00	300.00	300.00	0.00	300.00	Already set at maximum permitted.	0.00%
Failure to comply with a Community Protection Notice	100.00	0.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	Already set at maximum permitted.	0.00%
Breach of any Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs)	100.00	0.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	Already set at maximum permitted.	0.00%
*Reduced to £300.00 if paid in full within 10 days								
All of these Environmental FPN's are at the maximum allowed by the Government banding								
Animal Welfare Licensing								
The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations								
Part A - Covers the application and authorisation process.								

	2022/23			2023/24			Comment 2023/24	Increase
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge		
	£	£	£	£	£	£		
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 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	217.60	0.00	217.60	239.40	0.00	239.40	Increased charge, rounded up to the next 10p	10.02%
Part B								
1 Star and 2 Star establishments - 1 year licence	174.30	0.00	174.30	192.00	0.00	192.00	Increased charge, rounded up to the next 10p	10.15%
3 Star and 4 Star establishments - 2 year licence	290.80	0.00	290.80	320.00	0.00	320.00	Increased charge, rounded up to the next 10p	10.04%
5 Star establishments - 3 year licence	407.30	0.00	407.30	449.00	0.00	449.00	Increased charge, rounded up to the next 10p	10.24%
Hiring of Horses								
Part A ¹	217.60	0.00	217.60	239.40	0.00	239.40	Increased charge, rounded up to the next 10p	10.02%
Part B								
1 Star and 2 Star establishments - 1 year licence ³	174.30	0.00	174.30	192.00	0.00	192.00	Increased charge, rounded up to the next 10p	10.15%
3 Star and 4 Star establishments - 2 year licence ²	290.80	0.00	290.80	320.00	0.00	320.00	Increased charge, rounded up to the next 10p	10.04%
5 Star establishments - 3 year licence ²	407.30	0.00	407.30	449.00	0.00	449.00	Increased charge, rounded up to the next 10p	10.24%
Keeping or Training Animals for Exhibition								
Part A								
For a 3 year licence ¹	217.60	0.00	217.60	240.00	0.00	240.00	Increased charge, rounded up to the next 10p	10.29%
Part B								
For a 3 year licence ³	407.30	0.00	407.30	449.00	0.00	449.00	Increased charge, rounded up to the next 10p	10.24%
Dangerous Wild Animal Licence								
Part A								
For a 2 year licence ¹	217.60	0.00	217.60	239.50	0.00	239.50	Increased charge, rounded up to the next 10p	10.06%
Part B								
For a 2 year licence ³	290.80	0.00	290.80	320.00	0.00	320.00	Increased charge, rounded up to the next 10p	10.04%
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	979.60	0.00	979.60	1078.00	0.00	1,078.00	Increased charge, rounded up to the next 10p	10.04%
Part B								
For a 4 year licence ³	541.80	0.00	541.80	596.00	0.00	596.00	Increased charge, rounded up to the next 10p	10.00%

	2022/23			2023/24			Comment 2023/24	Increase
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge		
	£	£	£	£	£	£		
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)	92.80	0.00	92.80	102.10	0.00	102.10	Increased charge, rounded up to the next 10p	10.02%
Requests for Variations								
Administration amendment only	35.10	0.00	35.10	38.70	0.00	38.70	Increased charge, rounded up to the next 10p	10.26%
Inspector visit (if required) (additional to administration charge)	57.70	0.00	57.70	63.50	0.00	63.50	Increased charge, rounded up to the next 10p	10.05%
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	This fee is dictated by legislation.	0.00%
Additional fee for collecting/returning stray dogs	35.90	0.00	35.90	39.50	0.00	39.50	Increased charge, rounded up to the next 10p	10.03%
Out of hours additional fee for collecting/ returning stray dogs	46.10	0.00	46.10	50.80	0.00	50.80	Increased charge, rounded up to the next 10p	10.20%
Transport fee for returning dog to owner after a kennel stay	30.80	0.00	30.80	33.90	0.00	33.90	Increased charge, rounded up to the next 10p	10.06%
*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. The latest prices will be listed on the Swale BC stray dog web page.								
Pest Control								
Rats (per visit) with a minimum of 2 visits required	25.58	5.12	30.70	28.00	5.60	33.60	These figures are set at a competitive rate and need to remain consistent with MBC as we share a contractor.	9.45%
Mice (per visit) with a minimum of 2 visits required	25.58	5.12	30.70	28.00	5.60	33.60	As above	9.45%
Wasps per nest	52.17	10.43	62.60	57.17	11.43	68.60	As above	9.59%
Wasps per additional nest	9.42	1.88	11.30	10.33	2.07	12.40	As above	9.70%
Fleas and other household pests (up to 6 rooms)	60.58	12.12	72.70	66.33	13.27	79.60	As above	9.49%
Each additional room (up to 4)	9.42	1.88	11.30	10.33	2.07	12.40	As above	9.70%
Cockroaches in domestic premises (up to 6 rooms)	60.58	12.12	72.70	66.33	13.27	79.60	As above	9.49%
Each additional room (up to 4)	9.42	1.88	11.30	10.33	2.07	12.40	As above	9.70%
Ants, insects etc.	26.50	5.30	31.80	29.00	5.80	34.80	As above	9.43%

	2022/23			2023/24			Comment 2023/24	Increase
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge		
	£	£	£	£	£	£		
Bed bugs (up to 4 bedroom house). Anything larger will require a survey	244.50	48.90	293.40	267.50	53.50	321.00	As above	9.41%
Hourly charge for treatments carried out on industrial and commercial properties (hourly rate)	To be quoted by contractors on a job by job basis so as to remain competitive		To be quoted by contractors on a job by job basis so as to remain competitive					
For treatments outside of normal office hours (hourly rate)	As above		As above					
Woodworm, birds, death watch beetle, foxes, moles & squirrels	Price on application (surveys required)		Price on application (surveys required)					
Environmental Health (T Beattie)								
Food Export Certificate								
For businesses already in receipt of Export Health Certificate (EHC) issued by Swale BC	124.00	0.00	124.00	137.00	0.00	137.00	Service currently suspended.	10.48%
For new businesses applying for export certificates	257.00	0.00	257.00	284.00	0.00	284.00	as above	10.51%
Admin charge for changes to certificate	26.00	0.00	26.00	27.00	0.00	27.00	as above	3.85%
Sampling associated with Export Health Certificates (per hour)	55.00	11.00	66.00	65.83	13.17	79.00	Revision of hourly rate costs	19.69%
EHC for transit to destination country	36.00	0.00	36.00	39.60	0.00	39.60	Service currently suspended.	10.00%
Voluntary Surrender of Food								
Charge for food unfit for human consumption or unsuitable for sale	210.00	0.00	210.00	231.00	0.00	231.00	Minimal requests. None issued in 2021/22 or to date in 22/23.	10.00%
Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) Level 2 Award Training in Food Safety in Catering								
Fee charged to food handlers for training in food hygiene	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Food Hygiene Rating Scheme								
Fee to food businesses for re-inspection and re-scoring	168.00	0.00	168.00	185.00	0.00	185.00	Increased charge	10.12%
Food Business Advice								
Food hygiene advice (per hour)	55.00	11.00	66.00	65.83	13.17	79.00	Revision of hourly rate costs	19.69%

	2022/23			2023/24			Comment 2023/24	Increase
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge		
	£	£	£	£	£	£		
Registration Fee under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provision) Act								
(Relates to establishments offering cosmetic piercing, electrolysis, tattooing or acupuncture)								
Standard fee	328.00	0.00	328.00	338.00	0.00	338.00	Reduced increase due to process changes and reduction on administration time.	3.05%
Supplementary treatment registration fee (for additional beauty treatment registration inspection either at or after initial registration)	56.00	0.00	56.00	61.70	0.00	61.70	Increased charge	10.18%
Tattoo and Beauty Treatment Events (falling within the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act)	205.00	0.00	205.00	226.00	0.00	226.00	Increased charge	10.24%
Tattoo and Beauty Treatment Event charge for Artists (new artist registrations)	25.00	0.00	25.00	27.50	0.00	27.50	Increased charge	10.00%
Requests for Environmental Information (e.g. Contaminated land)								
Charge per hour	20.83	4.17	25.00	23.00	4.60	27.60	fee increase as none for service over last 7 years	10.42%
Requests for Enhanced Environmental Information for Contaminated Land and Professional Opinion								
Charge per hour	55.00	11.00	66.00	65.83	13.17	79.00	Revision of hourly rate costs	19.69%
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	55.00	11.00	66.00	65.83	13.17	79.00	as above	19.69%
Private Water Supplies Regulations 2016 & 2018 Amendments								
Risk assessment (hourly rate)	55.00	11.00	66.00	65.83	13.17	79.00	as above	19.69%
Sampling (hourly rate)	55.00	11.00	66.00	65.83	13.17	79.00	as above	19.69%
Investigation (hourly rate)	55.00	11.00	66.00	65.83	13.17	79.00	as above	19.69%
Derogation request	55.00	11.00	66.00	65.83	13.17	79.00	As above	19.69%
Analysis – Group A	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a		
Analysis – Group B	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a		
Analysis – audit monitoring	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a		
Housing & Community Services (S Curtis)								

	2022/23			2023/24			Comment 2023/24	Increase
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge		
	£	£	£	£	£	£		
Taxi Licensing								
Vehicle licence for 1 year	290.00	0.00	290.00	290.00	0.00	290.00	No increase recommended this year due to other policy changes that will impact upon taxi drivers.	0.00%
Private Hire operator licence valid for 5 years	430.00	0.00	430.00	430.00	0.00	430.00	No increase recommended this year due to other policy changes that will impact upon taxi drivers.	0.00%
Licence and plate for temporary hire vehicle	40.00	0.00	40.00	40.00	0.00	40.00	No increase recommended this year due to other policy changes that will impact upon taxi drivers.	0.00%
Knowledge test – initial	25.00	0.00	25.00	25.00	0.00	25.00	No increase recommended this year due to other policy changes that will impact upon taxi drivers.	0.00%
Knowledge test – re-sit	25.00	0.00	25.00	25.00	0.00	25.00	No increase recommended this year due to other policy changes that will impact upon taxi drivers.	0.00%
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	No increase recommended this year due to other policy changes that will impact upon taxi drivers.	0.00%
Upgrade Private Hire Drivers Badge to a Dual Badge	35.00	0.00	35.00	35.00	0.00	35.00	No increase recommended this year due to other policy changes that will impact upon taxi drivers.	0.00%
Dual / Private Hire Drivers Badge for 3 years	150.00	0.00	150.00	150.00	0.00	150.00	No increase recommended this year due to other policy changes that will impact upon taxi drivers.	0.00%
Non-refundable plate fee (plate number only issued once)	50.00	0.00	50.00	50.00	0.00	50.00	No increase recommended this year due to other policy changes that will impact upon taxi drivers.	0.00%
Replacement plate	15.00	0.00	15.00	15.00	0.00	15.00	No increase recommended this year due to other policy changes that will impact upon taxi drivers.	0.00%
Change of address	10.00	0.00	10.00	10.00	0.00	10.00	No increase recommended this year due to other policy changes that will impact upon taxi drivers.	0.00%
Change of ownership licensed vehicle	35.00	0.00	35.00	35.00	0.00	35.00	No increase recommended this year due to other policy changes that will impact upon taxi drivers.	0.00%
Dual / Private Hire Drivers badge replacement	10.00	0.00	10.00	10.00	0.00	10.00	No increase recommended this year due to other policy changes that will impact upon taxi drivers.	0.00%
Replacement paper licence certificate	10.00	0.00	10.00	10.00	0.00	10.00	No increase recommended this year due to other policy changes that will impact upon taxi drivers.	0.00%
Change of vehicle on an existing plate	80.00	0.00	80.00	80.00	0.00	80.00	No increase recommended this year due to other policy changes that will impact upon taxi drivers.	0.00%
Street Trading Licensing								
Annual consents (not events)	130.00	0.00	130.00	143.00	0.00	143.00	10% inflationary increase applied	10.00%
6 month consents (not events)	65.00	0.00	65.00	71.50	0.00	71.50	10% inflationary increase applied	10.00%
One off consent	10.00	0.00	10.00	10.00	0.00	10.00	To be decided at Licensing Committee of 15th February 2023	0.00%
Assistants Badge	15.00	0.00	15.00	16.50	0.00	16.50	10% inflationary increase applied	10.00%
Gambling Licensing								
New Applications/Applications for Provisional Statement								
Small casino	8000.00	0.00	8,000.00	8000.00	0.00	8,000.00	Discretionary to a Statutory Maximum £8,000.	0.00%

	2022/23			2023/24			Comment 2023/24	Increase
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge		
	£	£	£	£	£	£		
Large casino	10000.00	0.00	10,000.00	10000.00	0.00	10,000.00	Discretionary to a Statutory Maximum £10,000.	0.00%
Bingo club	2449.00	0.00	2,449.00	3500.00	0.00	3,500.00	Increased to Statutory Maximum £3,500.	42.92%
Betting premises	3000.00	0.00	3,000.00	3000.00	0.00	3,000.00	Discretionary to a Statutory Maximum £3,000.	0.00%
Tracks	2500.00	0.00	2,500.00	2500.00	0.00	2,500.00	Discretionary to a Statutory Maximum £2,500.	0.00%
Family entertainment centres	1913.00	0.00	1,913.00	2000.00	0.00	2,000.00	Increased to Statutory Maximum £2,000.	4.55%
Adult gaming centre	2000.00	0.00	2,000.00	2000.00	0.00	2,000.00	Discretionary to a Statutory Maximum £2,000	0.00%
Temporary use notice	263.00	0.00	263.00	500.00	0.00	500.00	Increased to Statutory Maximum £500.	90.11%
Licence Applications (Provisional Statement Holders)								
Small casino	3000.00	0.00	3,000.00	3000.00	0.00	3,000.00	Discretionary to a Statutory Maximum £3,000.	0.00%
Large casino	5000.00	0.00	5,000.00	5000.00	0.00	5,000.00	Discretionary to a Statutory Maximum £5,000.	0.00%
Bingo club	1010.60	0.00	1,010.60	1200.00	0.00	1,200.00	Increased to Statutory Maximum £1,200.	18.74%
Betting premises	1200.00	0.00	1,200.00	1200.00	0.00	1,200.00	Discretionary to a Statutory Maximum £1,200.	0.00%
Tracks	950.00	0.00	950.00	950.00	0.00	950.00	Discretionary to a Statutory Maximum £950.	0.00%
Family entertainment centre	840.40	0.00	840.40	950.00	0.00	950.00	Increased to Statutory Maximum £950.	13.04%
Adult gaming centre	1200.00	0.00	1,200.00	1200.00	0.00	1,200.00	Discretionary to a Statutory Maximum £1,200.	0.00%
Annual Fee								
Small casino	5000.00	0.00	5,000.00	5000.00	0.00	5,000.00	Discretionary to a Statutory Maximum £5,000.	0.00%
Large casino	10000.00	0.00	10,000.00	10000.00	0.00	10,000.00	Discretionary to a Statutory Maximum £10,000.	0.00%
Bingo club	758.00	0.00	758.00	1000.00	0.00	1,000.00	Increased to Statutory Maximum £1,000.	31.93%
Betting premises	600.00	0.00	600.00	600.00	0.00	600.00	Discretionary to a Statutory Maximum £600.	0.00%
Tracks	1000.00	0.00	1,000.00	1000.00	0.00	1,000.00	Discretionary to a Statutory Maximum £1,000.	0.00%
Family entertainment centres	660.00	0.00	660.00	750.00	0.00	750.00	Increased to Statutory Maximum £750.	13.64%
Adult gaming centre	1000.00	0.00	1,000.00	1000.00	0.00	1,000.00	Discretionary to a Statutory Maximum £1,000.	0.00%
Application to Vary								
Small casino	4000.00	0.00	4,000.00	4000.00	0.00	4,000.00	Discretionary to a Statutory Maximum £4,000.	0.00%
Large casino	5000.00	0.00	5,000.00	5000.00	0.00	5,000.00	Discretionary to a Statutory Maximum £5,000.	0.00%
Bingo club	1670.00	0.00	1,670.00	1750.00	0.00	1,750.00	Increased to Statutory Maximum £1,750.	4.79%
Betting premises	1500.00	0.00	1,500.00	1500.00	0.00	1,500.00	Discretionary to a Statutory Maximum £1,500.	0.00%
Tracks	1250.00	0.00	1,250.00	1250.00	0.00	1,250.00	Discretionary to a Statutory Maximum £1,250.	0.00%
Family entertainment centres	866.00	0.00	866.00	1000.00	0.00	1,000.00	Increased to Statutory Maximum £1,000.	15.47%
Adult gaming centre	1000.00	0.00	1,000.00	1000.00	0.00	1,000.00	Discretionary to a Statutory Maximum £1,000.	0.00%
Copy licence	25.00	0.00	25.00	25.00	0.00	25.00	Discretionary to a Statutory Maximum £25.	0.00%
Notification of change	36.00	0.00	36.00	50.00	0.00	50.00	Discretionary to a Statutory Maximum £50.	38.89%
Application to Transfer a Licence								
Small casino	1800.00	0.00	1,800.00	1800.00	0.00	1,800.00	Discretionary to a Statutory Maximum £1,800.	0.00%
Large casino	2150.00	0.00	2,150.00	2150.00	0.00	2,150.00	Discretionary to a Statutory Maximum £2,150.	0.00%
Bingo club	1010.60	0.00	1,010.60	1200.00	0.00	1,200.00	Increased to Statutory Maximum £1,200.	18.74%

	2022/23			2023/24			Comment 2023/24	Increase
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge		
	£	£	£	£	£	£		
Betting premises	1200.00	0.00	1,200.00	1200.00	0.00	1,200.00	Discretionary to a Statutory Maximum £1,200.	0.00%
Tracks	950.00	0.00	950.00	950.00	0.00	950.00	Discretionary to a Statutory Maximum £950.	0.00%
Family entertainment centres	928.00	0.00	928.00	950.00	0.00	950.00	Increased to Statutory Maximum £950.	2.37%
Adult gaming centre	1200.00	0.00	1,200.00	1200.00	0.00	1,200.00	Discretionary to a Statutory Maximum £1,200.	0.00%
Application for Re-instatement								
Small casino	1800.00	0.00	1,800.00	1800.00	0.00	1,800.00	Discretionary to a Statutory Maximum £1,800.	0.00%
Large casino	2150.00	0.00	2,150.00	2150.00	0.00	2,150.00	Discretionary to a Statutory Maximum £2,150.	0.00%
Bingo club	1010.60	0.00	1,010.60	1200.00	0.00	1,200.00	Increased to Statutory Maximum £1,200.	18.74%
Betting premises	1200.00	0.00	1,200.00	1200.00	0.00	1,200.00	Discretionary to a Statutory Maximum £1,200.	0.00%
Tracks	950.00	0.00	950.00	950.00	0.00	950.00	Discretionary to a Statutory Maximum £950.	0.00%
Family entertainment centres	928.00	0.00	928.00	950.00	0.00	950.00	Increased to Statutory Maximum £950.	2.37%
Adult gaming centre	1200.00	0.00	1,200.00	1200.00	0.00	1,200.00	Discretionary to a Statutory Maximum £1,200.	0.00%
Sex Establishment Licensing (sex shop, sex cinema and sex encounter venue)								
Application fee and 1 st licence	4522.00	0.00	4,522.00	4974.00	0.00	4,974.00	10% inflationary increase applied.	10.00%
Annual licence renewal	701.20	0.00	701.20	772.00	0.00	772.00	As above. Rounded up	10.10%
Application to vary	809.40	0.00	809.40	891.00	0.00	891.00	As above. Rounded down	10.08%
Transfer of licence	31.00	0.00	31.00	34.10	0.00	34.10	As above. Rounded up	10.00%
Duplicate licence	15.50	0.00	15.50	17.10	0.00	17.10	As above. Rounded down	10.32%
Scrap Metal Dealers Licensing								
Site licence	484.60	0.00	484.60	535.00	0.00	535.00	10% inflationary increase applied. Rounded down	10.40%
Site licence renewal	464.00	0.00	464.00	511.00	0.00	511.00	As above. Rounded down	10.13%
Collections licence, grant or renewal	226.80	0.00	226.80	250.00	0.00	250.00	As above. Rounded up	10.23%
Variation – collector to site	77.40	0.00	77.40	86.00	0.00	86.00	As above. Rounded up	11.11%
Variation – site to collector	56.70	0.00	56.70	63.00	0.00	63.00	As above. Rounded up	11.11%
Variation (minor administration, such as change of address)	36.10	0.00	36.10	40.00	0.00	40.00	As above. Rounded up	10.80%
Change of site manager	108.20	0.00	108.20	120.00	0.00	120.00	As above. Rounded up	10.91%
Pleasure Boat Licence								
Licence	149.60	0.00	149.60	165.00	0.00	165.00	10% inflationary increase applied. Rounded up	10.29%
Pavement Licence								
Application Fee	100.00	0.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	Discretionary to a Statutory Maximum of £100.	0.00%
CCTV Services (S Curtis)								
Swale Radio Link Annual Charge								
Charities	N/A	N/A	N/A	150.00	30.00	180.00	Scheme only introduced in August 22	
Independent Businesses	N/A	N/A	N/A	200.00	40.00	240.00	Scheme only introduced in August 22	
Large Organisation	N/A	N/A	N/A	350.00	70.00	420.00	Scheme only introduced in August 22	

Third Party Service Charges

	2022/23			2023/24			Comment 2023/24	Increase
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge		
	£	£	£	£	£	£		
Insurance Company Footage Review	N/A	N/A	N/A	70.00	14.00	84.00	New charges agreed to be introduced by Communities Committee on 07/09/22	
CCTV Services which may include design, installation, monitoring, maintenance, upgrades and decommissioning	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Charges to be determined by Head Housing/Communities and Director of Resources based upon service requested by third party	
Legal								
(C. Valmond)								
Legal Charges for Third Parties								
Hourly rate (no VAT)	225.00	0.00	225.00	247.00	0.00	247.00		9.78%
Hourly rate (when VAT applicable)	225.00	45.00	270.00	247.00	49.40	296.40		9.78%
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								
Property								
J. Johnson								
Room Hire of Swale House								
Non-Commercial								
Council chamber (half day)	75.00	15.00	90.00	82.50	16.50	99.00	Nearest whole or half-pound amount to CPI increase applied.	10.00%
Council chamber (full day)	125.00	25.00	150.00	137.50	27.50	165.00	Process as above	10.00%
Committee room (half day)	50.00	10.00	60.00	55.00	11.00	66.00	Process as above	10.00%
Committee room (full day)	75.00	15.00	90.00	82.50	16.50	99.00	Process as above	10.00%
Assembly room (half day)	37.50	7.50	45.00	41.25	8.25	49.50	Process as above	10.00%
Assembly room (full day)	62.50	12.50	75.00	68.80	13.76	82.56	Process as above	10.08%
Commercial								
Council chamber (half day)	150.00	30.00	180.00	165.00	33.00	198.00	Process as above	10.00%
Council chamber (full day)	250.00	50.00	300.00	275.00	55.00	330.00	Process as above	10.00%
Committee room (half day)	100.00	20.00	120.00	110.00	22.00	132.00	Process as above	10.00%
Committee room (full day)	150.00	30.00	180.00	165.00	33.00	198.00	Process as above	10.00%
Assembly room (half day)	75.00	15.00	90.00	82.50	16.50	99.00	Process as above	10.00%
Assembly room (full day)	125.00	25.00	150.00	137.50	27.50	165.00	Process as above	10.00%
Landlord's Consent Fee								
Assignments, subletting, charging *	300.00	60.00	360.00	400.00	80.00	480.00	To make the fee more representative of actual cost	33.33%
Alterations *	300.00	60.00	360.00	400.00	80.00	480.00	To make the fee more representative of actual cost	33.33%
Commercial wayleaves / easements*	N/A	N/A	N/A	875.00	175.00	1,050.00	New charge to reflect resources required.	N/A
* VAT is only applicable if the rent is subject to VAT.								

