

Agenda

Council Meeting

Date: Wednesday, 21 February 2024

Time 7.00 pm

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

Quorum = 16

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 20 February 2024.

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1. Emergency Evacuation Procedure

Visitors and members of the public who are unfamiliar with the building and procedures are advised that:

- (a) The fire alarm is a continuous loud ringing. In the event that a fire drill is planned during the meeting, the Chair will advise of this.
- (b) Exit routes from the chamber are located on each side of the room, one directly to a fire escape, the other to the stairs opposite the lifts.
- (c) In the event of the alarm sounding, leave the building via the nearest safe exit and gather at the assembly point on the far side of the car park. Do not leave the assembly point or re-enter the building until advised to do so. Do not use the lifts.
- (d) Anyone unable to use the stairs should make themselves known during this agenda item.

2. Apologies for Absence

3. Minutes

To approve the Minutes of the [Meeting](#) held on 31 January 2024 (Minute Nos. 584 - 593) as a correct record.

4. Declarations of Interest

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

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

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

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

5. Mayor's Announcements

6. Questions submitted by the Public

To consider any questions submitted by the public. (The deadline for questions is 4.30 pm on the Wednesday before the meeting – please contact Democratic Services by e-mailing democraticservices@swale.gov.uk or call 01795 417330).

7. Questions submitted by Members

To consider any questions submitted by Members. (The deadline for questions is 4.30 pm on the Monday the week before the meeting – please contact Democratic Services by e-mailing democraticservices@swale.gov.uk or call 01795 417330).

8. Leader's Statement

9. Nomination of Mayor 2024/25

Each candidate's proposer and seconder will be invited to speak for up to three minutes in support of their nomination. If more than one nomination is received for the position, a secret ballot will be taken.

10. Nomination of Deputy Mayor 2024/25

Each candidate's proposer and seconder will be invited to speak for up to three minutes in support of their nomination. If more than one nomination is received for the position, a secret ballot will be taken.

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Council is asked to note the recommendations from the following meeting:

- Policy and Resources Committee 29 November 2023

Issued on Tuesday, 13 February 2024

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

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

Council		Agenda Item:
Meeting Date	21 February 2024	
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 2023 are set out below:
- (i) the figures for payments made in 2023/24 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 (G)

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	None specific to this report.

Emergency	
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 2024

8 Background documents

None

Swale Borough Council

Pay Policy Statement – March 2024

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 nineteen 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 £16,500	5.50%	2.75%
£16,501 - £25,900	5.80%	2.90%
£25,901 - £42,100	6.50%	3.25%
£42,101 - £53,300	6.80%	3.40%
£53,301 - £74,700	8.50%	4.25%
£74,701 - £105,900	9.90%	4.95%
£105,901 - £124,800	10.50%	5.25%
£124,801 - £187,200	11.40%	5.70%
More than £187,201	12.50%	6.25%

The employer contribution rate, calculated as the future service rate excluding past service deficit for 2023/24 changed to 20.5%, 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 2023/24 there were sixteen 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 2024 there were five 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 (ten in 2023/24) who are on an out-of-hours on-call rota for specialist duties. The outcome of the review has also increased the level of remuneration to £125 each week for being on-call.

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 2024 this allowance was allocated to forty eight 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. 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.

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 for nominees and partners and the cost of the occasion is off-set through sponsorship from businesses and partners. The awards ceremony now takes place during the day and all staff are 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 twelve employees have used this benefit during 2023/24. 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 and must be published on our own website and a government website.

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 (G).

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
2021/22*	£110,932	£24,533	4.81
2022/23*	£116,385	£24,804	4.69
2023/24*	£117,377	£26,087	4.50
% change from previous year*	0.85%	5.17%	-4.05%

*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 receiving an increment that increased the earnings in 2023/24. In addition, the Chief Executive also acts as Returning Officer for all council elections for which an additional allowance is payable in relation to the overall supervision and ultimate responsibility for the conduct of council 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 1% of facility time is spent by union officials.

Percentage of pay bill spent on facility time:

Total cost of facility time	£1,323
Total pay bill	£12,401,865
Percentage of pay bill	0.01%

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 2023/24

Grade	1	2	3	4	5
1	GRADE 1 IS NO LONGER IN USE				
2	£21,041				
3	£21,335	£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)

Swale Borough Council operate a shared cost Additional Voluntary Contribution Scheme for employees. This policy will be reviewed from time to time by the Head of Human Resources in conjunction with the Chief Finance Officer.

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.

Appendix I (G)

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	£130,000 - £134,999	287	£247,480	Returning Officer responsible for all elections and Head of Paid Service.
Director of Resources	Resources	£110,000 - £114,999	58	-£13,488,790	Section 151 Officer.
Director of Regeneration & Neighbourhoods	Regeneration & Neighbourhoods	£105,000 - £109,999	196	£13,241,310	
Head of Environment & Leisure	Environment & Leisure	£90,000 - £94,999	50	£7,365,170	
Head of Legal Partnership	Mid Kent Legal Services	£85,000 - £89,999	21	£515,360	Head of partnership with Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells Borough Councils.
Head of Housing & Community Services	Housing & Community Services	£85,000 - £89,999	96	£4,059,680	
Head of Regeneration, Economic Development & Property and Interim Head of Planning Services	Regeneration, Economic Development & Property and Planning Services	£80,000 - £84,999	46	£586,650	
Head of Finance & Procurement	Finance & Procurement	£75,000 - £79,999	12	£949,150	
Strategic Programme & Assets Manager	Strategic Programme & Assets	£60,000 - £64,999	5	£210,740	
Capital Projects Manager	Capital Projects	£50,000 - £54,999	1		
Community Services Manager	Community Services	£60,000 - £64,999	21	£629,930	
Environmental Services Manager	Environmental Services	£60,000 - £64,999	17	£4,510,360	
Housing Options Manager	Housing Options	£60,000 - £64,999	35	£2,162,160	
Leisure & Technical Services Manager	Leisure & Technical Services	£60,000 - £64,999	24	£3,477,040	
Team Leader Contentious & Corporate Governance	Mid Kent Legal Services	£65,000 - £69,999	5	£0	Manager within shared service with Swale and Tunbridge Wells Borough Councils.

Private Sector Housing Manager	Private Sector Housing	£60,000 - £64,999	12	£362,340	
Revenues & Benefits Manager	Revenues and Benefits	£75,000 - £79,999	34	£1,199,630	Interim head of partnership for Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells Borough Councils.
Communications & Policy Manager	Communications & Policy	£55,000 - £59,999	5	£309,130	
Development Manager	Development	£60,000 - £64,999	17	-£13,240	
Democratic & Electoral Services Manager	Democratic & Electoral Services	£50,000 - £54,999	6		
Climate Change Officer	Climate Emergency	£50,000 - £54,999	2	£160,390	
Customer Services Manager	Customer Services	£50,000 - £54,999	23	£578,230	
Area Planning Officer	Development	£55,000 - £59,999	3	£0	
Environmental Contracts Manager	Environmental Services	£50,000 - £54,999	5	£3,961,180	
Principal Accountant	Financial Services	£50,000 - £54,999	5	£0	
Principal Accountant (Technical)	Financial Services	£50,000 - £54,999	2	£0	
Affordable Housing Enablement Manager	Housing & Community Services	£50,000 - £54,999	0	£67,470	
Information & Business Improvement Manager	Information & Business Improvement	£50,000 - £54,999	2	£0	
Green Spaces Manager	Leisure & Technical Services	£50,000 - £54,999	7	£1,943,470	
Seafront & Engineering Manager	Leisure & Technical Services	£50,000 - £54,999	8	£294,060	
Planning Team Leader	Mid Kent Legal Services	£60,000 - £64,999	3	£0	Manager within shared service with Swale and Tunbridge Wells Borough Councils.
Design & Conservation Manager	Planning Policy	£50,000 - £54,999	1	£139,080	
Buildings Operations & Maintenance Manager	Property Services	£50,000 - £54,999	10	£674,030	

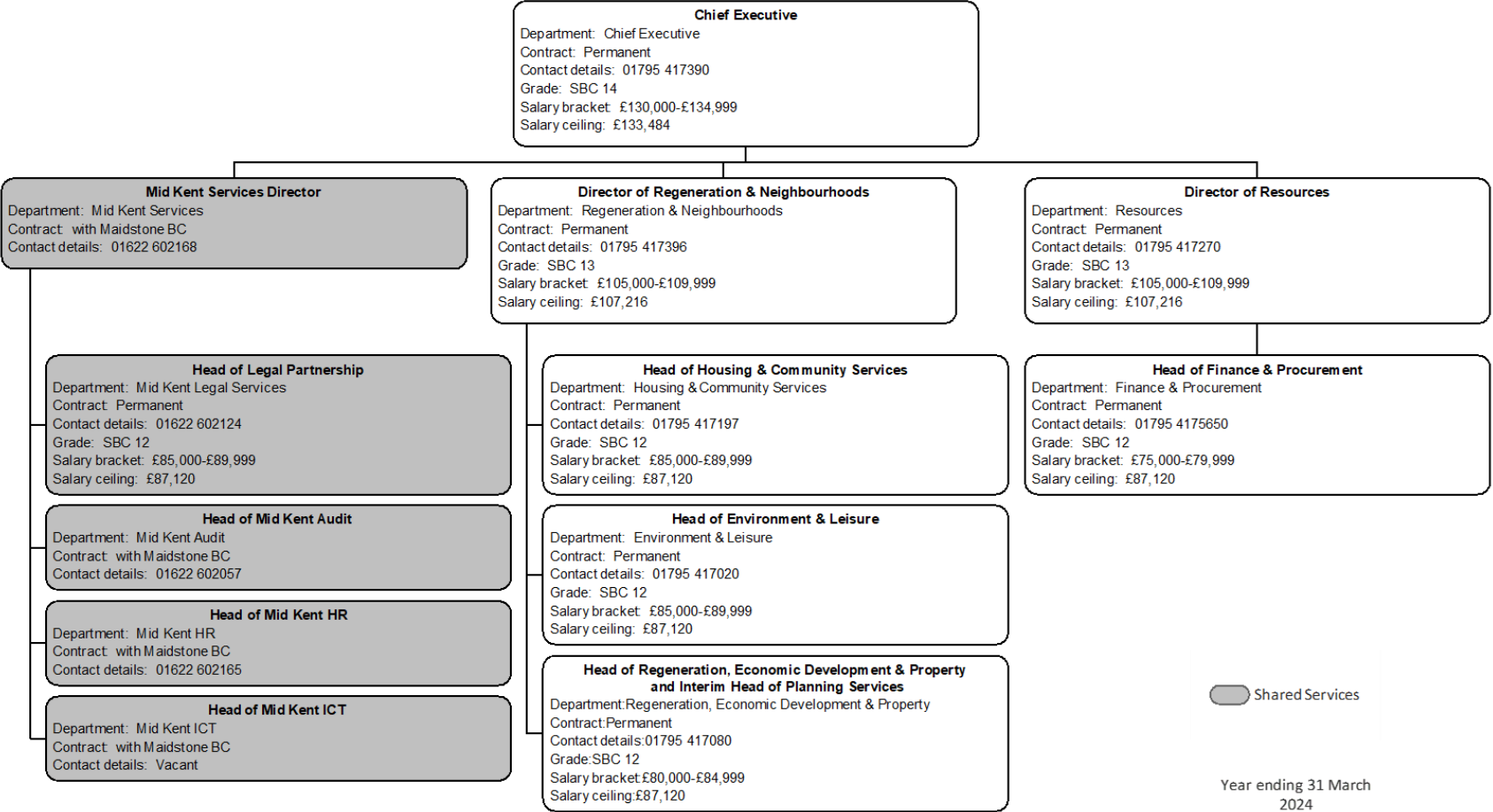
Number of employees whose remuneration in 2023/24 is at least £50,000, in brackets of £5,000

Remuneration band	Number of employees in band
£50,000 - £54,999	14
£55,000 - £59,999	3
£60,000 - £64,999	8
£65,000 - £69,999	1
£70,000 - £74,999	0
£75,000 - £79,999	2
£80,000 - £84,999	1
£85,000 - £89,999	2
£90,000 - £94,999	1
£95,000 - £99,999	0
£100,000 - £104,999	0
£105,000 - £109,999	1
£110,000 - £114,999	1
£115,000 - £119,999	0
£120,000 - £124,999	0
£125,000 - £129,999	0
£130,000 - £134,999	1
Total	35

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



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Council Meeting	
Meeting Date	21 February 2024
Report Title	Review of Polling Place – Teynham and Lynsted Ward (TLY polling district) Lynsted and Norton School
EMT Lead	Larissa Reed, Chief Executive and Returning Officer
Head of Service	
Lead Officer	Jo Millard, Democratic and Electoral Services Manager
Classification	Open
Recommendations	1. The proposed change to the polling place in the Teynham and Lynsted polling place be approved

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 Council is asked to consider proposals to change arrangements for voting in the Teynham and Lynsted (TLY) polling district at the request of Lynsted and Norton primary school, and after logistical and financial reasons in stationing a mobile unit at the school.

2 Background

- 2.1 The Electoral Administration Act 2006 introduced a requirement for Councils to undertake a review of polling districts and places in 2007 and every four years thereafter. In practice, however, this is monitored more regularly and where necessary, arrangements have been made for alternative polling places/stations, with the agreement of the Council and the Returning Officer. A full review will be carried out this year but a review of the polling place in Teynham and Lynsted has been carried out now in order that this polling place may be considered for the Kent Police and Crime Commissioners election in May 2024.
- 2.2 To clarify, the Council is responsible for setting the polling district (a geographical area of a ward) and polling places (a geographical area within a polling district that the polling station must be located within). The Returning Officer is responsible for locating the polling station, which must be within the polling place.

3 Proposals

- 3.1 It is proposed that Lynsted and Norton primary school is no longer used as a polling station, and that a room at Black Lion Public House, The Street, is used instead.

- 3.2 Whilst Lynsted and Norton Primary School has been used for many years, it is becoming increasingly difficult for the school to accommodate us, and in more recent years as a room has not been available, it has been necessary to hire a portacabin to use instead at considerable cost. The cost of hiring a portacabin and transporter to deliver and station at the school, as well as sundries such as chemical toilet facility, disabled ramp, generator and diesel totalled in excess of £4500 in 2023. Availability of portacabins is also more scarce as more authorities seek to find alternative venues other than schools.
- 3.3 As an alternative venue is available nearby and is suitable in terms of size, disabled access, car parking and costs, it is recommended that the polling place be extended to the Black Lion Public House so that the Returning Officer may use this venue at future elections whilst retaining the option to use Lynsted and Norton primary school.

4 Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

- 4.1 Council may make suggestions for alternative venues, however consideration does need to be given to practical aspects in terms of the venues available within the wards

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 Ward Members have been asked for their views regarding the proposed changes. Cllrs Lloyd Bowen and Julien Speed have both given their full support.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	Ensuring voters are able to vote at the most convenient and commodious venue within the polling place contributes to the objective to strengthen democracy within the emerging corporate plan.
Financial, Resource and Property	We are seeking to retain the current number of polling stations(which must be located within the polling place); the quote from the Black Lion Public House is significantly lower than the costs of hiring a portacabin and associated costs.
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	The Council is required to take a full review in accordance with the Electoral Administration Act 2006, but in practice keeps polling stations under regular review.
Crime and Disorder	None identified at this time.

Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	None identified at this time.
Health and Wellbeing	None identified at this time.
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	None identified at this time.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	The purpose of the review is to ensure that all voters have reasonable facilities for voting. It is important that venues meet health and safety requirements so as not to put voters at risk and election staff have assessed the venue. Polling Station staff are encouraged to give feedback on venues and each station is visited by a Polling Station Inspector on election day.
Equality and Diversity	One purpose of the review is to ensure that all electors in the Borough have reasonable facilities for voting, and that as far as is reasonable and practicable, facilities for voting are accessible for disabled people.
Privacy and Data Protection	None identified at this time

7 Appendices

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

- Appendix I: Map of Teynham and Lynsted polling places showing locations of Lynsted and Norton Primary School and Black Lion Public House.

8 Background Papers

None

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APPENDIX I – Map of Teynham and Lynsted polling place showing locations of Lynsted and Norton Primary School and Black Lion Public House.



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Council Meeting	
Meeting Date	21 February 2024
Report Title	Budget and Council Tax for 2024/25
EMT Lead	Lisa Fillery, Director of Resources
Head of Service	Claire Stanbury, Head of Finance and Procurement
Lead Officer	Lisa Fillery, Director of Resources Claire Stanbury, Head of Finance and Procurement
Classification	Open
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That members note the Director of Resources opinion on the robustness of the budget estimates and the adequacy of reserves. 2. That minute number 604 of the Policy and Resources committee on 7 February 2024 on the report on the Medium Term Financial Plan and the 2024/25 revenue and capital budgets be approved. 3. That the resolutions contained in Appendix I be approved. 4. That in accordance with the proposals contained within SI 2014 No. 165 that a recorded vote be taken on the 2024/25 Budget and Council Tax.

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 At their meeting on 7 February 2024, Policy and Resources Committee recommended the 2024/25 Revenue Budget, the Capital Programme for 2024/25 to 2027/28, and the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for 2024/25.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is for the Council to approve the Council Tax Requirement, Revenue Budget and Capital Programme, and Council Tax for the year 2024/25 as set out in the report to the Policy and Resources Committee on 7 February 2024, subject to any amendments, and to approve the Council Tax Resolutions set out in Appendix I.
- 1.3 This report reflects the latest information available for the preceptors at the time of writing (12 February 2024). Should there be any changes to these, members will be informed.

2 Background

- 2.1 As part of the 2024/25 budget setting process, the Policy and Resources Committee first received a report on the budget proposals for 2024/25 and an update on the Medium Term Financial Plan on 29 November 2023. The draft budget, following public consultation, was then considered again by Policy and Resources Committee on 7 February 2024.
- 2.2 The final settlement published on 5 February 2024 confirmed the grants from Central Government, and this was verbally communicated to Policy and Resources committee at the February meeting. There is an increase in grants of £179k, being £3k on services grant and £176k on the funding guarantee grant. The impact of this is a reduction in the proposed use of reserves to balance the budget for 2024/25, to £370k.
- 2.3 KCC's proposed budget for 2024/25 was published on 9 February and includes a proposal to end waste enabling payments payable to this council in 2024/25 of £297k. If this position is agreed as part of KCC's budget at their meeting on 19 February this will increase the budget gap for Swale to £667k.
- 2.4 The impact of the increased grant and the proposal included within KCC's budget report is illustrated as follows:

	2024/25 Budget as at P&R 7 Feb 2024	Additional Grant funding	Loss of waste enabling payments	2024/25 Revised budget position
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Net budget	24,373		297	24,670
Drainage Board	1,000			1,000
Contribution to Reserves	15			15
Use of Business Rates Pool Reserve	(855)			(855)
Budget gap/use of reserves	(549)	179	(297)	(667)
				0
<u>Funding</u>				0
Revenue Support Grant	(338)			(338)
Business Rates - Gross	(11,736)			(11,736)
New Homes Bonus	(674)			(674)
Services Grant	(27)	(3)		(30)
Funding Guarantee Grant	(1,100)	(176)		(1,276)
Council Tax requirement	10,109	0	0	10,109

3 Proposals

- 3.1 In accordance with Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 the Council's Section 151 Officer is required to report formally to the Council on the robustness of the estimates and the adequacy of the reserves. It should be noted that Section 26 of the Act gives the Secretary of State power to set a minimum level of reserves for which an authority must provide in setting its budget. The Section 151 Officer (the Director of Resources), in accordance with the Local Government Act 2003, hereby has confirmed her opinion that the 2024/25 budget submitted is robust and that the reserves are reasonable given an assessment of risks. The medium term savings requirement will need to be addressed in 2024/25 with a robust savings plan to reduce the reliance on the use of reserves to balance future years' budgets as it is not sustainable to continue to rely on significant transfers from reserves to support the base budget position. The 2023/24 half yearly budget monitoring position that was reported to this committee in November detailed the reduction in the estimated use of reserves for the current year. This reduction in the planned use of reserves for 2023/24 improves the balance of reserves held to support future years, but does not address the underlying need to deliver ongoing savings. The budget report to Policy and Resources committee on 7 February 2024 set out the background to this opinion.
- 3.2 All councils have to provide the Government with a forecast for their business rates to be collected for the forthcoming financial year (NNDR1), which has a statutory deadline of 31 January. For 2024/25 the Council is part of the Kent Business Rate Pool and the NNDR1 forms for the other Pool authorities are being collated and any significant changes will be reported to members as part of the monitoring reports during 2024/25.
- 3.3 The Town and Parish Council Precepts for 2024/25 are detailed in Appendix I and total £1,955,342. The increase in the average Band D Council Tax for parished areas is 11.58% and results in the average Band D Council Tax for parishes of £57.99 for 2024/25.
- 3.4 As well as its own Council Tax, Swale Borough Council collects on behalf of the other 'precepting authorities', i.e. Kent County Council, the Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority, and the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner.
- 3.5 At the time of writing this report, Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority were due to meet on 20 February 2024. This report is based upon a precept of £4,528,573 which results in a Band D Council Tax of £89.91 (2.99% or £2.61 increase).
- 3.6 The Police and Crime Panel met on 6 February 2024 to consider the budget proposals from the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner. The decision was for a precept of £12,901,725 which results in a Band D Council Tax of £256.15 (5.35% or £13.00 increase).

- 3.7 Kent County Council are due to meet on 19 February 2024 and set their precept. This report is based upon a precept of £81,133,540 resulting in a Band D Council Tax of £1,610.82 (4.992% or £76.59 increase including the Adult Social Care precept).
- 3.8 Appendix II provides more detail on the calculation of the Council Tax requirement and a summary of the calculation of Band D Council Tax.
- 3.9 Appendix III is the Budget report submitted to Policy and Resources committee on 7 February 2024.

4 Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

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

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 The budget proposals were reported to Policy and Resources Committee on 29 November 2023.
- 5.2 An online budget consultation exercise took place from 30 November 2023 to 3 January 2024, the results of which were reported to Policy and Resources committee on 7 February 2024.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
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: Council Tax Resolutions
- Appendix II: (i) Council Tax Requirement 2024/25
(ii) Calculation of Band D Council Tax 2024/25
- Appendix III: Budget report to Policy and Resources Committee 7 February 2024

8 Background Papers

8.1 As detailed in the budget report to the Policy and Resources committee on 7 February 2024.

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Council is recommended to resolve as follows:

1. That it be noted that, further to the Officer Delegated decision taken on 22 December 2023, the council calculated:

1.1 the Council Tax Base 2024/25 for the whole Council area as 50,367.85 (item T in the formula in Section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended) (the 'Act') and,

1.2 for dwellings in those parts of its area to which a Parish Precept relates as set out below:

Parish/ Town Council	Tax Base
Bapchild	591.91
Bobbing	984.39
Borden	1,103.97
Boughton	703.27
Bredgar	298.31
Doddington	226.20
Dunkirk	525.05
Eastchurch	842.82
Eastling	148.49
Faversham	7,387.56
Graveney & Goodnestone	185.39
Hartlip	369.35
Hernhill	321.76
Iwade	1,458.61
Leysdown	1,235.56
Lower Halstow	454.51
Luddenham	43.35
Lynsted	482.05
Milstead	94.13
Minster	5,714.24
Newington	1,054.01
Newnham	155.71
Norton & Buckland	191.55
Oare	173.24
Ospringe	284.39
Queenborough	906.78
Rodmersham	239.42
Selling	371.97
Sheerness	2,834.23
Sheldwich, Leaveland & Badlesmere	352.69
Stalisfield	101.84
Teynham	1,003.36
Throwley	144.87
Tonge	467.39
Tunstall	700.52
Upchurch	1,058.39
Warden	506.27
Total Parished Areas	33,717.55

2. That, as a preliminary step, the calculation of the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2024/25 (excluding parish precepts) is £10,108,827 as detailed in the report to Policy and Resources Committee on 7 February 2024.
3. That the following amounts be calculated for the year 2024/25 in accordance with Sections 30 to 36 of the Act:
 - 3.1 £95,122,902 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act taking into account all precepts issued to it by Parish Councils.
 - 3.2 £83,058,733 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act.
 - 3.3 £12,064,169 being the amount by which the aggregate at 3.1 above exceeds the aggregate at 3.2 above, calculated by the Council accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act, as its Council Tax requirement for the year (item R in the formula in Section 31B of the Act).
 - 3.4 £239.52 being the amount at 3.3 above (item R), all divided by item 1.1 above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including parish precepts).
 - 3.5 £1,955,342 being the aggregate amount of all special items (parish precepts) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act.
 - 3.6 £200.70 being the amount at 3.4 above, less the result given by dividing the amount at 3.5 above by 1.1 above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no parish precept relates.

3.7 Part of the Council's area being the amounts given by adding to the amount at 3.6 above the amounts of the special item or items relating to dwellings in those parts of the Council's area mentioned above divided in each case by the amount at 1.2 above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(3) of the Act, as the basic amounts of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which special items relate.

Parish / Town Council	£ p
Bapchild	223.98
Bobbing	253.28
Borden	269.26
Boughton-Under-Blean	328.67
Bredgar	242.08
Doddington	238.90
Dunkirk	254.47
Eastchurch	285.24
Eastling	235.70
Faversham Town Council	290.95
Graveney & Goodnestone	271.17
Hartlip	254.85
Hernhill	256.93
Iwade	242.52
Leysdown	231.95
Lower Halstow	283.73
Luddenham	200.70
Lynsted	267.55
Milstead	275.07
Minster	235.70
Newington	256.73
Newnham	234.99
Norton & Buckland	244.20
Oare	285.55
Ospringe	239.43
Queenborough Town Council	279.55
Rodmersham	255.00
Selling	246.44
Sheerness	250.08
Sheldwich, Leaveland & Badlesmere	229.83
Stalisfield	231.01
Teynham	266.48
Throwley	229.16
Tonge	217.82
Tunstall	211.41
Upchurch	246.60
Warden	233.29

Council Tax Resolutions

Appendix I

3.8	Band -	Band	Band	Band	Band	Band	Band	Band	Band
	A	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p
Bapchild	124.43	149.32	174.21	199.09	223.98	273.75	323.53	373.30	447.96
Bobbing	140.71	168.86	197.00	225.14	253.28	309.57	365.86	422.14	506.57
Borden	149.59	179.51	209.42	239.34	269.26	329.09	388.93	448.76	538.52
Boughton-Under-Blean	182.60	219.12	255.64	292.15	328.67	401.71	474.75	547.79	657.35
Bredgar	134.49	161.39	188.28	215.18	242.08	295.88	349.67	403.47	484.16
Doddington	132.72	159.27	185.81	212.36	238.90	291.99	345.08	398.17	477.80
Dunkirk	141.37	169.65	197.92	226.20	254.47	311.02	367.57	424.12	508.95
Eastchurch	158.47	190.16	221.85	253.55	285.24	348.63	412.02	475.40	570.48
Eastling	130.94	157.13	183.32	209.51	235.70	288.08	340.45	392.83	471.40
Faversham Town Council	161.64	193.97	226.30	258.62	290.95	355.61	420.26	484.92	581.90
Graveney & Goodnestone	150.65	180.78	210.91	241.04	271.17	331.43	391.69	451.96	542.35
Hartlip	141.58	169.90	198.22	226.53	254.85	311.48	368.12	424.75	509.70
Hernhill	142.74	171.28	199.83	228.38	256.93	314.02	371.11	428.21	513.85
Iwade	134.73	161.68	188.63	215.57	242.52	296.41	350.31	404.20	485.04
Leysdown	128.86	154.63	180.40	206.17	231.95	283.49	335.03	386.58	463.89
Lower Halstow	157.63	189.16	220.68	252.21	283.73	346.79	409.84	472.89	567.47
Luddenham	111.50	133.80	156.10	178.40	200.70	245.30	289.90	334.50	401.40
Lynsted	148.64	178.37	208.09	237.82	267.55	327.00	386.46	445.91	535.10
Milstead	152.81	183.38	213.94	244.50	275.07	336.19	397.32	458.44	550.13
Minster	130.94	157.13	183.32	209.51	235.70	288.08	340.46	392.83	471.40
Newington	142.63	171.15	199.68	228.20	256.73	313.78	370.83	427.88	513.45
Newnham	130.55	156.66	182.77	208.88	234.99	287.21	339.43	391.65	469.98
Norton & Buckland	135.67	162.80	189.94	217.07	244.20	298.47	352.74	407.01	488.41
Oare	158.64	190.37	222.10	253.83	285.55	349.01	412.47	475.92	571.11
Ospringe	133.02	159.62	186.22	212.83	239.43	292.64	345.85	399.05	478.86
Queenborough Town Council	155.31	186.37	217.43	248.49	279.55	341.67	403.80	465.92	559.10
Rodmersham	141.67	170.00	198.33	226.66	255.00	311.66	368.33	425.00	510.00
Selling	136.91	164.29	191.67	219.06	246.44	301.20	355.97	410.73	492.88
Sheerness	138.93	166.72	194.51	222.30	250.08	305.66	361.23	416.80	500.17
Sheldwich, Leaveland & Badlesmere	127.69	153.22	178.76	204.30	229.83	280.91	331.98	383.06	459.67
Stalisfield	128.34	154.01	179.68	205.34	231.01	282.35	333.68	385.02	462.02
Teynham	148.04	177.65	207.26	236.87	266.48	325.70	384.91	444.13	532.96
Throwley	127.31	152.77	178.24	203.70	229.16	280.08	331.01	381.93	458.32
Tonge	121.01	145.21	169.41	193.61	217.82	266.22	314.62	363.03	435.63
Tunstall	117.45	140.94	164.43	187.92	211.41	258.39	305.36	352.34	422.81
Upchurch	137.00	164.40	191.80	219.20	246.60	301.40	356.20	411.00	493.19
Warden	129.61	155.53	181.45	207.37	233.29	285.13	336.98	388.82	466.58
All other parts of the Council's area	111.50	133.80	156.10	178.40	200.70	245.30	289.90	334.50	401.40

Council Tax Resolutions

Appendix I

Being the amounts given by multiplying the amounts at 3.6 and 3.7 above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands.

