Dunstable Town Council Grove House 76 High Street North Dunstable Bedfordshire LU6 1NF

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Paul Hodson, Town Clerk and Chief Executive

Date: Friday 7 November 2025

TOWN COUNCIL

Dear Councillor,

A meeting of the **Finance and General Purposes Committee** will be held on **Monday 17 November 2025**, at **Grove House** in the **Council Chamber** at **7 pm**. To view the meeting live or afterwards use this link: <u>livestream</u>. Members of the public and press are also welcome to attend in person. Members of the public may ask a question during the public session, either in person or online via MS Teams. If you intend to raise a question, it is helpful to let us know beforehand to give councillors a chance to prepare an informed answer. Please contact the Council via <u>democratic@dunstable.gov.uk</u> or 01582 513000 by 4 pm on Friday 14 November 2025.

This meeting will be filmed by the Council and broadcast live and will be capable of repeated viewing. If you are seated in the Council Chamber it is likely that the cameras will capture your image. By your presence you are deemed to consent to be filmed, and to the use of those images and sound recordings for webcasting or training purposes.

If you address the committee in person or via Teams, your contribution will be recorded and broadcast, unless this is during a private session, as permitted by the Access to Information provisions.

Please see the below QR code to access the full agenda:



Yours faithfully

Paul Hodson

Town Clerk and Chief Executive

Members are reminded when making decisions that the Public Sector Equality Duty 2010 requires Members to have due regard to the need to: Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act, advance equality of opportunity between people who share a characteristic and those who don't, and to foster good relations between people who share a characteristic and those who don't.

To: All Members of the **Finance and General Purposes Committee:** 

John Gurney (Council Member), Liz Jones (Council Member), Kenson Gurney (Council Member), Matthew Brennan (Council Member), Matthew Neall (Council Member), Philip Crawley (Council Member), Wendy Bater (Council Member), Mark Davis (Council Alderman (Council Attwell (Council Member). Gregory Member), Richard Member), Johnson Tamara (Council Kotarski (Council Member), Nicholas Member), Louise O'Riordan (Council Member), Michelle Henderson (Council Member), Paul Hodson (Town Clerk and Chief Executive), Peter Hollick (Council Member), Trevor Adams (Council Member), Sally Kimondo (Council Member), Robert Blennerhassett (Council Member)

# **AGENDA**

263/25 Apologies for Absence

264/25 Declarations of Interest

265/25 Public Question Time

266/25 To approve as an accurate record the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 22 September 2025.

267/25 Action Tracker

To receive updates on previous actions

268/25 Finance Report

269/25 Compliance and Facilities Report

270/25 Marketing and Communications Report

271/25 Reference Up Reports

Personnel Sub-Committee held on 6 November 2025 (Minute 244/25)

272/25 Mayoral Allowance

273/25 Artificial Intelligence Use Policy

## 274/25 Corporate Services Budget Report 2025/26

## 275/25 Reports from Outside Organisations:

Citizen's Advice Management Committee – Councillor Attwell

Dunstable International Town Twinning Association – Town Mayor and Councillors Hollick and Kenson Gurney

Hospice at Home Management Committee – Councillor Wendy Bater

Ashton Almshouses Charity – Councillors O'Riordan and Alderman

Ashton Schools Foundation – Councillors Hollick and Alderman

Chew's Foundation – Councillors Brennan and Kimondo

Poor's Land Charity – Councillors Bater and Jones

Lockington Charity and Marshe Charity - Councillors Kimondo and Jones

Dunstable and District Scout Council Executive – Councillor Kotarski

## 276/25 Motion to exclude public and press

RECOMMENDED In terms of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972, the following items will be likely to disclose exempt information relating to establishment and contractual matters and it is, therefore, RECOMMENDED that pursuant to the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 the public and press be excluded.

277/25 Staffing Report

278/25 Date of the next meeting

Monday 26 January 2026 at 7pm

## **DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL**

# MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

## **HELD ON MONDAY 22 SEPTEMBER 2025 FROM 7 PM**

**Present:** Councillors Nicholas Kotarski (Chair), Johnson Tamara (Vice-Chair), Sally Kimondo (Mayor), Richard Attwell (Deputy Mayor), Greg Alderman, Philip Crawley, John Gurney, Kenson Gurney, Peter Hollick, Liz Jones and Matthew Neall

**In Attendance:** Paul Hodson (Town Clerk and Chief Executive), Lisa Scheder (Head of Corporate Services and Responsible Financial Officer), Kelley Hallam (HR & Payroll Manager), Katie Williams (Corporate Performance & Compliance Manager) and Rachel Connor (Corporate Marketing and Communications Officer)

Public: Nil

204/25 - Apologies for Absence

Councillors Matthew Brennan, Michelle Henderson and Louise O'Riordan

205/25 - Declarations of Interest

There were no specific declarations of interest

206/25 - Public Question Time

There were no questions from the public

207/25 - To approve as an accurate record the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 16 June 2025

**RESOLVED:** The Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee

held on 16 June 2025 were approved as a correct record and were signed

by the Chair.

208/25 - Action Tracker – to receive updates on previous actions

Members received and noted the Action Tracker summarised by the Town Clerk and Chief Executive.

Members and officers all stated that the Heritage Open Day had been a huge success and that 175 people had attended Grove House to view displays and speak with those present. Feedback received had been extremely positive and members thanked all those that took part and helped organise the event.

209/25 - Corporate Compliance and Facilities Report

The Corporate Performance and Compliance Manager presented a detailed report which included facility management, policy updates, health and safety and procurement.

Members were requested to clarify any issues relating to CCTV to enable the Corporate Performance and Compliance Manager to produce a detailed scope for a review of CCTV across the Council's estate. Members felt that all areas that the Council maintained should be included in the review

Action: Corporate Performance and Compliance Manager

The Committee reviewed the updated policies provided.

**RESOLVED**: i) to recommend the Health and Safety Policy be approved by the Council

- ii) that the updated Information Security Policy be approved
- iii) that the updated Data Protection Policy be approved

Members discussed the Carbon Action Plan and though they acknowledged that the aim for the Council to be carbon neutral was not achievable, they thought it was still important to set goals and timescales. It was therefore;

#### RESOLVED:

- i) to defer considering whether the Environmental Working Group should be disbanded to the following meeting
- ii) Not to adopt the Carbon and Energy Action Plan as presented
- iii) that the Carbon and Energy Action Plan be updated with goals and set timescales and brought back to the next meeting of the Committee
- iv) that the revision of the Corporate Plan action be deferred until the Carbon and Energy Action Plan had been updated and adopted

**Action:** Corporate Performance and Compliance Manager

#### 210/25 - Finance Report

The Head of Corporate Services summarised the report provided to members.

#### RESOLVED:

- i) to note the revenue budget position and year end forecasts for the current financial year to 31 August 2025
- ii) to note the Council's earmarked reserves as at 31 August 2025
- iii) to note the current investments
- iv) to note the current direct debits as at August 2025
- v) to note that the annual pay award for 2025/2026 had been included in staff

pay

Members were informed that the decoration of the Ceremony Room was now complete and that to enable the room to be utilised, 42 matching chairs were required. Mainly due to the pay award being lower than budgeted, the revenue budget for Corporate Services was forecast to be underspent. Members were therefore requested to approve the expenditure of approximately £3,000 for furnishing the Ceremony Room from this underspend.

**RESOLVED:** that the release of approximately £3,000 from forecasted revenue underspend within Corporate Services, for the purchase of furniture for the Ceremony Room and registrar rooms at Grove House, be approved

## 211/25 - Corporate Plan Update

The Corporate Performance and Compliance Manager presented a detailed report that updated Members on the progress of the Corporate Plan objectives, actions and key performance indicators associated with the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

Members noted the details within the report.

## 212/25 - Marketing and Communications

The Marketing and Communications officer summarised the report.

Members stated how much they liked the new website, and that it was much easier to navigate and noted the increase of the Council's social media followers.

Members were requested to approve a proposed calendar of surgery meetings. Members discussed the benefits of holding surgery meetings, but Members noted that attendance was poor, except when held on the market.

It was proposed, seconded and

**RESOLVED:** that Councillor surgeries would be held quarterly and only at the market or on event days

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive also suggested trialling an open, public session before Council meetings, which Members agreed to trial.

**Action:** Democratic Services Manager and Corporate Marketing and Communications Officer

## 213/25 - Referral Report from Personnel Sub-Committee

Members received and discussed a reference up from Personnel Sub-Committee which was summarised by the Town Clerk and Chief Executive.

**RESOLVED:** i) that the Vivup, Home & Electronics staff benefit scheme be amended to a salary sacrifice scheme from April 2026 be approved

- ii) that the adoption of the Vexatious Complaints policy be for approved
- iii) that the adoption of the Portable Electrical Appliance Safety policy be approved

# 214/25 - Motion to exclude press and public

#### **RESOLVED:**

in terms of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972, the following item would be likely to disclose exempt information relating to establishment and contractual matters and therefore, pursuant to the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 the public and press be excluded.

#### 215/25 - Members Update

### RESOLVED:

- i) to agree to encourage all councillors to attend the mediation event on Tuesday 7 October 2025
- ii) to recommend to Council to confirm adoption and endorsement of the NALC: Civility and Respect Pledge
- iii) to recommend to Council to encourage all Members to sign the Councillor's Statement of Assurance under the Civility and Respect Pledge
- iv) to agree for the Town Clerk and Chief Executive to enact any further advice or direction given by the Monitoring Officer arising from these matters

#### 216/25 - Date of the next meeting

Monday 17 November 2025 at 7.00 pm

The meeting closed at 9.30 pm

						AGENDA	A ITEM 267/25
Committee	Minute	Date	Action	Action Full	Responsible	Update	Status
FGP	039/25	1/20/2025	Carbon accomment	The Corporate Compliance and	The Corporate	This work will be reported as part of the	Ongoing
rgr	039/23	1/20/2025	Carbon assessment report	The Corporate Compliance and Performance Manager to provide a Carbon assessment report to March's committee.	The Corporate Compliance and Performance Manager	This work will be reported as part of the regular Compliance report to FGP, along with relevant updates to the correct committee.	Ongoing
FGP	209/25	8/9/2025		That the Carbon and Energy Action Plan be updated with goals and set timescales and brought back to the next meeting of the committee and that the revision of the Corporate Plan action be deffered until the Carbon and Energy Plan had been updated and adopted.	Corportae Performance & Compliance Manager		Ongoing

## **DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL**

## FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

#### **MONDAY 17 NOVEMBER 2025**

#### **FINANCE REPORT**

To 1.1) provide a revenue budgetary position report for the financial
year 2025/2026, to 30 September 2025
1.2) provide details of the Council's reserves as at 30 September 2025
1.3) provide detail on current investments
1.4) provide update on the first interim Internal Audit for financial year 2025/2026 External Audit for financial year 2024/2025

## 1. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1. To note the revenue budget position and year end forecasts for the current financial year, to 30 September 2025, at item 3.
- 1.2. To note the Council's earmarked reserves as at 30 September 2025, at item 4.
- 1.3. To note current investments, at item 5.
- 1.4. Provide Members with an update on the first Interim Audit Report for financial year 2025/2026 and update Members on the External Audit for financial year 2024/2025, at item 7.