	2022/23			2023/24			Comment 2023/24	Increase
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge		
	£	£	£	£	£	£		
FEES AND CHARGES SET NATIONALLY BY THE GOVERNMENT								
Housing (C. Hudson)								
Houses in Multiple Occupation Licensing								
<i>New Application</i>								
Non-accredited landlord	724.30	0.00	724.30	792.40	0.00	792.40	Statute only allows for recovery of costs involved in processing applications; costs reflect officer time and relevant oncosts	9.40%
Accredited landlord	602.00	0.00	602.00	673.50	0.00	673.50	Statute only allows for recovery of costs involved in processing applications; costs reflect officer time and relevant oncosts and 15 % off for being accredited	11.88%
<i>Renewal of Application</i>								
Non-accredited landlord	567.70	0.00	567.70	621.00	0.00	621.00	Statute only allows for recovery of costs involved in processing applications; costs reflect officer time and relevant oncosts	9.39%
Accredited landlord	482.50	0.00	482.50	528.00	0.00	528.00	Statute only allows for recovery of costs involved in processing applications; costs reflect officer time and relevant oncosts and 15 % off for being accredited	9.43%
Mobile Home Site Licence Fee								
<i>New Mobile Home Site Licence Application Fee</i>								
1-5 mobile homes on site	156.80	0.00	156.80	171.60	0.00	171.60	Statute only allows for recovery of costs involved in managing and processing licence applications;	9.44%
6-24 mobile homes on site	215.20	0.00	215.20	235.50	0.00	235.50	Statute only allows for recovery of costs involved in managing and processing licence applications;	9.43%
25-99 mobile homes on site	273.70	0.00	273.70	299.50	0.00	299.50	Statute only allows for recovery of costs involved in managing and processing licence applications;	9.43%
100+ mobile homes on site	314.70	0.00	314.70	344.30	0.00	344.30	Statute only allows for recovery of costs involved in managing and processing licence applications;	9.41%
<i>Annual Mobile Home Site Inspection Fee</i>								
Relevant sites occupied solely by owners and family members	No charge			No charge			These sites once set up cause no additional work to the council	

	2022/23			2023/24			Comment 2023/24	Increase
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge		
	£	£	£	£	£	£		
1-5 mobile homes on site	No charge			No charge			These sites once set up cause no additional work to the council	
6-24 mobile homes on site	176.30	0.00	176.30	192.90	0.00	192.90	Statute only allows for recovery of costs involved in inspecting site and recovery of relevant administration costs, any excess charges would need to be taken into account in the following year and fees would need to be reduced or increased accordingly.	9.42%
25-99 mobile homes on site	211.20	0.00	211.20	231.00	0.00	231.00	Statute only allows for recovery of costs involved in inspecting site and recovery of relevant administration costs, any excess charges would need to be taken into account in the following year and fees would need to be reduced or increased accordingly.	9.38%
100+ mobile homes on site	254.90	0.00	254.90	278.90	0.00	278.90	Statute only allows for recovery of costs involved in inspecting site and recovery of relevant administration costs, any excess charges would need to be taken into account in the following year and fees would need to be reduced or increased accordingly.	9.42%
Fee to Transfer or Amend Mobile Home Site Licence								
Transfer or amend mobile home site licence	132.60	0.00	132.60	145.10	0.00	145.10	Statute only allows for recovery of costs involved in inspecting site and recovery of relevant administration costs, any excess charges would need to be taken into account in the following year and fees would need to be reduced or increased accordingly.	9.43%
Fee for the Deposit of Mobile Home Site Rules								
Deposit of mobile home site rules	186.90	0.00	186.90	204.50	0.00	204.50	Statute only allows for recovery of costs involved in inspecting site and recovery of relevant administration costs, any excess charges would need to be taken into account in the following year and fees would need to be reduced or increased accordingly.	9.42%
Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Regulations 2015								
Fine level progresses to maximum fine permitted (1st offence £1,500, 2nd £2,500, 3rd £5,000)								

	2022/23			2023/24			Comment 2023/24	Increase
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge		
	£	£	£	£	£	£		
Penalty charge for non-compliance of Smoke or CO Alarm Regulations	5000.00	0.00	5,000.00	5000.00	0.00	5,000.00	maximum fine set by statute	0.00%
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	5000.00	0.00	5,000.00	5000.00	0.00	5,000.00	maximum fine set by statute	0.00%
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)	1000.00	0.00	1,000.00	1000.00	0.00	1,000.00	maximum fine set by statute	0.00%
All other offences £2,000 (or £1,500 if paid within 21 days)	2000.00	0.00	2,000.00	2000.00	0.00	2,000.00	maximum fine set by statute	0.00%
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)	2000.00	0.00	2,000.00	2000.00	0.00	2,000.00	maximum fine set by statute	0.00%
All other offences £4,000 (or £3,000 if paid within 21 days)	4000.00	0.00	4,000.00	4000.00	0.00	4,000.00	maximum fine set by statute	0.00%
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	maximum fine set by statute	0.00%
All other offences £2,000 (or £1,500 if paid within 21 days)	2000.00	0.00	2,000.00	2000.00	0.00	2,000.00	maximum fine set by statute	0.00%
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)	1000.00	0.00	1,000.00	1000.00	0.00	1,000.00	maximum fine set by statute	0.00%
All other offences £2,000 (or £1,500 if paid within 21 days)	2000.00	0.00	2,000.00	2000.00	0.00	2,000.00	maximum fine set by statute	0.00%
Planning (Flo Churchill)								
Planning Fees	The full details of current Planning fees can be found on https://ecab.planningportal.co.uk/uploads/english_application_fees.pdf							

	2022/23			2023/24			Comment 2023/24	Increase
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge		
	£	£	£	£	£	£		
(T Beattie)								
Public Health Control of Diseases Act 1984								
Various Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN's) issues under the Coronavirus legislation								
Pollution Prevention Control (PPC)								
A2 Process Application Fees								
A2 New application	3363.00	0.00	3,363.00	3363.00	0.00	3,363.00	Statutory charges	0.00%
Additional fee for operating without a permit (A2 and Standard Part B)	1188.00	0.00	1,188.00	1188.00	0.00	1,188.00	As above	0.00%
A2 Process Subsistence Fees								
A2 Low	1447.00	0.00	1,447.00	1447.00	0.00	1,447.00	As above	0.00%
A2 Medium	1610.00	0.00	1,610.00	1610.00	0.00	1,610.00	As above	0.00%
A2 High	1747.00	0.00	1,747.00	1747.00	0.00	1,747.00	As above	0.00%
A2 Low (E-PRTR)	1551.00	0.00	1,551.00	1551.00	0.00	1,551.00	As above	0.00%
A2 Medium (E-PRTR)	1715.00	0.00	1,715.00	1715.00	0.00	1,715.00	As above	0.00%
A3 High (E-PRTR)	2438.00	0.00	2,438.00	2438.00	0.00	2,438.00	As above	0.00%
Part B Process Application Fees								
Part B (Standard Process)	1650.00	0.00	1,650.00	1650.00	0.00	1,650.00	As above	0.00%
Part B Standard Process Subsistence Fees								
Part B Subsistence low	772.00	0.00	772.00	772.00	0.00	772.00	As above	0.00%
Part B Subsistence medium	1161.00	0.00	1,161.00	1161.00	0.00	1,161.00	As above	0.00%
Part B Subsistence high	1747.00	0.00	1,747.00	1747.00	0.00	1,747.00	As above	0.00%
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	As above	0.00%
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	As above	0.00%
Reduced fee subsistence medium	365.00	0.00	365.00	365.00	0.00	365.00	As above	0.00%
Reduced fee subsistence high	548.00	0.00	548.00	548.00	0.00	548.00	As above	0.00%
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	As above	0.00%
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	As above	0.00%
PVR I and DC subsistence fees medium	158.00	0.00	158.00	158.00	0.00	158.00	As above	0.00%
PVR I and DC subsistence fees high	237.00	0.00	237.00	237.00	0.00	237.00	As above	0.00%
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	As above	0.00%
Petrol Vapour Recovery I & II Combined Subsistence Fees								

	2022/23			2023/24			Comment 2023/24	Increase
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge		
	£	£	£	£	£	£		
PVR I & II Subsistence low	113.00	0.00	113.00	113.00	0.00	113.00	As above	0.00%
PVR I & II Subsistence medium	226.00	0.00	226.00	226.00	0.00	226.00	As above	0.00%
PVR I & II Subsistence high	341.00	0.00	341.00	341.00	0.00	341.00	As above	0.00%
Part B Mobile Concrete Crusher Plant – Application Fee per Number of Permits								
1 – 2	1650.00	0.00	1,650.00	1650.00	0.00	1,650.00	As above	0.00%
3 – 7	985.00	0.00	985.00	985.00	0.00	985.00	As above	0.00%
8 or more	498.00	0.00	498.00	498.00	0.00	498.00	As above	0.00%
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	As above	0.00%
1 – 2 Medium	1034.00	0.00	1,034.00	1034.00	0.00	1,034.00	As above	0.00%
1 – 2 High	1551.00	0.00	1,551.00	1551.00	0.00	1,551.00	As above	0.00%
3 – 7 Low	385.00	0.00	385.00	385.00	0.00	385.00	As above	0.00%
3 – 7 Medium	617.00	0.00	617.00	617.00	0.00	617.00	As above	0.00%
3 – 7 High	924.00	0.00	924.00	924.00	0.00	924.00	As above	0.00%
8 or over Low	198.00	0.00	198.00	198.00	0.00	198.00	As above	0.00%
8 or over Medium	316.00	0.00	316.00	316.00	0.00	316.00	As above	0.00%
8 or over High	473.00	0.00	473.00	473.00	0.00	473.00	As above	0.00%
Late Payment of Subsistence Fee								
All Permits	52.00	0.00	52.00	52.00	0.00	52.00	As above	0.00%
Operating without a Permit Fee								
Reduced Fee Activities	71.00	0.00	71.00	71.00	0.00	71.00	As above	0.00%
Standard Part B and A2	1188.00	0.00	1,188.00	1188.00	0.00	1,188.00	As above	0.00%
Electoral Services (D Clifford)								
Purchase of Electoral Register								
Full Register and the Notices of Alteration								
Hard copies (standard charge) plus charge (a) below	10.00	0.00	10.00	10.00	0.00	10.00	Statutory charges.	0.00%
(a) charge for each 1,000 entries	5.00	0.00	5.00	5.00	0.00	5.00	As above.	0.00%
Data format (standard charge) plus charge (b) below	20.00	0.00	20.00	20.00	0.00	20.00	As above.	0.00%
(b) charge for each 1,000 entries	1.50	0.00	1.50	1.50	0.00	1.50	As above.	0.00%
List of Overseas Electors								
Hard copies (standard charge) plus charge (c) below	10.00	0.00	10.00	10.00	0.00	10.00	As above.	0.00%
(c) charge per 100 entries	5.00	0.00	5.00	5.00	0.00	5.00	As above.	0.00%

	2022/23			2023/24			Comment 2023/24	Increase
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge		
	£	£	£	£	£	£		
Data format (standard charge) plus charge (d) below	20.00	0.00	20.00	20.00	0.00	20.00	As above.	0.00%
(d) charge per 100 entries	1.50	0.00	1.50	1.50	0.00	1.50	As above.	0.00%
Open (Edited) Register								
<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	As above.	0.00%
(e) charge per 1,000 entries	5.00	0.00	5.00	5.00	0.00	5.00	As above.	0.00%
Data format (standard charge) plus charge (f) below	20.00	0.00	20.00	20.00	0.00	20.00	As above.	0.00%
(f) charge per 1,000 entries	1.50	0.00	1.50	1.50	0.00	1.50	As above.	0.00%
Marked Polling Station and Absent Voter Registers								
Hard copies (standard charge) plus charge (g) below	10.00	0.00	10.00	10.00	0.00	10.00	As above.	0.00%
(g) charge per 1,000 entries	2.00	0.00	2.00	2.00	0.00	2.00	As above.	0.00%
Data format (standard charge) plus charge (h) below	10.00	0.00	10.00	10.00	0.00	10.00	As above.	0.00%
(h) charge per 1,000 entries	1.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	As above.	0.00%
Housing and Community Services (S Curtis)								
Liquor Licensing								
Main Application Fees for Premises and Personal Liquor Licensing								
Rateable Value B and A	100.00	0.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	Statutory fee set by Central Government.	0.00%
Rateable Value B and B	190.00	0.00	190.00	190.00	0.00	190.00	Statutory fee set by Central Government.	0.00%
Rateable Value B and C	315.00	0.00	315.00	315.00	0.00	315.00	Statutory fee set by Central Government.	0.00%
Rateable Value B and D	450.00	0.00	450.00	450.00	0.00	450.00	Statutory fee set by Central Government.	0.00%
Rateable Value B and E	635.00	0.00	635.00	635.00	0.00	635.00	Statutory fee set by Central Government.	0.00%
Main Annual Charge for Premises and Personal Liquor Licensing								
Rateable Value B and A	70.00	0.00	70.00	70.00	0.00	70.00	Statutory fee set by Central Government.	0.00%
Rateable Value B and B	180.00	0.00	180.00	180.00	0.00	180.00	Statutory fee set by Central Government.	0.00%
Rateable Value B and C	295.00	0.00	295.00	295.00	0.00	295.00	Statutory fee set by Central Government.	0.00%
Rateable Value B and D	320.00	0.00	320.00	320.00	0.00	320.00	Statutory fee set by Central Government.	0.00%
Rateable Value B and E	350.00	0.00	350.00	350.00	0.00	350.00	Statutory fee set by Central Government.	0.00%

	2022/23			2023/24			Comment 2023/24	Increase
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge		
	£	£	£	£	£	£		
Personal licence for alcohol	37.00	0.00	37.00	37.00	0.00	37.00	Statutory fee set by Central Government.	0.00%
Personal licence change	10.50	0.00	10.50	10.50	0.00	10.50	Statutory fee set by Central Government.	0.00%
Premises licence change	23.00	0.00	23.00	23.00	0.00	23.00	Statutory fee set by Central Government.	0.00%
Transfers	23.00	0.00	23.00	23.00	0.00	23.00	Statutory fee set by Central Government.	0.00%
Temporary events	21.00	0.00	21.00	21.00	0.00	21.00	Statutory fee set by Central Government.	0.00%
Register of interests	21.00	0.00	21.00	21.00	0.00	21.00	Statutory fee set by Central Government.	0.00%
Licensed Premises Gaming Machine Permit								
Grant	150.00	0.00	150.00	150.00	0.00	150.00	Statutory fee set by Central Government.	0.00%
Existing operator grant	100.00	0.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	Statutory fee set by Central Government.	0.00%
Variation	100.00	0.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	Statutory fee set by Central Government.	0.00%
Transfer	25.00	0.00	25.00	25.00	0.00	25.00	Statutory fee set by Central Government.	0.00%
Annual fee	50.00	0.00	50.00	50.00	0.00	50.00	Statutory fee set by Central Government.	0.00%
Change of name	25.00	0.00	25.00	25.00	0.00	25.00	Statutory fee set by Central Government.	0.00%
Copy of permit	15.00	0.00	15.00	15.00	0.00	15.00	Statutory fee set by Central Government.	0.00%
Licenses Premises Automatic Notification Process								
On notification	50.00	0.00	50.00	50.00	0.00	50.00	Statutory fee set by Central Government.	0.00%
Club Gaming Permits								
Grant	200.00	0.00	200.00	200.00	0.00	200.00	Statutory fee set by Central Government.	0.00%
Grant (Club Premises Certificate holder)	100.00	0.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	Statutory fee set by Central Government.	0.00%
Existing Operator Grant	100.00	0.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	Statutory fee set by Central Government.	0.00%
Variation	100.00	0.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	Statutory fee set by Central Government.	0.00%
Renewal fee	200.00	0.00	200.00	200.00	0.00	200.00	Statutory fee set by Central Government.	0.00%
Renewal (Club Premises Certificate Holder)	100.00	0.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	Statutory fee set by Central Government.	0.00%
Annual Fee	50.00	0.00	50.00	50.00	0.00	50.00	Statutory fee set by Central Government.	0.00%
Copy of permit	15.00	0.00	15.00	15.00	0.00	15.00	Statutory fee set by Central Government.	0.00%
Club Machine Permits								
Grant	200.00	0.00	200.00	200.00	0.00	200.00	Statutory fee set by Central Government.	0.00%
Grant (Club Premises Certificate holder)	100.00	0.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	Statutory fee set by Central Government.	0.00%
Existing Operator Grant	100.00	0.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	Statutory fee set by Central Government.	0.00%
Variation	100.00	0.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	Statutory fee set by Central Government.	0.00%
Renewal fee	200.00	0.00	200.00	200.00	0.00	200.00	Statutory fee set by Central Government.	0.00%
Renewal (Club Premises Certificate Holder)	100.00	0.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	Statutory fee set by Central Government.	0.00%
Annual Fee	50.00	0.00	50.00	50.00	0.00	50.00	Statutory fee set by Central Government.	0.00%
Copy of permit	15.00	0.00	15.00	15.00	0.00	15.00	Statutory fee set by Central Government.	0.00%
Family Entertainment Centre Gaming Machine Permits								
Application fee	300.00	0.00	300.00	300.00	0.00	300.00	Statutory fee set by Central Government.	0.00%
Renewal fee	300.00	0.00	300.00	300.00	0.00	300.00	Statutory fee set by Central Government.	0.00%

	2022/23			2023/24			Comment 2023/24	Increase
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge		
	£	£	£	£	£	£		
Transitional application fee	100.00	0.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	Statutory fee set by Central Government.	0.00%
Change of name	25.00	0.00	25.00	25.00	0.00	25.00	Statutory fee set by Central Government.	0.00%
Copy of permit	15.00	0.00	15.00	15.00	0.00	15.00	Statutory fee set by Central Government.	0.00%
Prize Gaming Permits								
Grant	300.00	0.00	300.00	300.00	0.00	300.00	Statutory fee set by Central Government.	0.00%
Renewal	300.00	0.00	300.00	300.00	0.00	300.00	Statutory fee set by Central Government.	0.00%
Existing Operator Grant	100.00	0.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	Statutory fee set by Central Government.	0.00%
Change of name	25.00	0.00	25.00	25.00	0.00	25.00	Statutory fee set by Central Government.	0.00%
Copy of permit	15.00	0.00	15.00	15.00	0.00	15.00	Statutory fee set by Central Government.	0.00%
Annual Fee	20.00	0.00	20.00	20.00	0.00	20.00	Statutory fee set by Central Government.	0.00%
Small Lottery Registration								
Grant	40.00	0.00	40.00	40.00	0.00	40.00	Statutory fee set by Central Government.	0.00%
Annual Fee	20.00	0.00	20.00	20.00	0.00	20.00	Statutory fee set by Central Government.	0.00%
Environment & Leisure (M Cassell)								
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	Statutory charge.	
14 days to 56 days	50.00	0.00	50.00	50.00	0.00	50.00	As above.	
57 days to 70 days	75.00	0.00	75.00	75.00	0.00	75.00	As above.	
After 70 days	82.00	0.00	82.00	82.00	0.00	82.00	As above.	
Higher Penalty System								
Up to 14 days	35.00	0.00	35.00	35.00	0.00	35.00	As above.	
14 days to 56 days	70.00	0.00	70.00	70.00	0.00	70.00	As above.	
57 days to 70 days	105.00	0.00	105.00	105.00	0.00	105.00	As above.	
After 70 days	112.00	0.00	112.00	112.00	0.00	112.00	As above.	
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	As above.	
Abandoning a vehicle	200.00	0.00	200.00	200.00	0.00	200.00	As above.	
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	As above.	
Smoking in a smoke free premises or vehicle	50.00	0.00	50.00	50.00	0.00	50.00	Statutory charge.	
Failure to display no smoking signs in smoke free premises or vehicle	200.00	0.00	200.00	200.00	0.00	200.00	Statutory charge.	

	2022/23			2023/24			Comment 2023/24	Increase
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge		
	£	£	£	£	£	£		
Smoking in an enclosed vehicle carrying a person under 18	50.00	0.00	50.00	50.00	0.00	50.00	Statutory charge.	
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								

Saving Classification	23/24	24/25	25/26	26/27	Total	Comments
Operational improvements and efficiencies						
All services - Operational	(94)	0	0	0	(94)	Various minor operational budgets (travel/subsistence/conferences etc) - historic underspends
Environment & Leisure - Operational	(13)	0	0	0	(13)	Various minor operational savings
Housing & Community - Operational	(328)	(200)	(200)	(200)	(928)	Relates mainly to assumed year on year reduction of current homelessness cost pressure through various initiatives
Policy, Governance & Customer services -Operational	(20)	0	0	0	(20)	Operational rental charges lower than anticipated
Regen & Ec dev - operational	(62)	0	0	0	(62)	Minor operational savings from New Ways of Working and reduced time in the office (£34k), freeze Greater North Kent Partnership subscriptions (assumed use of reserves from Partnership - £28k)
Contract adjustments						
Corporate Overhead -Contract	(22)	0	0	0	(22)	Savings from re-tender card payment and treasury services
Environment & Leisure - contract	(109)	(520)	(145)	0	(774)	2023/24 - Reduced litter bins from 2,500 to 2,250 (£50k), remove public convenience attendants from Sheerness and Minster Leas (£59k). 2024/25 - waste tender contract figures lower than anticipated (£520k). 2025/26 - anticipated savings from re-tendering of leisure centre contract (£145k)
Income and grants						
Environment & Leisure -Additional income	(370)	0	0	0	(370)	Additional income on current year from increased service demand/usage (car parks/street naming)
Fees & charges	(581)	(303)	(75)	0	(959)	Detail contained within Appendix 4 of the main report (fees and charges)
Discretionary grants to community and voluntary groups	(88)	(20)	0	0	(108)	Various third party discretionary grants to be discussed with relevant bodies during consultation period, including reduction in parish footway lighting grants over 2 years (£20k pa)
Members grants	(13)	0	0	0	(13)	Reduction in Members Grants to £1k per Member
Other grants	(127)	0	0	0	(127)	Cessation of annual grant process across multiple service areas including heritage and culture, sports development, tourism and countryside
Grants received	(103)	0	0	0	(103)	Slight increase in New Homes Bonus grant anticipated
Investment income	(60)	0	0	0	(60)	Additional investment income anticipated due to increasing bank base rates
Member allowances - saving from committee structure and proposed freeze	(60)	0	0	0	(60)	Savings from restructuring to the Committee system and freezing Member allowances
Member parking fee	(2)	0	0	0	(2)	Assumes new charge of £60 (inc VAT) for Member parking permits
Regen & Ec Dev - Additional income	(18)	(17)	0	0	(35)	Rent reviews in line with lease agreements
Service reconfiguration and efficiencies						
Environment & Leisure - restructure	(51)	0	0	0	(51)	Staffing reorganisation to reconfigure service delivery
Finance - restructure	(20)	0	0	0	(20)	Staffing reorganisation to reconfigure service delivery
Housing & Community - restructure	(122)	(41)	0	0	(163)	Staffing reorganisation to reconfigure service delivery
Planning - restructure	(31)	0	0	0	(31)	Staffing reorganisation to reconfigure service delivery
Regen & Ec dev - restructure	(192)	0	0	0	(192)	Staffing reorganisation to reconfigure service delivery
Revenues & Benefits - electronic billing	(10)	0	0	0	(10)	Savings from moving to electronic billing
Senior Management restructure	(100)	0	0	0	(100)	Staffing reorganisation to reconfigure service delivery
Shared Service - Operational	(40)	0	0	0	(40)	Various operational savings and staffing reorganisation to reconfigure service delivery
Shared services	0	(150)	0	0	(150)	Service transformation and potential shared service options
Suspend contribution to reserves	(178)	0	0	140	(38)	Temporarily suspend historic contributions to reserves
Savings total	(2,812)	(1,251)	(420)	(60)	(4,544)	

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Policy and Resources Committee	
Meeting Date	8 February 2023
Report Title	LGA model code of conduct
EMT Lead	David Clifford
Head of Service	Head of Policy, Governance and Customer Services – Monitoring Officer
Lead Officer	
Classification	Open
Recommendations	The committee is recommended to: 1. <i>Recommend the adoption</i> of the LGA model code of conduct to council, as a replacement for the current Swale code of conduct (§ 3.17).