3.9 The total precept per parish for 2024/25 is as follows:

Parish / Town Council	Total Precept £
Bapchild	13,780
Bobbing	51,764
Borden	75,687
Boughton-Under-Blean	90,000
Bredgar	12,344
Doddington	8,641
Dunkirk	28,234
Eastchurch	71,253
Eastling	5,197
Faversham Town Council	666,741
Graveney & Goodnestone	13,065
Hartlip	20,000
Hernhill	18,091
Iwade	61,000
Leysdown	38,606
Lower Halstow	37,740
Luddenham	0
Lynsted	32,224
Milstead	7,000
Minster	199,998
Newington	59,053
Newnham	5,339
Norton & Buckland	8,333
Oare	14,700
Ospringe	11,015
Queenborough Town Council	71,500
Rodmersham	13,000
Selling	17,013
Sheerness	139,962
Sheldwich, Leaveland & Badlesmere	10,275
Stalisfield	3,087
Teynham	66,000
Throwley	4,123
Tonge	8,000
Tunstall	7,500
Upchurch	48,577
Warden	16,500

4. That it be noted that, for the year 2024/25, Kent County Council, the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner, and the Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories shown below:

Valuation Bands

Swale Borough Council

-A	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
£111.50	£133.80	£156.10	£178.40	£200.70	£245.30	£289.90	£334.50	£401.40

Kent County Council

-A	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
£894.90	£1,073.88	£1,252.86	£1,431.84	£1,610.82	£1,968.78	£2,326.74	£2,684.70	£3,221.64

The Kent Police and Crime Commissioner

-A	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
£142.31	£170.77	£199.23	£227.69	£256.15	£313.07	£369.99	£426.92	£512.30

Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority

-A	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
£49.95	£59.94	£69.93	£79.92	£89.91	£109.89	£129.87	£149.85	£179.82

5. That, having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at 3.8 and 4 above, the Council, in accordance with Sections 30 and 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the following amounts as the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2024/25 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

Council Tax Resolutions

Appendix I

	Band -A	Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D	Band E	Band F	Band G	Band H
	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p
Bapchild	1,211.59	1,453.91	1,696.23	1,938.54	2,180.86	2,665.49	3,150.13	3,634.77	4,361.72
Bobbing	1,227.87	1,473.45	1,719.02	1,964.59	2,210.16	2,701.31	3,192.46	3,683.61	4,420.33
Borden	1,236.75	1,484.10	1,731.44	1,978.79	2,226.14	2,720.83	3,215.53	3,710.23	4,452.28
Boughton-Under-Blean	1,269.76	1,523.71	1,777.66	2,031.60	2,285.55	2,793.45	3,301.35	3,809.26	4,571.11
Bredgar	1,221.65	1,465.98	1,710.30	1,954.63	2,198.96	2,687.62	3,176.27	3,664.94	4,397.92
Doddington	1,219.88	1,463.86	1,707.83	1,951.81	2,195.78	2,683.73	3,171.68	3,659.64	4,391.56
Dunkirk	1,228.53	1,474.24	1,719.94	1,965.65	2,211.35	2,702.76	3,194.17	3,685.59	4,422.71
Eastchurch	1,245.63	1,494.75	1,743.87	1,993.00	2,242.12	2,740.37	3,238.62	3,736.87	4,484.24
Eastling	1,218.10	1,461.72	1,705.34	1,948.96	2,192.58	2,679.82	3,167.05	3,654.30	4,385.16
Faversham Town Council	1,248.80	1,498.56	1,748.32	1,998.07	2,247.83	2,747.35	3,246.86	3,746.39	4,495.66
Graveney & Goodnestone	1,237.81	1,485.37	1,732.93	1,980.49	2,228.05	2,723.17	3,218.29	3,713.43	4,456.11
Hartlip	1,228.74	1,474.49	1,720.24	1,965.98	2,211.73	2,703.22	3,194.72	3,686.22	4,423.46
Hernhill	1,229.90	1,475.87	1,721.85	1,967.83	2,213.81	2,705.76	3,197.71	3,689.68	4,427.61
Iwade	1,221.89	1,466.27	1,710.65	1,955.02	2,199.40	2,688.15	3,176.91	3,665.67	4,398.80
Leysdown	1,216.02	1,459.22	1,702.42	1,945.62	2,188.83	2,675.23	3,161.63	3,648.05	4,377.65
Lower Halstow	1,244.79	1,493.75	1,742.70	1,991.66	2,240.61	2,738.53	3,236.44	3,734.36	4,481.23
Luddenham	1,198.66	1,438.39	1,678.12	1,917.85	2,157.58	2,637.04	3,116.50	3,595.97	4,315.16
Lynsted	1,235.80	1,482.96	1,730.11	1,977.27	2,224.43	2,718.74	3,213.06	3,707.38	4,448.86
Milstead	1,239.97	1,487.97	1,735.96	1,983.95	2,231.95	2,727.93	3,223.92	3,719.91	4,463.89
Minster	1,218.10	1,461.72	1,705.34	1,948.96	2,192.58	2,679.82	3,167.06	3,654.30	4,385.16
Newington	1,229.79	1,475.74	1,721.70	1,967.65	2,213.61	2,705.52	3,197.43	3,689.35	4,427.21
Newnham	1,217.71	1,461.25	1,704.79	1,948.33	2,191.87	2,678.95	3,166.03	3,653.12	4,383.74
Norton & Buckland	1,222.83	1,467.39	1,711.96	1,956.52	2,201.08	2,690.21	3,179.34	3,668.48	4,402.17
Oare	1,245.80	1,494.96	1,744.12	1,993.28	2,242.43	2,740.75	3,239.07	3,737.39	4,484.87
Ospringe	1,220.18	1,464.21	1,708.24	1,952.28	2,196.31	2,684.38	3,172.45	3,660.52	4,392.62
Queenborough Town Council	1,242.47	1,490.96	1,739.45	1,987.94	2,236.43	2,733.41	3,230.40	3,727.39	4,472.86
Rodmersham	1,228.83	1,474.59	1,720.35	1,966.11	2,211.88	2,703.40	3,194.93	3,686.47	4,423.76
Selling	1,224.07	1,468.88	1,713.69	1,958.51	2,203.32	2,692.94	3,182.57	3,672.20	4,406.64
Sheerness	1,226.09	1,471.31	1,716.53	1,961.75	2,206.96	2,697.40	3,187.83	3,678.27	4,413.93
Sheldwich, Leaveland & Badlesmere	1,214.85	1,457.81	1,700.78	1,943.75	2,186.71	2,672.65	3,158.58	3,644.53	4,373.43
Stalisfield	1,215.50	1,458.60	1,701.70	1,944.79	2,187.89	2,674.09	3,160.28	3,646.49	4,375.78
Teynham	1,235.20	1,482.24	1,729.28	1,976.32	2,223.36	2,717.44	3,211.51	3,705.60	4,446.72
Throwley	1,214.47	1,457.36	1,700.26	1,943.15	2,186.04	2,671.82	3,157.61	3,643.40	4,372.08
Tonge	1,208.17	1,449.80	1,691.43	1,933.06	2,174.70	2,657.96	3,141.22	3,624.50	4,349.39
Tunstall	1,204.61	1,445.53	1,686.45	1,927.37	2,168.29	2,650.13	3,131.96	3,613.81	4,336.57
Upchurch	1,224.16	1,468.99	1,713.82	1,958.65	2,203.48	2,693.14	3,182.80	3,672.47	4,406.95
Warden	1,216.77	1,460.12	1,703.47	1,946.82	2,190.17	2,676.87	3,163.58	3,650.29	4,380.34
All other parts of the Council's area	1,198.66	1,438.39	1,678.12	1,917.85	2,157.58	2,637.04	3,116.50	3,595.97	4,315.16

6. That it be determined the Council's relevant basic amount of Council Tax for 2024/25 is not excessive in accordance with principles approved under Section

Council Tax Resolutions

Appendix I

52ZC of the Local Government Finance Act 1992. The principles for the 2024/25 financial year are set out in Annex A of The Referendums Relating to Council Tax Increases (Principles) (England) Report 2024/25. As the billing authority, the Council has not been notified by a major precepting authority that its relevant basic amount of Council Tax for 2024/25 is excessive and therefore the billing authority is not required to hold a referendum in accordance with Section 52ZK of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

7. That the revenue and capital estimates for 2024/25 in Appendix III be approved.

Council Tax 2024/25

Our Council Tax requirement is:

	2023/24	2024/25
	£	£
Swale Budget Requirement	21,896,344	24,162,827
Less Revenue Support Grant	(317,000)	(338,000)
Less Business Rates	(10,122,000)	(11,736,000)
Less Collection Fund Surplus	0	0
Less New Home Bonus	(1,103,000)	(674,000)
Less Additional Grants	(671,000)	(1,306,000)
Council Tax Requirement	9,683,344	10,108,827
Band D Council Tax	£194.94	£200.70
Tax Base	49,673.46	50,367.85

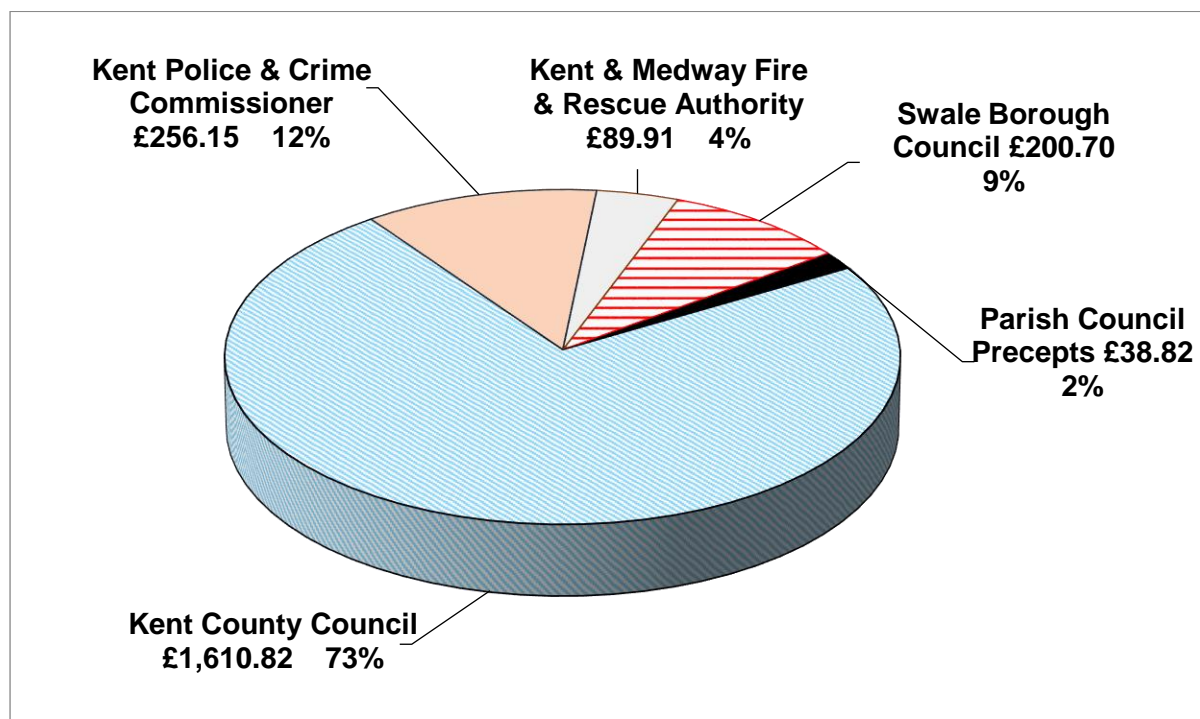
As well as our own Council Tax, we collect on behalf of the other 'precepting authorities', i.e. Kent County Council (4.992%, £76.59 increase including Adult Social Care precept), the Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority (2.99%, £2.61 increase) and the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner (5.346%, £13.00 increase). For a Band D property this equates to an overall increase of 4.756%, £97.96 compared to the increase of 5.03%, £98.61 in 2023/24. Where applicable there will be an additional sum collected on behalf of the Parish Councils which have chosen to levy a local precept (see Appendix I).

Calculation of Band D Council Tax 2024/25

2023/24		Authority	2024/25	
Precept £	Band D Council Tax £		Precept £	Band D Council Tax £
76,210,513	1,534.23	Kent County Council	81,133,540	1,610.82
12,078,102	243.15	Kent Police & Crime Commissioner	12,901,725	256.15
4,336,493	87.30	Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority	4,528,573	89.91
9,683,344	194.94	Swale Borough Council	10,108,827	200.70
102,308,452	2,059.62	Basic Council Tax	108,672,665	2,157.58
1,729,573	34.82	Parish Council Precepts*	1,955,342	38.82
104,038,025	2,094.44	Council Tax inc. Parish Precepts	110,628,007	2,196.40

*The Band D Council Tax is the average tax in respect of Parish Council Precepts for the whole Borough.

Allocation of Council Tax:



Policy and Resources Committee Meeting	
Meeting Date	7 th February 2024
Report Title	2024/25 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	<p>That Policy & Resources Recommends to Council:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To approve the Administration' s2024/25 revenue budget proposals. 2. To approve the proposed Council Tax Band D increase for 2024/25 to £200.70, or to the maximum allowed should the cash limit be increased. 3. To approve the levy of 100% Long Term Empty Premium for properties that had been empty for more than one year from 1 April 2024 and to levy a 100 per cent Second Home Premium for properties from 1 April 2025. 4. To approve the Medium Term Financial Plan. 5. To approve the Capital Strategy. 6. To approve the capital programme proposals. 7. To note the additional amount of Council Tax for Parish Precepts. 8. To approve the minimum revenue provision statement. 9. 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 and where legislation changes are made to centrally set charges in year. 10. To approve the use of reserves statement as detailed in appendix VI as to ensure reserves are valid and support the assumptions in the MTFS.

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the Council's Revenue and Capital budget proposals for 2024/25, the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and the Capital Strategy.
- 1.2 Policy and Resources committee received a budget report on 29 November 2023 prior to the provisional local authority grant settlement announced on 18 December 2023. 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 21 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 18 December announced another rollover settlement. New Homes Bonus will continue to be paid, although this will be the final payment. Services Grant has been drastically cut, but the Funding Guaranteed Grant will be paid again in 2024/25, now providing a 3% increase in core spending power before any decisions on Council Tax levels.
- 2.3 The main changes to the draft budget, arising from the provisional settlement are shown in the table below:

Funding source	Amount £'000 () = increase in grant	Comments
Revenue Support Grant	(21)	Inflationary increase
New Homes Bonus	429	Reduction based on activity
Services Grant	147	Reduction in grant
Funding Guarantee	(603)	Increased due to reductions in other grants
Total	(48)	

- 2.4 There was an announcement on 24 January of further funding for local government, including increasing the Funding Guarantee Grant to ensure a 4% increase in core spending power. However, the details of this will not be known until the final settlement is released.
- 2.5 New Homes Bonus and the Funding Guarantee Grant are not guaranteed beyond 2024/25. Central government have made it clear that this will be the final round of New Homes Bonus payments, and the Funding Guarantee Grant was never intended to be long term. As yet, there has been no information in relation to

what funding may replace these significant funding streams, increasing risk in future years.

- 2.6 As part of the funding settlement for 2023/24 the government announced a new funding stream, subject to the successful delivery of the Extended Producer Responsibility for packaging (pEPR) scheme. However, this has met with delays, so will not come into effect in the 2024/25 financial year, so we are reliant on existing income streams for waste collection being maintained.
- 2.7 When the funding comes online, 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.

Staff Pay

- 2.8 The budget assumes a 5% increase in staff pay as well as increments that are due and the increase in the real living wage.

Capital Strategy

- 2.9 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 how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the provision of local public services.
- 2.10 The proposed Treasury Management Strategy was reported to the Audit Committee on 24 January 2024 and is also reported separately to this meeting. The proposed Capital Programme and its funding are detailed in Appendix V to this report.
- 2.11 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.

2.12 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.

2.13 Council also agreed that in future specific capital projects will have a borrowing limit associated. This limit can be varied by Policy & Resources Committee.

2.14 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.

2.15 Looking ahead to 2024/25 there will be three major capital projects which are reflected in the draft Capital Budget:

2.15.1 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. 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.

2.15.2 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, with 2024/25 being the second year. The funding for this project will be a reallocation of temporary accommodation spend to cover the capital financing costs.

2.15.3 Levelling Up Scheme – the council was 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. Due to delays in announcing the award of funding, there may be a need to reprofile the budget into early 2025/26, but it is currently too early to commit to that course of action.

2.16 All capital expenditure must be financed, either from external sources (government grants and other contributions), the Council's own resources

(revenue, reserves and capital receipts) or debt (borrowing, leasing and Private Finance Initiative). The funding of the capital programme is also included in Appendix V.

- 2.17 Debt is only a temporary source of finance, since loans and leases 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.
- 2.18 Treasury management is concerned with keeping sufficient but not excessive cash available to meet the Council's spending needs, while managing the risks involved. Surplus cash is invested until required, while a shortage of cash will be met by borrowing. 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 £19.6m in the 6 months to 30 September 2023. 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 Financial Strategy is attached in Appendix I, and the detailed revenue budget proposal is attached in Appendix II.

Balanced Budget Proposals

- 3.2 The 29 November Policy and Resources report showed a balanced position with £1.360m being used from reserves within 2024/25 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 29 November report. These changes have had a positive impact on the budget of £811k, the most significant change is the proposed use of the business rate growth to support the base budget. This growth is forecast to be available annually until the business rate reset is actioned by central government. The reset has been continually delayed and it is currently

not thought that this will occur before 2026/27. The budget remains balanced by using reserves to the extent of £549k.

- 3.4 The table below shows a summary of all changes to the revenue budget as reported to Policy and Resources committee on 29 November 2023:

Budget heading	Amount £'000 () = improved position
Grant funding (per table in 2.3)	(48)
Drainage levy increase	1
Changes to the tax base	(40)
Growth in business rates	(1,000)
Changes to inflation assumptions	13
Public convenience contract extension	70
Temporary accommodation demand increase	165
Operational changes	28
Total	(811)

- 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 £5.76 (2.95%) in the Band D Council Tax to £200.70, or up to £204.93 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 50,367.85 by the Director of Resources.

- 3.10 Parish precepts are shown in Appendix IV.

- 3.11 The Levelling-Up and Regeneration Bill received Royal Assent in October 2023, and is now the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act ('the Act'). In respect of Council Tax, the Act introduces, amongst other things, two important changes, 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 Act shortens 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 Act allows the councils to 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 The change to long term empty premiums can be implemented from 1 April 2024, however the change to second home premiums requires at least 12 months notice before the implementation date and were therefore it is proposed that this be applied from 1 April 2025.

Fees and Charges

3.13 Proposed fees and charges were set out as part of the draft budget report on 29 November 2023, and these are set out in Appendix X.

3.14 Delegated authority is sought for the Director of Resources to adjust charge out rates to ensure full cost recovery.

Capital Programme

3.15 The capital budget is attached in Appendix V.

3.16 There has been one amendment to the budget previously presented. This is the inclusion of necessary upgrades to finance and payment systems. The upgrades will be fully funded by a reserve set aside for this purpose, so will have nil effect on the revenue budget.

Reserves

3.17 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.

3.18 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.

3.19 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.

- 3.20 The Council currently hold a balance of £3.1m as its General Fund balance. Whilst this is currently considered to be appropriate, this does need to increase over time to a target of £4m, representing two months spend. 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 2024/25. 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 2025/26 onwards. Earmarked reserves have been rationalised to transfer uncommitted balances to the budget contingency reserve to support a balanced budget position for future years, alongside a deliverable savings programme.
- 3.21 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 2024/25 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.
- 3.22 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 2023/24 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 budget.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 The budget proposals were reported to Policy and Resources Committee on the 29th of November 2023.
- 5.2 An online budget consultation exercise took place from 30th November 2023 to 3rd January 2024, and the results are summarised in Appendix IX.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
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 2024/25 – 2027/28
- Appendix VII: Minimum Revenue Provision Statement
- Appendix VIII: Budget Risks
- Appendix IX: Budget Consultation
- Appendix X: Fees and Charges
- Appendix XI: Proposed Changes Schedule

8 Background Papers

Policy and Resources papers 29 November 2023.

Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024/25 to 2027/28

Swale Borough Council

Contents

1. Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)
2. Corporate Plan
3. Context
4. Global and national Pressures
5. Local Pressures
6. Inflation
7. Funding changes
8. Income
9. Links to other strategies
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11. Closing the budget gap
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- Chart 1: Inflation Forecasts November 2023
- Chart 2: New Homes Bonus (NHB) Payments
- Chart 3: Council Tax Shares
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- Chart 5: Capital Programme 2024/25
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- 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 new corporate plan is currently being prepared and the draft version for consultation is being considered at tonight's committee meeting.
- 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 in delivering the required savings and enable 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 1.

2. Corporate Plan 2023 - 2027

'Learning from the past, focusing on the future'

2.1 The corporate is currently being redrafted to reflect the current priorities for this council. The draft plan that is proposed for consultation is on tonight's agenda and the details will be updated for future budget reports to reflect the revised Corporate Plan 2023-2027.

2.2 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

2.3 Our Values

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

- **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

2.4 '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. In recent years Sittingbourne has been the focus of major council-led redevelopment, with current schemes the Levelling Up Fund project, being focused on Sheerness. The Council's urban centres are connected both physically and culturally by the borough's extensive and important rural areas, accounting

for around a quarter of the population, which take in several protected wildlife habitats and part of the Kent Downs area of outstanding natural beauty.

- 3.2 Swale's demographic make-up is no less diverse than its geography, including a mix of affluent and less affluent communities, but in general the area is less well-off than is typical for the south-east, and there are some concentrated pockets of severe socioeconomic disadvantage to be found in locations across the borough. While the causes of this are deep-rooted and complex, the outcome is that a proportion of our residents suffer from entrenched inequality and a lack of opportunities which the council needs to do what it can to address.
- 3.3 The indices of multiple deprivation are calculated by government based on a range of measures of poverty and associated disadvantage 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. Energy prices remain high, and this continues to impact on the higher levels of inflation that we are experiencing.

Political

- 4.2 Despite there being a more stable political position than experienced this time last year, there has been little progress with the Fair Funding Review and business rates retention, so we have no more clarity in terms of local government funding than we did 5 or 6 years ago. The result of these changes will undoubtedly impact on Government spending priorities for future years but until these new policies are developed this is still an unknown.
- 4.3 Speculation continues as to when the next general election will be called, it will need to be before the end of next financial year as December 2024 will be the end of the 5-year maximum term of the current government. It is unlikely that any significant changes will be made to Local Government funding, however this does not provide any further certainty on our position for the future.

Central Government Funding

- 4.4 We were hoping this year for a multi-year settlement, but this is unlikely to happen in the run up to a general election. While there has been no further update on the delivery of the Fair Funding review, it is unlikely that this will be delivered ahead of a general election.
- 4.5 The business rates reset is still to be implemented and the position on any possible future reset remains unclear. A rollover settlement for 2024-25 has now been confirmed, with the funding reforms expected to be taking place in 2026-27 or later.

Inflation

- 4.6 Inflation has remained high over the last year, peaking at 11.1% in October 2022. Whilst rates have been falling, this reduction has been slow and at September 2023 inflation stood at 6.7%. Many of the Council's contracts are linked to inflation indices, so we are having to pay more just to stand still. Given that contracts costs are reviewed annually, it also means there is a lag before the increases are applied. This means that there is a lag in terms of cost increases, but also a lag in seeing the effects of falling inflation.
- 4.7 This Medium-Term Financial Plan assumes inflation increases at 5% for the coming financial year, reducing to 3.5% from 2025/26. Future year assumptions will be updated annually as part of the review of our plan over the medium term.

Interest Rates

- 4.8 In order to manage the rate of inflation, the Bank of England have been increasing interest rates. This has had a positive impact on the interest that the council earns on its cash holdings but has also meant that assumptions on the cost of financial our capital programme have increased. The previous assumptions on cost of borrowing are under review as capital schemes progress. Any changes that impact on the budget framework will be reported to committee for further decisions to be taken on whether to continue with the current scheme.

New Ways of Working

- 4.9 As the post covid world becomes our new normal, 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 As Members will be aware the waste contract was re-procured last year, and the decision was also taken to purchase the fleet vehicles ourselves, for use by the contractor. The

change in market conditions since the last contract was procured created a significant cost pressure on the budget for 2024/25. The annual inflationary increase also adds a significant increase to the cost of this contract.

- 5.3 The current assumptions for the contract cost have been reduced from the previous Medium Term Financial Plan as inflation levels have reduced since October 2022 and more certainty can be built into the financial model for implementation in March 2024.

Temporary accommodation

- 5.4 The council has a duty to provide emergency/temporary accommodation (TA) for homeless households whilst assessing their case and/or ahead of securing more permanent accommodation. A range of accommodation is currently used to cover this duty: some units owned by Swale, some units owned by housing associations, nightly let self-contained and shared accommodation and rooms in hotels/bed and breakfast accommodation.
- 5.5 Whilst some of the costs of this accommodation are covered by housing benefit this is only payable up to 90% of the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) which is the amount set by government that can be covered by housing benefit. The difference between the actual cost and housing benefit levels is borne by the council. This has been increasing over recent years, with growth having been built into the current budget assumptions. Officers are working hard to reduce the requirement for temporary accommodation with the number of households in TA as at the end of December 2023 being 303 compared to 356 at the same time last year. Despite the success of the team in reducing the number of households in TA the impact of higher interest rates is being seen in significant price increases from landlords.
- 5.6 As well as the costs to Swale, demand for TA in Kent is exceptionally high and often there are limited options, placements regularly occur outside the Borough. Many of the current TA options are not ideal for what are vulnerable households, accommodation that is not self-contained, not within Borough and is used for increasingly lengthy periods (we currently have 11 households that have been in TA for over 2 years).
- 5.7 Members agreed a project for the Council to purchase a number of properties that can be used to house those in need of TA. This will help to control the spiralling costs, although it is not a panacea for this problem. Progress is now being made, with more than a dozen property purchases currently being progressed.

Local Council Tax Support Schemes (LCTS)

- 5.8 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).
- 5.9 From April 2013 each billing authority was given the discretion to set their own scheme, although at the outset the government did stipulate that the scheme would not change the 100% maximum support for low-income pensioners i.e. they would receive the same level of support as they did under the system of Council Tax Benefit. Funding for LCTS is no longer received as a separate subsidy grant but is now within the overall Local Government Funding system as non ring-fenced funding within the Revenue Support Grant (RSG) and baseline funding level. The local scheme (for Swale) has changed several times since the introduction of LCTS in 2013/14.

- 5.10 In April 2023 the Council introduced a banded council tax reduction scheme which aimed to simplify the understanding and processing of the previous scheme. Full council approved the continuation of the scheme for 2024/25 with changes to be made to the income bands in line with changes made by the government to the benefits payable.

Lower Medway Internal Drainage Board Precept

- 5.11 The Internal Drainage Board Levy has been confirmed for 2024/25 with an increase of 5% taking the levy position to just over £1m, (the Council has no control over the setting of this levy). Following significant lobbying from local government colleagues, the impact on increases to internal drainage board levies was acknowledged by the Government in 2023/24 with the introduction of the Internal Drainage Board Levies grant. This grant was awarded to 15 local authorities to provide additional and exceptional one-off funding to councils most affected by increases in Internal Drainage Board Levies. Another one-year grant has now been announced, although allocation of the grant will not be known until the final settlement is released.
- 5.12 Government is now recognising that the pressure these levies apply to collection authorities is an ongoing issue and DLUHC will work with DEFRA and the local government sector to implement a long-term solution, although no plans have yet been released. The Leader and the Director of Resources are representing Swale on a LGA Special Interest Group that are hoping to change the way that the current drainage board levy precept process impacts on local government financial position.

