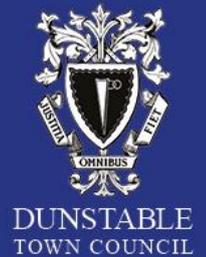


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**Paul Hodson**, Town Clerk and Chief Executive

Date: **Friday, 16 January 2026**

Dear Councillor,

A meeting of the **Finance and General Purposes Committee** will be held on **Monday 26 January 2026**, at **Grove House** in the **Council Chamber** at **7 pm**. To view the meeting live or afterwards use this link: [livestream](#). 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 [democratic@dunstable.gov.uk](mailto:democratic@dunstable.gov.uk) or 01582 513000 by 4 pm on Friday 23 January 2026.

*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), Kenson Gurney (Council Member), Matthew Brennan (Council Member), Matthew Neall (Council Member), Philip Crawley (Council Member), Wendy Bater (Council Member), Mark Davis (Council Member), Gregory Alderman (Council Member), Richard Attwell (Council Member), Johnson Tamara (Council Member), Nicholas Kotarski (Council Member), Louise O'Riordan (Council Member), Michelle Henderson (Council Member), Peter Hollick (Council Member), Trevor Adams (Council Member), Sally Kimondo (Council Member) and Robert Blennerhassett (Council Member)

## **AGENDA**

**036/26 Apologies for Absence**

**037/26 Declarations of Interest**

**038/26 Public Question Time**

**039/26 To approve as an accurate record the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on Monday 17 November 2025**

**040/26 Action Tracker – to receive updates on previous actions**

**041/26 Downside Roof Tender**

**042/26 Christmas Lights Tender**

**043/26 Finance Report**

**044/26 Budget Report 2026/27**

**045/26 Compliance and Facilities Report**

**046/26 Marketing and Communications Report**

**047/26 Social Media and Film and Photography Policies**

**048/26 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 Kenson Gurney  
Poor’s Land Charity – Councillor Kenson Gurney  
Lockington Charity and Marshe Charity – Councillor Kenson Gurney  
Dunstable and District Scout Council Executive – Councillor Kotarski  
Rotary Club of Dunstable - Councillors Kimondo, Attwell, Hollick, Neall and Kotarski

**049/26 Exclusion of the Press and Public**

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.

**050/26 Reference up from Personnel Sub Committee 15 January 2026**

**051/26 To discuss correspondence from Central Bedfordshire Council**

**052/26 Date of the next meeting – Monday 16 March 2026 at 7.00 pm**

## DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

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

HELD ON MONDAY 17 NOVEMBER 2025 FROM 7:00 PM

**Present:** Councillors Sally Kimondo (Town Mayor), Richard Attwell (Deputy Town Mayor), Nicholas Kotarski (Chair), Johnson Tamara (Vice-Chair), John Gurney, Liz Jones, Matthew Brennan, Matthew Neall, Gregory Alderman and Peter Hollick.

**In Attendance:** Paul Hodson (Town Clerk and Chief Executive), Lisa Scheder (Head of Corporate Services and Responsible Financial Officer), Jackie Carrington (Democratic Services Manager) and Rachel Connor (Corporate Marketing and Communications Officer)

**In Attendance:** Councillor Michelle Henderson  
**(Remotely)**

**Public:** None

#### **263/25 - Apologies for Absence**

Councillors Kenson Gurney, Philip Crawley and Louise O'Riordan

#### **264/25 - Declarations of Interest**

There were no specific declarations of interest

#### **265/25 - Public Question Time**

There were no questions from the public

#### **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.**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 22 September 2025 were approved as a correct record and were signed by the Chair

#### **267/25 - Action Tracker**

Members received and noted the Action Tracker.

## **268/25 - 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
  - ii) To note the Council's earmarked reserves as of 30 September 2025
  - iii) To note the current investments
  - iv) An update on the first Interim Audit Report for the financial year 2025/26 and an update on the External Audit for the financial year 2024/25 was received

## **269/25 - Compliance and Facilities Report**

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive summarised the report and gave details of the repair and maintenance work required at Grove House.

- RESOLVED:**
- i) to disband the Environmental Working Group
  - ii) to adopt the Carbon and Energy Action plan
  - iii) to revise Action 6 of the Corporate Plan to say CP6: To reduce Dunstable Town Council's total climate impact to 40 tCO<sub>2</sub>e by 2030

## **270/25 - Marketing and Communications Report**

The Marketing and Communications officer summarised the report. It was noted that there had been a steady increase in followers to the Council's social media pages and the Community Lottery was being promoted on a regular basis with the last video reaching 1,800 views.

## **271/25 - Reference Up Report**

Members received and discussed the report from Personnel Sub-Committee

- RESOLVED:** to approve and adopt the Councillor-Officer Protocol

## **272/25 - Mayoral Allowance**

The Head of Corporate Services presented the report outlining options for amending the Mayoral Handbook at Item 14b - Mayoral Allowance.

- RESOLVED:** to amend the Mayoral Handbook at Item 14b - Mayoral Allowance to say "*all contributions to your chosen charities must come from funds raised during the year (your mayoral allowance must not be used to donate to your chosen charities)*"

## **273/25 - Artificial Intelligence Use Policy**

The report was summarised by The Town Clerk and Chief Executive

**RESOLVED:** to adopt the AI Use Policy

## **274/25 - Corporate Services Budget Report 2026/27**

The Head of Corporate Services and Responsible Financial Officer outlined report, which members discussed the report in depth.

