



Agenda

Policy and Resources Committee Meeting

Date: Wednesday, 29 November 2023
Time 7.00 pm
Venue: Council Chamber, Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, ME10 3HT*

Membership:

Councillors Mike Baldock (Vice-Chair), Monique Bonney, Lloyd Bowen, Derek Carnell, Tim Gibson (Chair), Angela Harrison, Mike Henderson, James Hunt, Mark Last, Rich Lehmann, Richard Palmer, Julien Speed, Mike Whiting, Ashley Wise and Dolley Wooster

Quorum = 5

Pages

Information about this meeting

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- (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 18 October 2023 (Minute Nos. 356 – 372) as a correct records.

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.

Part A Reports for Recommendation to Council

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Part B Reports for Decision by the Policy and Resources Committee

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14.	Membership of KCC Enhanced Bus Partnership - to follow To agree the Member nominations made by the Planning and Transportation Policy Working Group on 23 November 2023	
15.	South Thames Gateway Building Control Business Plan	159 - 162
16.	Exclusion of the Press and Public To decide whether to pass the resolution set out below in respect of the following items: That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3. 3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).	
17.	South Thames Building Gateway Control Business Plan - Exempt Appendix I	163 - 190

Issued on Tuesday, 21 November 2023

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

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

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Agenda Item

Policy and Resources Committee	
Meeting Date	29 November 2023
Report Title	Constitution amendment: Various
EMT Lead	Robin Harris – Monitoring Officer
Head of Service	
Lead Officer	
Classification	Open
Recommendations	Policy and Resources committee is asked to: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Agree the amendments at Appendix I and recommend to council their incorporation into the constitution.2. With regard to amendment 3 in Appendix I Committee to consider whether a wider review of member training should be undertaken.

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report introduces a number of changes to the constitution to correct errors, provide clarity and generally improve the document. The report asks to Policy and Resources committee to recommend the amendments to council for adoption.

2 Background

- 2.1 Council voted unanimously in October 2021 to move to a committee system of governance from the 2022/23 municipal year. At the same meeting, council requested the cross-party working group which had been established to consider this governance change to continue its work in overseeing the detail of the new constitution. Following the election in May 2023 there are changes in membership of the working group, which now comprises Cllrs Baldock (chair), Palmer, Gibson, Harrison, Bowen, Whiting, Perkin and Lehmann.
- 2.2 The group has now met twice, on a monthly basis and will continue to meet monthly until January 2024 when the frequency of meetings will be reviewed with regard to the committee workflow.
- 2.3 It is inevitable when setting out to draft a new constitution that once adopted, over time, errors will be noted and the opportunity arises to put in place improvements and learnings. The amendments proposed, as set out in Appendix I have been raised as issues because they are either in error, could have greater clarity, make decisions more robust and improve efficiency.

3 Proposals

- 3.1 The constitution working group reviewed the proposals in appendix I and were satisfied that the amendments to the constitution should be made.
- 3.2 Appendix 1 details the proposals and the reasons for the proposal.
- 3.3 The Policy and Resources committee is now **recommended** to agree the proposed amendments at Appendix I and recommend them to council for adoption into the constitution.
- 3.4 With regard to amendment 3 it was noted by the CWG that there are numerous references to Member training in the Constitution and that while the identified matter could be simply corrected, it was appropriate to get a steer from the Committee on how the wider issue of member training should be approached.

4 Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

- 4.1 The Committee could not make the proposed amendments, but this is not recommended as errors would remain and improvements would not be made.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 The cross-party constitution working group has given detailed consideration to the proposed amendments set out at Appendix I. Specific points discussed and agreed by the group are highlighted in Section 3 above. Consultation has also taken place with the officers, who are responsible for administering the work in the areas affected.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	Adoption of improvements to the constitution and the removal of errors support the fourth corporate priority of renewing local democracy and making the council fit for the future.
Financial, Resource and Property	No direct implications identified at this stage.
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	The Council is required to have a constitution.
Crime and Disorder	No direct implications identified at this stage.

Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	
Health and Wellbeing	
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	
Risk Management and Health and Safety	
Equality and Diversity	
Privacy and Data Protection	

7 Appendices

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

8 Background Papers

- 8.1 There are no background papers

Amendment 1

P&R Committee request

At the July meeting of the P&R Committee the following point was raised in discussion:

- needed to ensure that Policy and Resources Committee meetings were in-line with the relevant quarters to enable Members to consider the most up-to-date information.

The minuted decision was this:

(6) That the Constitution Working Group looked at what information Members received in relation to budgets and when it was received.

The pertinent paragraph of the constitution relating to budget information is this:

A2.2 A summary of such variations from budgeted amounts, whether or not previously reported, shall be included within the monthly reports to Strategic Management Team and quarterly reports to Policy and Resources Committee. This summary would include income and expenditure programmed for the remainder of the financial year, effectively presenting an updated outturn for the financial year. The Strategic Management Team would advise of any remedial action required to adjust the overall budget to bring it back in line with the original budget, subject to any Policy and Resources Committee approval to vary the original budget.

It is proposed that the word quarterly is replaced with biannual and so the text would read as follows:

A2.2 A summary of such variations from budgeted amounts, whether or not previously reported, shall be included within the monthly reports to **Strategic** Management Team and **quarterly twice yearly** reports to Policy and Resources Committee. This summary would include income and expenditure programmed for the remainder of the financial year, effectively presenting an updated outturn for the financial year. The **Strategic** Management Team would advise of any remedial action required to adjust the overall budget to bring it back in line with the original budget, subject to any Policy and Resources Committee approval to vary the original budget.

Reason:

This would mean that the historic quarterly reports no longer come to committee after the new budget has been set. This is preferable. The timing of the reports is an operational matter to be agreed with the Committee Chair by the relevant officers.

Amendment 2

P&R Committee request

At the July meeting of the P&R Committee the following point was raised in discussion:

- the Constitution Working Group should consider whether it was necessary that items for noting were considered by the relevant committee or just circulated for information; and...

This arises from the commentary in the peer review that too many matters / reports go to committees for noting.

There is no relevant provision in the Constitution for the noting of reports or the treatment of the same. This appears to have arisen as a matter of practice.

It is therefore proposed to insert into the constitution after:

2.3 Service Committees

2.3.1.2 All of the service committees shall exercise the following functions within their areas of responsibility:

...

vi. to appoint and oversee the work of any subcommittees.

Proposal:

vii. To note reports presented to the committee. The committee Chairman has discretion, in consultation with the relevant officers to determine whether a report for noting by the committee is required, or if the information may be provided in another way, for example by circulation to all members via the update. Where matters are not reported to committee then a list of such matters should be provided to the next meeting of that committee. Where matters for noting are circulated to all members then a list of such matters should be provided to the next full council meeting.

Reason:

To respond to commentary in the peer review and provide a pragmatic and flexible approach to the dissemination of information to members.

Amendment 3

Councillor request in respect of member training

Councillors must be trained to sit on Audit Committee and Licensing Committee. Under the Licensing Committee, you do need to be trained to sit on a sub-committee (hearing panel), but the Committee itself deals with policy. So, why would you need to be trained?

Proposal:

2.4.3.1 The Licensing Committee shall comprise of 15 members of the Council. ~~who have received appropriate training on licensing.~~

...

2.4.3.4 The Licensing Committee shall have ~~a~~ Licensing Act Sub-committees and ~~a~~ General Licensing Sub-committees each comprised of 3 members of the Licensing Committee ~~who have received training on the relevant areas of licensing law.~~

Reason:

Reflecting the position that training is required to sit on a sub-committee hearing panel, but not on the main committee.

Amendment 4

Contract standing orders:

We would to make a change to Contract Standing Orders. CSOs currently require financial appraisals to be undertaken annually on all contracts over £30k (including VAT), we would like to change this to £120k (including VAT).

Proposal: (Proposed amendment in red)

3.6.7.6 Financial appraisals shall be carried out by Finance and Procurement on all contracts over £30,000 (including VAT) prior to award. Contracts over £120,000 (including VAT) shall also have a financial appraisal undertaken by Finance and Procurement annually on or near the anniversary date of the contract award date.

Reason:

This is a proportionate step which brings annual appraisals in line with our other procurement thresholds.

Policy and Resources Committee	
Meeting date	29 November 2023
Report Title	Budget 2024/25 and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) Forecasts
EMT Lead	Lisa Fillery, Director of Resources
Head of Service	Claire Stanbury, Head of Finance and Procurement
Lead Officer	Claire Stanbury, Head of Finance and Procurement
Classification	Open
Recommendations	<p>The Policy and Resources Committee is asked to;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Note the draft 2024/25 revenue and capital budget forecasts; 2. Note the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) projections; 3. Note the proposals for the fees and charges increases; 4. Approve the proposed budget consultation.

1. Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the draft 2024/25 revenue and capital budgets and the draft Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). The MTFS is a strategic document, supporting delivery of the Corporate Plan outcomes and helping to ensure a focus on the Council's medium term budget position. It establishes how the Council's priorities will be achieved by setting out the framework within which resources are available over the medium term and the financial challenges facing the Council in terms of funding gaps. The context within which these budget forecasts is being made is as complex as it has ever been with continuing pressure around the Net Zero agenda, the ongoing inflationary pressures which are feeding into a cost-of-living crisis, political turmoil nationally, conflict in Ukraine and the Middle East and an uncertain future for local government funding, all of which make forecasting challenging.
- 1.2 The updated high level funding forecasts in this strategy build on previous figures from the 2023/24 budget setting exercise, which were forecasting future year deficits in the region of £2.6m in 2024/25 (excluding the uncertainty around government grant funding of £1.7m). The updated budget gap now differs from this peaking at £2.2m (again excluding government grants) in 2026/27, in the main this is due to economic inflationary pressures, delays to funding reviews and some key service pressures, all of which are impacting on the medium term projections (Appendix 1).

Updated funding forecasts	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Base budget & reserve contributions	23,942	25,111	25,603	27,216	27,591
Revenue Support Grant (RSG)	(317)	(317)	(317)	(317)	(317)
Business Rates	(10,122)	(10,736)	(11,004)	(11,279)	(11,279)
New Homes Bonus	(1,103)	0	0	0	0
Services Grant	(174)	0	0	0	0
Funding Guarantee Grant	(497)	0	0	0	0
Uncertain Government Grants	0	(1,774)	(1,774)	(1,774)	(1,774)
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)	(10,069)	(10,371)	(10,789)	(11,223)
Deficit	0	1,360	1,282	2,202	2,143

- 1.3 A detailed budget review has taken place over previous months to identify efficiencies and additional income to help support frontline services and to balance the Council's

financial position. For next year this totals around £3.5m (Appendix 2) and is supported by various increases to fees and charges (Appendix 4), service reviews, and savings agreed as part of the 2023/24 Medium Term Financial Plan. There is also a planned use of Business Rate income within the Kent Pool Growth Fund, to recharge costs that meet the criteria of the pooled fund. Based on current forecasts this still leaves a deficit of £1.360m which will need to be supported from reserves if further savings cannot be identified. Based on the projections above and the spending estimates and use of reserves in the current year the earmarked reserves are forecast to be insufficient to address any budget gap after 2026/27.

1.4 The capital spending projections for future years (Appendix 3) are included and assume borrowing of £38m between 2023/24 and 2027/28. The main borrowing will be in relation to Rainbow homes, purchase of the waste fleet, and purchase of properties to use for temporary accommodation. However, with the recent instability of the financial markets and increases to borrowing costs it will be necessary to fundamentally review schemes with borrowing requirements to ensure they remain affordable and still deliver the anticipated benefits. In summary the key messages are as follows;

- Estimated budget gap of £1.360m 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.

2. Proposals

- 2.1 Given the timing of this report this is an interim step in the development of fully balanced budget proposals. The updated Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) is attached at Appendix 1. It currently shows a gap of £1.360m which needs to be addressed to balance the 2024/25 budget. To reduce the gap to this level, it is currently proposed to use £855k from Business Rates Growth Fund reserve.
- 2.2 The savings and efficiencies totalling £3.5m that the Council has identified to help support the 2024/25 budget can be found within Appendix 2, (£1.25m of these savings were agreed as part of the budget process for 2023/24). The draft capital budget is included within Appendix 3 while the fees and charges proposals for next year are covered by Appendix 4. Appendix 5 includes a risk assessment for next year's budget.
- 2.3 The MTFS and budget forecasts include the latest information available. It should however be noted that some of the assumptions that have currently been made will not be confirmed until the Provisional Settlement is announced, the date of which is currently anticipated to be during the week commencing 18 December 2023.

3. Alternative Options

- 3.1 Do nothing – This is not recommended as the Council is legally required to set a balanced budget. A further budget report will be submitted to Policy & Resources and Council in February 2024.

4. Consultation undertaken or proposed

- 4.1 Formal consultation of the proposed budget will be undertaken. The Budget proposals contained in this report will be made available for comment on the Council's website from 30 November to 3 January.

5. 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.

6. Appendices

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

- Appendix 1: Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) – General Fund Summary Forecasts
- Appendix 1a: MTFS General Fund Summary Forecasts
- Appendix 2: Savings Summary
- Appendix 3: Capital Programme
- Appendix 4: Fees and Charges
- Appendix 5: Risk Assessment

7. Background papers

7.1 None.

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

Swale Borough Council

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2. Corporate Plan
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4. Global and national Pressures
5. Local Pressures
6. Inflation
7. Funding changes
8. Income
9. Links to other strategies
10. Looking forward
11. Closing the budget gap
12. Risk assessment
13. Conclusions

Tables and Charts

- Chart 1: Inflation Forecasts November 2023
- Chart 2: New Homes Bonus (NHB) Payments
- Chart 3: Council Tax Shares
- Chart 4: Reserve Balance Projections
- Chart 5: Capital Programme 2024/25
- Chart 6: Capital Programme Funding 2024/25
- Chart 7: Capital Programme Forecast 2023/24 to 2027/28

- 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

- Appendix 1: Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) – General Fund Summary Forecasts
- Appendix 2: Savings Summary
- Appendix 3: Capital Programme
- Appendix 4: Fees and Charges
- Appendix 5: Risk Assessment

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, we;

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

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 now seems more likely than ever, with the funding reforms 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 last year's deficit being £0.352m and current forecasts for the end of this financial year at c£1m. Officers are working hard to reduce the requirement for temporary accommodation with the number of households in TA as at the end of October 2023 being 358 compared to 444 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. Earlier this month 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 At the present time the levy for 2023/24 has been increased by 5% to £1m, there is however a risk that there will be a higher inflationary factor added by the Board and 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.
- 5.12 Despite initial acknowledgement that the current funding process for drainage levies puts undue pressure on drainage board levy collection authorities, the government are not committing to ongoing support for those local authorities affected. 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

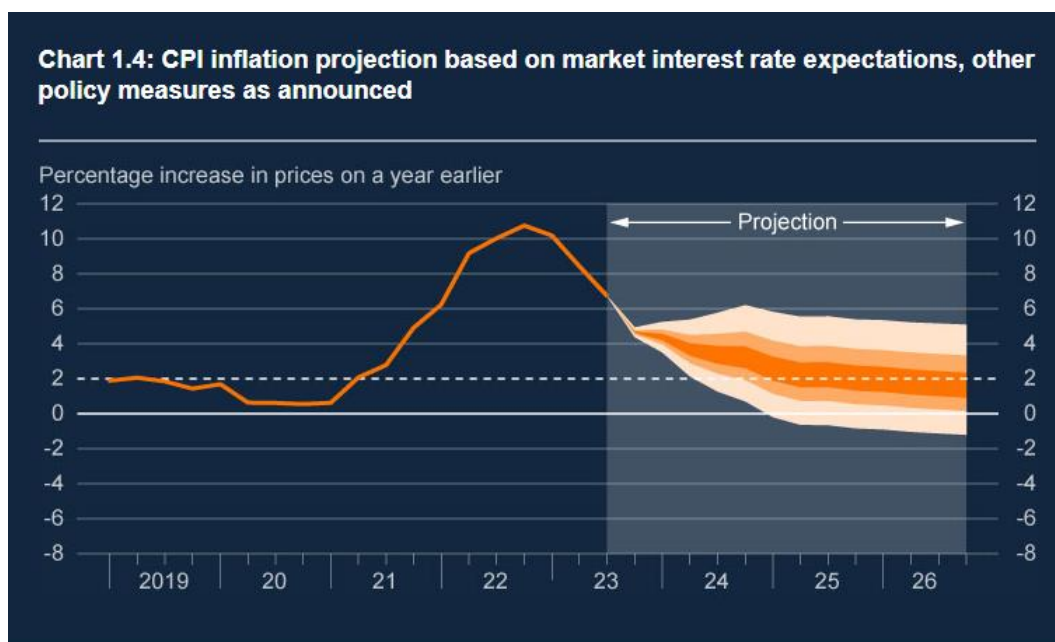
- 5.13 We recognise that our staff are our most important resource at the heart of the services we provide. We currently have around 260 full time equivalent posts and 300 actual members of staff. Our pay bill is our most significant area of direct spend and stands at £14.4m including pension contributions 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 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 will run until 31 December 2023, with the change made permanent on 1 January 2024 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 is projected to fall to around 4.5% by the end of this year and 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 progress the MTFP will be 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 is expected to deliver 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.

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 (there is no further update on this position at this stage and we are assuming this increase will remain in place). Although it has not yet been announced at the present time we are assuming that the £5 threshold will also still apply

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 £10.069m for 2024/25, which is growth of £386k 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 last year allowed the additional 1% increase nothing has yet been announced in relation to the £5 cash limit. There remains speculation that the £5 cash limit could increase to perhaps £10 but this has not yet been confirmed.

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	385,748	
3.85%	7.50	473,109	87,361
5.12%	10.00	598,033	124,924

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 is currently expected to be published by 21 December. 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 £10.7m for 2024/25.
- 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.

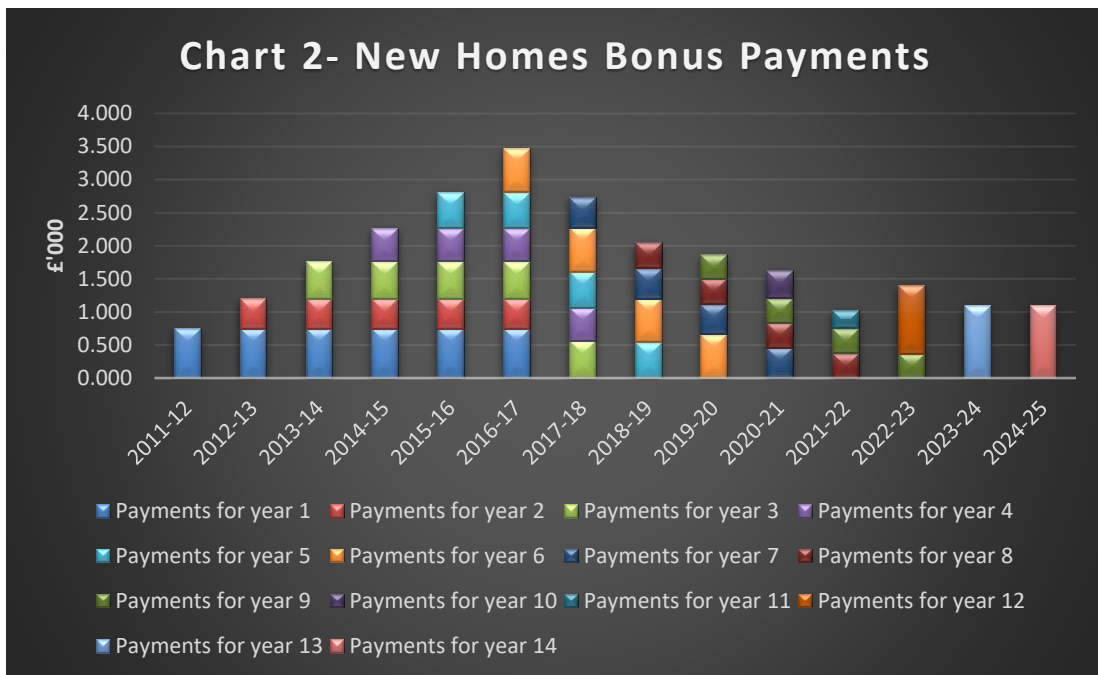
Kent Business Rates Pooling Arrangements

- 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 is very uncertain as last year's settlement confirmed an additional one year agreement only for 2023/24. The current budget assumes that the grant will be awarded as the same level for 2024/25, however this imposes a risk of an increased budget gap of £1.1m if that is not the case. The chart below shows the current projections, but these won't be confirmed until the Settlement announcements at the end of the year.

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

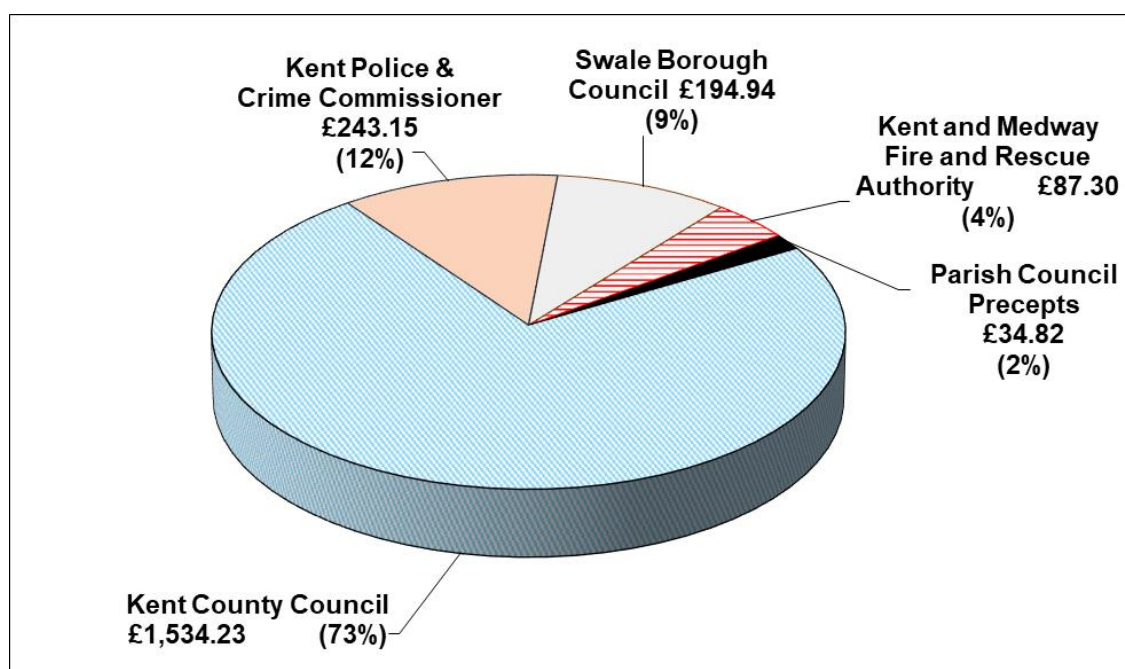


Council Tax

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

8.10 The charge on a Band D property which is retained by Swale is currently £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 £386k (including tax base growth assumptions) over the 2023/24 income levels.