Workforce

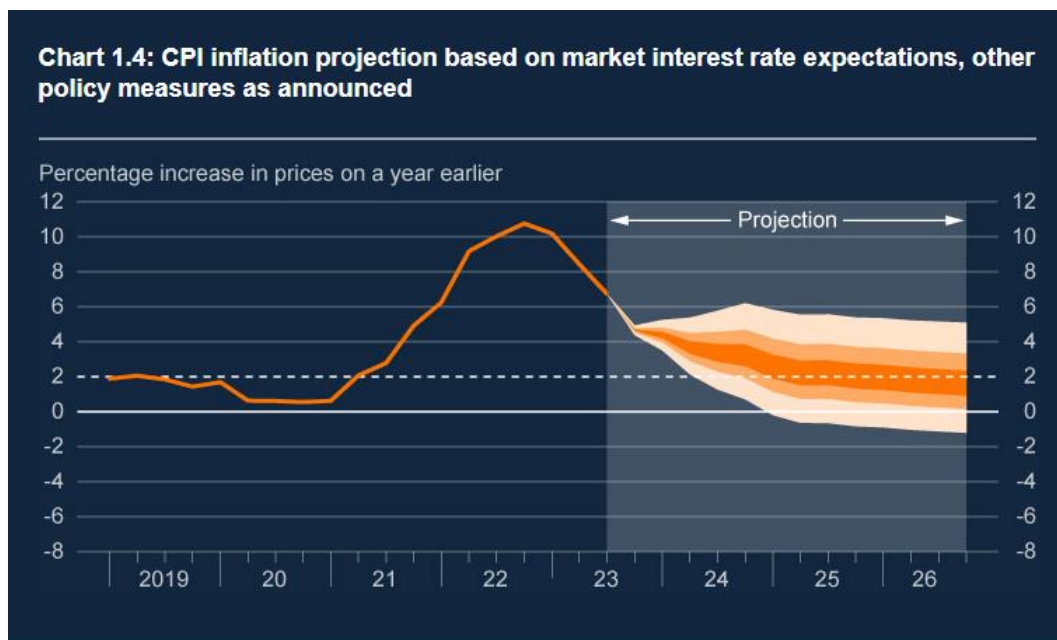
- 5.13 We recognise that our staff are our most important resource at the heart of the services we provide. We currently have around 260 full time equivalent posts and 300 actual members of staff. Our pay bill is our most significant area of direct spend and stands at £14.4m including pension contributions of £2.6m as per the 2024/25 budget. The pension fund is administered by Kent County Council (KCC), employee contribution rates are set by Government and range from 5.5% to 12.5%. The fund actuary Barnett Waddingham sets the employer contribution rate, currently 20.5%, plus an annual fixed sum.
- 5.14 The Fund is valued once every three years and the valuation as at 31 March 2022 disclosed a net deficit of £8.46m on Swale's share of the fund, a reduction of £7m from the 2019 valuation deficit of £15.5m due largely to increases in annual investment returns. The change in contribution rates because of the March 2022 valuation took effect from 1 April 2023. The contribution rate increased from 18.5% to 20.5% but the back funding element decreased, the combined impact of which is a budget saving of £200k.
- 5.15 The 2023/24 Medium Term Financial Strategy did not make provision for a staff pay award, but it proposed a reduction in weekly working hours from 37 to 34 hour. Following consultation with staff, Members agreed a change to a 34-hour week, and an implementation phase commenced on 1 May. This implementation phase ran until 31 December 2023 and results are now being closely reviewed with a view for the change to be made permanent unless there is compelling evidence to return to a 37-hour week.

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 Consumer Price Index (CPI) was at 6.7% at the end of September. The Bank of England’s Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) met on 1 November and maintained the bank base at 5.25%. CPI inflation fell to 3.9% for November 2023, before creeping up to 4.0% at the end of December. CPI inflation is expected to continue to fall to meet the MPC target of 2% by the end of 2025. Higher energy and other import price inflation has led to a slower fall in inflation levels than previously expected.
- 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 5% for 2024/25 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 1 – MPC Forecasts November 2023



- 6.3 **Staff Pay** – The Council is not part of a National Joint Council (NJC) national pay agreement, so any increases are set and agreed locally in negotiation with the Union. The current financial plan makes provision for a pay award next financial year and pay negotiation discussions with the union commenced at the start of November 2023. As negotiations progressed the MTFP has been updated. The budget also includes provision for turnover savings (for staff leaving and temporarily vacant posts etc) of 2%. As a guide a 1% increase equates to approximately £132,000 annually.
- 6.4 **Income (fees and charges)** – As in the previous year, increases in the fees and charges for 2024/25 are being recommended for an increase in line with our inflationary and cost of living increases. As part of the Council’s financial planning processes, and to address the pressures on future year’s budgets, the finance team will continue to work with service

managers as part of the 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 Services Grant and a Funding Guarantee Grant. The Settlement confirmed some additional one-off grant funding for 2023/24, an amalgamation of specific service grants into the RSG allocation 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 2023/24 (before the amalgamation of the specific service grants was just £0.1m compared to £4.1m back in 2014/15 representing a reduction of 98%.

Settlement Funding – Spending Round 2023

- 7.2 The Chancellor delivered his Autumn Statement on 22 November 2023. The Autumn Statement responds to the OBR forecasts and sets out the medium-term path for public finances. Last year 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 centered around changes to business rate relief and the uplift to the business rate multiplier. This section will be updated when details are available.
- 7.3 The provisional 2024/25 settlement provided an inflationary uplift to Revenue Support Grant, but a significant reduction in Service Grant. The overall amount of New Homes Bonus paid to local government remains the same as 2023/24, but due to the allocation method, Swale is likely to see a significant reduction in this grant. Government have confirmed in the provisional settlement that this will be the final year for New Homes Bonus, but with no details as to what may replace it as a form of funding.
- 7.4 2023/24 saw the introduction of the Funding Guarantee Grant, and government have continued this for another year, but with very little certainty beyond 2024/25. This grant should ensure that councils have a 3% increase in core spending power before any increases in Council Tax. An announcement was made in January 2024 that this will be increased to a 4% increase, although grant amounts have yet to be confirmed, and there will be no certainty until the final settlement is released in February.

District Council Band D Increases

- 7.3 The previous settlement saw the Chancellor use council tax increases to help manage the funding gap within local government which brought in changes to increase the core

Band D threshold from 1.99% to 2.99%. This applies to all classes of authority and has been extended for another year to 2024/25. Announcements made to date are that the £5 cash threshold will also still apply, although this is now lower than the 2.99% increase allowed for most authorities.

7.4 The forecasts within this MTFP assume council tax increase of 2.95% for modelling purposes and coupled with growth forecasts in the tax base resulted in income projections of around £10.109m for 2024/25, which is growth of £425k based on the 2023/24 position. This charge equates to an increase of just over 11p a week for Swale’s element of the council tax. It should be noted that, while this information would be used at this point for modelling purposes now, the council tax will not actually be agreed and set until the Full Council budget setting meeting in February 2024.

7.5 While the statement allowed the additional 1% increase the £5 cash limit looks unlikely to increase. Lower tier councils are highlighting the need to increase the cash limit, as the £5 increase is now lower than the percentage increase for almost all authorities, and as such is becoming irrelevant.

7.6 If the £5 cap was also increased, the following additional income could be generated;

Band D increase	£ increase	Additional Council Tax Estimate	Increased Estimate
2.95%	5.76	425,483	
3.83%	7.47	511,612	86,129
5.12%	9.99	638,539	126,927

7.7 Just for information a £10 increase would equate to 19p a week or 2.7p a day and it is recommended that the Council consult on potentially higher increases (up to £10) in case this turns out to be an option.

7.8 The provisional settlement was published on 18 December 2023. Until the Settlement figures are finally confirmed the figures are still provisional and subject to change, but this is the best information we have at the present time. Projections are still therefore based on estimates which have not yet been finalised and could potentially be impacted significantly by changes in Government spending plans and fiscal policy.

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 £23.3m after the tariff and levy payments are made the net income to Swale reduces to around £10.1m for 2023/24 and just over £11.7m for 2024/25. Business Rates growth has now been built into the base budget, creating this increase, but this does create a greater risk when Business Rates reset finally takes place.
- 8.3 The draft budget position for 2024/25 includes the proposal to maximise the use of the Business Rates Growth Fund element of the business rates pool as the annual contributions from this element of the pool can be used to support existing council expenditure.
- 8.4 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

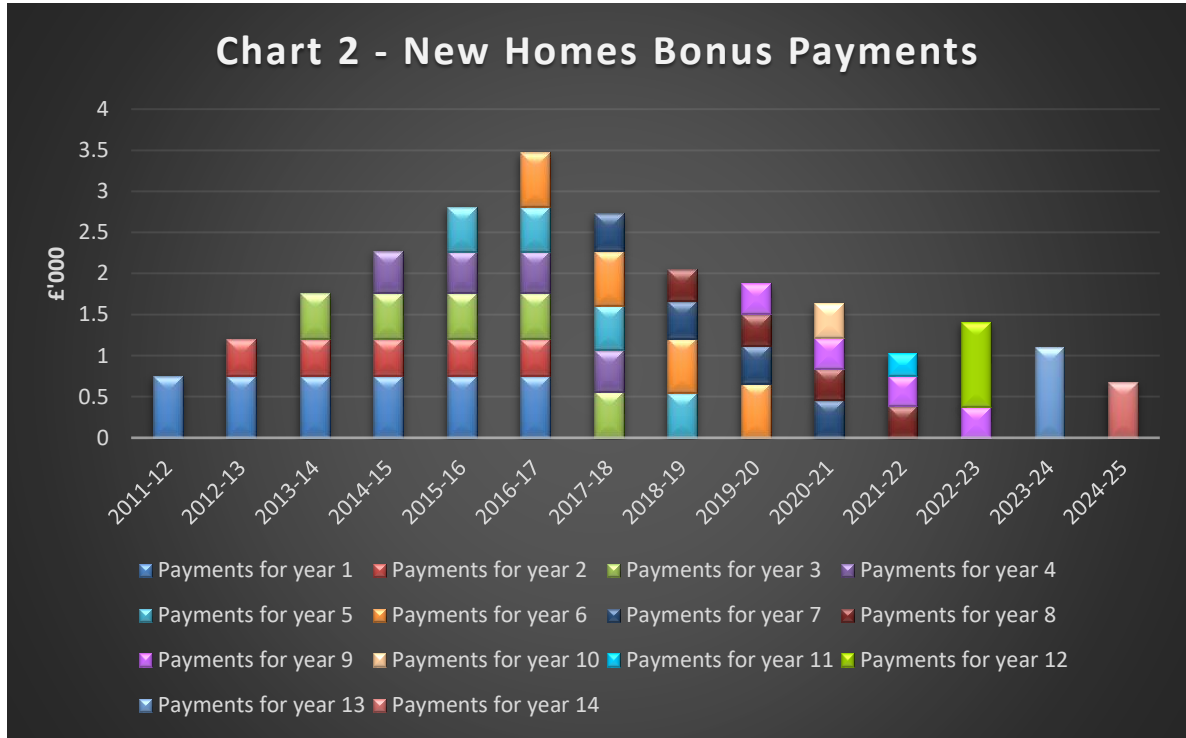
- 8.5 Local authorities can enter arrangements with other Councils to pool their business rates. Legislation allows councils to voluntarily enter a business rates retention pool. Councils within a pool are treated as a single entity with tariffs and top ups netted off and a single levy rate applied. In two tier areas this creates the potential for the levy paid by Borough Councils being reduced thus retaining more resources in the local area. Swale has been a member of the Kent Business Rates Pool since 2015/16, the pool must reapply to DLUHC each year for the arrangements to continue. There is still an option for the pool not to proceed up to 28 days after the Local Government Finance Settlement is received. At the Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on 28 September 2022 delegation was given to the Leader and the Director of Resources in consultation with the opposition group leaders to continue membership of the pool unless there was a significant change in circumstances. On this basis Swale is continuing to remain in the Kent Pool.

New Homes Bonus (NHB)

- 8.6 The New Homes Bonus was introduced in 2011/12 to incentivise and reward Councils and Communities that build new homes in their area. The bonus was originally paid as an un-ringfenced grant for six years and was paid based on the net additional homes plus an additional supplement of £350 per affordable dwelling. The payment is then split between local authority tiers: 80% to lower tier (Swale) and 20% to upper tier (KCC).
- 8.7 Since its initial introduction the payment mechanism has undergone two fundamental changes which have significantly impacted on the income received by Swale. The first was the transition from payments rolled up over a 6-year period up to 2016/17 (for which the Council received £12.3m) to 5 years in 2017/18 to the new 'floor' of 4 years from 2018/19 onwards. The second was in 2017/18 when a national baseline of 0.4% (based on borough property numbers) was introduced which attracted no bonus funding. The allocation of New Homes Bonus Grant for 2024/25 according to the provisional settlement is £674k, which is a reduction of £429k compared to the previous year.

8.8 The provisional settlement confirmed this as an additional one-year agreement only for 2024/25, stating that this will be the final year of New Homes Bonus payments. The current budget therefore assumes that the grant will be removed from 2025/26 and as yet there is no information about any possible replacement funding. The chart below shows the current expectation, as per the provisional settlement.

8.9 Chart 2 – New Homes Bonus payments 2011/12 onwards

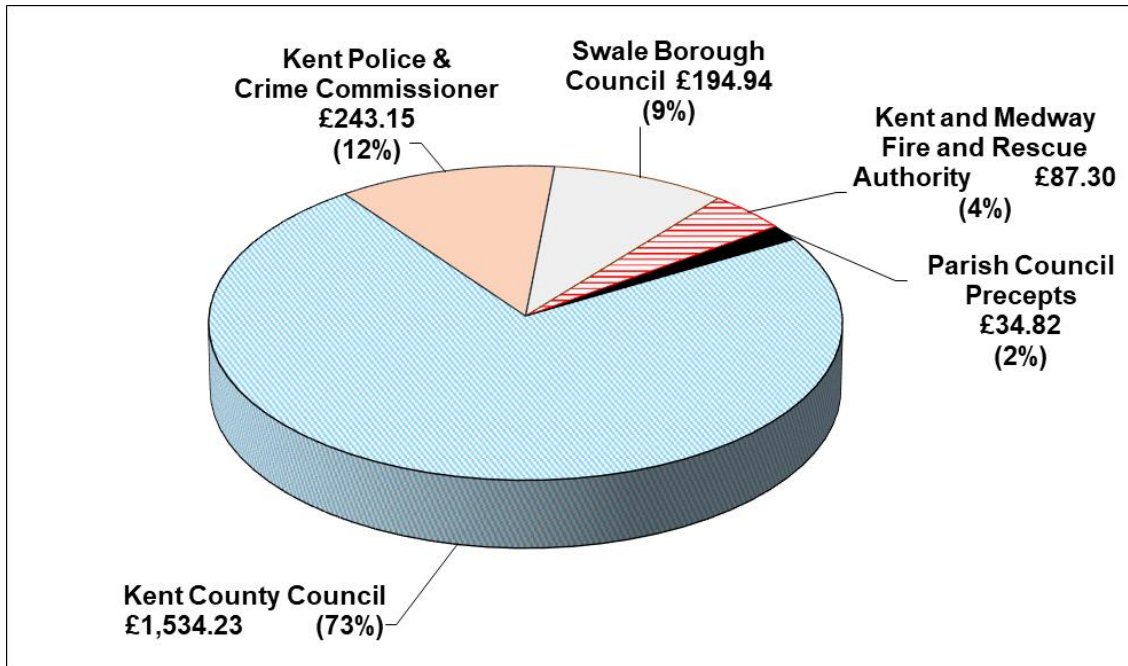


Council Tax

8.10 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.

8.11 The charge on a Band D property which is retained by Swale is currently £194.94 (£189.27 2022/23) based on a tax base of 49,673.46 (48,939.46 2022/23). Any increases on this amount are restricted by a cap put in place by the Government, but as discussed above this amount is 3% or £5, whichever is the greater, without undertaking a referendum on the proposals. This generates an extra £425k (including tax base growth assumptions) over the 2023/24 income levels.

8.12 Chart 3 – Council Tax split 2023/24



8.13 Within the MTFs, it is assumed that Swale will increase its precept by 2.95% annually from next year. This table highlights the impact of the assumed increases within the charts below.

Table 1 – Projected council tax income growth

Council Tax	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
Tax Base	50,367.85	50,871.53	51,380.25	51,894.05
Band D Council Tax £	£ 200.70	£ 206.64	£ 212.76	£ 219.06
Council Tax	£10.109m	£10.512m	£10.931m	£11.368m

Fees and charges

8.14 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£9.6m gross income budgeted for 2023/24, the most significant areas include waste and recycling (£1.3m) which includes things such as garden bins and bulky waste collection, car parking income (£3.1m), commercial rents (£1.9m) 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.

8.15 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 2023 included £13.0m investment in 2023/24 with £26.7m in 2023/24 and £30m 2024/25. This is funded through a mixture of capital receipts and reserves, internal/external borrowing and s106 contributions and other grants. 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 includes the provision to acquire the waste and street cleansing fleet vehicles in line with the procurement of the new contract. 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 2023/24

- 9.7 The Council's Treasury Management Strategy Statement is intrinsically linked with the Capital Strategy and the capital programme, the latest report can be accessed on the Council's website [here](#). 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 three main reports each year;
- Before the start of the financial year, the updated Treasury Management Strategy Statement which includes the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) policy statement; how investments and borrowings are to be organised (including prudential indicators); and an Investment Strategy;
 - A mid-year treasury management assurance report to update Council with the progress of the capital position; adherence to the treasury management strategy and whether any policies require revision and;
 - At the end of the financial year, a treasury management outturn report to provide details of actual indicators compared to the estimates within the strategy.

Property Asset Strategy

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

Commissioning and Procurement Policy

- 9.13 The Commissioning and Procurement Policy establishes the Council's strategic approach to procurement. The Policy should be read in conjunction with the Finance Code of Practice, Contract Procedure Rules and Scheme of Delegation within the Council's Constitution. It emphasises the increasing importance of using procurement to support wider social, economic and environmental objectives, in ways that offer real long term benefit.
- 9.14 The Council recognises the importance of a strong and vibrant local economy and the role it can play in stimulating local markets. The website has been developed to provide potential suppliers with a host of information in relation to the Council's procurement processes, which includes a portal advertising all current tender opportunities. To deliver an agile service the Council uses an electronic tendering system.
- 9.15 The strategy provides a corporate focus for procurement, embracing the Council's

commitment to strategic procurement and its alignment with corporate objectives and values. The document is not intended to be a “user manual”, although the principles contained within the strategy should be applied to all facets of procurement activity. Additional detail regarding the Council’s procurement processes can be found within the Contract Procedure Rules and there are user guides available on the intranet.

- 9.16 Social value is the positive impact an organisation has further to the activities it carries out. These can be economic, social and environmental impacts. The Council recognises that Social Value can significantly help it in meeting its priorities and aspirations for the borough by supporting good jobs, better incomes and wellbeing, increased skill levels, higher value economy and higher productivity levels. The Commissioning and Procurement Policy is one of the underpinning strategies that supports the Council’s priorities.

10 Looking forward

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

- 10.1 The resources position has been updated with the best information currently available against the previous budget forecasts below. The business rates and Fair Funding reviews have been further delayed and the Council is experiencing significant spending pressures in future years which is further compounded with the uncertainty around central government funding.

Table 2 – Deficit forecasts as per the 2023/24 budget

Funding forecasts Feb 2023	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Base budget & reserve contributions	23,941	25,415	26,024	26,997
Revenue Support Grant (RSG)	(317)	(317)	(317)	(317)
Business Rates	(10,122)	(10,736)	(10,897)	(11,060)
Lower Tier Services Grant	0	0	0	0
New Homes Bonus	(1,103)	0	0	0
Services Grant	(174)	0	0	0
Council Tax	(9,683)	(10,074)	(10,475)	(10,894)
Uncertain government grants		(1,654)	(1,654)	(1,654)
Funding Guarantee	(497)	0	0	0
Projected use of reserves/savings	2,045	2,635	2,681	3,073

- 10.2 Following the updates to the current MTFP, the table below has been updated to show the revised funding position, with the future year’s deficit peaking at £3.1m in 2026/27. If the business rates reset takes place, this deficit could increase significantly.

Table 3 – Updated deficit forecasts based on updated assumptions for 2024/25

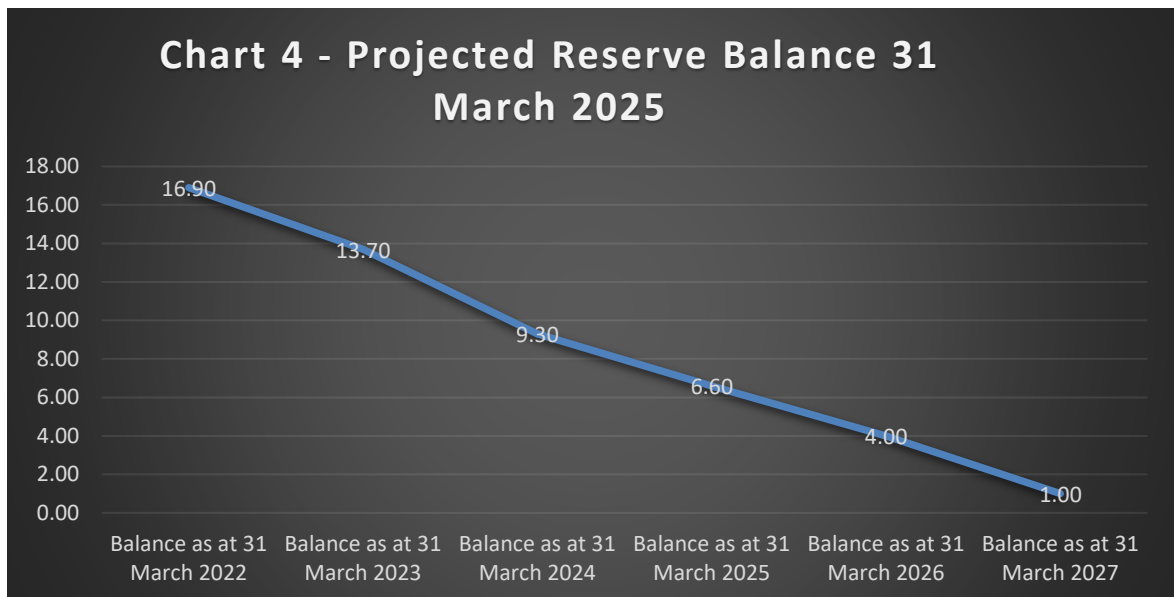
Updated funding forecasts November 2023	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Internal Drainage Board Levy	951	1,000	1,049	1,101	1,101
Base budget & reserve contributions	22,991	24,388	24,830	26,391	26,766
Revenue Support Grant (RSG)	(317)	(338)	(345)	(352)	(359)
Business Rates	(10,122)	(11,736)	(12,004)	(12,279)	(12,279)
New Homes Bonus	(1,103)	(674)	0	0	0
Services Grant	(174)	(27)	0	0	0
Funding Guarantee Grant	(497)	(1100)	0	0	0
Uncertain Government Grants	0	0	(27)	(27)	(27)
Kent Pool Growth Fund (Business Rates)	0	(855)	(855)	(855)	(855)
Planned use of reserves	(2,045)	0	0	0	0
Council Tax	(9,684)	(10,109)	(10,410)	(10,828)	(11,262)
Forecast Deficit	0	549	2,238	3,151	3,085

- 10.3 The additional cost pressures in 2024/25 relate mainly to the new waste contract costs and ongoing inflation costs of external contracts, shared services and our own workforce. This is partly offset through savings proposals, assumptions on the continuation of central government funding, use of reserves and the use of the Kent Growth Fund business rates to support the base budget. The savings breakdown can be found within Appendix XI.
- 10.4 It should be noted that the grant projections for 2024/25 are still subject to final agreement so there is still an element of risk around these, but it is the best information currently available.
- 10.5 Officers have previously undertaken high level analysis of the cost of the statutory and non-statutory functions which the Council undertakes. Statutory functions include things such as waste collection and the payment of benefits, non-statutory areas include things such as the provision of public conveniences and leisure facilities. Very roughly the statutory services cost around £20m and the Council's grants and income (from business rates, council tax etc) is around the same level.

Reserves

- 10.6 The Council holds several 'usable' reserves both for revenue and capital purposes which fall within one of the following categories:
- General Reserve
 - Earmarked Reserves
 - Ringfenced Reserves
 - Capital Receipts Reserve
- 10.7 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.

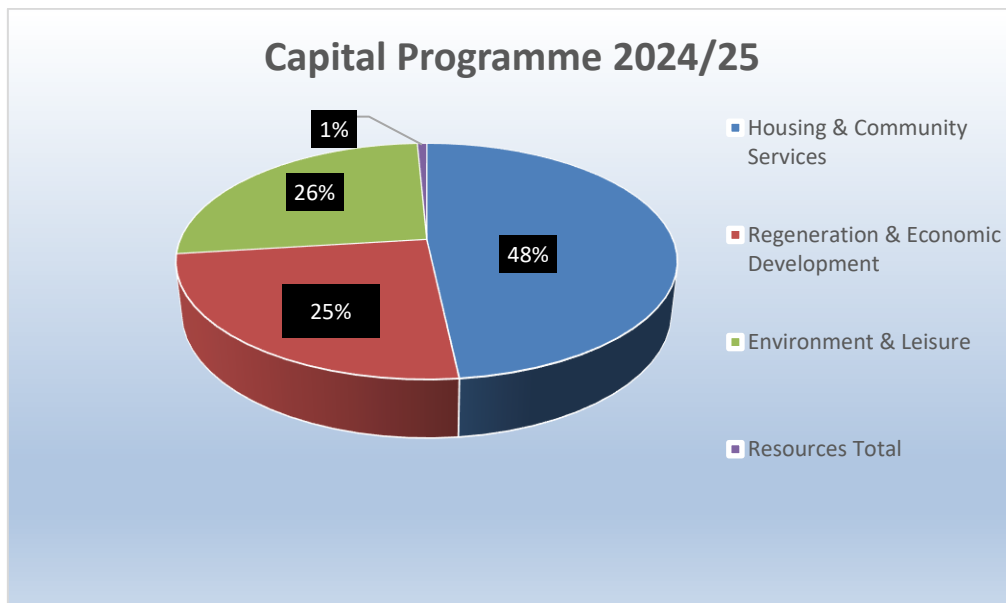
- 10.8 As part of setting the budget each year the adequacy of all reserves is assessed along with the optimum level of General Reserve that we should hold. The optimum level of the General Reserve considers a risk assessment of the budget and the context within which it has been prepared.
- 10.9 *Earmarked 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, were reviewed and rationalisation of balances agreed as part of setting the budget for 2023/24. The review of reserve balances is an ongoing process as reserve funded projects are progressed.
- 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 2023 stood at £13.4m, the planned use of reserves for the 2023/24 financial year is £4.4m which leaves a forecast balance as at 1 April 2024 of £9.0m. Based on the current medium term budget projections the Council will not have sufficient reserves to help address the budget gap after 2026/27.



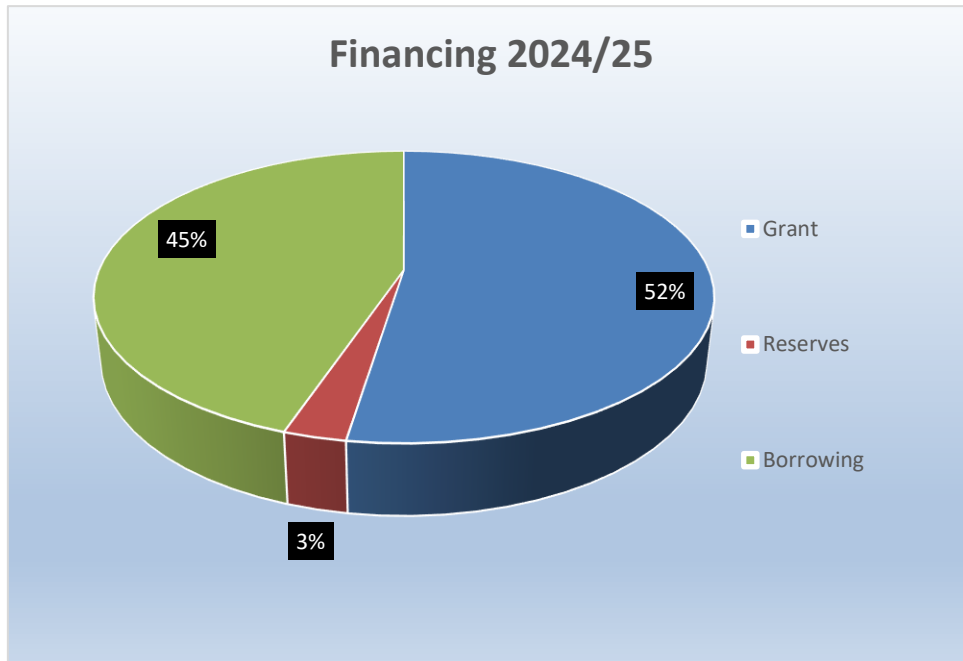
Capital

- 10.14 The capital programme (Appendix 3) 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 and also the funding for the Rainbow Homes housing provision. The cost of borrowing has increased significantly over the past year, although the position has stabilised recently, borrowing rates remain high. What this does mean is that any business cases which include borrowing will need to be fundamentally reviewed before any borrowing takes place to ensure the schemes remain affordable and still 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 (£31.4m) along with the forecasts to 2027/28.