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report describes the background to the LGA’s development of a model code of conduct, and sets out the main provisions of the code, highlighting differences to the current Swale code and what these differences are intended to address.
- 1.2 Following detailed consideration of the new code and the ways in which it represents an improvement over the current Swale code, the standards committee recommends to this committee and to council the adoption of the LGA code in replacement of the current Swale code.

2 Background

- 2.1 In 2018 the Committee on Standards in Public Life undertook a review into local government ethical standards, publishing its report into the matter in early 2019. The recommendations and best practice suggestions contained in the report have previously been considered by the Swale standards committee, a process which resulted in several improvements to Swale’s way of working.
- 2.2 The overwhelming majority of the 26 formal recommendations in the report were aimed at government, at least insofar as their implementation would require changes to legislation. Government published its response to the report in March 2022, essentially declining to introduce any legislative changes to parliament. One of the few recommendations which were not aimed at government was directed to the LGA, which the report recommended should develop a model councillor code of conduct.
- 2.3 The report’s executive summary included the following brief justification for this recommendation:

There is considerable variation in the length, quality and clarity of [different local authorities'] codes of conduct. This creates confusion among members of the public, and among councillors who represent more than one tier of local government. Many codes of conduct fail to address adequately important areas of behaviour such as social media use and bullying and harassment. An updated model code of conduct should therefore be available to local authorities in order to enhance the consistency and quality of local authority codes.

- 2.4 Following publication of the report, the LGA's legal team worked in consultation with the sector, including monitoring officers and standards committees, to produce a model code. The Swale standards committee was involved in this work, submitting a detailed response to the LGA's consultation on the first draft of the code. The final version of the new code was published in May 2021.
- 2.5 Swale's current code of conduct was adopted shortly after the coming into force of the relevant provisions of the Localism Act 2011. One of the effects of the 2011 Act had been to hand responsibility for member standards to individual councils within a fairly circumscribed legislative framework, reversing the earlier more centralised and prescriptive approach.
- 2.6 At the time Swale's code was being drafted, work was ongoing among Kent councils to develop a Kent-wide model, which was subsequently adopted by KCC and most districts, but not Swale. The standards committee has previously reviewed the latest version of the Kent code alongside the new LGA model code and generally found the latter to be preferable.
- 2.7 The new LGA code is quite different to Swale's current code. By law, all local authority codes have to be consistent with the seven principles of public life developed by the Committee on Standards in Public Life (the so-called 'Nolan principles': selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership). However, whereas in Swale's code these are listed at the start of the document and can have a tendency to obscure somewhat the actual substance of the code which is set out in subsequent paragraphs, in the LGA model the principles are listed in an appendix.
- 2.8 With regard to the substance of the two codes, the LGA model is more detailed and less general than Swale's. The Swale code sets out 11 paragraphs describing required behaviours, and while these are always related in some way either to probity or to decency, the relationship is arguably less clear than it could be. The LGA code offers a more specific set of behaviours which must or must not be demonstrated, as well as taking a more considered approach to disclosable interests. It is difficult to argue against the notion that it is simply a better, more comprehensive and more up-to-date code of conduct.
- 2.9 Swale's current code of conduct is provided for information at Appendix I, and the LGA model code, with its own appendices, is set out at Appendix II.

3 Proposals

Summary of the LGA code

- 3.1 The LGA code is structured as a series of statements to the effect of “As a councillor, I do/do not do X”, with these statements being grouped thematically and benefitting from some helpful supplementary explanatory text. A slightly summarised list of these statements is as follows.

As a councillor:

- 1.1 I treat other councillors and members of the public with respect.
- 1.2 I treat council staff with respect and respect the role they play.
- 2.1 I do not bully any person.
- 2.2 I do not harass any person.
- 2.3 I promote equalities and do not discriminate unlawfully against any person.
- 3.1 I do not compromise the impartiality of council officers.
- 4.1 I do not disclose confidential information unlawfully or in the absence of a duty to do so.
- 4.2 I do not improperly use knowledge gained as a councillor for personal advantage.
- 4.3 I do not prevent anyone from getting information they are entitled to by law.
- 5.1 I do not bring my role or my local authority into disrepute.
- 6.1 I do not use my position improperly to the advantage or disadvantage of myself or anyone else.
- 7.1 I do not misuse council resources.
- 7.2 I will, when using council resources, act in accordance with the council’s requirements and ensure they are not used for political purposes.
- 8.1 I undertake code of conduct training provided by my local authority.
- 8.2 I cooperate with any code of conduct investigation and/or determination.
- 8.3 I do not intimidate any person likely to be involved with the administration of any investigation or proceedings.
- 8.4 I comply with any sanction imposed on me following a finding that I have breached the code of conduct.
- 9.1 I register and disclose my interests.
- 10.1 I do not accept gifts or hospitality which could give rise to substantive personal gain, or those from persons seeking advantage from the council which could give rise to a reasonable suspicion of influence on my part to show favour.
- 10.2 I register any gift or hospitality with an estimated value of at least £50.

- 10.3 I register any significant gift or hospitality which I have been offered but have refused to accept.
- 3.2 Some of these statements are either more specific and more explicit than what is contained in the current Swale code, or are not covered by the Swale code at all. In the former category are the requirements in sections 2 and 3 on bullying, harassment and compromising the impartiality of officers, which within the Swale code are covered broadly but much less explicitly by paragraphs 5, 9 and 10. In the latter category is section 8 on positive cooperation with the code of conduct. There have been examples in the lifetime of the current council of member conduct which could have been judged to be a breach of one or more of the requirements in section 8.

Treatment of registrable interests

- 3.3 Appendix B of the LGA code sets out the requirements on the registration and disclosure of interests. The regime on disclosable pecuniary interests (DPIs) is prescribed by secondary legislation made under the 2011 Act, and the LGA code's requirements on DPIs are thus identical to Swale's current requirements. With regard to other interests, however, the two codes are quite different.
- 3.4 In place of Swale's 'disclosable non-pecuniary interests', the LGA code sets out 'other registrable interests'. The fact that such interests are 'registrable' rather than merely 'disclosable' is of relevance in contrast to interests which are disclosable but not registrable, a class of interests (described in the next section) which are not covered by the Swale code. The LGA code's list of other registrable interests is similar to Swale's but slightly expanded. It includes:
- Any unpaid directorships. (Paid directorships are DPIs.)
 - Any body of which you are a member or are in a position of general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed by your authority.
 - Any body:
 - Exercising functions of a public nature;
 - Directed to charitable purposes; or
 - One of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion (including any political party or trade union).
- 3.5 A significant difference between the LGA code and the Swale code is that where a matter to be discussed at a council meeting directly relates to an 'other registrable interest', the consequences are the same as if the interest was a DPI, so that the member must generally not participate in the discussion or vote.
- 3.6 In this sense, 'directly relates to' means that in the case of a planning application, for example, the application is made by, or the property is owned by, the relevant body. This is intentionally very narrow. The situation in which a relevant body could more broadly be affected by a decision, e.g. in relation to a planning

application for a neighbouring property, is covered by the two-tier approach to disclosable non-registrable interests described below.

Bias and the treatment of disclosable non-registrable interests

- 3.7 A reasonable criticism of the legal framework on DPis is the narrowness of its applicability, with councillors being required to disclose and register the interests only of themselves and their partners. This means that as far as the interests regime is concerned, a member could legitimately participate in a council discussion and vote on a decision about an interest, e.g. a planning application, of their parent, child, business partner or best friend of many years' standing.
- 3.8 In fact such a scenario would generally be covered by the common law provisions on presumed and apparent bias, and for the sake of the robustness of the decision, members in such a situation would be well advised to recuse themselves from participation, but there would be nothing in the code of conduct to compel this. The LGA code on the other hand does regulate such participation, taking a two-tier approach. In the first tier, where a matter to be discussed 'directly relates' to the financial interest or wellbeing of a member or that of a relative or close associate, the member is obliged to treat the matter as if they had a DPI in it.
- 3.9 The second tier seeks to resolve the tension between the common law provisions on bias on the one hand and the narrowness of the legal meaning of 'having an interest in' a matter, as established by the 2011 Act, on the other. It does this by establishing that when a matter to be discussed 'affects' either a member's own financial interest or wellbeing or that of a relative, a close associate, or a body listed as an 'other registrable interest' of the member, the member must disclose the interest. In determining whether the member may participate in the discussion and vote, two tests are then applied.
- 3.10 The first test is whether the member's financial interest or wellbeing (or that of the persons and bodies associated with them, as described) is affected to a greater extent than that of other inhabitants of the same ward. The second test is the common law test of whether a reasonable and informed observer would believe the member's view of the public interest to be affected by the existence of the interest. If, but only if, either of these tests is met, the existence of the interest is to be treated as if it were a DPI.
- 3.11 In its response to the LGA consultation on the draft code, the Swale standards committee expressed some doubt as to the wisdom of extending the code of conduct into the territory of bias in this way. The final version of the code has resolved these issues, so that the code can now operate as an effective mechanism for protecting council decision-making from members who may have a bias but still wish to participate in the decision. This is a protection which the current Swale code does not offer.

Implementation of a decision to adopt the LGA code

- 3.12 This would seem to be a timely moment to adopt a new code of conduct, with the all-out election in May likely to result in a number of new councillors being elected. There has been a somewhat renewed interest in, and focus on, member standards in Swale in the last year or so, and adoption of a new code could be a means of further raising the profile of member standards across the council.
- 3.13 It would necessarily entail a comprehensive programme of training for all members on the provisions of the new code, which in itself could have a beneficial effect in terms of raising awareness of basic requirements, as well as of the impact of adverse behaviour on the people who are victims of it. This training would sit well with the wider training to new and existing members which the member development working group will be looking to roll out after the election.
- 3.14 While training on the detail of the new code could most beneficially be undertaken when the new council is in place, it is important that all members of the council being asked to adopt the new code have an understanding of the implications for them and the council in terms of the differences between the current code and the new one. A member briefing session has therefore been arranged prior to the February council meeting, which will be an opportunity for members to familiarise themselves with the new code and ask questions about its operation.

Town and parish councils

- 3.15 As sovereign bodies, the borough's town and parish councils are free to adopt whichever code of member conduct they believe is most appropriate for them, but complaints under the code are all handled by the Swale monitoring officer. There have traditionally been two different codes in operation in different parishes, the Swale code and the model parish code developed by the National Association of Local Councils.
- 3.16 Adoption of the LGA code by Swale (and potentially also by some parishes) would mean that there would in future be three rather than two different codes in operation in the borough, in addition to the Kent code covering KCC members. However, the existence of two codes has never caused any significant issues, as long as 'twin-hatted' members are always clear on which code is applicable to them depending on the capacity in which they are operating, and it is not anticipated that the introduction of a third code to this mix would create any significant problems.

Recommendations

- 3.17 The Policy and Resources committee is now ***recommended*** to propose the adoption of the LGA model code of conduct to council as a replacement for the current Swale code of conduct.

4 Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

- 4.1 The foregoing sections of the report set out why the standards committee believes the LGA model code to be a superior code, and one that is better suited to Swale's needs, than the existing Swale code. However, there is no legal obligation to adopt the model code, and the retention of the current code is an entirely feasible option if that is members' preference.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 Members of the standards committee, led by the standards working group, have been closely involved in the decision to recommend adoption of the new code to this committee and to council. The constitution working group considered a draft of this report at its meeting on 11 January and endorsed the contents. The executive management team has also reviewed the new code and confirmed its agreement with the standards committee that it is better suited to Swale's needs than the existing code.
- 5.2 As described above, the intention is for a briefing session prior to the February council meeting to enable all members to become familiar with the new code and ask questions about it before being asked to adopt it. More comprehensive training on the new code would then form part of the training offer to members after the election during the initial months of the new council.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	Maintaining and enforcing high standards of member conduct is essential to the achievement of all of the council's corporate strategic objectives. Adoption of a new code of conduct would particularly support the objectives in the fourth corporate plan priority, to 'renew local democracy and make the council fit for the future'.
Financial, Resource and Property	No implications identified at this stage.
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	The legal implications are as set out in the body of the report. Adoption of the LGA code could have a positive impact on Swale's ability to prevent members with presumed or apparent bias from weakening the robustness of council decisions by participating in them. The introduction of the new code, perhaps particularly the enhanced provisions on interests, would need to be accompanied by a comprehensive programme of training for all members.
Crime and Disorder	No implications identified at this stage.

Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	No implications identified at this stage.
Health and Wellbeing	No significant concrete implications identified at this stage, but the effects of adverse member behaviour on the health and wellbeing of those who are the victims of it, whether other members, officers or members of the public, should not be underestimated. The LGA model code is arguably better suited to addressing problems of bullying and harassment than is the current Swale code.
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	No implications identified at this stage.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	No implications identified at this stage.
Equality and Diversity	A requirement on members to promote equality and not to discriminate unlawfully is included in the LGA model code. While a similar requirement can be read into the current Swale code, particularly paragraphs 3, 8, 9 and 10, it would probably be preferable to have the requirement stated explicitly and with sufficient clarity as to facilitate a more straightforward evaluation of alleged breaches.
Privacy and Data Protection	No implications 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: Swale's current code of conduct
- Appendix II: LGA model code of conduct

8 Background Papers

8.1 There are no background papers.

APPENDIX I: SWALE'S CURRENT CODE OF CONDUCT

As a Member or co-opted Member of *Swale Borough Council* I have a responsibility to represent the community and work constructively with our staff and partner organisations to secure better social, economic and environmental outcomes for all.

In accordance with the Localism Act provisions, when acting in this capacity I am committed to behaving in a manner that is consistent with the following principles to achieve best value for our residents and maintain public confidence in this authority:

SELFLESSNESS: Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.

INTEGRITY: Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.

OBJECTIVITY: In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

ACCOUNTABILITY: Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

OPENNESS: Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

HONESTY: Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

LEADERSHIP: Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

The Act further provides for registration and disclosure of interests and in Swale Borough Council this will be done as follows:

Registering and declaring pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests

I must, within 28 days of taking office as a Member or co-opted Member, notify my authority's Monitoring Officer of any disclosable pecuniary interest as defined by regulations made by the Secretary of State, where the pecuniary interest is mine, my spouse's or civil partner's, or is the pecuniary interest of somebody with whom I am living with as a husband or wife, or as if we were civil partners.

In addition, I must, within 28 days of taking office as a Member or co-opted Member, notify my Authority's Monitoring Officer of any disclosable pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest which my authority has decided should be included in the register.

If an interest has not been entered onto the Authority's register, I must disclose the interest to any meeting of the Authority at which I am present, where I have a disclosable interest in any matter being considered and where the matter is not a

'sensitive interest'.¹

Following any disclosure of an interest not on the Authority's register or the subject of pending notification, I must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest within 28 days beginning with the date of disclosure.

Unless dispensation has been granted, I may not participate in any discussion of, vote on, or discharge any function related to any matter in which I have a pecuniary interest as defined by regulations made by the Secretary of State. Additionally, I must observe the restrictions my Authority places on my involvement in matters where I have a pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest as defined by my Authority.

The following sets out the disclosable pecuniary interests I am required to register under the Code of Conduct, The Localism Act and the SI No. 1464 The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests Regulations 2012):

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Prescribed description</i>
Employment, office, trade, profession or vacation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.
Sponsorship	Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the relevant authority) made or provided within the relevant period in respect of any expenses incurred by M in carrying out duties as a member, or towards the election expenses of M. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 ⁽²⁾ .
Contracts	Any contract which is made between the relevant person (or a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest) and the relevant authority— (a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and (b) which has not been fully discharged.
Land	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the relevant authority.
Licences	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the relevant authority for a month or longer.

¹ A 'sensitive interest' is described in the Localism Act 2011 as a Member or co-opted Member of an authority having an interest, and the nature of the interest being such that the Member or co-opted Member, and the authority's monitoring officer, consider that disclosure of the details of the interest could lead to the Member or co-opted Member, or a person connected with the Member or co-opted Member, being subject to violence or intimidation.

⁽²⁾ 1992 c. 52.

Corporate tenancies	Any tenancy where (to M's knowledge)— (a) the landlord is the relevant authority; and (b) the tenant is a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest.
Securities	Any beneficial interest in securities of a body where— (a) that body (to M's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the relevant authority; and (b) either— (i) the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or (ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.

The following sets out disclosable non-pecuniary interests which my authority has decided should be included in the register.

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Description</i>
Appointments and nominations by the Authority	Name the outside body and the position you are appointed or nominated to e.g. member, trustee, director, observer etc. and name the Authority which appointed you e.g. Swale Borough Council.
Bodies which exercise functions of a public nature	Name the body and say what position you hold e.g. Councillor XYZ Parish Council, Governor ABC School etc.
Bodies which influence public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union)	Name the body and say what position you hold e.g. secretary or member of the ABC for Action Group, or member of ABC Trade Union

As a Member of Swale Borough Council, my conduct will in particular address the statutory principles of the Code of Conduct by:

1. Championing the needs of residents – the whole community and in a special way my constituents, including those who did not vote for me - and putting their interests first.
2. Dealing with representations or enquiries from residents, Members of our communities and visitors fairly, appropriately and impartially.
3. Not allowing other pressures, including the financial interests of myself or others connected to me, to deter me from pursuing constituents' casework, the interests of the Swale area or the good governance of the Authority in a proper manner.
4. Exercising independent judgement and not compromising my position by placing myself under obligations to outside individuals or organisations who might seek to influence the way I perform my duties as a Member/co-opted Member of this authority.
5. Listening to the interests of all parties, including relevant advice from statutory and other professional officers, taking all relevant information into consideration, remaining objective and making decisions on merit.
6. Being accountable for my decisions and co-operating when scrutinised internally and externally, including by local residents.
7. Contributing to making this Authority's decision-making processes as open and transparent as possible to enable residents to understand the reasoning behind those decisions and to be informed when holding me and other Members to account but restricting access to information when the wider public interest or the law requires it.
8. Behaving in accordance with all our legal obligations, alongside any requirements contained within this authority's policies, protocols and procedures, including on the use of the Authority's resources.
9. Valuing my colleagues and staff and engaging with them in an appropriate manner and one that underpins the mutual respect between us that is essential to good local government.
10. Always treating people with respect, including the organisations and public I engage with and those I work alongside.
11. Providing leadership through behaving in accordance with these principles when championing the interests of the community with other organisations as well as within this authority.

APPENDIX II: LGA MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT

[PDF document provided separately]

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Local Government Association

Model Councillor Code of Conduct 2020

Joint statement

The role of councillor across all tiers of local government is a vital part of our country's system of democracy. It is important that as councillors we can be held accountable and all adopt the behaviors and responsibilities associated with the role. Our conduct as an individual councillor affects the reputation of all councillors. We want the role of councillor to be one that people aspire to. We also want individuals from a range of backgrounds and circumstances to be putting themselves forward to become councillors.

As councillors, we represent local residents, work to develop better services and deliver local change. The public have high expectations of us and entrust us to represent our local area, taking decisions fairly, openly, and transparently. We have both an individual and collective responsibility to meet these expectations by maintaining high standards and demonstrating good conduct, and by challenging behaviour which falls below expectations.

Importantly, we should be able to undertake our role as a councillor without being intimidated, abused, bullied, or threatened by anyone, including the general public.

This Code has been designed to protect our democratic role, encourage good conduct and safeguard the public's trust in local government.

Introduction

The Local Government Association (LGA) has developed this Model Councillor Code of Conduct, in association with key partners and after extensive consultation with the sector, as part of its work on supporting all tiers of local government to continue to aspire to high standards of leadership and performance. It is a template for councils to adopt in whole and/or with local amendments.

All councils are required to have a local Councillor Code of Conduct.

The LGA will undertake an annual review of this Code to ensure it continues to be fit-for-purpose, incorporating advances in technology, social media and changes in legislation. The LGA can also offer support, training and mediation to councils and councillors on the application of the Code and the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) and the county associations of local councils can offer advice and support to town and parish councils.

Definitions

For the purposes of this Code of Conduct, a “councillor” means a member or co-opted member of a local authority or a directly elected mayor. A “co-opted member” is defined in the Localism Act 2011 Section 27(4) as “a person who is not a member of the authority but who

- a) is a member of any committee or sub-committee of the authority, or;
- b) is a member of, and represents the authority on, any joint committee or joint sub-committee of the authority;

and who is entitled to vote on any question that falls to be decided at any meeting of that committee or sub-committee”.

For the purposes of this Code of Conduct, “local authority” includes county councils, district councils, London borough councils, parish councils, town councils, fire and rescue authorities, police authorities, joint authorities, economic prosperity boards, combined authorities and National Park authorities.

Purpose of the Code of Conduct

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to assist you, as a councillor, in modelling the behaviour that is expected of you, to provide a personal check and balance, and to set out the type of conduct that could lead to action being taken against you. It is also to protect you, the public, fellow councillors, local authority officers and the reputation of local government. It sets out general principles of conduct expected of all councillors and your specific obligations in relation to standards of conduct. The LGA encourages the use of support, training and mediation prior to action being taken using the Code. The fundamental aim of the Code is to create and maintain public confidence in the role of councillor and local government.