8.11 Chart 3 – Council Tax split 2023/24



8.12 Within the MTFs, it is assumed that Swale will increase its precept by 2.99% 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	50,170.19	50,671.89	51,178.61	51,690.40
Band D Council Tax £	£ 200.70	£ 206.64	£ 212.76	£ 219.06
Council Tax	£10.069m	£10.471m	£10.889m	£11.323m

Fees and charges

8.13 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.

8.14 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 \(item 12 pg 135\)](#). 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 approved by Full Council in March 2018 is currently being reviewed with a draft Strategy due to be considered by Regeneration and Property Committee on 14 November 2023 , the draft 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 (This excludes the uncertain government grant funding allocations and the impact of business rates reset and could therefore increase to £4.7m).

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

Updated funding forecasts	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
November 2023	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Internal Drainage Board Levy	951	999	1,048	1,100	1,100
Base budget & reserve contributions	22,991	24,112	24,555	26,116	26,491
Revenue Support Grant (RSG)	(317)	(317)	(317)	(317)	(317)
Business Rates	(10,122)	(10,736)	(11,004)	(11,279)	(11,279)
New Homes Bonus	(1,103)	0	0	0	0
Services Grant	(174)	0	0	0	0
Funding Guarantee Grant	(497)	0	0	0	0
Uncertain Government Grants	0	(1,774)	(1,774)	(1,774)	(1,774)
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)	(10,069)	(10,371)	(10,789)	(11,223)
Forecast Deficit	0	1,360	1,282	2,202	2,143

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 (£3.5m) can be found within Appendix 2.

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

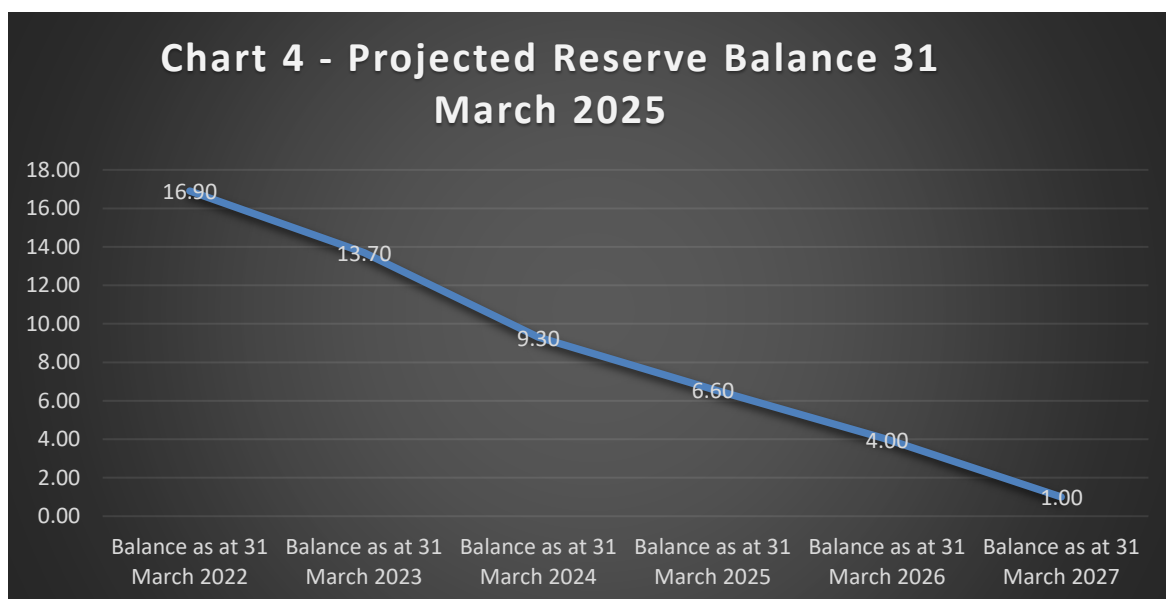
10.6 The Council holds several 'usable' reserves both for revenue and capital purposes which fall within one of the following categories:

- 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.

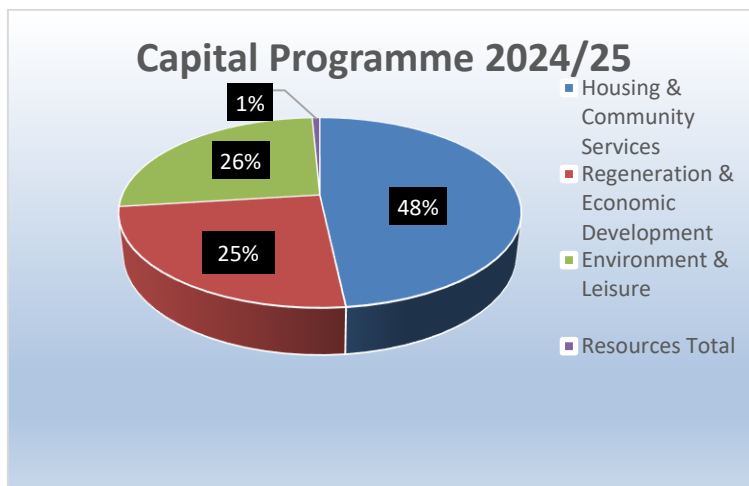
- 10.8 As part of setting the budget each year the adequacy of all reserves is assessed along with the optimum level of General Reserve that we should hold. The optimum level of the General Reserve considers a risk assessment of the budget and the context within which it has been prepared.
- 10.9 *Earmarked 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.



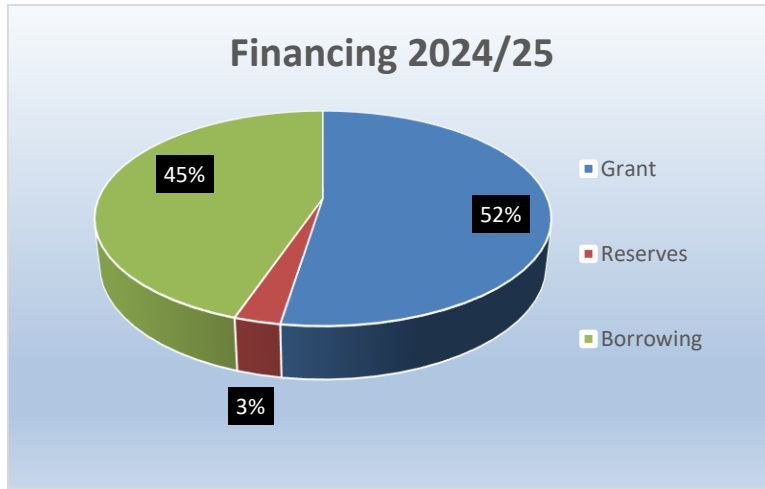
Capital

- 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.

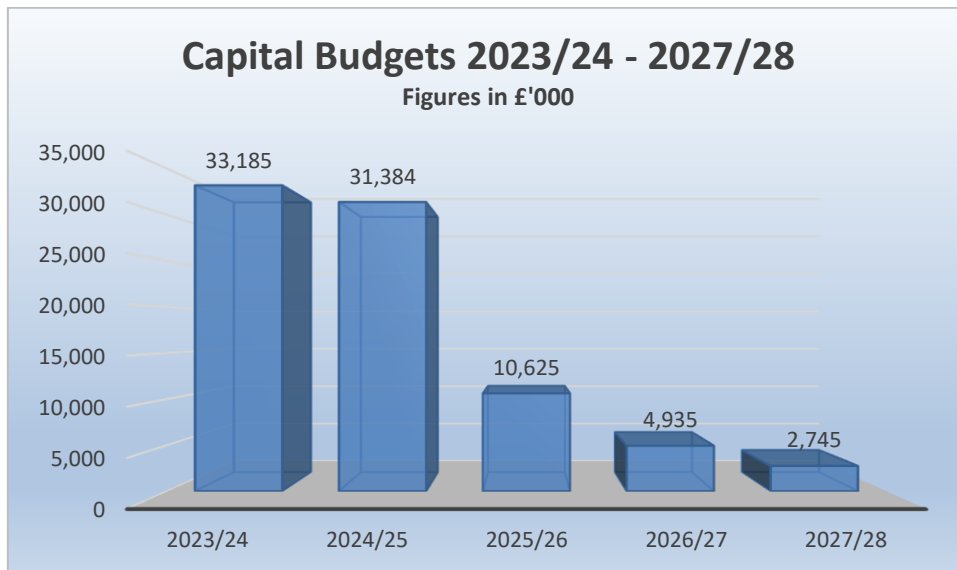
10.18 Chart 5 – Capital Programme 2024/25



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 £3.5m (Appendix 2), however based on current forecasts this still leaves a total deficit of £1.3m 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 consulting the draft budget proposals until January 2024.

- 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 has been slightly delayed and is now proposed for December 2023. The proposals are intended to increase major and minor application fees by 35% and 25% respectively.
- 11.7 During 2023/24 the council produced a Parking Policy which is currently out to public consultation following Community Committee on 31 October. 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 4.

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 draft 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, 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 Provisional Settlement is announced, the date of which is currently anticipated week commencing 18 December 2023.
- 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 Provisional Settlement is announced week commencing 18 December 2023.
- 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 £ 3.5m (Appendix 2), and are supported by a number of increases to fees and charges (Appendix 4), however based on current forecasts this still leaves a deficit of £1.3m 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 5.
- 12.9 At the current time the key messages are as follows;
- Estimated budget gap of £1.3m 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.

App 1 – Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) – General Fund Summary Forecasts
App 2 – Savings Summary
App 3 – Capital Programme
App 4 – Fees and charges
App 5 – Risk Assessment

Appendix 1 - Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) – General Fund Summary Forecasts					
Service	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Chief Executive	568	568	568	568	568
Policy & Communications	332	332	332	332	332
Democratic Services & Information Governance	1,263	1,263	1,263	1,263	1,263
Housing & Community	4,806	4,540	4,340	4,140	4,140
Planning	680	381	311	251	191
Environment & Leisure	8,691	9,891	9,658	10,258	9,993
Regeneration & Economic Development	(318)	(524)	(674)	(725)	(725)
Finance & Procurement	986	953	953	953	953
Revenues & Benefits	580	486	486	486	486
MKS Environmental Health	551	577	599	622	622
MKS Information Technology	856	911	964	1,119	1,119
MKS Internal Audit	176	168	175	182	182
MKS Human Resources	729	753	773	794	794
MKS Legal	445	469	491	514	514
Corporate Overheads & Capital Financing	2,586	2,413	2,387	2,381	2,381
Collection Fund Surplus/Deficit	45	45	45	45	45
Pay & Inflation	0	938	1,935	2,943	3,643
Fees & Charges (various services)	0	(66)	(66)	(66)	(66)
Sub Total Base Budget	22,976	24,097	24,540	26,060	26,435
Drainage Board	951	999	1,048	1,100	1,100
Contribution to Reserves	15	15	15	56	56
Uncertain Government Grants	0	(1,774)	(1,774)	(1,774)	(1,774)
Use of Business Rates Pool Reserve	0	(855)	(855)	(855)	(855)
Cumulative Savings Required	(2,045)	(1,360)	(1,282)	(2,202)	(2,143)
Grants					
Revenue Support Grant	(317)	(317)	(317)	(317)	(317)
Business Rates - Gross	(10,122)	(10,736)	(11,004)	(11,279)	(11,279)
New Homes Bonus	(1,103)	0	0	0	0
Services Grant	(174)	0	0	0	0
Funding Guarantee Grant	(497)	0	0	0	0
Council Tax requirement	9,684	10,069	10,371	10,789	11,223
Tax Base	49,673.46	50,170.19	50,671.89	51,178.61	51,690.40
Council Tax £	194.94	200.70	206.64	212.76	219.06
Council Tax increase %	3.00%	2.95%	2.96%	2.96%	2.96%
Council Tax increase £	5.67	5.76	5.94	6.12	6.30
Tax Base increase %	1.50%	1.00%	1.00%	1.00%	1.00%
Annual savings required	(2,045)	(1,360)	78	(920)	59

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Saving Summary November 2023		2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
Savings as per 2023/24 MTFP	Agreed Feb 2023	(1,250,850)	(420,000)	(60,000)	0
Corporate Overheads & Capital Financing	Capital financing review	(36,000)	0	0	0
Corporate Overheads & Capital Financing	Insurance Contract reprovision	(100,000)	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
Environment & Leisure	Attended toilets	(50,000)	(100,000)	0	0
Environment & Leisure	Car park income	(331,000)	0	0	0
Environment & Leisure	Garden waste	(71,000)	0	0	0
Environment & Leisure	Grounds Maintenance	0	(175,000)	0	0
Environment & Leisure	Street Cleansing Contract	0	(200,000)	0	0
Environment & Leisure	Waste Contract - updated Assumptions	(250,000)	0	0	0
Fees & Charges	Fees & Charges	(172,673)	(70,000)	(60,000)	(60,000)
Finance & Procurement	Service Reconfiguration	(40,000)	0	0	0
Housing & Community	Operational Efficiencies	(10,000)	0	0	0
Housing & Community	External Grant Review	(66,000)	0	0	0
MKS Information Technology	Software savings	(8,300)	0	0	0
MKS Internal Audit	Efficiency and service review	(17,700)	0	0	0
Regeneration & Economic Development	Building control operational efficiencies	(25,000)	0	0	0
Regeneration & Economic Development	Property Rents	(66,000)	(113,000)	0	0
Business Rates Pool Reserve	Business Rates Pool Reserve	(854,830)	0	0	0
Business Rates - Gross	Inflationary increase in business rates	0	(268,000)	(275,000)	0
Savings Total		(3,554,353)	(1,346,000)	(395,000)	(60,000)

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Scheme	Scheme			Previous		2023/24 Budget			2024/25 Budget		
	Spend £'000	Income £'000	Net £'000	Spend £'000	Income £'000	Spend £'000	Income £'000	Net £'000	Spend £'000	Income £'000	Net £'000
CCTV Replacement	60	(60)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Disabled Facilities Grants	Ongoing programme			0	0	6,103	(6,103)	0	2,725	(2,725)	0
Local Housing Company	23,250	(1,373)	21,877	187	(155)	5,263	(469)	4,794	8,000	(250)	7,750
Dolphin Barge Museum & Skatepark	104	(104)	0	52	(52)	52	(52)	0	0	0	0
Forstal Community Association	65	(65)	0	0	0	65	(65)	0	0	0	0
Purchase of Temporary Accommodation	11,000	(437)	10,563	0	0	4,400	(131)	4,269	6,600	(306)	6,294
Local Authority Housing Fund (Bridging)	464	(464)	0	0	0	139	(139)	0	325	(325)	0
Housing & Community Services	34,943	(2,504)	32,440	239	(207)	16,022	(6,959)	9,063	17,650	(3,606)	14,044
Faversham Creek Basin Regeneration	200	(200)	0	0	0	200	(200)	0	0	0	0
High Streets	584	(584)	0	468	(468)	116	(116)	0	0	0	0
St Micheal's Church Boundary Wall	135	(135)	0	70	(70)	66	(66)	0	0	0	0
Swale House Refurbishment	2,100	0	2,100	1,818	0	282	0	282	0	0	0
Rural England Prosperity Projects	503	(503)	0	0	0	126	(126)	0	377	(377)	0
UKSPF	186	(186)	0	0	0	37	(37)	0	149	(149)	0
Levelling Up Scheme	20,509	(20,445)	64	64	0	7,349	(7,349)	0	13,096	(13,096)	0
Wayfinding Signage - Faversham	49	(49)	0	9	(9)	40	(40)	0	0	0	0
Regeneration & Economic Development	24,266	(22,102)	2,164	2,429	(547)	8,215	(7,933)	282	13,622	(13,622)	0
Waste Vehicle Fleet	7,035	(2,000)	5,035	0	0	7,035	(2,000)	5,035	0	0	0
Beach Huts	143	(143)	0	0	0	143	(143)	0	0	0	0
Coach Parking	35	(35)	0	0	0	35	(35)	0	0	0	0
Gunpowder Works Oare Faversham	30	(30)	0	0	0	30	(30)	0	0	0	0
Sheerness Public Toilets	120	(120)	0	0	0	120	(120)	0	0	0	0
Barton's Point Drainage	70	(70)	0	20	(20)	50	(50)	0	0	0	0
Leisure Centre Improvements	287	0	287	0	0	287	0	287	0	0	0
Lynsted Churchyard Walls	120	(120)	0	0	0	120	(120)	0	0	0	0
Open Spaces Play Equipment & Improvements	Ongoing programme			0	0	513	(513)	0	0	0	0
The Forum Public Toilets	50	(50)	0	8	(8)	42	(42)	0	0	0	0
Barton's Point Shower & Toilets	180	(180)	0	0	0	180	(180)	0	0	0	0
Changing Places	150	(130)	20	0	0	150	(130)	20	0	0	0
Environment & Leisure	8,220	(2,878)	5,342	28	(28)	8,705	(3,364)	5,342	0	0	0
ICT Replacement	Ongoing programme			0	0	192	(192)	0	112	(112)	0
Council Chamber IT Equipment	50	(50)	0	0	0	50	(50)	0	0	0	0
Resources Total	50	(50)	0	0	0	242	(242)	0	112	(112)	0
Grand Total	67,479	(27,533)	39,946	2,696	(781)	33,185	(18,498)	14,687	31,384	(17,340)	14,044

Scheme	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
CCTV Replacement	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
Local Housing Company	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
Forstal Community Association	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Purchase of Temporary Accommodation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Local Authority Housing Fund (Bridging)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Housing & Community Services	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
High Streets	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
St Micheal's Church Boundary Wall	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Swale House Refurbishment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rural England Prosperity Projects	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
UKSPF	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Levelling Up Scheme	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wayfinding Signage - Faversham	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Regeneration & Economic Development	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Waste Vehicle Fleet	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Beach Huts	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Coach Parking	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Gunpowder Works Oare Faversham	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sheerness Public Toilets	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Barton's Point Drainage	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Leisure Centre Improvements	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lynsted Churchyard Walls	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Open Spaces Play Equipment & Improvements	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The Forum Public Toilets	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Barton's Point Shower & Toilets	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Changing Places	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Environment & Leisure	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ICT Replacement	100	(100)	0	150	(150)	0	20	(20)	0
Council Chamber IT Equipment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Resources Total	100	(100)	0	150	(150)	0	20	(20)	0
Grand Total	10,625	(3,075)	7,550	4,935	(3,185)	1,750	2,745	(2,745)	0

	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							
All Swale Borough Council car parks listed are chargeable at all times							
Short Stay (maximum stay 4 hours) between 7am and 7pm							
Fixed rate off-peak charge between 7pm and 7am							
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 between 7pm and 7am	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 motorcycles bays using cashless parking transactions only) - up to 4 hours	0.00	0.00	0.00	83.00	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 between the hours of 6am and midnight.							
Patrons of Light Cinema will have free parking all day on Sundays and after 6pm Mon-Sat. Ticket must be validated at the Light before payment at car park machine							
Up to 30 minutes	0.50	0.10	0.60	0.58	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 (Preferential rate for hotel guests (for 24 hours))	2.50	0.50	3.00	2.50	0.50	3.00	0.00%

	2023/24			2024/25			Increase
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	
	£	£	£	£	£	£	
Long Stay Car Parks							
Standard tariff 7am - 7pm. Fixed rate off-peak charge between 7pm and 7am							
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 between 7pm and 7am	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 between 7pm and 7am	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	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			

	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							
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							
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							
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							
The facilities are booked out to a school, club, association or an organisation representing affiliated clubs or constituent associations,							
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							
All bookings must be paid for in full before the start of the booking. You cannot change VAT exempt bookings once they have been							
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%
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	8.00	0.00	8.00	15.94%
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			

	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, Faversham & Murston	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)	0.00	0.00	0.00	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				
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				
Purchase of beach hut	Market price		Market price				
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							
On application (yellow lines and changes to existing orders)							
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%
On application (loading bays, single bays)							
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%
No objections received (yellow lines and changes to existing orders)							
All size consultations	575.00	0.00	575.00	620.00	0.00	620.00	7.83%
No objections received (loading bays, single bays)							
All size consultations	286.00	0.00	286.00	310.00	0.00	310.00	8.39%
Objections received (Joint Transportation Board report)							
All size consultations	286.00	0.00	286.00	310.00	0.00	310.00	8.39%
Progress/implement scheme (yellow lines and changes to existing orders)							
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%
Progress/implement scheme (loading bays, single bays)							
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	0.00%
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%
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 householder for domestic/household							
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	0.00%
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							
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							
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	
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	
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	

	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						
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						
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			

	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	
Analysis – Group B	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Analysis – audit monitoring	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	

	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		n/a		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	n/a
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							
New Application							
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%
Renewal of Application							
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							
New Mobile Home Site Licence Application Fee							
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%
Annual Mobile Home Site Inspection Fee							
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%
Fee to Transfer or Amend Mobile Home Site Licence							
Transfer or amend mobile home site licence	145.10	0.00	145.10	153.50	0.00	153.50	5.79%
Fee for the Deposit of Mobile Home Site Rules							
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							
<i>(Statutory Maximum £2,000)</i>							
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							
<i>(Statutory Maximum £4,000)</i>							
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							
<i>(Statutory Maximum £1,000)</i>							
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							
<i>(Statutory Maximum £2,000)</i>							
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) issues 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%
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%

	2023/24			2024/25			Increase
	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	Charge	VAT 20%	Total Charge	
	£	£	£	£	£	£	
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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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 hyperinflation 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 to deliver balanced budgets, 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 analysts still firmly believe that it will happen soon.
- 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 £1.6m 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	Possible/likely	High	The MTFS is currently forecasting government grant funding of £1.7m per year which we hope will continue. Any reduction in this amount will add to the savings requirement.
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.

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Policy and Resources Committee		Agenda Item:
Meeting Date	29 November 2023	
Report Title	Financial Management Report – Half Year 2023/24	
EMT Lead	Lisa Fillery, Director of Resources	
Head of Service	Claire Stanbury, Head of Finance & Procurement	
Lead Officer	Caroline Frampton, Principal Accountant	
Classification	Open	
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To note the projected revenue position, which is balanced through a reduction of £500,000 in the amount to be taken from reserves. 2. To note the capital expenditure of £1.4m against the budget as detailed in Table 2 and Appendix I. 3. To approve the transfers to reserves to create an insurance reserve and an investment smoothing reserve. 	

1. Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the half year revenue and capital budget monitoring forecast for 2023/24. The report is based on service activity for April – September 2023 and is collated from monitoring returns from budget managers.
- 1.2 The purpose of the report is to forecast the estimated outturn position for 2023/24 compared to the budget approved at Council in February 2023 and subsequently amended by virements, made under delegated authority during the year.
- 1.3 The headline figures are:
 - revenue underspend on services of £500,000 which will reduce the value of reserves used in year to balance the finances – Table 1;
 - capital expenditure of £1.4m – Table 2 and Appendix I.
- 1.4 The Head of Finance and Procurement would like to express her thanks to budget managers and Heads of Service for the way in which they have all adapted to the new budget monitoring process being used this year.

2. Background

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

3. Proposals

Revenue Outturn

Table 1 - Variance by Service

	Working Budget £'000	Projected Outturn £'000	Projected Variance £'000
Chief Executive	604	613	9
Elections & Communications	554	583	29
Democratic Services & Information Governance	967	953	(14)
Housing & Community	4,869	5,112	242
Planning	574	1,089	515
Environment & Leisure	8,335	7,711	(624)
Regeneration & Economic Development	(157)	(193)	(35)
Finance & Procurement	824	829	5
Revenues & Benefits	411	272	(139)
Environmental Health	548	595	47
Information Technology	1,285	1,331	46
Internal Audit	176	165	(12)
Human Resources	449	451	1
Legal	564	558	(6)
Drainage Board Levy	951	912	(39)
Corporate Overheads & Capital Financing	2,942	2,416	(526)
NET REVENUE SERVICE EXPENDITURE	23,897	23,397	(500)
Finance by:			
Budget Contingency Reserve	(2,045)	(1,545)	500
Revenue Support Grant	(317)	(317)	(0)
Funding Guarantee Grant	(497)	(497)	0
Services Grant	(174)	(174)	0
Business Rates	(10,122)	(10,122)	0
New Homes Bonus	(1,103)	(1,102)	1
Collection Fund Surplus	45	45	(0)
Council Tax Requirement	(9,684)	(9,683)	1
TOTAL FINANCING	(23,897)	(23,396)	501
NET EXPENDITURE (Contribution (to)/from General Fund)	0	1	1

3.1 The variances with brackets are underspends, i.e. income received was greater than the budget or the spend was less than budget; variances with no brackets are overspends, i.e. the income was less than the budget, or the spend was more than budget.

3.2 The significant variances from budget are explained below.

3.3 Housing & Community Services £242,000 projected overspend

	Working Budget £'000	Projected Outturn £'000	Projected Variance £'000
Temporary Accommodation	3,077	3,435	358
Licensing	(84)	(92)	(8)
Community Services	973	1,022	49
Customer Services	613	531	(82)
Other	280	206	(74)
Total	4,858	5,101	242

The overspend in temporary accommodation (TA) - the growth in landlord charges continues to be a concern, reflecting the current economic position, which is also causing the case load to increase. The main providers of TA, Link and Paramount, both increased their costs last year by approximately 25%, and Paramount have increased their fees further this year. However, the team are working hard to keep costs down as much as possible, and the project to purchase houses for TA use is now progressing, which will help to control costs. The additional costs are partly offset by grants received to fund the costs of housing Ukrainian nationals. The savings summary shows the TA savings target as being partially achieved, despite the fact that an overspend is being reported against the service. The partial achievement recognises that efficiencies and other solutions are being implemented, but the overspend is due to the increase in the costs of existing solutions which we cannot move away from fully.

The income received for most licences has fallen below budget in the last few years, and this is expected to remain true, although it is forecast that income will remain in line with that received over recent years. Hackney carriage licence income remains strong, and there are small savings in salary costs this year which help to achieve an underspend overall. Structural budget issues will be picked up as part of the budget process for 2024/25, ensuring that budgets are appropriately aligned with the sources of income.

Community Services includes the departmental salary savings that are expected from the restructure, which was a budget reduction of £121,000. This saving has not yet been profiled across the teams, and so is held in this service area. The restructure is now complete, so the budget will be reprofiled accordingly. Some of this saving is being made within the service area, and combined with underspends reducing the forecast overspend to £49,000. This area also includes an overspend for an extra post in the CCTV unit that is required due to the implementation of the 34 hour week.

Customer Services is showing a forecast underspend of £82,000 which is largely due to salary savings. This will be addressed as part of reprofiling the salary savings budget currently held in the Community Services reporting line.

'Other' includes salary savings expected in Private Sector Housing services and a small increase in Disabled Facilities Grant fee income.

3.4 Planning £515,000 projected overspend

	Working Budget £'000	Projected Outturn £'000	Projected Variance £'000
Conservation & Design	85	85	0
Building Control	107	87	(20)
Local Land Charges (including shared service)	(170)	(61)	109
Development Management	(247)	215	462
Planning Shared Service	218	195	(24)
Spatial Planning & Local Plan	581	569	(12)
Total	574	1,089	515

Building Control is currently forecasting an underspend of £35,000 which reflects the agreed 2023/24 membership fee. This is partially offset by additional costs on dangerous structures.

Local Land Charges position is showing a forecast overspend of £109,000. This reflects an expectation that income will be less than budget, and this may need to be addressed as part of the budget setting process for 2024/25. Income was below budget last year, and current data shows a downward trend in activity.

Development Management is forecasting an overspend of £462,000. This includes an overspend of £586,000 on staffing related costs as there is currently a need to use agency staff due to recruitment problems. This is partially offset by income expected to achieve above the budget level, although not for all income sources. Planning application fees are expected to achieve slightly above budget, and that is despite the delay in being able to implement the increased fee, due to Central Government.

3.5 Environment & Leisure £624,000 projected underspend

	Working Budget £'000	Projected Outturn £'000	Projected Variance £'000
Environmental Services	6,449	5,737	(711)
Leisure & Technical Services	1,580	1,826	246
Grounds Maintenance	1,709	1,735	25
Parking Management	(1,592)	(1,844)	(253)
Other	189	258	69
Total	8,335	7,711	(624)

Environmental Services have a projected underspend of £711,000 which is largely attributable to refuse collection and street cleansing. This includes £50,000 forecast compensation income payable by the contractor for poor performance. The main reason for the underspend is that indexation was lower than forecast a year ago. Garden waste income is forecast to exceed budget by £30,000 although there is a risk of non-renewal of subscriptions that could lead to the forecast not being reached.

Leisure & Technical Services are showing a projected overspend of £246,000. This contains:

- an expected £101,000 cost on leisure and sports centres in relation to an increase in leisure centre utility costs;
- the extra cost of refunding car parking at Swallows Leisure Centre, which at the current rate is expected to be £60,000 more than last year;
- an anticipated underachievement of beach huts income of £32,000 due to there being a delay on the 26 additional huts which were allowed for in the rental income budget;
- an overspend of £52,000 in parks and open spaces, some of which are historic budget issues that need to be picked up as part of 2024/25 budget setting, but also due to extra health and safety work required on large trees.

Non-contract additional grounds maintenance of £55,000 at Barton’s point will be offset by £55,000 Levelling Up grant received.

Parking Management is forecast to underspend by £253,000 this year, which is made up of £413,000 of additional income, offset by overspends for items such as electricity, contract inflationary increases, and increased transaction fees from taking card payments. We will look to address structural budget issues as part of the 2024/25 budget setting process.

The additional projected income of £413,000 as detailed below:

Projected variance as at quarter 1:	£'000
General car parks - additional fees income	(223)
Multi Storey - additional fees income	(140)
Net excess parking charges	(50)
Net other	0
Total	(413)

The forecast overspend of £69,000 on ‘Other’ is largely down to the combined salary savings to be achieved through restructure. The restructure is complete and savings are being achieved through the team, but the budget has not yet been profiled accordingly.

3.6 Regeneration and Economic Development projected underspend £35,000

The underspend within Regeneration and Economic Development includes some savings due to staff vacancies, although these are also offset by the cost of agency staff. There is additional rental income being achieved in a number of properties this year due to back rent due from rent reviews, which means that although rental income will be greater on these properties in future years, this year is seeing a spike in those particular rents.

3.7 Shared Services £77,000 projected overspend

There is a projected overspend of £47,000 for the Environmental Shared Service with Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, which we will look to address in

budget setting for 2024/25, and an estimated overspend of £46,000 within ICT from expected maintenance costs.

3.8 Drainage Board Levy projected underspend of £39,000

Due to the large increase in drainage board levy fees, those councils who were disproportionately affected received a grant from central government. Swale were one of the few to receive such a grant, and that grant is the reason for the underspend shown here. Current expectations are that the grant is for one year only.

3.9 Corporate Overheads and Capital Financing projected underspend of £526,000

This includes an improvement in net investment income of £249,000 as a result of the increasing interest rates, a saving on KCC pension costs of £210,000, a saving of £36,000 on MRP costs due to previous slippage of capital projects, and a saving of £67,000 from the recent retendering of the insurance contract.

3.10 £100,000 of savings on the insurance contract will be used this year to create an insurance reserve. This will be a one-off contribution to this new reserve, and this is included as a saving in future years.

3.11 The excess investment income currently being achieved due to higher interest rates is partly being used to reduce the overall take from reserves. However, we propose transferring £100,000 to an investment smoothing reserve. The reason for this is that a technical accounting requirement is due to be effective from 2025/26 which will result in changes in investment valuations impacting on Council Tax levels. The creation of this reserve will allow us to smooth the impacts of those changes in valuations, to hopefully avoid creating budget pressures in future years.

3.12 Budget Contingency Reserve projected overspend of £500,000

The overall position currently forecast would be an underspend of £500,000. However, as we are drawing down money from reserves in order to balance the budget position this year, and underspend will result in a reduced take from reserves, as reported here.

Achievement of Savings

3.13 Departmental salary savings have been achieved in service areas, but budgets are still to be realigned in line with the revised structures. Although the budgets are not currently aligned, monitoring has taken place to ensure that the savings are being achieved.

3.14 As previously mentioned in this report, the growth built in for the waste contract price increase in 2023/24 has not been required in full, due to indexation coming in lower than expected. As we start a new contract on 24 March 2024, this is not an ongoing saving. However, assumptions around inflation were made in calculating the starting position for the new Suez contract, and that is now being reassessed as part of budget setting for 2024/25 and it is expected that there will be some saving against the original assumption.

- 3.15 An exercise has been carried out to review the savings proposals for 2023/24 and assess if those savings are being achieved. The results of that exercise are shown in Appendix II.
- 3.16 This analysis of the half year forecast will feed into the budget setting process for 2024/25, analysing the savings that were built into the 2023/24 budget and ensure that those savings are on target to be achieved, as well as identifying other areas of pressure or potential savings.

Capital Expenditure

- 3.17 This section of the report details actual capital expenditure at the half year and highlights any variations between the 2023/24 capital budget and the projected outturn. The revised budget includes the 2022/23 roll forwards as agreed by the Policy and Resources Committee 12 July 2023, but amended based on spend allocated to revenue budgets in the previous year.
- 3.18 New schemes funded from reserves and funds have been reported. Appendix I provides further details.
- 3.19 Actual expenditure is £1.4m which is 4.23% of the budget. A summary is set out in Table 2 below and further details are shown in Appendix I.
- 3.20 Although only 4.23% of the total capital budget has been spent so far, the working budget does contain amounts brought forward from previous years, which will likely slip again into future years. A large budget where this is expected to happen is the Disabled Facilities Grant, which is effectively a rolling budget and a backlog of work was created during the covid lockdown periods, with works now taking place.
- 3.21 Some large capital spend is also expected in the second half of the year, with the waste vehicles becoming due in full, and activity on the purchase of houses for temporary accommodation getting to the stage of completing on the first houses. The payment for the waste vehicles alone will push the spend up to 25.4% of budget.

Table 2 – Capital Expenditure to end of September 2023

	2023/24 Budget £'000	Actuals April to June £'000	Projected Variance £'000
Housing & Community Services	16,022	664	0
Regeneration & Economic Development	8,215	456	0
Environment & Leisure	8,705	255	0
Information Technology	242	27	0
Total Capital Programme	33,184	1,402	0

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 None identified – this report is largely for information.

5. Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

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

6. Implications

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

7. Appendices

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

- Appendix I: Capital Expenditure to end of September 2023
- Appendix II: Savings Progress 2023/24

8. Background Papers

- Council Meeting Agenda and Minutes 23 February 2022 Item 12
- Policy & Resources Committee 8 February 2023

Capital Half Year Position 2023/24

Scheme	2023/24 Original Budget £'000	2023/24 Working Budget £'000	2023/24 Actuals To Date £'000	2023/24 Projected Variance £'000
Disabled Facilities Grants	2,063	6,103	637	0
Local Housing Company	5,000	5,263	0	0
Dolphin Barge Museum & Skatepark	0	52	0	0
Forstal Community Association	0	65	20	0
Purchase of Temporary Accommodation	4,400	4,400	7	0
Local Authority Housing Fund (Bridging)	139	139	0	0
Housing & Community Services	11,602	16,022	664	0
Faversham Creek Basin Regeneration	200	200	0	0
High Streets	0	116	0	0
St Micheal's Church Boundary Wall	0	66	62	0
Swale House Refurbishment	0	282	117	0
Rural England Prosperity Projects	126	126	0	0
UKSPF	37	37	0	0
Levelling Up Scheme	7,349	7,349	274	0
Wayfinding Signage - Faversham	0	40	3	0
Regeneration & Economic Development	7,711	8,215	456	0
Waste Vehicle Fleet	7,035	7,035	0	0
Beach Huts	143	143	0	0
Coach Parking	0	35	0	0
Gunpowder Works Oare Faversham	0	30	0	0
Sheerness Public Toilets	0	120	84	0
Barton's Point Drainage	0	50	0	0
Leisure Centre Improvements	0	287	0	0
Lynsted Churchyard Walls	120	120	0	0
Open Spaces Play Equipment & Improvements	0	513	46	0
The Forum Public Toilets	0	42	0	0
Barton's Point Shower & Toilets	0	180	125	0
Changing Places	0	150	0	0
Environment & Leisure	7,298	8,705	255	0
ICT Replacement	0	192	27	0
Council Chamber IT Equipment	50	50	0	0
Resources Total	50	242	27	0
Grand Total	26,661	33,184	1,402	0

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Saving Classification	23/24	Comments	September Update
Operational improvements and efficiencies			
All services - Operational	(94)	Various minor operational budgets (travel/subsistence/conferences etc) - historic underspends	Achieved
Environment & Leisure - Operational	(13)	Various minor operational savings	Achieved
Housing & Community - Operational	(200)	Relates to assumed year on year reduction of current homelessness cost pressure through various initiatives	Partial - work ongoing
Housing & Community - Operational	(128)	Disabled Facilities Grant admin income, Youth Forum grant, additional homelessness prevention grant	Achieved
Policy, Governance & Customer services - Operational	(20)	Operational rental charges lower than anticipated	Achieved
Regen & Ec dev - operational	(28)	freeze Greater North Kent Partnership subscriptions (assumed use of reserves from Partnership - £28k)	Decision under review
Regen & Ec dev - operational	(34)	Minor operational savings from New Ways of Working and reduced time in the office (£34k),	Achieved
Contract adjustments			
Corporate Overhead - Contract	(22)	Savings from re-tender card payment and treasury services	Achieved
Environment & Leisure - contract	(109)	2023/24 - Reduced litter bins from 2,500 to 2,250 (£50k), remove public convenience attendants from Sheerness and Minster Leas (£59k).	Partial
Income and grants			
Fees & charges	(20)	Street naming income	Partial
Fees & charges	(150)	Planning PPA fee income	Partial
Fees & charges	(100)	Planning fee income	Achieved
Fees & charges	(455)	Parking fee income	Achieved
Fees & charges	(22)	Beach huts	Delivery delayed
Fees & charges	(154)	General increases	Achieved
Fees & charges	(50)	Garden waste	Achieved
Discretionary grants to community and voluntary	(88)	Various third party discretionary grants to be discussed with relevant bodies during consultation period), including reduction in parish footway lighting grants over 2 years (£20k pa)	Achieved
Members grants	(13)	Reduction in Members Grants to £1k per Member	Achieved
Other grants	(127)	Cessation of annual grant process across multiple service areas including heritage and culture, sports development, tourism and countryside	Achieved
Grants received	(103)	Slight increase in New Homes Bonus grant anticipated	Achieved
Investment income	(60)	Additional investment income anticipated due to increasing bank base rates	Achieved
Member allowances - saving from committee structure and proposed freeze	(60)	Savings from restructuring to the Committee system and freezing Member allowances	Achieved
Member parking fee	(2)	Assumes new charge of £60 (inc VAT) for Member parking permits	Partial
Regen & Ec Dev - Additional income	(18)	Rent reviews in line with lease agreements	To be confirmed
Service reconfiguration and efficiencies			
Environment & Leisure - restructure	(51)	Staffing reorganisation to reconfigure service delivery	Achieved

Finance - restructure	(20)	Staffing reorganisation to reconfigure service delivery	Achieved
Housing & Community - restructure	(122)	Staffing reorganisation to reconfigure service delivery	Achieved
Planning - restructure	(31)	Staffing reorganisation to reconfigure service delivery	To be confirmed
Regen & Ec dev - restructure	(192)	Staffing reorganisation to reconfigure service delivery	Achieved
Revenues & Benefits - electronic billing	(10)	Savings from moving to electronic billing	To be confirmed
Senior Management restructure	(100)	Staffing reorganisation to reconfigure service delivery	Achieved
Shared Service - Operational	(40)	Various operational savings and staffing reorganisation to reconfigure service delivery	Partial
Suspend contribution to	(178)	Temporarily suspend historic contributions to reserves	Achieved

Savings total (2,812)

Policy & Resources Committee	
Meeting Date	29 November 2023
Report Title	Procurement of Consultancy Services
EMT Lead	Lisa Fillery, Director of Resources
Head of Service	Claire Stanbury, Head of Finance and Procurement
Lead Officer	Charlotte Knowles, Commissioning Manager
Classification	Open
Recommendations	1. That the Committee approves the appointment of Reed Talent Solutions t/a Consultancy+ as a provider of Consultancy Services until 30 September 2027.

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report seeks committee approval of the appointment of Consultancy+ as a provider of consultancy services.

2 Background

- 2.1 On 22 April 2020, Cabinet approved the appointment of Reed Talent Solutions t/a Consultancy+ as a provider of consultancy services via the YPO (Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation) HR Services and Solutions Framework (569). The Framework expired on 30 September 2023 and is replaced by the YPO Managing Consultancy and Professional Services Framework (1141).
- 2.2 Consultancy+ are the sole supplier on the neutral vendor Framework. Reed Talent Solutions, trading as Consultancy+ is an organisation with between 201 and 500 directly employed staff.
- 2.3 Consultants can be appointed by:
- Direct award / named supplier service: this is where the Council knows the consultant/professional it wishes to work with, and the supplier is already fully onboarded with Consultancy+.
 - Direct award / named supplier and onboarding service: this is where the Council knows the consultant/professional it wishes to work with, and Consultancy+ onboards this supplier onto their supply chain of consultancy and professional services.
 - Further competition / full service: this is where the Council knows the service or the outcome it will require, and Consultancy+ supports in finding a solution or suitable consultant/professional to deliver the requirement and fulfil the desired outcome.
- 2.4 The benefits of using the framework agreement are:

Single Supplier Solution:

- Consultancy+ have specialist procurement and service teams to support and understand the Council’s requirement.
- Consultancy+ have an extensive supply chain that is actively managed and vetted.
- The Council has the option to utilise a known consultant or professional (including local SMEs who are not generally on the national Framework Agreements) and Consultancy+ will support with onboarding them into their supply chain.
- Confidence that the right solution will be delivered based on the requirement.

Procurement Expertise:

- Single provider framework and easy direct award process.
- Support from YPO on understanding the requirement and services.
- Compliant route to market with reduced timescales – no need to run a full above threshold procurement if procuring via the framework agreement.
- Assured supplier standards – suppliers/providers are ‘pre-qualified’ as to their general suitability.

Value for Money:

- Aggregation of spend – potential for the Council to utilise benefits of aggregated spend volume and increased leverage in the market.
- Social Value to be delivered by the provider through appointment of the framework agreement. Further social value requirements can be achieved at call-off contract level.
- Value for money through a time-effective (shorter timescales as no need to run a full tendering exercise), specialised service to meet consultancy requirements under competitive pricing.

2.5 The Council has been using Consultancy+ since 2020. Under the old Framework, Consultancy+ charged 4.5% per project. Under the new Framework, the fees are as follows:

Named supplier:

Project spend value	Fee
£0 - £10,999	2.3%
£11,000 - £499,999	3.5%

£500,000 - £4,999,999	3.1%
£5m - £9,999,999	1.1%
£10m+	0.7%

Named Supplier & Onboarding:

Project spend value	Fee
£0 - £10,999	2.3%
£11,000 - £499,999	3.6%
£500,000 - £4,999,999	3.3%
£5m - £9,999,999	1.1%
£10m+	0.7%

Full Service:

Project spend value	Fee
£0 - £10,999	3%
£11,000 - £499,999	4.8%
£500,000 - £4,999,999	3.8%
£5m - £9,999,999	1.2%
£10m+	0.8%

- 2.6 As this is a neutral vendor Framework, Committee approval is required as the whole life / cumulative value is likely to be over £120,000 (including VAT). However, if approved, there is no guarantee of contract value as there is no obligation to use the Framework. All procurement options will be considered with the lead officer for each project including Request for Quotation / Invitation to Tender and other Framework Agreements.

3 Proposals

- 3.1 The Committee is requested to approve the proposal to use the Framework, enter into a contract with Consultancy+ until 30 September 2027 and give the Head of Mid Kent Legal Services the authority to complete such contract and any ancillary agreements.