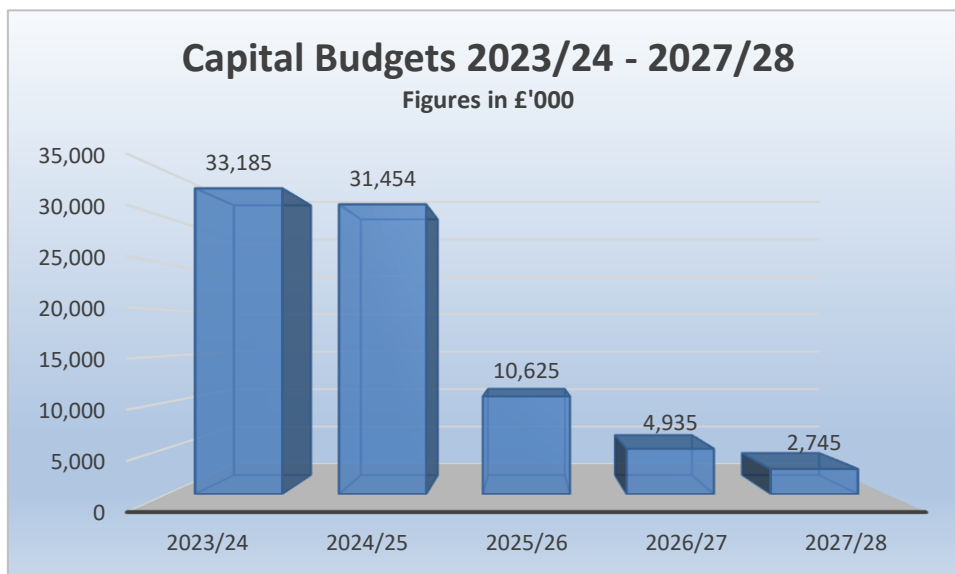
10.18 **Chart 5 – Capital Programme 2024/25**



10.19 Chart 6 – Capital Programme Funding 2024/25



10.20 Chart 7 – Capital Programme Forecast 2023/24 to 2027/28



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 2024/25 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 £5.4m (Appendix XI), however based on current forecasts this still leaves a total deficit of £549k which will need to be supported from reserves. An Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) has been undertaken on the proposals where relevant and the council will be consulted on the draft budget proposals throughout December 2023.
- 11.3 Once the budget position is approved, work will commence on delivering savings proposals at the earliest opportunity. The full year effect for some of the proposed savings have been built into the forecasts from 2025/26 but any opportunity to deliver ahead of this forecast will be actioned.
- 11.4 The efficiencies and savings identified have come from a number of areas and include the following;
- Additional income from increased annual demand – car parks, planning etc
 - Increased fees and charges
 - A freeze in Members allowances
 - Reductions in some 3rd party grants
 - Staff restructure savings across service areas
 - Proposed use of Kent Growth Fund to support base budget
 - Reduced cost of pension backfunding payments
 - Reduction in contract costs across services
 - Removal of discretionary council tax discounts for empty properties
 - Investment income
 - Shared services
 - Digital transformation
 - Various operational savings – minor budget lines

Fees & Charges Review

- 11.5 A full review of the existing fees and charges was carried out as part of the budget build process for 2024/25. As detailed above this strategy is recommending an inflationary increase as a minimum in line with the increase in costs that the council is experiencing.
- 11.6 The increase in planning fees included in the government's planning reform proposals in May 2022 were originally due to be implemented from October 2023. This was delayed and was eventually implemented in December 2023. The changes increased major and minor application fees by 35% and 25% respectively.
- 11.7 During 2023/24 the council produced a Parking Policy. This has been out to public consultation, and a final decision will be taken by the Community Committee on 6 March 2024. The Policy aims to address the principles under which the parking service will operate with fees and charges continuing to be reviewed annually as part of the budget setting process. Proposed changes to car parking fees include reviewing the evening charging policy and a 10p increase in the hourly rates.
- 11.8 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 2024/25 can be found within Appendix X.

Financial sustainability

- 11.9 Financial sustainability and reducing reliance on central government grants is one of the four key themes within the existing 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

- 11.10 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.
- 11.11 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

- 11.12 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 is in progress and the results will help us better understand the challenges faced in terms of maintaining and improving our asset base over the medium to long term to ensure that it remains fit for purpose, delivering income for the Council where appropriate.
- 11.13 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.
- 11.14 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.
- 11.15 The Council continues to progress its New Ways of Working strategy off the back of the Covid pandemic and subsequent office refurbishment will bring for new operating models and how the Council conducts its business in the future. With the development of hybrid working, we have taken the opportunity to rationalise office space. Work is ongoing to rent out our surplus office space and work with other partner organisations and indeed

the private sector. There may also maybe opportunities to work with other partners under the government's [One Public Estate](#) agenda.

Digital Transformation

- 11.16 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.
- 11.17 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

- 11.18 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 avenue which Swale is already heavily involved in, including activities like the joint waste procurement but could involve a range of other joint procurement opportunities.
- 11.19 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 developed with work ongoing on the transfer of the Revenues and Benefits Service to MKS.

Growing Business Rates and NHB

- 11.20 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.
- 11.21 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

- 11.22 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 2024/25. The budget proposes that the discounts that are

currently awarded for uninhabitable, short term empty and unfurnished properties are removed with effect from 1 April 2024.

New opportunities

- 11.23 Given the current uncertainties around the cost-of-living crisis, global events and the economy in general, as well as the current landscape of local councils reporting financial difficulties, Local Government funding and funding mechanisms are overdue for review and the outcome from this remains a significant risk for the Council's medium term financial assumptions. It will be essential to identify new opportunities to either increase income, increase efficiency through the redesign of services, explore new partnership models for service delivery etc and this will be one of the main challenges over the medium term.
- 11.24 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 2026/27 so this would not even be an option.

Lobbying and consultation

- 11.25 The Council will continue to lobby central government in terms of increased funding allocations and continued relaxation/increased flexibility in terms of the council tax referendum principles which will be one of the things required if income raising and decision making is ever to be truly local. We will also continue to respond to all relevant consultations and surveys, in particular in relation to the business rates and Fair Funding reviews.
- 11.26 Members will need to support the efficiency agenda in future years and support officers to deliver a balanced budget position over the medium term as use of one-off reserves to balance the budget deficit is not sustainable.

12. Conclusions

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

- 12.1 While the Council's reserves do provide some level of comfort over the short term and could be used to address budget deficits this is not a sustainable financial strategy for the medium to long term, and as mentioned earlier within the report the earmarked reserves will be fully depleted in 2026/27 if ongoing savings are not found for the base budget.
- 12.2 Previous budget forecasts made back in February 2023 were made at a time of significant uncertainty in terms of future Government finances due to the Fair Funding and Business Rates Review. This uncertainty remains and additional levels of complexity in terms of future inflation forecasts and potential impacts on the economy, suppliers, and contracts.
- 12.3 The updated high level funding forecasts within the strategy build on previous figures from the 2023/24 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 £3.0m by 2026/27.
- 12.4 The MTFs and budget forecasts include the latest information available and it should however be noted that some of the assumptions that have currently been made will not be confirmed until the Final Settlement is announced, the date of which is currently anticipated in early February 2024.

- 12.5 The funding estimates for next year in terms of the central government grants are far from certain and this represents a potential income risk of around £1.7m if the grants are removed. We will not have any further clarity on these until the Final Settlement is announced in early February 2024.
- 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 £5.3m (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 £549k 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;
- Estimated budget gap of £549k for 2024/25 even with current savings and fee increases
 - We can deliver our statutory services with current income levels but nothing more
 - To fund non-statutory services we need to find more income/savings/reserves
 - Our reserves will help set a balanced budget for the next 3 years but not after 2026/27
 - 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, but officers will continue working on the forecasts between now and the point at which the council tax is set in February 2024, by which time the Settlement figures will have been finalised.

Detailed Revenue Budget Proposals

Service	2023/24	Growth	Savings	Income Changes	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Chief Executive	568	0	0	0	568	568	568	568
Policy & Communications	332	0	0	0	332	332	332	332
Democratic Services & Information Governance	1,263	0	0	0	1,263	1,263	1,263	1,263
Housing & Community	4,806	205	(276)	11	4,746	4,546	4,346	4,346
Planning	680	201	0	(500)	381	311	251	191
Environment & Leisure	8,691	2,463	(570)	(511)	10,074	9,841	10,441	10,176
Regeneration & Economic Development	(318)	40	(25)	(221)	(524)	(674)	(725)	(725)
Finance & Procurement	986	6	(40)	0	953	953	953	953
Revenues & Benefits	580	103	(200)	0	483	483	483	483
MKS Environmental Health	551	26	0	0	577	599	622	622
MKS Information Technology	856	63	(8)	0	911	964	1,119	1,119
MKS Internal Audit	176	9	(27)	0	159	166	173	173
MKS Human Resources	729	24	0	0	753	773	794	794
MKS Legal	445	28	0	(4)	469	491	514	514
Corporate Overheads & Capital Financing	2,586	245	(417)	0	2,413	2,387	2,381	2,381
Collection Fund Surplus/Deficit	45	0	0	0	45	45	45	45
Pay & Inflation	0	837	0	0	837	1,834	2,842	3,542
Fees & Charges	0	0	0	(66)	(66)	(66)	(66)	(66)
Sub Total Base Budget	22,976	4,250	(1,563)	(1,291)	24,373	24,815	26,335	26,710
Drainage Board	951	49	0	0	1,000	1,049	1,101	1,101
Contribution to Reserves	15	0	0	0	15	15	56	56
Contribution from Reserves	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Uncertain Government Grants	0	0	0	0	0	(27)	(27)	(27)
Special Expenses	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Use of Business Rates Pool Reserve	0	0	(855)	0	(855)	(855)	(855)	(855)
Cumulative Savings Required	(2,045)	(1,828)	1,433	1,891	(549)	(2,238)	(3,151)	(3,085)
Grants								
Revenue Support Grant	(317)	0	0	(21)	(338)	(345)	(352)	(359)
Business Rates - Gross	(10,122)	0	0	(1,614)	(11,736)	(12,004)	(12,279)	(12,279)
Services Grant	(174)	0	0	147	(27)	0	0	0
New Homes Bonus	(1,103)	0	0	429	(674)	0	0	0
Funding Guarantee Grant	(497)	0	0	(603)	(1,100)	0	0	0
Council Tax requirement	9,684	2,471	(984)	(1,062)	10,109	10,410	10,828	11,262

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COLLECTION FUND AND COUNCIL TAX BASE

Tax Base

The tax base for 2024/25 is 50,367.85.

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 £60,000 is shared as follows:

	£'000
Central Government	172
Kent County Council	(177)
The Police and Crime Commissioner for Kent	(33)
Kent & Medway Towns Fire & Rescue Authority	(8)
Swale Borough Council	106
Total	60

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 21 February 2024.

Parish Council Precepts

Parish Council precept demands have been submitted during January 2024 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 2023/24 £	Tax Base 2024/25	Parish Precept 2024/25 £	Additional Council Tax for Band D 2024/25 £	Additional Council Tax for Band D 2024/25 % change
Bapchild	27.98	591.91	13,780	23.28	-16.80%
Bobbing	19.25	984.39	51,764	52.58	173.14%
Borden	63.59	1,103.97	75,687	68.56	7.82%
Boughton-under-Blean	99.34	703.27	90,000	127.97	28.82%
Bredgar	40.78	298.31	12,344	41.38	1.47%
Doddington	38.20	226.20	8,641	38.20	0.00%
Dunkirk	52.28	525.05	28,234	53.77	2.85%
Eastchurch	55.30	842.82	71,253	84.54	52.88%
Eastling	35.00	148.49	5,197	35.00	0.00%
Faversham Town Council	82.80	7,387.56	666,741	90.25	9.00%
Graveney & Goodnestone	73.55	185.39	13,065	70.47	-4.19%
Hartlip	21.69	369.35	20,000	54.15	149.65%
Hernhill	47.64	321.76	18,091	56.23	18.03%
Iwade	35.36	1,458.61	61,000	41.82	18.27%
Leysdown	25.97	1,235.56	38,606	31.25	20.33%
Lower Halstow	82.51	454.51	37,740	83.03	0.63%
Luddenham		43.35	0	0.00	0.00%
Lynsted	56.13	482.05	32,224	66.85	19.10%
Milstead	67.55	94.13	7,000	74.37	10.10%
Minster	35.00	5,714.24	199,998	35.00	0.00%
Newington	54.59	1,054.01	59,053	56.03	2.64%
Newnham	34.29	155.71	5,339	34.29	0.00%
Norton & Buckland	39.26	191.55	8,333	43.50	10.80%
Oare	63.40	173.24	14,700	84.85	33.83%
Ospringe	38.32	284.39	11,015	38.73	1.07%
Queenborough Town Council	76.81	906.78	71,500	78.85	2.66%
Rodmersham	48.02	239.42	13,000	54.30	13.08%
Selling	37.13	371.97	17,013	45.74	23.19%
Sheerness Town Council	49.49	2,834.23	139,962	49.38	-0.22%
Sheldwich, Leaveland & Badlesmere	28.30	352.69	10,275	29.13	2.93%
Stalisfield	29.14	101.84	3,087	30.31	4.02%
Teynham	60.56	1,003.36	66,000	65.78	8.62%
Throwley	25.60	144.87	4,123	28.46	11.17%
Tonge	14.40	467.39	8,000	17.12	18.89%
Tunstall	10.79	700.52	7,500	10.71	-0.74%
Upchurch	36.81	1,058.39	48,577	45.90	24.69%
Warden	29.82	506.27	16,500	32.59	9.29%
Total			1,955,342		

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Scheme	Funding Source	Scheme			Previous		2023/24 Budget		
		Spend £'000	Income £'000	Net £'000	Spend £'000	Income £'000	Spend £'000	Income £'000	Net £'000
CCTV Replacement	Reserves	60	(60)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Disabled Facilities Grants	Grant	Ongoing programme			0	0	6,103	(6,103)	0
Local Housing Company	Borrowing/reserves	23,250	(1,373)	21,877	187	(155)	5,263	(469)	4,794
Dolphin Barge Museum & Skatepark	Reserves	104	(104)	0	52	(52)	52	(52)	0
Forstal Community Association	Reserves	65	(65)	0	0	0	65	(65)	0
Purchase of Temporary Accommodation	Borrowing/grant	11,000	(437)	10,563	0	0	4,400	(131)	4,269
Local Authority Housing Fund (Bridging)	Grant	464	(464)	0	0	0	139	(139)	0
Housing & Community Services		34,943	(2,504)	32,440	239	(207)	16,022	(6,959)	9,063
Faversham Creek Basin Regeneration	Capital receipts	200	(200)	0	0	0	200	(200)	0
High Streets	Reserves	584	(584)	0	468	(468)	116	(116)	0
St Micheal's Church Boundary Wall	s106/reserves	135	(135)	0	70	(70)	66	(66)	0
Swale House Refurbishment	Borrowing	2,100	0	2,100	1,818	0	282	0	282
Rural England Prosperity Projects	Grant	503	(503)	0	0	0	126	(126)	0
UKSPF	Grant	186	(186)	0	0	0	37	(37)	0
Levelling Up Scheme	Grant/reserves	20,509	(20,445)	64	64	0	7,349	(7,349)	0
Wayfinding Signage - Faversham	Reserves	49	(49)	0	9	(9)	40	(40)	0
Regeneration & Economic Development		24,266	(22,102)	2,164	2,429	(547)	8,215	(7,933)	282
Waste Vehicle Fleet	Borrowing/capital receipts	7,035	(2,000)	5,035	0	0	7,035	(2,000)	5,035
Beach Huts	Capital receipts	143	(143)	0	0	0	143	(143)	0
Coach Parking	Reserves	35	(35)	0	0	0	35	(35)	0
Gunpowder Works Oare Faversham	s106	30	(30)	0	0	0	30	(30)	0
Sheerness Public Toilets	Reserves	120	(120)	0	0	0	120	(120)	0
Barton's Point Drainage	Reserves	70	(70)	0	20	(20)	50	(50)	0
Leisure Centre Improvements	Borrowing	287	0	287	0	0	287	0	287
Lynsted Churchyard Walls	Capital receipts	120	(120)	0	0	0	120	(120)	0
Open Spaces Play Equipment & Improvements	s106/reserves	Ongoing programme			0	0	513	(513)	0
The Forum Public Toilets	Reserves	50	(50)	0	8	(8)	42	(42)	0
Barton's Point Shower & Toilets	Reserves	180	(180)	0	0	0	180	(180)	0
Changing Places	Grant/borrowing	150	(130)	20	0	0	150	(130)	20
Environment & Leisure		8,220	(2,878)	5,342	28	(28)	8,705	(3,364)	5,342
ICT Replacement	Reserves	Ongoing programme			0	0	192	(192)	0
Finance System Upgrades	Reserves	70	(70)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Council Chamber IT Equipment	Reserves	50	(50)	0	0	0	50	(50)	0
Resources Total		120	(120)	0	0	0	242	(242)	0
Grand Total		67,549	(27,603)	39,946	2,696	(781)	33,185	(18,498)	14,687

Scheme	2024/25 Budget			2025/26 Budget			2026/27 Budget			2027/28 Budget		
	Spend £'000	Income £'000	Net £'000	Spend £'000	Income £'000	Net £'000	Spend £'000	Income £'000	Net £'000	Spend £'000	Income £'000	Net £'000
CCTV Replacement	0	0	0	0	0	0	60	(60)	0	0	0	0
Disabled Facilities Grants	2,725	(2,725)	0	2,725	(2,725)	0	2,725	(2,725)	0	2,725	(2,725)	0
Local Housing Company	8,000	(250)	7,750	7,800	(250)	7,550	2,000	(250)	1,750	0	0	0
Dolphin Barge Museum & Skatepark	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Forstal Community Association	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Purchase of Temporary Accommodation	6,600	(306)	6,294	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Local Authority Housing Fund (Bridging)	325	(325)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Housing & Community Services	17,650	(3,606)	14,044	10,525	(2,975)	7,550	4,785	(3,035)	1,750	2,725	(2,725)	0
Faversham Creek Basin Regeneration	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
High Streets	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
St Micheal's Church Boundary Wall	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Swale House Refurbishment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rural England Prosperity Projects	377	(377)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
UKSPF	149	(149)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Levelling Up Scheme	13,096	(13,096)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wayfinding Signage - Faversham	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Regeneration & Economic Development	13,622	(13,622)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Waste Vehicle Fleet	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Beach Huts	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Coach Parking	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Gunpowder Works Oare Faversham	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sheerness Public Toilets	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Barton's Point Drainage	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Leisure Centre Improvements	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lynsted Churchyard Walls	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Open Spaces Play Equipment & Improvements	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The Forum Public Toilets	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Barton's Point Shower & Toilets	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Changing Places	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Environment & Leisure	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ICT Replacement	112	(112)	0	100	(100)	0	150	(150)	0	20	(20)	0
Finance System Upgrades	70	(70)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Council Chamber IT Equipment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Resources Total	182	(182)	0	100	(100)	0	150	(150)	0	20	(20)	0
Grand Total	31,454	(17,410)	14,044	10,625	(3,075)	7,550	4,935	(3,185)	1,750	2,745	(2,745)	0

Estimated Use of Reserves 2022/23 - 2027/28											
	Balance 2022/23	Est use 2023/24	Balance 2023/24	Est use 2024/25	Balance 2024/25	Est use 2025/26	Balance 2025/26	Est use 2026/27	Balance 2026/27	Est use 2027/28	Balance 2027/28
General Fund Balance	(3,103,000)	0	(3,103,000)	0	(3,103,000)	0	(3,103,000)	0	(3,103,000)	840,000	(2,263,000)
Earmarked Reserves											
Building Maintenance Fund	(740,174)	100,000	(640,174)	100,000	(540,174)	100,000	(440,174)	100,000	(340,174)	100,000	(240,174)
Repair & Replacement Reserves	(742,314)	82,625	(659,689)	97,000	(562,689)	110,000	(452,689)	275,000	(177,689)	115,000	(62,689)
Civil Parking Enforcement Reserve	(158,397)	15,000	(143,397)	15,000	(128,397)	100,000	(28,397)	28,397	(0)	0	(0)
General Reserve A/C	(586,354)	331,068	(255,286)	255,286	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Performance Fund	(4,541)	0	(4,541)	4,541	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Local Plan Reserve	(212,819)	30,000	(182,819)	30,000	(152,819)	30,000	(122,819)	50,000	(72,819)	50,000	(22,819)
Stay Put Grants Reserve	(87,894)	0	(87,894)	87,894	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Staffing costs Reserve	(192,199)	150,000	(42,199)	0	(42,199)	42,199	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
Homeless/Housing Reserve	(77,729)	0	(77,729)	0	(77,729)	25,000	(52,729)	25,000	(27,729)	0	(27,729)
Communities Fund	(6,100)	0	(6,100)	6,100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Council Tax/Housing Benefits Reserve	(730,778)	150,000	(580,778)	300,000	(280,778)	250,000	(30,778)	30,778	(0)	0	(0)
Refuse and Recycling Reserve	(108,318)	58,318	(50,000)	50,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Business Rates Volatility Reserve	(1,003,928)	(600,000)	(1,603,928)	(656,197)	(2,260,125)	(110,000)	(2,370,125)	1,510,125	(860,000)	860,000	0
Electoral Registration Reserve	(101,021)	100,000	(1,021)	(25,000)	(26,021)	(25,000)	(51,021)	(25,000)	(76,021)	76,021	0
Preceptors CT Support Reserve	(225,520)	0	(225,520)	225,520	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Waste Scheme Promotion Reserve	(97,634)	0	(97,634)	50,000	(47,634)	47,634	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
Financial Services Reserve	(160,000)	50,000	(110,000)	70,000	(40,000)	40,000	0	0	0	0	0
Tree Surveys & Works in Churchyard Reserve	(63,000)	15,000	(48,000)	15,000	(33,000)	33,000	0	0	0	0	0
Kent Pool Economic Development Business Rates Reserve	(1,887,354)	(629,000)	(2,516,354)	355,000	(2,161,354)	(145,000)	(2,306,354)	855,000	(1,451,354)	(145,000)	(1,596,354)
Milton Creek Access Road Reserve	(3,320)	3,320	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
Housing & Commercial Growth Business Rates Fund	(1,333,519)	250,000	(1,083,519)	250,000	(833,519)	833,519	0	0	0	0	0
Special Projects Reserve	(666,574)	666,574	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Environmental Initiatives Reserve	(156,165)	15,000	(141,165)	50,000	(91,165)	50,000	(41,165)	41,165	(0)	0	(0)
Heritage Strategy Reserve	(110,902)	110,902	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Visitor Economy Strategy Reserve	(127,556)	50,000	(77,556)	77,556	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
High Street Funding Reserve	(221,510)	221,510	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Improvement and Resilience Reserve	(327,603)	327,603	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Covid Recovery	(800,789)	800,789	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Budget Contingency Reserve	(2,118,734)	1,044,211	(1,074,523)	(371,287)	(1,445,810)	1,440,348	(5,462)	1,000	(4,462)	3,979	(483)
Other earmarked reserves	(394,730)	172,008	(222,722)	129,863	(92,859)	53,800	(39,059)	31,959	(7,100)	0	(7,100)
Total Earmarked (Excl General Fund)	(13,447,475)	3,514,928	(9,932,546)	1,116,276	(8,816,271)	2,875,500	(5,940,771)	2,923,424	(3,017,347)	1,060,000	(1,957,347)
Total earmarked plus general fund	(16,550,475)	3,514,928	(13,035,546)	1,116,276	(11,919,271)	2,875,500	(9,043,771)	2,923,424	(6,120,347)	1,900,000	(4,220,347)
Ring Fenced/accounting/collection fund											
Collection fund & grants in advance	(1,325,582)	1,325,582	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Accounting adjustments & smoothing	(357,093)	131,324	(225,770)	165,118	(60,652)	58,652	(2,000)	0	(2,000)	0	(2,000)
	(1,682,676)	1,456,906	(225,770)	165,118	(60,652)	58,652	(2,000)	0	(2,000)	0	(2,000)

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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 2024/25 it is recommended that:

- For capital expenditure incurred before 1st April 2008, and for supported capital expenditure incurred on or 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 by charging the expenditure over the expected useful life of the relevant asset, starting in the year after the asset becomes operational, or as the principal repayment on an annuity with an annual interest rate determined by the loan rate, whichever method is most appropriate.
- 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.
- For assets acquired by leases or the Private Finance Initiative, MRP will be determined as being equal to the element of the rent or charge that goes to write down the balance sheet liability, and
- For capital expenditure loans to third parties, the Council will make nil MRP unless (a) the loan is an investment for commercial purposes and no repayment was received in year or (b) an expected credit loss was recognised or increased in-year, but will instead apply the capital receipts arising from principal repayments to reduce the capital financing requirement instead. In years where there is no principal repayment on loans that are investments for commercial purposes, 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. Sufficient MRP will be charged to ensure that the outstanding capital financing requirement (CFR) on the loan is no higher than the principal amount outstanding less the expected credit loss. This option

Minimum Revenue Provision Statement

was proposed by the government in its recent MRP consultation and in the Council's view is consistent with the current regulations.

Capital expenditure incurred during 2024/25 will not be subject to a MRP charge until 2025/26 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 Management Strategy.

1. Risk Assessment

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

- 1.1 A comprehensive financial risk assessment is undertaken for the revenue and capital budget setting process to ensure that all risks and uncertainties affecting the Council's financial position are identified as far as is reasonably practical. These are reviewed each year as part of the refresh of the MTFS and future year's budget forecasts. The key strategic financial risks to be considered in developing the MTFS are included within the table below.
- 1.2 Medium term financial planning, set against a backdrop of severe reductions in Government funding and unprecedented economic challenges, both nationally and globally, carries with it a significant element of risk. Many factors may impact on the figures presented here and themes have been highlighted where appropriate. Most significant are the spending pressures (waste/homelessness), the high inflation the country is currently experiencing, 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 in the delivery of a balanced budget, without impacting on frontline services.
- 1.3 There have been issues with some areas of the Council's business with regards the supply chain issues with the new waste fleet having to be ordered a year in advance of delivery, and we are continuing to see increased costs in terms of labour supply and for construction costs 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, and although a recession has so far been avoided, growth is still slow to recover and analysts still believe that a shallow recession may happen.
- 1.5 Uncertainty around current and future local government finance policy will undoubtedly affect our finances over the coming years but hopefully this will become more stable following the upcoming general election.
- 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.
- 1.7 As part of strengthening the financial management of the Council, we will be looking to deliver a medium term financial policy that details future savings beyond 2024-25 to show how the budget will remain balanced over the four year period.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Management
Future available resources less than assumed.	Possible	High	Annual review of reserves and reserves policy to identify future resources. Assumptions on funding for 2024/25 and beyond are based on best estimates at this time. A prudent approach has been adopted based on previous years' experience as well as using regional network contacts to inform modelling.

Efficiency/transformation initiatives not delivered	Possible	High	The MTFS is currently forecasting significant budget gaps, peaking at £3.1m in 2026/27. Use of one-off reserves to help plug these gaps is not sustainable.
Planned savings not delivered	Possible	High	The MTFS contains budget changes resulting from agreed service changes. Ongoing monitoring of the achievement of these, through regular budget monitoring, will help identify any issues.
Uncertainty around government grant funding	Likely	High	The MTFS is currently forecasting government grant funding of £1.8m in 2024/25. However, 2024/25 is expected to be the final year for most of these grants, so this adds £1.8m to the annual future savings requirement. There may be transitional support available, but this is currently an unknown.
Uncertainty around county council funding	Likely	Medium	A number of council services are supported through funding from KCC. If the funding is removed, the burden will fall to Swale and increase the budget gap. Managers are working closely with KCC to manage the risk to finances and service delivery.
Deadline pressure on capital project funding	Possible	Medium	Delays in funding announcements, without extensions to project end dates creates risk that projects may not receive the full funding award. Project Managers are in constant contact with government to raise the awareness of this issue and to request extensions to the end date where possible.
Overreliance on reserve contributions supporting base budget deficits which is not a sustainable position.	Likely	High	Early preparation of 2024/25 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 2024/25 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.
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.

Budget consultation survey results

Background

Following the agreement of the Policy and Resources Committee on 29 November, a consultation was launched on draft proposals for the council's budget for the financial year 2024/25.

This consultation ran for 5 weeks, and responses were encouraged through news release, social media posts, and the council website.

There were:

- 453 views of the consultation page on the council's website
- Social media activity promoting the consultation reached 2,078 people

The consultation asked people to read key budget documents and then respond to 17 questions.

The consultation closed at 5pm on Tuesday 3 January, having received 12 responses, and a letter was also received from Citizens Advice Swale.

Comments were also received from the Parking Policy consultation, which are reported on here.

Results – Summary

The results contained a lot of suggestions that are not within the control of Swale Borough Council, but instead fall to other agencies such as Kent County Council or the police. This sadly reduces the level of response further.

Section 1 – Draft Budget

Q1

The council needs to prepare a balanced budget so that its costs are met by income. The council intends to increase its income. How would you suggest we might do that?

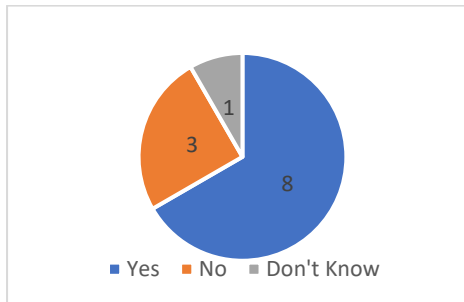
There were 10 responses to this question, with very little in the way of strong themes coming through:

- 4 respondents suggested increasing fines for FPNs and/or parking breaches.
- 2 respondents suggested that parking fees should be reduced.
- 2 respondents suggested increasing parking income through new fees for overnight parking of motorhomes, increasing EV charging prices, and increasing general traffic regulations and road markings.
- 2 respondents suggested increasing fees in relation to new housing developments.
- Other suggestions included:
 - Renting out Swale House
 - Filling empty commercial units, such as Bourne Place
 - Increasing leisure centre and swimming pool fees
 - Using own properties for temporary accommodation
 - Chargeable events/concerts
 - Increasing taxi and gambling licence fees

- Reducing toilet opening times and attendants
- Reducing fees and charges to increase demand
- Making further efficiencies
- Increasing Council Tax

Q2

Do you believe the council should reduce its spending?

**Q3**

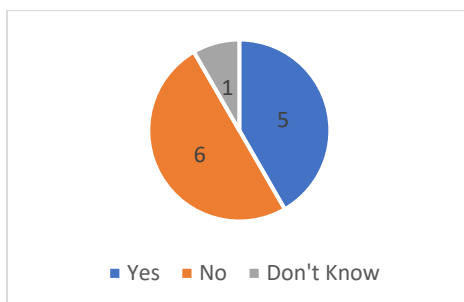
Which services would you reduce?