General principles of councillor conduct

Everyone in public office at all levels; all who serve the public or deliver public services, including ministers, civil servants, councillors and local authority officers; should uphold the [Seven Principles of Public Life](#), also known as the Nolan Principles.

Building on these principles, the following general principles have been developed specifically for the role of councillor.

In accordance with the public trust placed in me, on all occasions:

- I act with integrity and honesty
- I act lawfully
- I treat all persons fairly and with respect; and
- I lead by example and act in a way that secures public confidence in the role of councillor.

In undertaking my role:

- I impartially exercise my responsibilities in the interests of the local community
- I do not improperly seek to confer an advantage, or disadvantage, on any person
- I avoid conflicts of interest
- I exercise reasonable care and diligence; and
- I ensure that public resources are used prudently in accordance with my local authority's requirements and in the public interest.

Application of the Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct applies to you as soon as you sign your declaration of acceptance of the office of councillor or attend your first meeting as a co-opted member and continues to apply to you until you cease to be a councillor.

This Code of Conduct applies to you when you are acting in your capacity as a councillor which may include when:

- you misuse your position as a councillor
- Your actions would give the impression to a reasonable member of the public with knowledge of all the facts that you are acting as a councillor;

The Code applies to all forms of communication and interaction, including:

- at face-to-face meetings
- at online or telephone meetings
- in written communication
- in verbal communication
- in non-verbal communication
- in electronic and social media communication, posts, statements and comments.

You are also expected to uphold high standards of conduct and show leadership at all times when acting as a councillor.

Your Monitoring Officer has statutory responsibility for the implementation of the Code of Conduct, and you are encouraged to seek advice from your Monitoring Officer on any matters that may relate to the Code of Conduct. Town and parish councillors are encouraged to seek advice from their Clerk, who may refer matters to the Monitoring

Officer.

Standards of councillor conduct

This section sets out your obligations, which are the minimum standards of conduct required of you as a councillor. Should your conduct fall short of these standards, a complaint may be made against you, which may result in action being taken.

Guidance is included to help explain the reasons for the obligations and how they should be followed.

General Conduct

1. Respect

As a councillor:

1.1 I treat other councillors and members of the public with respect.

1.2 I treat local authority employees, employees and representatives of partner organisations and those volunteering for the local authority with respect and respect the role they play.

Respect means politeness and courtesy in behaviour, speech, and in the written word. Debate and having different views are all part of a healthy democracy. As a councillor, you can express, challenge, criticise and disagree with views, ideas, opinions and policies in a robust but civil manner. You should not, however, subject individuals, groups of people or organisations to personal attack.

In your contact with the public, you should treat them politely and courteously. Rude and offensive behaviour lowers the public's expectations and confidence in councillors.

In return, you have a right to expect respectful behaviour from the public. If members of the public are being abusive, intimidatory or threatening you are entitled to stop any conversation or interaction in person or online and report them to the local authority, the relevant social media provider or the police. This also applies to fellow councillors, where action could then be taken under the Councillor Code of Conduct, and local authority employees, where concerns should be raised in line with the local authority's councillor-officer protocol.

2. Bullying, harassment and discrimination

As a councillor:

2.1 I do not bully any person.

2.2 I do not harass any person.

2.3 I promote equalities and do not discriminate unlawfully against any person.

The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) characterises bullying as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient. Bullying might be a regular pattern of behaviour or a one-off incident, happen face-to-face, on social media, in emails or phone calls, happen in the workplace or at work social events and may not always be obvious or noticed by others.

The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 defines harassment as conduct that causes alarm or distress or puts people in fear of violence and must involve such conduct on at least two occasions. It can include repeated attempts to impose unwanted communications and

contact upon a person in a manner that could be expected to cause distress or fear in any reasonable person.

Unlawful discrimination is where someone is treated unfairly because of a protected characteristic. Protected characteristics are specific aspects of a person's identity defined by the Equality Act 2010. They are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The Equality Act 2010 places specific duties on local authorities. Councillors have a central role to play in ensuring that equality issues are integral to the local authority's performance and strategic aims, and that there is a strong vision and public commitment to equality across public services.

3. Impartiality of officers of the council

As a councillor:

3.1 I do not compromise, or attempt to compromise, the impartiality of anyone who works for, or on behalf of, the local authority.

Officers work for the local authority as a whole and must be politically neutral (unless they are political assistants). They should not be coerced or persuaded to act in a way that would undermine their neutrality. You can question officers in order to understand, for example, their reasons for proposing to act in a particular way, or the content of a report that they have written. However, you must not try and force them to act differently, change their advice, or alter the content of that report, if doing so would prejudice their professional integrity.

4. Confidentiality and access to information

As a councillor:

4.1 I do not disclose information:

- a. given to me in confidence by anyone**
- b. acquired by me which I believe, or ought reasonably to be aware, is of a confidential nature, unless**
 - i. I have received the consent of a person authorised to give it;**
 - ii. I am required by law to do so;**
 - iii. the disclosure is made to a third party for the purpose of obtaining professional legal advice provided that the third party agrees not to disclose the information to any other person; or**
 - iv. the disclosure is:**
 - 1. reasonable and in the public interest; and**
 - 2. made in good faith and in compliance with the reasonable requirements of the local authority; and**
 - 3. I have consulted the Monitoring Officer prior to its release.**

4.2 I do not improperly use knowledge gained solely as a result of my role as a councillor for the advancement of myself, my friends, my family members, my employer or my business interests.

4.3 I do not prevent anyone from getting information that they are entitled to by law.

Local authorities must work openly and transparently, and their proceedings and printed materials are open to the public, except in certain legally defined circumstances. You should work on this basis, but there will be times when it is required by law that discussions, documents and other information relating to or held by the local authority must be treated in a confidential manner. Examples include personal data relating to individuals or information relating to ongoing negotiations.

5. Disrepute

As a councillor:

5.1 I do not bring my role or local authority into disrepute.

As a Councillor, you are trusted to make decisions on behalf of your community and your actions and behaviour are subject to greater scrutiny than that of ordinary members of the public. You should be aware that your actions might have an adverse impact on you, other councillors and/or your local authority and may lower the public's confidence in you or your local authority's ability to discharge your/its functions. For example, behaviour that is considered dishonest and/or deceitful can bring your local authority into disrepute.

You are able to hold the local authority and fellow councillors to account and are able to constructively challenge and express concern about decisions and processes undertaken by the council whilst continuing to adhere to other aspects of this Code of Conduct.

6. Use of position

As a councillor:

6.1 I do not use, or attempt to use, my position improperly to the advantage or disadvantage of myself or anyone else.

Your position as a member of the local authority provides you with certain opportunities, responsibilities, and privileges, and you make choices all the time that will impact others. However, you should not take advantage of these opportunities to further your own or others' private interests or to disadvantage anyone unfairly.

7. Use of local authority resources and facilities

As a councillor:

7.1 I do not misuse council resources.

7.2 I will, when using the resources of the local authority or authorising their use by others:

- a. act in accordance with the local authority's requirements; and**
- b. ensure that such resources are not used for political purposes unless that use could reasonably be regarded as likely to facilitate, or be conducive to, the discharge of the functions of the local authority or of the office to which I have been elected or appointed.**

You may be provided with resources and facilities by the local authority to assist you in carrying out your duties as a councillor.

Examples include:

- office support
- stationery
- equipment such as phones, and computers
- transport

- access and use of local authority buildings and rooms.

These are given to you to help you carry out your role as a councillor more effectively and are not to be used for business or personal gain. They should be used in accordance with the purpose for which they have been provided and the local authority's own policies regarding their use.

8. Complying with the Code of Conduct

As a Councillor:

8.1 I undertake Code of Conduct training provided by my local authority.

8.2 I cooperate with any Code of Conduct investigation and/or determination.

8.3 I do not intimidate or attempt to intimidate any person who is likely to be involved with the administration of any investigation or proceedings.

8.4 I comply with any sanction imposed on me following a finding that I have breached the Code of Conduct.

It is extremely important for you as a councillor to demonstrate high standards, for you to have your actions open to scrutiny and for you not to undermine public trust in the local authority or its governance. If you do not understand or are concerned about the local authority's processes in handling a complaint you should raise this with your Monitoring Officer.

Protecting your reputation and the reputation of the local authority

9. Interests

As a councillor:

9.1 I register and disclose my interests.

Section 29 of the Localism Act 2011 requires the Monitoring Officer to establish and maintain a register of interests of members of the authority .

You need to register your interests so that the public, local authority employees and fellow councillors know which of your interests might give rise to a conflict of interest. The register is a public document that can be consulted when (or before) an issue arises. The register also protects you by allowing you to demonstrate openness and a willingness to be held accountable. You are personally responsible for deciding whether or not you should disclose an interest in a meeting, but it can be helpful for you to know early on if others think that a potential conflict might arise. It is also important that the public know about any interest that might have to be disclosed by you or other councillors when making or taking part in decisions, so that decision making is seen by the public as open and honest. This helps to ensure that public confidence in the integrity of local governance is maintained.

You should note that failure to register or disclose a disclosable pecuniary interest as set out in **Table 1**, is a criminal offence under the Localism Act 2011.

Appendix B sets out the detailed provisions on registering and disclosing interests. If in doubt, you should always seek advice from your Monitoring Officer.

10. Gifts and hospitality

As a councillor:

- 10.1 I do not accept gifts or hospitality, irrespective of estimated value, which could give rise to real or substantive personal gain or a reasonable suspicion of influence on my part to show favour from persons seeking to acquire, develop or do business with the local authority or from persons who may apply to the local authority for any permission, licence or other significant advantage.**

- 10.2 I register with the Monitoring Officer any gift or hospitality with an estimated value of at least £50 within 28 days of its receipt.**

- 10.3 I register with the Monitoring Officer any significant gift or hospitality that I have been offered but have refused to accept.**

In order to protect your position and the reputation of the local authority, you should exercise caution in accepting any gifts or hospitality which are (or which you reasonably believe to be) offered to you because you are a councillor. The presumption should always be not to accept significant gifts or hospitality. However, there may be times when such a refusal may be difficult if it is seen as rudeness in which case you could accept it but must ensure it is publicly registered. However, you do not need to register gifts and hospitality which are not related to your role as a councillor, such as Christmas gifts from your friends and family. It is also important to note that it is appropriate to accept normal expenses and hospitality associated with your duties as a councillor. If you are unsure, do contact your Monitoring Officer for guidance.

Appendices

Appendix A – The Seven Principles of Public Life

The principles are:

Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

Integrity

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must disclose and resolve any interests and relationships.

Objectivity

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

Openness

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

Leadership

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

Appendix B Registering interests

Within 28 days of becoming a member or your re-election or re-appointment to office you must register with the Monitoring Officer the interests which fall within the categories set out in **Table 1 (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests)** which are as described in "The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012". You should also register details of your other personal interests which fall within the categories set out in **Table 2 (Other Registerable Interests)**.

"Disclosable Pecuniary Interest" means an interest of yourself, or of your partner if you are aware of your partner's interest, within the descriptions set out in Table 1 below.

"Partner" means a spouse or civil partner, or a person with whom you are living as husband or wife, or a person with whom you are living as if you are civil partners.

1. You must ensure that your register of interests is kept up-to-date and within 28 days of becoming aware of any new interest, or of any change to a registered interest, notify the Monitoring Officer.
2. A 'sensitive interest' is as an interest which, if disclosed, could lead to the councillor, or a person connected with the councillor, being subject to violence or intimidation.
3. Where you have a 'sensitive interest' you must notify the Monitoring Officer with the reasons why you believe it is a sensitive interest. If the Monitoring Officer agrees they will withhold the interest from the public register.

Non participation in case of disclosable pecuniary interest

4. Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to one of your Disclosable Pecuniary Interests as set out in **Table 1**, you must disclose the interest, not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest, just that you have an interest. Dispensation may be granted in limited circumstances, to enable you to participate and vote on a matter in which you have a disclosable pecuniary interest.
5. [Where you have a disclosable pecuniary interest on a matter to be considered or is being considered by you as a Cabinet member in exercise of your executive function, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest and must not take any steps or further steps in the matter apart from arranging for someone else to deal with it]

Disclosure of Other Registerable Interests

6. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to the financial interest or wellbeing of one of your Other Registerable Interests (as set out in **Table 2**), you must disclose the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but otherwise must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

Disclosure of Non-Registerable Interests

7. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to your financial interest or well-being (and is not a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest set out in Table 1) or a financial interest or well-being of a relative or close associate, you must disclose the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.
8. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **affects** –
 - a. your own financial interest or well-being;
 - b. a financial interest or well-being of a relative or close associate; or
 - c. a financial interest or wellbeing of a body included under Other Registerable Interests as set out in **Table 2**

you must disclose the interest. In order to determine whether you can remain in the meeting after disclosing your interest the following test should be applied

9. Where a matter (referred to in paragraph 8 above) **affects** the financial interest or well-being:
 - a. to a greater extent than it affects the financial interests of the majority of inhabitants of the ward affected by the decision and;
 - b. a reasonable member of the public knowing all the facts would believe that it would affect your view of the wider public interest

You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation.

If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

10. [Where you have an Other Registerable Interest or Non-Registerable Interest on a matter to be considered or is being considered by you as a Cabinet member in exercise of your executive function, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest and must not take any steps or further steps in the matter apart from arranging for someone else to deal with it]

Table 1: Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

This table sets out the explanation of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests as set out in the [Relevant Authorities \(Disclosable Pecuniary Interests\) Regulations 2012](#).

Subject	Description
Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.
Sponsorship	Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the council) made to the councillor during the previous 12-month period for expenses incurred by him/her in carrying out his/her duties as a councillor, or towards his/her election expenses. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.
Contracts	Any contract made between the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the

	<p>councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners (or a firm in which such person is a partner, or an incorporated body of which such person is a director* or a body that such person has a beneficial interest in the securities of*) and the council —</p> <p>(a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and</p> <p>(b) which has not been fully discharged.</p>
Land and Property	<p>Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the council.</p> <p>‘Land’ excludes an easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land which does not give the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners (alone or jointly with another) a right to occupy or to receive income.</p>
Licenses	<p>Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the council for a month or longer</p>
Corporate tenancies	<p>Any tenancy where (to the councillor’s knowledge)—</p> <p>(a) the landlord is the council; and</p> <p>(b) the tenant is a body that the councillor, or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners is a partner of or a director* of or has a beneficial interest in the securities* of.</p>
Securities	<p>Any beneficial interest in securities* of a body where—</p> <p>(a) that body (to the councillor’s knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the council; and</p> <p>(b) either—</p> <p>(i) the total nominal value of the securities* exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or</p> <p>(ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the councillor, or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were</p>

	spouses/civil partners have a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.
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* 'director' includes a member of the committee of management of an industrial and provident society.

* 'securities' means shares, debentures, debenture stock, loan stock, bonds, units of a collective investment scheme within the meaning of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and other securities of any description, other than money deposited with a building society.

Table 2: Other Registrable Interests

You must register as an Other Registrable Interest :

- a) any unpaid directorships
- b) any body of which you are a member or are in a position of general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed by your authority
- c) any body
 - (i) exercising functions of a public nature
 - (ii) directed to charitable purposes or
 - (iii) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union)

of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management

Appendix C – the Committee on Standards in Public Life

The LGA has undertaken this review whilst the Government continues to consider the recommendations made by the Committee on Standards in Public Life in their report on [Local Government Ethical Standards](#). If the Government chooses to implement any of the recommendations, this could require a change to this Code.

The recommendations cover:

- Recommendations for changes to the Localism Act 2011 to clarify in law when the Code of Conduct applies
- The introduction of sanctions
- An appeals process through the Local Government Ombudsman
- Changes to the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012
- Updates to the Local Government Transparency Code
- Changes to the role and responsibilities of the Independent Person
- That the criminal offences in the Localism Act 2011 relating to Disclosable Pecuniary Interests should be abolished

The Local Government Ethical Standards report also includes Best Practice recommendations. These are:

Best practice 1: Local authorities should include prohibitions on bullying and harassment in codes of conduct. These should include a definition of bullying and harassment, supplemented with a list of examples of the sort of behaviour covered by such a definition.

Best practice 2: Councils should include provisions in their code of conduct requiring councillors to comply with any formal standards investigation and prohibiting trivial or malicious allegations by councillors.

Best practice 3: Principal authorities should review their code of conduct each year and regularly seek, where possible, the views of the public, community organisations and neighbouring authorities.

Best practice 4: An authority's code should be readily accessible to both councillors and the public, in a prominent position on a council's website and available in council premises.

Best practice 5: Local authorities should update their gifts and hospitality register at least once per quarter, and publish it in an accessible format, such as CSV.

Best practice 6: Councils should publish a clear and straightforward public interest test against which allegations are filtered.

Best practice 7: Local authorities should have access to at least two Independent Persons.

Best practice 8: An Independent Person should be consulted as to whether to undertake a formal investigation on an allegation, and should be given the option to

review and comment on allegations which the responsible officer is minded to dismiss as being without merit, vexatious, or trivial.

Best practice 9: Where a local authority makes a decision on an allegation of misconduct following a formal investigation, a decision notice should be published as soon as possible on its website, including a brief statement of facts, the provisions of the code engaged by the allegations, the view of the Independent Person, the reasoning of the decision-maker, and any sanction applied.

Best practice 10: A local authority should have straightforward and accessible guidance on its website on how to make a complaint under the code of conduct, the process for handling complaints, and estimated timescales for investigations and outcomes.

Best practice 11: Formal standards complaints about the conduct of a parish councillor towards a clerk should be made by the chair or by the parish council, rather than the clerk in all but exceptional circumstances.

Best practice 12: Monitoring Officers' roles should include providing advice, support and management of investigations and adjudications on alleged breaches to parish councils within the remit of the principal authority. They should be provided with adequate training, corporate support and resources to undertake this work.

Best practice 13: A local authority should have procedures in place to address any conflicts of interest when undertaking a standards investigation. Possible steps should include asking the Monitoring Officer from a different authority to undertake the investigation.

Best practice 14: Councils should report on separate bodies they have set up or which they own as part of their annual governance statement and give a full picture of their relationship with those bodies. Separate bodies created by local authorities should abide by the Nolan principle of openness and publish their board agendas and minutes and annual reports in an accessible place.

Best practice 15: Senior officers should meet regularly with political group leaders or group whips to discuss standards issues.

The LGA has committed to reviewing the Code on an annual basis to ensure it is still fit for purpose.

Policy and Resources Committee	
Meeting Date	8 February 2023
Report Title	Treasury Management Strategy 2023/24
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 Olga Cole, Management Accountant
Key Decision	Yes
Classification	Open
Recommendations	1. To approve the Treasury Management Strategy 2023/24 and the Prudential and Treasury Management Indicators.

1. Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 Treasury management is the management of the Council’s cash flows, borrowing and investments, and the associated risks. The Council has invested substantial sums of money and is therefore exposed to financial risks including the loss of invested funds and the revenue effect of changing interest rates. The successful identification, monitoring and control of financial risk are therefore central to the Council’s prudent financial management.
- 1.2 Treasury risk management at the Council is conducted within the framework of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy’s Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice 2021 Edition (the CIPFA Code) which requires the Council to approve a treasury management strategy before the start of each financial year. This report fulfils the Council’s legal obligation under the Local Government Act 2003 to have regard to the CIPFA Code.

2. External Context

- 2.1 The ongoing impact on the UK from the war in Ukraine, together with higher inflation, higher interest rates, uncertain government policy, and a deteriorating economic outlook, will be major influences on the Council’s treasury management strategy for 2023/24.
- 2.2 The Bank of England (BoE) increased Bank Rate by 0.5% to 3.5% in December 2022. This followed a 0.75% rise in November which was the largest single rate hike since 1989 and the ninth successive rise since December 2021.
- 2.3 The November quarterly Monetary Policy Report (MPR) forecast a prolonged but shallow recession in the UK with CPI inflation remaining elevated at over 10% in the near-term. While the projected peak of inflation is lower than in the August report, due in part to the government’s support package for household energy costs, inflation is expected to remain higher for longer over the forecast horizon and the economic outlook remains weak, with unemployment projected to start rising.

- 2.4 The UK economy contracted by 0.3% between July and September 2022 according to the Office for National Statistics, and the BoE forecasts Gross Domestic Product (GDP) will decline 0.75% in the second half of the calendar year due to the squeeze on household income from higher energy costs and goods prices. Growth is then expected to continue to fall throughout 2023 and the first half of 2024.
- 2.5 The weakening economic picture during 2022 led the credit rating agencies to reflect this in their assessment of the outlook for the UK sovereign as well as several local authorities and financial institutions, revising them to negative from stable.
- 2.6 There are competing tensions in the banking sector which could impact bank balance sheet strength going forward. The weakening economic outlook and likely recessions in many regions increase the possibility of a deterioration in the quality of banks' assets, while higher interest rates provide a boost to net income and profitability.
- 2.7 However, the institutions on our adviser Arlingclose's counterparty list remain well-capitalised and their counterparty advice on both recommended institutions and maximum duration remain under constant review and will continue to reflect economic conditions and the credit outlook.

3. Background

Interest Rate Forecast and Market Outlook

- 3.1 The Council's treasury management adviser Arlingclose forecasts that Bank Rate will continue to rise in 2023 as the Bank of England attempts to subdue inflation which is significantly above its 2% target.
- 3.2 While interest rate expectations reduced during October and November 2022, multiple interest rate rises are still expected over the forecast horizon despite the looming recession. Arlingclose expects Bank Rate to rise to 4.25% by June 2023 under its central case, with the risks in the near- and medium-term to the upside should inflation not evolve as the Bank forecasts and remains persistently higher.
- 3.3 Yields are expected to remain broadly at current levels over the medium-term, with 5-, 10- and 20-year gilt yields expected to average around 3.6%, 3.7%, and 3.9% respectively over the 3-year period to September 2025. The risks for short, medium and longer-term yields are judged to be broadly balanced over the forecast horizon. As ever, there will undoubtedly be short-term volatility due to economic and political uncertainty and events.

Official Bank Rate	Curr ent	Dec- 22	Mar- 23	Jun- 23	Sep- 23	Dec- 23	Mar- 24	Jun- 24	Sep- 24	Mar- 22	Jun- 25	Sep- 25	Dec- 25
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Upside Risk	0.00	0.25	0.50	0.75	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.25	1.50	1.75	1.50	1.25	1.25
Arlingclose	3.00	3.50	4.00	4.25	4.25	4.25	4.25	4.00	3.75	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50
Downside Risk	0.00	0.25	0.50	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00

- 3.4 For the purpose of setting the 2023/24 budget, it has been assumed that new treasury investments will be made at an average rate of 2%, and that new short-term loans will be borrowed at an average rate of 4.20%.