4 Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

- 4.1 Other frameworks are available that could deliver the same service opportunities that we can achieve through the Consultancy+ framework. However, these frameworks either have higher fees or shorter payment terms that do not align with the Council's terms but offer no gains that would be of value to the Council. As such, these frameworks have been rejected as feasible alternatives.
- 4.2 Not to approve the Consultancy+ Framework as a procurement option for consultancies.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 The Commissioning Manager has consulted Finance and Mid Kent Legal Services on the use of this Framework.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	Appointing a supplier that meets a good quality standard and provides good value for money contributes towards the corporate priority “Renewing local democracy and making the council fit for the future”.
Financial, Resource and Property	In 2022-23, the Council spent approximately £41,000 with Consultancy+. The total contract value for the four years is therefore, anticipated to be over £120,000.
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	<p>Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 - Social Value is delivered by the provider through the framework agreement. Further social value requirements can be achieved for further competitions and direct awards at call-off contract level.</p> <p>The Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 as amended (“TUPE”) do not apply to this contract.</p> <p>YPO’s standard framework agreement terms and conditions will apply.</p>
Crime and Disorder	None identified at this stage.
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	This can be considered in the suppliers’ responses to the Social Value quality question in further competitions.
Health and Wellbeing	None identified at this stage.
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	None identified at this stage.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	Suppliers/providers are ‘pre-qualified’ as to their general suitability during the onboarding process.
Equality and Diversity	None identified at this stage.
Privacy and Data Protection	This is covered by the Framework terms and conditions.

7 Appendices

7.1 None.

8 Background Documents

8.1 None.

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Policy and Resources Committee Meeting	
Meeting Date	29 November 2023
Report Title	Nightly Paid Temporary Accommodation Tender Outcome
EMT Lead	Emma Wiggins, Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods and Lisa Fillery, Director of Resources
Head of Service	Charlotte Hudson, Head of Housing and Community Services and Claire Stanbury, Head of Finance and Procurement
Lead Officer	Roxanne Sheppard, Housing Options Manager and Charlotte Knowles, Commissioning Manager
Classification	Open
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To note the outcome of the tender process. 2. To approve a waiver of contract standing orders.

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide feedback on the outcome of the tender for temporary accommodation and to seek approval of a waiver of contract standing orders.

2 Background

Introduction and general description of the service

- 2.1 Maidstone, Tunbridge Wells and Swale Borough Councils (the Council's) have been exploring options for the procurement of ad hoc Nightly Paid Accommodation.
- 2.2 This is a critical service the Councils have a statutory duty to provide. The Councils provide a customer focused service that aims to ensure customers' needs and requirements are met through temporary accommodation placements.
- 2.3 This joint project began in early 2021, Procurement have facilitated extensive discussions between the Housing teams. The project started by agreeing the minimum standards the Councils expected of all temporary accommodation providers. These discussions helped us to define the Councils priorities and identify our route to market.
- 2.4 After conducting extensive market engagement, we explored all available options. The Housing Teams agreed that an open Find a Tender Service (FTS) tender to build a panel of suppliers would present the best route to market so that the councils could use multiple providers.

Current Processes

- 2.5 For many years, the Councils have operated using a variety of providers under various short-term agreements. The market had never been fully tested and the Housing teams are reliant on in house knowledge. The number of providers currently being used is limited and leads to occasions where the Council is overcharged for accommodation that does not always meet our high standards.

Tender process

- 2.6 The Councils were limited in the way in which this service could be procured due to the overall spend of each authority. We identified the following 3 routes to market:
- Compliant FTS Tender
 - Procurement via a Framework Agreement
 - Procurement via a dynamic purchasing system.
- 2.7 The Councils proceeded to critically assess each of the available routes to establish which would enable us to achieve the desired result of high-quality accommodation at rates that would allow us to be able to better manage our budgets. We were unable to find a framework that would meet the requirements of the Councils. We extensively explored a dynamic purchasing system; however, it was agreed that the system was not suitable as this would increase the already spiralling costs. It was agreed that an open FTS level tender would provide the most flexible route to market which would fulfil the Councils requirements.
- 2.8 A full FTS level procurement process was conducted, led by Tunbridge Wells, in order to test the market. The tender advert was posted on FTS, Kent Business Portal and the Contracts Finder website and was live for 8 weeks. The deadline for submission was 12:00pm on 21st of March 2023.
- 2.9 38 companies expressed an interest in the opportunity and were able to download the documents from the portal.
- 2.10 Of these 38 companies, 1 advised that they would not be responding to the opportunity and opted out of the procurement exercise.
- 2.11 9 submissions were received on time, with 28 companies failing to respond at all.
- 2.12 The evaluation was weighted 50% on Qualitative criteria, with 50% weighting on cost. The quality criteria included a 10% weighting on social value (Tunbridge Well's standard procedure). Tenderers needed to achieve a minimum of 50% of the total quality marks available to remain in the process.

Invitation To Tender Evaluation process

- 2.13 After opening the tender, Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells' Senior Procurement Officer carried out an initial assessment of the tenders received. The tenders received were checked for compliance with the mandatory requirements stated within Invitation to tender document. A secondary check of the geographical area that each tenderer services was conducted along with a review of their property lists.
- 2.14 Many of the tenders received were non-compliant with the mandatory requirements set out in the invitation to tender. They had either not provided vital documentation or had not submitted fixed cost proposals.
- 2.15 Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells' Senior Procurement Officer and Swale's Commissioning Manager informed the evaluation team of the number of tenders received and fed back details from the initial evaluation of each tenderer.
- 2.16 The Housing teams agreed that we did not have enough tender responses to form the desired panel. As many of the tenders received were not compliant with the requirements set out in the invitation to tender, the Housing teams decided to cancel the current tender process.

3 Proposals

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Councils cancel this tender process, continue to operate under the short-term agreements in place with local providers for the foreseeable future, and consider running this exercise in 24 to 36 months' time. The current market conditions have resulted in some tenderers being unable to commit to a fixed price arrangement. In rerunning this tender at a later date, it is anticipated that the housing markets may have settled and we that we could find ourselves in a more receptive market.
- 3.2 Legal have advised that a Waiver should be sought to ensure compliance with Contract Standing Orders. It is acknowledged that Public Contracts Regulations cannot be waived but as a compliant procurement process has been undertaken which was unsuccessful, the risk of challenge is low.
- 3.3 Contract Standing Orders require committee approval of waivers over £120,000 (including VAT).

4 Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

- 4.1 Do nothing.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 Mid Kent Legal Services and the Housing Options Manager have been consulted.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	Contributes towards renewing local democracy and making the council fit for the future.
Financial, Resource and Property	<p>Costs continue to be managed in house, and only the most cost-effective bookings are made where possible.</p> <p>Actual spend for 2022/23 was £4,353,067.</p>
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	<p>A procurement process was undertaken that was fully compliant with The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 but was unsuccessful.</p> <p>The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 - Tenderers were asked to put forward their version of how they could add social value to the Council for the duration of this contract.</p>
Crime and Disorder	None identified.
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	None identified.
Health and Wellbeing	Monitored through Housing options procedures.
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	Continue to ensure all Safeguarding procedures are followed and concerns reported appropriately.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	Temporary accommodation spend is identified as a strategic risk.
Equality and Diversity	None identified.
Privacy and Data Protection	None identified.

7 Appendices

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

- Appendix I: Waiver request

8 Background Papers

None.

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Please send waivers to procurement@swale.gov.uk

P.01 – CONTRACT STANDING ORDERS WAIVER FORM

Please note Waivers will only be approved in advance and only in exceptional circumstances

Pages 1 – 5 are to be completed by the officer requesting the waiver. Incomplete requests will be returned. This waiver request must be signed and dated.

Name of Project / Procurement	Nightly Paid Temporary Accommodation
Works, Goods, Consultancy or Services	Service
Capital ¹ or Revenue Spend	Revenue
Whole Life Contract Value Inc. extension period (including VAT)	Estimated - £4,353,067 (ex VAT) pa £5,223,680.40 (inc VAT) pa
Description of Works / Service / Goods / Consultant	Provision of nightly paid temporary accommodation (statutory duty).
For Consultancy, has an IR35 Check been undertaken	N/A
Result of IR35 – Only for the appointment of consultants (please supply a copy with the waiver form)	N/A
Whole life Contract Period	Estimated up to £13,059,201 (ex VAT) £15,671,041.20 (inc VAT)
Contract start and end dates	N/A
Date waiver submitted to Procurement team	05/10/2023
Name and contact details of supplier	Multiple
Company registration number	Multiple

Please identify the elements of 'Procedure to be used' below which are intended to be complied with for the relevant threshold.

Total Value of Contract (including VAT)	Type of Contract	Procedure to be used	Can the requirements be complied with? (delete as appropriate)
£120,000 to £213,477 **	Works, supplies and services	a) At least three electronic tenders in advance	Yes/No
		b) Spend should be agreed by relevant Committee Chair;	Yes/No Please state which Committee Chair:
		c) Risk assessment conducted (in writing) and kept on the file	Yes/No
		d) As a minimum to be advertised www.swale.gov.uk the Council's E-procurement System plus Contract Finder	Yes/No

¹ All Capital spend over £10,000 will need to be either identified in the budget endorsed by the relevant Committee or received S.151 Officer approval or published in the currently published Budget Book. **Please provide this information with your waiver submission**

		e) Tenders opened at the same time by the Democratic and Electoral Services Manager (or nominee), in the presence of the Responsible Officer (or nominee) and a suitable person from Legal Services (or Nominee);	Yes/No
		f) Financial appraisals shall be carried out by Financial Services prior to award;	Yes/No
		g) Award of contract approved by the Responsible Officer plus signed by another officer;	Yes/No
		h) Contracts in writing using the standard clauses and to include the core clauses as set out within the CSOs document or other terms and conditions approved in advance by Legal and Finance;	Yes/No
		i) Record to be entered on the Council's Contract Register at award stage.	Yes/No
		j) Contract executed as a deed	Yes/No
£213,477** plus	Supplies and services	a) Public Contract Regs apply – full competitive process with tenders following advertisement in Find a Tender Service for supplies and services, there is a presumption in favour of advertising and a competitive process. This will also be advertised on the Swale website, The Council's e-procurement system and Contract Finder;	Yes but not on Swale's website as it was led by MBC & TWBC. Committee Chair:
		b) Points a; b; c; d; e; f; g; h, i and j as above for works, supplies and services for £120,000 to £189,330**	No
		a) Points a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i and j as above for works, supplies and services for £120,000 to £213,477**.	Yes/No

** or relevant threshold in force at the time under the Public Contracts Regs.

Please complete:

I confirm that a Purchase Order (PO) will be raised (<£30k) or a contract will be drawn up using SBC's standard T&Cs.	No
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Please send waivers to procurement@swale.gov.uk

<p>I confirm that the Provider has in place the following insurances: Public liability Insurance to a minimum level of £5 million, Employers Liability Insurance to a minimum level of £10 million, Professional Indemnity Insurance £2 million (if applicable) and Product Liability Insurance £2 million (if applicable).</p>	<p>Insurance certificates are not currently requested.</p>
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Please provide a full explanation for seeking a waiver of the rules. For Waivers OVER 25k, you are required to include neighbouring authority approaches to delivering similar works, goods and services:

Temporary accommodation is a critical service that the Council has a statutory duty to provide. A joint procurement exercise was undertaken with Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells. Market engagement was undertaken followed by a fully compliant open tender exercise. The tender was advertised on the Kent Business Portal, Contracts Finder and Find a Tender Service. 9 submissions were received but many tenders were either non-compliant, would not include a fixed price or did not include local properties so there were not enough providers for contracts to be awarded.

The intention is to consider rerunning a procurement exercise in 24 to 36 months' time when it is anticipated that the housing markets may have settled and we that we could find ourselves in a more receptive market.

The intention in the interim, is to continue to operate under the short-term agreements in place with local providers and to therefore waive contract Standing Orders until a new procurement process is undertaken. It is acknowledged that Public Contracts Regulations cannot be waived but as a compliant procurement process has been undertaken which was unsuccessful, the risk of challenge is low.

<p>Responsible officer Name (PRINT)</p>	<p>Roxanne Sheppard</p>	<p>Dept. / Section</p>	<p>Housing Options</p>
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<p>I confirm that waiver of the regulation have been sought and a written report submitted to; a) The Head of Finance and Procurement as 13.3.2 for contracts not exceeding £120,000 (including VAT). b) The relevant Committee for contracts of £120,000 (including VAT) and above.</p>			<p><input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Signed by responsible officer</p>	<p>Roxanne Sheppard</p>	<p>Insert signature</p>	<p>Date</p>
<p>Authorised by line manager</p>	<p>Charlotte Hudson</p>	<p>Insert signature</p>	<p>Date</p>

You will be notified within 7 days of receipt of request. Please see below for primary acceptance of waiver regulations criteria

THIS SECTION FORWARD IS FOR PROCUREMENT USE ONLY

Waiver of Regulations in Accordance with Contract Standing Orders 13.3

Re: Temporary Accommodation

I have considered the reasons for the waiver in relation to the above for an estimated contract sum of £ for the period of **days/months/years**. I am **satisfied/ not satisfied** that the circumstances for the waiver are justified in line with CSO 13.1.4 and are genuinely exceptional by virtue of details provided and contained with the waiver report form to Procurement dated **05/10/2023**.

The primary reasons for **waiver** regulations are set out as:

- a) the work, supply or service is required as a matter of urgency and a delay would be likely to lead to financial loss, personal injury or damage to property (13.1.1)
- b) the circumstances set out in Regulation 14 apply (whether or not the contract is of a type which is subject to the application of the Public Contracts Regs); (e.g. where the council has already gone out to competitive tender and only non-compliant tenders received) (13.1.2)
- c) the contract is awarded under a Purchasing Scheme of a type where a competition has already been undertaken on behalf of the Council (13.1.3)
- d) The proposals are most expedient to the efficient management of the service for the reasons recorded (13.1.4)
- e) Waiver declined as deemed non-compliant with Contract Standing Orders. CSO 13.2 (Re Purchasing guide)

The primary reason for the **waiver** is therefore point **d**.

I confirm consultation has taken place with Legal and Financial Services, (if applicable), through the agreed email procedures protocol for procurements of value of £30,001 - £119,999.

Comments / Conditions / Suggestions:

Condition / Comment No.	Description	By Who
1		
2		
3		

Signed Name Title	Insert signature here Director of Resources The Director of Resources is authorised to complete the necessary documentation as per the SBC constitution.
Dated	
Reference	A946
Department	Finance & Procurement

Policy & Resources Committee Meeting	
Meeting Date	29 November 2023
Report Title	Corporate Plan 2023-2027 – public consultation draft
EMT Lead	Larissa Reed – Chief Executive
Head of Service	Philip Sutcliffe – Communications & Policy Manager
Lead Officer	Janet Dart – Policy & Engagement Officer
Classification	Open
Recommendations	1. To approve the draft Corporate Plan 2023-2027 to undertake a public consultation from 30 November 2023 to 25 January 2024

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report presents the draft corporate plan 2023-2027 (appendix I) for discussion, amendment and agreement to go out to public consultation.

2 Background

- 2.1 Since the May 2023 borough election, the new administration have been meeting to discuss their vision and ambition for the borough and to consider what their priorities for the Council should be for the period 2023-2027. Committee chairs and vice-chairs have been working with senior officers to develop a new corporate plan which is a living document setting out the vision of the council and the strategic, corporate priorities.
- 2.2 The council's corporate plan establishes the political and managerial priorities on which the organisation will focus over a medium-term period. Without attempting to cover in any detail all of the objectives to be pursued by every department, it sets the tone for future resource allocation, establishing which activities and objectives are priorities.
- 2.3 In an era of constrained and diminishing resources, it is important to have a plan that is linked to the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) which should inform the key decisions of the council.
- 2.4 The plan is central to the strategic framework which links to departments' operational service plans and to individual officers' objectives. It establishes clear priorities while also providing a steer for all teams to link their work to the overall ambitions of the council.

3 Proposals

- 3.1 The committee is asked to consider the draft corporate plan (appendix I), and the draft equality impact assessment (appendix II.). The committee is also asked to approve the draft corporate plan to go out to an eight-week public consultation from 30 November 2023 to 25 January 2024.

4 Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

- 4.1 Not have a corporate plan. There is a legal requirement for councils to have a definite policy framework, however there is no specific requirement for a corporate plan. However, the absence of a plan is likely to result in a lack of clarity about the organisation's priorities and less coherent decision-making by members, and is therefore not recommended.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 Swale Borough Council members, town and parish councillors and members of the public were consulted at the September 2023 round of Area Committee meetings to seek feedback on the five priorities and their definitions.
- 5.2 The detailed objectives within each priority were taken to all-staff briefings and the staff engagement group in October 2023. A workshop was held with external partners to seek their feedback on the priorities and the proposed vision statement. Political group leaders were also consulted to seek their views.
- 5.3 The administration met to consider the feedback and used it to finalise the final draft of the corporate plan.
- 5.4 The next step, should the Policy & Resources Committee agree, will be to go out for an eight-week public consultation running from 30 November 2023 to 25 January 2024.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	The draft plan at appendix I will replace the existing plan on adoption by council.
Financial, Resource and Property	The corporate plan complements the MTFP, in that it sets out in broad terms what the council aims to achieve given the resources established by the MTFP. It is anticipated that the activities required by the plan will generally be funded within the resourcing framework established in the MTFP.
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	The legal status of the corporate plan as a component of the statutory policy framework originates from the Local Government

	Act 2000 and regulations subsequently made under it. No specific procurement implications have been identified at this stage.
Crime and Disorder	The draft plan at appendix I includes some specific points of relevance to crime and disorder, particularly under priority 1 – Community.
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	The draft plan at appendix I includes some specific points of relevance to the environment and to the climate and ecological emergencies, particularly under priority 3 - Environment.
Health and Wellbeing	The draft plan at appendix I includes some specific points of relevance to health and wellbeing, particularly under priority 4 – Health & Housing.
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	The draft plan at appendix I includes some specific points of relevance to safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults, particularly under priority 1 – Community and priority 4 – Health & Housing.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	No specific implications have been identified at this stage.
Equality and Diversity	The public sector equality duty requires decision-makers to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and advance equality of opportunity right throughout the decision-making process. A preliminary equality impact assessment is attached at appendix II. The corporate plan is in general at too high a level of abstraction for the aims of the equality duty to be relevant in any concrete way, although they are likely to be much more relevant to many of the pieces of work which will flow from it, which will all need to be subject to individual impact assessments. The impact of the plan itself on the aims of the equality duty, without reference to these more detailed pieces of work, is at this stage considered to be low, and nothing requiring the mitigation of adverse impacts has been identified. It is believed at this stage that the plan involves no unlawful discrimination.
Privacy and Data Protection	No specific implications have been identified at this stage.

7 Appendices

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

Appendix I – Draft corporate plan 2023-2027

Appendix II – Draft equality impact assessment

8 Background Papers

None.

Corporate Plan

2023 - 2027

Foreword by Leader

Welcome to Swale Borough Council's Corporate Plan, which sets out our ambitions and priorities up to 2027. It builds on what we have learnt over the last four years and sets out what we plan to focus on in the future. A great deal has been achieved over the last four years which is something our coalition administration is very proud of. Throughout the challenging times of the Covid-19 pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis, the council has delivered projects at the same time as providing support to the community.

This document's primary purpose is to ensure that the organisation's resources are coherently allocated in support of agreed priorities. The objectives established here will therefore be a significant factor in determining the focus of the council's activities over the next few years

Our plan has been developed following conversations with residents, town and parish councils and representatives from the public, private and voluntary sectors.

We believe the priorities in this plan, on homes, on jobs, on health, on social inclusion, on the environment and on our partnerships with the voluntary sector, are exactly the ones the council most needs to focus on if its efforts to improve the lives of residents in our borough are to be effective.



Cllr Tim Gibson
Leader of the Council

Introduction

The borough council is made up of 47 elected members representing 24 wards and employing 283 full-time equivalent staff. Of those 28 are working in a shared service. The all-out election held in May 2023 resulted in a change to the coalition administration which includes the Labour, Swale Independents Alliance and Green groups.

One of the objectives of the coalition administration, which was formed at SBC following the 2019 local elections, was to diffuse power among members and improve public engagement in decision-making. The council voted in October 2021 to move to a committee system of governance from the 2022/23 municipal year. A cross-party working group was set up to consider this governance change and to oversee the detail in the new governance model. At the February 2022 Council meeting members agreed a five-service committee model which was successfully implemented in May 2022.

As part of the objective to improve public engagement in decision-making, four area committees were established with their inaugural meetings taking place in September 2020. The purpose of the area committees is to enhance the quality of life and council services in the relevant area and to bring local insight to into council decision-making. The area committees have evolved over the last three years and have recently adapted due to them no longer having funding to allocate. They play an important role in developing new policies and projects as can provide local input at an early development stage.

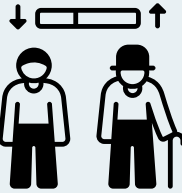
Mid Kent Services (MKS) is a partnership between Swale, Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells Borough councils. The partnership (originally Mid Kent Improvement Partnership) was formed in 2008, and means the councils work together to reduce costs and improve service delivery and resilience. The partnership delivers a number of different fully shared services, and the partner authorities work together on shared procurement exercises and contract monitoring arrangements (like waste and recycling services) and have some shared management arrangements eg in parking services. The partnership is flexible to meet the needs of each authority and not all the partners are part of every Mid Kent service, for example HR is shared between Maidstone and Swale only. Some services are provided to other authorities such as Ashford is a partner in the internal audit partnership and the HR service delivers payroll for Dartford Council. MKS is not a separate entity: all shared services staff are employed by one of the councils and deliver services to the councils who are partners in that service.

Swale is part of the following Mid Kent shared services:

- Internal Audit
- HR (including Payroll)
- Legal
- ICT
- Planning Support and land charges
- Fraud and compliance
- Debt Recovery
- Environmental Health

Understanding Swale

Swale population



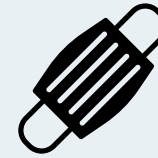
151,700

Area of Swale



139 sq miles

Covid-19 Pandemic



7,000

vulnerable people contacted

Covid-19 Pandemic

60

rough sleepers assisted into
emergency accommodation

Cost of Living crisis



14,800 households
provided food support through
Household Support Fund

Levelling-Up Fund



£20mil

secured for the
Sheerness Revival programme

Understanding Swale

Population

Swale is home to 151,700 people and the population grew by 11.7% between the 2011 and 2021 census - a higher rate than the South-East which grew 7.5% during the same period. It is anticipated that the population will grow to more than 180,000 by the year 2040. The largest age group is 55 to 59 years and there are slightly more females than males in the whole population.

In the 2021 census, around 137,400 Swale residents said they were born in England. This represented 90.6% of the local population. The figure has risen from around 125,600 in 2011, which at the time represented 92.5% of Swale's population. In 2021, 2.3% of Swale residents identified their ethnic group within the "Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African" category, up from 1.0% in 2011.

In 2021, 8.5% of Swale residents were identified as being disabled and limited a lot. This figure decreased from 9.4% in 2011. In 2021, just over one in nine people (11.3%) were identified as being disabled and limited a little, compared with 10.7% in 2011. The proportion of Swale residents who were not disabled increased from 79.9% to 80.1%.