Members asked Officers to review the current ear-marked reserves to identify any that could be removed or reduced. Members requested that once the forecast underspend has been further clarified, a revised budget proposal be submitted which uses any available underspend to reduce the required precept increase in 2026 where possible.

**Action:** Head of Corporate Services and Responsible Financial Officer

## **275/25 - Reports from Outside Organisations:**

Citizen's Advice Management Committee – Councillor Attwell had attended the AGM of the Citizen's Advice Bureau and stated that many residents of Dunstable had used the services provided over the last year.

Dunstable International Town Twinning Association – Councillor Hollick stated that the Association was somewhat dormant at the moment.

Hospice at Home Management Committee – Councillor Jones stated Hospice at Home continues to thrive in the community. There are currently 25 volunteers and Hospice at Home is focusing on their 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary which it celebrates next May.

Ashton Almshouses Charity – Councillor Alderman was unable to attend meeting and had no update.

Ashton Schools Foundation – Councillor Hollick was unable to attend the meeting and had no update.

Chew's Foundation – Councillor Brennan stated the next meeting was in a couple of weeks and he would update at the next meeting.

Poor's Land Charity – Councillor Jones stated nothing to report

Lockington Charity and Marshe Charity – Councillors Kimondo and Jones had attended the meeting at the beginning of November. Grants have been given to appropriate families of Dunstable and the Charity will continue to do so.

Dunstable and District Scout Council Executive – Councillor Kotarski would be attending the meeting next week.

Councillor Brennan requested that Pride Dunstable and The Rotary Club be included in the Outside Organisations and asked when this could happen. The Town Clerk and Chief Executive stated that members could request that Members be appointed to an outside organisation at any time, as long as they are happy to have a representative from the Council attend. It was also stated that the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Chairs of the Committees were attending the Rotary Club as part of the Council's corporate membership, along with the Town Clerk and Chief Executive who was the Council's key contact, and they could report back to committee after attendance. Rotary Club was to be added to the Agenda under Outside Organisations.

**276/25 - Motion to exclude public and press**

**RESOLVED:** 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 was therefore AGREED that pursuant to the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 the public and press be excluded.

**277/25 - Bennett's Cafe and Community Hub Staffing Report**

**RESOLVED:**

- I. To amend the role of Manager of Bennetts Café and Community Hub from a fixed-term contract to a permanent contract.
- II. To approve the creation of a 16 hour per week Catering Assistant post using existing budgets within the Bennetts Café and Community Hub

**278/25 - Date of the next meeting**

Monday 26 January 2026 at 7pm

**The meeting closed at 9:01 PM**



AGENDA ITEM 040-26

Committee	Minute	Date	Action	Action Full	Responsible	Update	Status
FGP	039/25	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.	Completed
FGP	209/25	9/22/2025	Carbon Action Plan	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 deferred until the Carbon and Energy Plan had been updated and adopted.	Corporate Performance & Compliance Manager	This was reported to FGP at the meeting in November 2025 and will continue to form part of the regular Compliance report	Completed
FGP	274/25	11/17/2025	Corporate Services Budget Report 2026/27	Members asked Officers to review the current earmarked reserves to identify any that could be removed or reduced. Members requested that once the forecast underspend has been further clarified, a revised budget proposal be submitted which uses any available underspend to reduce the required precept increase in 2026 where possible.	Head of Corporate Services	Included in Finance report being presented to Committee 26 January 2026	Completed
FGP	275/25	11/17/2025	Reports from Outside Organisations	Councillor Brennan requested that Pride Dunstable and The Rotary Club be included in the Outside Organisations and asked when this could happen. The Town Clerk and Chief Executive stated that members could request that Members be appointed to an outside organisation at any time, as long as they are happy to have a representative from the Council attend. It was also stated that the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Chairs of the Committees were attending the Rotary Club as part of the Council's corporate membership, along with the Town Clerk and Chief Executive who was the Council's key contact, and they could report back to committee after attendance. Rotary Club was to be added to the Agenda under Outside Organisations.	Democratic Services Manager	Rotary Club added to Agenda under Outside Organisations. Update -added to Agenda for meeting 26/01/2026  Dunstable Pride can be added once Members have agreed to send someone to represent Dunstable Pride and the nomination is made. Update - Taking to Full Council 09/02/2026 for approval	Completed

**DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL**

**FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

**MONDAY 26 JANUARY 2026**

**DOWNSIDE ROOF REPAIR**

**Purpose of Report:** i) For members to approve the recommended contractor to undertake the repair of the roof at Downside Community Centre.

ii) For members to release the full balance of the reserve 316

**1. ACTIONS RECOMMENDED**

- 1.1 That members approve the recommended contractor for the Downside Community Centre Roof Repair Contract – Bidder C for the amount proposed, at a cost of £63,890.
- 1.2 For members to release the full balance of the reserve 316 (currently just over £45,000 has been approved to spend) and approve the spend for the purposes related to the repair of Downside Community Centre roof.