#### 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. The budgetary control report summarises the net expenditure against budget for each service area as at 30 September 2025. This forms the basis for the projected outturn at the end of this financial year, taking account of current known variances.
- 2.2. Members should note that, this early in the year we are still faced with substantial unknowns and the forecasts detailed can only take account of known or estimated income and expenditure at this point.

## 3. REVENUE BUDGETARY REPORT

3.1. The summary at Appendix 1 shows the net expenditure at 30 September 2025 per service area and an indication of the anticipated outturn against budget, taking account of seasonal variances and known commitments for the remainder of the financial year.

- 3.2. The summary shows an overall net revenue underspend forecasted for the financial year of £119,517. The underspend is predominantly due to the National Pay Award for 2025/26 agreed in August 2025 being less than budgeted, as well as vacancies early in the financial year, resulting in the salary budgets being £91,733 of the £119,517 underspend shown.
- 3.3. Within **Corporate Services**, the overall variance is forecast to be £14,588 underspent. Significant variances to the budget are as follows:
  - Staff Costs are forecast to be underspent by £38,024, mainly due to the pay award agreed being less than budgeted together with a vacancy in the early part of the year, together with maternity leave.
  - Central Services are due to be overspent by £15,226; this is predominantly due to urgent legal costs incurred as well as IT support annual fees crossover.
  - Grove House is due to go overspent by £4,422; this is due to the cleaning contract being over that budgeted, together with £3,000 agreed overspend for the purchase of additional furniture for the ceremony room.
  - Corporate Management is due to be overspent by £4,087, which is mainly due to the insurance premium for the current year being over the budgeted amount.
- 3.4. Within **Grounds and Environmental Services**, the overall variance is forecast to be £48,116 underspent. Significant variances to the budget are as follows:
  - Grounds Staff and Vehicle Costs are forecasted to be underspent by £57,709; this
    is due to the pay award agreed being less than budgeted together with a vacancy
    in the early part of the year, as well as a substantial saving forecast on the vehicle
    fuel due to purchasing efficiencies
  - Cemetery is forecast to underachieve by £15,476; this is predominantly due to burial income, this has been calculated based on actuals to date and average estimated for the remainder of the year, together with professional fees incurred but unbudgeted.
  - Recreation Grounds is forecast to underspend by £2,110, this is mainly due to additional income for pitch hire in this financial year
  - Town Ranger Service is due to overachieve by £3,288, mainly due to securing an
    additional external maintenance contract for this year and expenditure on fuel
    estimated to come under budget, based on the previous year's actuals.
- 3.5. **Community Services** overall variance is forecast to be £56,813 underspent, significant variances to the budget are as follows:
  - Staff Costs are due to be underspent by £6,050; this is mainly due to the pay award agreed being less than budgeted, together with previous forecasts being higher than actuals to date.
  - Older People's Support Service is due to be underspent by £6,808, mainly due to transport costs and hall hire being estimated at lower than budgeted, as well as overachievement on the income and CBC contribution being over the budgeted value.
  - Grove Corner is due to be underspent by £3,187; this is due to a saving on the staff costs due to the pay award agreed as well as pension savings.

- Bennett Memorial RG Splash Park is due to underachieve by £8,194; this is mainly due to lower income generation that budgeted, slightly offset by a saving on purchases
- Priory House is due to underspend by £37,804, this is mainly due to the savings on salary costs by the partial secondment of a member of the team to Corporate Services for the year, together with underspends forecast on various expenditure budgets due to the shop closure.
- Town Centre Services is forecasting an underspent of £10,068, mainly due to a saving on the salaries due to a vacancy as well as the pay award, together with overachievement predicted on stall hire.

## 4. RESERVES

4.1. The schedule enclosed at Appendix 2 provides detail of actual contributions to, and expenditure from, reserve funds at 30 September 2025.

#### 5. INVESTMENTS UPDATE

5.1. Dunstable Town Council's current bank and investment account balances as at 31 October 2025 were as follows:

Account	Balance	Interest earned in month
Current Account	£10,000.00	-
Business Reserve Account	£524,634.26	£255.27
CCLA Deposit Account	£3,047,546.39	£10,223.42

#### 6. FINANCIAL GOVERNANCE

- 6.1. Councillors should, as a minimum, view and audit the Council's accounts on a quarterly basis.
- 6.2. The next quarterly financial Councillor Audit is due to take place this month, where Councillors Kotarski and Tamara, together with Councillor John Gurney, will be carrying out a 'mini-audit'.
- 6.3. Further quarterly audits have been arranged, and all Councillors on Finance and General Purposes Committee are invited to be part of any future Financial Governance Audits they are available for.

#### 7. AUDIT

- 7.1. The first interim Internal Audit for financial year 2025/2026 is taking place on 12 and 13 November 2025. The outcome report will be shared with the committee prior to the meeting on 17 November 2025.
- 7.2. As Members are aware, the external audit for financial year 2024/2025 was due for completion by 30 September 2025, in line with the Accounts and Audit Regulations

2015. Officers were contacted by the auditors, Mazars LLP, on 24 September 2025 advising that some audit reports may not be ready by 30 September, and that would result in the Council not being able to place the audited AGAR and completion notice on the Council website. Officers have therefore placed a notice to this effect on the website that this will be published as soon as it becomes available. The auditors contacted Officers in October with their initial review requests (this seems standard practice) for which a response was sent on 16 October. At the time of writing this report a response has not been received. Officers will update Members at the committee meeting of any update.

- 8. **EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS-** none
- 9. FINANCIAL IMPACT
- 9.1. These are inherent in this report.
- 10. ENVIRONMENTAL AND BIODIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS none
- 11. POLICY AND CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS- none
- 12. **HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS** none
- 13. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS
- 13.1. The National Joint Council for local government services agreed rates of pay applicable from 1 April 2025 (covering the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026) on 24 July 2025. The new pay rate being an increase of 3.20 per cent on all Spinal Column Points (SCP).
- 14. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS** none
- 15. APPENDICES
- 15.1. Appendix 1 Summary of the Revenue Budget Report at 30 September 2025 Appendix 2 Summary of Earmarked Reserves at 30 September 2025
- BACKGROUND PAPERS none
- 17. AUTHOR

Lisa Scheder – Head of Corporate Services and Responsible Financial Officer <a href="mailto:lisa.scheder@dunstable.gov.uk">lisa.scheder@dunstable.gov.uk</a>

# Summary of Actuals vs Budget

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#### **Corporate Services**

Service Area	Budget 2025/26	Actuals to Date	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	Year-end Forecast	Year-end Variance
Staff Costs	(544,549)	(253,163)	0	(291,386)	(506,525)	38,024
Central Services	(131,414)	(121,836)	(3,129)	(6,357)	(146,640)	(15,226)
Grove House	(35,742)	(23,818)	(2,188)	(14,158)	(40,164)	(4,422)
Corporate Management	(45,885)	(56,992)	(4,116)	(34,866)	(49,972)	(4,087)
Democratic Management & Representation	(24,740)	(11,073)	(2,787)	(10,536)	(24,441)	299
Capital & Projects (inc loan charges)	(104,399)	(84,097)	(6,715)	(20,013)	(104,399)	0
Grand Total	(886,729)	(550,9 <i>7</i> 9)	(18,935)	(377,316)	(872,141)	14,588

#### **Grounds and Environmental Services**

Service Area	Budget 2025/26	Actuals to Date	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	Year-end Forecast	Year-end Variance
Staff Costs	(987,404)	(467,604)	(840)	(518,960)	(929,695)	57,709
Allotments	3,418	(2,916)	0	(6,886)	4,161	743
Cemetery	68,458	24,537	(5,613)	(75,349)	52,982	(15,476)
Recreation Grounds	(84,527)	(24,778)	(5,295)	(52,962)	(82,417)	2,110
Town Centre and Gardens	(32,114)	(35,208)	(11,371)	(19,168)	(32,608)	(494)
Town Ranger Service	(14,038)	(3,282)	(1,337)	(12,139)	(10,514)	3,524
Capital & Projects	(141,815)	(125,080)	(6,912)	(116,323)	(141,815)	0
Grand Total	(1,188,022)	(634,331)	(31,368)	(801,787)	(1,139,906)	48,116

## **Community Services**

Service Area	Budget 2025/26	Actuals to Date	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	Year-end Forecast	Year-end Variance
Staff Costs	(351,165)	(158,051)	0	(216,015)	(345,115)	6,050
Older People's Support Service	(31,493)	(8,471)	(2,127)	(26,238)	(24,685)	6,808
Community Engagement (inc Grants)	(32,207)	(18,749)	(5,345)	(12,884)	(32,105)	102
Grove Corner	(20,795)	(8,710)	(1,581)	(15,926)	(17,608)	3,187
Bennett Memorial RG Splash Park	(69,353)	(53,214)	(2,634)	(30,534)	(77,547)	(8,194)
Events Programme	(192,557)	(123,574)	(36,848)	(25,162)	(191,569)	988
Priory House	(134,707)	(58,704)	(3,017)	(98,410)	(96,903)	37,804
Town Centre Services (inc Special Markets)	(125,750)	(42,466)	(34,554)	(53,031)	(115,682)	10,068
Public Conveniences (Ashton Square)	(7,575)	(2,576)	(1,062)	(3,937)	(7,575)	0
Capital & Projects	(241,815)	(221,958)	(149,300)	8,913	(241,815)	0
Grand Total	(1,207,417)	(696,473)	(236,468)	(473,224)	(1,150,604)	56,813