Economy and demographic make-up

Swale's demographic make-up includes a mix of affluent and less affluent communities. In general, the area is less well-off than is typical for the region, 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.

The indices of multiple deprivation in 2019 showed Swale's overall position had 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.

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 is at the lower end of the skills spectrum and the average weekly earnings are significantly below regional and national averages.

Geography

Swale is one of 12 districts which make up the county of Kent. Located on the county's northern coast, the borough sits between Medway, Maidstone and Canterbury, around 37 miles (60km) from central London in one direction and 25 miles (40km) from the Channel Tunnel in the other.

The borough covers an area of 139 square miles (360km²), roughly one-tenth of Kent and is a remarkably diverse place, including the historic market town of Faversham, the traditional seaside resort of Sheerness, the more industrial market town of Sittingbourne and rural villages. The 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 a number of protected wildlife habitats and part of the Kent Downs area of outstanding natural beauty.

Challenges and achievements

The Covid-19 Pandemic in Swale

SBC's members and officers showed high levels of adaptability and innovation responding to the Covid-19 pandemic and worked in collaboration with a wide range of partners to facilitate and enable recovery. The council managed in the order of £50m to businesses and other organisations, involving over 10,000 grants made under the range of direct support schemes that were set up over the period of March 2020 to March 2022. The government's 'Everyone in' scheme which was delivered by the Housing Team assisted over 60 potential rough sleepers into emergency accommodation. The small Rough Sleeper Initiative team provided regular outreach work throughout lockdown to provide support and ensure no-one was overlooked. The Community Support team made contact with approximately 7000 individuals identified by the Government as Shielding or Vulnerable to ensure that they had adequate access to food and other essential supplies. With the support of partner agencies and the voluntary community sector the team ensured that food parcels were made available to those that needed them and that signposting was undertaken for all other essential needs.

Cost-of-Living crisis

The Swale Community & Partnership Team are currently working with Kent County Council (KCC) to deliver the Household Support Fund, this is government funding, to support vulnerable residents in need of help due to significantly rising living costs.

The scheme has been in place from 1 April 2022 and the current round ends 31 March 2024. So far, the scheme has provided food support awards to more than 14,800 households in the form of vouchers, food parcels, food shopping and hot meals. Over 7,100 households have received energy and water support

in the form of fuel vouchers, essentials linked to energy and/or water in the form of warm packs and hydro meters.

The Cost-of-Living Partnership Group was created in August 2022 to address issues impacting Swale residents and local organisations. The group now has a membership of over 40 organisations from across Swale including the Voluntary Community Sector (VCS) and statutory partners. The meetings have been attended by local members of parliament as well as regularly attended by SBC Councillors and has enabled a collaborative voice on behalf of the VCS, which has also stimulated project delivery and improved relationships

Water emergency

In July 2022, water supplies to homes and businesses in the Isle of Sheppey were lost due to a major fault in the primary water main that carries water to storage reservoirs on the Island. Due to the hot weather at the time, demand for water was exceptionally high and the council put in place its Emergency Plan to work with Southern Water to keep the community informed and distribute bottled water to the community. Coinciding with this, there was a water emergency in the eastern end of the borough. This is a good example of the resilience of the council in times of crisis and demonstrates the dedication of staff who were redeployed from their day jobs so they could work shifts helping the efforts on the ground handing out water and delivering to vulnerable residents. There was also a team working behind the scenes co-ordinating logistics for both emergencies.



Levelling-up funding

In 2022 the council secured £20 million of Government Levelling-Up Funding for the Sheerness Revival programme which will improve health, education, leisure and employment opportunities in Sheerness. The project will regenerate the Beachfields area which will include a new café, extend the healthy living centre to include an outdoor gym, soft-play and adventure golf areas. Funding will also expand Sheppey College to improve its further education offer and create workshop spaces at Masters House.

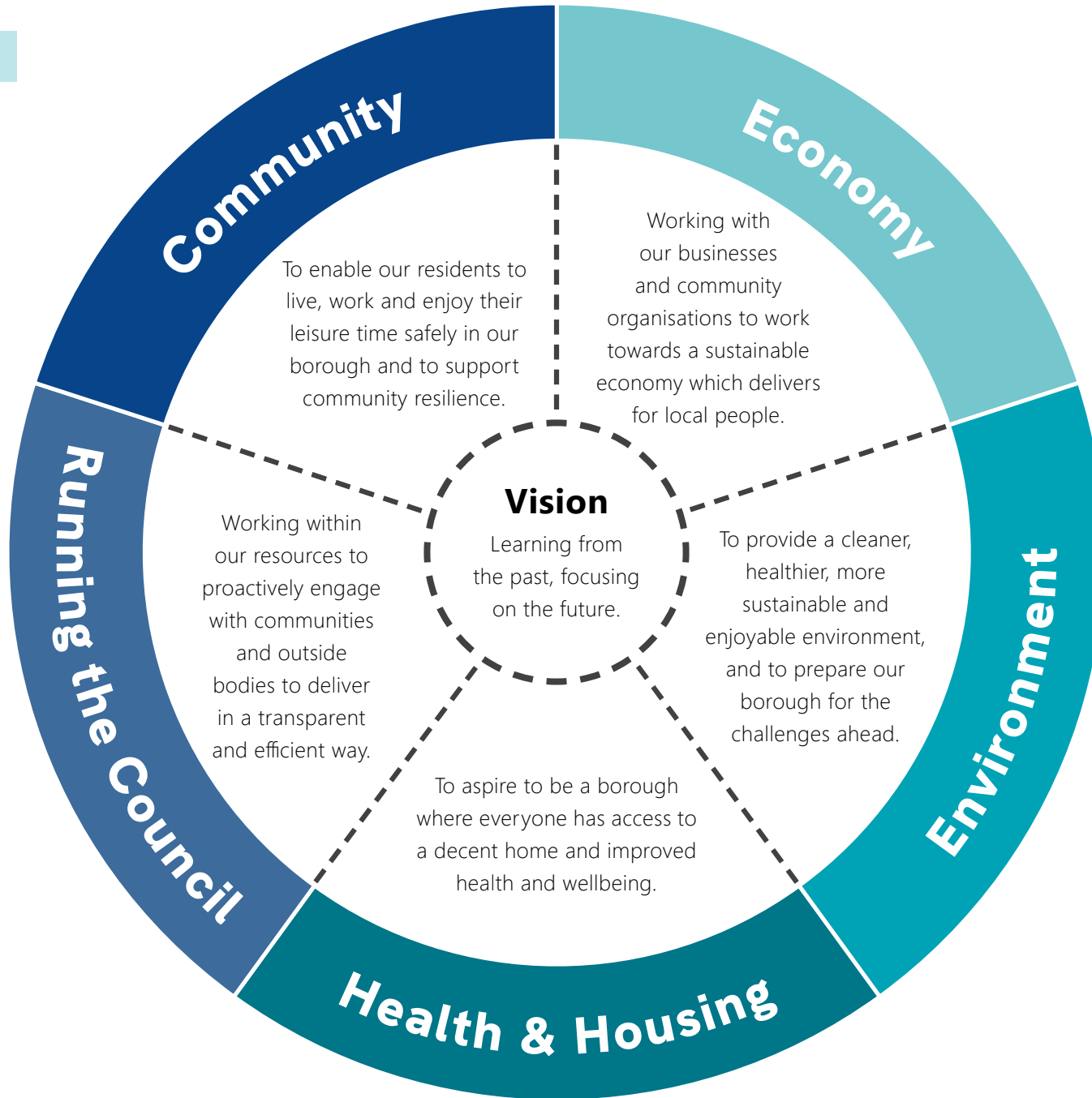
Public realm improvements

The last Corporate Plan cycle facilitated a number of improvements to public realm, including Faversham recreation ground, various churchyards and war memorials, several play areas including Beachfields Sheerness, Manor Grove Sittingbourne and Millfield in Faversham, and new public toilet facilities at Minster Leas, Milton Creek Country Park and Beachfields.

Murston HeArt Project

SBC awarded £100,000 to Murston All Saints Trust for the restoration and development of Murston Old Church. The project included restoring the 14th century chancel as an art gallery and meeting space, studios for visual arts and crafts, plus a community and education space and café which were completed in December 2022. A pocket park was created in the surrounding churchyard including seating, pathways and parking facilities.

Our priorities



Community – the current picture

This priority is focused on creating a sense of community across the borough. We will do this by working in partnership with the voluntary and community sector, town and parish councils and in maximising our partnership within the public and private sector. We want our residents to be proud of the borough they live in and have opportunities to live, work and enjoy their leisure time safely in our borough. Our aim is for our communities to be resilient focusing our support towards the most vulnerable.

The ongoing recovery from the pandemic means that communities are more focused on what they can do in their leisure time and the benefits to health of either for formal or informal activity. We will deliver services that provide access to a range of leisure facilities and play opportunities both in the built and natural environment. These community assets are pivotal, and the plan identifies how we will look to work with a range of partners and volunteers across the community to achieve this.

Through the pandemic and other emergencies that Swale has faced we have seen our community come together to support each other, we want to build upon this working with Town and Parish Councils to develop more localised emergency plans.

Swale has a vibrant Voluntary and Community Sector who deliver a broad range of services to every part and demographic of the borough, we will play our part in working with the sector to develop and become stronger. Building on the work through the Cost of Living Partnership which has enabled us to support the most vulnerable in our community.

We have a strong Community Safety Partnership in the borough, together we tackle the most significant issues that are affecting our communities. Tackling crime, anti-social behaviour and violence is a key consideration for the partnership. The Council will continue to play its part through using its powers under anti-social behaviour legislation, managing the town centre CCTV and using our licencing powers.

Parking, whether on or off-street, is an important consideration and links to a range of other functions such as safer streets, supporting the economy and regeneration and the encouraging environmental changes. This plan ensures we develop clear and transparent ways that we will manage this service moving forwards.

Ethnic groups Swale | (England) % of all people

Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh
1.5% (9.6%)



Black, Black British, Black Welsh,
Caribbean or African **2.3%** (4.2%)



Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups
1.8% (3.0%)



White **93.8%** (81.0%)



Other ethnic group **0.5%** (2.2%)



Community – what we will do:

- Provide the evidence base for the Local Plan to ensure our built and outdoor sport and health facilities meet the demands of the current and future populations.
- Review the Leisure centre service in order to deliver a range of options for residents to improve their health and wellbeing.
- Inspect and maintain the playgrounds across the borough and seek external contributions to enhance them wherever possible.
- Complete the Parking Policy review and implement the principles to ensure traffic flow across the borough.
- Work in partnership with the local towns and parishes and voluntary sector on our community assets – e.g., playgrounds, sports pitches and pavilions, community halls.
- To support local groups and organisations in Swale through the delivery of the member grants programme and review the funding mechanism of a community lottery scheme.
- Enable and empower the existing voluntary and community sector in Swale to develop, strengthen, grow, and improve sustainability for the future.
- To consult with our residents on ways of devolving power and giving communities a greater say in what happens in their locale potentially through the establishment of new Parish, Town and Community Councils.
- To support the voluntary and community sector to co-ordinate an effective response to the cost-of-living crisis, including effective distribution of the Household Support Fund.
- To work as part of the Community Safety Partnership to delivery priorities to address domestic abuse, crime, and disorder, ASB and support vulnerable people.
- To deliver the Safer Streets Programme in Sittingbourne and Sheerness town centres.
- To deliver an effective public space CCTV service and town centre radio scheme, and to grow wider service delivery by the control centre.
- To engage with schools to inform young people about democracy and the work of the council.

Economy – the current picture

Many partners have a role to play in securing economic prosperity – from external funders recognising Swale’s significant potential, to local businesses and skills providers, to business advocacy and support groups.

The award of £20m Levelling-Up funding for the Sheerness Revival programme is major endorsement of this potential. Sheerness Revival will deliver not just short-term benefits but will pave the way, and set the scene, for a collaborative approach to Island regeneration.

The priorities in our Corporate Plan are set against a backdrop of difficult financial times for local authorities, and our objectives seek to maximise the impact of partnership working. Through this approach, our objectives support a wider array of corporate priorities, such as the climate change and ecological emergency agenda.

Limited resources highlight the importance of a clear and robust approach to delivery and our Property Asset Strategy and Economic Development Strategy will support the Corporate Plan in driving efficiencies and identifying opportunities to deliver for our residents and businesses.

The Local Plan is a key tool to deliver corporate priorities and we will seek to ensure Swale’s Local Plan supports the future of our borough as a sustainable, forward-looking place to live, work and enjoy.

Employment history Swale | (England)

Not in employment: Worked in the last 12 months
10.9% (13.2%)



Not in employment: Not worked in the last 12 months
64.9% (61.1%)



Not in employment: Never worked
24.1% (25.6%)



% of people aged 16 years and over not in employment

Economic activity status Swale | (England)

Economically active: in employment
56.7% (57.4%)



Economically active: Unemployment
3.2% (3.5%)



Economically inactive
40.1% (39.1%)



% of people aged 16 years and over



Economy – What we will do:

- Use the Levelling-Up Fund as a catalyst for further regeneration on the Isle of Sheppey.
- Use the Sittingbourne Supplementary Planning Document as a model framework to support town centre regeneration.
- Implement the Property Asset Strategy to support best use of our assets and look to increase our income.
- Deliver economic development through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) (currently programmed to March 2025).
- Develop an Economic Development Strategy, building on the successes of the Economic Improvement Plan.
- Progress a Local Plan with local needs and capacity at its heart.
- Support skills development through advocacy and partnership working.
- Develop the borough's second Heritage Action Plan that reflects in-house and partnership capacity, to support and promote our outstanding assets.
- Seek partnerships and support funding bids to facilitate the re-opening of rail freight-heads at Ridham Dock, to get freight off the roads and onto rail.
- Support Network Rail to address the increased traffic congestion at Sittingbourne railway bridge.

Environment – the current picture

The scale of the challenge that the climate and ecological emergency presents us with is unprecedented. The crisis is not something that any of us are immune from, and we will be seeing the impacts on every aspect of our lives. While of course it needs global entities to do much of the work, we can make a small difference across our borough. Our last plan set a pathway for us to be an exemplar environmental steward and this plan looks to continue that approach. This cannot be done just by the Council's actions, we need everyone across the borough to take a positive step forward, whether that be residents at home, businesses or other public sector organisations. This plan looks to review our own targets for reaching net zero following recent national changes. This will include looking at the benefits that renewable energy can bring to our assets, reviewing policies and services to see what more can be done within the budget footprint, as well as maximising external investment in active travel.

The council is about to embark on a new waste, recycling and street cleansing contract. This is vitally important on a number of fronts. Keeping with the environmental challenges, it is imperative that we work with residents to ensure that firstly, we reduce the waste of materials. Doing so will not only support the environment, it will also help residents reduce the ongoing costs of replacing items. Secondly, if an item does need to be thrown away, we need to collectively ensure it goes to the right place, ideally being recycled for future use. The new contract is an opportunity to reset what we have been doing and to try to improve recycling participation, particularly in food and garden waste. We also need to reduce the amount of contamination in our recycling as the hard work of many residents is spoilt by others putting the wrong items in the recycling bins.

Finally, we want to focus on our public realm and how it looks. We want to improve the cleanliness of our borough through a more effective street cleansing contract. We will also work harder to tackle the problem of littering and fly-tipping. We also control large parts of public open space such as our parks, country parks, seafront and residential greens. Whilst our ability to fund major improvements is greatly reduced, we will do what we can to lever in external funding to improve our public spaces. Making sure that there is a balanced approach to keeping well-maintained areas of grass for people to enjoy sports and leisure time, but also providing areas that could be allowed to grow differently to promote ecological improvements.

Number of cars or vans ■ Swale | (England)

No cars or vans in household
16.6% (23.5%)



1 car or van in household
40.1% (41.3%)



2 cars or vans in household
30.5% (26.1%)



3 or more cars or vans in household
30.5% (26.1%)



% of people aged 16 years and over

Environment – What we will do:

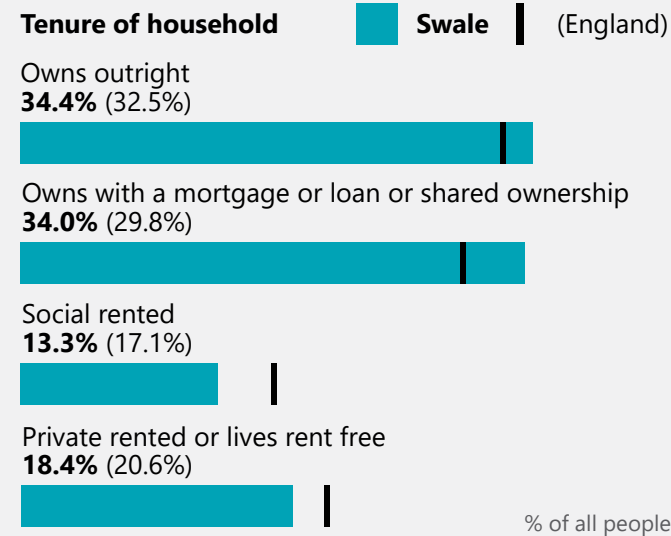
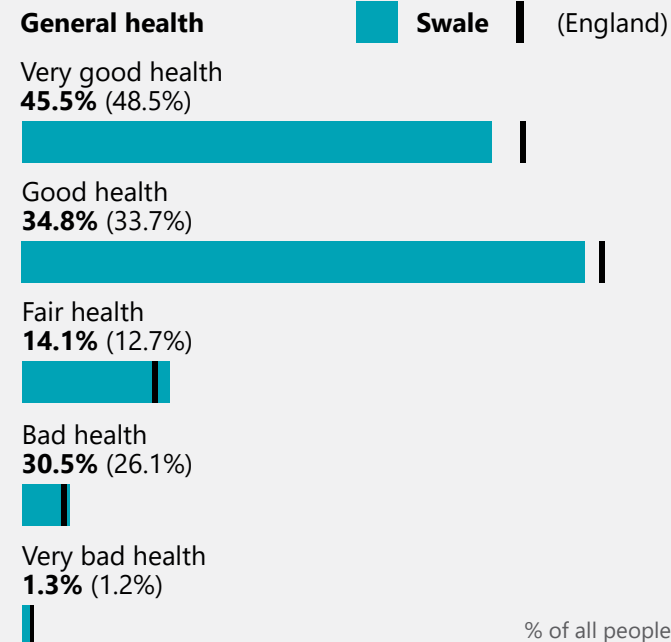
- Refresh the Climate and Ecological Emergency Action Plan and continue to be a leader in our work towards net zero.
 - Look at the feasibility of solar and renewable energy solutions for our estate, including council car parks.
 - Create an air quality policy that formalises what we can do to improve air quality for the benefit of our residents.
 - Form partnerships with key stakeholders to ensure we champion active travel opportunities.
 - Review the grounds maintenance service to ensure we maximise biodiversity gains, particularly with grass cutting, whilst continuing to provide places for residents to enjoy their leisure time.
 - Ensure key policy documents such as the Local Plan and Open Spaces Strategy lever in improvements in the quantity and quality of open space to meet the needs of a growing population.
 - Work with our partners and contractor to successfully deliver the new waste collection contract and undertake initiatives to deliver improved recycling participation.
 - Promote the circular economy by raising awareness of how the materials residents put in their bins can be used for the benefit of the environment.
 - Build on the benefits of an improved street cleansing service and work with residents to ensure they can take pride in their local community.
- Make best use of our resources alongside other enforcement agencies to investigate the most disruptive environmental crimes across the borough, in order to deliver the best environmental outcomes for residents.
 - Lobby for the best possible standards in marine and coastal environments, protecting our habitats and reducing the impacts of pollution.

Health & Housing – the current picture

We are currently in the midst of national housing crisis, and this is placing significant pressure on borough councils to keep up with increasing demand on those that find themselves homeless. We have made strong progress during the life of the last corporate plan to tackle the issue of homelessness and increase affordable housing. Yet still more needs to be done to tackle the ever-increasing demand on our services. The priorities within the corporate plan reflect how we intend to manage the service to make sure the service is as effective as possible and takes a long-term strategic approach to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping, we will also work with our partners to ensure that we reduce homelessness and enable affordable housing to be delivered and maintained in the borough.

Ensuring everyone has access to a decent home is a clear ambition of the council, during the life of this plan we will make steps towards this ambition through the use of our enforcement powers and looking at the introduction of new powers that will be introduced through the Renters Reform Bill.

Swale has significant health inequalities across the borough, these are more pronounced in our more deprived areas. As the borough council we have a significant place leadership role to ensure that health inequalities are addressed in everything we do. We will embed in the organisation through all our policies, consideration on the impacts of health and wellbeing of our residents and actively work with our partners through the Integrated Care System and Health and Care Partnership to make a step change in the health of our residents.





Health & Housing – What we will do:

- Work with Breaking Barriers Innovation playbook programme, to develop a long-term programme to tackle health inequalities on the Isle of Sheppey.
- Actively play our role in the Health and Care Partnership to address health inequalities in the borough.
- Ensure we address health inequalities in all our policies ensuring a blueprint for a healthy borough.
- Deliver the Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023 -2027, to meet and build on our statutory obligations to tackle homelessness and improve the standards of homes.
- Purchase accommodation to use as temporary accommodation to enable us to control costs and provide improved quality and more local provision.
- Prepare for the introduction of the Renters Reform Bill 2023 and ensure we implement the requirements when it receives royal ascent.
- Work in partnership to maximise the number and range of affordable homes in the borough.
- Ensure we meet our safeguarding obligations to keep children and vulnerable adults safe.
- Achieve Domestic Abuse Housing Accreditation, demonstrating our commitment to identifying abuse, preventing it and provide help to those affected.



Running the Council – the current picture

Like all councils, we are facing significant financial challenges at a time when the need for our services has never been greater. The council has worked hard to ensure that our main services have been protected and have worked to prioritise our spend to ensure that we protect the most vulnerable in our borough.

Our work in partnership with business and the voluntary sector has enable our money to go further and we need to continue this for the coming four years.

The way we provide services may need to look different but we will ensure that all our customers, residents and businesses will be able to access the help and support they need.

As one of the largest employers in Swale, we also are proud of our record for paying the real living wage to all staff including apprentices and providing high quality training and support to our staff. We need to continue to be the employer of choice for our staff to ensure we retain highly qualified and experienced people who share our values and share our passion for Swale and for providing high quality services.

Running the Council – What we will do:

We seek to provide a caring, responsible and accountable Council

- Maintain fiscally sound and stable position.
- Seek to make best use of assets and staff resources.
- Effective partnership working.
- Maximising opportunities for external funding and income streams.