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Council has known that the roof of the main hall at Downside Community Centre was reaching the end of its life for around five years now and as a result has been putting £5,000 into reserves every year, and then most recently £27,000. The reserve now totals £79,769.
- 2.2 This winter there have been roof leaks affecting the kitchen of the centre and temporary repairs have been made, but this further provides evidence that there is a need to undertake these repairs as soon as possible to limit any further damage.

**3. MAIN CONSIDERATIONS**

**3.1 TENDERS RECEIVED**

- 3.2 The Town Council received five complete responses from the initial stage in the tender process. One submission could not be considered because not all the documentation was legible. All tender bids were evaluated and scored in accordance with the following criteria:

Evaluation	Criteria	Weight
Qualitative	Quality responses	55%
Commercial	Price	40%
Social value	<i>EDI Form (Equality, Diversity, Inclusion)</i>	5%

3.3 From the remaining five bidders all had supplied enough information to enable scoring. It was agreed that from this scoring all the necessary information had been provided and therefore there was no need for formal presentation. The detail provided by both bidders was comprehensive, and there were no additional queries which would benefit from a second interview/presentation stage.

### **3.4 PROPOSED CONTRACTOR**

3.5 Bidder C received the highest score from the Tender Response Evaluation, and those involved in the process agreed that the preferred bidder was bidder C for the following reasons.

3.6 Bidder C is the most local bidder to Dunstable.

3.7 Bidder C has considerable and reputable experience in the building industry.

3.8 Bidder C has robust method statement, health safety related documents and qualifications.

3.9 Bidder C can deliver the works on time within this financial year.

3.10 Bidder C provided a tender with no miss calculations or omission of items and at a value that was within budget, but not significantly under budget which would cause concern.

### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 Quotations ranged from £90,280 to £41,000 with an average value of £69,062.20. The recommended bidder came in at below average and within budget at £63,890.

4.2 There is currently £79,768 In the reserve and means the recommendation contained within the report has no negative financial implications. The residual amount in the reserve (£15,878, with an additional £5,000 being added on 1 April 2026) could be used to pay for the making good of the kitchen ceiling, the condition of which has been impacted on due roof leaks this winter. Whilst there will still be some remaining that leaves the Council a balance for any future unforeseen works to the building.

**5. POLICY AND CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 This tender process accords directly with the Council's Corporate Objective of *'Continuing to improve the organisational management, efficiency and environmental sustainability of the Town Council'*
- 5.2 This tender process accords directly with the Council's Corporate Objective of *'To continue to improve services targeted to all community sectors in the town'*
- 5.3 Selection of Bidder C would meet with the Council's Procurement Policy.

**6. HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Bidder C provided satisfactory Health and Safety documentation which suggested to the officers that they can safely undertake the works. Braiser Freeth will over see the work and will ensure that, if agreed, Bidder C adheres to relevant Health and Safety legislation.

**7. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS - None**

**8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS - None**

**9. ENVIRONMENTAL AND BIODIVERSITY POLICIES**

- 9.1 Bidder C has provided their detailed environmental policy which meets requirements. The works themselves will be conducted in line with this policy and therefore reducing their environmental impact where possible.

**10. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS - None**

**11. APPENDICES AND BACKGROUND PAPERS - None**

**12. AUTHOR**

- 12.1 Becky Wisbey – Head of Community Services  
Becky.wisbey@dusntable.gov.uk

**DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL**

**FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

**MONDAY 26 JANUARY 2026**

**CHRISTMAS LIGHTING**

**Purpose of Report:** i. For members to approve the recommended supplier for Christmas lighting.

ii. For members to make a decision on whether to extend the lighting scheme using the recommended supplier.

**1. ACTIONS RECOMMENDED**

- 1.1 That members approve the recommended supplier for the Christmas Lighting Contract – Bidder A - at a cost of £16,364 per year for five years.
- 1.2 That members make a decision about whether to extend the Christmas lighting scheme using the recommended supplier and in doing so make a recommendation to either:
  - 1.2.1 increase the Christmas Lighting budget in 26/27 by £13,140, and increase the precept accordingly, and then reduce to an increase of £2,340 for the following four years after

or

  - 1.2.2 Spend £13,410 from Ear-marked reserve 314 to enable the extension of the lighting scheme, subject to final repairs costs for the 25/26 scheme coming in on budget, and then increase the revenue budget by £2,340 for the following four years, beginning in 27/28.

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Dunstable Town Council arranges for the installation and removal of Dunstable's Christmas lighting scheme, together with its storage, and maintenance as well as the testing of columns, lighting, mechanical, structural and electrical through a contractor. The contract with the current Christmas lighting contractor ends on 31 March 2026, therefore officers tested the market, going back out to tender in October/November 2025.
- 2.2 The current annual budget for Christmas lighting is £19,000; all tenders received were within this budget. There is also a reserve for Christmas lighting, which the Council adds £7,000 to each year. The reserve currently stands at £19,691 of which £9,095 is committed, leaving £10,556 uncommitted and

another £7,000 reserve contribution is due in April 2026, together with any underspend from the 25/26 scheme leaving a minimum of £17,556 available come April 2026.