DTC Grand Total (3,282,168) (1,881,783) (286,771) (1,652,327) (3,162,651) 119,517						
	DTC Grand Total	(3,282,168)	(1,881,783)	(286,771)	(1,652,327)	119,517

<u>Dunstable Town Council - Reserves Summary 2025/26</u>

APPENDIX 2

	Description	Officer	Balance as at 01.04.25	Contributions Revenue/ Other	Expenditure in year	Bal as at 30.09.25	Commitments/Programme of works, etc	Committed Amount	Bal after committed
310	General Reserve	TC&CE / HofCorp	£593,193			£593,193	FGP 16.06.25- Minute 167/25- Cemetery works (GES 09.06.25)	-£27,492	£565,701
312	Vehicles Reserve	HofGES	£74,169	£20,000		£94,169	FGP 17.06.24- Minute 141/24- bal of £28,347 for 2 replacement vehicles & 1 additional ride on mower (of £92,337 approved)	-£28,347	£65,822
314	Christmas Lights Reserve	HofCS	£12,651	£7,000		£19,651	5 year replacement lighting plan 21/22-25/26 ; Council 15.04.24- Minute 99/24= release of £8,731 for replacement and repairs of lights	-£9,095	£10,556
315	Street Dressing Reserve	HofCS	£1,047			£1,047	FGP 16.09.24- Minute 194/24= bal of £1,047.28 for 40th anniversary street dressing (of £7,467 approved)	-£1,047	£0
316	Downside Building Maintenance Res	HofCS	£52,769	£27,000		£79,769	FGP 12.06.23- Minute 141/23= £36,679 & £8,792.55- for 2nd phase roof repairs	-£45,472	£34,297
317	Grove Corner Building Maint Reserve	HofCS	£38,565	£4,000		£42,565	Chairmans Approval 17.04.23= bal of £2,000 roof survey & development plans (of £5,000 approved)	-£2,000	£40,565
318	Building Security Systems	HofCorp	£5,357			£5,357	Council 15.04.24- Minute 99/24= £5,357 for improved security for Grove House	-£5,357	£0
319	Cemetery Memorial Safety	HofGES	£3,075	£1,655		£4,730	Council 15.04.24- Minute 99/24= £3,075 for periodic inspections and subsequent works	-£3,075	£1,655
320	Priory House Tearooms Equipment	HofCS	£9,000	£3,000		£12,000	Council 15.04.24- Minute 99/24= £9,000 for replacement of kitchen/catering equipment	-£9,000	£3,000
321	IT/Equipment Reserve	TC&CE / HofCorp	£1,213	£20,000		£21,213			£21,213
322	Older People's Day Care Svce	HofCS	£12,325			£12,325			£12,325
323	Election Reserve	TC&CE / HofCorp	£20,000			£20,000	Council 15.04.24- Minute 99/24= £20,000 for future election costs due to CBC	-£20,000	£0
324	Grove House Building Reserve	HofCorp	£190,521	£49,000	-£72,040	£167,481	Council 24.06.24- Minute 165/24= £213,276 for essential repair and maintenance works (of £226,550 approved)	-£98,481	£69,000
325	Priory House Works Contingency	HofCS	£29,864			£29,864	Council 07.04.25- Minute 115/25= £29,864 for PH Exhibition (in £161,013 total with £11,149 on 327 & £120,000 on 333)	-£29,864	£0
	Mayoral Reserve	HofCorp	£3,000			£3,000	FGP 19.01.15-Minute 24 - to be retained for transport/allowance as required	-£3,000	£0

							Council 15.04.24- Minute 99/24= £11.149 for		
327	Priory House Exhibition	HofCS	£11,149			£11,149	programme of future exhibitions	-£11,149	£0
		TC&CE /				·			
330	Town Twinning Reserve	HofCorp	£8,389		-£115	£8,274	Retained for twinning activities to be determined		£8,274
							Council 15.04.24- Minute 99/24= bal of £7,361 for programme of tree inspections and subsequent works		
331	Tree Reserve	HofGES	£14,481	£15,000	-£7,120	£22,361	(from £15,488 approved)	-£7,361	£15,000
			, , ,	,	, , ,	,,,,,,		,	,
							500 00 04 00 M;		
							FGP 20.01.20- Minute 8- Bal of £4,723 for recreation grounds improvement works (from £26,668 agreed);		
							Council 29.06.20- Minute 85- bal of £12,982 for Priory		
332	Open Spaces Improvement Plan	HofGES	£51,759	£30,000	-£7,810	£73,949	Gardens Pergola Repairs (from £15,000 agreed);	-£17,705	£56,244
002	open opacce improvement fair		201,100	200,000	21,010	210,040		211,100	200,244
							FGP Minute 41/23 23.01.23- bal of £164,853- Roof		
							works (of £205,000 agreed); Council 07.04.25 - Minute 115/25= bal of £113,400 -		
333	Priory House Building Reserve	HofCS	£262,023	£149,357	-£69,827	£341,553	Priory House Exhibition (of £120,000 agreed)	-£273,393	£68,160
224	Devilled Buildings Maintenance Bas	HofGES	507.500	045.000		640.600			640.600
334	Pavilion Buildings Maintenance Res	HOIGES	£27,632	£15,000		£42,632	FGP 15.04.24- Minute 99/24= bal of £1,005 for Church		£42,632
335	Church Street Phone Box Maintenance	HofGES	£3,002		-£2,257	£746	Street phone box maintenance (from £5,000 approved)	-£746	£0
							FGP Minute 107 20.06.22= bal for 5 year infrastructure		
	All ( ) D	HofGES	200 207	05.000	04.045	000 400	improvement programme (upto £42,800 approved)	045 440	044.070
338	Allotments Reserve	HOIGES	£22,827	£5,000	-£1,345	£26,482	(includes £5,000 pa contributions to 26/27)	-£15,112	£11,370
		TC&CE /							
341	Outdoor Leisure (non play) Reserve	HofGES	£15,052	£12,000		£27,052			£27,052
240	Managrial Karba Danama	HofGES	0404			0404	Council 15.04.24- Minute 99/24= £300 for purchase of memorial kerbs	0200	0404
342	Memorial Kerbs Reserve	HOIGES	£461			£461	memorial kerbs	-£300	£161
343	Cemetery Building Maintenance Res	HofGES	£17,281	£10,000		£27,281			£27,281
0.0	Comments of Damaning Mannion and Proceedings		211,201	210,000		227,207			221,201
344	Fencing Maintenance Reserve	HofGES	£7,000	£7,000		£14,000			£14,000
0.40	1101147/0: 11	HofCS	0450 000	0005 700	0004.740	005 500	HSHAZ scheme programme / HAR 1 Priory House	005 700	00
346	HSHAZ/Priory House HAR	поісз	£153,282	£385,702	-£634,748	-£95,763	works programme- to future claim / claims due	£95,763	£0
349	Website Development	HofCorp	£0	£900		£900			£900
		TC&CE /							
	Neighbourhood Development	HofCorp	£12,668			£12,668			£12,668
	Earmarked Reserves Total		£1,653,755	£761,614	-£795,261	£1,620,108		-£512,234	£1,107,875

#### Capital Receipt - Sale of Land at Meadway

HofGES HofGES	£10,000 £147,361 £100,000		01.045	£10,000	Council 05.12.22 Minute 210- creation of new reserve from capital receipt received July 2022  FGP 18.09.23- Minute 187/23= balance of £32,135.50 for development of the new cemetery (of £76,775 approved)  FGP 17.06.24- Minute 141/24= bal of £99,305 - Depot	-£32,136	£10,000 £115,225
	,		04.045	£147,361	for development of the new cemetery (of £76,775 approved)	-£32,136	£115,225
HofGES	£100,000		04.045		FGP 17.06.24- Minute 141/24= bal of £99.305 - Depot		
			-£1,815	£98,185	Extension (of £100,000 approved)	-£98,185	£0
HofGES	£42			£42			£42
HofCS	£26,000			£26,000	Council 17.04.23 Minute 93/23- release from capital receipt received July 2022 for Priory House furniture	-£26,000	£0
HofGES	£169,000		-£2,750	£166,250	Chairs Approval 11.04.25- bal of £1,830 (from £2,830 approved) - Professional Fees	-£166,250	£0
TC&CE	£57	00	CAEGE	£57		-£57	£0
Н	ofGES	ofGES £169,000  C&CE £57	ofGES £169,000	ofGES £169,000 -£2,750  C&CE £57	ofGES £169,000 -£2,750 £166,250  C&CE £57 £57	HofCS         £26,000         receipt received July 2022 for Priory House furniture           ofGES         £169,000         -£2,750         £166,250         Chairs Approval 11.04.25- bal of £1,830 (from £2,830 approved) - Professional Fees           C&CE         £57         £57         £57	HofCS         £26,000         £26,000         receipt received July 2022 for Priory House furniture         -£26,000           ofGES         £169,000         -£2,750         £166,250         Chairs Approval 11.04.25- bal of £1,830 (from £2,830 approved) - Professional Fees         -£166,250           C&CE         £57         £57         -£57

## S106/External Funding/Ringfenced Expenditure specified by funding body

352	Development Contributions- REV	HofGES	£34,316			£34,316	£8,000 committed in 23/24 revenue budget from Bal of £22,129 for Willoughy (from S106 £47,645) Bal of £4,038 for Court Drive Landscaping (from CBC £15,000)	-£12,038	£22,278
	Little Committee Front	11.100	050.004			050 004	Bal in holding code as committed Joint	050.004	00
570	Joint Committee Fund	HofCS	£50,021			£50,021	Committees fund only = not DTC	-£50,021	£0
	S106/External Funding Total		£84,337	£0	£0	£84,337		-£62,059	£22,278
			£2,190,552	£761,614	-£799,826	£2,152,340		-£1,022,187	£1,130,153

#### Key:

- = Finance and General Purposes Committee
- = Grounds and Environmental Services Committee
- = Community Services Committee

# **DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL**

# FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

#### **MONDAY 17 NOVEMBER 2025**

#### CORPORATE COMPLIANCE AND FACILITIES REPORT

Purpose of report: for Members to consider recommendations as below:

## 1. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1. To agree to disband the Environmental Working Group, at item 6.2
- 1.2. To agree to adopt the Carbon and Energy Action plan, at item 6.3
- 1.3. To agree to revise Action 6 of the Corporate Plan, at item 6.4

#### 2. COMPLIANCE

- 2.1. The council have recruited maternity cover for role of corporate performance and compliance manager, who is now in post.
- 2.2. CP&CM is working with Cloudy to recertify Cyber Essentials accreditation in line with the annual process.