Borrowing Strategy

- 3.5 The Council's chief objective, when borrowing money, is to strike an appropriately low risk balance between securing low interest costs and achieving certainty of those costs over the period for which funds are required. The flexibility to renegotiate loans should the Council's long-term plans change is a secondary objective.
- 3.6 The Council currently holds £10 million of loans, as part of its strategy for funding previous years' capital programmes. The Council may borrow additional sums to pre-fund future years' requirements, providing this does not exceed the authorised limit for borrowing of £57 million.
- 3.7 Councils are required to balance their revenue budget annually and cannot borrow to achieve a balanced position. However, they have very far reaching powers to borrow to fund capital expenditure. This has historically been funded from borrowing from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB), which is part of the Debt Management Office which is part of the Treasury. Borrowing can be for up to 50 years at rates which are below commercial rates.
- 3.8 CIPFA has published its revised Prudential Code and Treasury Management Code of Practice and these are available for sale on the CIPFA publications website. The Revised Prudential Code took effect from December 2021, although authorities may defer introducing the revised reporting requirements until the 2023/24 financial year if they wish. It particularly highlights that the requirement that local authorities must not borrow to invest primarily for financial return applies with immediate effect. In August 2021 HM Treasury significantly revised their PWLB guidance. This includes a statement highlighting that the government and CIPFA are clear that borrowing to invest for yield is not permitted under the prudential framework. This Council has had a clear policy of not borrowing for income purposes.
- 3.9 Given the significant cuts to public expenditure and in particular to local government funding, the Council's borrowing strategy continues to address the key issue of affordability without compromising the longer-term stability of the debt portfolio. With short-term interest rates currently lower than long-term rates, it is likely to be more cost effective in the short-term to either use internal resources, or to borrow short-term loans instead of borrowing at fixed rates for long periods. By doing so, the Council is able to reduce net borrowing costs (despite foregone investment income) and reduce overall treasury risk. The benefits of internal/short-term borrowing will be monitored regularly. Arlingclose will assist the Council with this 'cost of carry' and breakeven analysis. Its output may determine whether the Council borrows additional sums at long-term fixed rates in 2023/24 with a view to keeping future interest costs low, even if this causes additional cost in the short-term.

3.10 The Council may also consider forward starting loans, where the interest rate is fixed in advance, but the cash is received in later years. This would enable certainty of cost to be achieved without suffering a “cost of carry” in the intervening period. In addition, the Council may borrow short-term loans to cover unplanned cash flow shortages.

3.11 The approved sources of long-term and short-term borrowing are:

- HM Treasury’s PWLB Lending facility (formerly the Public Works Loan Board)
- Any institution approved for investments
- UK Local Authorities
- Any other UK public sector body
- Any other bank or building society authorised to operate in the UK
- UK public and private sector pension funds (except the Kent Pension Fund)
- Capital market bond investors
- UK Municipal Bonds Agency plc and other special purpose companies created to enable local authority bond issues.

3.12 In addition, capital finance may be raised by the following methods that are not borrowing, but may be classed as other debt liabilities:

- Leasing
- Hire Purchase
- Private Finance Initiative
- Sale and Leaseback

3.13 The Council has the following loans outstanding:

Lender	Amount (£ million)	Borrowing rate	Start Date of Loan	Maturity Date of loan	Duration
West Midlands Combined Authority	5	1.05 %	07/04/2022	06/04/2023	12 months
London Borough of Islington	5	0.40 %	28/02/2022	27/02/2023	12 months
Total	10				

Rainbow Homes

- 3.14 In March 2020, the Cabinet approved proposals to set up a housing company which will help deliver affordable homes for local people without placing financial burden on the Council. Council-owned land would be transferred to the company to provide around 139 new properties, in exchange for an equity share in the company. The estimated build costs, energy efficiency and lifecycle costs of developing, managing and maintaining the initially planned 139 properties to be up to £23 million, which would be initially paid for through a 50-year loan to the company.
- 3.15 Short-term and variable rate loans: These loans leave the Authority exposed to the risk of short-term interest rate rises and are therefore subject to the interest rate exposure limits in the treasury management indicators below.
- 3.16 Debt rescheduling: The PWLB allows authorities to repay loans before maturity and either pay a premium or receive a discount according to a set formula based on current interest rates. Other lenders may also be prepared to negotiate premature redemption terms. The Council may take advantage of this and replace some loans with new loans, or repay loans without replacement, where this is expected to lead to an overall cost saving or a reduction in risk. As we currently don't have any long-term loans, this would not be applicable to 2023-24.

Investment Strategy

- 3.17 The Council holds significant invested funds, representing income received in advance of expenditure plus balances and reserves held. In the past 12 months, the Council's investment balance has averaged £33m compared with £38m in the previous financial year. The contribution that these investments make to the objectives of the Council is to support effective treasury management activities.
- 3.18 The CIPFA Code requires the Council to invest its funds prudently, and to have regard to the security and liquidity of its investments before seeking the highest rate of return, or yield. The Council's objective when investing money is to strike an appropriate balance between risk and return, minimising the risk of incurring losses from defaults and the risk of receiving unsuitably low investment income. Where balances are expected to be invested for more than one year, the Council will aim to achieve a total return that is equal or higher than the prevailing rate of inflation, in order to maintain the spending power of the sum invested. The Council aims to be a responsible investor and will consider environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues when investing
- 3.19 The Council largely uses Money Market Funds and the Debt Management office for short-term investments. The only long-term investment remains the £3 million in the Church, Charities and Local Authorities (CCLA) Property Fund.

- 3.20 **Environmental, Social and Governance Policy (ESG):** considerations are increasingly a factor in global investors' decision making, but the framework for evaluating investment opportunities is still developing and therefore the Council's ESG policy does not currently include ESG scoring or other real-time ESG criteria at an individual investment level. When investing in banks and funds, the Council will prioritise banks that are signatories to the UN Principles for Responsible Banking and funds operated by managers that are signatories to the UN Principles for Responsible Investment, the Net Zero Asset Managers Alliance and/or the UK Stewardship Code.
- 3.21 **Business models:** Under the International Financial Reporting Standard (IFRS) 9 the accounting for certain investments depends on the Council's "business model" for managing them. The Council aims to achieve value from its treasury investments by a business model of collecting the contractual cash flows and therefore, where other criteria are also met, these investments will continue to be accounted for at amortised cost.
- 3.22 The Council could make use of the following asset classes for both Treasury and Non Treasury investments:

Treasury Investments	
Government	Loans to, and bonds and bills issued or guaranteed by, national governments, regional and local authorities and multilateral development banks. These investments are not subject to bail-in, and there is generally a lower risk of insolvency, although they are not zero risk. Investments with the UK Government are deemed to be low credit risk due to its ability to create additional currency and therefore may be made in unlimited amounts for up to 50 years.
Banks and Building Societies (unsecured)	Accounts, deposits, certificates of deposit and senior unsecured bonds with banks and building societies, other than multilateral development banks. These investments are subject to the risk of credit loss via a bail-in should the regulator determine that the bank is failing or likely to fail. See below for arrangements relating to operational bank accounts
Operational Bank Accounts	The Council may incur operational exposures, for example through current accounts, collection accounts and merchant acquiring services, to any UK bank with credit ratings no lower than BBB- and with assets greater than £25 billion. These are not classed as investments but are still subject to the risk of a bank bail-in, and balances will therefore be kept below £500,000 per bank. The Bank of England has stated that in the event of failure, banks with assets greater than £25 billion are more likely to be bailed-in than made insolvent, increasing the chance of the Council maintaining operational continuity.
Money Market Funds	Pooled funds that offer same-day or short notice liquidity and very low or no price volatility by investing in short-term money markets. They have the advantage over bank accounts of providing wide diversification of investment risks, coupled with the services of a professional fund manager in return for a small fee. Although no sector limit applies to money market funds, the Council will take care to diversify its liquid investments over a variety of providers to ensure access to cash at all times

Strategic Pooled Funds	Bond, equity and property funds offer enhanced returns over the longer term, but are more volatile in the short term. These allow the Council to diversify into asset classes other than cash without the need to own and manage the underlying investments. Because these funds have no defined maturity date, but are available for withdrawal after a notice period, their performance and continued suitability in meeting the Council's investment objectives will be monitored regularly.
Registered Providers (unsecured)	Loans to, and bonds issued or guaranteed by, registered providers of social housing and registered social landlords, formerly known as housing associations. These bodies are regulated by the Regulator of Social Housing. As providers of public services, they retain the likelihood of receiving government support if needed.
Secured investments	Investments secured on the borrower's assets, which limits the potential losses in the event of insolvency. The amount and quality of the security will be a key factor in the investment decision. Covered bonds and reverse repurchase agreements with banks and building societies are exempt from bail-in. Where there is no investment specific credit rating, but the collateral upon which the investment is secured has a credit rating, the higher of the collateral credit rating and the counterparty credit rating will be used. The combined secured and unsecured investments with any one counterparty will not exceed the cash limit for secured investments.
Other Investments	This category covers treasury investments not listed above, for example unsecured corporate bonds and company loans. Non-bank companies cannot be bailed-in but can become insolvent placing the Council's investment at risk.
Non-Treasury Investments	
Non-Treasury Investments	The Council invests in property in the borough and will, where there are opportunities, consider further investment, where this is primarily related to the functions of the Council such as service delivery and regeneration. However, the Council will not borrow to invest primarily for financial return.

- 3.23 The Council will retain the CCLA property fund and keep the remaining monies primarily in Money Market Funds and the Debt Management Account Deposit Facility (DMADF) (an investment facility operated by the UK Government). The Director of Resources does not believe that investing in equity or bond funds is advisable at the current time, given equity market valuations and the impact on bond investments. This will be reviewed as market conditions develop.
- 3.24 Currently the Council makes no direct investments in equities or corporate bonds. If this changed in the year the Director of Resources will ensure that investments are consistent with the Council's health and climate change objectives.
- 3.25 Credit ratings are obtained and monitored by the Council's treasury advisers, who will notify changes in ratings as they occur. Where an entity has its credit rating downgraded, so that it fails to meet the approved investment criteria then:
- no new investments will be made;
 - any existing investments that can be recalled or sold at no cost will be; and,
 - full consideration will be given to the recall or sale of all other existing investments with the affected counterparty.

- 3.26 Where a credit rating agency announces that a credit rating is on review for possible downgrade (also known as “rating watch negative” or “credit watch negative”) so that it may fall below the approved rating criteria, then only investments that can be withdrawn on the next working day will be made with that organisation until the outcome of the review is announced. This policy will not apply to negative outlooks, which indicate a long-term direction of travel, rather than an imminent change of rating.
- 3.27 The Council understands that credit ratings are good, but not perfect, predictors of investment default. Full regard will, therefore, be given to other available information on the credit quality of the organisations in which it invests, including credit default swap prices, financial statements, information on potential government support and reports in the quality financial press and analysis and advice from the Council’s treasury management adviser. No investments will be made with an organisation if there are substantive doubts about its credit quality, even though it may meet the credit rating criteria.
- 3.28 When deteriorating financial market conditions affect the creditworthiness of all organisations, as happened in 2008 and 2020, this is not generally reflected in credit ratings, but can be seen in other market measures. In these circumstances, the Council will restrict its investments to those organisations of higher credit quality and reduce the maximum duration of its investments to maintain the required level of security. The extent of these restrictions will be in line with prevailing financial market conditions. If these restrictions mean that insufficient commercial organisations of high credit quality are available to invest the Council’s cash balances, then the surplus will be deposited with the UK Government, or with other local authorities. This will cause investment returns to fall, but will protect the principal sum invested.
- 3.29 The Council currently has the following Investments:

Counterparty	Average Rate %	Balance Invested at 30 December 2022 £'000
Debt Management Office (Bank of England)	3.18	7,500
Invesco Money Market Fund	3.22	3,000
DWS (Deutsche) Money Market Fund	3.43	3,000
Goldman Sachs Money Market Fund	3.18	3,000
Aberdeen Standard Money Market Fund	3.23	3,000
Black Rock Money Market Fund	3.21	3,000
JP Morgan Money Market Fund	3.15	3,000
Morgan Stanley Money Market Fund	3.18	3,000
SSGA Money Market Fund	3.13	2,830
CCLA Property Fund	3.84	3,000
Total Investments		34,330

- 3.30 The definition of investments in CIPFA’s revised Codes now covers all the financial assets of the Council, as well as other non-financial assets which the Council holds primarily for financial return. This is replicated in the 2018 Investment Guidance from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), in which the definition of investments is further broadened to also include all such assets held partially for financial return. The Prudential and Treasury Management Codes now have detailed definitions of treasury, service and commercial investments.
- 3.31 The Council has not made, and will not make, any direct commercial investments outside of the Borough. Capital funds will be used for the benefit of local residents.
- 3.32 At 31 March 2022 the Council held £4.03 million of longstanding investments in 13 directly owned properties. These investments generated £0.2 million of investment income for the Council in 2021/22 after taking account of direct costs, representing a rate of return of 5.2%. No significant change in this Investment is anticipated in 2023/24.
- 3.33 Although not strictly counted as investments, since no money has exchanged hands yet, loan commitments carry similar risks to the Council and are included here for completeness.
- 3.34 The loans made by the Council are shown below:

	31 March 2022
	£'000
Housing repair loans	1,949
Employee car loans	80
Other debtors	4,040
Total	6,069

- 3.35 The main risk when making service loans is that the borrower will be unable to repay the principal lent and/or the interest due. In order to limit this risk, a loss allowance is calculated for each debt reflecting the statistical likelihood that the debtor will be unable to meet their contractual commitments to the Council, which for 2021/22 was £0.2 million. The loss allowance has been calculated by reference to the Council’s historic experience of default. In addition, to mitigate risk, all debts have to be managed in accordance with the Council’s Financial Regulations.
- 3.36 The most significant loans shown are the Housing Repair Loans which are loans for private sector housing home adaptations – landlords and owner-occupiers can apply for a loan for adaptations that will enable them to stay in their own homes. The risk relating to these loans is low as they are a charge of the property and are repayable when a property is sold.
- 3.37 An analysis of short-term debtors is reported to Policy and Resources committee as part of the quarterly Financial Management Report.

4. Proposal

- 4.1 The Council may invest its surplus funds with any of the counterparty types in the table below, subject to the cash limits (per counterparty) and the time limits shown.

Counterparty	Time Limit	Cash Limits
The UK Government	50 years	Unlimited
Local Authorities and other government entities	25 years	£3m
Major UK banks / building societies unsecured deposits*	13 months	£3m
Leeds Building Society unsecured deposits*	As per credit advice	£1.5m
Close Brothers unsecured deposits*	As per credit advice	£1.5m
Money Market Funds*	n/a**	£3m each
Strategic Pooled Funds e.g., Absolute return, Equity income, Corporate Bond Funds, Multi Asset Funds	n/a**	£3m each
CCLA Property Fund	n/a**	£3m
Registered providers (unsecured) *	5 years	£3m in aggregate
Secured Investments*	25 years	£3m in aggregate
Other Investments *	5 years	£3m in aggregate
Non treasury investments	As per credit advice	To be agreed on a case by case basis

* Minimum credit rating: Treasury investments in the sectors marked with an asterisk will only be made with entities whose lowest published long-term credit rating is no lower than [A-]. Where available, the credit rating relevant to the specific investment or class of investment is used, otherwise the counterparty credit rating is used. However, investment decisions are never made solely based on credit ratings, and all other relevant factors including external advice will be taken into account.

- 4.2 The Director of Resources in consultation with the Chair of Policy and Resources committee may consider longer duration depending on market conditions.

- 4.3 The Council may also purchase property for investment purposes, but the Council will not borrow to invest primarily for financial return. The Council may also make loans and investments for service purposes, for example in shared ownership housing, as loans to local businesses and landlords, or as equity investments and loans to the Council's owned companies, in line with existing policies and where there is a sound business case.

- 4.4 The Council does not directly invest in financial derivatives although these may be present in pooled funds and will be managed in line with the overall treasury strategy. The Council will only use standalone financial derivatives (such as swaps, forwards, futures and options) where they can be clearly demonstrated to reduce the overall level of the financial risks that the Council is exposed to. In line with the CIPFA Code, the Council will seek external advice and will consider that advice before entering into financial derivatives to ensure that it fully understands the implications. Financial derivative transactions may be arranged with any organisation that meets the approved investment criteria, assessed using the appropriate credit rating for derivative exposures. An allowance for credit risk calculated using the methodology in the Treasury Management Practices document will count against the counterparty credit limit and the relevant foreign country limit.
- 4.5 The Director of Resources ensures that any commercial deals meet the regulatory requirements and the CIPFA prudential framework.

Treasury Adviser

- 4.6 The Council has appointed Arlingclose Limited as its treasury management adviser and receives specific advice on investment, debt and capital finance issues. Officers meet with Arlingclose on a quarterly basis, receive information daily and attend relevant training courses.
- 4.7 The day-to-day treasury management activity is undertaken on the Council's behalf by Kent County Council's Treasury & Investments team to the criteria set out in this report. This has been particularly beneficial in using their relationships to obtain the low-cost loans from other Councils.

5. Alternative Options

- 5.1 The Strategy is intended to give flexibility with regard to borrowing and investment options.
- 5.2 The CIPFA Code does not prescribe any particular treasury management strategy for local authorities to adopt. The Director of Resources believes that the above Strategy represents an appropriate balance between risk management and cost effectiveness. Some alternative strategies, with their financial and risk management implications, are listed below.

Alternative	Impact on income and expenditure	Impact on risk management
Invest in a narrower range of counterparties and/or for shorter times	Interest income will be lower	Lower chance of losses from credit related defaults, but any such losses may be greater
Invest in a wider range of counterparties and/or for longer times	Interest income will be higher	Increased risk of losses from credit related defaults, but any such losses may be smaller

Alternative	Impact on income and expenditure	Impact on risk management
Borrow additional sums at long-term fixed interest rates	Debt interest costs will rise; need to ensure that this is offset by higher investment income	Higher investment balance leading to a higher impact in the event of a default; however long-term interest costs may be more certain
Borrow short-term or variable loans instead of long-term fixed rates	Debt interest costs will initially be lower	Increases in debt interest costs will be broadly offset by rising investment income in the medium term, but long-term costs may be less certain

6. Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

6.1 Consultation has been taken with Arlingclose.

7. Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	Good management of the Council's cash balances assists the overall financial position of the Council and this helps to meet the emerging Corporate Plan objectives.
Financial, Resource and Property	The budget for net investment income in 2023/24 is £(147,000).
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	Government and CIPFA requirements complied with.
Crime and Disorder	Not applicable
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	Not applicable
Health and Wellbeing	Not applicable
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	Not applicable
Risk Management and Health and Safety	Risk is controlled through adherence to specific guidance included in CIPFA's Treasury Management Code of Practice and Cross-Sectoral Guidance Notes. The principle of security of funds over-rides investment performance considerations.
Equality and Diversity	Not applicable
Privacy and Data Protection	Not applicable

8. Appendices

8.1 The following appendices are published with this report and form part of the report.

- Appendix I Treasury Management Prudential Indicators

9. Background Papers

None

Acronyms Used:

BoE	The Bank of England
CCLA	Church, Charities and Local Authorities
CFR	Capital Financing Requirement
CIPFA	The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy
DLUHC	Department of Levelling Up, Housing & Communities
DMADF	Debt Management Account Deposit Facility
MHCLG	Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
PWLB	Public Works Loan Board
STC	Sittingbourne Town Centre

Treasury Management Prudential Indicators

Background

There is a requirement under the Local Government Act 2003 for local authorities to have regard to CIPFA's Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (the "CIPFA Prudential Code") when setting and reviewing their Prudential Indicators. The objectives of the Prudential Code are to ensure, within a clear framework, that the capital investment plans of local authorities are affordable, prudent and sustainable, and that treasury management decisions are taken in accordance with good professional practice. To demonstrate that the Council has fulfilled these objectives, the Prudential Code sets out the following indicators that must be set and monitored each year.

Gross Debt and the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)

This is a key indicator of prudence. Statutory guidance states that external debt should not exceed the capital financing requirement in the previous year plus the estimates of any increase in the CFR at the end of the current year and the next two years. The table below demonstrates that the Council is complying with this aspect of the Prudential Code.

Gross Debt and the Capital Financing Requirement	2022/23 Revised	2023/24 Estimate	2024/25 Estimate	2025/26 Estimate
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Capital Financing Requirements	50,043	53,996	61,000	67,803
Gross External Debt	(10,000)	(30,000)	(35,000)	(50,000)
Internal Borrowing	40,043	23,996	26,000	17,803

Estimates of Capital Expenditure

This indicator is set to ensure that the level of proposed capital expenditure remains within sustainable limits and, in particular, to consider the impact on Council Tax. (See Capital Programme in 2023/24 Budget Report to Policy and Resources Committee.)

Capital Expenditure and Financing	2022/23 Revised	2023/24 Estimate	2024/25 Estimate	2025/26 Estimate
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Total Expenditure	13,089	26,522	29,711	9,963
Revenue contributions	2,894	50	509	0
Capital receipts	74	2,463	0	0
Grants	7,031	9,574	14,602	2,163
Internal/ External borrowing	3,090	14,435	14,600	7,800
Total Financing	13,089	26,522	29,711	9,963

Treasury Management Prudential Indicators

Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream

This is an indicator of affordability, highlighting the revenue implications of existing and proposed capital expenditure by identifying the proportion of the revenue budget required to meet financing costs, net of investment income.

Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream	2022/23 Revised	2023/24 Estimate	2024/25 Estimate	2025/26 Estimate
	%	%	%	%
General Fund Total	6.81	6.62	6.84	5.25

Authorised Limit for External Debt

The Authorised Limit sets the maximum level of external borrowing on a gross basis (i.e., not net of investments) for the Council. It is measured on a daily basis against all external borrowing items on the Balance Sheet (i.e., long and short-term borrowing, overdrawn bank balances and long-term liabilities). This Prudential Indicator separately identifies borrowing from other long-term liabilities such as finance leases. It is consistent with the Council's existing commitments, its proposals for capital expenditure and financing, and its approved treasury management policy statement and practices.

The Authorised Limit has been set on the estimate of the most likely, prudent but not worst-case scenario with sufficient headroom over and above this to allow for unusual cash movements.

The Authorised Limit is the statutory limit determined under Section 3(1) of the Local Government Act 2003 (referred to in the legislation as the Affordable Limit).

Authorised Limit for External Debt	2022/23 Revised	2023/24 Estimate	2024/25 Estimate	2025/26 Estimate
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Borrowing	60,000	55,000	55,000	50,000
Other long-term liabilities	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000
Total	62,000	57,000	57,000	52,000

Treasury Management Prudential Indicators

Operational Boundary for External Debt

The operational boundary is based on the Council's estimate of most likely (i.e., prudent but not worst case) scenario for external debt. It links directly to the Council's estimates of capital expenditure, the capital financing requirement and cash flow requirements, and is a key management tool for in-year monitoring. Other long-term liabilities comprise finance lease and other liabilities that are not borrowing but form part of the Council's debt.