2.3 The new contract will be for five years from 1 April 2026.

### 3. MAIN CONSIDERATIONS

#### 3.1 TENDERS RECEIVED

3.2 The Town Council received two responses from the initial stage in the tender process. All tender bids were evaluated and scored in accordance with the following criteria:

Evaluation	Criteria	Weight
Qualitative	Quality responses	55%
Commercial	Price	40%
Social value	<i>EDI Form (Equality, Diversity, Inclusion)</i>	5%

3.3 From the two bidders all had supplied enough information to enable scoring. It was agreed that from this scoring all the necessary information had been provided and therefore there was no need for formal presentation. The detail provided by both bidders was comprehensive, and there were no additional queries which would benefit from a second interview/presentation stage.

#### 3.4 PROPOSED PROVIDER

3.5 Bidder A received the highest score from the Tender Response Evaluation, and those involved in the process agreed that the preferred bidder was bidder A for the following reasons.

3.6 Bidder A is the most local bidder to Dunstable.

3.7 Bidder A has extensive experience in delivering Christmas lighting schemes.

3.8 Bidder A has robust method statement, health safety related documents and qualifications.

3.9 Bidder A employs 20 people showing resilience and scope for managing the Christmas lighting contract successfully at all levels, e.g. planning works and emergency responses.

#### 3.10 EXTENSION OF CHRISTMAS LIGHTING SCHEME

3.11 Members requested that when going out to tender officers obtained quotes from the bidders for extending the lighting scheme at the four 'gateways' to the town.

Bidder A provided examples of what the design could consist of with two pricing options. Bidder B did not, although they did provide one quotation. See the table below.

Item	Bidder A (£)	Bidder B (£)
Install of electric column power points (per lighting column – up to 12)	£395 (per column)	£560
Storage – up to 12 (annual)	Free of Charge	£540
Light install – up to 12 (annual)	£1,200	£3,568
Lights removal – up to 12 (annual)	£550	£3,568
Purchase of lighting (per unit)	Design a £380 Design b £442	£465
Testing to include electrical, mechanical, structural and the testing of existing decorations (annual)	£300	£710
Initial strength testing of columns	£145 (per column)	£600
Testing of columns after year 1 (annual)	£240	£440
Other		£450

Annual costs	Bidder A (design a)	Bidder B
Year 1 (26-27)	£13,140	£17,061
Year 2 (27-28)	£2,340	£10,341
Year 3 (28-29)	£2,340	£10,341
Year 4 (29-30)	£2,340	£10,341
Year 5 (30-31) 31/3/31	£2,340	£10,341
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£22,500</b>	<b>£58,425</b>

#### 4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

##### 4.1 Financial Comparison:

Item	Bidder A (£)	Bidder B (£)
Removal of lights from existing provider's storage and transportation to new storage (one off charge)	Free of charge	£525
Call out (per hour)	£100	£65
Storage (annual)	Free of charge	£1,416
Light install and removal of lamp banners	£120	£4,694.50
Light removal and install of lamp banners	£60	£4,694.50
Dress Trees 30 ft and 20 ft	£600 (30ft)	£700 (30ft)

	£475 (20ft)	£650 (20ft)
Attendance at switch on event	Free of Charge	Free of Charge
Testing to include electrical, mechanical, structural and the testing of existing decorations (annual)	£1,375	£740
Testing of Columns and anchor point when not fixed to lighting columns (annual)	£450	£990
Offsite Maintenance (per hour)	£45	£50

4.2 Over a 5-year contract term Bidder A would cost the Council £81,820. The annual budget is £19,000. This would result in over the contract period, the remainder of £13,180 being available to cover additional costs such as call outs, repairs etc. This is based on the current scheme and not with any extension to it. Officers are confident that this is sufficient, based on past experience.

4.3 Over a 5-year contract term Bidder B would cost the Council £75,000, resulting in over the contract period, £20,000 being available to cover additional costs such as call outs repairs etc. However, Bidder A scored significantly higher overall.

## 5. POLICY AND CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS

5.1 This tender process accords directly with the Council's Corporate Objective of *'Continuing to improve the organisational management, efficiency and environmental sustainability of the Town Council'*

5.2 This tender process accords directly with the Council's Corporate Objective of *'To continue to improve services targeted to all community sectors in the town'*

5.3 Selection of Bidder A would meet with the Council's Procurement Policy.

## 6. HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Both bidders provided satisfactory Health and Safety documentation which suggested to the officers that both could safely manage the town's Christmas Lighting Scheme. However, Bidder B's is all based on paper and have no practical evidence of their ability to safely manage a Christmas Lighting Scheme, whereas the preferred Bidder, A, has provided practical evidence of this.

## 7. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS - None

## 8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS - None

## 9. ENVIRONMENTAL AND BIODIVERSITY POLICIES

9.1 Both bidders provided satisfactory environmental policies.

## 10. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The Town Council have a statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and foster good relations in respect of nine protected characteristics: age disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

10.2 Bidder A has provided evidence that accords with the Council's Equality & Diversity Policy and have their own Equalities Policy and on that basis offers equalities training to staff.