There were nine responses to this question:

- 4 made suggestions to reduce costs in temporary accommodation
- Other suggestions included:
 - Reducing verge maintenance
 - Freezing/reducing salaries of top earners
 - Reducing corporate costs and Member allowances
 - Reducing spend on climate and ecological emergency
 - Ensure assets are used to the end of their lives

Q4

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

**Q5**

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

There were eight responses to this question:

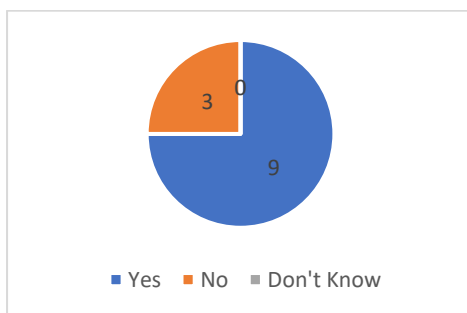
- Suggestions for increased spending included:

- Prevention of illegal dumping, building more council houses, supporting local third parties who provide essential support.
- Suggestions for reducing spending included:
 - Grounds maintenance, grants, cycle routes or any net zero/green agenda projects, council tax collection, and temporary accommodation.
- Other comments included:
 - Review of all services for efficiencies, consider mergers with other councils, not reducing hours of operation.

Section 2 – Proposed Fees & Charges

Q6

Do you agree that we should recover the costs of a service through the fees and charges for that service wherever possible?



Q7

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

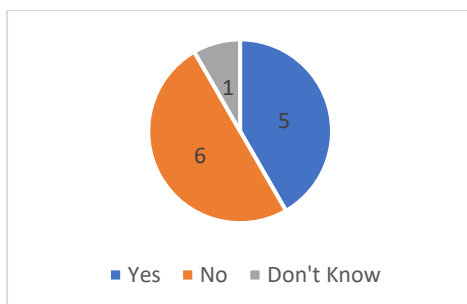
There were nine responses to this question, including:

- 4 disagreeing with the parking charge proposals
- 4 agreeing with increased fees for services where appropriate (discretionary services, FPNs, planning applications for 3+ homes, licence fees)

Section 3 – Proposed Parking Fees & Charges

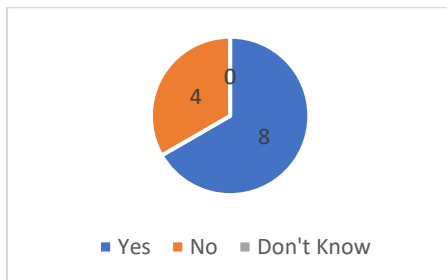
Q8

Do you agree with the proposal to have hourly charging during the day and a set overnight fee?



Q9

Do you believe that a charge should be made for motorcycle parking?

**Q10**

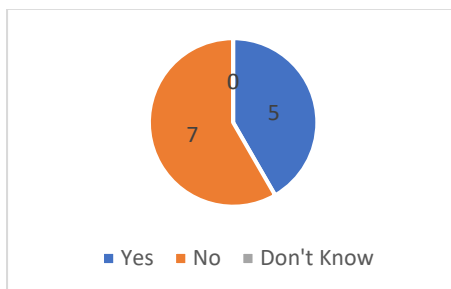
Please use the text box below to let us have any other views on the proposed increases to the parking fees and charges.

There were 10 responses to this question:

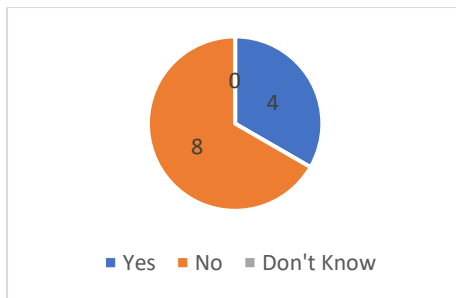
- 5 respondents were against night time parking charges, whilst 1 was in favour of, but felt this should start at 6pm
- 2 respondents were opposed to motorcycle charging
- 2 respondents felt that users should pay their fair share
- 2 respondents felt parking fees were proportionate, or could be increased.

Section 4 – Proposed Council Tax Level**Q11**

The Band D Council Tax for Swale Council for this year is £194.94 and the suggested increase for 2024/25 is £5.76. In the current financial circumstances do you think that this is an appropriate amount to charge?

**Q12**

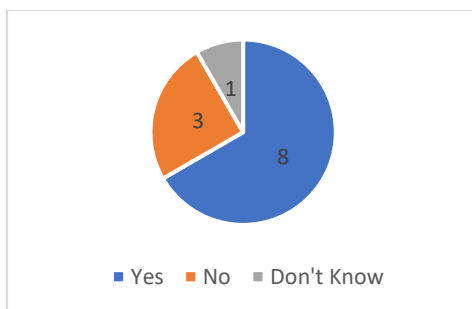
If the government gave us more flexibility to increase the charge beyond 2.99% to help support the council's budget would you be supportive?



Section 5 – Council Tax Discounts

Q13

Do you agree that these discounts (uninhabitable properties, and short term empty & unfurnished properties) should be removed?



Q14

Please use the text box below to let us have any views on this proposal.

There were 11 responses to this question:

- 8 respondents agree to removing or reducing the discount for short term empty properties, with some exceptions such as probate delays
- 5 respondents agree to removing the discount for uninhabitable properties, or having a limit on how long such a discount would be applied
- 1 respondent felt both discounts should be kept, and another that the uninhabitable discount should remain
- 3 respondents felt that Council Tax should be increased on empty homes
- 2 respondents felt this could be an incentive to bring empty homes into use.

Section 6 – Capital Spending Plans

Q15

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

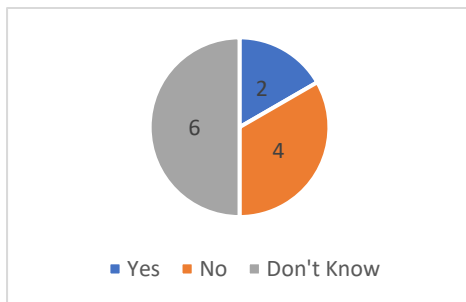
There were six responses to this question:

- 2 comments suggested only urgent projects should be considered whilst the funding generally is limited
- 2 respondents were supportive of the capital programme
- 1 respondent was happy for the council to borrow to build council housing
- 1 respondent felt there should be a longer term view, such as purchasing more properties for temporary accommodation beyond 2024/25.

Section 7 – Future Savings Options

Q16

Do you agree with the savings proposals outlined in the report?



Q17

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

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

- Services should be unaffected by savings
- Concern about cuts to voluntary organisations
- Running down reserves is not sensible
- Reduce spend on environmental issues and regeneration
- Leverage the private sector
- Purchase houses to use for temporary accommodation
- Assist customers who lack digital skills to reduce admin costs in the long term.

Results – Detailed

The responses from each free text question are set out below.

Q1

The council needs to prepare a balanced budget so that its costs are met by income. The council intends to increase its income. How would you suggest we might do that?

There were 10 responses to this question.

Suggestions were:

- Encourage people into the town rather than driving them away. An increase in parking costs has a detrimental effect on footfall, not the desired one. Short term gain, long term loss springs to mind. Ensure people can actually get to the town, traffic has been appalling. All shopping this year has been done online.

- Increase fines for offences & offenders which cost the council time and money to clear up and look to reduce costs and overheads for buildings and transport. Fees and costs should also be raised for new developments / developers looking to build in the area and fines should be levied against contractors who fail to complete planned works on time / to the requisite standard that lasts.
- Increase charges for leisure centre and swimming pool use. Increase penalties for fly-tipping.
- Increase the cost of statutory services such as those relating to property improvement.
- Make further savings and efficiencies residents cannot afford to pay increasing council tax.
- Stop paying bonuses to those at the top. Stop paying travel expenses. Cut back on paying out for useless ideas like 20 zones now cycle routes.
- Rent out empty space in Swale House, fill the empty units at Bourne Place, reduce the opening time and attendance at public conveniences, advertise more opportunities for concessions, increase Council Tax and fees and charges.
- Review all council house rents to bring them more in line with commercial rents. Too much incentive to stay in a council house even when families earn significant money. (Just look at Union Leaders on £100k+ still occupying council houses)
Create motorhome stopping areas in car parks charging an overnight fee.
Increase EV charging prices so that a clear profit is made.
The level of economically inactive people is shocking and more so those that have never had a job. Actively provide agency services for those people to work from home.
Get commercial companies to help with recycling sites so that you make money from the materials particularly metal but also hardcore etc)
Own your own accommodation for TA housing.
Remove parking charges and enforcement in most areas. Overall it is normally only good for the contractors. For illegal parking push that back to the Police.
Actively pursue illegal dumping of large quantities of overburden. Agree with Environment Agency that landfill tax payable is yours. Big money potentially.
Learn to create interesting car and motorcycle routes like Scotlands NC500 bringing tourism in. Put on events like the Bromley Pageant on Council land where you get a share of the gate fees. These can be big events.
- Increasing fines for offences such as fly tipping, any other environmental FPN's and parking breaches could be one way. Housing development companies could pay an increased amount for each development that is created towards the costs of services that will be provided by the council and later via council tax to those residents once properties are built. General traffic regulation and road makings etc could be significantly be increased compared to current proposals, these figures seem lower increases compared to other areas where costs are looking to be increased .
Wheeled bins for any new housing developments could be increased further as currently set to rise by 5.87% on average. Some increases to taxi licences and gambling licensing could be proposed as currently no increases planned ,when even a small 2 or 3 % could raise essential funds.
- External grants such as big lottery, potentially reduce some fees and charges to increase demand and thus increase income.

Q3

Which services would you reduce?

- Top earners salary frozen. Reduce verge maintenance to help biodiversity. Stop paying 4 traffic wardens to act like vultures around the town.
- Chief executive does not need a salary more than 15x the average UK household (£32k pa average). This should be reduced for starters. The council also needs to look at reducing its spending in the temporary accommodation sector which has one of the largest outgoings compared to income.
- Housing, corporate services, councillor's allowances.
- Those stated above.
- Communications, Climate & Ecological Emergency, Economic Development, Community Development, Customer Services.
- Do not buy new refuse vehicles. Best environmental solution is to use existing to the end of their lives. If you must have electric convert them. If you do own the fleet then ensure contractor liable for damage/misuse.
Cut all inclusion and diversity roles and operations. Reduce HR to one person per 100 employees. Reduce sickness absence and the game of ill health retirement. Move all new staff on money purchase pension schemes rather than final salary. Ensure all office based staff work in the office and certainly not remotely or overseas. Reduce air quality monitoring consultant costs by extending testing cycle. Only monitor where there is an alert and move other locations to 5 yearly. Cease the use of B&B but utilise ex military barracks as accommodation. Incentivises people to help themselves.
Do not sell any council properties and if challenged on the right to buy then increase the valuations by the enterprise value of the property.
Cease the use of taxis to take kids to school. Issue bicycles instead on cost and health grounds.
Cease maintaining council houses and make it a condition of rental. After the stories in the news make sure all residents have an obligation to avoid mold. It is not difficult by airing the room, bleach and anti mold paint.
Cease the use of consultants. They are expensive and normally only tell you what you already know.
Introduce a roving pothole repair team which should reduce the cost of damage to vehicles.
Reduced hours without reduced costs is disgraceful when services are poor.
Have a rates scheme for charities. They often compete with other shops and drag down the image of high streets.
Cut money to the police. They have become bloated and inefficient.
- Temporary accommodation, as there are many empty properties in the borough that could be purchased and used rather than outsourcing. Could street cleansing be done less often as a way to cut some costs?
- Members ICT allowance and expenses.
- Non statutory services, move the 11 TA cases older than 2 year into their own property.

Q5

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

- Reduction in ground maintenance to increase biodiversity. Increase in waste management to stop illegal dumping of rubbish that is having a huge negative impact on the streets.

- I think there needs to be a top to tail review of all services being provided to see what efficiencies and cuts can be made to balance the books before any talk of spending on other services is considered.
- I think you should build more council housing. Stop cutting your staff and stop reducing hours of operation for help to residents, for example in housing options. Do not cut your support of the voluntary sector locally.
- Statutory services should be ringfenced but further merge with other councils should be considered. All other services including grants should be reduced.
- Cycle routes and use the money to repair the already damaged roads.
- Any new projects associated with Net Zero and the green agenda. Note it is neither a climate crisis (read Unsettled by Steven N Koonan) nor ecological crisis but we do need to be mindful of both climate and ecology.
All social services should be questioned to run at the minimum with exception of physically verifiably disabled and the elderly. Too many people are gaming the system now.
Absolutely no new active travel schemes. They are costly, little used and drive business away from the area. Many are being removed elsewhere in the country. It is amazing how many zealots have polluting battery powered bicycles and do not get healthier as they are effectively electric motorcycles!
- Cut costs on council tax collection by more pro active education with residents of local support available and also of benefit schemes, acknowledging that many people can't or don't access the internet so need help with forms. Temporary housing could be less if bought properties in the borough to reduce costs of statutory provision. Maintain or increase expenditure to local 3rd parties who provide essential support to many people in the area which helps improve wellbeing and social/economic environment.
- Would need more detail to be able to answer.

Q7

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

- No to parking, enough is enough, you have raised prices to justify wages of wardens and it is a revenue making scheme to punish residents (and customers!) in an already failing High Street. Don't aim at individual planning applications, House builders are making Huge profits, look at any planning applications with excess of 3 dwellings and increase fees with this.
- Any service which costs the council money but which is not a necessity should have its fees increased in line with inflation. For fixed penalties and fines these should be increased more than the rate of inflation, more aggressively pursued to not only cover the council costs but also to provide additional as compensation to help run other services which were previously cut.
- By increasing the cost of discretionary fees and charges it passes the cost to those who can afford to pay more.
- Dependent on cost benefit analysis and Quails.
- How long do you think the working class can continue to pay these increases. Manage our money wisely and listen to what the people want.

- You have become addicted to parking money. You need to do a complete review looking at doing away with the lot. Remove parking costs and enforcement people keeping a tiny team for enforcement of abuse. You will probably find overall you will make money. Many of the fees you levy have a negative effect on commerce and those living in Swale particularly if they are already economically vulnerable.
- Some increase do seem fairer than others, but is it possible to increase further some costs like taxi and gambling licences where currently no increases. Further increases for further environmental FPN's and fly tipping etc as these must reflect the costs involved to then collect rubbish dumped and impact on staffing costs involved to administer these areas.
- Evening and overnight charges for car parking should be cancelled and revert back to the daytime 8am-6pm core peak day time hours. The revenue already collected from car parking far exceeds the cost and maintenance charges to provide this service. The proposed overnight fixed charge should not be introduced. An example of disproportionate costs includes - to park for 1.5 hours from 6:00 to 7:30 would cost £4.30 (overnight £3 plus 1 hour from 6pm to 7pm). In addition - charging for all motorcycles and some car parks by cashless payment options only, actively discriminates against members of the community that cannot pay by electronic means. If you do not have a smart/mobile phone - you are excluded from using those facilities. To promote more use of local services and support businesses, I would also suggest making the first half hour of any stay, free of charge.
- Do not agree with night time parking fees. Have you considered reducing some fees to increase demand and bring in more income.

Q10

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

- I agree with the overnight proposals but should start from 6pm. No for charging for motorcycles, we should be encouraging light traffic no penalising.
- Parking charges even on the new fee structure are proportionate for now. When they start to become disproportionate is when there will be an issue.
- Do not give free parking to electric vehicles. Also no free electricity.
- Those using their cars should pay their fair share of the costs.
- Evening charges harms towns' economy, further increase in parking will see a reduction in income.
- By having night charges you are reducing footfall to towns, businesses close. Stop being so greedy.
- Are you insane?!! Motorcycles are the best solution for the environment and congestion rather than 2 tonne EVs. Introducing night charges for parking will kill evening visits to places like Faversham stone dead. As above, car park charges should be removed and all the machines and unhappiness that goes with them and their running costs. Instead perhaps test some of the new PV systems for roads to generate electricity income.
- The costs for travelodge stayers is very low compared to other areas where this service is provided and could be increased to match similar other charges by local authorities. Will any increase impact on people shopping in the towns ?
- Evening and overnight charges for car parking should be cancelled and revert back to the daytime 8am-6pm core peak day time hours. The revenue already collected from car parking far exceeds the cost and maintenance charges to provide this

service. The proposed overnight fixed charge should not be introduced. An example of disproportionate costs includes - to park for 1.5 hours from 6:00 to 7:30 would cost £4.30 (overnight £3 plus 1 hour from 6pm to 7pm). In addition - charging for all motorcycles and some car parks by cashless payment options only, actively discriminates against members of the community that cannot pay by electronic means. If you do not have a smart/mobile phone - you are excluded from using those facilities. To promote more use of local services and support businesses, I would also suggest making the first half hour of any stay, free of charge.

- I do not support charges after 6pm especially as cars are the only options a the busses stop at 7 or earlier in my case at 5pm.

Q14

Please use the text box below to let us have any views on this proposal.

- Both should be short term, up to a maximum of 4 months. Don't remove, just shorted the benefit.
- I think it's a good idea. I would also suggest additional council tax increases for those who have more than 1 property (especially if it's for rental / buy to let purposes).
- I agree with removing discount for short term empty properties but how an you charge council tax for a property which is uninhabitable? It's not logical.
- It will encourage landlords to make sure they provide property that will reduce the under capacity in the rental market.
- This proposal requires practical application to work.
- Just because they are empty doesn't mean they shouldn't pay.
- It depends if the property is empty due to a death that is going through probate / in the process of being sold - I think there should still be an exemption for this.
- It is a difficult one as some people again are playing the system allowing properties to fall into disrepair and then catch light to make money whereas some are genuine reasons. Will create a new enforcement game of when you get to know somewhere is empty. You might wish to double council taxes on properties that are commercial lets all year. Coastal properties are often empty most of the year.
- Offering incentives to those with empty properties to purchase them could be a possibility and reduce expenditure on temporary housing budget too.
- If properties are either uninhabitable, or are short term empty and unfurnished, they are not using any facilities provided by the Council. Why should they have to pay anything?
- you should charge double for every year these properties are kept empty and land banked

Q15

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

- Each has its own merit and any that are required should go a head to reduce overspend in following years.
- Unless these are urgent for healthcare, policing or fire safety, everything else should be put on hold unless absolutely critical until the books are balanced and more urgent services prioritised for funding.
- I do not know the details but am happy for you to borrow in order to build council housing.
- I have no comment on the capital budget.

- A number of councils have undertaken this approach, interest rates may not further decrease, capital receipts are dependent on sales, reserves are finite and decreasing.
- If you do not have the money then all should stop without a clear business benefit case. The refuse truck purchase seems mad at a time of short funds so I do hope the case is sound. You should work assets for as long as possible which is also the most environmentally beneficial thing to do.
- you need more of a longer term view. ie more TA properties beyond 24/25 what new parks and sports ground to impact environmental schemes

Q17

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

- It is leadership's responsibility to ensure these are deliverable without affecting service. Swale has seen a huge increase in residential properties without an increase in infrastructure. Most of these new estates have management fees so where is all the money?!?!?
- There is no detail in the budget report about exactly which services will be cut and by how much. I am worried about cuts to voluntary agencies, who do a great job for the borough and save you a lot of money by providing public services.
- Reducing the contribution to some in the charitable sector will cost the council money in the long run. The contribution to Citizens Advice results in more value to Swale BC than the actual cost of the subsidy.
- These proposals are not sufficient.
- You seem to waste tax payers money for idiotic ideas that no one wants.
- Running reserves down is not sensible. Need to stop nearly all the environmental spends. Reduce the spend on regeneration but leverage the private sector.
- Savings could be made by purchasing own housing stock to reduce temp housing costs. Assisting more people with non digital skills to complete forms which would increase their income, reduce monies owed to SBC and subsequently reduce admin costs associated with chasing up monies owed.
- Please see previous comments around new car park charges introduced for 2023/24 and proposed for 2024/25.
- not enough detail to answer but generally in support.

Response from Citizens Advice Swale

Introduction

We are writing to SBC members to ask you to consider your critical contribution to our service and to look again at the impact your proposed cuts in funding will have on what we can deliver to Swale residents.

We are grateful to Swale Borough Council for its unwavering support over the years. We understand that setting the budget for 2024/5 has been an immense challenge and you

have not taken the decisions lightly.

Nonetheless, it is our public service duty to provide all members with a detailed explanation about how our work supports statutory services, and the potential domino effect should we be unable to sustain our core organisation and general services, from which the majority of our project work derives.

Citizens Advice delivers a return on SBCs investment

It is fair to say that in recent years Citizens Advice Swale (CAS) has become akin to a fourth emergency service. The 'wrap around' support we offer is second to none. SBC' contribution is an investment from which we deliver demonstrable returns.. The social, health and financial burdens of the last few years have taken their toll on Swale's citizens: CAS provides them with the tools to help themselves and help them keep their heads above water. We keep people in their homes, we ensure basic needs are met, we encourage self help and educate people about how to better manage money and pay liabilities. We increase residents' incomes, we support people to stay in work. The combined impact of our advice services on health and wellbeing is palpable

In the last financial year we supported 3012 unique clients with 17505 Issues. Of these 9740 were related to debt and benefits and 1567 were related to housing. 61% of clients were disabled or registered as having a long term health condition. We produced a total income gain of £795,496.70 for residents. Per resident this equates to on average £264 per client.

As 2023 went on, demand grew, the issues clients faced became more complex and inter-related and we now find ourselves significantly under-resourced. Currently there is a four week wait for debt appointments and only 10% of calls are answered via our Adviceline. Despite this challenge the quality of our service remains gold standard. As a local citizens advice office we have external accreditations for both debt and welfare benefits, we have met all our quality requirements for generalist advice and recently passed our three year audit with a glowing report. This is testament to the dedication of staff who are dealing with more and more vulnerable, complex cases and working harder and harder to meet the needs of our clients. How SBC's contribution to CAS makes a difference

In 2023-24 we received a grant of £133,000 from Swale Borough Council. It is of course not our only source of funding but the contribution represents an essential support for our core costs which can be difficult to cover from project based funding.

A limited breakdown of these costs for a typical year shows: £58,000 towards rent, utilities, IT and other office overheads. The rest of the grant broadly covers a proportion of our overall salary cost. The £133,000 received also allowed us to generate over £300,000 in additional income. This income was majoritively project based. It gave us the ability to expand services on the island, work more closely with food banks and local authority and support a large number of residents in severe deprivation

What we can offer

In terms of the value your money provides to local residents, the figures for 2022/23 are astounding. These figures are produced by our national body and are credible and conservative. The financial value is a minimum return on the value of Citizens Advice . Every £1 invested into our organisation is worth £21.62 in public value and £3.65 in fiscal value. Our services save the NHS £224,390 per year by reducing use. We've saved the DWP £672,429 by keeping people in work . The total value to the people we help is an astonishing £5,425,520 and the total public value is £9,744,500. Regarding the local authority's statutory duty Swale Citizens Advice has saved £188, 568 in preventing homelessness, housing eviction and in council tax repayments

The consequences of a cut in funding

As noted above, SBC's contribution pays for our core overheads and salaries for key members of staff who are essential in our ability to generate further funds. It gives CAS the financial stability it needs in order to plan for the future, develop and fundraise. If we were unable to secure replacement funding within the next 3 months our service would have to shrink to minimal levels. Based on our current draft budget, and the proposed cut to our grant, we would need to reduce face to face services to a single location, with much reduced hours and make multiple redundancies. The majority of our project work would be at risk as would potentially 75% of our admin staff, 70% of supervision, and we would be unable to continue to provide welfare benefits support. The cuts in supervision would compromise our ability to provide multi channel access to our services. Our debt project would also need to be shut down: This service operates on referral from our general service which would no longer generate enough referrals for us to meet necessary targets or manage audit requirements. In addition, we would lose our capacity to develop, grow or look for future investment. It would be a skeleton ship offering the bare minimum in the face of increasing demand.

Handling the risks whilst developing services and staff

Given this potentially bleak scenario, CAS has not been complacent. We have escalated our fundraising strategy, exploring all alternative streams of income that can sustain our services. Grant funding is a challenge. Aside from the fierce competition that all charities face, our specific difficulty is that because our service is open to everybody and not targeted at specific sections of the community, CAS is excluded from applying to many of the grant bodies that offer support for core costs. Nonetheless, we have invested in our staff, developing our fundraising skills, and fostered a culture of innovation and learning. introduced a more systematic process for tracking opportunities and submitted many more grants in 23/4 than in previous years. Application processes are, however, lengthy and we are unlikely to have confirmation from the more significant grants for at least 3 months, which adds to the urgency of our current situation. We have also placed a high emphasis on volunteer recruitment to try and bridge the gap between resource and demand. In short, we have done everything we can to mitigate the risks we face, short of making direct cuts to services.

We recently expanded our services back onto the Isle of Sheppey and now offer face to face debt and generalist advice on a weekly basis. Our newly secured energy project looks like it will enable us to enhance this presence further and we had hoped to offer sessions in both Minster and Leysdown from the Spring. We have been active participants at networking events and are regular contributors to the cost of living groups and One Swale roadshows in an attempt to access harder to reach groups and highlight how we can support marginalised groups further. The current year's funding has allowed us to respond to changing needs and work more closely with partner organisations. This has proved to be an extremely positive experience

We hope SBC will reconsider their grant funding proposals and maintain their contribution to our service at 23/24 levels. This would offer a lifeline and an opportunity for CAS to redouble efforts to secure longer term sustainability and make the necessary organisational changes that will secure our continuity. Crucially it would allow us to continue to provide our services to local residents through what has been a period of immense difficulty for many. It would alleviate the pressures faced by local councils and would support them in meeting their statutory duties. It would make the world of difference to some of Swale's most vulnerable households.

Some testimonies from local residents

Recent feedback provided by clients helps demonstrate the difference we make to people's lives:

I cannot thank you all enough, the Advice that I was given and the subsequent actions have actually been life changing for myself and my three sons Ten out of ten and gratitude to you ...my fragile mental health has improved as now I have hope and can look forward to a better life for my family. Cannot thank you enough.

I'll never be able to thank Citizens Advice enough, especially Tracy and her team in Faversham, as well as your Super Advisers at Head Office. I hate to think where my 2 kids and I would be, without their fantastic knowledge, advice and invaluable support

I cannot thank my advisor enough for all that he did for me in such difficult times. I feel at the lowest point of my life he saved me. Guided me through every step and advised me throughout each process of what to expect and how to keep going. He was absolutely sensational at his job... without him... we wouldn't be settled now and doing ok today. Professionalism at its best. Thank you so very very much.

I admire these people who volunteer their time to help people who are having problems. I particularly warmed to the lady who was training as she showed great empathy and seemed aware I wasn't someone just scrounging off the state. I worked til covid started but now at 73 my job no longer exists and in any case my mobility is becoming a problem. My savings have gone and I wanted help re housing benefit in relation to the room I rent

No complaints. Quite the opposite. I was impressed with the service. Great advice, brilliant help. Without which I wouldn't be where I am now.

Fiona Spall & Jude Lee (Interim Chief
Officers) Sarah Harvey (Chair of Trustees)

Citizens Advice Swale

Parking Consultation – Comments Received

A consultation on the parking policy was undertaken alongside the budget consultation, and 23 comments were received relating to fees and charges, 5 comments regarding charging for motorcycles, and 1 comments regarding charging for motorhomes. The comments are detailed below.

- Reduced fee after 6pm (Bourne Place) for those using the cinema complex, etc on weekdays.
- The charges for evening parking, especially Faversham, are appalling. It heavily impacts on social and hospitality businesses who are already struggling.
- The waiting time at minor injuries is often in excess of an hour, putting a cost on families already struggling.
- Families are finding the cost prohibitive for the swimming pool, and is adding a horrific cost to members of the swimming club.
- I would be interest to know how much revenue has been generated, against how much will be lost in business rates if just 2 businesses close.
- Night Charging is killing local businesses - theatre, cinema, restaurants, bars. You can't just pop for a swim or yoga now without it costing you even more now. The carparks are empty - which is so sad as charging puts people off - the additional cost adds up in a cost of living crisis. Especially for regular visits such as the pool or yoga studio for weekly classes.
- You should be helping not hindering town centres.
- Such a bad decision by SWB. Bring back no charges from 6pm to 8am!!
- Consider a reduction in car parking fees on market and event days to encourage independent and smaller traders, and tourism.
- Do not substantially increase charges for, or decrease provision of, parking used by urban residents without their own provision or which provide access to country walks etc. The latter are needed for exercise and health where the overall cost of withdrawing provision would be greater than the cost of providing it.
- I believe your general parking policy is completely wrong if you want people to "use the high street". Why would I pay to park if I wanted to just "pop in" to buy a snack from the bakers in the high street? Maybe £1.50 for a pie, plus a half our parking charge, plus the aggro of finding a machine that works, queue with everyone else, find some change for the machine (and remember, I don't have a smart phone), eventually get a ticket, walk back to where you've parked, put your ticket in the window correctly (so as not to chance a fine by some overzealous parking bod), and then, and only then, can you go and buy your pie. No, I won't bother, I'll go to Sainsbury's where I can park for nothing, and I don't have to worry about traffic wardens.
- Instead of your short sighted policy of raising as much money NOW from carpark charges (I know this probably raises plenty of short term revenue but this is at the expense of the high street retailers (just look at Canterbury high street – there's

nothing there!)), I suggest you make all parking free for two hours to enable people to just pop in to their local shops and spend their money. Further, get rid of the evening charges which directly affects the hospitality sector including small businesses such as Faversham cinema.