Operational Boundary	2022/23 Revised £'000	2023/24 Estimate £'000	2024/25 Estimate £'000	2025/26 Estimate £'000
Borrowing	40,000	45,000	45,000	40,000
Other long-term liabilities	500	500	500	500
Total Operational Boundary	40,500	45,500	45,500	40,500

Interest Rate Exposures: This indicator is set to control the Council's exposure to interest rate risk. The upper limits on the one-year revenue impact of a 1% rise or fall in interest rates will be:

Interest rate risk indicator	Limit
Upper limit on one-year revenue impact of a 1% <u>rise</u> in interest rates	£(250,000)
Upper limit on one-year revenue impact of a 1% <u>fall</u> in interest rates	£250,000

Maturity Structure of Borrowing

This indicator is set to control the Council's exposure to refinancing risk. The upper and lower limits on the maturity structure of fixed rate borrowing will be:

Maturity Structure of Borrowing	Lower Limit for 2023/24 %	Upper Limit for 2023/24 %
Under 12 months	0	100
12 months and within 24 months	0	100
24 months and within 5 years	0	100
5 years and within 10 years	0	100
10 years and above	0	100

Treasury Management Prudential Indicators

Long-term treasury management investments

The purpose of this indicator is to control the Council's exposure to the risk of incurring losses by seeking early repayment of its investments. The prudential limits on the long-term treasury management investments will be:

Price Risk Indicator	2023/24 Estimate £'000	2024/25 Estimate £'000	2025/26 Estimate £'000	No Fixed Date £'000
Limit on principal invested longer than 1 year	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000

Long-term investments with no fixed maturity date include strategic pooled funds and real estate investment trusts but exclude money market funds and bank accounts with no fixed maturity date as these are considered short-term.

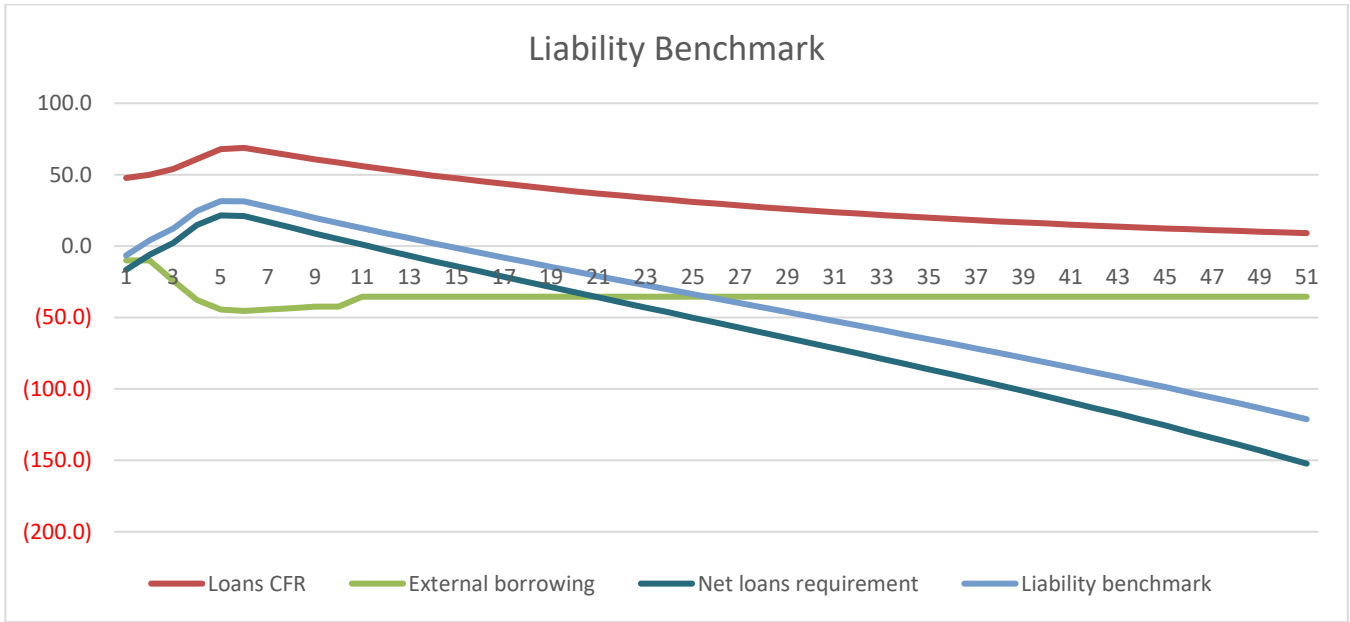
Liability benchmark: To compare the Council's actual borrowing against an alternative strategy, a liability benchmark has been calculated showing the lowest risk level of borrowing. This assumes that cash and investment balances are kept to a minimum level of £10m at each year-end to maintain sufficient liquidity but minimise credit risk.

The liability benchmark is an important tool to help establish whether the Council is likely to be a long-term borrower or long-term investor in the future, and so shape its strategic focus and decision making. The liability benchmark itself represents an estimate of the cumulative amount of external borrowing the Council must hold to fund its current capital and revenue plans while keeping treasury investments at the minimum level required to manage day-to-day cash flow.

	31.3.22 Actual £m	31.3.23 Estimate £m	31.3.24 Forecast £m	31.3.25 Forecast £m	31.3.26 Forecast £m
Loans CFR	47.8	50.0	54.0	61.0	67.8
Less: Balance sheet resources	-64.4	-56.0	-51.7	-46.3	-46.3
Net loans requirement	-16.6	-6.0	2.3	14.7	21.5
Plus: Liquidity allowance	10	10	10	10	10
Liability benchmark	-6.6	4.0	12.3	24.7	31.5

The long-term liability benchmark above assumes capital expenditure funded by borrowing, minimum revenue provision on new capital expenditure based on income, expenditure and reserves all increasing by inflation and appropriate asset life values (8 years for waste vehicles, 50 years for all other assets).

Treasury Management Prudential Indicators



Policy and Resources Committee		Agenda Item:
Meeting Date	8 February 2023	
Report Title	Pay Policy Statement	
EMT Lead	Larissa Reed, Chief Executive	
Head of Service	Bal Sandher, Head of HR Shared Service	
Lead Officer	Bal Sandher, Head of HR Shared Service	
Classification	Open	
Recommendations	<p>That the proposed Pay Policy Statement be agreed for publication on the council's web site.</p> <p>That the information within the Pay Policy Statement is updated with actual year-end figures before final publication.</p>	

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 The report is required to enable the council to satisfy the requirements of section 38 of the Localism Act 2011, which required that authorities must prepare a pay policy statement for the financial year 2012/13 and for each subsequent financial year; this statement must be agreed by full Council. The proposed statement is an update on the Council's current statement.

- 1.2. Terms and conditions of employment for employees is a non-executive function and the Policy and Resources Committee has delegated responsibility for this within the Council's constitution. Although there is no statutory template for the Pay Policy, it is recommended that it sets out as many of the relevant policies as possible so that they are transparent and in one place. The attached document refers to the policies currently in place.

2 Background

- 2.1 Section 38 (1) of the Localism Act 2011 required English and Welsh local authorities to produce a Pay Policy Statement for 2012/13, and for each financial year after that. The Bill as initially drafted referred solely to chief officers (a term which includes both statutory and non-statutory chief officers, and their deputies); but amendments reflecting concerns over low pay and also, drawing on Will Hutton's 2011 Review of Fair Pay in the Public Sector, introduced requirements to compare the policies on remunerating chief officers and other employees, and to set out policy on the lowest paid.

- 2.2 The matters that must be included in the statutory Pay Policy Statement are as follows:

- a local authority's policy on the level and elements of remuneration for each chief officer;
- a local authority's policy on the remuneration of its lowest-paid employees (together with its definition of "lowest-paid employees" and its reasons for adopting that definition);
- a local authority's policy on the relationship between the remuneration of its chief officers and other officers and in particular the pay multiple between the two;
- a local authority's policy on other specific aspects of chief officers' remuneration, including: remuneration on recruitment, increases and additions to remuneration, use of performance-related pay and bonuses, termination payments, and transparency;
- an organisation chart or description of the number and grades of staff in the top three layers of the organisation, with information on the grades of all those with salaries in excess of £50,000; and
- details of facility time and the number of trade union representatives for each of the recognised trade unions.

2.3 With regard to the process for approval, the Pay Policy Statement:

- must be approved formally by the Council meeting;
- must be approved by the end of March each year;
- can be amended in-year;
- must be published on the authority's website; and
- must be complied with when the authority sets the terms and conditions for a chief officer.

2.4 The Act specifically mentions that the Pay Policy Statement may set out the authority's policies relating to other terms and conditions for chief officers, and in the interest of open government there are recommendations that the Statement sets out as much information relating to employee terms and conditions as is practical.

3 Proposal

3.1 The proposed Pay Policy Statement (Appendix I) sets out the Council's overarching Reward Strategy, including many of the associated terms and conditions, and is designed to satisfy the requirements of the Localism Act 2011.

3.2 Once the agreed Pay Policy Statement is accepted by full Council it will be published on the Council's website, along with the details that are already required under the Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency 2011 and the Equality Act 2010.

- 3.3 For ease of reference, the key changes in the document compared with that published in 2022 are set out below:
- (i) the figures for payments made in 2022/23 set out in the categories in section 3.6 of the Pay Policy Statement have been updated;
 - (ii) section 4 outlines the changes to the chief executive earnings
 - (iii) section 5 of the Pay Policy statement reflects the requirements of the Trade Union (Facility Time Publication Requirements) Regulations 2017 that came into force on 1st April 2017. The figures to reflect the time spent on trade union duties have been updated in the tables;
 - (iv) details of remuneration for senior staff have been updated in appendix I (H)
 - (v) Section 3.5 of the Pay Policy statement outlines the process to be followed for any special severance payments. The Government has published statutory guidance on the making and disclosure of Special Severance Payments by local authorities in England. This refers to the need for a higher level of scrutiny in relation to decisions to pay “special severance payments”, which are defined as additional, discretionary sums on top of statutory and contractual entitlement.

4 Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

- 4.1 The Council could choose to publicise a reduced version of the Pay Policy Statement that satisfies the minimum requirements of the Act, but this is not recommended as it does not satisfy the need for transparency, and means that the data is not seen in the context of the good work already undertaken by the Council.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 As this is a statement of what is already in place and does not make any changes to the current position there has been no consultation to date; the report to the Policy and Resources Committee forms the basis of consultation to ensure that this format is acceptable before going to full council.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	The policies summarised in the Pay Policy Statement assist the Council in achieving its priority of “renewing local democracy and making the council fit for the future’.
Financial, Resource and Property	There are no additional resource implications as a result of the Pay Policy Statement as it is setting out what is already in place. The aim of Section 38 of the Localism Act is to ensure there is openness and transparency with regard to the allocation of public

	money to employee remuneration.
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	Localism Act 2011
Crime and Disorder	None specific to this report.
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	None specific to this report.
Health and Wellbeing	None specific to this report.
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	None specific to this report.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	<p>There are no risks associated with the publication of the Pay Policy Statement as all this information would be available if requested through the Freedom of Information Act, although the publication of the information may help to reduce some of the FOI requests received.</p> <p>There is a risk to the Council if it does not produce a Pay Policy Statement as this is a statutory requirement.</p>
Equality and Diversity	The Equality Act 2010 places requirements upon all public sector bodies to ensure that its policies and procedures are promoting equality. The measures summarised within the Pay Policy Statement support this requirement.
Privacy and Data Protection	There is no impact to Privacy and Data Protection.

7 Appendices

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

- **Appendix I:** Pay Policy Statement - March 2023

8 Background documents

None

Swale Borough Council

Pay Policy Statement – March 2023

1. Introduction

The Workforce Strategy sets out four key themes:

- Performance and Development;
- Reward and Recognition;
- Engagement and Wellbeing; and
- Workforce for the future

These strategic themes recognise the importance of pay and rewards in our role as an employer. Our work on pay and rewards began in 2010 with an equal pay audit resulting in significant changes to the Council's terms and conditions. The work continued through the implementation of the Workforce Strategy, and the development of a Total Rewards approach to remuneration for council staff.

Swale Borough Council has its own employment terms and conditions and undertakes local pay bargaining with UNISON.

2. Terms and Conditions – Decision Making

Terms and conditions for employees are a non-executive function, and the responsibility for decisions on these matters is delegated to the Policy and Resources Committee.

The responsibility for agreeing the appraisal and remuneration of the Chief Officers lies with a Member panel. Senior appointments are also the responsibility of a Member panel.

Where the decision of the Policy and Resources Committee has a budgetary implication beyond the agreed in-year budget, this will also require agreement from Full Council.

3. Reward Strategy

The Reward Strategy was developed in full consultation with trade unions, staff, and Members and was agreed by the General Purposes Committee in 2010. This was a very thorough piece of work that ensured the Council managed the terms of employees at all levels in the same way, and applied the principles of equal pay and performance management to the scheme that was developed.

The principles for the reward strategy are to:

- (i) support a **performance** orientated organisation;
- (ii) provide an **attractive** employment package at all levels;
- (iii) be relevant to a **modern** local government authority;
- (iv) have a pay structure that is **transparent** and straightforward;
- (v) reward people **fairly** and consistently;
- (vi) move toward a **Total Reward** approach; and
- (vii) be **affordable** within the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

The reward strategy takes a 'Total Reward' approach to the benefits package received by employees at the Council to ensure that maximum benefit is gained from all aspects of what is on offer to employees. The key elements of this package are set out below.

3.1 Pay Scale and Pay Progression

Our policy for pay grades within the organisation is to apply an objective assessment of the relative 'size and value' of all our roles using a formal job evaluation process. Posts are graded through the INBUCON Job Evaluation Scheme, and this process identifies the value or size of the role when all the duties are being performed and the employee is fully effective in the role. Job evaluators are drawn from different parts of the organisation and trained to use the INBUCON scheme; every panel has one trade union representative as part of the panel.

The pay scale has up to five increments per grade which recognise that with development in a role over time an employee is of more value to the organisation and therefore warrants a higher salary. There are fewer incremental points in the lower grades and more in the more complex roles. New appointments to post will normally be at the first point of the grade, unless there is evidence of a skill shortage in line with the criteria set out in the Market Supplement Policy. The pay scale is set out at Appendix I (A).

In July 2019, the council agreed to move to the real Living Wage which is independently calculated by the Living Wage Foundation. This gave a significant increase to our low paid staff. The Lowest Paid employees are defined as those whose posts have INBUCON points of 121 to 153, which place them into grade 2 of the pay scale. The real Living Wage has been applied every year since 2019 to ensure our lowest paid staff are rewarded appropriately to meet their living cost needs.

The Council has a process of local pay consultation with UNISON to determine whether there should be an annual pay award, taking into consideration both inflation and affordability.

Incremental progression is assessed against the agreed Competency Profile for the role and evidence of the necessary Performance Standards and agreed objectives. Assessment will be on an annual basis, but will be linked to the clear and continuous performance at the level required at each incremental step. The rules for pay progression are set out in Appendix I (B).

Incremental progression is assessed by an employee's line manager in consultation with the Head of Service and Director who has to approve the recommendations within their Directorate; this is monitored collectively by Senior Management Team. The process and timetable for appraisals and incremental progression for the Chief Executive and Directors is set out at Appendix I (C).

3.2 Market Supplements

The pay principles recognise that the Council needs to be an attractive employer whilst also balancing this with the needs to manage the budget and protect the public purse. Within local government there are several skill areas that have been extremely difficult over the years in terms of both recruitment and retention - this is particularly in fields where there are private sector employers competing for the same skills, or in unattractive areas of work.

In order to be able to respond to recruitment difficulties the Council has a Market Supplement Policy which sets clear criteria for the agreement and retention of a market supplement. The Policy is at Appendix I (D). Currently, there are twenty four employees in receipt of Market Supplements that are either working in Planning or Legal teams.

3.3 Pension

The Council offers access to the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS), which is a significant benefit to employees and is one of the aspects of the Council's Total Rewards package.

The pension scheme is standard between all local government employers, and in broad terms offers a pension benefit equivalent to 1/49th of pensionable salary per year of service, where pensionable salary is calculated on a career average with benefits paid at state retirement age.

Although most of the rules associated with the scheme are set centrally, there are a few areas where local employers must define their own policy; the discretionary policy is attached at Appendix I (E). In broad terms it is not the policy of the Council to increase pension benefits to employees through any form of enhancement.

The LGPS is a defined benefits scheme which requires contribution rates from employees of between 5.5% and 12.5% depending on earnings, in accordance with the following table; in April 2014 there was an option to lower level contributions with the introduction of the 50/50 scheme.

Pensionable pay	Main Section	50/50 Section
Up to £15,000	5.50%	2.75%
£15,001 - £23,600	5.80%	2.90%
£23,601 - £38,300	6.50%	3.25%
£38,301 - £48,500	6.80%	3.40%
£48,501 - £67,900	8.50%	4.25%
£67,901 - £96,200	9.90%	4.95%
£96,201 - £113,400	10.50%	5.25%
£113,401 - £170,100	11.40%	5.70%
More than £170,001	12.50%	6.25%

The employer contribution rate, calculated as the future service rate excluding past service deficit for 2022/23 remains at 18.5%, although this does vary from year to year.

Kent County Council is the administering authority for the Swale Borough Council scheme.

3.4 Pay Protection and Redundancy Payments

The Council has a Redundancy Policy which sets out the approach that must be followed if posts are going to be affected because of organisational change. The procedure sets out the approval process and the consultation timetable; it also sets out the terms for redundancy and pay protection. The Pay Protection Policy is set out at Appendix I (F).

Any payments paid to an employee in relation to redundancy shall be in accordance with the statutory redundancy payments scheme and any other regulations applicable, except that the Council will calculate a week's pay on actual earnings where this is in excess of the statutory maximum figure (***Local Govt. (Early Termination of Employment)(Discretionary Compensation) (England and Wales) Regulations 2000***).

The policy of the organisation regarding re-employment following redundancy follow the NJC terms and conditions, i.e. if a redundant employee commences local government employment within one month of the redundancy then the redundancy payment must be returned. Any other re-employment will only be considered where all other Council rules on recruitment or procurement have been followed.

3.5 Special Severance Payments

In exceptional circumstances the Council may make a payment to an individual under a formal agreement.

Where this is the case the following authorisation process will apply to all staff:

- payments of £100,000 and above must be approved by a vote of full council, as set out in the Localism Act 2011
- payments of £20,000 and above, but below £100,000, must be personally approved and signed off by the Head of Paid Service, in consultation with the Leader and that of any others who have signed off the payment
- payments below £20,000 must be approved according to the local authority's scheme of delegation.

Where the proposed payment is to the Head of Paid Service, to avoid a conflict of interest it is expected that the payment should be approved by a panel including at least two independent persons.

3.6 Other payments

Honoraria: the Council has a policy to recognise situations where an employee takes on more responsibility on a temporary basis; normally for an agreed period of up to 6 months. This is often as a cost saving measure when there is a vacancy, maternity leave etc. In 2022/23 there were twelve people in receipt of honoraria.

Flexibility Allowances: certain members of staff (below management grades) are required to work outside of normal council working patterns. To compensate them for this flexibility they are paid a 10% supplement to their salary. As at March 2023 there were seven people in receipt of this payment. This allowance has been reviewed and agreement reached with trade unions that the allowance would not be paid in the future to any employees that were aware of the requirement for working 'unsocial' hours at the time they applied for the position; this is the main cause of the reduction of the number of people still in receipt of the allowance.

Stand-by payments: a review of standby duties and payments was carried out in August 2019. This resulted in amending the Standby Allowance Policy to ensure that those employees who are required to take part in standby rotas and respond to call out duties are treated consistently across the Council and remunerated fairly for the duties. The standby payments are paid to a small number of employees (twenty six in 2022/23) who are on an out-of-hours on-call rota for specialist duties such as collecting stray dogs or attending noise complaints. The outcome of the review has also increased the level of remuneration to £125 each week of being on-call compared to the previous rate of £100.

Bonuses: the Council does not have a bonus system for any grade of staff.

Car Payments: the Council removed lease cars and lease car allowances in 2010. However, a car allowance of up to £1,239 was given to those employees that are required to have a vehicle for their role and that drive a minimum of 2,000 miles annually. This changed in June 2016 with the allowance being reduced to £1000 per annum and pro-rata for part time staff as well as an increase to the mileage threshold

to 2,500. At the end of March 2023 this allowance was allocated to fifty four members of staff. The majority of staff in receipt of this payment are within the statutory services which require external visits e.g. planning, housing, and where there are other shared services requiring travel between districts. Mileage rates for those receiving this allowance is 37.8 pence per mile.

3.7 Special fees and arrangements

Special fees may be paid for certain additional duties; in general these are connected to election duties, and the funding for the allowance will not come from the Council's own budget. An additional fee is normally paid for the role of Returning Officer for the District elections however, this was previously incorporated into the Chief Executive's base salary where s/he is acting on behalf of the Council (eg borough and parish elections). This has now changed and the additional fees will be paid for undertaking the role of Returning Officer, Counting Officer or other similar role, on behalf of another authority or organisation.

The Council has adopted the Kent schedule of fees, which is attached at Appendix I (G).

3.8 Other employee benefits

The Council provides access to an **Employee Assistance Programme** which provides staff with both telephone and face-to-face counselling on a range of issues. The Council has access to an Occupational Health Service that helps to ensure that employees are properly supported to avoid taking sick leave and to return to work as soon as possible.

The Council supports employees in their role with a **development plan and training opportunities** to ensure they are fully qualified and trained to give excellent service.

On an annual basis the Council has an **Awards Ceremony** that recognises the best achievements of staff during the preceding year. In previous years the ceremony took place in the evening in the form of a dinner and dance for nominees and partners and the cost of the occasion is off-set through sponsorship from businesses and partners. The awards ceremony in the future will take place during the day and all staff will be invited to attend the event to recognise staff achievements during the year.

The Council offers a **salary sacrifice scheme** to employees for the purchase of bicycles. In December 2018, the Council introduced another salary sacrifice scheme for the purchase of cars. There is no cost to the Council of these schemes.

In 2014 the Council updated its **long service awards** scheme to include a wider range of employees. Small benefits (eg £25 shopping voucher) are given to those reaching ten years' service, and at five yearly intervals up to forty years' service. This form of recognition is in line with our Mid Kent Services (MKS) partners.

The Council introduced the opportunity for employees to **buy additional annual leave**, and eight employees have used this benefit during 2022/23. This is at no cost to the Council.

4. Monitoring

Salary budgets are monitored through the normal budget management processes by line managers. Members and senior officers regularly examine the Medium Term Financial Strategy, and in particular consider ways to reduce costs to the Council.

As required by the Equality Act 2010 the Council undertakes an equal pay audit of salaries, which is published on the Council's web site. This helps to identify whether there are significant differences in pay for employees that have one or more of the protected characteristics.

From April 2017 under the Equality Act 2010 employers with more than 250 employees are required to publish statutory gender pay gap calculations on an annual basis. The data must be a snapshot of salary data on 31 March 2022 and must be published on our own website and a government website by 30 March 2023.

The Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency 2011 required that salary data was published on the highest earning staff within the Council; this was actioned by March 2011 as required by the Code. There has been further qualification of the salary threshold for publication which has been set at £50,000 and above. This information, plus the inclusion of all additional fees, is at Appendix 1 (H).

The Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency September 2011 also requires that there is a process established to monitor the rate of growth of senior earnings compared to all other employees in the organisation. The formula required is to calculate the pay multiple of the Chief Executive's salary compared to the median earnings of all other employees; where there is any significant change year-on-year this should be explained. It is the Council's policy to use this pay multiple to monitor the relationship between remuneration of chief officers and other employees.