**11. APPENDICES AND BACKGROUND PAPERS - None**

**12. AUTHOR**

12.1 Becky Wisbey – Head of Community Services  
Becky.wisbey@dusntable.gov.uk

## Corporate Services

	Service Area	Budget 2025/26	Actuals at 30 Nov 2025	Funds Available	Year-end Forecast	Year-end Variance	
100	Staff Costs	(544,549)	(347,075)	(197,474)	(522,858)	21,691	Maternity / National pay award less than budgeted
101	Central Services	(131,414)	(135,549)	11,870	(158,606)	(27,192)	Professional Fees unbudgeted/urgent plus IT contract 14 months costings Saving on reduced utility charges forecast, offset by equipment purchase (ceremony room furniture)
102	Grove House	(35,742)	(29,092)	(8,358)	(30,923)	4,819	Additional H&S requirements (alarms/security systems); insurance premium over budget; offset by increased interest earned forecast
106	Corporate Management	(45,885)	(47,621)	(16,343)	(59,987)	(14,102)	
107	Democratic Management	(24,740)	(13,187)	(9,669)	(24,441)	299	
110	Capital & Projects (inc loan charges)	(104,399)	(101,212)	(2,417)	(104,399)	0	
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>(886,729)</b>	<b>(673,736)</b>	<b>(222,391)</b>	<b>(901,214)</b>	<b>(14,485)</b>	

## Grounds and Environmental Services

	Service Area	Budget 2025/26	Actuals at 30 Nov 2025	Funds Available	Year-end Forecast	Year-end Variance	
200	Staff Costs, Vehicle Costs	(987,404)	(621,810)	(364,239)	(922,025)	65,379	In year vacancies; pay award less than budgeted; vehicle fuel saving Reduced repairs and maintenance costs; increase on income - rents/maintenance
201	Allotments	3,418	(3,951)	(5,159)	4,474	1,056	Reduced income forecast; salaries savings due to vacancies at beginning and end of year
202	Cemetery	68,458	45,620	(43,766)	57,795	(10,663)	Increased pitchhire income; underspend on cleaning; offset by equipment expenditure
205	Recreation Grounds	(84,527)	(35,230)	(40,130)	(85,917)	(1,390)	
403	Town Centre and Gardens	(32,114)	(50,143)	(6,746)	(33,645)	(1,531)	Toilet Hire during Priory House closure
206	Town Ranger Service	(14,038)	(4,769)	(9,040)	(9,514)	4,524	vehicle fuel saving; additional maintenance contract
210	Capital & Projects	(141,815)	(138,047)	(103,356)	(141,815)	0	
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>(1,188,022)</b>	<b>(808,330)</b>	<b>(572,436)</b>	<b>(1,130,647)</b>	<b>57,375</b>	

## Community Services

	Service Area	Budget 2025/26	Actuals at 30 Nov 2025	Funds Available	Year-end Forecast	Year-end Variance	
300	Staff Costs	(351,165)	(202,773)	(145,642)	(346,462)	4,703	National pay award less than budgeted
209	Older People's Support Service	(31,493)	(14,091)	(15,639)	(24,973)	6,520	Transport and hall hire less than budgeted; overachievement on income
303	Community Engagement (inc Grants)	(32,207)	(23,212)	(5,059)	(32,912)	(705)	
304	Grove Corner	(20,795)	(11,028)	(12,917)	(18,184)	2,611	National pay award less than budgeted High water bills due to leak; lower than budgeted income generation, slightly offset by reduced purchases
115	Bennett Memorial RG Splash Park	(69,353)	(69,003)	(11,908)	(82,985)	(13,632)	
401	Events Programme	(192,557)	(146,960)	(15,429)	(187,865)	4,692	Increased income generation
402	Priory House	(134,707)	(78,270)	(72,524)	(98,001)	36,706	Partial secondment; various savings due to shop closure for part of year
405	Town Centre Services (inc Special Markets)	(125,750)	(68,871)	(41,686)	(119,812)	5,938	National pay award less than budgeted; increased stall hire income
407	Public Conveniences (Ashton Square)	(7,575)	(3,647)	(2,989)	(7,575)	0	
310	Capital & Projects	(241,815)	(240,188)	73,843	(241,815)	0	
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>(1,207,417)</b>	<b>(858,043)</b>	<b>(249,950)</b>	<b>(1,160,584)</b>	<b>46,833</b>	
<b>DTC Grand Total</b>		<b>(3,282,168)</b>	<b>(2,340,109)</b>	<b>(1,044,777)</b>	<b>(3,192,445)</b>	<b>89,723</b>	

# Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2024/25 Form 3

To be completed by Local Councils, Internal Drainage Boards and other Smaller Authorities\*:

- where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure exceeded £25,000 but did not exceed £6.5 million; or
- where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure was £25,000 or less but that:
  - are unable to certify themselves as exempt (fee payable); or
  - have requested a limited assurance review (fee payable)

## Guidance notes on completing Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2024/25

1. Every smaller authority in England that either received gross income or incurred gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 **must** complete Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return at the end of each financial year in accordance with *Proper Practices*.
2. **The Annual Governance and Accountability Return is made up of three parts, pages 3 to 6:**
  - The **Annual Internal Audit Report** must be completed by the authority's internal auditor.
  - **Sections 1 and 2** must be completed and approved by the authority.
  - **Section 3** is completed by the external auditor and will be returned to the authority.
3. The authority **must** approve Section 1, Annual Governance Statement, before approving Section 2, Accounting Statements, and both **must** be approved and published on the authority website/webpage **before 1 July 2025**.
4. An authority with either gross income or gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 or an authority with neither income nor expenditure exceeding £25,000, but which is unable to certify itself as exempt, or is requesting a limited assurance review, **must** return to the external auditor by email or post (not both) **no later than 30 June 2025**. Reminder letters will incur a charge of £40 +VAT:
  - the Annual Governance and Accountability Return Sections 1 and 2, together with
  - a bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2025
  - an explanation of any significant year on year variances in the accounting statements
  - notification of the commencement date of the period for the exercise of public rights
  - Annual Internal Audit Report 2024/25

Unless requested, do not send any additional documents to your external auditor. Your external auditor will ask for any additional documents needed.