We will focus on

- Reviewing our customer service options to enable better outcomes for customers.
- Ensuring inclusivity and equality for all residents.
- Improving communication with residents via all channels.
- Reviewing contract and partnership arrangements to ensure the most appropriate and efficient means of delivering services to our diverse communities and customers.
- Investing in projects which deliver financial returns and/or contribute to our wider objectives around Net Zero.
- Work towards maximising the rates of income on all commercial council properties.
- Maximising opportunities for external grant funding to deliver the Council's corporate objectives.
- Managing finances and having a sound culture of performance management robustly to ensure Value for Money.
- Provide services that meet the needs of residents.
- Create a culture that empowers and fosters an ambitious and motivated workforce.

We will embed a positive culture by

- Welcoming fair and appropriate challenge.
- Instilling the values of integrity, dignity, respect and pride.

We will have clear performance expectations by

- A sound culture of performance management.
- Ensuring core governance around corporate and financial planning, workforce planning, managing assets and sound and ethical procurement.
- Ensuring value for money is embedded in culture, service quality and social values.

We will promote strong staff/member relations by

- Maintaining effective governance that allows sound decision making.
- Working together to ensure that staff and elected members codes of conduct are met and adhered to.
- Embedding well-being policy.
- Supporting and training for effective workforce development.
- Appropriate training and support to be provided to our councillors.
- Actively promoting fairness, equality and diversity.
- Work collaboratively to alleviate difficulties with recruitment and retention.

In short, we will:

- Achieve a balanced budget.
- Demonstrate good governance.
- Develop and implement our Customer Access Strategy, ensuring customers can access our services in the most efficient and effective way.
- Provide value for money services.
- Support and develop staff.
- Ensure well managed assets.



Values and behaviours

We are doing a piece of work to review our values and behaviours which will be complete by April 2024. We are also developing a member/officer protocol to improve levels of collaboration, mutual understanding and tone of communication between some elected members and staff.

Our current values, which represent the beliefs and expected behaviour of everyone working for Swale 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

Monitoring

The priorities and objectives in this Corporate Plan will be monitored and reviewed annually at the Policy & Resources Committee.

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An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is a document that summarises how the council has had due regard to the public sector equality duty (Equality Act 2010) in decision-making.

When to assess

An EIA should be carried out when you are changing, removing or introducing a new service, policy or function. The assessment should be proportionate; a major financial decision will need to be assessed more closely than a minor policy change.

Public sector equality duty

The Equality Act 2010 places a duty on the council, when exercising public functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- 1) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010;
- 2) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- 3) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

These are known as the three aims of the general equality duty.

Protected characteristics

The Equality Act 2010 sets out nine protected characteristics that apply to the equality duty:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership*
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Ethnicity
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

*For marriage and civil partnership, only the first aim of the duty applies in relation to employment.

We also ask you to consider other socially excluded groups, which could include people who are geographically isolated from services, with low literacy skills or living in poverty or low incomes; this may impact on aspirations, health or other areas of their life which are not protected by the Equality Act, but should be considered when delivering services.

Due regard

To 'have due regard' means that in making decisions and in its other day-to-day activities the council must consciously consider the need to do the things set out in the general equality duty: eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

How much regard is 'due' will depend on the circumstances and in particular on the relevance of the aims in the general equality duty to the decision or function in question. The greater the relevance and potential

impact, the higher the regard required by the duty. The three aims of the duty may be more relevant to some functions than others; or they may be more relevant to some protected characteristics than others.

Collecting and using equality information

[The Equalities and Human Rights Commission](#) (EHRC) states that 'Having due regard to the aims of the general equality duty requires public authorities to have an adequate evidence base for their decision making'. We need to make sure that we understand the potential impact of decisions on people with different protected characteristics. This will help us to reduce or remove unhelpful impacts. We need to consider this information before and as decisions are being made.

There are a number of publications and websites that may be useful in understanding the profile of users of a service, or those who may be affected.

- The Office for National Statistics Neighbourhoods website <https://www.ons.gov.uk/>
- Kent County Council Facts and Figures about Kent <http://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/information-and-data/Facts-and-figures-about-Kent>
- Public health and social care data http://www.kpho.org.uk/search?mode=results&queries_exclude_query=no&queries_excludefromsearch_query=yes&queries_keyword_query=Swale

At this stage you may find that you need further information and will need to undertake engagement or consultation. Identify the gaps in your knowledge and take steps to fill these.

Case law principles

A number of principles have been established by the courts in relation to the equality duty and due regard:

- Decision-makers in public authorities must be aware of their duty to have 'due regard' to the equality duty
- Due regard is fulfilled before and at the time a particular policy is under consideration as well as at the time a decision is taken. Due regard involves a conscious approach and state of mind.
- A public authority cannot satisfy the duty by justifying a decision after it has been taken.
- The duty must be exercised in substance, with rigour and with an open mind in such a way that it influences the final decision.
- The person completing the EIA should have knowledge and understanding of the service, policy, strategy, practice, plan.
- The duty is a non-delegable one. The duty will always remain the responsibility of the public authority.
- A public authority is responsible for ensuring that any contracted organisations which provide services on their behalf can comply with the duty, are required in contracts to comply with it, and do comply in practice.
- The duty is a continuing one. It applies when a service, policy, strategy, practice or plan is developed or agreed, and when it is implemented or reviewed.
- It is good practice for those exercising public functions to keep an accurate record showing that they have actually considered the general duty and pondered relevant questions. Proper record keeping encourages transparency and will discipline those carrying out the relevant function to undertake the duty conscientiously.
- The general equality duty is not a duty to achieve a result, it is a duty to have due regard to the need achieve the aims of the duty.
- A public authority will need to consider whether it has sufficient information to assess the effects of the policy, or the way a function is being carried out, on the aims set out in the general equality duty.
- A public authority cannot avoid complying with the duty by claiming that it does not have enough resources to do so.

Lead officer:	Janet Dart – Policy & Engagement Officer
Decision maker:	Policy & Resources Committee
People involved:	Larissa Reed – Chief Executive Phil Sutcliffe – Communications & Policy Manager Janet Dart – Policy & Engagement Officer
Decision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy, project, service, contract • Review, change, new, stop 	This is a high-level strategic plan which has been developed following the formation of the new political administration in May 2023.
Date of decision: The date when the final decision is made. The EIA must be complete before this point and inform the final decision.	To approve the draft to go out to public consultation - Policy & Resources Committee: November 2023. To review the consultation responses and consider any amendments – Policy & Resources Committee: February 2024. To adopt the new corporate plan – Full Council: February 2024.
Summary of the decision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aims and objectives • Key actions • Expected outcomes • Who will be affected and how? • How many people will be affected? 	<p>The main purpose of the corporate plan is to set the council's strategic direction over the medium term. It is intended to influence and guide future detailed decision-making about resource allocation and activities, rather than to set out the detail of that decision-making in advance. It is therefore very difficult to foresee equality-related issues at this stage, and separate EIAs will need to be conducted on individual decisions as they arise.</p> <p>Insofar as it provides guidance for the allocation of council resources over the medium term, the corporate plan potentially has an impact on everyone living in, working in or visiting the borough.</p> <p>The plan proposes five overarching priorities for the council to focus on over the period 2023-2027.</p> <p>Community – to enable our residents to live, work and enjoy their leisure time safely in our borough and to support community resilience.</p> <p>Economy – working with our businesses and community organisations to work towards a sustainable economy which delivers for local people.</p> <p>Environment – to provide a cleaner, healthier and more sustainable and enjoyable environment and to prepare our borough for the challenges ahead.</p> <p>Health & Housing – to aspire to be a borough where everyone has access to a decent home and improved health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Running the Council – working within our resources to proactively engage with communities and outside bodies to deliver our priorities in a transparent and efficient way.</p> <p>Beneath each of these priorities sit a number of high-level objectives which are set out in detail in the draft corporate plan.</p>
Information and research: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline the information and research that has informed the decision. 	The text of the plan contains some contextual demographic information about the borough and its residents. However, the plan is (intentionally) at too abstract a level to have a definite impact on people with particular protected characteristics. More detailed

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include sources and key findings. • Include information on how the decision will affect people with different protected characteristics. 	pieces of work which will sit under the objectives in the plan will need to be subject to impact assessments in their own right in due course.
<p>Consultation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has there been specific consultation on this decision? • What were the results of the consultation? • Did the consultation analysis reveal any difference in views across the protected characteristics? • Can any conclusions be drawn from the analysis on how the decision will affect people with different protected characteristics? 	Significant internal and external consultation has taken place during the development of the plan, and public consultation will be undertaken and the results of that consultation factored in prior to final adoption of the plan. This will be described fully in the relevant section of the report to the Policy & Resources Committee.

Is the decision relevant to the aims of the equality duty?

Guidance on the aims can be found in the EHRC's PSED Technical Guidance -

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/equality-act-technical-guidance>

Aim	Yes/No
1) Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation	Yes
2) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it	Yes
3) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it	Yes

Assess the relevance of the decision to people with different protected characteristics and assess the impact of the decision on people with different protected characteristics.

When assessing relevance and impact, make it clear who the assessment applies to within the protected characteristic category. For example, a decision may have high relevance for young people but low relevance for older people; it may have a positive impact on women but a neutral impact on men.

Characteristic	Relevance to decision High/Medium/Low/None	Impact of decision Positive/Negative/Neutral
Age	Medium	Positive
Disability	Medium	Positive
Gender reassignment	Low	Neutral
Marriage and civil partnership	Low	Neutral
Pregnancy and maternity	Low	Neutral
Ethnicity	Low	Neutral
Religion or belief	Low	Neutral
Sex	Low	Neutral
Sexual orientation	Low	Neutral
Other socially excluded groups ¹	High	Positive

¹ Other socially excluded groups could include those with literacy issues, people living in poverty or on low incomes or people who are geographically isolated from services.

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<p>Conclusion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider how due regard has been had to the equality duty, from start to finish. • There should be no unlawful discrimination arising from the decision. <p>Advise on the overall equality implications that should be taken into account in the final decision, considering relevance and impact.</p>	<p>The corporate plan is in general at too high a level of abstraction for the aims of the equality duty to be relevant in any concrete way, although they are likely to be much more relevant to many of the pieces of work which will flow from it. The impact of the plan itself on the aims of the equality duty, without reference to these more detailed pieces of work, is at this stage considered to be low, and nothing requiring the mitigation of adverse impacts has been identified. It is believed at this stage that the plan involves no unlawful discrimination.</p>
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Timing

- Having ‘due regard’ is a state of mind. It should be considered at the inception of any decision.
- Due regard should be considered throughout the development of the decision. Notes should be taken on how due regard to the equality duty has been considered through research, meetings, project teams, committees and consultations.
- The completion of the EIA is a way of effectively summarising the due regard shown to the equality duty throughout the development of the decision. The completed EIA must inform the final decision-making process. The decision-maker must be aware of the duty and the completed EIA.

Full technical guidance on the public sector equality duty can be found at:

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/equality-act-technical-guidance>

Please send the EIA in draft to Janet Dart in the Comms and Policy Team (janetdart@swale.gov.uk) who will review it with colleagues and let you have any comments or suggested changes.

This Equality Impact Assessment should form an appendix to any EMT/SMT or committee report relating to the decision, and a summary should be included in the ‘Equality and Diversity’ section of the standard committee report template under ‘Section 6 – Implications’.

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Policy and Resources Committee	
Meeting Date	29 th November 2023
Report Title	LCWIP – Rural Highways Review – Borden & Grove Park Ward
EMT Lead	Emma Wiggins, Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods
Head of Service	Martyn Cassell, Head of Environment and Leisure
Lead Officer	Adrian Oliver, Active Travel Coordinator
Classification	Open
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That a Multi-Agency Task Force be formed and monitors the wider road network to ensure that the current programme of works and any future planned works, delivers the mitigations to allow for the regeneration of the shared space rural lanes and implement the interventions where and when appropriate. 2. That the Task Force encompasses Hartlip, Newington & Upchurch Ward and Bobbing Iwade & Lower Halstow Ward. 3. That the group assists Kent Highways and National Highways with traffic management plans by providing local knowledge, during the Key Street and Grovehurst roundabout works to endeavour to maintain the flow of traffic. 4. That the group liaises with large employers, logistics companies, public transport providers, Medway Council, Utilities, and other organisations, including schools to reduce the impact of congestion during the works. 5. That the group to manage publicity to help drivers avoid and reduce congestion

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to ask the Policy & Resources Committee to consider and agree the recommendations unanimously passed by Members of the Joint Transport Board.
- 1.2 This report provides a summary of a Briefing Paper (Annex A) analysing the rural road network in Borden & Grove Park Ward as part of the Swale Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan. During the course of the research, it became apparent that National Highways and KCC works on the M2, A249 and A2 are exacerbating the situation on the rural roads. The existing Kent Corridor meetings between National Highways and Kent Highways are not keeping the traffic moving expeditiously on the strategic network, nor minimising the impact on the wider road network.
- 1.3 This situation and the questions raised in the Briefing Paper, are repeated in rural Wards across the borough, where the growth in private car use, home deliveries, use of Satellite Navigation and size of vehicles, has made the shared spaces of our rural lanes inhospitable to residents and vulnerable road users.

2 Background

- 2.1 The Rural section of the Swale Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) is to develop walking, wheeling and cycling networks that connect rural settlements with the key conurbations and strengthen rural clusters in an intuitive way. The aim is to provide people with safe environments, to walk, wheel and cycle, enabling them to have the choice to undertake activities (like dog walking) and everyday trips (shopping, commutes & leisure) under their own steam. As well as providing urban residents and visitors the opportunity to actively explore our rural landscapes.
- 2.2 The examination of the roads and PROW in the Borden & Grove Park Ward was the first of a series of rural Ward exercises to gain a deeper understanding of the issues.
- 2.3 The issues in this Ward are wider than the immediate infrastructure. The position of the Ward, south and west of Sittingbourne, bounded by the A2, A249 (Key Street roundabout) and M2 (Junction 5) along with the presence of the Kent Science Park, means that there is considerable motor traffic passing through the rural lane shared space.
- 2.4 The ongoing National Highways works on Junction 5 and the imminent works on Key Street roundabout, plus the Wises Lane development will all exacerbate the situation. All these appear to be operating in silos with little appreciation of the impact on the wider road network. There has been issues with diversion routes causing gridlock in the borough. There is now an expectation that better coordination is needed to prevent gridlocks.
- 2.5 Reported peak journey times between Sheppey towns and Sittingbourne are now approaching an hour, queues are over the bridge and back to Minster, drivers are becoming stuck for long periods on narrow country lanes, traffic is noticeably increasing on rural lanes and school buses are arriving late. This situation is impacting the borough's economy and environment, as well as drivers and residents' health & well-being.

3 Proposals

- 3.1 Establish a Task Force to endeavour to maintain the continued flow of traffic on the A2, especially through Sittingbourne, the A249, and other key corridors, not relying on dispersion through residential streets and rural lanes.
- 3.2 The Task Force to be made up of officers and Members from Swale Borough Council – including the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Joint Transport Board – as well as representatives from Kent County Council Highways, National Highways, business and education.
- 3.3 Consideration to be given to the involvement of Utility Companies, Bus Operators and large logistics businesses.
- 3.4 Communications representatives from National Highways, KCC and Swale Borough Council to be closely involved.
- 3.5 The Task Force to be a roundtable, bringing local knowledge and feedback, to assist Kent Highways and National Highways in their duty to ensure the expeditious movement of traffic on the Highway network through Swale.
- 3.6 The initial Task Force meeting will consider the Terms of Reference and meeting frequency, which could be as often as every two weeks to enable actions to be taken to the Kent Corridor meeting.
- 3.7 The Task Force to continually assess its effectiveness. It is envisaged to operate during the works at Junction 5 of the M2, Key Street roundabout and Grovehurst roundabout. Continued operation after these works to be considered by the Task Force at the time.
- 3.8 The Task Force to direct liaison with large employers, logistics companies, public transport providers, Medway Council, utilities and other organisations, including schools, to reduce the impact of congestion during the works.

4 Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

- 4.1 An alternative option would be to continue the current approach to traffic management which is leading to considerable delays, lack of local input on proposed diversions and heavy traffic using and damaging inappropriate rural lanes.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 An LCWIP consultation took place in 2022 and residents have been contributing comments on [Widenmypath.com/Swale](https://www.widenmypath.com/Swale).
- 5.2 Discussions and correspondence have been had with Highway Officers at Kent County Council, but this needs a multi-agency response.
- 5.3 As part of the Task Force's work, on going feedback from drivers and businesses will be sought.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	Improving Community Safety through safer Highways.
Financial, Resource and Property	Cost of operating and funding the Task Force should be within the works project budgets held by Kent County Council and National Highways.
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	None at this stage
Crime and Disorder	Irresponsible/aggressive driving, particularly speeding, ignoring TROs
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	Poor air quality & noise pollution along the built-up areas of the A2 caused by additional congestion. Rural lane through traffic increases carbon emissions, particulate matter (PM1 and PM2.5), noise pollution and ecological harm.
Health and Wellbeing	The congestion along the strategic network (A2 & A249) is impacting the health & wellbeing of drivers, passengers and residents with issues including stress, air pollution & noise pollution.
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	None identified at this stage.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	None identified at this stage.
Equality & Diversity	Congestion has a greater impact on those who often have no choice but to drive. The residents most impacted by noise and particulate pollution are those in the homes closest to the roads.
Privacy and Data Protection	None identified at this stage.

7 Appendices

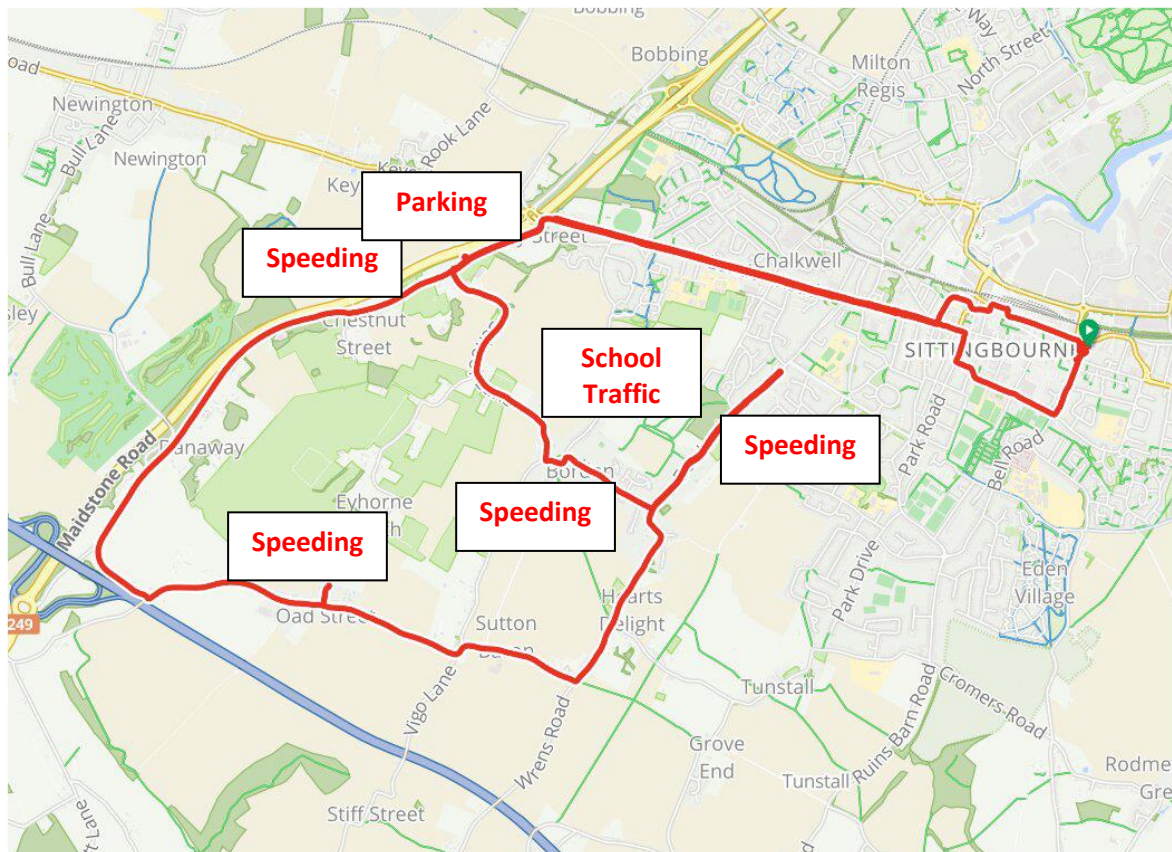
- 7.1 The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:
- Annex A – Copy of Borden & Grove Park Ward LCWIP Rural Lane Review Briefing Paper

8 Background Papers

None

Borden & Grove Park Ward LCWIP Rural Lane Review Briefing Paper

This Briefing Note follows an assessment of the country lanes in the Borden & Grove Park Ward as part of the boroughwide LCWIP Rural work. As part of this work the SYSTRA A249 Grovehurst Junction Improvement Scheme Walking, Cycling and Horse-riding Assessment Report was also reviewed. This work included a ride with the chair of Borden Parish Council to gain a better understanding of the traffic problems being faced by residents and businesses. The route taken of this ride is highlighted in red below.



Background

This Ward, like others across Swale, has suffered from a significant volume of inappropriate traffic using the rural lanes, at speed, to enable drivers to avoid perceived delays on the A2 and A249. This has been exacerbated by National Highways' ongoing work on Junction 5 of the M2. This has meant that rural settlements such as Oad Street, Chestnut Street, Danaway and Borden have been blighted by traffic.