- The car park in the evening usually has around 5 cars in it now so is hardly bringing in substantial cash. It would be far better and safer to return to the old system and allow vehicles to park there free from 6.30. It would also promote Faversham town centre (including the cinema) as an attractive place to come in the evenings and help to support local business. The new car park charging timings do not work and are causing problems for visitors to the town and residents alike.
- It's bad enough that we have higher prices in the day time without being stung to attend a show or event in the evening. It would be sensible to go back to the cheaper evening tariff whilst leaving the day time tariff where it is.
- Charging people to park after 6pm is simply madness in Faversham, you usually find that the people who make these rules are not affected by them.
- Central car park in Faversham was previously free of charge after 6pm. This is a short stay car park which previously accommodated the overflow of town centre resident permit holders who could not otherwise find a space when returning home from work. Notwithstanding the fees, this is no longer an option as a vehicle can be parked there for a maximum of 4 hours, taking you to only 10pm. The evening charges are also adversely impacting on the local theatre, swimming pool, cinema and restaurants. In particular the theatre is run by volunteers who now have to pay to park. It would make sense for:
 - An overnight fixed charge from 6pm to 7am – say £1
 - Resident permit holders to be allowed to park free of charges from 6pm to 7am.
- Parking should be free again after 6.30pm it is killing the local evening economy and causing more parking issues on local side streets.
- Your job is to provide the services the public want and to control the cost, value and quality of those services. You are tasked to manage public infrastructure and land in the interests of the community and not just the Council coffers or green agendas.
- As a minimum you should be providing the following financial information as you should be monitoring it and it would not be commercially sensitive. You are a geographic monopoly after all! It is:
 - the past 3 years total costs associated with running the Swale parking operation (separated between direct and contractor costs)
 - the income generated in total by Swale, then split by permits, parking charges and penalties
 - how much of the income goes outside Swale to contractors, consultants and advisors
 - how much of the income is retained by Swale and the profit you believe you are making
 - the forecast financial benefits of the changes you are proposing for Swale, plus the changes to contractors income. Then show the direct costs of the changes and charges to the community
- Parking charges should be withdrawn for all locations around the town centre and congestion seen as a sign of a healthy economy. We want towns to be popular!
- It is interesting that pricing of parking is totally omitted. Do you not want the public to have a say in that area? Again, if you want to change parking prices that should be a

consultation to the public or even a simple referendum. The Swiss seem to have a very good system.

- Charging for on street parking should be minimised wherever possible as it is too easy for Councils to get hooked on the income. A 3 yearly review should be carried out to see which streets would benefit from the removal of on street charges. Penalties for the public parking on public roads and spaces should be a last resort for flagrant violation and not seen as an opportunity to scalp the public for economic gain.
- In order to support economic growth, Swale should be looking to encourage travel to all our centres of commerce and remove parking charges wherever possible as they are killing our High Streets and small businesses. If charges are necessary at a very few select occasions then they should be removed when major events are on. Swale should be looking to its towns to be major congestion centres showing that people wish to visit them and spend money.
- I'd like to object to charging for motorcycle parking. My 16 year old daughter volunteers at the British Heart Foundation on a Saturday. She rides her Moped and parks it in one of the town centre car parks. If she needs to start paying for her parking, she won't be able to continue with her volunteering job. You can only park for 4 hours max and her shift is longer than that. She also sometimes parks in the town when she goes to her 6th form class, as her school don't allow their 16-18 year olds to park on the school site. The streets around Sittingbourne just aren't safe for her to leave her moped. It will get stolen. She parks it in the town centre car park as there is an element of safety involved too. Please reconsider charging for motorcycle parking. This will impact young people trying to get ahead in life. It's simply unfair.
- Motorcycle Parking. I have a motorcycle, I don't have a smartphone, or apps, on anything like it. You are being prejudiced and discriminating against people like me who don't own or use this type of equipment. It's not my fault that parking tickets are vulnerable to removal by unknown persons.
For the very small amount of motorcycles, and the small area they take up in a carpark, surely waiving the fee would be the simplest solution, I mean you can't be losing much revenue by doing this, can you?
- Motor cycle charges to be introduced in car parks – are residents then able to apply for a residents parking permit? How will this permit be displayed on the vehicle? It is acknowledged that they can pay only by Ringo due to inability to display a ticket. Similarly, how would they display a resident's parking permit? Where will motor cycles be able to park? If the only available parking is in pay and display carparks this is going to be extremely inconvenient and costly, particularly if the motor cycle is not used daily.
- - It would appear that the anti car lobby has now moved on to powered two wheelers. These are probably the best form of transport. They take up virtually no more space than a bicycle; do not contribute to congestion; journey times are predictable and seldom affected by traffic jams; safer for other road users as they have less kinetic energy in collisions (unlike all the 2 tonne EVs appearing on the road and releasing more particulates); they are more fuel efficient and have lower emissions in real life due to almost never sitting in queues and jams; not limited in range; etc The only method of payment is the RingGo app because a ticket cannot be affixed to a bike?! Then don't do it for the above reasons or people will just use their cars.
- You only have 15 spaces spread across 46 car parks. Not only is this ridiculous but you now propose to charge for parking a motorcycle!!! You can generally get 2 bikes in a car space and often up to 4 so again congestion is reduced. This was proposed

in London and has now been dropped after action by the public. Can you name who put this forward?

- Swale should introduce and advertise overnight parking for Motorhomes and campervans near town centres and costal areas. Like the French, have simple byelaws that limit the number of days you can stay (normally 2 or 3 nights). Motorhomes tend to be expensive and the owners have disposable income and spend it in the communities they visit. We tend to holiday in France and Germany due to their Aires and Stellplatz respectively. Motorhomes being in car parks at night also tends to stop misuse of the car parks and vandalism. We should be making our towns and holiday locations a pleasure and easy to visit. Allow the parking for free or a token level.

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	2023/24			2024/25			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	139.00	27.80	166.80	147.08	29.42	176.50	5.81%
Staying Put Handyperson Rates							
Hourly rate for a handyperson	13.50	2.70	16.20	14.29	2.86	17.15	5.85%
Subsidised hourly rate for a handyperson – client in receipt of benefits	5.00	1.00	6.00	5.29	1.06	6.35	5.80%
Private disabled works (household not eligible for Disabled Facilities Grant)	150.00	0.00	150.00	158.70	0.00	158.70	5.80%
Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) fee (statutory % charge)	12.50%			12.50%			
Alleygate Key							
Fee	18.33	3.67	22.00	19.42	3.88	23.30	5.95%
Town Centre Licence							
Licence for large events of 10,000 people or more	550.00	0.00	550.00	582.00	0.00	582.00	5.82%
Planning							
(J Johnson)							
Planning Performance Agreements (PPA)							
Central government encourages the use of planning performance agreements (PPA's) for large or complex planning proposals. These are voluntary agreements between us and the applicants which helps to:							
<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 							
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 (new fee structure proposed from 2024/25)							
Large major (50+ houses or flats, or commercial over 10,000sqm)	n/a	n/a	n/a	4,370.42	874.08	5,244.50	n/a
Major (10-49 houses or flats)	n/a	n/a	n/a	2,871.25	574.25	3,445.50	n/a
Minor	n/a	n/a	n/a	801.67	160.33	962.00	n/a
Householder	n/a	n/a	n/a	291.67	58.33	350.00	n/a
Heritage & urban design attendance at meeting per hour	n/a	n/a	n/a	208.33	41.67	250.00	n/a
Listed building (householder) - written advice only	n/a	n/a	n/a	100.00	20.00	120.00	n/a
Local not-for-profit charities	n/a	n/a	n/a	0.00	0.00	0.00	n/a
Others not in categories above, charged at an hourly rate	Price on application			Price on application			n/a
* Parish Councils, voluntary organisations, national charities or charities that are not 'not-for-profit' will be charged based on development size.							
Pre Application Advice - Meetings							
Very large major	3250.00	650.00	3,900.00	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Major	2300.00	460.00	2,760.00	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Minor	505.00	101.00	606.00	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Other (excluding householders and listed buildings)	152.00	30.40	182.40	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Charities, voluntary groups and parish councils	0.00	0.00	0.00	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Works/repairs to listed buildings	0.00	0.00	0.00	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

	2023/24			2024/25			Increase
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	
	£	£	£	£	£	£	
Pre Application Advice - Letters							
Very large major	1010.00	202.00	1,212.00	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Major	505.00	101.00	606.00	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Minor	253.00	50.60	303.60	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Other (excluding householders and listed buildings)	76.00	15.20	91.20	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Householder	51.00	10.20	61.20	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Charities, voluntary groups and parish councils	0.00	0.00	0.00	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Works/repairs to listed buildings	0.00	0.00	0.00	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Complaints made under the High Hedges Legislation							
Standard fee	565.00	0.00	565.00	600.00	0.00	600.00	6.19%
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.							
Local Land Charges							
Official Searches							
LLC1 only	15.00	0.00	15.00	15.00	0.00	15.00	0.00%
LLC1 only - additional parcel	4.80	0.00	4.80	4.80	0.00	4.80	0.00%
Con 29	136.67	27.33	164.00	143.50	28.70	172.20	5.00%
Con 29 - additional parcel	20.00	4.00	24.00	21.00	4.20	25.20	5.00%
Standard search (LLC1 & Con29)*	151.67	27.33*	179.00	158.50	28.70	187.20	4.58%
Standard search (LLC1 & Con29) - additional parcel*	24.80	4.00*	28.80	25.80	4.20	30.00	4.17%
Part II enquiry - Con29 questions 4-21	13.50	2.70	16.20	14.17	2.83	17.00	4.96%
Part II enquiry - Con29 question 22	25.00	5.00	30.00	26.25	5.25	31.50	5.00%
Additional questions	19.00	3.80	22.80	19.96	3.99	23.95	5.05%
*VAT applicable only to the Con29 part of the charge.							
Personal Searches							
Enhanced Personal Search	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00%
1.1 (a-l) (Planning)	7.00	1.40	8.40	7.33	1.47	8.80	4.71%
1.1 (J, K, L) (Building Regulations)	7.00	1.40	8.40	7.33	1.47	8.80	4.71%
2.1 (b-d)	3.50	0.70	4.20	3.67	0.73	4.40	4.86%
3.1 Land for public purpose	3.50	0.70	4.20	3.67	0.73	4.40	4.86%
3.3 Drainage matters	3.50	0.70	4.20	3.67	0.73	4.40	4.86%
3.5 Railway schemes	3.50	0.70	4.20	3.67	0.73	4.40	4.86%
3.7 Outstanding Notices	10.00	2.00	12.00	10.50	2.10	12.60	5.00%
3.8 Building Regulations Contravention	3.50	0.70	4.20	3.67	0.73	4.40	4.86%
3.9 Enforcement	7.00	1.40	8.40	7.33	1.47	8.80	4.71%
3.10 CILs	4.75	0.95	5.70	5.00	1.00	6.00	5.26%
3.12 Compulsory purchase	3.50	0.70	4.20	3.67	0.73	4.40	4.86%
3.13b Contaminated land	3.50	0.70	4.20	3.67	0.73	4.40	4.86%
3.13c Contaminated land	3.50	0.70	4.20	3.67	0.73	4.40	4.86%

	2023/24			2024/25			Increase
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	
	£	£	£	£	£	£	
Environment and Leisure							
(M Cassell)							
Car Parks and Season Tickets (Subject to car park policy review)							
A review of the parking policy is currently in progress. Chargeable times are under review as part of this. However, the proposed rates for charging are as follows.							
Short Stay (maximum stay 4 hours). Chargeable hours subject to the parking policy.							
Fixed rate off-peak chargeable hours as per the parking policy.							
Faversham: Central car park (season tickets for business only), Institute Road car park (no season tickets)							
Sittingbourne: Albany Road, Central Avenue, Crown Quay Lane, Milton High Street, The Forum, The Swallows, Swale House (weekends only), The Forum (season tickets 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	0.58	0.12	0.70	16.00%
Up to 1 hour	1.08	0.22	1.30	1.17	0.23	1.40	8.33%
Up to 2 hours	2.17	0.43	2.60	2.33	0.47	2.80	7.37%
Up to 4 hours	4.33	0.87	5.20	4.67	0.93	5.60	7.85%
Off peak fixed rate (subject to decision on final parking policy)	n/a	n/a	n/a	2.50	0.50	3.00	n/a
Season per quarter (for business only Central car park, Faversham/ Forum, Sittingbourne)	220.00	44.00	264.00	241.67	48.33	290.00	9.85%
Electric vehicle parking/charging per kilowatt hour (kWh)	variable	variable	variable	variable	variable	variable	0.00%
Motorcycles (in motorcycle bays using cashless parking transactions only) - up to 4 hours (subject to decision on final parking policy)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.83	0.17	1.00	n/a
Sittingbourne: East Street car park, Albany Service Road car park							
Maximum stay 1 hour (cashless transactions only)	1.08	0.22	1.30	1.17	0.23	1.40	8.33%
Bourne Place Multi-Storey Car Park							
The charge is for ALL parking bays including disabled and parent/child bays.							
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	0.58	0.12	0.70	16.00%
Up to 1 hour	1.08	0.22	1.30	1.17	0.23	1.40	8.33%
Up to 2 hours	2.17	0.43	2.60	2.33	0.47	2.80	7.37%
Up to 3 hours	3.25	0.65	3.90	3.50	0.70	4.20	7.69%
Up to 4 hours	4.33	0.87	5.20	4.67	0.93	5.60	7.85%
Up to 5 hours	5.42	1.08	6.50	5.83	1.17	7.00	7.56%
Up to a maximum of 6 hours	6.50	1.30	7.80	7.00	1.40	8.40	7.69%
Over 6 hours (within 24 hour period)	7.58	1.52	9.10	8.17	1.63	9.80	7.78%
Lost ticket	7.58	1.52	9.10	8.17	1.63	9.80	7.78%
Season ticket per quarter (subject to a maximum capacity)	220.00	44.00	264.00	241.67	48.33	290.00	9.85%
Replacement for lost, stolen or destroyed season tickets	n/a	n/a	n/a	10.00	2.00	12.00	n/a
Travelodge	2.50	0.50	3.00	2.50	0.50	3.00	0.00%
(Preferential rate for hotel guests (for 24 hours))							

	2023/24			2024/25			Increase
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	
	£	£	£	£	£	£	
Long Stay Car Parks							
Chargeable and off-peak hours as per the parking policy.							
Faversham: Partridge Lane, Queens Hall							
Sittingbourne: Spring Street, Bell Road, Cockleshell Walk							
Sheerness: Albion Place, Beach Street, Bridge Road, Cross Street, Trinity Road, Library and Park Road Queenborough.							
Ship on Shore (9am to 7pm only no evening fee).							
Up to 30 minutes	0.50	0.10	0.60	0.58	0.12	0.70	16.00%
Up to 1 hour	1.08	0.22	1.30	1.17	0.23	1.40	8.33%
Up to 2 hours	2.17	0.43	2.60	2.33	0.47	2.80	7.37%
Up to 4 hours	4.33	0.87	5.20	4.67	0.93	5.60	7.85%
Over 4 hours	5.50	1.10	6.60	5.92	1.18	7.10	7.64%
Off peak fixed rate (subject to decision on final parking policy)	n/a	n/a	n/a	2.50	0.50	3.00	n/a
Season ticket per month (long stay car park)	82.50	16.50	99.00	90.83	18.17	109.00	10.10%
Season ticket per quarter (long stay car park)	220.00	44.00	264.00	241.67	48.33	290.00	9.85%
Seasonal Car parks							
Leysdown: Promenade, Little Oyster, (seasonal) (all day between 1 March and 31 October)							
Up to 1 hour	1.08	0.22	1.30	1.17	0.23	1.40	8.33%
Up to 2 hours	2.17	0.43	2.60	2.33	0.47	2.80	7.37%
Up to 4 hours	4.33	0.87	5.20	4.67	0.93	5.60	7.85%
All day	5.50	1.10	6.60	5.92	1.18	7.10	7.64%
Off peak fixed rate as per the parking policy	n/a	n/a	n/a	2.50	0.50	3.00	n/a
Motorcycles (in motorcycle bays using cashless parking transactions only) - up to 4 hours (subject to decision on final parking policy)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.83	0.17	1.00	n/a
Season tickets (to be used at any long stay car park throughout the Borough - excluding Bourne Place MSCP)							
Season per quarter	234.17	46.83	281.00	257.50	51.50	309.00	9.96%
Replacement for lost, stolen or destroyed season tickets	9.17	1.83	11.00	10.00	2.00	12.00	9.05%
All pay and display car parks – closure of parking bays through events or other activities	Price on application dependent on car park location, type of event (commercial – enthusiast – voluntary/community) and local impact			Price on application dependent on car park location, type of event (commercial – enthusiast – voluntary/community) and local impact			n/a

	2023/24			2024/25			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	18.75	3.75	22.50	20.63	4.13	24.75	10.02%
Sheerness: Delamark Road car park (residents only).							
Per quarter	14.17	2.83	17.00	15.58	3.12	18.70	9.95%
Residents' Parking Permits (on street)							
Per annum	45.00	0.00	45.00	45.00	0.00	45.00	0.00%
Visitors permit book (10 days) - for resident permit holders only	11.00	0.00	11.00	11.00	0.00	11.00	0.00%
Visitors parking permits (per day) - for resident permit holders only	1.10	0.00	1.10	1.10	0.00	1.10	0.00%
Hourly scratchcards (per hour) - for all others	1.10	0.00	1.10	1.10	0.00	1.10	0.00%
Hourly scratchcards (per book of 10 hours) - for all others	10.00	0.00	10.00	10.00	0.00	10.00	0.00%
Business per annum	45.00	0.00	45.00	45.00	0.00	45.00	0.00%
Nativity Close (exemption permit concession admin fee)	30.00	0.00	30.00	30.00	0.00	30.00	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	0.00%
Dispensation / Waivers							
Maximum 1 day	12.00	0.00	12.00	12.00	0.00	12.00	0.00%
Maximum 1 week	36.00	0.00	36.00	36.00	0.00	36.00	0.00%
Maximum 2 weeks	45.00	0.00	45.00	45.00	0.00	45.00	0.00%
Maximum 1 month	60.00	0.00	60.00	60.00	0.00	60.00	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	0.00%
Suspension admin fee	100.00	0.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00%

	2023/24			2024/25			Increase
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	
	£	£	£	£	£	£	
Sports Facilities							
Tennis Courts							
Unlit court (hourly rate)	n/a	n/a	n/a	5.00	1.00	6.00	n/a
Court with floodlighting (hourly rate)	n/a	n/a	n/a	7.50	1.50	9.00	n/a
Season ticket (3 court bookings of up to 2 hours per session per week)	n/a	n/a	n/a	33.33	6.67	40.00	n/a
With changing facilities and showers							
- Senior	64.58	12.92	77.50	72.00	14.40	86.40	11.49%
- Under 18s	21.50	4.30	25.80	24.00	4.80	28.80	11.63%
- Under 16s & mini soccer	16.17	3.23	19.40	18.00	3.60	21.60	11.32%
With changing facilities only							
- Senior	53.75	10.75	64.50	60.00	12.00	72.00	11.63%
- Under 18s	17.92	3.58	21.50	20.00	4.00	24.00	11.61%
- Under 16s & mini soccer	15.08	3.02	18.10	16.75	3.35	20.10	11.07%
With no facilities							
- Senior	36.75	7.35	44.10	41.00	8.20	49.20	11.56%
- Under 18s	16.00	3.20	19.20	17.80	3.56	21.36	11.25%
- Under 16s & mini soccer	9.83	1.97	11.80	11.00	2.20	13.20	11.90%
If your booking meets all of the rules below, you can choose to save money and not pay VAT on the booking.							
VAT exemption rules							
The booking consists of 10 or more dates.							
Each booking is for the same sport.							
Each booking is in the same place. This condition is still met where a different pitch, court or lane is used (or a different number of pitches, courts or							
The gap between each session is at least 1 day but not more than 14 days (for a gap to be at least 1 day, 24 hours must elapse between the start of							
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							
The facilities are booked out to a school, club, association or an organisation representing affiliated clubs or constituent associations, such as a local							
The person to whom the facilities are booked has exclusive use of them during the bookings.							
If you want your booking to be VAT exempt, you must make sure that it meets all of the rules above. Because the rules are given to us by the							
government, we cannot change them.							
All bookings must be paid for in full before the start of the booking. You cannot change VAT exempt bookings once they have been paid for, so you							
must make sure the dates and times are right for you.							
Allotments							
Plots of 10 rods & pro rata	65.00	0.00	65.00	70.00	0.00	70.00	7.69%
Plots of 10 rods & pro rata (OAPs/Disabled)	32.50	0.00	32.50	35.00	0.00	35.00	7.69%
Refundable keys deposit	n/a	n/a	n/a	5.00	0.00	5.00	n/a
King George's Pavilion							
Main hall/tea room (hourly rate) (minimum hire 1 hour)							
Mon-Sun (9am-midnight)	11.40	0.00	11.40	12.00	0.00	12.00	5.26%
Playgroups (per morning)	28.50	0.00	28.50	30.00	0.00	30.00	5.26%
Tea room – for children's parties only (per hour) minimum 1 hour hire	9.20	0.00	9.20	10.00	0.00	10.00	8.70%
Caretaking services – set up and clear away: standard tables and/or chairs	6.90	0.00	6.90	12.46	0.00	12.46	80.58%
Refundable deposits	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00%
Bank Holidays, New Year's Eve	Double the standard rate			Double the standard rate			n/a

	2023/24			2024/25			Increase
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	
	£	£	£	£	£	£	
Cemeteries Burial Fees							
<i>Includes Exclusive Right of Burial for 50 years, Interment, Memorial & Re-inscription Permits</i>							
1 st Burial Sittingbourne, Faversham & Murston	2500.00	0.00	2,500.00	2,700.00	0.00	2,700.00	8.00%
1 st Burial Sheppey and Iwade	2290.00	0.00	2,290.00	2,475.00	0.00	2,475.00	8.08%
1 st Burial if no use of previously purchased grave Sittingbourne,	1240.00	0.00	1,240.00	1,350.00	0.00	1,350.00	8.87%
1 st Burial if no use of previously purchased grave Sheppey	1000.00	0.00	1,000.00	1,080.00	0.00	1,080.00	8.00%
2 nd Burial Sittingbourne, Faversham & Murston	1000.00	0.00	1,000.00	1,080.00	0.00	1,080.00	8.00%
2 nd Burial Sheppey and Iwade	825.00	0.00	825.00	900.00	0.00	900.00	9.09%
3 rd Burial Sittingbourne, Faversham & Murston	825.00	0.00	825.00	900.00	0.00	900.00	9.09%
Extended right of burial extension – 10 years	250.00	0.00	250.00	270.00	0.00	270.00	8.00%
Extended right of burial extension – 20 years	500.00	0.00	500.00	540.00	0.00	540.00	8.00%
Extended right of burial extension – 30 years	750.00	0.00	750.00	815.00	0.00	815.00	8.67%
Extended right of burial extension – 40 years	1000.00	0.00	1,000.00	1,080.00	0.00	1,080.00	8.00%
Cremated Remains (all sites)							
<i>(includes Exclusive Rights to Burial for 50 years, Interment, Memorial & Re-inscription Permit)</i>							
1 st Burial	669.70	0.00	669.70	730.00	0.00	730.00	9.00%
1 st Burial (where no use has been made of previously purchased grave)	245.00	0.00	245.00	265.00	0.00	265.00	8.16%
2 nd Burial	245.00	0.00	245.00	265.00	0.00	265.00	8.16%
3 rd Burial	245.00	0.00	245.00	265.00	0.00	265.00	8.16%
4 th Burial	245.00	0.00	245.00	265.00	0.00	265.00	8.16%
Burial of loose ashes	125.00	0.00	125.00	135.00	0.00	135.00	8.00%
Extended right of burial extension – 10 years	86.00	0.00	86.00	95.00	0.00	95.00	10.47%
Extended right of burial extension – 20 years	170.50	0.00	170.50	185.00	0.00	185.00	8.50%
Extended right of burial extension – 30 years	256.00	0.00	256.00	280.00	0.00	280.00	9.38%
Extended right of burial extension – 40 years	340.90	0.00	340.90	370.00	0.00	370.00	8.54%

	2023/24			2024/25			Increase
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	
	£	£	£	£	£	£	
Child Burial							
Under 18 years of age	Covered by Children's Funeral Fund for England. Subject to criteria.			Covered by Children's Funeral Fund for England. Subject to criteria.			
Ancillary Services							
Issue of letter of confirmation where deed is lost	70.00	0.00	70.00	75.00	0.00	75.00	7.14%
Use of chapel in Sittingbourne	98.00	0.00	98.00	105.00	0.00	105.00	7.14%
Use of chapel in Faversham	133.00	0.00	133.00	145.00	0.00	145.00	9.02%
Turfed grave	At cost			At cost			n/a
Transfer of deed ownership	69.80	0.00	69.80	75.00	0.00	75.00	7.45%
Record search & certificate (each grave)	34.90	0.00	35.00	38.00	0.00	38.00	8.57%
Extra cost of large coffin or casket (measuring 30 inches or more)	n/a	n/a	n/a	100.00	0.00	100.00	n/a
Exhumation of coffin	2500.00	0.00	2,500.00	2,800.00	0.00	2,800.00	12.00%
Exhumation of cremated remains	335.00	0.00	335.00	375.00	0.00	375.00	11.94%
Other services (vatable)	At cost			At cost			n/a
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	900.00	180.00	1,080.00	975.00	195.00	1,170.00	8.33%
Memorial bench with concrete installation	1130.00	226.00	1,356.00	1,220.00	244.00	1,464.00	7.96%

	2023/24			2024/25			Increase
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	
	£	£	£	£	£	£	
Travelling Fairs							
Pitch premium for days open to the public only (per day)	1023.00	0.00	1,023.00	1,100.00	0.00	1,100.00	7.53%
Pitch premium for days open to the public only (per day) Local Operator	341.00	0.00	341.00	365.00	0.00	365.00	7.04%
Use of Council Land – Travelling Fairs							
On site fee payable whether or not open to the public (including arrival and departure days)	66.00	0.00	66.00	72.50	0.00	72.50	9.85%
On site fee payable whether or not open to the public (including arrival and departure days) Local Operator	22.00	0.00	22.00	24.00	0.00	24.00	9.09%
Refundable deposit	676.50	0.00	676.50	735.00	0.00	735.00	8.65%
Use of Council Land – Travelling Shows							
On site fee for days open to the public	226.90	0.00	226.90	245.00	0.00	245.00	7.98%
On site fee payable when not open to the public (including arrival and departure days)	65.30	0.00	65.30	70.00	0.00	70.00	7.20%
Refundable deposit	676.50	0.00	676.50	735.00	0.00	735.00	8.65%
Use of Council Land – Events							
On site fee for small commercial events – day usage of open space	231.00	0.00	231.00	250.00	0.00	250.00	8.23%
On site fee for large commercial events – day usage of open space	Price on Application		Price on application				n/a
On site fee for enthusiast event – day usage of open space	115.50	0.00	115.50	125.00	0.00	125.00	8.23%
On site fee for community/voluntary event – day usage of open space	0.00		0.00				0.00%
Refundable deposit	225.50	0.00	225.50	245.00	0.00	245.00	8.65%
Beach Hut Charges							
Locations now at Minster Leas and Leysdown							
Ground rental – beach hut owned	498.00	0.00	498.00	530.00	0.00	530.00	6.43%
Annual rental	1219.30	243.86	1,463.16	1,300.00	260.00	1,560.00	6.62%
Weekly rental	88.00	17.60	105.60	94.00	18.80	112.80	6.82%
Refundable keys deposit	25.00	0.00	25.00	30.00	0.00	30.00	20.00%
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				n/a
Purchase of beach hut	Market price		Market price				n/a
Access Over Open Space Licence							
Used for residential properties requiring access over our land to undertake works/deliveries etc.							
Standard fee	73.70	0.00	73.70	85.00	0.00	85.00	15.33%

	2023/24			2024/25			Increase
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	
	£	£	£	£	£	£	
Traffic Regulation Order Applications							
<i>On application (yellow lines and changes to existing orders)</i>							
Small (1-30 consultations)	1210.00	0.00	1,210.00	1,310.00	0.00	1,310.00	8.26%
Medium (31-50 consultations)	1430.00	0.00	1,430.00	1,550.00	0.00	1,550.00	8.39%
Large (50+ consultations)	1760.00	0.00	1,760.00	1,910.00	0.00	1,910.00	8.52%
<i>On application (loading bays, single bays)</i>							
Small (1-30 consultations)	575.00	0.00	575.00	620.00	0.00	620.00	7.83%
Medium (31-50 consultations)	860.00	0.00	860.00	940.00	0.00	940.00	9.30%
Large (50+ consultations)	1150.00	0.00	1,150.00	1,250.00	0.00	1,250.00	8.70%
<i>No objections received (yellow lines and changes to existing orders)</i>							
All size consultations	575.00	0.00	575.00	620.00	0.00	620.00	7.83%
<i>No objections received (loading bays, single bays)</i>							
All size consultations	286.00	0.00	286.00	310.00	0.00	310.00	8.39%
<i>Objections received (Joint Transportation Board report)</i>							
All size consultations	286.00	0.00	286.00	310.00	0.00	310.00	8.39%
<i>Progress/implement scheme (yellow lines and changes to existing orders)</i>							
Small (1-30 consultations)	575.00	0.00	575.00	630.00	0.00	630.00	9.57%
Medium (31-50 consultations)	685.00	0.00	685.00	750.00	0.00	750.00	9.49%
Large (50+ consultations)	810.00	0.00	810.00	900.00	0.00	900.00	11.11%
<i>Progress/implement scheme (loading bays, single bays)</i>							
Small (1-30 consultations)	122.00	0.00	122.00	130.00	0.00	130.00	6.56%
Medium (31-50 consultations)	122.00	0.00	122.00	130.00	0.00	130.00	6.56%
Large (50+ consultations)	122.00	0.00	122.00	130.00	0.00	130.00	6.56%
Inclusion of new or amended waiting restrictions into Traffic Regulation Order	1210.00	0.00	1,210.00	1,320.00	0.00	1,320.00	9.09%
White Bar Markings							
Installation of new white bar marking across vehicle crossing	141.00	28.20	169.20	154.17	30.83	185.00	9.34%
Re-painting existing white bar marking across vehicle crossing	118.00	23.60	141.60	129.17	25.83	155.00	9.47%
Installation of Advisory Bays on Private Lane (e.g. Disabled Bay in Housing Association Car Park)							
Installation of Advisory Parking Bay on Private Land	110.00	0.00	110.00	116.40	0.00	116.40	5.82%
Street Naming & Numbering							
Changing or requesting new property	82.50	0.00	82.50	90.75	0.00	90.75	10.00%
New street name	165.00	0.00	165.00	181.50	0.00	181.50	10.00%
New street developments (4 or more properties/units) per property/unit with minimum charge of £180	55.00	0.00	55.00	60.50	0.00	60.50	10.00%
Provision of historical information relating to street naming & numbering	33.00	0.00	33.00	36.30	0.00	36.30	10.00%
Changing street name	770.00	0.00	770.00	847.00	0.00	847.00	10.00%