Once the external auditor has completed the limited assurance review and is able to give an opinion, the Annual Governance and Accountability **Section 1, Section 2 and Section 3 – External Auditor Report and Certificate** will be returned to the authority by email or post.

## Publication Requirements

Under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, authorities must publish the following information on the authority website/webpage:

Before 1 July 2025 authorities **must** publish:

- Notice of the period for the exercise of public rights and a declaration that the accounting statements are as yet unaudited;
- **Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement 2024/25**, approved and signed, page 4
- **Section 2 - Accounting Statements 2024/25**, approved and signed, page 5

Not later than 30 September 2025 authorities **must** publish:

- Notice of conclusion of audit
- **Section 3 - External Auditor Report and Certificate**
- **Sections 1 and 2 of AGAR** including any amendments as a result of the limited assurance review. It is recommended as best practice, to avoid any potential confusion by local electors and interested parties, that you also publish the Annual Internal Audit Report, page 3.

The Annual Governance and Accountability Return constitutes the annual return referred to in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. Throughout, the words 'external auditor' have the same meaning as the words 'local auditor' in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

\*for a complete list of bodies that may be smaller authorities refer to schedule 2 to the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.

## Guidance notes on completing Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2024/25

- The authority **must** comply with *Proper Practices* in completing Sections 1 and 2 of this AGAR. *Proper Practices* are found in the *Practitioners' Guide\** which is updated from time to time and contains everything needed to prepare successfully for the financial year-end and the subsequent work by the external auditor.
- Make sure that the AGAR is complete (no highlighted boxes left empty) and is properly signed and dated. Any amendments must be approved by the authority and properly initialled.
- The authority **should** receive and note the Annual Internal Audit Report before approving the Annual Governance Statement and the accounts.
- Use the checklist provided below to review the AGAR for completeness before returning it to the external auditor by email or post (not both) no later than 30 June 2025.
- The Annual Governance Statement (Section 1) must be approved on the same day or before the Accounting Statements (Section 2) and evidenced by the agenda or minute references.
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) must certify the accounts (Section 2) before they are presented to the authority for approval. The authority must in this order; consider, approve and sign the accounts.
- The RFO is required to commence the public rights period as soon as practical after the date of the AGAR approval.
- **You must inform your external auditor about any change of Clerk, Responsible Financial Officer or Chair, and provide relevant authority owned generic email addresses and telephone numbers.**
- Make sure that the copy of the bank reconciliation to be sent to your external auditor with the AGAR covers all the bank accounts. If the authority holds any short-term investments, note their value on the bank reconciliation. The external auditor must be able to agree the bank reconciliation to Box 8 on the accounting statements (**Section 2, page 5**). An explanation **must** be provided of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8. More help on bank reconciliation is available in the *Practitioners' Guide\**.
- Explain fully significant variances in the accounting statements on **page 5**. Do not just send a copy of the detailed accounting records instead of this explanation. The external auditor wants to know that you understand the reasons for all variances. Include complete numerical and narrative analysis to support the full variance.
- If the bank reconciliation is incomplete or variances not **fully** explained then additional costs may be incurred.
- Make sure that the accounting statements add up and that the balance carried forward from the previous year (Box 7 of 2024) equals the balance brought forward in the current year (Box 1 of 2025).
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), on behalf of the authority, **must** set the commencement date for the exercise of public rights of 30 consecutive working days which **must** include the first ten working days of July.
- The authority **must** publish on the authority website/webpage the information required by Regulation 15 (2), Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, including the period for the exercise of public rights and the name and address of the external auditor **before 1 July 2025**.

Completion checklist – 'No' answers mean you may not have met requirements		Yes	No
All sections	Have all highlighted boxes have been completed?	✓	
	Has all additional information requested, including <b>the dates set for the period for the exercise of public rights</b> , been provided for the external auditor?	✓	
Internal Audit Report	Have all highlighted boxes been completed by the internal auditor and explanations provided?	✓	
Section 1	For any statement to which the response is 'no', has an explanation been published?	✓	
Section 2	Has the Responsible Financial Officer signed the accounting statements before presentation to the authority for approval?	✓	
	Has the authority's approval of the accounting statements been confirmed by the signature of the Chair of the approval meeting?	✓	
	Has an explanation of significant variations been published where required?	✓	
	Has the bank reconciliation as at <b>31 March 2025</b> been reconciled to Box 8?	✓	
	Has an explanation of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8 been provided?	✓	
Sections 1 and 2	Trust funds – have all disclosures been made if the authority as a body corporate is a sole managing trustee? <b>NB:</b> do not send trust accounting statements unless requested.		✓

*\*Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices*, can be downloaded from [www.nalc.gov.uk](http://www.nalc.gov.uk) or from [www.ada.org.uk](http://www.ada.org.uk)

# Annual Internal Audit Report 2024/25

## DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

ENTER PUBLICLY [www.dunstable.gov.uk](http://www.dunstable.gov.uk) / WEBSITE ADDRESS

During the financial year ended 31 March 2025, this authority's internal auditor acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with the relevant procedures and controls in operation and obtained appropriate evidence from the authority.