#### 3. FACILITIES

#### **Grove House – Building Works**

3.1. The Council's contractor has proposed the following initial strategy for repairs at Grove House:

Step 1: Full Structural Appraisal	Commission a comprehensive structural survey of the entire Grove House, by a structural engineer with expertise in historic buildings.
Step 2: Engagement with Central Beds Conservation Officer	Initiate discussions regarding the ongoing "emergency repairs" to the front wall, with the aim of securing their support and working collaboratively to complete these structural works.
Step 3: Drainage System Improvements	Seek permission from CBC to redesign the building's rainwater drainage system to connect into the public underground drainage system. This would offer significant long-term benefit to the building's preservation helping to prevent saturation of the main walls.
Step 4: Temporary Repairs to Rear Parapet Gutter Wall	Carry out essential temporary repairs to prevent further water ingress or deterioration.

3.2. Steps 1–4 could proceed concurrently but will be managed as distinctly separate matters.

Following this initial phase, particularly the findings of the structural appraisal, the Council will be in a much stronger position to develop a comprehensive 5–10 year phased programme of repairs and renovation.

#### **Grove House – General**

3.3. The Council are awaiting approval of a marriage venue licence from CBC; an inspection was carried out on 4 November, and the next step is for a 21 day notice to be issued by CBC.

## **Downside Community Centre**

3.4. The Council's solicitors have provided a draft lease, and final details are being agreed.

#### 4. PROJECTS AND PROCUREMENT

4.1. There are several large maintenance works required at Grove House. The CP&CM has been working on obtaining quotations prior to 26/27 budget setting:

Fire alarm system replacement	FRA and Fire safety contractor recommends that the Council consider upgrading the current fire alarm system as it is over 40 years old.	Quote outstanding.
Additional recommended fire safety devices	Fire safety contractor recommends additional devices such as smoke detectors, flashing lights etc to bring Grove House up to L2 standard of compliance.	Survey outstanding
Installation of additional emergency lighting	Emergency lighting contractor has recommended an additional 23 emergency lights to be installed.  1 now replaced.	Lighting to be replaced with suitable alternative as/when required.  Officers to obtain quote to replace all recommended lights for review.
Installation of RCD protection to existing electrical installation	EICR and FRA recommend that the Council upgrade current	£5,714

	electrical installation to	
	improve RCD protection.	
Upgrades to cold water	Legionella contractor has	£1,794
storage systems	recommended upgrades	
	to the cold water systems	
	at Grove House.	

4.2. Issues with the Council's waste contractor are ongoing with reliability of collections, inaccurate scheduling and billing. Site managers are contacting offices directly, as well as regular attempts from the Corporate Performance and Compliance Manager. The contractor has recently been taken over, which may account for the issues.

#### 5. HEALTH AND SAFETY

#### **CCTV**

5.1. Work on the scoping of CCTV across all sites will commence once the Grounds antisocial behaviour working group has agreed any requirements to be considered.

#### 6. ENVIRONMENTAL AND BIODIVERSITY

- 6.1. Due to the constraints of managing historical buildings and the Council's desire to continue providing services to its community, the working group formed the view that achieving carbon neutrality by 2030 is unrealistic and unachievable. This view is supported by the Council's consultant Ian Bryne, and as such the Corporate Performance and Compliance Manager has drafted a revised more concise plan (at 6.2), proposed that the Environmental Working Group is disbanded (at 6.3) and reviewed the Corporate plan action accordingly (at 6.4).
- 6.2. The Performance and Compliance Manager has drafted a revised plan based on the work done by Ian Bryne, taking into account the knowledge and experiences and current financial position of the Council. A copy of this plan is available in Appendix 5 to this report. It is proposed that the new plan is adopted in favour of the existing plan which is unachievable.
- 6.3. It is proposed that councillors agree to disband the Environmental working group, in favour of an update on progress through the compliance and facilities information report.
- 6.4. It is proposed that the Corporate Plan action is revised to say:

CP6: To reduce Dunstable Town Council's total climate impact to 40 tCO2e by 2030.

#### 7. FINANCIAL IMPACT

7.1. These are inherent within this report.

# 8. POLICY AND CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. Detailed at 6.4, Members are requested to agree the amendment of a corporate plan objective.
- 9. **EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS** none
- 10. HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS
- 10.1. The report highlights examples of additional works required to meet health and safety requirements. The additional reserve proposed for 2026/27 for Health and Safety measures would enable such works to go ahead.
- 11. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS none
- 12. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS none
- 13. APPENDICES
- 13.1. 269.25 Compliance Report FGP 17 November 2025 Appendix 1.pdf
- 14. BACKGROUND PAPERS none
- 15. AUTHOR

Katie Williams - Corporate Performance & Compliance Manager <a href="mailto:compliance@dunstable.gov.uk">compliance@dunstable.gov.uk</a>

# Dunstable Town Council - Energy and Carbon Action Plan

#	Location	Brief Description	Costs	Savings	Payback	CO <sub>2</sub>	Target	Status
1	Grove House	Insulate hot water pipework	1	1	2	1	-	Complete
2	Grove Corner	Decommission rear boiler, join to newer condensing boiler.	2 - 4	1 - 2	2	1 - 2	2030	To be considered.
3	Grove House	Consider internal wall insulation	3	1	1	1	ТВС	To be considered as part of major building works. This item will be reported to FGP as part of compliance report.
4	Grove House	Replace remaining halogen spots and T12 tubes with LEDs	1	1	3	1	2028	To be considered.
5	Creasey Park Mess Room	Consider well insulated replacement for portacabin with improved heating	4	2	2	2	ТВС	This item is being reported to Grounds
6	Vans	Improve monitoring of mileage	1	1	3	1	-	Complete
7	Various	Add smart metering at locations which are still billed quarterly					-	Complete
8	Priory House	Replace halogens with LEDs in exhibition room	2	2	2	2	March 2027	All lights to be replaced with LED's as part of the restoration process
9	Kingsbury Pavillion	Add solar thermal water on SE roof	3	1	1	1		To be considered
10	Cemetery	Consider PV panels on building roofs	4	2	1	2		To be considered
11	Bennett' Splash Café	Consider thin film PV on café roof	4	2	2	2		To be considered

# Dunstable Town Council - Energy and Carbon Action Plan

#	Location	Brief Description	Costs	Savings	Payback	CO <sub>2</sub>	Target	Status
12	All sites	Consider opportunities for a 'tiny forest'	4	0	0	1	Ongoing	Mentmore completed on a tiny forest in 2024. 40 trees being planted across DTC parks.
13	All sites	Review sourcing of bedding plants with potential for lower carbon supply	0	0	0	3	-	Complete to best value. Currently using a local supplier. Reviewed their GSCM - cost versus carbon recommendations currently unachievable. Will continue to review & work with supply partners.

## **DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL**

## FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

## **MONDAY 17 NOVEMBER 2025**

## **MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS**

Purpose of report: For information

#### 1. SOCIAL MEDIA

- 1.1. The Marketing and Communications Officer, along with other officers, continues to use social media as the primary channel of communication to engage with the public and provide timely updates on Town Council news and events.
- 1.2. The use of posts and stories on social media continues to prove effective, generating positive engagement and interaction from the public. Analytics indicate that this approach helps to increase visibility, broaden audience reach, and encourage participation in Town Council initiatives.
- 1.3. All accounts have seen a steady increase in followers. Dunstable Town Council's Facebook reached another milestone of 15,000 since the last report. The objective still stands to reach the milestone of 1,000 followers on Dunstable Town Council's Instagram.
- 1.4. The following figures are accurate as of 4 November and show how many followers have been gained since the previous report:

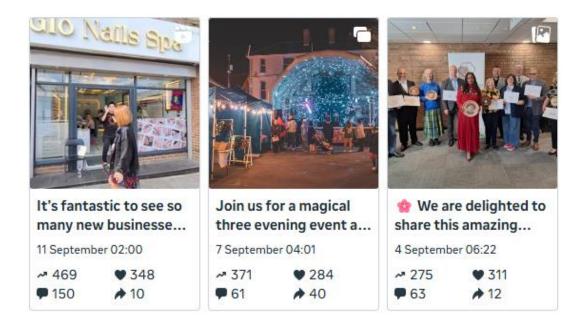
Platform	Entity	Followers	Change
	Dunstable Town Council	15,093	+287
Facebook	Bennett's Café & Splash Park	5,273	+ 127
racebook	Town Ranger Services	1,505	+9
	Grove Corner	1,534	+35
	Priory House	1,503	+36
Inotogram	Dunstable Town Council	989	+139
Instagram	Bennett's Café & Splash Park	66	+5
	Grove Corner	514	+13
LinkedIn	Dunstable Town Council	366	+19
TikTok Dunstable Town Council		186	+10

1.5. **Dunstable Town Council Facebook insights.** 

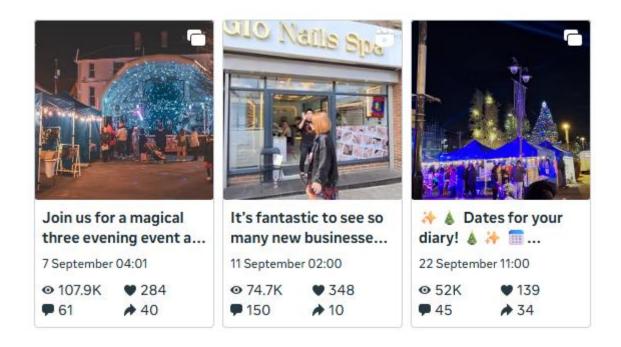
Top three social media Facebook posts from 1 September to 1 November by interactions:

- 1. Video of saying hello to new business in the town centre
- 2. Twilight market promotion
- 3. Anglia in Bloom results