	2023/24			2024/25			Increase
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	
	£	£	£	£	£	£	
Harbour Mooring Fees							
Faversham Town Quay per night	8.60	1.72	10.32	9.40	1.88	11.28	9.30%
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	55.00	0.00	55.00	59.00	0.00	59.00	7.27%
Bulky Waste Collections							
Charge covers up to 4 bulky items. If white goods, charge covers only one item.	30.00	0.00	30.00	32.50	0.00	32.50	8.33%
Clinical Waste Collection							
Residents receive up to 2 free collections per annum then any subsequent collections will be charged at the following rates per collection	n/a	n/a	n/a	3.50	0.00	3.50	n/a
Wheeled Bins for new developments							
Wheeled bins 140 litre	45.20	0.00	45.20	47.90	0.00	47.90	5.97%
Wheeled bins 180 litre	51.20	0.00	51.20	54.20	0.00	54.20	5.86%
Wheeled bins 240 litre	51.20	0.00	51.20	54.20	0.00	54.20	5.86%
Wheeled bins 1,100 litre	497.00	0.00	497.00	525.90	0.00	525.90	5.81%
Food waste container 23 litre	11.90	0.00	11.90	12.60	0.00	12.60	5.88%
Kitchen caddy 5 litre	6.00	0.00	6.00	6.40	0.00	6.40	6.67%
Bin repairs	n/a	n/a	n/a	15.00	0.00	15.00	n/a
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	32.00	0.00	32.00	6.67%
Note: Wheeled bins are non-vatable when supplied directly to a household for domestic/household waste							
Additional Litter Bins (each)							
145 litre galvanised (fee does not include emptying the bin)	495.00	99.00	594.00	530.00	106.00	636.00	7.07%
Annual emptying cost	n/a	n/a	n/a	130.00	0.00	130.00	n/a
Bin Store Clearance							
Per occasion	175.00	0.00	175.00	200.00	0.00	200.00	14.29%
Wheeled Bins for Community Events							
Provision of wheeled bins for events (cost per occasion) – delivery/ collection charge	113.50	0.00	113.50	122.00	0.00	122.00	7.49%
Wheeled bin hire (cost per bin)	14.30	0.00	14.30	15.50	0.00	15.50	8.39%
Servicing of bins during event	Price on application			Price on application			0.00%

	2023/24			2024/25			Increase
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	
	£	£	£	£	£	£	
Radar Key for Disabled Toilets							
Fee	3.00	0.00	3.00	3.50	0.00	3.50	16.67%
Environmental – Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN)							
Fly tipping (level 1)* - single item or black bag, no criteria from level 2 met	400.00	0.00	400.00	600.00	0.00	600.00	50.00%
Fly tipping (level 2) - multiple items, or multiple locations, or hazardous waste, or blocking access, or specialist equipment required to clear any item	400.00	0.00	400.00	1000.00	0.00	1,000.00	150.00%
Littering (level 1)** - single item of litter eg cigarette butt, no criteria from level 2 met	150.00	0.00	150.00	200.00	0.00	200.00	33.33%
Littering (level 2) - repeated offence, multiple items, littering from vehicles, hazardous waste, littering into a watercourse	150.00	0.00	150.00	500.00	0.00	500.00	233.33%
Householders/Commercial duty of care – lack of care in disposal of waste*	400.00	0.00	400.00	600.00	0.00	600.00	50.00%
Refuse left out inappropriately	80.00	0.00	80.00	80.00	0.00	80.00	0.00%
Graffiti	150.00	0.00	150.00	150.00	0.00	150.00	0.00%
Fly posting	150.00	0.00	150.00	150.00	0.00	150.00	0.00%
Waste carrier offences	300.00	0.00	300.00	300.00	0.00	300.00	0.00%
Failure to comply with a Community Protection Notice	100.00	0.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00%
Breach of any Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs)	100.00	0.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00%
*Reduced to £300 if paid in full within 10 days (23/24 charge), reduced to £450 if paid in full within 14 days (24/25 charge)							
**Reduced to £150 if paid in in full within 14 days (24/25 charge)							

	2023/24			2024/25			Increase
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	
	£	£	£	£	£	£	
Animal Welfare Licensing							
The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018 came into force on 1 October 2018. Charges have been calculated using the Local Government Association guidance document on locally set licence fees ('Open for Business').							
Part A - Covers the application and authorisation process.							
Part B - Is the cost for administering and enforcing the legislative framework.							
Boarding in Kennels for Dogs, Boarding for Cats, Day Care for Dogs, Home Boarding for Dogs, Breeding Dogs and Selling Animals as Pets							
(This fee applies to both arranging the provision of accommodation for other people's dogs and/or host families where dogs are boarded within the Borough.)							
Part A ¹	239.40	0.00	239.40	263.50	0.00	263.50	10.07%
Part B							
1 Star and 2 Star establishments - 1 year licence (Boarders up to 50 dogs; Breeders with 1 - 5 breeding bitches; Pet shops with up to 3 groups of animals (i.e fish, reptiles, cats, dogs etc).	192.00	0.00	192.00	212.00	0.00	212.00	10.42%
1 Star and 2 Star establishments - 1 year licence (Boarders with 51 or more dogs; Breeders with 6 or more breeding bitches)	n/a	n/a	n/a	233.00	0.00	233.00	n/a
3 Star and 4 Star establishments - 2 year licence (Boarders up to 50 dogs; Breeders with 1 - 5 breeding bitches; Pet shops with up to 3 groups of animals).	320.00	0.00	320.00	352.00	0.00	352.00	10.00%
3 Star and 4 Star establishments - 2 year licence (Boarders with 51 or more dogs; Breeders with 6 or more breeding bitches).	n/a	n/a	n/a	387.00	0.00	387.00	n/a
5 Star establishments - 3 year licence (Boarders up to 50 dogs; Breeders with 1 - 5 breeding bitches; Pet shops with up to 3 groups of animals).	449.00	0.00	449.00	494.00	0.00	494.00	10.02%
5 Star establishments - 3 year licence (Boarders with 51 or more dogs; Breeders with 6 or more breeding bitches).	n/a	n/a	n/a	543.00	0.00	543.00	n/a
Charge for each additional 'group' of animals being sold as pets (i.e fish, reptiles, dogs, cats etc)	n/a	n/a	n/a	30.00	0.00	30.00	n/a
Hiring of Horses							
Part A ¹	239.40	0.00	239.40	263.50	0.00	263.50	10.07%
Part B							
1 Star and 2 Star establishments - 1 year licence (1 - 10 horses) ³	192.00	0.00	192.00	212.00	0.00	212.00	10.42%
1 Star and 2 Star establishments - 1 year licence (11 or more horses) ³	n/a	n/a	n/a	233.00	0.00	233.00	n/a
3 Star and 4 Star establishments - 2 year licence (1 - 10 horses) ²	320.00	0.00	320.00	352.00	0.00	352.00	10.00%
3 Star and 4 Star establishments - 2 year licence (11 or more horses) ²	n/a	n/a	n/a	387.00	0.00	387.00	n/a
5 Star establishments - 3 year licence (1 - 10 horses) ²	449.00	0.00	449.00	494.00	0.00	494.00	10.02%
5 Star establishments - 3 year licence (11 or more horses) ²	n/a	n/a	n/a	543.00	0.00	543.00	n/a

	2023/24			2024/25			Increase
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	
	£	£	£	£	£	£	
Keeping or Training Animals for Exhibition							
Part A							
For a 3 year licence ¹	240.00	0.00	240.00	264.00	0.00	264.00	10.00%
Part B							
For a 3 year licence ³	449.00	0.00	449.00	494.00	0.00	494.00	10.02%
Dangerous Wild Animal Licence							
Part A							
For a 2 year licence ¹	239.50	0.00	239.50	263.50	0.00	263.50	10.02%
Part B							
For a 2 year licence ³	320.00	0.00	320.00	352.00	0.00	352.00	10.00%
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	1078.00	0.00	1,078.00	1,186.00	0.00	1,186.00	10.02%
Part B							
For a 4 year licence ³	596.00	0.00	596.00	656.00	0.00	656.00	10.07%
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			n/a
Request for re-inspection (for all licences) (plus vet fees if applicable)	102.10	0.00	102.10	112.00	0.00	112.00	9.70%
Requests for Variations							
Administration amendment only	38.70	0.00	38.70	42.50	0.00	42.50	9.82%
Inspector visit (if required) (additional to administration charge)	63.50	0.00	63.50	70.00	0.00	70.00	10.24%
Vet fees	hourly rate plus travel time			hourly rate plus travel time			n/a
Stray Dog Collection							
Statutory charge as per legislation	25.00	0.00	25.00	25.00	0.00	25.00	0.00%
Additional fee for collecting/returning stray dogs	39.50	0.00	39.50	42.00	0.00	42.00	6.33%
Out of hours additional fee for collecting/ returning stray dogs	50.80	0.00	50.80	54.00	0.00	54.00	6.30%
Transport fee for returning dog to owner after a kennel stay	33.90	0.00	33.90	36.00	0.00	36.00	6.19%
Kennel stay fee per night	24.00	24.00	24.00	25.50	0.00	25.50	6.25%
*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.							
Pest Control							
A range of pest control services may be offered - see our website for up to date details	Price on application			Price on application			

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	2023/24			2024/25			Increase
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	
	£	£	£	£	£	£	
Environmental Health (T Beattie)							
Food Export Certificate							
For businesses already in receipt of Export Health Certificate (EHC) issued by Swale BC	137.00	0.00	137.00	146.00	0.00	146.00	6.57%
For new businesses applying for export certificates	284.00	0.00	284.00	302.00	0.00	302.00	6.34%
Admin charge for changes to certificate	27.00	0.00	27.00	29.00	0.00	29.00	7.41%
Sampling associated with Export Health Certificates (per hour)	65.83	13.17	79.00	70.83	14.17	85.00	7.60%
EHC for transit to destination country	39.60	0.00	39.60	42.00	0.00	42.00	6.06%
Voluntary Surrender of Food							
Charge for food unfit for human consumption or unsuitable for sale	231.00	0.00	231.00	247.00	0.00	247.00	6.93%
Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) Level 2 Award Training in Food Safety in Catering							
Food Hygiene Rating Scheme							
Fee to food businesses for re-inspection and re-scoring	185.00	0.00	185.00	205.00	0.00	205.00	10.81%
Food Business Advice							
Food hygiene advice (per hour)	65.83	13.17	79.00	70.83	14.17	85.00	7.60%
Registration Fee under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provision) Act (Relates to establishments offering cosmetic piercing, electrolysis, tattooing or acupuncture)							
Standard fee	338.00	0.00	338.00	354.00	0.00	354.00	4.73%
Supplementary treatment registration fee (for additional beauty treatment registration inspection either at or after initial registration)	61.70	0.00	61.70	64.00	0.00	64.00	3.73%
Tattoo and Beauty Treatment Events (falling within the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act)	226.00	0.00	226.00	222.00	0.00	222.00	-1.77%
Tattoo and Beauty Treatment Event charge for Artists (new artist registrations)	27.50	0.00	27.50	35.00	0.00	35.00	27.27%
Requests for Environmental Information (e.g. Contaminated land)							
Charge per hour	23.00	4.60	27.60	23.00	4.60	27.60	0.00%
Requests for Enhanced Environmental Information for Contaminated Land and Professional Opinion							
Charge per hour	65.83	13.17	79.00	71.00	14.20	85.20	7.85%
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	65.83	13.17	79.00	71.00	14.20	85.20	7.85%
Private Water Supplies Regulations 2016 & 2018 Amendments							
Risk assessment (hourly rate)	65.83	13.17	79.00	71.00	14.20	85.20	7.85%
Sampling (hourly rate)	65.83	13.17	79.00	71.00	14.20	85.20	7.85%
Investigation (hourly rate)	65.83	13.17	79.00	71.00	14.20	85.20	7.85%
Derogation request	65.83	13.17	79.00	71.00	14.20	85.20	7.85%
Analysis – Group A	n/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	n/a
Analysis – audit monitoring	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

	2023/24			2024/25			Increase
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	
	£	£	£	£	£	£	
Housing & Community Services (S Curtis)							
Taxi Licensing							
Vehicle licence for 1 year	290.00	0.00	290.00	290.00	0.00	290.00	0.00%
Private Hire operator licence valid for 5 years	430.00	0.00	430.00	430.00	0.00	430.00	0.00%
Licence and plate for temporary hire vehicle	40.00	0.00	40.00	40.00	0.00	40.00	0.00%
Knowledge test – initial	25.00	0.00	25.00	25.00	0.00	25.00	0.00%
Knowledge test – re-sit	25.00	0.00	25.00	25.00	0.00	25.00	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	0.00%
Upgrade Private Hire Drivers Badge to a Dual Badge	35.00	0.00	35.00	35.00	0.00	35.00	0.00%
Dual / Private Hire Drivers Badge for 3 years	150.00	0.00	150.00	150.00	0.00	150.00	0.00%
Non-refundable plate fee (plate number only issued once)	50.00	0.00	50.00	50.00	0.00	50.00	0.00%
Replacement plate	15.00	0.00	15.00	15.00	0.00	15.00	0.00%
Change of address	10.00	0.00	10.00	10.00	0.00	10.00	0.00%
Change of ownership licensed vehicle	35.00	0.00	35.00	35.00	0.00	35.00	0.00%
Dual / Private Hire Drivers badge replacement	10.00	0.00	10.00	10.00	0.00	10.00	0.00%
Replacement paper licence certificate	10.00	0.00	10.00	10.00	0.00	10.00	0.00%
Change of vehicle on an existing plate	80.00	0.00	80.00	80.00	0.00	80.00	0.00%
Street Trading Licensing							
Annual consents (not events)	143.00	0.00	143.00	151.30	0.00	151.30	5.80%
6 month consents (not events)	71.50	0.00	71.50	75.65	0.00	75.65	5.80%
One off consent	10.00	0.00	10.00	10.60	0.00	10.60	6.00%
Assistants Badge	16.50	0.00	16.50	17.45	0.00	17.45	5.76%
Gambling Licensing							
New Applications/Applications for Provisional Statement							
Small casino	8000.00	0.00	8,000.00	8,000.00	0.00	8,000.00	0.00%
Large casino	10000.00	0.00	10,000.00	10,000.00	0.00	10,000.00	0.00%
Bingo club	3500.00	0.00	3,500.00	3,500.00	0.00	3,500.00	0.00%
Betting premises	3000.00	0.00	3,000.00	3,000.00	0.00	3,000.00	0.00%
Tracks	2500.00	0.00	2,500.00	2,500.00	0.00	2,500.00	0.00%
Family entertainment centres	2000.00	0.00	2,000.00	2,000.00	0.00	2,000.00	0.00%
Adult gaming centre	2000.00	0.00	2,000.00	2,000.00	0.00	2,000.00	0.00%
Temporary use notice	500.00	0.00	500.00	500.00	0.00	500.00	0.00%
Licence Applications (Provisional Statement Holders)							
Small casino	3000.00	0.00	3,000.00	3,000.00	0.00	3,000.00	0.00%
Large casino	5000.00	0.00	5,000.00	5,000.00	0.00	5,000.00	0.00%
Bingo club	1200.00	0.00	1,200.00	1,200.00	0.00	1,200.00	0.00%
Betting premises	1200.00	0.00	1,200.00	1,200.00	0.00	1,200.00	0.00%
Tracks	950.00	0.00	950.00	950.00	0.00	950.00	0.00%
Family entertainment centre	950.00	0.00	950.00	950.00	0.00	950.00	0.00%
Adult gaming centre	1200.00	0.00	1,200.00	1,200.00	0.00	1,200.00	0.00%

	2023/24			2024/25			Increase
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	
	£	£	£	£	£	£	
Annual Fee							
Small casino	5000.00	0.00	5,000.00	5,000.00	0.00	5,000.00	0.00%
Large casino	10000.00	0.00	10,000.00	10,000.00	0.00	10,000.00	0.00%
Bingo club	1000.00	0.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	0.00	1,000.00	0.00%
Betting premises	600.00	0.00	600.00	600.00	0.00	600.00	0.00%
Tracks	1000.00	0.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	0.00	1,000.00	0.00%
Family entertainment centres	750.00	0.00	750.00	750.00	0.00	750.00	0.00%
Adult gaming centre	1000.00	0.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	0.00	1,000.00	0.00%
Application to Vary							
Small casino	4000.00	0.00	4,000.00	4,000.00	0.00	4,000.00	0.00%
Large casino	5000.00	0.00	5,000.00	5,000.00	0.00	5,000.00	0.00%
Bingo club	1750.00	0.00	1,750.00	1,750.00	0.00	1,750.00	0.00%
Betting premises	1500.00	0.00	1,500.00	1,500.00	0.00	1,500.00	0.00%
Tracks	1250.00	0.00	1,250.00	1,250.00	0.00	1,250.00	0.00%
Family entertainment centres	1000.00	0.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	0.00	1,000.00	0.00%
Adult gaming centre	1000.00	0.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	0.00	1,000.00	0.00%
Copy licence	25.00	0.00	25.00	25.00	0.00	25.00	0.00%
Notification of change	50.00	0.00	50.00	50.00	0.00	50.00	0.00%
Application to Transfer a Licence							
Small casino	1800.00	0.00	1,800.00	1,800.00	0.00	1,800.00	0.00%
Large casino	2150.00	0.00	2,150.00	2,150.00	0.00	2,150.00	0.00%
Bingo club	1200.00	0.00	1,200.00	1,200.00	0.00	1,200.00	0.00%
Betting premises	1200.00	0.00	1,200.00	1,200.00	0.00	1,200.00	0.00%
Tracks	950.00	0.00	950.00	950.00	0.00	950.00	0.00%
Family entertainment centres	950.00	0.00	950.00	950.00	0.00	950.00	0.00%
Adult gaming centre	1200.00	0.00	1,200.00	1,200.00	0.00	1,200.00	0.00%
Application for Re-instatement							
Small casino	1800.00	0.00	1,800.00	1,800.00	0.00	1,800.00	0.00%
Large casino	2150.00	0.00	2,150.00	2,150.00	0.00	2,150.00	0.00%
Bingo club	1200.00	0.00	1,200.00	1,200.00	0.00	1,200.00	0.00%
Betting premises	1200.00	0.00	1,200.00	1,200.00	0.00	1,200.00	0.00%
Tracks	950.00	0.00	950.00	950.00	0.00	950.00	0.00%
Family entertainment centres	950.00	0.00	950.00	950.00	0.00	950.00	0.00%
Adult gaming centre	1200.00	0.00	1,200.00	1,200.00	0.00	1,200.00	0.00%
Sex Establishment Licensing (sex shop, sex cinema and sex encounter venue)							
Application fee and 1 st licence	4974.00	0.00	4,974.00	5,262.50	0.00	5,262.50	5.80%
Annual licence renewal	772.00	0.00	772.00	817.00	0.00	817.00	5.83%
Application to vary	891.00	0.00	891.00	943.00	0.00	943.00	5.84%
Transfer of licence	34.10	0.00	34.10	36.00	0.00	36.00	5.57%
Duplicate licence	17.10	0.00	17.10	18.10	0.00	18.10	5.85%

	2023/24			2024/25			Increase
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	
	£	£	£	£	£	£	
Scrap Metal Dealers Licensing							
Site licence	535.00	0.00	535.00	566.00	0.00	566.00	5.79%
Site licence renewal	511.00	0.00	511.00	540.65	0.00	540.65	5.80%
Collections licence, grant or renewal	250.00	0.00	250.00	264.50	0.00	264.50	5.80%
Variation – collector to site	86.00	0.00	86.00	91.00	0.00	91.00	5.81%
Variation – site to collector	63.00	0.00	63.00	66.65	0.00	66.65	5.79%
Variation (minor administration, such as change of address)	40.00	0.00	40.00	42.35	0.00	42.35	5.88%
Change of site manager	120.00	0.00	120.00	127.00	0.00	127.00	5.83%
Pleasure Boat Licence							
Licence	165.00	0.00	165.00	174.60	0.00	174.60	5.82%
Pavement Licence							
Application Fee	100.00	0.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00%
CCTV Services (S Curtis)							
Swale Radio Link Annual Charge							
Charities	150.00	30.00	180.00	150.00	30.00	180.00	0.00%
Independent Businesses	200.00	40.00	240.00	200.00	40.00	240.00	0.00%
Large Organisation	350.00	70.00	420.00	350.00	70.00	420.00	0.00%
Third Party Service Charges							
Insurance Company Footage Review	70.00	14.00	84.00	74.04	14.81	88.85	5.77%
CCTV Services which may include design, installation, monitoring, maintenance, upgrades and decommissioning	Price on application		Price on application		Price on application		n/a
Legal (C Valmond)							
Legal Charges for Third Parties							
Hourly rate (no VAT)	247.00	0.00	247.00	271.00	0.00	271.00	9.72%
Hourly rate (when VAT applicable)	247.00	49.40	296.40	271.00	54.20	325.20	9.72%
Note: VAT may be chargeable depending on the nature of the transaction. VAT is not payable in relation to most income (as most income is S106 related, which derives from a statutory function) but VAT is payable in certain circumstances, e.g. charging for provision of extra copies of documents.							
Revenues & Benefits (Z Kent)							
Council Tax liability orders	60.00	0.00	60.00	66.00	0.00	66.00	10.00%
Council Tax summons	43.00	0.00	43.00	47.30	0.00	47.30	10.00%
Business rates liability order	103.00	0.00	103.00	66.00	0.00	66.00	-35.92%
Business rates summons	0.00	0.00	0.00	47.30	0.00	47.30	n/a

	2023/24			2024/25			Increase
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	
	£	£	£	£	£	£	
Property							
(J Johnson)							
Room Hire of Swale House							
Non-Commercial							
Council chamber (half day)	82.50	16.50	99.00	87.29	17.46	104.75	5.81%
Council chamber (full day)	137.50	27.50	165.00	145.46	29.09	174.55	5.79%
Committee room (half day)	55.00	11.00	66.00	58.21	11.64	69.85	5.84%
Committee room (full day)	82.50	16.50	99.00	87.29	17.46	104.75	5.81%
Assembly room (half day)	41.25	8.25	49.50	43.63	8.73	52.36	5.77%
Assembly room (full day)	68.80	13.76	82.56	72.79	14.56	87.35	5.80%
Commercial							
Council chamber (half day)	165.00	33.00	198.00	174.58	34.92	209.50	5.81%
Council chamber (full day)	275.00	55.00	330.00	290.96	58.19	349.15	5.80%
Committee room (half day)	110.00	22.00	132.00	116.38	23.28	139.66	5.80%
Committee room (full day)	165.00	33.00	198.00	174.58	34.92	209.50	5.81%
Assembly room (half day)	82.50	16.50	99.00	87.29	17.46	104.75	5.81%
Assembly room (full day)	137.50	27.50	165.00	145.46	29.09	174.55	5.79%
Landlord's Consent Fee							
Assignments, subletting, charging *	400.00	80.00	480.00	423.21	84.64	507.85	5.80%
Alterations *	400.00	80.00	480.00	423.21	84.64	507.85	5.80%
Commercial wayleaves / easements*	875.00	175.00	1,050.00	925.75	185.15	1,110.90	5.80%
Parking space licences	n/a	n/a	n/a	200.00	40.00	240.00	n/a

* VAT is only applicable if the rent is subject to VAT.

	2023/24			2024/25			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	792.40	0.00	792.40	838.35	0.00	838.35	5.80%
Accredited landlord	673.50	0.00	673.50	712.55	0.00	712.55	5.80%
<i>Renewal of Application</i>							
Non-accredited landlord	621.00	0.00	621.00	657.00	0.00	657.00	5.80%
Accredited landlord	528.00	0.00	528.00	558.60	0.00	558.60	5.80%
Mobile Home Site Licence Fee							
<i>New Mobile Home Site Licence Application Fee</i>							
1-5 mobile homes on site	171.60	0.00	171.60	181.55	0.00	181.55	5.80%
6-24 mobile homes on site	235.50	0.00	235.50	249.15	0.00	249.15	5.80%
25-99 mobile homes on site	299.50	0.00	299.50	316.85	0.00	316.85	5.79%
100+ mobile homes on site	344.30	0.00	344.30	364.25	0.00	364.25	5.79%
<i>Annual Mobile Home Site Inspection Fee</i>							
Relevant sites occupied solely by owners and family members	No charge		No charge				
1-5 mobile homes on site	No charge		No charge				
6-24 mobile homes on site	192.90	0.00	192.90	204.10	0.00	204.10	5.81%
25-99 mobile homes on site	231.00	0.00	231.00	244.40	0.00	244.40	5.80%
100+ mobile homes on site	278.90	0.00	278.90	295.10	0.00	295.10	5.81%
<i>Fee to Transfer or Amend Mobile Home Site Licence</i>							
Transfer or amend mobile home site licence	145.10	0.00	145.10	153.50	0.00	153.50	5.79%
<i>Fee for the Deposit of Mobile Home Site Rules</i>							
Deposit of mobile home site rules	204.50	0.00	204.50	216.35	0.00	216.35	5.79%
Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Regulations 2015							
Fine level progresses to maximum fine permitted (1st offence £1,500, 2nd £2,500, 3rd £5,000)							
Penalty charge for non-compliance of Smoke or CO Alarm Regulations	5000.00	0.00	5,000.00	5,290.00	0.00	5,290.00	5.80%
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	5,290.00	0.00	5,290.00	5.80%

	2023/24			2024/25			Increase
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	
	£	£	£	£	£	£	
Non-Compliance with Minimum Energy Standards in Private Rented Properties							
Breaching the ban on letting a property with an F or G rating for less than 3 months (Statutory Maximum £2,000)							
First offence £1,000 (or £750 if paid within 21 days)	1000.00	0.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	0.00	1,000.00	0.00%
All other offences £2,000 (or £1,500 if paid within 21 days)	2000.00	0.00	2,000.00	2,000.00	0.00	2,000.00	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	2,000.00	0.00	2,000.00	0.00%
All other offences £4,000 (or £3,000 if paid within 21 days)	4000.00	0.00	4,000.00	4,000.00	0.00	4,000.00	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	0.00%
All other offences £2,000 (or £1,500 if paid within 21 days)	2000.00	0.00	2,000.00	2,000.00	0.00	2,000.00	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	1,000.00	0.00	1,000.00	0.00%
All other offences £2,000 (or £1,500 if paid within 21 days)	2000.00	0.00	2,000.00	2,000.00	0.00	2,000.00	0.00%
Planning (J Johnson)							
Planning Fees	The full details of current Planning fees can be found on https://ecab.planningportal.co.uk/uploads/english_application_fees.pdf						
Environmental Health (T Beattie)							
Public Health Control of Diseases Act 1984							
Various Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN's) issued under the Coronavirus legislation							
Pollution Prevention Control (PPC)							
A2 Process Application Fees							
A2 New application	3363.00	0.00	3,363.00	3,363.00	0.00	3,363.00	0.00%
Additional fee for operating without a permit (A2 and Standard Part B)	1188.00	0.00	1,188.00	1,188.00	0.00	1,188.00	0.00%
A2 Process Subsistence Fees							
A2 Low	1447.00	0.00	1,447.00	1,447.00	0.00	1,447.00	0.00%
A2 Medium	1610.00	0.00	1,610.00	1,610.00	0.00	1,610.00	0.00%
A2 High	1747.00	0.00	1,747.00	1,747.00	0.00	1,747.00	0.00%
A2 Low (E-PRTR)	1551.00	0.00	1,551.00	1,551.00	0.00	1,551.00	0.00%
A2 Medium (E-PRTR)	1715.00	0.00	1,715.00	1,715.00	0.00	1,715.00	0.00%
A3 High (E-PRTR)	2438.00	0.00	2,438.00	2,438.00	0.00	2,438.00	0.00%
Part B Process Application Fees							
Part B (Standard Process)	1650.00	0.00	1,650.00	1,650.00	0.00	1,650.00	0.00%
Part B Standard Process Subsistence Fees							
Part B Subsistence low	772.00	0.00	772.00	772.00	0.00	772.00	0.00%
Part B Subsistence medium	1161.00	0.00	1,161.00	1,161.00	0.00	1,161.00	0.00%
Part B Subsistence high	1747.00	0.00	1,747.00	1,747.00	0.00	1,747.00	0.00%