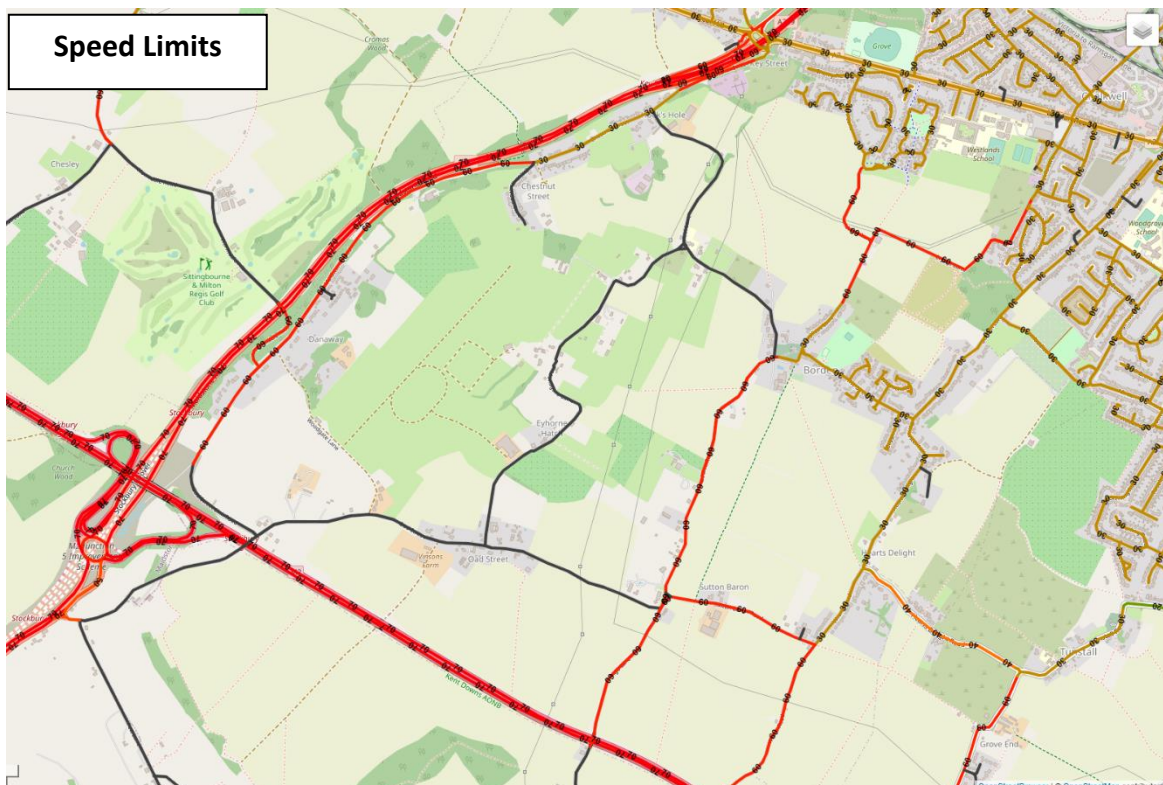
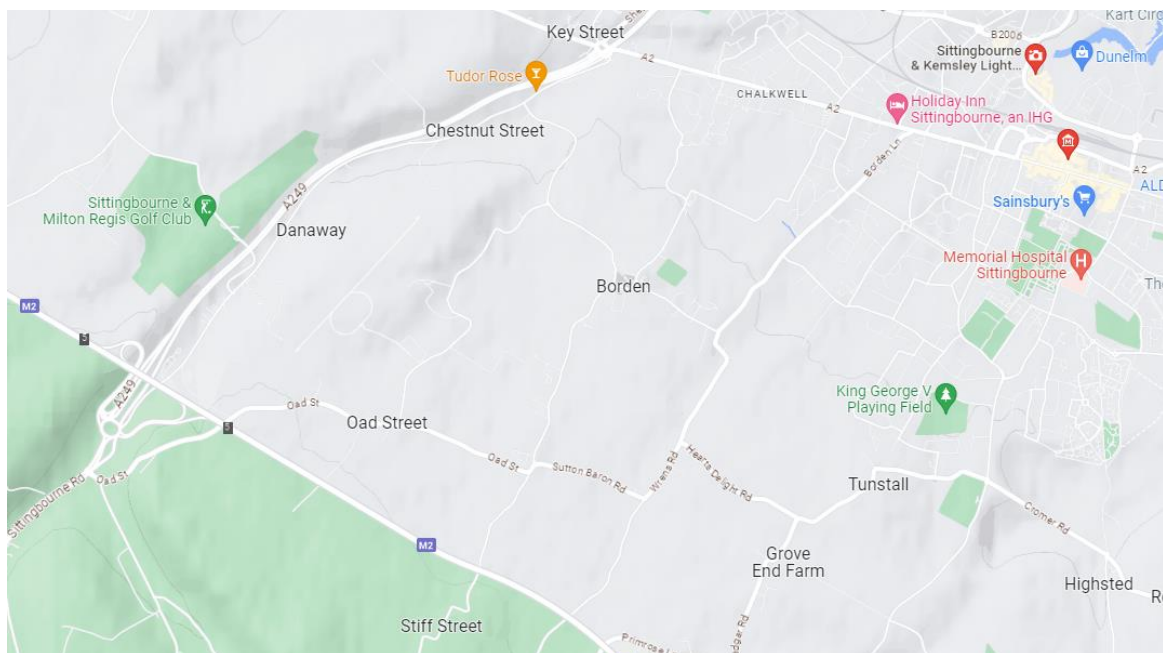
Consequences

Large volumes of speeding traffic on rural lanes across Borden has multiple impacts:

- Danger - Unlike roads designed for significant traffic volumes at speed, these rural lanes do not generally have footways and when they do, they are rarely continuous.
- Harming and reducing vulnerable road users – These rural lanes are utilised by a wider range of users, walkers, mobility aid users, cyclists and equestrians. All of whom are now prioritised above motorists in the Highway Code. A fact that is currently not yet reflected in Highways spending, design or usage.
- Speeding – Most of the rural lanes in Borden are “unrestricted”, giving drivers a green light to drive at whatever speed they feel appropriate – which is often inappropriate.
- Fear – This cannot be under-estimated. Every rural resident who has ever walked, wheeled, cycled or ridden along a country lane has experienced some vehicle incident that has put them in danger or harm. This is wrong. Rural lanes must be shared by all, there is no option, they are not the domain of motorised vehicles. This is why “through” traffic is so inappropriate. Billions have been spent building the strategic network specifically for drivers, make them use it.
- Farm Operations Interference - For farms, and there are several in this area, rural lanes are operational environments, faster higher volumes of traffic impede their work.
- Infrastructure Damage - More damage to rural lanes due to increased weight, width, as well as speed of vehicles leading to increased degradation of road surfaces and undermining road margins and verges.
- Noise - The increased noise, especially at speed, impacts residents’ mental health
- Health & Well-being – Rural traffic creates a car dependent culture amongst rural communities, which further increases the traffic on rural lanes. This increases residents’ inactivity which has long term negative health implications
- Property damage – as many properties are close to rural lanes, often right on the roadside – which was fine when the passing traffic was originally the occasional horse and cart – not a 36 tonne truck or 2.5 tonne SUV.
- Ecological damage – air pollution, noise pollution, run off pollution, as well as physical harm to flora and fauna
- Economic damage – we should be celebrating the glorious countryside of the Borden area, opening it up to nearby urban residents and visitors from further afield. This cannot be fully realised whilst inappropriate traffic dominates the landscape, suppressing the visitor economy.

Current and Future Road Layout

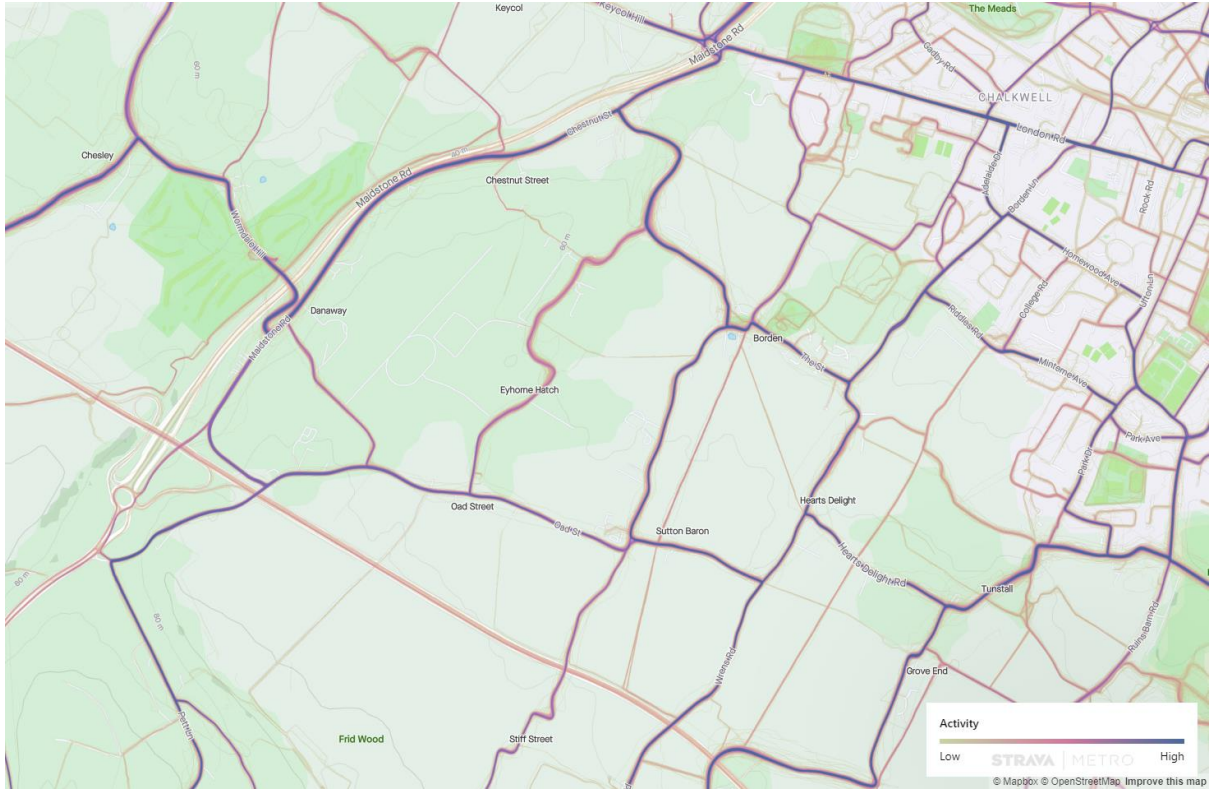
Below is the current road layout across the Ward. Works are being undertaken at Junction 5 of the M2 and are planned at Key Street roundabout and the Wises Lane development includes a new road and a roundabout on Chestnut Street (diagrams below). Despite this large amount of concentrated Highways work, no study has been commissioned on the cumulative impact of these improvements on the rural road network and the residents & businesses. It is obviously hoped that all these junction improvements will make life better for the rural residents. However, because the research has not been undertaken, despite the size of these Highways investments, we simply don't know. On the face of it, without further rural road traffic management, it appears that the strategic highways improvements could potentially make utilising the rural lane network more attractive, further increasing the flow of motorised traffic Northeast & Southwest.



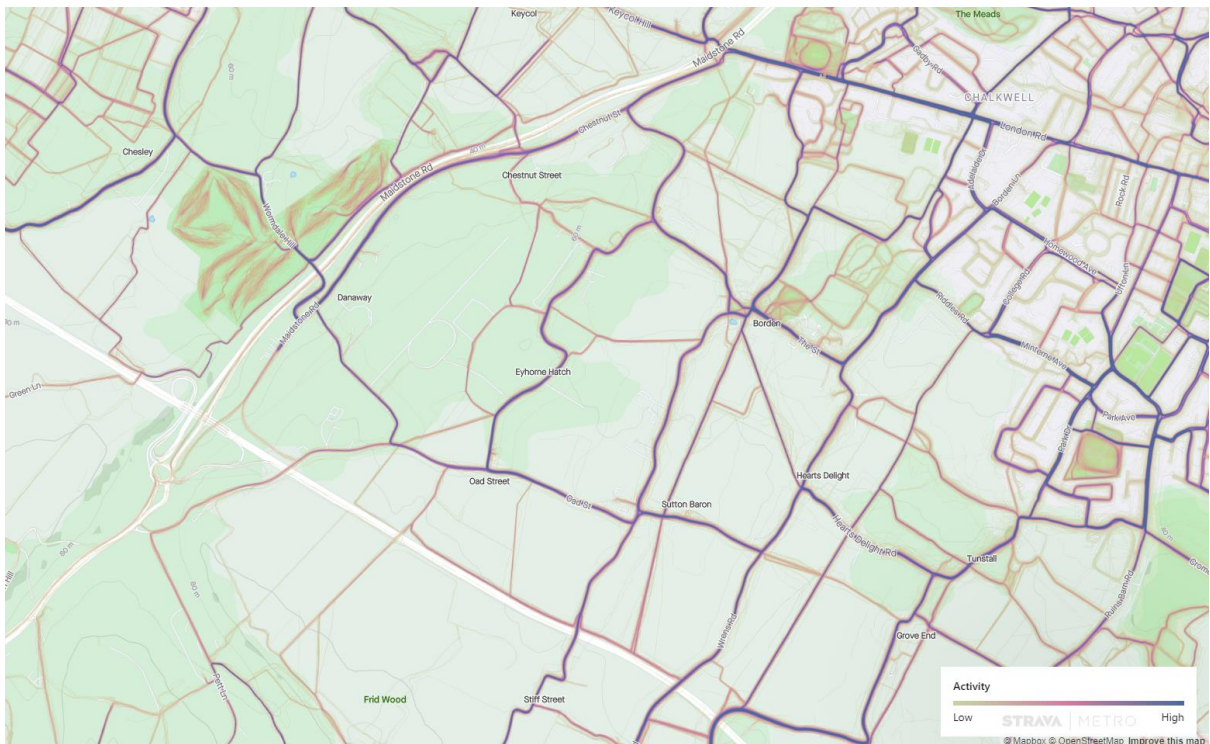
STRAVA METRO Heat Maps

These heat maps, utilising data collected between August 2022 and July 2023, show a high level of cycling, running and walking throughout the Borden area and across Key Street roundabout.

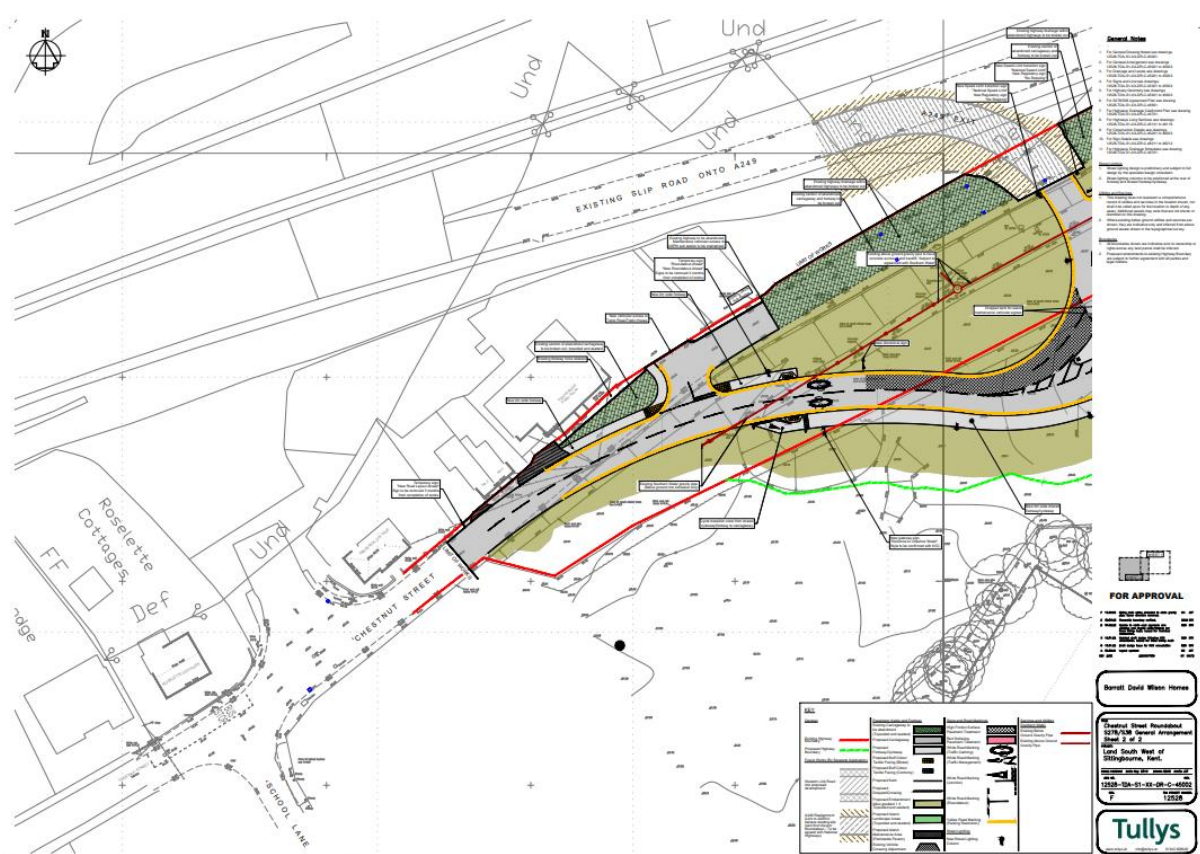
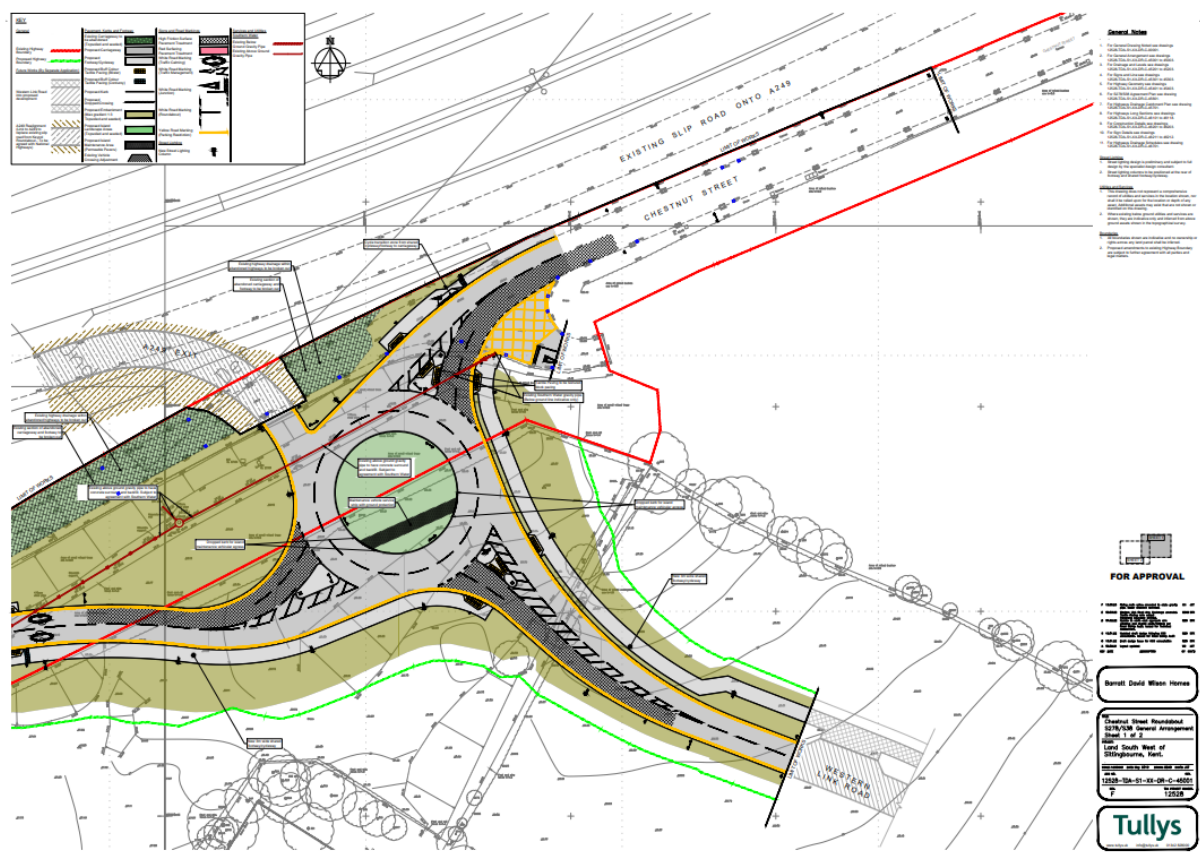
Bicycle and e-bike Riding



Walking & Running

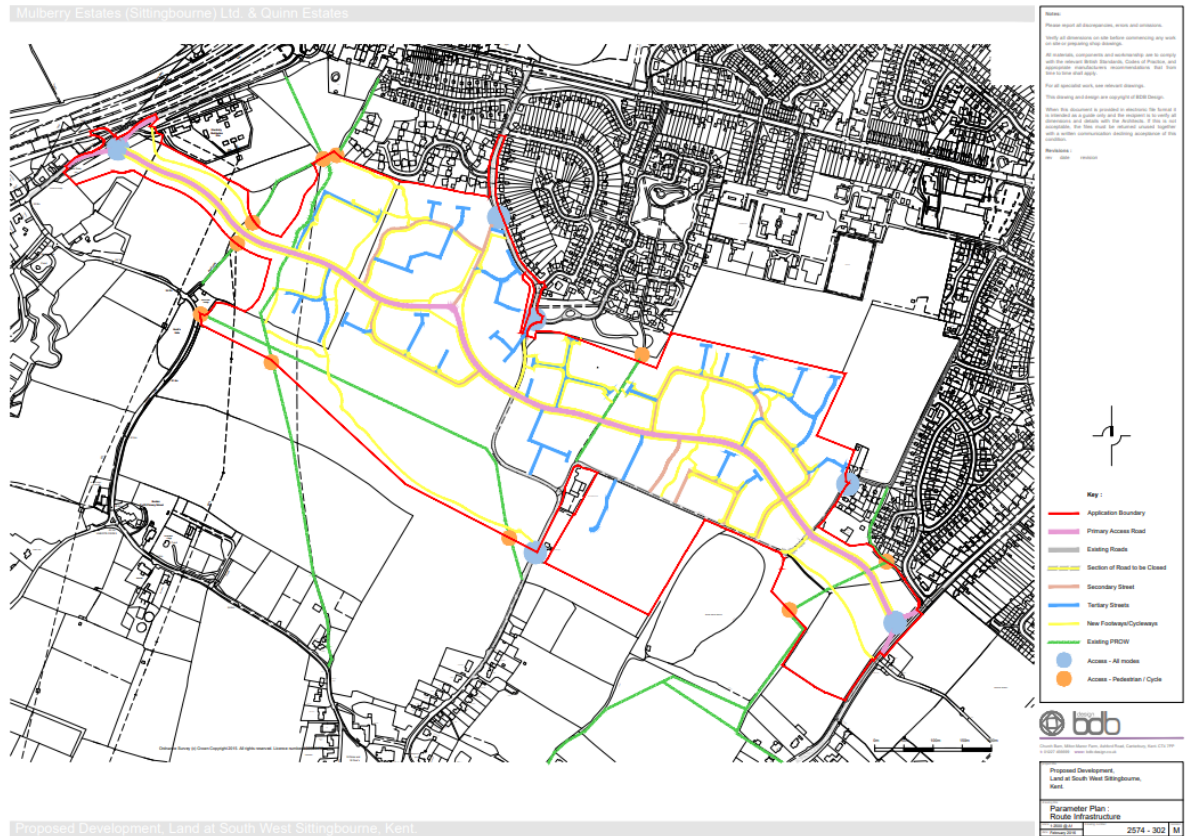


Chestnut Street roundabout plans

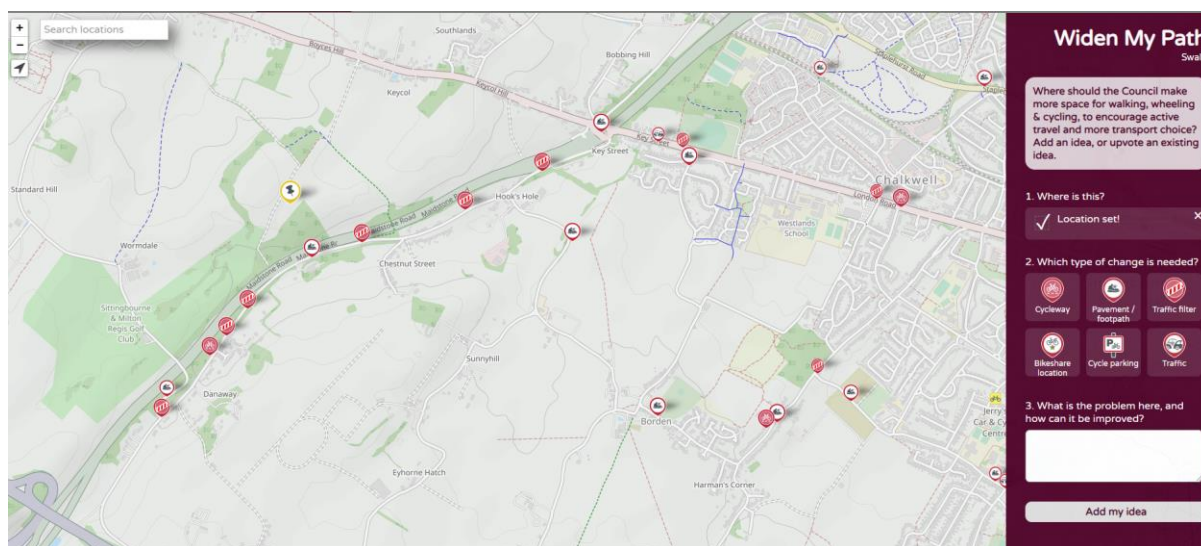


Wises Lane Development

This development will bring a new link road, the new Chestnut Street roundabout and more old-style shared paths as well a significant increase in daily vehicle movements. It cuts across several PROW which should mean some improvements to the network. Below is a map of the originally planned route infrastructure.