# Top content by interactions

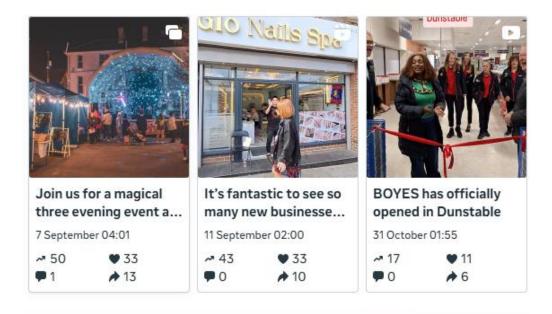


- 1.6. Top three social media Facebook stories from 1 June to 1 September by views:
  - 1. Twilight market promotion
  - 2. Video of saying hello to new business in the town centre
  - 3. Twilight market promotion
  - Top content by views



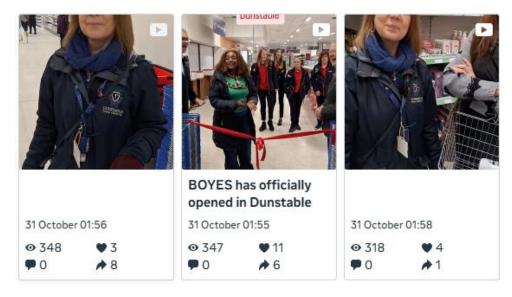
- 1.7. Top three social media Instagram posts from 1 September to 1 November by interactions:
  - 1. Promoting Twilight Markets

- 2. Video of saying hello to new business in the town centre
- 3. Opening of Boyes with the Town Mayor
- Top content by interactions



# 1.8. Top three social media Instagram stories 1 September to 1 November by reach:

- 1. Opening of Boyes instruction with the Town Centre Manager
- 2. Opening of Boyes with the Town Mayor
- 3. Opening of Boyes with a customer
- Top stories by views



1.9. Analysis of the top three performing social media posts for Dunstable Town Council indicates that video content featuring the Town Centre Manager speaking directly to the camera generates the highest engagement. Posts that include this style of content, showing personal interaction and local involvement, continue to resonate well with audiences.

#### 2. EMAIL MARKETING

2.1 The Marketing and Communications Officer continues to produce the staff and councillor newsletter, ensuring regular updates are shared across the organisation to support internal communication and engagement.

#### 3. WEBSITE

- 3.1 The council's new website continues to operate effectively, with no reported issues or negative feedback received during this period. All functions appear to be running as expected.
- 3.2 Statistics from the Recite Me accessibility tool are provided directly by the company to the Marketing and Communications Officer. These reports give detailed insights into how visitors are using the accessibility functions. This information enables the Council to assess the impact of the accessibility tool, monitor usage trends, and ensure the website continues to meet the needs of all users.

The figures below show how users have used Recite Me:

Pages viewed using the tool	93
How many users	42
Screen reader	55%
Translation	23%
Mobile	50%
Desktop	49%

- The figures below show how users have visited the Town Council website from 1 September from 1 November.
  - 1. Homepage
  - 2. What's on page
  - 3. /news/dunstables-newest-store-opening-this-friday
  - 4. /job-vacancies
  - 5. /event/proms-in-the-park

Organic search (google, Bing	8,250
etc.)	
Direct:	6,711
Organic social (Facebook,	2,009
Instagram)	
Mobile:	46.1%
Desktop:	52.2%
Tablet:	1.7%

3.4 It is interesting to note that desktop usage has increased, with a higher percentage of users now accessing the website via desktop compared to mobile devices.

#### 4. EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

4.1 The VMS screen, Community Ward noticeboards, and the What's on screen continue to be used regularly by the Town Council and other community groups.

#### 5. TALK OF THE TOWN

- 5.1. The Christmas edition has now been printed and distributed to households. Additional copies of *Talk of the Town* are also available at Priory House, Bennett's Café, the cemetery, Grove House, and the Ashton Square toilets for residents to collect.
- 5.2 Officers are continuing efforts to attract additional advertisers for *Talk of the Town*.

## 6. COMMUNITY LOTTERY

- 6.1 The Marketing and Communications Officer continues to promote public participation in the community lottery, encouraging residents to play and support local good causes. Efforts are also being made to reach out to additional organisations and community groups to invite them to register.
- 6.2 A promotional video was produced and shared on social media to highlight local good causes, explain the benefits of joining the Community Lottery, and demonstrate how funds raised support community initiatives. The video achieved a reach of approximately 1,800 users and received 24 reactions.

#### 7. AUTHOR

7.1 Rachel Connor – Corporate Marketing & Communications Officer <a href="mailto:communications@dunstable.gov.uk">communications@dunstable.gov.uk</a>

# **DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL**

# FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

## **MONDAY 17 NOVEMBER 2025**

## REFERRAL REPORT FROM PERSONNEL SUB-COMMITTEE

Purpose of Report: For Members to approve the following recommendation made by the

Members at the meeting of the Personnel Sub-Committee held on 6

November 2025.

#### 1. COUNCILLOR-OFFICER PROTOCOL

1.1 Members reviewed the Councillor-Officer Protocol.

**RESOLVED**: that the adoption of the Councillor-Officer Protocol be recommended for approval by the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

## Minute Number (244/25)

- 2. APPENDICES
- 2.1 Appendix 1 Draft Councillor-Officer Protocol
- 3. AUTHOR
- 3.1 Kelley Hallam (HR& Payroll Manager) kelley.hallam@dunstable.gov.uk

# **DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL**

# COUNCILLOR-OFFICER PROTOCOL

#### INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Protocol is to guide councillors and officers of Dunstable Town Council in their relations with one another. The Protocol's intention is to build and maintain good working relationships between councillors and officers as they work together. Employees who are required to give advice to councillors are referred to as "officers" throughout.

A strong, constructive, and trusting relationship between councillors and officers is essential to the effective and efficient working of the Council.

This Protocol also seeks to reflect the principles underlying the Code of Conduct which applies to councillors, and the employment terms and conditions of officers. The shared objective is to enhance and maintain the integrity (real and perceived) of local government.

The following extract from the Local Government Association guidance on the 2020 Model councillor Code of Conduct states that:

"Both councillors and officers are servants of the public and are indispensable to one another. Together, they bring the critical skills, experience and knowledge required to manage an effective local authority.

At the heart of this relationship, is the importance of mutual respect. Councillor-officer relationships should be conducted in a positive and constructive way. Therefore, it is important that any dealings between councillors and officers should observe reasonable standards of courtesy, should show mutual appreciation of the importance of their respective roles and that neither party should seek to take unfair advantage of their position or seek to exert undue influence on the other party.

Councillors provide a democratic mandate to the local authority and are responsible to the electorate whom they represent. They set their local authority's policy framework, ensure that services and policies are delivered and scrutinise local authority services.

Chairs and vice chairs of committees have additional responsibilities. These responsibilities will result in increased expectations and relationships with officers that are more complex. Such councillors must still respect the impartiality of officers and must not ask them to undertake work of a party-political nature or compromise their position with other councillors or other officers.

Officers provide the professional advice and managerial expertise and information needed for decision making by councillors and to deliver the policy framework agreed

by councillors. They are responsible for implementing decisions of councillors and the day-to-day administration of the local authority.

The roles are very different but need to work in a complementary way.

It is important for both sides to respect these differences and ensure that they work in harmony. Getting that relationship right is an important skill. That is why the code requires councillors to respect an officer's impartiality and professional expertise. In turn officers should respect a councillor's democratic mandate as the people accountable to the public for the work of the local authority. It is also important for a local authority to have a councillor-officer protocol which sets out how this relationship works and what both councillors and officers can expect in terms of mutual respect and good working relationships."

#### This Protocol covers:

- The respective roles and responsibilities of the councillors and the officers;
- Relationships between councillors and officers;
- Where/who a councillor or an officer should go to if they have concerns;
- Who is responsible for making decisions.

#### **BACKGROUND**

This Protocol is intended to assist councillors and officers, in approaching some of the sensitive circumstances which arise in a challenging working environment.

The reputation and integrity of Dunstable Town Council is significantly influenced by the effectiveness of councillors and the officers working together to support each other's roles.

The aim is effective and professional working relationships characterised by mutual trust, respect and courtesy. Overly close personal familiarity between councillors and officers is not recommended as it has the potential to damage this relationship

#### **ROLES OF COUNCILLORS AND OFFICERS**

The respective roles of councillors and officers can be summarised as follows:

- Councillors and officers are servants of the public and they are indispensable to one another, but their responsibilities are distinct.
- Councillors are responsible to the electorate and serve only for their term of office.
- Officers are responsible to the Council. Their job is to give advice to councillors and to the Council, and to carry out the Council's work under the direction and control of the Council and relevant committees.

#### Councillors

Councillors have four main areas of responsibility:

- To determine council policy and provide community leadership;
- To monitor and review council performance in implementing policies and delivering services;
- To represent the Council externally; and
- To act as advocates for their constituents.

All councillors have the same rights and obligations in their relationship with officers, regardless of their status and should be treated equally.

Councillors should not involve themselves in the day to day running of Dunstable Town Council. This is the officer's responsibility, and the officer will be acting on instructions from the Council or its committees, within an agreed job description.

In line with the councillors' Code of Conduct, a councillor must treat others with respect, must not bully or harass people and must not do anything which compromises, or is likely to compromise, the impartiality of those who work for, or on behalf of, the Council.

# Officers can expect councillors:

- to give strategic leadership and direction and to seek to further their agreed policies and objectives with the understanding that councillors have the right to take the final decision on issues based on advice
- to act within the policies, practices, processes and conventions established by Dunstable Town Council
- to work constructively in partnership with officers acknowledging their separate and distinct roles and responsibilities
- to understand and support the respective roles and responsibilities of officers and their associated workloads, pressures and reporting lines
- to treat them fairly and with respect, dignity and courtesy
- to act with integrity, to give support and to respect appropriate confidentiality
- to recognise that officers do not work under the instruction of individual councillors or groups
- not to subject them to bullying, intimidation, harassment, or put them under undue pressure.
- to treat all officers, partners (those external people with whom the Council works) and members of the public equally, and not discriminate based on any characteristic such as age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.
- not to request officers to exercise discretion which involves acting outside the council's policies and procedures
- not to authorise, initiate, or certify any financial transactions or to enter into any contract, agreement or undertaking on behalf of the Council or in their role as a councillor without proper and lawful authority
- not to use their position or relationship with officers to advance their personal interest or those of others or to influence decisions improperly

- to comply at all times with the councillors' Code of Conduct, the law, and such other policies, procedures, protocols and conventions agreed by the Council.
- respect the impartiality of officers and do not undermine their role in carrying out their duties
- do not ask officers to undertake work, or act in a way, which seeks to support or benefit
  a particular political party or gives rise to an officer being criticised for operating in a
  party-political manner
- do not ask officers to exceed their authority where that authority is given

#### Chairs and vice-chairs of council and committees

Chairs and vice-chairs have additional responsibilities as delegated by the council. These responsibilities mean that they may have to have a closer working relationship with employees than other councillors do. However, they must still respect the impartiality of officers and must not ask them to undertake work or anything else which would prejudice their impartiality.