	2023/24			2024/25			Increase
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	
	£	£	£	£	£	£	
Part B Reduced Fee Application Fees (including car re-sprayers)							
Reduced fee application fee	362.00	0.00	362.00	362.00	0.00	362.00	0.00%
Part B Reduced Fee Subsistence Fees (including car re-sprayers)							
Reduced fee subsistence low	228.00	0.00	228.00	228.00	0.00	228.00	0.00%
Reduced fee subsistence medium	365.00	0.00	365.00	365.00	0.00	365.00	0.00%
Reduced fee subsistence high	548.00	0.00	548.00	548.00	0.00	548.00	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	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	0.00%
PVR I and DC subsistence fees medium	158.00	0.00	158.00	158.00	0.00	158.00	0.00%
PVR I and DC subsistence fees high	237.00	0.00	237.00	237.00	0.00	237.00	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	0.00%
Petrol Vapour Recovery I & II Combined Subsistence Fees							
PVR I & II Subsistence low	113.00	0.00	113.00	113.00	0.00	113.00	0.00%
PVR I & II Subsistence medium	226.00	0.00	226.00	226.00	0.00	226.00	0.00%
PVR I & II Subsistence high	341.00	0.00	341.00	341.00	0.00	341.00	0.00%
Part B Mobile Concrete Crusher Plant – Application Fee per Number of Permits							
1 – 2	1650.00	0.00	1,650.00	1,650.00	0.00	1,650.00	0.00%
3 – 7	985.00	0.00	985.00	985.00	0.00	985.00	0.00%
8 or more	498.00	0.00	498.00	498.00	0.00	498.00	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	0.00%
1 – 2 Medium	1034.00	0.00	1,034.00	1,034.00	0.00	1,034.00	0.00%
1 – 2 High	1551.00	0.00	1,551.00	1,551.00	0.00	1,551.00	0.00%
3 – 7 Low	385.00	0.00	385.00	385.00	0.00	385.00	0.00%
3 – 7 Medium	617.00	0.00	617.00	617.00	0.00	617.00	0.00%
3 – 7 High	924.00	0.00	924.00	924.00	0.00	924.00	0.00%
8 or over Low	198.00	0.00	198.00	198.00	0.00	198.00	0.00%
8 or over Medium	316.00	0.00	316.00	316.00	0.00	316.00	0.00%
8 or over High	473.00	0.00	473.00	473.00	0.00	473.00	0.00%
Late Payment of Subsistence Fee							
All Permits	52.00	0.00	52.00	52.00	0.00	52.00	0.00%
Operating without a Permit Fee							
Reduced Fee Activities	71.00	0.00	71.00	71.00	0.00	71.00	0.00%
Standard Part B and A2	1188.00	0.00	1,188.00	1,188.00	0.00	1,188.00	0.00%

	2023/24			2024/25			Increase
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	
	£	£	£	£	£	£	
Electoral Services							
(J Millard)							
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	0.00%
(a) charge for each 1,000 entries	5.00	0.00	5.00	5.00	0.00	5.00	0.00%
Data format (standard charge) plus charge (b) below	20.00	0.00	20.00	20.00	0.00	20.00	0.00%
(b) charge for each 1,000 entries	1.50	0.00	1.50	1.50	0.00	1.50	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	0.00%
(c) charge per 100 entries	5.00	0.00	5.00	5.00	0.00	5.00	0.00%
Data format (standard charge) plus charge (d) below	20.00	0.00	20.00	20.00	0.00	20.00	0.00%
(d) charge per 100 entries	1.50	0.00	1.50	1.50	0.00	1.50	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	0.00%
(e) charge per 1,000 entries	5.00	0.00	5.00	5.00	0.00	5.00	0.00%
Data format (standard charge) plus charge (f) below	20.00	0.00	20.00	20.00	0.00	20.00	0.00%
(f) charge per 1,000 entries	1.50	0.00	1.50	1.50	0.00	1.50	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	0.00%
(g) charge per 1,000 entries	2.00	0.00	2.00	2.00	0.00	2.00	0.00%
Data format (standard charge) plus charge (h) below	10.00	0.00	10.00	10.00	0.00	10.00	0.00%
(h) charge per 1,000 entries	1.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	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	0.00%
Rateable Value B and B	190.00	0.00	190.00	190.00	0.00	190.00	0.00%
Rateable Value B and C	315.00	0.00	315.00	315.00	0.00	315.00	0.00%
Rateable Value B and D	450.00	0.00	450.00	450.00	0.00	450.00	0.00%
Rateable Value B and E	635.00	0.00	635.00	635.00	0.00	635.00	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	0.00%
Rateable Value B and B	180.00	0.00	180.00	180.00	0.00	180.00	0.00%
Rateable Value B and C	295.00	0.00	295.00	295.00	0.00	295.00	0.00%
Rateable Value B and D	320.00	0.00	320.00	320.00	0.00	320.00	0.00%
Rateable Value B and E	350.00	0.00	350.00	350.00	0.00	350.00	0.00%
Personal licence for alcohol	37.00	0.00	37.00	37.00	0.00	37.00	0.00%
Personal licence change	10.50	0.00	10.50	10.50	0.00	10.50	0.00%
Premises licence change	23.00	0.00	23.00	23.00	0.00	23.00	0.00%
Transfers	23.00	0.00	23.00	23.00	0.00	23.00	0.00%
Temporary events	21.00	0.00	21.00	21.00	0.00	21.00	0.00%
Register of interests	21.00	0.00	21.00	21.00	0.00	21.00	0.00%

	2023/24			2024/25			Increase
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	
	£	£	£	£	£	£	
Licensed Premises Gaming Machine Permit							
Grant	150.00	0.00	150.00	150.00	0.00	150.00	0.00%
Existing operator grant	100.00	0.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00%
Variation	100.00	0.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00%
Transfer	25.00	0.00	25.00	25.00	0.00	25.00	0.00%
Annual fee	50.00	0.00	50.00	50.00	0.00	50.00	0.00%
Change of name	25.00	0.00	25.00	25.00	0.00	25.00	0.00%
Copy of permit	15.00	0.00	15.00	15.00	0.00	15.00	0.00%
Licenses Premises Automatic Notification Process							
On notification	50.00	0.00	50.00	50.00	0.00	50.00	0.00%
Club Gaming Permits							
Grant	200.00	0.00	200.00	200.00	0.00	200.00	0.00%
Grant (Club Premises Certificate holder)	100.00	0.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00%
Existing Operator Grant	100.00	0.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00%
Variation	100.00	0.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00%
Renewal fee	200.00	0.00	200.00	200.00	0.00	200.00	0.00%
Renewal (Club Premises Certificate Holder)	100.00	0.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00%
Annual Fee	50.00	0.00	50.00	50.00	0.00	50.00	0.00%
Copy of permit	15.00	0.00	15.00	15.00	0.00	15.00	0.00%
Club Machine Permits							
Grant	200.00	0.00	200.00	200.00	0.00	200.00	0.00%
Grant (Club Premises Certificate holder)	100.00	0.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00%
Existing Operator Grant	100.00	0.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00%
Variation	100.00	0.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00%
Renewal fee	200.00	0.00	200.00	200.00	0.00	200.00	0.00%
Renewal (Club Premises Certificate Holder)	100.00	0.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00%
Annual Fee	50.00	0.00	50.00	50.00	0.00	50.00	0.00%
Copy of permit	15.00	0.00	15.00	15.00	0.00	15.00	0.00%
Family Entertainment Centre Gaming Machine Permits							
Application fee	300.00	0.00	300.00	300.00	0.00	300.00	0.00%
Renewal fee	300.00	0.00	300.00	300.00	0.00	300.00	0.00%
Transitional application fee	100.00	0.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00%
Change of name	25.00	0.00	25.00	25.00	0.00	25.00	0.00%
Copy of permit	15.00	0.00	15.00	15.00	0.00	15.00	0.00%
Prize Gaming Permits							
Grant	300.00	0.00	300.00	300.00	0.00	300.00	0.00%
Renewal	300.00	0.00	300.00	300.00	0.00	300.00	0.00%
Existing Operator Grant	100.00	0.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00%
Change of name	25.00	0.00	25.00	25.00	0.00	25.00	0.00%
Copy of permit	15.00	0.00	15.00	15.00	0.00	15.00	0.00%
Annual Fee	20.00	0.00	20.00	20.00	0.00	20.00	0.00%
Small Lottery Registration							
Grant	40.00	0.00	40.00	40.00	0.00	40.00	0.00%
Annual Fee	20.00	0.00	20.00	20.00	0.00	20.00	0.00%

	2023/24			2024/25			Increase
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	
	£	£	£	£	£	£	
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	0.00%
14 days to 56 days	50.00	0.00	50.00	50.00	0.00	50.00	0.00%
57 days to 70 days	75.00	0.00	75.00	75.00	0.00	75.00	0.00%
After 70 days	82.00	0.00	82.00	82.00	0.00	82.00	0.00%
Higher Penalty System							
Up to 14 days	35.00	0.00	35.00	35.00	0.00	35.00	0.00%
14 days to 56 days	70.00	0.00	70.00	70.00	0.00	70.00	0.00%
57 days to 70 days	105.00	0.00	105.00	105.00	0.00	105.00	0.00%
After 70 days	112.00	0.00	112.00	112.00	0.00	112.00	0.00%
Environmental Fixed Penalty Notices							
Anti Idling (failure to turn off engine once requested to do so)	20.00	0.00	20.00	20.00	0.00	20.00	0.00%
Abandoning a vehicle	200.00	0.00	200.00	200.00	0.00	200.00	0.00%
Repairing vehicles on a road (or) exposing vehicles for sale on a road	100.00	0.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00%
Smoking in a smoke free premises or vehicle	50.00	0.00	50.00	50.00	0.00	50.00	0.00%
Failure to display no smoking signs in smoke free premises or vehicle	200.00	0.00	200.00	200.00	0.00	200.00	0.00%
Smoking in an enclosed vehicle carrying a person under 18	50.00	0.00	50.00	50.00	0.00	50.00	0.00%
¹ Increases to £40 if not paid within 28 days ² Reduced to £30.00 if paid within 15 days ³ Reduced to £150.00 if paid within 15 days							

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Growth Summary		2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
Savings as per 2023/24 MTFP	Agreed Feb 2023	3,052,971	1,064,000	1,224,000	0
Housing & Community Planning	Increased Costs of Homelessness	205,000	0	0	0
Environment & Leisure	Service Reconfiguration	200,000	0	0	0
Environment & Leisure	Parking Contracts	49,000	0	0	0
Environment & Leisure	Leisure Contracts	89,000	0	0	0
Environment & Leisure	Lifeboat Contract	11,000	0	0	0
Environment & Leisure	Utility Increases	110,000	0	0	0
Environment & Leisure	Public Convenience Contract	70,000	0	0	0
Environment & Leisure	Waste Contract - Updated Assumptions	(250,000)	0	0	0
Environment & Leisure	Climate Emergency	85,000	0	0	0
Regeneration & Economic Development	Commercial Property Maintenance	30,000	0	0	0
Revenues & Benefits	Grant reduction	2,560	0	0	0
Revenues & Benefits	Loss of Income	100,000	0	0	0
Corporate Overheads & Capital Financing	Audit Fee Increase	26,000	0	0	0
Pay & Inflation	Increase in NNDR on SBC properties	5,000	0	0	0
Pay & Inflation	Pay Award	496,400	0	0	0
Drainage Board	Levy Increase	17,000	0	0	0
		4,298,931	1,064,000	1,224,000	0

Savings Summary		2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
Savings as per 2023/24 MTFP	Agreed Feb 2023	(964,500)	(345,000)	(200,000)	0
Housing & Community	Operational Efficiencies	(10,000)	0	0	0
Housing & Community	External Grant Review	(66,000)	0	0	0
Environment & Leisure	Attended Toilets	(50,000)	(100,000)	0	0
Environment & Leisure	Contract Savings	0	(375,000)	0	(265,000)
Regeneration & Economic Development	Building Control Operational Efficiencies	(25,000)	0	0	0
Finance & Procurement	Service Reconfiguration	(40,000)	0	0	0
Revenues & Benefits	Additional Cost Recovery	(6,300)	0	0	0
MKS Information Technology	Software Savings	(8,300)	0	0	0
MKS Internal Audit	Efficiency and Service Review	(26,700)	0	0	0
Corporate Overheads & Capital Financing	Capital Financing Review	(36,000)	0	0	0
Corporate Overheads & Capital Financing	Insurance Contract Reversion	(125,000)	0	0	0
Corporate Overheads & Capital Financing	Pension Backfunding Revaluation	(200,000)	0	0	0
Corporate Overheads & Capital Financing	Small Budget Savings	(5,000)	0	0	0
Business Rates Pool Reserve	Business Rates Pool Reserve	(854,830)	0	0	0
		(2,417,630)	(820,000)	(200,000)	(265,000)

Income Changes Summary		2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
Savings as per 2023/24 MTFP	Agreed Feb 2023	(1,137,864)	(272,500)	(214,000)	0
Housing & Community	Income Activity Changes	11,000	0	0	0
Planning	Planning Income	(300,000)	0	0	0
Environment & Leisure	Car Park Income	(331,000)	0	0	0
Environment & Leisure	Garden Waste	(71,000)	0	0	0
Regeneration & Economic Development	Property Rents	(6,000)	0	0	0
MKS Legal	Additional Income	(4,082)	0	0	0
Fees & Charges	Fees & Charges	(65,591)	0	0	0
Business Rates - Gross	Business Rates Growth	(1,000,000)	0	0	0
Business Rates - Gross	Inflationary Increase in Business Rates	0	(268,000)	(275,000)	0
Central Government Grants	Settlement Increases	(47,985)	1,767,240	(6,895)	(7,033)
Council Tax Increase	Changes to the Tax Base	(5,071)	0	0	0
		(2,957,593)	1,226,740	(495,895)	(7,033)

Council Meeting	
Meeting Date	21 February 2024
Report Title	Treasury Management Strategy 2024/25
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
Classification	Open
Recommendations	1. To approve the Treasury Management Strategy 2024/25 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 **Economic background:** The impact on the UK from higher interest rates and inflation, a weakening economic outlook, an uncertain political climate due to an upcoming general election, together with war in Ukraine and the Middle East, will be major influences on the Council's treasury management strategy for 2024/25.
- 2.2 The Bank of England (BoE) increased Bank Rate to 5.25% in August 2023, before maintaining this level in September and then again in November. Members of the BoE's Monetary Policy Committee voted 6-3 in favour of keeping Bank Rate at 5.25%. The three dissenters wanted to increase rates by another 0.25%.
- 2.3 The November quarterly Monetary Policy Report (MPR) forecast a prolonged period of weak Gross Domestic Product (GDP) with the potential for a mild contraction due to ongoing weak economic activity. The outlook for CPI inflation was deemed to be highly uncertain, with near-term risks to CPI falling to the 2% target coming from potential energy price increases, strong domestic wage growth and persistence in price-setting.

- 2.4 ONS figures showed CPI inflation was 3.9% in November 2023, down from a 4.6% rate in the previous month and, in line with the recent trend, lower than expected. The core CPI inflation rate declined to 5.1% from the previous month's 5.7%, again lower than predictions. Looking ahead, using the interest rate path implied by financial markets the BoE expects CPI inflation to continue falling slowly, but taking until early 2025 to reach the 2% target before dropping below target during the second half 2025 and into 2026.
- 2.5 ONS figures showed the UK economy contracted by 0.1% between July and September 2023. The BoE forecasts that higher interest rates will constrain GDP growth, which will remain weak over the entire forecast horizon.
- 2.6 **Credit outlook:** Moody's revised its outlook on the UK sovereign to stable from negative to reflect its view of restored political predictability following the volatility after the 2022 mini-budget. Moody's also affirmed the Aa3 rating in recognition of the UK's economic resilience and strong institutional framework.
- 2.7 Following its rating action on the UK sovereign, Moody's revised the outlook on five UK banks to stable from negative and then followed this by the same action on five rated local authorities. However, within the same update the long-term ratings of those five local authorities were downgraded.
- 2.8 There remain competing tensions in the banking sector, on one side from higher interest rates boosting net income and profitability against another of a weakening economic outlook and likely recessions that increase the possibility of a deterioration in the quality of banks' assets. 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 **Interest rate forecast (December 2023):** Although UK inflation and wage growth remain elevated, the Council's treasury management adviser Arlingclose forecasts that Bank Rate has peaked at 5.25%. The Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee will start reducing rates in 2024 to stimulate the UK economy but will be reluctant to do so until it is sure there will be no lingering second-round effects. Arlingclose sees rate cuts from Q3 2024 to a low of around 3% by early-mid 2026.
- 3.2 Arlingclose expects long-term gilt yields to be broadly stable at current levels (amid continued volatility), following the decline in yields towards the end of 2023, which reflects the expected lower medium-term path for Bank Rate. Yields will remain relatively higher than in the past, due to quantitative tightening and significant bond supply. As ever, there will undoubtedly be short-term volatility due to economic and political uncertainty and events.

Official Bank Rate	Curr ent	Dec-23	Mar-24	Jun-24	Sep-24	Dec-24	Mar-25	Jun-25	Sep-25	Dec-25	Mar-26	Jun-26	Sep-26
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Upside Risk	0.00	0.25	0.50	0.50	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	1.00	1.00
Central Case	5.25	5.25	5.25	5.25	5.00	4.75	4.25	4.00	3.75	3.50	3.25	3.00	3.00
Downside Risk	0.00	0.00	-0.25	-0.50	-0.75	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00

- 3.3 For the purpose of setting the 2024/25 budget, it has been assumed that new treasury investments will be made at an average rate of 4.50%, and that new short-term loans will be borrowed at an average rate of 5.50%.
- 3.4 Where investment income exceeds budget, e.g. from higher risk investments including pooled funds, or debt interest paid falls below budget, e.g. from cheap short-term borrowing, then an assessment of savings will be made with a view to transferring an appropriate amount to a treasury management reserve to cover the risk of capital losses or higher interest rates payable in future years. Transfers to reserves will be brought before the Policy and Resources Committee for approval.

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 £5 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 £57.5 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. Recently this has been funded from borrowing from other Local Authorities. There is also an option to borrow from Public Works Loans Board (PWLB), which is part of the Debt Management Office which is part of the Treasury. Borrowing from PWLB 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 could 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. Short-term interest rates are currently at a 15-year high but are expected to fall in the coming years and it is therefore likely to be more cost effective over the medium-term to either use internal resources, or to borrow short-term loans instead.
- 3.10 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 against the potential for incurring additional costs by deferring borrowing into future years when long-term borrowing rates are forecast to rise modestly. 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 2024/25 with a view to keeping future interest costs low, even if this causes additional cost in the short-term.
- 3.11 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.
- 3.12 The approved sources of long-term and short-term borrowing are:
- HM Treasury's PWLB Lending facility (formerly the Public Works Loan Board)
 - UK Infrastructure Bank Ltd
 - 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
 - Retail investors via a regulated peer-to-peer platform
 - UK Municipal Bonds Agency plc and other special purpose companies created to enable local authority bond issues.
- 3.13 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

- Similar Asset Based Finance

3.14 The Council has the following loan outstanding:

Lender	Amount (£ million)	Borrowing rate	Start Date of Loan	Maturity Date of loan	Duration
North Northamptonshire Council	5	4.30 %	27/02/2023	26/02/2024	12 months
Total	5				

Capital Programme

- 3.15 The capital program contains a number of projects that will need to be funded from borrowing. The anticipated breakdown of capital funding is detailed in Appendix I. The Director of Resources has delegation to make borrowing decision as and when required to ensure best value is obtained and risks are minimised.
- 3.16 Short-term and variable rate loans: These loans leave the Council 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.
- 3.17 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 2024-25.

Treasury Investment Strategy

- 3.18 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 ranged between £7.5 and £46.1 million with an average investment balance of £25 million. Levels are expected to be slightly lower in the forthcoming year, as capital projects require payment, as well as a reduction in passported government grant schemes.
- 3.19 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.
- 3.20 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.

- 3.21 The CIPFA Code doesn't permit local authorities to both borrow and invest long-term for cash flow management. But the Council may make long-term investments for treasury risk management purposes, including to manage interest risk by investing sums borrowed in advance for the capital programme for up to three years; to manage inflation risk by investing usable reserves in instruments whose value raises with inflation; and to manage price risk by adding diversification to the strategic pooled fund portfolio.
- 3.22 **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.
- 3.23 **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.
- 3.24 The Council could make use of the following counterparties 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 zero 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 in England. 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.

3.25 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) or other counterparties in table 4.1. The Head of Finance and Procurement 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.

3.26 Currently the Council makes no direct investments in equities or corporate bonds. If this changed in the year the Head of Finance and Procurement will ensure that investments are consistent with the Council's health and climate change objectives.

3.27 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.

3.28 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.

3.29 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.

3.30 When deteriorating financial market conditions affect the creditworthiness of all organisations, as happened in 2008, 2020 and 2022, 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.

3.31 The Council currently has the following Investments:

Counterparty	Average Rate %	Balance Invested at 30 November 2023 £'000
Invesco Money Market Fund	5.33	3,000
DWS (Deutsche) Money Market Fund	5.24	2,470
Goldman Sachs Money Market Fund	5.27	3,000
Aberdeen Standard Money Market Fund	5.25	3,000
Black Rock Money Market Fund	5.27	3,000
Morgan Stanley Money Market Fund	5.32	3,000
SSGA Money Market Fund	5.29	3,000
CCLA Property Fund	5.04	3,000
Total Investments		23,470

- 3.32 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.
- 3.33 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.
- 3.34 At 31 March 2023 the Council held £4.173 million of longstanding investments in 12 directly owned properties. These investments generated £0.2 million of investment income for the Council in 2022/23 after taking account of direct costs, representing a rate of return of 5.8%. No significant change in this Investment is anticipated in 2024/25.
- 3.35 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.
- 3.36 The loans made by the Council are shown below:

	31 March 2023
	£’000
Housing repair loans	1,748
Employee car loans	51
Other debtors	304
Total	2,103

- 3.37 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 2022/23 was £97,000. 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.
- 3.38 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.
- 3.39 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 **Approved counterparties:** 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

This table must be read in conjunction with the notes below.

* **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.
- 4.5 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. Embedded derivatives, including those present in pooled funds and forward starting transactions, will not be subject to this policy, although the risks they present will be managed in line with the overall treasury risk management strategy.
- 4.6 The Head of Finance and Procurement ensures that any commercial deals meet the regulatory requirements and the CIPFA prudential framework.

Treasury Adviser

- 4.7 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.
- 4.8 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

Alternative	Impact on income and expenditure	Impact on risk management
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
Borrow additional sums at long-term fixed interest rates	Debt interest costs will rise; this is unlikely to be 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
Reduce level of borrowing	Saving on debt interest is likely to exceed lost investment income	Reduced investment balance leading to a lower impact in the event of a default; however, long-term interest 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 2024/25 is £(121,000).
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

Issue	Implications
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

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	2023/24 Revised	2024/25 Estimate	2025/26 Estimate	2026/27 Estimate
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Capital Financing Requirements	60,521	72,390	77,412	76,445
Gross External Debt (incl leases)	(10,000)	(30,500)	(40,500)	(50,500)
Internal Borrowing	50,521	41,890	36,912	25,945

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 2024/25 Budget Report to Policy and Resources Committee.)

Capital Expenditure and Financing	2023/24 Revised	2024/25 Estimate	2025/26 Estimate	2026/27 Estimate
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Total Expenditure	33,185	31,384	10,625	4,935
Section 106 Contribution	110	0	0	0
Grants	14,015	16,469	2,725	2,725
Capital receipts	2,463	0	0	0
Reserves	1,910	871	350	460
Borrowing	14,687	14,044	7,550	1,750
Total Financing	33,185	31,384	10,625	4,935

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	2023/24 Revised	2024/25 Estimate	2025/26 Estimate	2026/27 Estimate
General Fund Total	5.16%	6.85%	6.59%	6.36%

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	2023/24 Revised	2024/25 Estimate	2025/26 Estimate	2026/27 Estimate
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Borrowing	60,000	55,000	55,000	50,000
Other long-term liabilities	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500
Total	62,500	57,500	57,500	52,500

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 leases and other liabilities that are not borrowing but form part of the Council's debt.

Operational Boundary	2023/24 Revised £'000	2024/25 Estimate £'000	2025/26 Estimate £'000	2026/27 Estimate £'000
Borrowing	40,000	45,000	45,000	40,000
Other long-term liabilities	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
Total Operational Boundary	41,000	46,000	46,000	41,000

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	£(180,000)
Upper limit on one-year revenue impact of a 1% <u>fall</u> in interest rates	£180,000

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 2024/25 %	Upper Limit for 2024/25 %
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

Time period starts on the first day of each financial year. The maturity date of borrowing is the earliest date on which the lender can demand repayment.

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	2024/25 Estimate £'000	2025/26 Estimate £'000	2026/27 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.

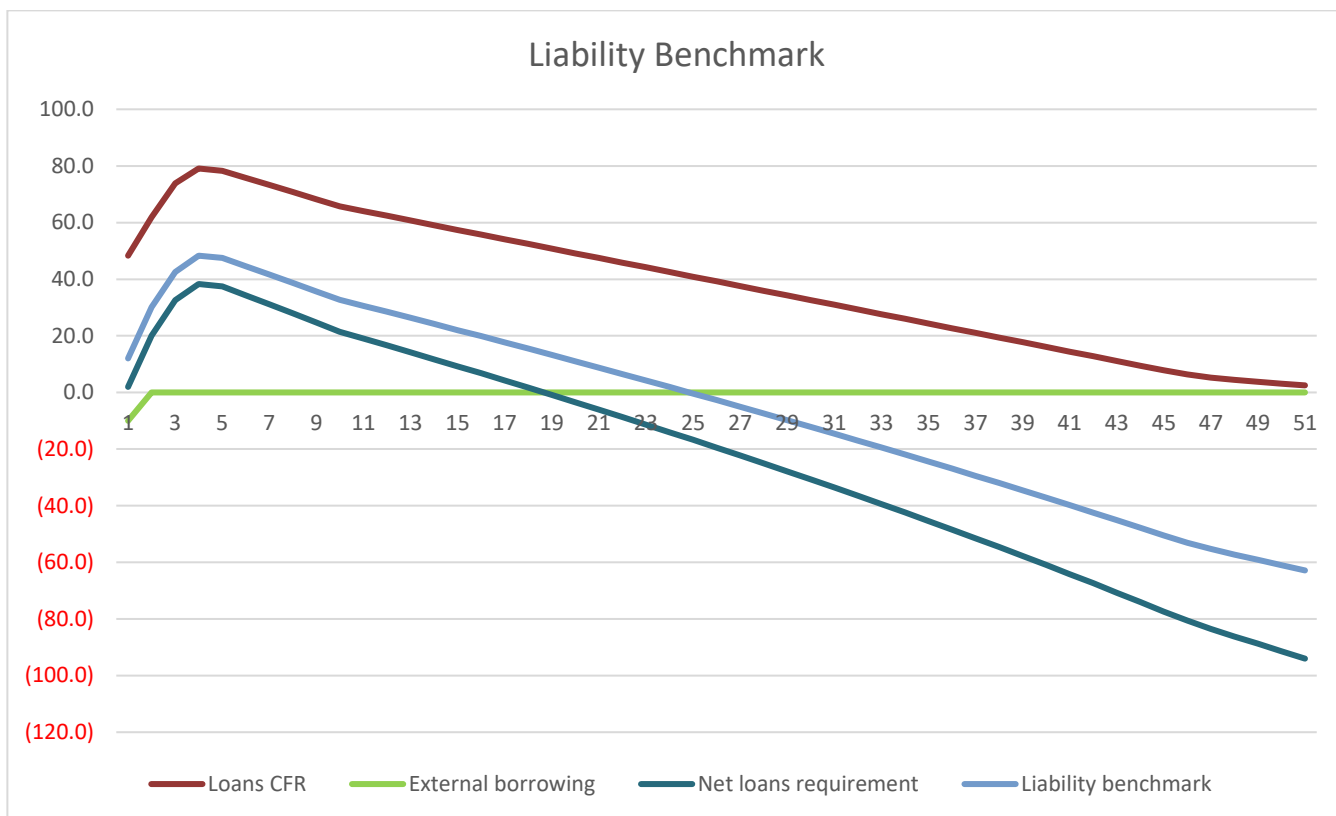
The liability benchmark is an important tool to help establish whether the Council is likely to be a long-term borrower or long-term investor in the future, and so shape its strategic focus and decision making. The liability benchmark itself represents an estimate of the cumulative amount of external 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.

Prudential Indicator: Liability benchmark

	31.3.23 Actual £m	31.3.24 Estimate £m	31.3.25 Forecast £m	31.3.26 Forecast £m	31.3.27 Forecast £m
Loans CFR	48.3	61.9	73.9	79.1	78.3
Less: Balance sheet resources	(46.3)	(41.8)	(41.3)	(40.8)	(40.8)
Net loans requirement	2.0	20.1	32.6	38.3	37.5
Plus: Liquidity allowance	10	10	10	10	10
Liability benchmark	12	30.1	42.6	48.3	47.5

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



Council: 21 February 2024

Recommendations for Approval

Council is asked to note the following recommendations:

Policy and Resources Committee 29 November 2023 and the amendment to recommendation (3) and as amended at the Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on 7 February 2024.

Minute No. 445 – Constitution Amendment: Various

- (1) That amendments 1 and 4 be recommended to Council for incorporation into the Constitution.***
- (2) That amendment 2 be referred back to the Constitution Working Group.***
- (3) That amendment 3 be recommended to Council for incorporation into the Constitution subject to the following amendment to 2.4.3.4: “The Licensing Committee shall have a General Licensing Sub-Committee comprising 3 members of the Council who have received training on the relevant areas of licensing law and 2.4.3.4. The Licensing Act Sub-Committee comprising 3 members of the Licensing Committee who have received training on the relevant areas of licensing law”.***

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