The internal audit for 2024/25 has been carried out in accordance with this authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this authority.

Internal control objective	Yes	No*	Not covered**
A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.	✓		
B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	✓		
D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	✓		
E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
F. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.	✓		
G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	✓		
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	✓		
I. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.	✓		
J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	✓		
K. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2023/24, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. <i>(If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2023/24 AGAR tick "not covered")</i>			✓
L. The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation.	✓		
M. In the year covered by this AGAR, the authority correctly provided for a period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations <i>(during the 2024-25 AGAR period, were public rights in relation to the 2023-24 AGAR evidenced by a notice on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set).</i>	✓		
N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2023/24 AGAR <i>(see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).</i>	✓		
<b>O. (For local councils only)</b> Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.	Yes	No	Not applicable
			✓

For any other risk areas identified by this authority adequate controls existed (list any other risk areas on separate sheets if needed).

Date(s) internal audit undertaken

26/11/2024 25/03/2025 05/06/2025

Name of person who carried out the internal audit

SF Christopher for Auditing Solutions Ltd

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit

*SF Christopher*

Date

05/06/2025

\*If the response is 'no' please state the implications and action being taken to address any weakness in control identified (add separate sheets if needed).

\*\*Note: If the response is 'not covered' please state when the most recent internal audit work was done in this area and when it is

## Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2024/25

We acknowledge as the members of:

### DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2025, that:

	Agreed		
	Yes	No*	
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	✓		<i>prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.</i>
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	✓		<i>made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.</i>
3. We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.	✓		<i>has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.</i>
4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	✓		<i>during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.</i>
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	✓		<i>considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.</i>
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.	✓		<i>arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.</i>
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	✓		<i>responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.</i>
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.	✓		<i>disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.</i>
9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	Yes	No	N/A
			✓

**\*Please provide explanations to the external auditor on a separate sheet for each 'No' response and describe how the authority will address the weaknesses identified. These sheets must be published with the Annual Governance Statement.**

This Annual Governance Statement was approved at a meeting of the authority on:

23/06/2025

and recorded as minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE  
168/25

Signed by the Chair and Clerk of the meeting where approval was given:

Chair

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Clerk

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

ENTER PUBLICLY [www.dunstable.gov.uk](http://www.dunstable.gov.uk) WEBSITE ADDRESS

## Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2024/25 for

### DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2024 £	31 March 2025 £	
			<i>Please round all figures to nearest £1. Do not leave any boxes blank and report £0 or Nil balances. All figures must agree to underlying financial records.</i>
1. Balances brought forward	2,860,550	2,168,307	<i>Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.</i>
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	2,791,245	2,933,469	<i>Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.</i>
3. (+) Total other receipts	1,856,248	2,058,695	<i>Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.</i>
4. (-) Staff costs	2,200,520	2,184,074	<i>Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.</i>
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	125,813	122,376	<i>Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).</i>
6. (-) All other payments	3,013,403	2,713,490	<i>Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).</i>
7. (=) Balances carried forward	2,168,307	2,140,531	<i>Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).</i>
8. Total value of cash and short term investments	2,277,012	2,135,048	<i>The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – To agree with bank reconciliation.</i>
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	8,207,590	8,406,182	<i>The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.</i>
10. Total borrowings	920,242	841,714	<i>The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).</i>

For Local Councils Only	Yes	No	N/A	
11a. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)		✓		<i>The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.</i>
11b. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)			✓	<i>The figures in the accounting statements above exclude any Trust transactions.</i>

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2025 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

**Signed by Responsible Financial Officer before being presented to the authority for approval**

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date

13/06/2025

I confirm that these Accounting Statements were approved by this authority on this date:

23/06/2025

as recorded in minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE 168/25

Signed by Chair of the meeting where the Accounting Statements were approved

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

## Section 3 – External Auditor’s Report and Certificate 2024/25

In respect of

**Dunstable Town Council**

### 1 Respective responsibilities of the auditor and the authority

Our responsibility as auditors to complete a **limited assurance review** is set out by the National Audit Office (NAO). A limited assurance review is **not a full statutory audit**, it does not constitute an audit carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) and hence it **does not** provide the same level of assurance that such an audit would. The UK Government has determined that a lower level of assurance than that provided by a full statutory audit is appropriate for those local public bodies with the lowest levels of spending.

Under a limited assurance review, the auditor is responsible for reviewing Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with NAO Auditor Guidance Note 02 (AGN 02 as issued by the NAO on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General. AGN 02 is available from the NAO website – <https://www.nao.org.uk/code-audit-practice/guidance-and-information-for-auditors/> .

This authority is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control. The authority prepares an Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with *Proper Practices* which:

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2025; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

### 2 External auditor’s limited assurance opinion 2024/25

On the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority:

Not Applicable.

### 3 External auditor certificate 2024/25

We certify that we have completed our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2025.