#### Officers

The primary role of officers is to advise, inform and support all members and to implement the agreed policies of the council.

Officers are responsible for day-to-day managerial and operational decisions within Dunstable Town Council, including directing and overseeing the work of any more junior officers. Councillors should avoid inappropriate involvement in such matters.

In performing their role, officers will act professionally, impartially and with neutrality. Whilst officers will respect a councillor's view on an issue, the officer should not be influenced or pressured to make comments, or recommendations which are contrary to their professional judgement or views.

#### Officers must:

- implement decisions of the Council and its committees which are lawful, which have been properly approved in accordance with the requirements of the law and are duly recorded. This includes respecting the decisions made, regardless of any different advice given to the Council or whether the decision differs from the officer's view.
- work in partnership with councillors in an impartial and professional manner
- treat councillors fairly and with respect, dignity and courtesy
- treat all councillors, partners and members of the public equally, and not discriminate based on any characteristic such as age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.
- assist and advise all parts of the Council. Officers must always act to the best of their abilities in the best interests of the authority as expressed in the Council's formal decisions.
- respond to enquiries and complaints in accordance with the Council's standards protocol
- be alert to issues which are, or are likely to be, contentious or politically sensitive, and be aware of the implications for councillors, the media or other sections of the public.

- · act with honesty, respect, dignity and courtesy at all times
- provide support and learning and development opportunities for councillors to help them in performing their various roles in line with the Council's training and development policy
- not seek to use their relationship with councillors to advance their personal interests or to influence decisions improperly
- to act within the policies, practices, processes and conventions established by the council

Officers have the right not to support councillors in any role other than that of councillor, and not to engage in actions incompatible with this Protocol.

In giving advice to councillors, and in preparing and presenting reports, it is the responsibility of the officer to express their own professional views and recommendations. An officer may report the views of individual councillors on an issue, but the recommendation should be the officer's own. If a councillor wishes to express a contrary view they should not pressurise the officer to make a recommendation contrary to the officer's professional view, nor victimise an officer for discharging their responsibilities.

## The Relationship: General

Councillors and officers are indispensable to one another. However, their responsibilities are distinct. Councillors are accountable to the public, whereas officers are accountable to the council as a whole.

At the heart of this Protocol is the importance of mutual respect and also of civility. Councillor/officer relationships are to be conducted in a positive and constructive way. Therefore, it is important that any dealings between councillors and officers should observe standards of courtesy and that neither party should seek to take unfair advantage of their position nor seek to exert undue influence on the other party.

Individual councillors should not actively seek to undermine majority decisions of the corporate body, as this could then bring them into conflict with officers who have been charged with promoting and implementing the Council's collectively determined course of action.

Councillors should not raise matters relating to the conduct or capability of an officer, or of officers collectively, in a manner that is incompatible with this Protocol, at meetings held in public or on social media. This is a long-standing tradition in public service. An officer has no means of responding to criticisms like this in public.

A councillor who is unhappy about the actions taken by, or conduct of, an officer should:

- avoid personal attacks on, or abuse of, the officer at all times
- ensure that any criticism is well founded and constructive
- ensure that any criticism is made in private
- take up the concern with the chair

Neither should an officer raise with a councillor, matters relating to the conduct or capability of another councillor or officer or to the internal management of the Council in a manner that is incompatible with the objectives of this Protocol.

Potential breaches of this Protocol are considered below.

## **Expectations**

All councillors can expect:

- A commitment from officers to Dunstable Town Council as a whole, and not to any individual councillor, group of councillors or political group;
- A working partnership;
- Officers to understand and support respective roles, workloads and pressures;
- A timely response from officers to enquiries and complaints;
- Officer's professional and impartial advice, not influenced by political views or personal preferences;
- Timely, up to date, information on matters that can reasonably be considered appropriate and relevant to their needs, having regard to any individual responsibilities or positions that they hold;
- Officers to be aware of, and sensitive to, the public and political environment locally;
- Respect, courtesy, integrity and appropriate confidentiality from officers and other councillors;
- Training and development opportunities to help them carry out their role effectively;
- Not to have personal issues raised with them by officers outside the Council's agreed procedures;
- That officers will not use their contact with councillors to advance their personal interests or to influence decisions improperly.

## Officers can expect from councillors:

- A working partnership;
- An understanding of, and support for, respective roles, workloads and pressures;
- Leadership and direction;
- Respect, courtesy, integrity and appropriate confidentiality;
- Not to be bullied or to be put under undue pressure;
- That councillors will not use their position or relationship with officers to advance their personal interests or those of others or to influence decisions improperly;
- That councillors will at all times comply with the Council's adopted Code of Conduct.

## Some general principles

Close personal relationships between councillors and officers can confuse their separate roles and get in the way of the proper conduct of council business, not least, by creating a perception in others that a particular councillor or officer is getting preferential treatment.

Special relationships with particular individuals are not recommended, as it can create suspicion that an employee favours that councillor above others.

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive is the head of paid services and has a line-management responsibility to all other staff. Communications should be made directly with the Town Clerk and Chief Executive unless it is agreed by the Town Clerk and Chief Executive that such communications may take place directly with other officers over a particular matter.

Councillors should not give instructions directly to the Town Clerk and Chief Executive's staff without the express approval of the Town Clerk and Chief Executive.

#### COUNCILLORS' ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND TO COUNCIL DOCUMENTS

Councillors are free to approach officers to provide them with such information, explanation and advice as they may reasonably need in order to assist them in discharging their role as members of the Council. Such requests should be made through the Town Clerk and Chief Executive or relevant Head of Service in the first instance. This can range from a request for general information about some aspect of the Council's activities, to a request for specific information on behalf of a constituent.

The legal rights of councillors to inspect council documents are covered partly by statute and partly by the common law.

The common law right of councillors is based on the principle that any member has a prima facie right to inspect council documents so far as their access to the documents is reasonably necessary to enable the member properly to perform their duties as a member of the Council. This principle is commonly referred to as the "need to know" principle.

The exercise of this common law right depends therefore upon the councillor's ability to demonstrate that they have the necessary "need to know". In this respect a member has no right to "a roving commission" to go and examine documents of the Council. Mere curiosity is not sufficient. The crucial question is the determination of the "need to know". This question must be determined by the officer.

In some circumstances (e.g. a committee member wishing to inspect documents relating to the functions of that committee) a councillor's "need to know" will normally be presumed. In other circumstances (e.g. a councillor wishing to inspect documents which contain personal information about third parties) a councillor will normally be expected to justify the request in specific terms. Any council information provided to a councillor must only be used by the councillor for the purpose for which it was provided i.e. in connection with the proper performance of the councillor's duties as a member of the Council.

For completeness, councillors do, of course, have the same right as any other member of the public to make requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

#### **CORRESPONDENCE**

Correspondence between an individual councillor and an officer should not normally be copied (by the officer) to any other councillor. Where exceptionally it is necessary to copy the correspondence to another councillor, this should be made clear to the original councillor. In other words, a system of "silent copies" should not be employed. Acknowledging that the "BCC" system of e-mailing is used, it should be made clear at the foot of any e-mails if another councillor has received an e-mail by adding "CC councillor X."

Official letters or emails on behalf of the Council should normally be sent out under the name of the officer, rather than under the name of a councillor. It may be appropriate in certain circumstances (e.g. representations to a government minister) for a letter or email to appear over the name of the chair, but this should be the exception rather than the norm. Letters or

emails which, for example, create obligations or give instructions on behalf of the Council should never be sent out in the name of a councillor.

Correspondence to individual councillors from officers should not be sent or copied to complainants or other third parties if they are marked "confidential". In doing so, the relevant officer should seek to make clear what is to be treated as being shared with the councillor in confidence only and why that is so.

#### **PRESS AND MEDIA**

Councils are accountable to their electorate. Accountability requires local understanding. This will be promoted by the Council, explaining its objectives and policies to the electors and customers. Councils use publicity to keep the public informed and to encourage public participation. The Council needs to tell the public about the services it provides. Good effective publicity should aim to improve public awareness of the Council's activities. Publicity is a sensitive matter in any political environment because of the impact it can have. Expenditure on publicity can be significant. It is essential to ensure that decisions on publicity are properly made in accordance with the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity and the Council's Press & Media Policy.

The officer may respond to press enquiries but should confine any comments to the facts of the subject matter and the professional aspects of the function concerned. On no account must an officer expressly or impliedly make any political opinion, comment or statement.

Any press release that may be necessary to clarify the Council's position in relation to disputes, major planning developments, court issues or individuals' complaints should be approved by the officer.

The Mayor (or chair of a committee) may act as spokespersons for the Council in responding to the press and media and making public statements on behalf of the Council but should liaise with the officer on all forms of contact with the press and media. The Council may also appoint individual councillors as spokespeople where there is an area of particular expertise, but this should only be done with the agreement of the Council.

The Council must comply with the provisions of the Local Government Act 1986 ("the Act") regarding publicity. All media relations work will comply with the national Code of Practice for Local Government Publicity. The Code is statutory guidance, and the Council must have regard to it and follow its provisions when making any decision on publicity.

The LGA has produced useful guidance on the Publicity Code - https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/short-guide-publicity-during-pre-election-period For more detailed information and guidance regarding the role of councillors in connection with the use of social media, reference should be made to the Council's Social Media Policy.

#### IF THINGS GO WRONG

#### **Procedure for officers:**

From time to time the relationship between councillors and the officer (or other employees) may break down or become strained. The Council will attempt to resolve matters informally,

but if the informal approach does not resolve matters, the Council's Grievance Policy will be followed.

The principal council's monitoring officer may be able to offer a mediation/conciliation role, or it may be necessary to seek independent advice.

The Council's Grievance and Disciplinary Policies enables individual employees to raise concerns, problems or complaints about their employment in an open and fair way.