The recommendation in the 'Hutton Review of Fair Pay' 2011 has been followed:

"the pay multiple should be calculated on the basis of all taxable earnings for the given year, including base salary, variable pay, bonuses, allowances and the cash value of any benefits in kind"

	Chief Executive earnings	Median	Pay Multiple
2019/20*	£93,189	£23,244	4.01
% change from previous year*	-25.94	0.92%	-26.56%
2020/21*	£23,907	£23,947	1.00
% change from previous year*	-74.34%	3.02%	-75.06
2021/22*	£117,988	£24,533	4.81
% change from previous year*	393.52%	2.45%	381
2022/23*	£115,758	£24,848	4.66
% change from previous year*	-1.89%	1.28%	-3.12

*The Local Government Association guidance is that organisations should use taxable pay to calculate the pay multiple. In previous years the multiple has been calculated using the National Insurance pay level which includes the pension contribution paid by the individual and is a higher figure.

The main difference in the Chief Executives pay relates to not receiving any election payments in 2022/23. In the previous year the Chief Executive received a payment for her role as the Returning Officer at the Local elections.

It is important to emphasise that the pay policy of the Council is to pay at the market median, and this is only reached at the top of the incremental pay points for each grade. This ensures that people are paid at a lower level than the Council policy until they have fully matured into the role. In addition, although these are contractual payments, they are withheld if performance is not satisfactory at the expected level.

5. Trade Union Facility time

The Council recognises UNISON, and there is a history of co-operative employee relations. As a result of this cooperative approach, a range of fair employment policies are now in place. As a result, there is generally a low level of trade union activity.

The Trade Union (Facility Time Publication Requirements) Regulations 2017 came into force on 1st April 2017 which requires public sector employers to publish specified information relating to facility time provided by trade union officials. Under the regulations, the relevant information will need to be published on an annual basis for the period 1st April to 31st March.

The Council allows reasonable time for trade union duties (eg attending management meetings, pay negotiation, etc) but no time is given for trade union activities (canvassing for additional membership etc.)

The number of trade union representatives is as follows:

	Headcount	FTE
UNISON	4	4

Percentage of time spent by union officials on facility time is:

Percentage of time	Number of employees
0%	0
1-50%	4
51%-99%	0
100%	0

Note: only 6% of facility time is spent by union officials.

Percentage of pay bill spent on facility time:

Total cost of facility time	£5,274.27
Total pay bill	£9,414,670
Percentage of pay bill	0.06%

There has been no time spent on paid trade union activities.

6. Contact for further information

If you require any further information regarding the salary policy of the council you should contact Bal Sandher, Head of HR Shared Services, on 01622 602165, or by email on baljinder.sandher@midkent.gov.uk

Pay Scale 2022/23

Grade	1	2	3	4	5
1	GRADE 1 IS NO LONGER IN USE				
2	19,111				
3	20,117	20,917	21,753	22,625	
4	23,451	24,394	25,371	26,382	
5	26,514	27,521	28,626	29,766	
6	29,974	31,172	32,416	33,718	
7	33,897	35,113	36,520	37,986	
8	38,089	39,613	41,194	42,846	
9	44,990	46,787	48,654	50,603	
10	53,355	55,491	57,707	60,015	
11	62,431	64,927	67,526	70,227	73,031
12	74,468	77,443	80,543	83,769	87,120
13	91,646	95,316	99,123	103,090	107,216
14	118,599	122,158	125,822	129,596	133,484

Pay Progression

1. Annual Inflation Award

Annual pay consultation will consider the cost of living and the position of SBC pay in comparison to the market, but affordability will be the foremost consideration. Consultation will commence annually in September with the aim to reach agreement within the budget cycle so that payment can be made in April salaries.

The Chief Executive and Head of HR are responsible for undertaking pay negotiation with trade unions, but the Cabinet takes ultimate responsibility for agreeing the budget.

2. Pay progression within grade

The pay scale has up to five increments which recognise that, with development in a role over time, an employee is of more value to the organisation and therefore warrants a higher salary. There are fewer incremental points in the lower grades and more in the more complex roles. New appointments to post will normally be at the first point of the grade unless there is evidence of a skill shortage in line with the criteria set out in the Market Supplement Policy.

Progress through the grade will be assessed annually. This will not be an automatic progression but will require an assessment against the agreed Competency Profile and Performance Standards for the position. Where the employee has progressed towards the full competency profile they will be awarded an increment. Assessment for incremental progression will take place by **October** each year. This will therefore not be linked to the annual appraisal but will take place mid-year. Increased increments will be paid with effect from 1 October.

Employees must have six months' service in their role by 1 October to be eligible for assessment. If they are more recently appointed they will receive a review after six months in the position; thereafter they will be reviewed annually for the October increment.

Individuals will need to consistently demonstrate the behaviours required by the Competency Profile and Performance Standards for their role in order to maintain their incremental position. One-off performance will not be sufficient to merit or maintain an increment.

Where individuals do not sustain the level of performance or where they have been assimilated to the top of the grade but are assessed as not having the full range of competencies, they will be given time to improve, but their pay will be frozen until they drop to the pay level that matches their performance. This includes any rise in annual pay as a result of pay inflation. This is outside the normal Pay Protection Policy as it does not represent an organisational change. Where the individual is assessed as not meeting the requirements of the grade their performance will be treated as a capability issue.

3. Career Grades and Incremental Progression

A Career Grade offers the opportunity of a long path of progression to a particular professional position. As such the nature of the role and the requisite competencies are likely to vary considerably between the entry point and final destination. This means that through Job Evaluation the Career Grade is likely to span several grades and have many steps. To enable this clear stepped progression there may be some need to have interim points between the normal incremental points, e.g. in recognition of the achievement of some particular milestone. These half incremental steps will be allowed providing that there is prior agreement with the Head of HR, that they are applied equally to all those who meet the criteria and are set out as part of the agreed career grade structure.

Progress through the career grade will need to be evidence based, and the Head of HR will need to agree to the progression if it is between grades.

Chief Executive and Director Appraisal Process

The appraisal panel for the Chief Executive will comprise of the Leader, Deputy Leader and Leader of the Majority Opposition Party, supported by HR.

This panel will also take a 'grandparent' role to review and comment on the full annual appraisal and objectives for the Directors as set by the Chief Executive.

The timetable and process for the Chief Executive is set out below:

Month	Activity
January	The Chief Executive undertakes a self-review of achievements against the annual objectives, and suggests possible objectives for the coming year.
January	Feedback from the members of the working group on the Chief Executive's performance is obtained.
Early February	The Chief Executive reviews Member feedback in relation to progress, development and future targets.
February	After the budget has been agreed by full Council, the working group and Chief Executive meet formally, supported by HR for the formal appraisal and objective setting. The outcome of the agreed objectives will be reported at the next full Council by the Leader. The meeting to be documented by HR as the Chief Executive's formal appraisal.
September	The working group and Chief Executive, supported by HR meet to review mid-year progress, and agree whether performance is satisfactory. If the Chief Executive is performing to a satisfactory level the annual increment will be awarded (up to the top of the grade). The summary of this meeting to be reported back to the General Purposes Committee.

The process for Directors is set out below:

Month	Activity
January	<p>The Director undertakes a self-review of achievements against the annual objectives and suggests possible objectives for the coming year.</p> <p>This self-review is submitted to the Chief Executive.</p>
Early February	<p>The Director and Chief Executive meet to discuss progress, development and future targets.</p>
Early February	<p>The Chief Executive prepares a draft appraisal document with assessment of performance in the previous year and against competencies.</p> <p>Draft forward objectives and a development plan are also documented and agreed between the Chief Executive and Director.</p>
February	<p>The appraisal panel, the Chief Executive and the Director meet formally for the 'grandparent review', and finalisation of the Director's objectives.</p> <p>The meeting to be documented by the Chief Executive as the Director's formal appraisal.</p>
September	<p>The Chief Executive and Director meet to review mid-year progress and agree whether performance is satisfactory.</p> <p>If the Director is performing to a satisfactory level the annual increment will be awarded (up to the top of the grade).</p>

Market Supplements for Pay

1. Introduction

The Council will utilise a Market Supplement to ensure that competitive salaries will attract and retain key workers in skill shortage areas without distorting the pay structures for all other employees. A Market Supplement for recruitment or retention purposes will only be used where there are clear business reasons that cannot be better addressed through the total benefits package, the work environment or department skill mix. It is recognised that pay is only one factor contributing to our attractiveness as an employer and other aspects of employment, particularly those relating to development, should be applied rather than using just a Market Supplement.

All jobs are graded using the Inbucon Job Evaluation system and the defined pay policy of the Council is to pay at Market Median where the market used is the Inbucon salary data. This is also checked against local Kent salary surveys to ensure that it is robust for the geographical region. This approach ensures that the employees of Swale Borough Council are paid at a fair level in comparison to other workers in similar employment groups.

However, there is recognition that in certain professions there are either national or regional skill shortages and Swale needs to be responsive to the competition for these skills. In the longer term our aim will be to train employees to move into these specialist areas and to ensure that the specialists' skills are utilised properly within the organisation. In the short term Market Supplements may be used.

2. Identification of the Skill Shortage

2.1 Recruitment Campaigns

Where there is no anticipated shortage there will need to be a minimum of two appropriate external recruitment campaigns within a 12 month period to establish that it is not possible to fill a position before it is agreed there is a requirement for a market supplement.

2.2 KPOG Salary Survey

The salary survey is conducted on an annual basis and gives details of the comparative salaries for defined positions in the Kent Districts. This clearly identifies the median salaries and is particularly relevant for local government roles. This will enable the identification of positions which may be vulnerable and, where there is more than a 10% salary difference from the median, there should be consideration of the need for a market supplement. The existence of this difference alone is unlikely to be sufficient justification and further analysis will be required to identify whether this has had an adverse impact on the Council's ability to recruit and retain relevant staff.

2.3 National Information

Within local government there are certain identified skill shortage areas. These are identified through data collection from the Employers Organisation and the I&DeA. In 2015 these skills were listed as:

- (i) Children's social workers
- (ii) Planning officers *
- (iii) Building control officers
- (iv) Environmental health officers *
- (v) Educational psychologists
- (vi) School crossing patrol
- (vii) Adult social workers
- (viii) Trading standards officers
- (ix) Solicitors and lawyers *
- (x) Mental Health Social Workers

* category of worker employed by SBC

This national picture is the first indicator of a shortage. Where there is an identified shortage nationally the manager will still be required to demonstrate that this applies to the local area. This proof can be gained through the outcome of a relevant recruitment campaign during the previous 12 month period, or through information from agencies about the availability of particular skill sets.

3. Market Supplement for Recruitment Purposes

The level of supplement will be agreed between the Director and the Head of HR Shared Services in consultation with the Chief Financial Officer. It will be paid as part of monthly salary and will be pensionable. The supplement will not be subject to the cost of living award and will not be taken into account for any salary-related enhancements, e.g. overtime, which will be paid at the normal salary rate. The Market Supplement will be given for a minimum two year period initially. This will be annually reviewed to confirm that the supplement is still necessary, and at the appropriate level. Where a reduction in level is the outcome of the review this will not take effect until the minimum two years has expired. Reductions will follow the process set out in Section 5.

The payment of a Market Supplement must be within the Director's agreed budget. Approval must be given by the relevant Director and the Head of HR Shared Services, who will ensure that all alternative options have been explored.

4. Market Supplement for Retention Purposes

Whilst the Market Supplement is principally to enable the Council to be able to compete in a highly competitive market to attract new employees, there may be exceptional cases where a supplement should be considered for existing employees. This may occur in situations where a new recruit is offered a supplement that would then cause equally mobile colleagues to leave and seek a similar salary elsewhere.

There may also be occasions where an employee with a specialist skill needs to be retained to ensure business continuity.

The level of supplement will be agreed between the Director and the Head of HR Shared Services in consultation with the Chief Financial Officer. It will be paid as part of monthly salary and will be pensionable. The supplement will not be subject to the cost of living award and will not be taken into account for any salary-related enhancements, e.g. overtime, which will be paid at the normal salary rate.

The Market Supplement will be given for a minimum two year period initially. This will be annually reviewed to confirm that the supplement is still necessary, and at the appropriate level. Where a reduction in level is the outcome of the review this will not take effect until the minimum two years has expired. Reductions will follow the process set out in Section 5.

Payment of a Retention Supplement must only be considered in exceptional circumstances, and particular attention must be paid to the Equal Pay issues.

5. Removal of the Supplement

The availability of skills varies over time. As professions are identified as skill shortage areas and salaries rise they can attract an increased number of trainees. Where this is the case the Council would not wish to incur unnecessary costs, i.e. paying more for a skill than the median rate, if this would be sufficient to attract high quality applicants. The economic situation may also change so that scarce skills become available from other sectors or organisations.

Senior Management Team will review the posts attracting a supplement annually; this will usually coincide with the annual KPOG salary survey at the beginning of each year, but the date may vary according to information availability. When it is clear that a particular profession or skill area no longer necessitates a market supplement this will be withdrawn over a phased period of two years – with the withdrawal of 25% of the supplement every six months until the employee returns to the normal rate for the job. The assessment of the on-going need will relate to the national skills assessment combined with local salary reviews and the response to recruitment campaigns. When a market supplement is to be withdrawn the employee will be notified and given a minimum of three months' notice that a phased reduction will commence.

Policy and Procedural Issues: Local Government Scheme Regulations - Employer Discretions

This paper confirms the pension policy of Swale Borough Council as it relates to the exercise of discretions contained in the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013 and the LGPS (Transitional Provisions, Savings and amendments) Regulations 2014. Last updated June 2014.

The policy statement applies to all members of staff who are eligible to be members of the LGPS, as defined in the regulations i.e. employees with a contract of employment of over three month's duration and who are under 75 years of age and are contractually enrolled at the start of employment. Those with contracts of less than three months, including casuals, can join but need to elect to do so.

Employees who are members of the pension scheme are only entitled to receive pension benefits if they have two years or more service. Under LGPS 2014 Regulation 18, if an employee leaves within two years of the start of their employment their contributions can be repaid or transferred to another scheme, unless there is some fraudulent offence or misconduct in connection with the employment.

Principles

The Authority will treat any individual retirement case and decisions on its merits.

Decisions relating to retirement will be made taking into account the business case and business implications, the financial implications, employment law consideration, the regulations and the legality of each case. It may also take into account long term savings, affordability, skills and skills retention and impact on service delivery.

The definition of business efficiency shall include, but not be limited to financial savings and/or quality improvements judged on a case-by-case basis.

Each decision will be made free from discrimination on the grounds of any protected characterising – age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy & maternity, race, religion and belief, sex, sexual orientation, or any other personal criteria.

The Authority's decisions relating to retirement and the release of pension benefits will be in line with the current pension regulations. These regulations may be updated from time to time, and the Authority will default to the regulations if the policy is not explicit on any current or future regulation.

Decisions relating to the release of deferred benefits to former employees will refer to the relevant pension policies applicable at the time of their employment. In such cases, the decision as to the release of deferred benefits will be on a case-by-case basis and will take into account the criteria detailed in these principles. Guidance may be sought from the pension administrators as required.

Decisions taken under these discretions will be reported to the General Purposes Committee.

Regulation 9 (1) & (3) - Contributions

Swale Borough Council will apply the nationally determined employee contribution rates and bands. These are subject to change and may be varied.

Swale Borough Council will pay the rate of contributions determined in the regulations for employees whose pay is reduced through ill health or during authorised unpaid leave, including child related leave.

The calculation of pensionable pay will include basic annual salary plus any other pensionable salary items including – Market Supplement/ Premium, Overtime, Bonus, Honorarium, Salary Supplements. The pensionable pay will be reviewed monthly and based on earnings for that month to identify the appropriate band and contribution percentage

Swale Borough Council will notify employees of their individual contribution rates in their payslips or by letter at least annually.

Regulation 16 (2)e and 16 (4)d – Shared Cost Additional Pension Contributions (SCAPC)

It is not Swale Borough Council's general policy to operate a SCAPC where a scheme member wishes to purchase extra annual pension (up to the limit defined in the regulations).

A scheme member who has a period of child related leave or authorised unpaid leave may elect, within 30 days of return to work, to pay a SCAPC to cover the amount of pension 'lost' during the period of absence. In these circumstances Swale Borough Council is required to contribute 2/3rds of the cost. If an election is made after the 30 day time limit the full costs will be met by the scheme member.

Employees who have the option to pay contributions in respect of a period of unpaid absence must elect to do so within 30 days of the date of the notice issued to them by the Human Resources Section stating the amount of contributions to be paid. This time limit may be extended by the Head of Human Resources if the employee can demonstrate exceptional circumstances so as to justify an extension of time.

TP Regulations 1(1)(c) of Schedule 2 – whether to allow the rule of 85 to be 'switched on' for members age 55-59.

It is not Swale Borough Council's general policy to make use of the discretion to 'switch back on' the 85 year rule protections unless there are clear financial or operational advantages to the council. Each case will be considered on its merits by Head of Human Resources, the Chief Financial Officer, and the relevant Director.

Regulation 17 (1) – Shared Cost Additional Voluntary Contributions (SCAVC)

It is not the current policy of the Borough Council to operate a shared cost Additional Voluntary Contribution Scheme for employees. However, this policy will be reviewed from time to time by the Head of Human Resources in conjunction with the Chief Finance Officer, and then the decision is subject to Member's approval.

Regulation 21 (5) – In determining Assumed Pensionable Pay whether a lump sum payment made in the previous 12 months is a 'regular lump sum'.

Swale Borough Council will maintain a list which details what Swale Borough Council considers being a regular lump sum payment made to our employees to be used in the calculation of the Assumed Pensionable Pay.

Regulation 22 (7)(b) & 22 (8)(b) - Aggregation of Benefits

Employees who have previous LGPS pension benefits in England and Wales will automatically have these aggregated with their new LGPS employment, unless they elect within 12 months of commencing membership of the LGPS in the new employment to retain separate benefits. Swale Borough Council has the discretion to extend this period beyond 12 months and each case will be considered on its own merits by the Head of Human Resources, the Chief Financial Officer and the relevant Director.

Regulation 30(6) – Flexible Retirement

It is Swale Borough Council's policy to only provide consent for flexible retirement and the immediate payment of benefits where there are clear financial or operational benefits to the Council. Any such consent requires the agreement of the Head of Human Resources and the relevant Director and each case would be considered on its merits.

If consent has been given under Regulation 30 (6) it is not Swale Borough Council's general policy to waive any actuarial reduction unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Regulation 30(8) Waiving of Actuarial Reductions

It is not the policy of the Borough Council to give consent to the immediate payment of benefits to employees under this regulation, unless there is a demonstrable benefit to the organisation which would take full account of any extra costs to be borne by the Authority. In circumstances where a request is made for an early payment of a deferred benefit this is unlikely to be granted except in the most extreme cases of hardship; circumstances must be exceptional and would not reasonably be expected to prevail i.e. the occurrence of a disaster or accident etc. Financial hardship alone would not normally be deemed sufficient. Any such consent shall be agreed by the Head of Human Resources, Chief Financial Officer and the relevant Director, taking account of all the details involved in the case.

Where a scheme member has previously been awarded a preserved benefit, it is not generally the policy of Swale Borough Council to give consent under this regulation to the early payment of benefits; however, each request will be considered and full account taken of any costs to be borne by the authority. Any consent shall be agreed by the Head of Human Resources, Chief Financial Officer and the relevant Director, taking account of all the details involved in the case. It is not the Council's general policy to waive any actuarial reduction in these circumstances.

Regulation 31 – Award of Additional Pension

Swale Borough Council has the discretion to award additional pension (up to the additional pension limit defined in the regulations) to an active member or within six months of leaving the scheme to a scheme member who was dismissed on grounds of redundancy or business efficiency.

Swale Borough Council will only exercise this discretion in exceptional circumstances and where there is a proven total benefit to the organisation which includes any costs that might be borne by the authority. Any consent shall be agreed by the Head of Human Resources, Chief Financial Officer and the relevant Director, taking account of all the details involved in the case.

Regulation 100 (6) – Aggregation of Benefits

If a scheme member wishes to transfer any pension benefits they have built up in other schemes to the Local Government Pension Scheme, it is the policy of Swale Borough Council that the election must be made within 12 months of the Pension Section being notified that the employee has become an active member of the Kent Scheme.

If the 12 month period has elapsed then the member may make a case for any exceptional circumstances to be considered by the Head of Human Resources, the Chief Financial Officer and the relevant Director within Swale Borough Council, and by the Pension Scheme Administrator. Both organisations must agree to the late transfer.

Protection of Earnings Policy

1. Introduction

The Council believes that an integral feature of any successful organisation is its ability to identify the need for change and to manage that change, taking into account management's aspirations as well as the aspirations and well being of its employees.

Whilst the Council is committed to providing security of employment and to minimising the personal impact of organisational change there will be occasions when it will be necessary to reorganise services and the way in which they are delivered. In these circumstances the provisions of this Policy will apply. This policy needs to be read in conjunction with the Organisational Change Policy.

2. Scope

This policy applies to any employee who, as a consequence of organisational change, is required by management to change their grade or method of working or suffers a reduction in basic hours worked within the standard working week or suffers a reduction in basic pay and allowances.

The provisions of this policy **do not** apply as a result of:-

- a) action taken in accordance with the Council's Disciplinary or Capability procedures
- b) the need for re-deployment on health grounds
- c) unacceptable standards of work performance
- d) a request from the individual or by mutual agreement between the individual and Council
- e) a voluntary application to another position within the Council
- f) the removal of a Market Supplement following an annual review, any loss here would be dealt with in accordance with the Market Supplement Policy.

3. Protection Period

Protection of earnings will be given for a period of 24 months. The first twelve months will be protected at the full earnings of the role held by the employee prior to the change, the second period of 12 months will be at half the rate of the new earnings compared to the old earnings. After a period of 12 months the employee will move to the salary and earnings of the new post. The employee will be moved to the salary point of the pay scale for the grade of the new post that is closest to the salary of the previous post. In most cases this is likely to be the highest incremental point of the relevant grade.

In exceptional circumstances, and where there may be a cost advantage to the organisation there may be agreement with the Chief Executive, the Chief Financial Officer and Head of Organisation Development to extend this period.

4. Calculation of Protection

Earnings protection will be calculated as an average of the earnings in the four months preceding the organisational change. This will include basic salary, essential car user allowance, lease car cash allowance, stand-by payments and an average of overtime and out of hour's payments.

Earnings in the new post will be off-set against protected earnings and if for any particular pay period the earnings in the new post exceed the protected earnings then the higher earnings will be paid for that pay period.

Where the period of protection spans the annual pay award the protected pay will be reduced by an amount equivalent to any increase in pay in the new substantive post.

5. Conditions of Protection

Protection of earnings is conditional upon the employee undertaking any shift work, standby or other duties which may be required in the new post. Where there are increased earnings as a result of these additional duties this will result in an equivalent decrease in pay protection. In circumstance where the employee is required to drive and the post is designated as an Essential Car User or the level of mileage is such that the employee qualifies for the Essential Car User Allowance this will be paid but the level of pay protection will be reduced by the equivalent amount.

Protection of earnings is also conditional upon the employee accepting any subsequent offer of a suitable alternative post which attracts a salary in excess of that of the new post.

Overtime will be paid at the new rate (i.e. the real rate attached to the post) not at the protected rate.