Widen My Path/Swale



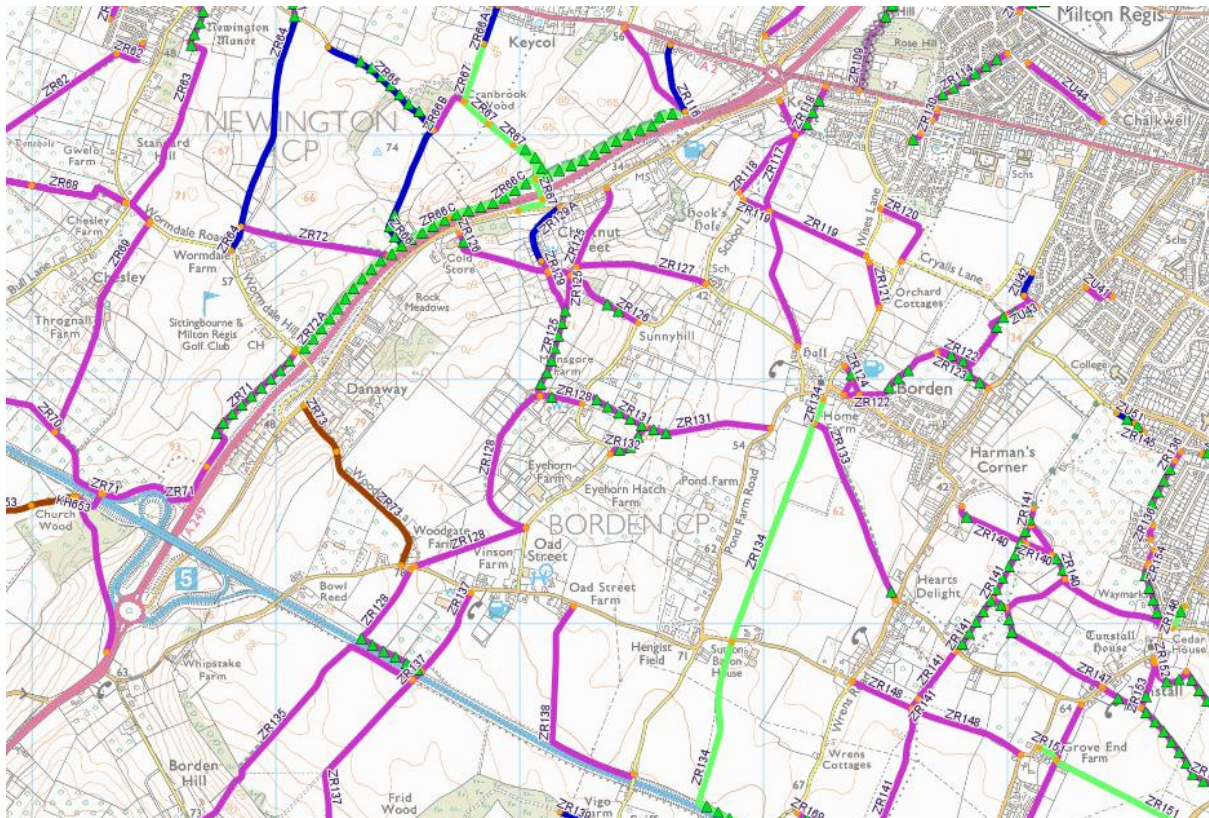
Since summer 2022 we have been collecting comments on www.widenmypath.com/swale on where residents think the Council should make more space for walking, wheeling & cycling, to encourage active travel and more transport choice. Below are the comments specifically relating to the Borden area.

Comment	Category	Likes
Speed of traffic through narrower part of Borden Lane in the village needs reducing. Speeds frequently exceed 30 mph.	Closure	0
Wide road with space for cyclepath. Rat run with ignored 30 mph limit. Main route to station and town centre.	cycleways	7
Narrow pavements on upper end of Borden Lane, fast moving traffic a danger	track	8
Traffic calming needed. Can't slow down to pull onto my driveway (southbound) without people overtaking me heading towards the junction of Wormdale/Maidstone at speed.	closure	7
Crossing needed to allow safe access to park and the Maypole.	track	7
Nowhere for pedestrians to shelter safely from passing traffic. This route is used by many including the elderly, parents with prams/buggies and school children daily. There is no pavement.	track	2
Foliage needs cutting back, footpath is becoming very narrow.	track	4
Poor visibility when accessing Borden Lane from Riddles owing to parked cars	closure	1
Road usually has a 50-mph speed limit which is too high. Current 30 mph widely ignored. Site of several accidents. Main cycle route to get to Maidstone or Newington to avoid main A249.	cycleways	9
Speeding and rat running which makes it very dangerous. Our car was hit parked on Maidstone Road by a speeding driver.	closure	9
This is a rat run and leads to a primary school. Speeds are too high, traffic volume too high. Pavements disappear and pedestrians need to cross the road several times to access the school.	closure	8
No pavement! Near primary school	track	9

Public Rights of Way Network

The Borden area is quite well served by the PROW network. Better utilisation of the paths could be encouraged through improvements making them less for the enthusiast and more accessible for everyday use. There are potentially some useful everyday trip routes such as:

- Hearts Delight-Borden (ZR133/ZR134) – 15-minute walk
- Chestnut Street-Borden Primary School (ZR125/ZR127) – 10-minute walk
- Danaway-Oad Street (ZR73) – 15-20 minute walk
- Borden-Westlands School (ZR122/ZU43/ZU42) – 25-minute walk



Questions that need answers

1. What traffic management is being put in place to deter traffic from using Chestnut Street and the Maidstone Road? Weight limits? Access Only? Speed Limits?
2. Why is the proposed cycling provision on the new Western Link Road shared use and only on one side?
3. Why are cycle tracks/footways not continuous at junctions, giving priority to vulnerable road users?
4. The pedestrian and cycling impact assessments in the Systra A249 Key Street Junction report dated 24/05/2022 erroneously assessed the demand for routes as “Low”, with one “Moderate”. Consequently, a higher level of intervention to tackle the severance impact of the revised junction needs to be proposed.
5. Likewise, the current level of walking, running and cycling along Chestnut Street – the proposed A249 slip road and access route to the Wisers Lane development, requires a greater level of active travel interventions. It is certainly not acceptable to direct cyclists from a shared path onto Chestnut Street north of the new roundabout.
6. How is traffic going to be managed to deter it from utilising J5-L3 to and from Sittingbourne through inappropriate rural lanes?
7. Is the Western Link road on the Wisers Lane development expected to divert traffic away from Borden and Oad Street and become the main route connecting south Sittingbourne to the A249?
8. If so, what additional work is being planned for Borden Lane (i.e. segregated cycle tracks)?
9. What plans are in place to improve traffic flows and therefore drivers’ perceptions, on the A2? Parking restrictions? System traffic light management? Junction improvements /reductions? Traffic reduction measures?
10. Has a study been commissioned to look at the cumulative impact of these Highways improvements on the wider road network? Is there an understanding of the impact on traffic flows beyond the A249 and the M2?
11. What analysis has been undertaken to understand the level of risk to future Highways funding for providing inadequate active travel facilities with highways improvements?
12. What mitigating traffic management is being implemented during the works to maintain traffic flow on the A2 and dissuade drivers from using inappropriate rural lanes?
13. What discussions are planned with large employers, logistics companies, Medway Council and other organisations, including schools, to reduce the impact of congestion during the works?

Policy & Resources Committee Meeting	
Meeting Date	29 November 2023
Report Title	Overarching Enforcement Policy
EMT Lead	Larissa Reed – Chief Executive
Head of Service	Philip Sutcliffe – Communications & Policy Manager
Lead Officer	Janet Dart – Policy & Engagement Officer
Classification	Open
Recommendations	Adopt the overarching enforcement policy at Appendix I.

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Council’s existing enforcement policy was approved and published in December 2020 and it is recommended it should be reviewed every three years. The purpose of this report is to seek the Policy & Resources Committee’s endorsement of the reviewed policy.

2 Background

- 2.1 The Council discharges a range of functions that involve enforcement activity including:
- Community safety;
 - Environmental health;
 - Environmental response;
 - Housing;
 - Licensing;
 - Parking; and
 - Planning.
- 2.2 It is good practice for the Council to have a single overarching policy in place that helps to promote efficient and effective approaches to regulatory inspection and enforcement as a means of improving regulatory outcomes without imposing unnecessary burdens. Councils are encouraged to comply with the Regulators’ Code.
- 2.3 The policy sets out the principles of good regulation (consistent, targeted, transparent, accountable, proportionate and helpful) which will be applied to all of the Council’s enforcement activity.

3 Proposals

- 3.1 The policy is intended as an umbrella policy and applies to all service areas of the Council with enforcement responsibilities.

- 3.2 The policy sits above all of the service-specific policies which the Council is responsible for discharging. The policy therefore sets out a short and succinct statement of what those who are on the receiving end of enforcement action should expect from the Council in how it discharges its responsibilities.
- 3.3 A review has been carried out and as there have been no changes to the Regulators' Code since the overarching enforcement policy was adopted in December 2020, the existing policy is still compliant with the Code.

4 Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

- 4.1 The alternative option is to not review the existing overarching enforcement policy. This has been discounted as the Council should check that the policy is still compliant with the Regulators' Code and no revisions to the code have taken place which may necessitate revisions to any council policies.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 Heads of Service, Mid Kent Legal Service and the team leaders responsible for discharging enforcement functions were consulted as part of the review of the existing policy.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	The policy aligns with several objectives in the adopted corporate plan 2020-2023.
Financial, Resource and Property	None identified at this stage.
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	The policy is intended to ensure that regulatory inspection and enforcement is carried out in a fair, practical and consistent manner. It is good practice to have this in line with the Regulators' Code, which sits under the Legislative and Regulatory Reform Act 2006. Mid Kent Legal Services were consulted during the review of the policy.
Crime and Disorder	The policy makes clear that enforcement activity is targeted on those whose activities give rise to the most serious offences.
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	Environmental response is one of the Council's key means of keeping the borough clean and enforcement activity is a primary means of achieving this.
Health and Wellbeing	None identified at this stage.

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

7 Appendices

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

Appendix I – Overarching Enforcement Policy

8 Background Papers

The Regulators' Code : <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/regulators-code>

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Swale Borough Council Overarching Enforcement Policy

1 - Introduction

- 1.1 This overarching enforcement policy is an umbrella policy and applies to all service areas. Extra requirements can apply to specific enforcement activities such as health and safety, licensing, planning and parking services.
- 1.2 Detailed service-specific policies and procedures, where needed, are held, updated and reviewed by the relevant service. Information about these may be obtained directly from that service.
- 1.3 This policy helps to make sure that regulatory inspection and enforcement is carried out in a fair, practical and consistent manner.
- 1.4 This policy has been written in accordance with the Regulators' Code April 2014 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/300126/14-705-regulators-code.pdf. In certain circumstances we may conclude that a provision in the Code is either not relevant or is outweighed by another provision. We will ensure that any decision to depart from the Code will be properly reasoned and based on evidence.

2 - Council aim and vision

- 2.1 Swale Borough Council has set out its strategic aims and vision in the Corporate Plan and the enforcement services of the Council carry out their duties in support of these. The specific aims that relate to enforcement services are found in service plans together with the core enforcement activities of the service.
- 2.2 Good regulation and enforcement helps to support the local economy and a safer and more enjoyable environment for residents.

3 - Principles of good regulation

Proportionality

- 3.1 The principle of proportionality is that enforcement action taken against a person, organisation or business is suitable and appropriate in the circumstances. It should also justify the level of resources to be implemented taking into account factors such as interests, resources and objectives.
- 3.2 To achieve proportionality, Swale Borough Council will carefully consider all the issues relevant to an enforcement matter. This could include issues such as the

seriousness of the offence, the offender's circumstances, the interests and safety of the public and environment.

- 3.3 In all cases, Swale Borough Council will follow the relevant guidance to deliver best practice.

Consistency

- 3.4 Swale borough council will carry out enforcement action in a fair and consistent manner in accordance with its policies and procedures. Similar approaches will be taken in similar circumstances to achieve similar ends, although each case will be assessed on its own merits. The willingness to comply and co-operation of the person, organisation or business subject to enforcement action may also be taken into account in deciding how and what enforcement action should be taken.

Targeted

- 3.5 Targeting means making sure that enforcement activity is targeted on those whose activities that give rise to the most serious offences. It also means that any enforcement action is focused on those with a duty imposed on them by Statute and where as a result of their breach of duty any offences committed by others are likely to be facilitated.
- 3.6 Any enforcement action will be targeted against the person, organisation or business who is under a duty, such as employers, employees, owners of premises, householders, self-employed persons, or individual members of the public.

Transparency

- 3.7 Transparency is important in maintaining public confidence in our capability. We will help those being regulated to understand what they need to do and how they can achieve compliance. In all matters the various enforcement teams will also clearly identify themselves and their role.
- 3.8 Swale enforcement officers will explain carefully (if necessary in writing) why the action is necessary, who must carry it out, and by what date it must be carried out.
- 3.9 Where appropriate, Swale Borough Council will give reasonable opportunity for discussion before formal enforcement action is taken. Where it is appropriate but not possible, we will give a written explanation of our reasons for taking immediate action and this will be done as soon as practicable.
- 3.10 Information and advice will be provided in language or in a format which is easy to understand.

Accountability

- 3.11 Swale Borough Council is accountable to the public for its actions. This means we must have policies and standards which are easily accessible and understood, and effective and easily accessible mechanisms for dealing with comments and handling complaints.
- 3.12 Swale Borough Council has an internal procedure for dealing with complaints against its services. Details are available on the Council's website <https://www.swale.gov.uk/compliments-and-complaints/>. In addition to Swale Borough Council's own complaints procedures, the Local Government Ombudsman hears complaints regarding local government maladministration, and details of this service are also available from the council.
- 3.13 Where a right of appeal is applicable we will give out information on how to do this with the statutory notices or warnings served by us.

Helpfulness

- 3.14 Our staff will deal courteously and efficiently with all people, organisations and businesses they come into contact with. Staff will, in the usual course of events, identify themselves by name, and contact numbers will be made available as soon as practicable after the event. We will communicate by email where this is possible and preferable.

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Policy and Resources Committee Forward Decisions Plan – 29 November 2023 meeting

Report title, background information and recommendation(s)	Date of meeting	Open or exempt?	Lead Officer and report author
Treasury and Investment Strategy	7 February 2024	Open	Head of Service: Lisa Fillery Report author: Claire Stanbury
Proposed Bollard Removal at James Street, Sheerness	7 February 2024	Open	Head of Service: Martyn Cassell Report Author: Donna Seager
Capital Strategy	7 February 2024	Open	Head of Service: Lisa Fillery Report author: Claire Stanbury
Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy	7 February 2024	Open	Head of Service: Lisa Fillery Report author: Claire Stanbury
Sheerness Marine Town Conservation Area Reviews	7 February 2024	Open	Head of Service: Joanne Johnson Report Author: Jhilmil Kishore
Corporate Equality Scheme	7 February 2024	Open	Head of Service: Larissa Reed Report Author: Janet Dart
Final Budget	7 February 2024	Open	Head of Service: Lisa Fillery Report author: Claire Stanbury
Faversham Neighbourhood Plan	20 March 2024	Open	Head of Service: Joanne Johnson Report Author: Jhilmil Kishore
Faversham Town and Faversham Preston Next Conservation Area Review	20 March 2024	Open	Head of Service: Joanne Johnson Report Author: Jhilmil Kishore

Q3 Budget Monitoring	20 March 2024	Open	Head of Service: Lisa Fillery Report author: Claire Stanbury
Enforcement Local Plan – draft for consultation	20 March 2024	Open	Head of Service: Emma Wiggins Report Author: Joanne Johnson

Policy and Resources Committee	
Meeting Date	29 November 2023
Report Title	South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership Business Plan 2024 – 2027
EMT Lead	Emma Wiggins Director of Regeneration & Neighbourhoods
Head of Service	Joanne Johnson Head of Regeneration, Economic Development and Property and Interim Head of Planning
Lead Officer	Joanne Johnson Head of Regeneration, Economic Development and Property and Interim Head of Planning
Classification	Part Open / part exempt
Recommendations	1. Members are asked to provide comment on the draft South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership Business Plan for 2024 – 2027.

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek comments on the draft South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership (STGBC) Business Plan for 2024 – 2027.
- 1.2 The STGBC Constitution states that before 1 October each year the Joint Committee is required to approve and send its draft Business Plan for the following year to each partner authority for comment. This draft was considered at the STGBC Joint Committee meeting of 21 September 2023.
- 1.3 This draft Business Plan sits within the Council’s membership of the fourth term of the STGBC partnership.
- 1.4 Following consideration by each partner authority, the revised business plan will be reviewed at the December Joint Committee, including the final financial statement. This will then return to each authority for ratifying in the new year.
- 1.5 The Joint Committee has a duty under the Memorandum of Agreement to formally adopt the Business Plan at the Annual General Meeting.

2 Background

- 2.1 The STG Building Control Partnership (involving Medway, Gravesham and Swale) was formed in October 2007 with Canterbury joining in April 2018. Under the terms of the Memorandum Agreement between the partner authorities, a rolling business plan needs to be agreed.

- 2.2 Each partner authority is required to comment on the draft business plan and advise the STBGC Joint Committee.
- 2.3 Much of the STGBC operation is subject to competition from approved inspectors. The service however retains statutory responsibilities regarding public protection e.g. dangerous structures, demolitions, unauthorised works, etc
- 2.4 The service finds itself increasingly competing with approved inspectors within a more competitive and diminishing market. This has put pressure on income generation within the service, and correspondingly has put pressure on the resourcing of the service itself. This has been exacerbated by the Building Safety Act 2022 which has mandated the licensing of all individuals within the profession, placing further pressure on staff resources.
- 2.5 The Business Plan (Appendix I) outlines how the building control function will be delivered on behalf of the partnership local authorities up until 2027, and forecasts budget contributions from 2024/25 to 2026/27.
- 2.6 The Business Plan presents three agreed objectives, and includes an action plan and targets to achieve them:
- Embracing our customer needs and expectations
 - Maximisation of technology to reduce cost and continue to improve the way we work
 - Valuing, supporting and development of staff

3 Proposals

- 3.1 Members are asked to comment on the draft South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership Business Plan for 2024 – 2027.

4 Alternative Options

- 4.1 The Council could consider removing itself from the partnership (by giving the requisite year's notice). However, one of the recognised successes of STGBC is the efficiencies secured by economies of scale. This has been borne out through separate reviews undertaken by the partner authorities. There is also considerable value in resilience and risk mitigation through being part of the partnership. This option is not recommended.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 The draft Business Plan was approved by the STGBC Joint Committee at its meeting on 21 September 2023. Councillor Gibson is Swale Borough Council's representative on this Joint Committee.
- 5.2 Officer input had been sought and provided on earlier drafts.

5.3 This same process is carried out with each of the partner authorities.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	The Business Plan supports the delivery of priority 4 of the Corporate Plan, making the Council fit for the future, by supporting the operation of an efficient and resilient partnership arrangement.
Financial, Resource and Property	<p>Costs involved in being a partner authority are set out in the attached appendix.</p> <p>The Medium Term Financial Plan accommodates the proposed contributions as stated above.</p> <p>Finance colleagues were consulted on the draft plan.</p>
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	<p>The Partnership and Joint Committee operate under a memorandum of agreement signed by each of the partner authorities.</p> <p>Legal colleagues were consulted on the draft plan.</p>
Crime and Disorder	Effective control and enforcement of building standards and dealing with dangerous structures is consistent with an increased perception of security and wellbeing.
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	None identified at this stage
Health and Wellbeing	None identified at this stage.
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	None identified at this stage.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	None identified at this stage.
Equality and Diversity	None identified at this stage.
Privacy and Data Protection	None identified at this stage.

7 Appendices

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

Appendix I: STBGC Business Plan (exempt)

8 Background Papers

None.

DRAFT

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

Document is Restricted

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