Where the matter relates to a formal written complaint alleging a breach of the Councillors' Code of Conduct the matter must be referred to the principal council's monitoring officer in the first instance in line with the Localism Act 2011. The Council may however, try to resolve any concerns raised informally before they become a formal written allegation.

#### **Procedure for councillors:**

If a councillor is dissatisfied with the conduct, behaviour or performance of the officer or another employee, the matter should be reported to the Town Clerk and Chief Executive in the first instance. If the matter cannot be resolved informally, it may be necessary to invoke the Council's disciplinary procedure.

## **DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL**

### MEETING OF FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

#### **MONDAY 17 NOVEMBER 2025**

#### **MAYORAL ALLOWANCE**

**Purpose of Report:** For members to approve an amendment to the Mayoral Handbook

#### 1. ACTION RECOMMENDED

1.1. To approve the proposed amendment to the Mayoral Handbook at Item 14b- Mayoral Allowance.

#### 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. The Mayoral Handbook, at section 14b, states that the allowance may be used towards the following:
  - i. Clothing/Partner's clothing
  - ii. Donations to charities
  - iii. Purchase of Raffle Tickets
  - iv. Taking flowers, chocolates or biscuits (on 100th Birthday etc)
  - v. Expenses on foreign visits
  - vi. Personal hospitality (drinks in Parlour, private lunches etc)
  - vii. Invitations which incur a cost to attend
- 2.2. Members have expressed a requirement to clarify item ii. Donations to charities. Members are asked to approve one of the options below.

#### 3. OPTIONS

- 3.1. Money spent for or at an event the Mayor is invited to, whether or not they are able to attend (e.g. charity donations at events, raffle tickets or raffle prizes). (Combining ii and iii)
- 3.2. Amend the handbook to state that donations to charities should not include the Mayor's own chosen charities to support during their year, and that any donation to the chosen charities should be taken from income raised during the mayoral year for this purpose
- 3.3. Remove this option completely from the 'allowance' section of the Handbook and instead amend any mention of the fundraising a mayor may choose to do, to greater detail the donation element.

# 4. BACKGROUND PAPERS

4.1. <u>Mayoral Handbook Final Version.pdf</u>

# 5. AUTHOR

Lisa Scheder – Head of Corporate Services and Responsible Financial Officer Email – <u>lisa.scheder@dunstable.gov.uk</u>

#### **DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL**

### FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

#### **MONDAY 17 NOVEMBER 2025**

#### ADOPTION OF AN ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE USE POLICY

**Purpose of report:** To consider adopting the proposed AI Use Policy to ensure responsible, secure, and effective use of artificial intelligence (AI) by staff, contractors, and volunteers.

#### 1. RECOMMENDATION

1.1. That the Council the Al Use Policy is adopted and implemented with immediate effect.

#### 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. Artificial Intelligence (AI) refers to computer systems capable of tasks that typically require human intelligence, such as writing, summarising, answering questions, or identifying patterns in data. All has the potential to help staff work more efficiently and improve Council services but must be used responsibly and securely.
- 2.2. The attached policy sets out clear rules for the use of AI by Council staff, contractors, and volunteers. It emphasises the importance of using AI to support, not replace, human decision-making, and includes requirements for transparency, data security, fairness, and environmental responsibility. The policy also lists approved AI tools and outlines the Council's commitment to regular review and staff training.

#### 3. KEY FEATURES OF THE POLICY

- Al must support, not replace, staff decision-making.
- All Al-generated content must be checked and edited before use.
- Use of Al with personal, confidential, or sensitive information is restricted to staff with a Microsoft Copilot license, and only with appropriate safeguards.
- Only Al tools meeting the Council's Cyber Essentials standards may be used.
- Staff must be transparent about Al involvement in creating content.
- The policy encourages the use of energy-efficient ("lightweight") Al tools and highlights environmental considerations.
- A list of approved and sustainable AI tools is provided.
- Training and support will be offered to staff.
- The policy will be regularly reviewed and updated as technology evolves.

#### 4. RATIONALE FOR ADOPTION

- Ensures compliance with data protection and cyber security standards.
- Promotes responsible, fair, and transparent use of Al.
- Supports staff to use AI effectively and safely.

- Reduces risk of misuse or unintended consequences.
- Aligns with the Council's commitment to sustainability and good governance. Implementation
- Policy to be published on the Council's intranet and circulated to all staff, contractors, and volunteers.
- Training sessions and guidance to be provided.
- Ongoing review and feedback mechanisms to ensure the policy remains current and effective.

#### 5. FINANCIAL IMPACT

5.1. Adoption of the policy does not require additional expenditure. Any costs associated with training or approved tools are already budgeted or will be managed within existing resources.

#### 6. POLICY AND CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. The policy supports the Council's objective to "continue to improve the organisational management, efficiency and environmental sustainability of the Town Council" and the Corporate Plan action to "Improve efficiency through the use of ICT".
- 7. **EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS** None
- 8. **HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS** None
- 9. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS
- 9.1. The policy will be incorporated into staff induction and ongoing training.

#### 10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1. The policy is designed to ensure compliance with relevant data protection and cyber security legislation.

#### 11. ENVIRONMENTAL AND BIODIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

11.1. The policy encourages the proportionate use of energy-efficient Al tools and supports the Council's sustainability goals.

#### 12. APPENDICES

- 12.1. Draft Dunstable Town Council Al Use Policy
- 13. **BACKGROUND PAPERS** None

#### 14. AUTHOR

Paul Hodson – Town Clerk and Chief Executive paul.hodson@dunstable.gov.uk

#### **Dunstable Town Council – AI Use Policy**

#### 1. What is AI?

Artificial Intelligence (AI) means computer systems that can do tasks that usually need human thinking—like writing, summarising, answering questions, or spotting patterns in data. All can help staff work more efficiently, but it must be used responsibly.

### 2. Why We Use Al

We want staff to use AI to:

- Save time
- Improve services
- Support decision-making

But Al must be used safely, fairly, and with care—especially when handling sensitive information.

### 3. Who This Policy Is For

This policy applies to all Council staff, contractors, and volunteers who use Al tools in their work.

#### 4. Key Rules for Using Al

#### 4.1 Use AI to Help, Not Replace

- Al should support your work—not make decisions on its own.
- Always check and edit Al-generated content before using it.

#### 4.2 Be Open

- If AI helped create something (like a report or post), say so when appropriate.

#### 4.3 Keep Data Safe

- Only staff with a Microsoft Copilot licence may use AI with personal, confidential, or sensitive information—and even then, only with caution and care.
- Never enter private data into Al tools unless approved and secure.
- Only use Al tools that meet the Council's Cyber Essentials standards.

#### 4.4 Use Fairly

- Don't use AI in ways that could be unfair or biased.
- Be alert to mistakes—Al can get things wrong.

#### 4.5 Think About the Environment

- Al uses energy. Avoid unnecessary or repeated queries.
- Use lightweight AI tools when possible. These are simple tools that do one job well without using lots of computing power.

Examples of lightweight tools:

- Grammarly writing help
- Otter.ai meeting transcripts
- Perplexity quick factual answers
- Elicit research summaries

#### 5. Approved Al Tools

The Council supports the use of:

- Microsoft Copilot secure and meets Cyber Essentials
- ChatGPT for information that is not confidential or personal
- Other tools may be allowed but must be approved by the Head of Corporate Services or Town Clerk and Chief Executive

Tools with strong sustainability commitments:

- Microsoft Copilot – aims for 100% carbon-free electricity by 2030

Free or low-cost tools may be used only if they meet security and data protection standards.

#### 6. Training and Support

The Council will offer training and guidance.

Staff are encouraged to share tips and good practice.

## 7. Keeping This Policy Up to Date

Al is changing fast. The Council will regularly review this policy and update the list of approved tools.

## 8. If Things Go Wrong

Misusing AI may lead to disciplinary action.

If you're unsure or concerned, speak to your manager or the Head of Corporate Services.

Co-Pilot was used to help draft and grammar check this document

#### **DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL**

#### FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

#### **MONDAY 17 NOVEMBER 2025**

#### **BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR 2026/27**

Purpose of Report: For members to consider and comment on highlight budget

proposals for Corporate Services for 2026/2027

#### 1. ACTION RECOMMENDED

1.1 For members to consider and comment on draft budget proposals and fees and charges for the Corporate Services' service area for 2026/27, as well as indicative budget changes for the following three years.

#### 2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1. A budget for 2026/27 has been drafted and is included below. This year each committee is being given two opportunities to review the budget; for Corporate Services, this will be on 17 November 2025 and 26 January 2026. This will enable members to review proposed changes in the first meeting, to enable officers to prepare a full budget for the second meeting.
- 2.2. In drafting the budget, officers have had to make assumptions about the salary increase being forecast for 2026/27. Staff contracts specify that pay will increase by the amount set by the national agreement each year. For 2026/27 this has been estimated at 4%. When the 4-year budget was produced to Council, at 2025/26 budget setting, the percentage increase was estimated at 3% year on year. However, based on national RPI known, this would be a risk on the Councils finances and therefore 4% has been proposed, in line with the nationally predicted percentage. For Communities and Grounds and Environmental Services Committees this was given for information only; the decision on salary increases will be recommended by the Finance and General Purposes Committee to Full Council
- 2.3. For other inflationary increases, these were set at 3% when the four-year budget was agreed in February 2025, and the budget now being prepared for 2026/27 has kept increases to 3%. This may put some pressure on services but will help to keep budget increases down.
- 2.4. It is not yet possible to be precise about the impact of the proposed budget on the precept and individual Council Taxpayers because the Council Tax Base has not yet been provided by Central Bedfordshire Council. This will be available for the next budget round. We have therefore had to make assumptions at this stage that it will stay the same as the current year at 13,335.
- 2.5. As Members approved a 4-year budget in February 2025, the growth items below include those figures and are noted.