6. Pension Implication

It has been the Borough Council's policy to issue a certificate of protection of pension benefits to protect employees who suffer detriment by being required to take a cut in pay or who are prevented from having future pay increases by having their pay frozen. Any certificates issued may continue to apply to pension forecasts whilst they are still valid. Following the pension changes on 1 April 2008 there were no further certificates of protection issued but up to 31 March 2014 there are options for pension calculation to be based over a longer time period, affected employees should contact the pension administrator.

7. Terms and Conditions other than Pay

Annual Leave entitlements and length of notice period required from the employee will not be protected and those applicable to the new post will be effective from the date of transfer.

ELECTORAL REGISTRATION OFFICERS AND STAFF (Kent AEROS) – SCALE OF FEES

Proposed scale of fees for District/Borough and Parish Council elections and Neighbourhood Referendum held on or after 1st April 2021

1. The scale of fees are uplifted annually, by using the NJC award pay award for local government and approved by the Kent Chief Executives Group.
2. Kent County Council's scale of fees uses a calculation based upon per 1000 electorate. Kent AEROS' scale uses a calculation of per 500 electorate because of small parishes.
3. In order to ensure consistency the Kent AERO's scale reflects the KCC 2021 Scale and is usually in line with the NJC increase
4. The Kent AEROS' scale has been uplifted by 2% in line with KCC Scale of Fees as the NJC awards are yet to be agreed.

	Item	Current 2020 £	Proposed 2021 £
Stationery and Equipment			
1.	Printing and publishing all notices, forms and other documents, providing stationery and sundries, and other miscellaneous expenditure including postage, telephone calls and faxes	Reasonable and appropriate cost	Reasonable and appropriate cost
2.	Stationery and equipment at each polling station, including depreciation		
3.	Hire of any building or room for the purpose of the election and the expenses attending the use of any building or room, including temporary polling stations if necessary		
4.	Fitting-up polling stations including the provision, transport		

	and erection of voting compartments, the hire of necessary furniture (where this is not otherwise available) and the return to store afterwards		
5.	Ballot Papers – provision and printing		
6.	Register of Electors – purchase		
7.	Printing or production of official poll cards and postal vote packs		
8.	Delivery of official poll cards by hand	Second class postage rate	Second class postage rate
Travelling expenses			
9.	Travelling expenses to DRO's staff to make arrangements for the poll or otherwise in connection with the conduct of the election	48p per mile	49p per mile
10.	Presiding Officer travelling expenses	15.32	15.63
11.	Poll Clerk travelling expenses	8.90	9.08
12.	Travelling expenses for staff in connection with the counting of votes, at the discretion of the DRO	8.90	9.08
Polling Station Staff			
13.	One Presiding Officer at each Polling Station – single election	223.35	227.82
14.	For each PO at a Polling Station – combined election or difficult station due to local circumstances (at the discretion of the Returning Officer (RO))	274.37	279.86
15.	For a PO who acts as a supervisor at a Polling Place where there is more than one Polling Station	(additional) 10.82	(additional) 11.04

16.	Supervising Officer (SO) – for every 10 polling station overseen	223.35	227.82
17.	For each Poll Clerk (PC) at a Polling Station – single election (see Notes)	139.52	142.31
18.	For each Poll Clerk at a Polling Station – joint election or difficult station due to local circumstances (at the discretion of the Returning Officer (RO))	165.91	169.23
19.	For each training session provided by the DRO for Presiding Officers, Poll Clerks or count staff	191.47	195.30
20.	For each Presiding Officer and Poll Clerk attending training	49.58	50.57
21.	An allowance for each polling station to have available a mobile phone on polling day	5.36	5.47
22.	For the employment of persons in connection with the counting of the votes, clerical and other assistance required by the RO – for each 500 electors or part in a contested election	78.13 (per 500)	79.69
23.	For the employment of persons in connection with the issue and opening of postal ballot papers – for each 100 postal voters or part	76.58	78.11
24.	For the recount of votes – for each 500 electors or part	4.50	4.59
25.	Payment to the District/Borough for the use of Council staff to support the RO in the		

	conduct of elections as follows:		
(a)	Contested election – (i.e. without District/Borough) for each 500 electors (or part)	60.52 (per 500)	61.73 (per 500)
(b)	Contested joint election (i.e. with District/Borough) – for each 500 (or part)	30.26 (per 500)	30.87 (per 500)
26.	Contested single election – payment to DRO for the management and conduct of the election – for each 500 electors or part	33.82	34.50
27.	Contested joint election – payment to DRO for the management and conduct of the election – for each 500 electors or part	46.70	47.63
28.	For each Counter attending training	16.07	16.39
29.	For each Count Supervisor and Count General Assistant attending training	32.15	32.79
30.	Reasonable refreshments for staff involved in the verification and count	Maximum £5.25 per head	Maximum £5.36 per head
31.	Payment to District/Borough Council for the use of Council staff at an uncontested election – for each 500 electors or part	16.69 (per 500)	17.02 (per 500)
32.	RO fee for the conduct of elections as follows:		
(a)	Uncontested District/Borough election – single fee	57.92	59.08

(b)	Uncontested Parish election – single fee	19.85	20.25
33.	For clerical and other assistance required by the Returning Officer at an uncontested election – for each 500 electors (or part)	21.25	21.68

Notes

1. The fees are calculated on the number of local government electors on the register of electors and entitled to vote at the last day for publication of the notice of election.
2. At parish polls the fees relating to polling staff **may** be pro rata.
3. **Items 10, 11 and 12** – variable mileage rates may be applied where fixed travel is considered appropriate.
4. **Item 24** – in special circumstances, the RO may recover actual costs
5. **Item 31** – the payment referred to applies (in the case of a parish election) to each ward of the parish.

Appendix I (H)

Information published in accordance with the guidance associated with the Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency, which requires the publication of senior salaries within a £5,000 range.

Details of remuneration and job title of senior employees whose basic salary is between £50,000 and £150,000.

Position	Reporting Unit	Remuneration	No of staff	Budget responsibility	Other services/responsibilities
Chief Executive	Chief Executive	£140,000 - £144,999	283	£263,350	Returning Officer responsible for all elections and Head of Paid Service.
Director of Regeneration & Neighbourhoods	Regeneration & Neighbourhoods	£115,000 - £119,999	166	£12,386,060	
Director of Resources	Resources	£110,000 - £114,999	92	-£12,649,410	Section 151 Officer.
Head of Policy, Governance & Customer Services	Policy, Governance & Customer Services	£95,000 - £99,999	36	£2,627,760	
Head of Environment & Leisure	Environment & Leisure	£95,000 - £99,999	46	£6,989,610	
Head of Housing & Community Services	Housing & Community Services	£95,000 - £99,999	67	£3,844,210	
Head of Legal Partnership	Mid Kent Legal Services	£90,000 - £94,999	21	£482,530	Head of partnership with Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells Borough Councils.
Head of Regeneration, Economic Development & Property	Regeneration, Economic Development & Property	£85,000 - £89,999	21	£61,720	
Head of Finance & Procurement	Finance & Procurement	£75,000 - £79,999	12	£964,350	
Revenues & Benefits Manager	Revenues and Benefits	£75,000 - £79,999	41	£9,560	
Planning Policy Manager	Planning Policy	£65,000 - £69,999	9	£608,810	
Resilience Manager	Resilience	£65,000 - £69,999	0	£32,270	
Destination & Place Manager	Destination & Place	£65,000 - £69,999	2	£227,960	
Development Manager	Development	£65,000 - £69,999	17	£21,950	

Housing Options Manager	Housing Options	£65,000 - £69,999	31	£2,070,430	
Community Safety Manager	Community Safety	£65,000 - £69,999	15	£493,460	
Leisure & Technical Services Manager	Leisure & Technical Services	£65,000 - £69,999	23	£1,343,900	
Estates Surveyor	Property Services	£65,000 - £69,999	1	-£1,707,350	
Economic Development & External Funding Manager	Economic Development & External Funding	£65,000 - £69,999	2	£213,440	
Environmental Services Manager	Environmental Services	£65,000 - £69,999	16	£4,487,880	
Team Leader Contentious & Corporate Governance	Mid Kent Legal Services	£65,000 - £69,999	5	£0	
Private Sector Housing Manager	Private Sector Housing	£60,000 - £64,999	12	£334,560	
Planning Team Leader	Mid Kent Legal Services	£60,000 - £64,999	4	-	
Communications & Policy Manager	Communications & Policy	£55,000 - £59,999	4	-	
Information & Business Improvement Manager	Information & Business Improvement	£55,000 - £59,999	2	-	
Design & Conservation Manager	Planning Policy	£55,000 - £59,999	0	-	
Area Planning Officer	Development	£55,000 - £59,999	3	-	
Green Spaces Manager	Leisure & Technical Services	£55,000 - £59,999	7	-	
Climate Change Officer	Climate Emergency	£55,000 - £59,999	1	-	
Principal Accountant	Financial Services	£55,000 - £59,999	5	-	
Environmental Contracts Manager	Environmental Services	£55,000 - £59,999	5	-	
Customer Services Manager	Customer Services	£55,000 - £59,999	17	-	

Affordable Housing Enablement Manager	Housing & Community Services	£55,000 - £59,999	0	-	
Seafront & Engineering Manager	Leisure & Technical Services	£55,000 - £59,999	7	-	
Buildings Manager	Property Services	£55,000 - £59,999	12	-	
Principal Accountant (Technical)	Financial Services	£50,000 - £54,999	0	-	

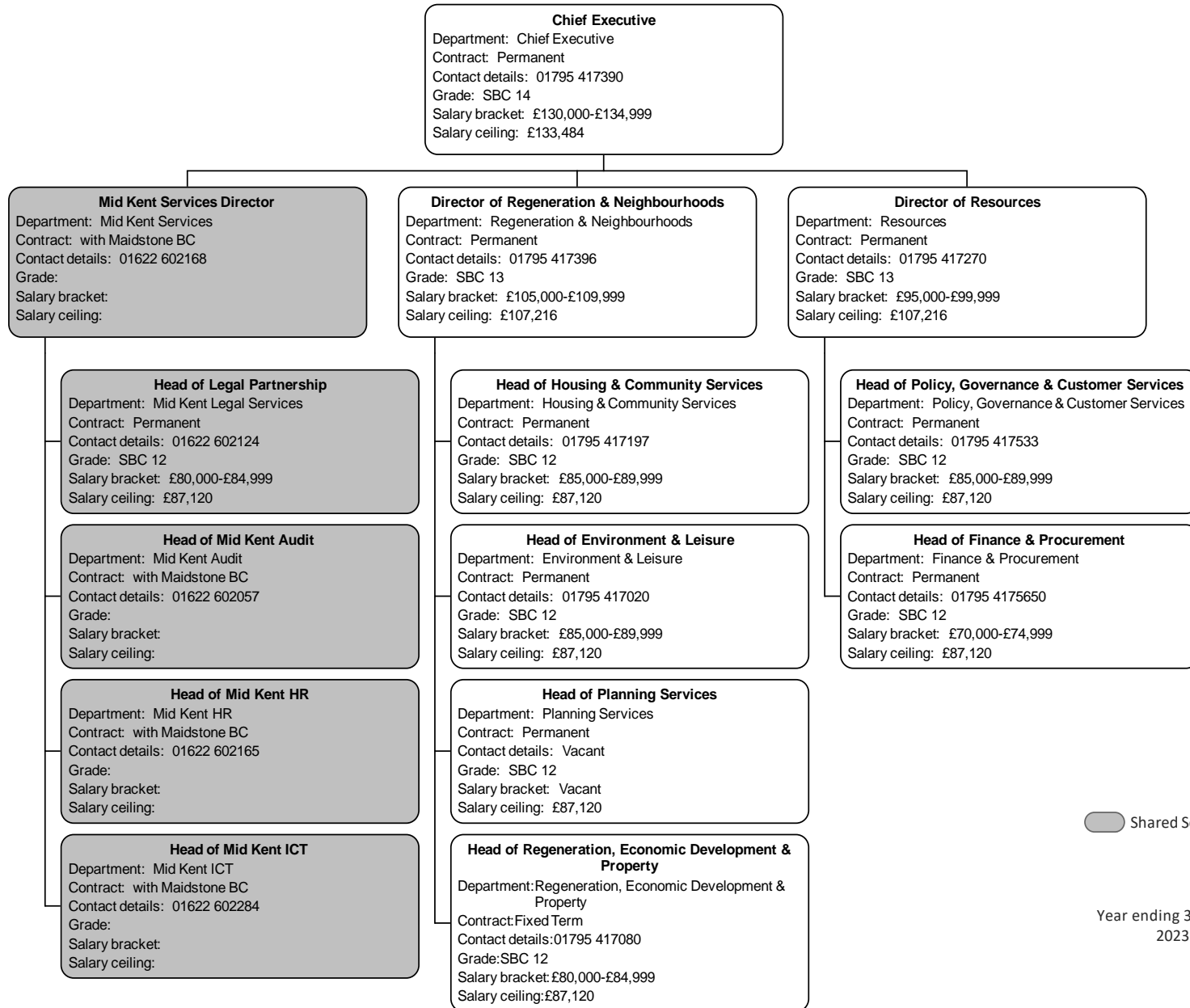
Number of employees whose remuneration in 2022/23 is at least £50,000, in brackets of £5,000

Remuneration band	Number of employees in band
£50,000 - £54,999	7
£55,000 - £59,999	13
£60,000 - £64,999	2
£65,000 - £69,999	12
£70,000 - £74,999	0
£75,000 - £79,999	2
£80,000 - £84,999	0
£85,000 - £89,999	1
£90,000 - £94,999	1
£95,000 - £99,999	3
£100,000 - £104,999	0
£105,000 - £109,999	0
£110,000 - £114,999	2
£115,000 - £119,999	0
£120,000 - £124,999	0
£125,000 - £129,999	0
£130,000 - £134,999	0
£135,000 - £139,999	0
£140,000 - £144,999	1
Total	44

The Council has three shared services and a secondment arrangement that are managed by Heads of Service not directly employed by Swale Borough Council. The salary details for these post holders may be found in the transparency data of the relevant employing authority.

Post	Employing Authority
Head of Audit Partnership	Maidstone Borough Council
Head of HR Shared Services	Maidstone Borough Council
Head of ICT Partnership	Maidstone Borough Council

Swale Borough Council Organisation Chart



Shared Services

Year ending 31 March
2023

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Policy and Resources Committee	
Meeting Date	8 February 2023
Report Title	Procedure for appointing persons to inquorate parish councils under s91 of the Local Government Act 1972
EMT Lead	David Clifford
Head of Service	Head of Policy, Governance and Customer Services (Monitoring Officer)
Lead Officer	
Classification	Open
Recommendations	Policy and Resources committee is asked to: 1. Adopt the procedure for appointing persons to inquorate parish councils at Appendix I.

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 Section 91 of the Local Government Act 1972 enables the district council to appoint by order persons to fill vacant seats on inquorate town and parish councils. This report introduces a draft procedure to be followed at Swale in making use of this power, and asks Policy and Resources committee to review and adopt this.

2 Background

- 2.1 There is no requirement on the district council to make use of the power at s91 of the 1972 Act, and in fact it has historically been rare in Swale that casual vacancies have caused town and parish councils to become inquorate. However, there has recently been an example of a parish council becoming inquorate and requesting Swale to appoint persons to restore the quorum. This process has now concluded satisfactorily, but it has highlighted the lack of an agreed procedure for undertaking this work.
- 2.2 The intention behind s91 of the 1972 Act has generally always been understood to be to enable persons to be appointed to inquorate councils in order that a quorate council can co-opt new members. Once a quorum is restored without the need for the appointed members, those appointed members are then generally expected to step down.
- 2.3 Section 2.8.4 of the Swale constitution provides the chief executive with delegated authority to make s91 orders, but as with any officer delegation, while the decision on whether and how to exercise the delegation is for the chief executive alone, she would not want to do this in a way which was not generally in accordance with members' preferences.

- 2.4 While the 1972 Act does not specify any particular category of person to be appointed, it is customary for the principal council to ask people who already have a democratic mandate in or close to the town or parish in question. This generally means that the members of the principal council (or both principal councils in two-tier areas such as Swale) are invited first. Recent experience of this process has suggested that a procedure for making appointments agreed in advance of a town or parish council becoming in-charge would be beneficial.

3 Proposals

- 3.1 The draft procedure at Appendix I provides some clarity around when and how the power at s91 of the 1972 Act will be exercised in Swale. The procedure covers the need to clarify how many seats fall to be filled, and then, most significantly, the order in which categories of persons will be invited to be appointed.
- 3.2 The order set out in paragraph 4 of the procedure is as follows:
1. Borough councillors representing the ward(s) in which the town or parish is located.
 2. Borough councillors representing ward(s) neighbouring those in which the town or parish is situated.
 3. All borough councillors, and all KCC councillors representing the division in which the town or parish is located.
 4. Town and parish councillors from towns and parishes neighbouring the in-charge town or parish.
- 3.1 The procedure then discusses how situations will be handled in which more persons from a given tier express a desire to be appointed than the number of seats to be filled, or in which there are no or insufficient volunteers from any of the four tiers. Finally, the procedure sets out what will happen with completed orders so as to ensure they are compliant with the requirements of the 1972 Act.
- 3.2 Policy and Resources committee is now ***recommended*** to review and adopt the procedure at Appendix I.

4 Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

- 4.1 The law does not specify how the powers in s91 of the 1972 Act should be used, so there is flexibility in terms of whether and how to make use of them. The council has not previously had a formal procedure, so a legitimate option would be to continue to do without one. However, recent experience of needing to make appointments under s91 has demonstrated that a procedure agreed in advance would be helpful to future such situations, so this do-nothing option has been rejected.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 The Swale local councils liaison forum brings town/parish council member representatives and clerks together with Swale's leader and chief executive to discuss matters of common interest. The liaison forum considered and endorsed the procedure at Appendix I at its November 2022 meeting.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	The recommendation in this report supports the council's fourth corporate priority to 'renew local democracy and make the council fit for the future'.
Financial, Resource and Property	No implications identified at this stage.
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	The legal background and implications are set out in the body of the report. Principal councils are under no duty to make use of the power at s91 of the Local Government Act 1972, or to adopt any formal procedure for doing so.
Crime and Disorder	No implications identified at this stage.
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	
Health and Wellbeing	
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	
Risk Management and Health and Safety	
Equality and Diversity	
Privacy and Data Protection	

7 Appendices

- 7.1 The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:
- Appendix I: Procedure for appointing persons to inquorate town and parish councils

8 Background Papers

- 8.1 There are no background papers.

SWALE BOROUGH COUNCIL**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972****PROCEDURE FOR APPOINTING PERSONS TO INQUORATE TOWN AND PARISH COUNCILS**

When a town or parish council within the borough of Swale becomes inquorate, the borough council may under s91 of the Local Government Act 1972 appoint persons by order to fill any or all of the vacant seats. Section 2.8.4 of the Swale constitution provides the chief executive with delegated authority to make such orders.

This note sets out how this authority will generally be exercised and the procedure to be followed when a town or parish clerk advises Swale that their town or parish council has become inquorate.

1. The monitoring officer will confirm that the town or parish council is inquorate and both (i) the number of seats to be filled to restore a quorum and (ii) the total number of vacant seats.
2. Swale is not under any obligation to appoint persons to fill vacant seats on town and parish councils. The chief executive will make a decision as to whether persons should be appointed, and if so the most desirable number of persons, in consultation with the council leader and the leader of the largest opposition group. This decision will have regard to the needs of the relevant town or parish and the recent history of the town or parish council, including the reasons for the recent vacancies.
3. The chief executive will invite persons to fill the number of seats they have determined should be filled. Persons appointed to town and parish councils by order under s91 of the 1972 Act do not need to meet the usual eligibility requirements for election or co-option to the town or parish council.
4. Persons will generally be invited in the following order. No further invitations will be issued once the number of seats to be filled has been reached. Any person invited may decline to be appointed. In the event that invitations to one tier of persons do not result in a sufficient number of persons willing to be appointed, invitations to the next tier of persons will be issued.
 1. Borough councillors representing the ward(s) in which the town or parish is located.
 2. Borough councillors representing ward(s) neighbouring those in which the town or parish is situated.
 3. All borough councillors, and all KCC councillors representing the division in which the town or parish is located.
 4. Town and parish councillors from towns and parishes neighbouring the inquorate town or parish.

5. In the event that invitations to a tier of persons result in more persons willing to be appointed than the number of seats to be filled, the chief executive will negotiate with all persons willing to be appointed in order to try to reduce the number. Where the number of persons to be appointed is less than the total number of vacant seats on the council, the chief executive may decide to appoint persons to fill seats up to the total number of vacant seats. The chief executive's decision on which persons within a given tier of persons will be appointed will be final.
6. In the event that invitations have been sent to persons in all four of the tiers listed in point (4) above and the number of persons to be appointed has not been reached, the chief executive may decide to appoint fewer persons as long as this restores the town or parish council to a quorum. Otherwise, the chief executive will consult with the council leader and the leader of the largest opposition group to determine which further persons should be invited to be appointed, or whether it would be preferable for the town or parish council to remain inquorate until the next election.
7. The chief executive will determine, in consultation with the council leader and the leader of the largest opposition group, whether any order appointing persons to the town or parish council should specify a date on which the appointment shall cease. In the alternative, the order will generally state that appointment(s) shall cease once sufficient eligible persons have been co-opted or elected to form a quorum.
8. The orders appointing persons to the town or parish council will be signed by the chief executive and sealed by the legal service. One copy of the order will be forwarded to the town or parish clerk, and two copies will be forwarded to the secretary of state for levelling up, housing and communities (or their successor in the event that the name of the department changes), in accordance with s91(3) of the 1972 Act.

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Policy and Resources Committee Forward Decisions Plan – 8 February 2023 meeting

Report title, background information and recommendation(s)	Date of meeting	Open or exempt?	Lead Officer and report author
Treasury Management Strategy 2022/23	February 23	Open	Head of Service: Lisa Fillery Report Author: Head of Finance and Procurement
Final Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan including fees and charges	February 23	Open	Head of Service: Lisa Fillery Report Author: Lisa Fillery
Adoption of the new code of conduct	February 23	Open	Head of Service: David Clifford Report Author: David Clifford
Pay Policy Statement	February 23	Open	Head of Service: Bal Sandher Report Author: Bal Sandher
Procedure for appointing persons to inqorate parish councils under s91 of the Local Government Act 1972	February 23	Open	Head of Service: David Clifford Report Author: David Clifford
Senior Management Restructure	February 23	Exempt	Head of Service: Larissa Reed Report Author: Larissa Reed

Risk Update report	22/03/23	Open	Head of Service: Alison Blake Report author: Alison Blake
Q3 Budget Monitoring	22/03/23	Open	Head of Service: Lisa Fillery Report author: Head of Finance and Procurement
Domestic Abuse Policy Adoption	22/03/23	Open	Head of Service: Charlotte Hudson Report Author: Steph Curtis
Performance Monitoring & Priority Projects Report – 2022/23 year-end	24/05/23	Open	Head of Service: David Clifford Report author: Tony Potter
2022/23 Outturn report	July 23	Open	Head of Service: Lisa Fillery Report author: Lisa Fillery

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