# 2.6. Growth items over £1,000:

Cost Centre	Nominal Code	Description	Previously included in 4-year budget	+ / - (if required)	Total	Reason / Notes
101	4037	Equipment/IT maintenance/support	-48,276	-1,108	-49,384	Additional co-pilot licences required
102	4016	Grove House – Cleaning	-11,808	-2,500	-14,308	25/26 underbudgeted; prices increase inline with national pay increases
106	4033	Newsletter	-37,132	-3,000	-40,132	Increased paper costs
106	4026	Insurance	-73,854	-7,000	-80,854	25/26 underbudgeted; increase based on actuals plus inflationary increase
110	4952	Health and Safety Reserve	0	-5,000	-5,000	New reserve – compliance requirements

# 2.7. Savings over £1,000:

Cost Centre	Nominal Code	Description	Previously included in 4-year budget	+ / - (if required)	Total	Reasons
101	4007	Training	-23,000	-3,000	-20,000	Reduced requirement
101	4021	Telephones/Data Links	-17,150	-3,000	-14,150	Mobile phone contact saving
102	1001	Grove House – Lettings/Facility Hire	3,500	1,500	5,000	Focussed increase on lettings
102	1002	Grove House – Rent Receivable	26,326	1,746	28,072	Additional tenant secured
106	4061	Annual Report	-1,250	-1,250	0	To produce in house

# 2.8. Corporate Services draft budget:

# CORPORATE SERVICES

# **STAFF COSTS**

Cost Centre	Nominal Code	Nominal Description	2025/26 Budget	Prospective 2026/27 budget	26/27 (set in Feb 2025)	+/-	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
100	4001	Salaries	-544,549	-559,999	-560,885	886	-576,799	-594,103	-611,926
			-544,549	-559,999	-560,885	886	-576,799	-594,103	-611,926

# CENTRAL SERVICES

Cost Centre	Nominal Code	Nominal Description	2025/26 Budget	Prospective 2026/27 budget	26/27 (set in Feb 2025)	+/-	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
101	4007	Training	-22,500	-20,000	-23,000	3,000	-20,600	-21,218	-21,855
101	4010	Payroll Services	-6,994	-7,344	-7,344	0	-7,564	-7,791	-8,025
101	4021	Telephones/Data Links	-16,650	-14,150	-17,150	3,000	-14,575	-17,012	-15,522
101	4022	Postage	-1,000	-1,000	-1,000	0	-1,000	-1,000	-1,000
101	4023	Stationery	-3,000	-3,000	-3,000	0	-3,000	-3,000	-3,000
101	4025	Subscriptions/Publications	-7,500	-8,827	-7,875	-952	-9,092	-9,365	-9,646
101	4037	Eqpt/IT Maintenance/Support	-46,870	-49,384	-48,276	-1,108	-50,866	-52,391	-53,963
101	4039	Equipment Hire	-6,400	-6,400	-6,400	0	-4,000	-4,120	-4,244
101	4058	Professional Services	-20,500	-21,525	-21,525	0	-22,601	-23,731	-24,918
			-131,414	-131,630	-135,569	3,940	-133,297	-139,628	-142,171

# GROVE HOUSE

Cost	Nominal		2025/26	Prospective 2026/27	26/27 (set in Feb				
Centre	Code	Nominal Description	Budget	budget	2025)	+/-	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
102	1001	INC - Lettings/Facility Hire	2,500	5,000	3,500	1,500	5,000	6,000	6,000
102	1002	INC - Rent Receivable	25,072	28,072	26,326	1,746	28,072	28,072	28,072
102	4011	Rates	-16,100	-16,100	-16,422	322	-16,422	-16,750	-17,085
102	4012	Water	-1,000	-1,000	-1,000	0	-1,000	-1,000	-1,000
102	4014	Electricity	-9,000	-9,000	-9,000	0	-9,000	-9,000	-9,000
102	4015	Gas	-10,000	-10,000	-10,000	0	-10,000	-10,000	-10,000
102	4016	Cleaning	-11,464	-14,308	-11,808	-2,500	-14,737	-15,179	-15,635
102	4017	Waste Disposal	-979	-1,008	-1,008	0	-1,039	-1,070	-1,102
102	4018	Security	-200	-200	-200	0	-200	-200	-200
102	4036	Maintenance Contracts	-3,708	-4,319	-3,819	-500	-4,449	-4,582	-4,719
102	4038	Repairs & Maintenance	-7,000	-7,210	-7,210	0	-7,426	-7,649	-7,879
102	4040	Equipment/Materials/Tools	-3,863	-3,979	-3,979	0	-3,979	-4,098	-4,221
			-35,742	-34,052	-34,621	569	-35,180	-35,457	-36,769

#### **CORPORATE SERVICES**

# CORPORATE MANAGEMENT

Cost Centre	Nominal Code	Nominal Description	2025/26 Budget	Prospective 2026/27 budget	26/27 (set in Feb 2025)	+/-	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
106	4032	Publicity / Marketing	-5,500	-5,500	-5,500	0	-5,500	-5,500	-5,500
106	4033	Newsletter	-36,050	-40,132	-37,132	-3,000	-41,336	-42,576	-43,853
106	4034	Website	-4,500	-4,500	-4,500	0	-4,500	-4,500	-4,500
106	4006	Health & Safety	-10,300	-10,609	-10,609	0	-10,927	-11,255	-11,593
106	4003	Pension Payments (early retire	-7,920	-8,157	-7,920	-237	-8,402	-8,654	-8,913
106	4019	DBS Checks (prev CRB)	-550	-550	-550	0	-550	-550	-550
106	4062	HR Related Costs	-3,605	-3,713	-3,713	0	-3,824	-3,939	-4,057
106	4063	Uniform	-3,090	-3,183	-3,183	0	-3,278	-3,377	-3,478
106	1096	INC - Interest Receivable	101,000	101,000	101,000	0	101,000	101,000	101,000
106	1099	INC - Recharges etc	6,150	6,335	6,335	0	6,525	6,721	6,922
106	4026	Insurance	-71,703	-80,854	-73,854	-7,000	-83,280	-85,778	-88,351
106	4056	Audit Fees - External	-3,543	-3,649	-3,649	0	-3,758	-3,871	-3,987
106	4057	Audit Fees - Internal	-2,524	-2,599	-2,599	0	-2,677	-2,757	-2,840
106	4061	Annual Report	-1,250	0	-1,250	1,250	0	0	0
106	4096	Bank Charges	-2,500	-2,000	-2,750	750	-2,000	-2,000	-2,000
		-	-45,885	-58,111	-49,874	-8,237	-62,508	-67,037	-71,701

# DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

Cost	Nominal		2025/26	Prospective 2026/27	26/27 (set in Feb				
Centre	Code	Nominal Description	Budget	budget	2025)	+/-	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
107	1099	INC - Recharges etc	0	0	0	0			
107	4007	Training	-1,000	-1,000	-1,000	0	-1,000	-1,000	-1,000
107	4024	Printing	-1,250	-1,250	-1,250	0	-1,250	-1,250	-1,250
107	4025	Subscriptions/Publications	-2,300	-2,369	-2,369	0	-2,440	-2,513	-2,589
107	4501	Mayor's Transport	-3,500	-3,500	-3,500	0	-3,500	-3,500	-3,500
107	4502	Mayor's Allowance	-4,500	-4,500	-4,500	0	-4,500	-4,500	-4,500
107	4503	Civic Hospitality	-8,600	-9,558	-8,858	-700	-9,845	-10,140	-10,444
107	4504	Civic Regalia	-500	-1,000	-500	-500	-1,000	-1,000	-1,000
107	4515	Remembrance Events	-3,090	-3,183	-3,183	0	-3,278	-3,377	-3,478
			-24,740	-26,360	-25,160	-1,200	-26,813	-27,280	-27,761

# CORPORATE SERVICES

# CAPITAL AND PROJECTS

Cost Centre	Nominal Code	Nominal Description	2025/26 Budget	Prospective 2026/27 budget	26/27 (set in Feb 2025)	+/-	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
110	4051	Loan Interest Payable	-10,932	-9849	-9,849	0	-8,766	-7,683	-6,599
110	4052	Loan Capital Repaid	-23,567	-23567	-23,567	0	-23,567	-23,567	-23,567
110	4721	Tfr to IT/Equipment Reserve	-20,000	-20000	-20,000	0	-25,000	-35,000	-35,000
110	4723	Tfr to Election Reserve	0	-20000	-20,000	0	-30,000	-30,000	-30,000
110	4724	Tfr to Building Maint Res	-49,000	-69000	-69,000	0	-69,000	-69,000	-69,000
110	NEW	NEW Health and Safety Reserve		-5000	0	-5,000	-5,000	-5,000	-5,000
110	4936	Res Exp- Personnel Reserve			-1,000	1,000	-1,000	-1,000	-1,000
110	4949	Res Exp- Website Development	-900	-900	-900	0	-900	-900	-900
		_	-104,399	-148,316	-144,316	-4,000	-163,233	-172,150	-171,066

## **SUMMARY**

Cost Centre	Cost Centre Description	2025/26 Budget	Prospective 2026/27 budget	26/27 (set in Feb 2025)	+/-	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
100	STAFF COSTS	-544,549	-559,999	-560,885	886	-576,799	-594,103	-611,926
101	CENTRAL SERVICES	-131,414	-131,630	-135,569	3,940	-133,297	-139,628	-142,171
102	GROVE HOUSE	-35,742	-34,052	-34,621	569	-35,180	-35,457	-36,769
106	CORPORATE MANAGEMENT	-45,885	-58,111	-49,874	-8,237	-62,508	-67,037	-71,701
107	DEMOCRATIC SERVICES	-24,740	-26,360	-25,160	-1,200	-26,813	-27,280	-27,761
110	CAPITAL AND PROJECTS	-104,399	-148,316	-144,316	-4,000	-163,233	-172,150	-171,066
		-886,729	-958,468	-950,426	-8,042	-997,830	- 1,035,655	-1,061,395

#### 3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1. The proposed budget would ensure the Council continued to provide the current level of service while maintaining good governance and treasury management. The provision of indicative budget changes for the following three years enables Members to ensure that plans are in place to maintain sufficient reserves to sustain the Council's current assets.

#### 4. POLICY AND CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS

4.1. The Council have adopted a new Corporate Plan for 2024-2027, the budget proposed would enable the Council to maintain the current range and quality of services provided.

#### 5. HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

5.1. The draft general health and safety budget for 2026/27 has been increased in line with known cost rises and budgetary requirements.

#### 6. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

6.1. None; salary budgets will be provided for the next meeting.

#### 7. EQUALITIES AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1. There are none arising directly from this report.

#### 8. SEPARATE ENCLOSURES

8.1. None

#### 9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

9.1. None

#### 10. AUTHORS

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