\*We do not certify completion because:

Not applicable

External Auditor Name

**Forvis Mazars LLP, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE1 1DF**

External Auditor Signature

*Forvis Mazars LLP*

Date

**9 December 2025**

Newcastle office  
Sustainably routed via:  
30 Old Bailey  
London  
EC4M 7AU



Tel: +44 (0)191 383 6300  
[forvismazars.com/uk](http://forvismazars.com/uk)

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

Direct line: +44 (0)191 383 6348

Email: [local.councils@mazars.co.uk](mailto:local.councils@mazars.co.uk)

Date: 11 December 2025

Dear Mrs Scheder

### **Completion of the limited assurance review for the year ended 31 March 2025**

We have completed our review for the year ended 31 March 2025 and I have pleasure in enclosing the certified Annual Governance and Accountability Return. The External Auditor's Certificate and Report is given in Section 3.

If there are any significant matters arising from the review, they are summarised in the External Auditor's certificate in Section 3. If we have identified minor scope for improvement we have recorded this on page 2 of this letter. The Council must consider these matters and decide what action is required. In most cases this will be self-evident. In some instances we have referred to further guidance available, in particular, in the publication "*Governance and Accountability for Local Councils – A Practitioners' Guide (England) 2024*". This can be obtained via your NALC or SLCC branch, or downloaded free of charge.

#### **Action you are required to take:**

The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 set out what you must do at the conclusion of the review. In summary, you are required to:

**Publish (which must include publication on the authority's website) a statement on or before 30 September to confirm:**

- that the review has been concluded and that the statement of accounts has been published;
- of the rights of inspection conferred on local government electors by section 25 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014; and
- the address at which, and the hours during which, those rights may be exercised.
- Keep copies of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for purchase by any person on payment of a reasonable sum.
- Ensure that the Annual Governance and Accountability Return remains available for public access for a period of not less than five years beginning with the date on which the Annual Governance and Accountability Return was first published.

*The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 do not specify the period the Completion Notice needs to be on the council's website, but this period must be reasonable.*

Forvis Mazars LLP

Forvis Mazars LLP is the UK firm of Forvis Mazars Global, a leading global professional services network. Forvis Mazars LLP is a limited liability partnership registered in England and Wales with registered number OC308299 and with its registered office at 30 Old Bailey, London, EC4M 7AU. Registered to carry on audit work in the UK by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales. Details about our audit registration can be viewed at [www.auditregister.org.uk](http://www.auditregister.org.uk) under reference number C001139861. VAT number: GB 839 8356 73

**Minor scope for improvement in 2025/2026**

The bank reconciliation initially provided by the Council did not include cash book figures to reconcile to the bank statements. In future the Council should use the standard proforma provided in our guidance or in the Practitioner's Guide when preparing the bank reconciliation.

**Accessibility Regulations**

We are aware that the Accounts and Audit Regulations requirement for a physical 'wet ink' signature on the original AGAR, does not allow parish council's to fully comply with the Accessibility Regulations. The National Audit Office are aware that the two pieces of legislation are not compatible, therefore smaller authorities are advised to make it clear on their website that the document is a scan and will not be fully compliant with the Accessibility Regulations.

**Audit fee**

Our fee note for the audit, which is in accordance with the audit fee scales set by SAAA, and available at [Audit Fees | Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments \(saaa.co.uk\)](https://saaa.co.uk) will follow.

We would be grateful if you could arrange for this to be paid at the earliest opportunity.

Commitment to achieving net zero

We've made an important change to how we handle post - and sustainability is driving it.

In line with our net zero targets, we encourage digital communication wherever possible. However, should it be necessary for you to communicate with us by post, our correspondence address is **30 Old Bailey, London, EC4M 7AU**.

Yours sincerely



**James Collins**

Director

For and on behalf of Forvis Mazars LLP

**DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL**

**FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

**MONDAY 26 JANUARY 2026**

**FINANCE REPORT**

<b>Purpose of report:</b>	To
	1.1) provide a revenue budgetary position report for the financial year 2025/2026
	1.2) request approval of allocation and expenditure of the current financial year forecast underspends
	1.3) note the Council's earmarked reserves
1.4) provide detail on current investments	1.5) request approval of expenditure from the Civic Hospitality budget and Developer's contribution earmarked reserve
	1.6) receive and note the outcome of the External Audit

**1. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1.1. To note the revenue budget position and year end forecasts for the current financial year, to 30 November 2025, at item 3.
- 1.2. To approve the allocation, and subsequent expenditure of the current financial year's forecast underspend of £89,723, together with the unrequired Neighbourhood Development reserve of £12,668, for:
- £31,000 – detached youth work reserve
  - £5,000 – performance area access door
  - £30,000 – Grove House Gardens 'ranger' stores' essential roof repairs
  - £36,391 OR balance at 31 March 2026 – professional fees
- Detailed at item 4 of this report.
- 1.3. To note the Council's earmarked reserves as at 31 December 2025, at item 5.
- 1.4. To note current investments, at item 7.
- 1.5. For Members to approve expenditure of the following:
- £5,000 from the civic hospitality budget 2026/27
  - £4,038 from the balance of the Developers Contribution earmarked reserve allocated for Court Drive landscaping
- to refurbish the raised beds, large street planters and planted areas in the town centre and the planters on Court Drive in preparation for Dunstable's 2026 Britain in Bloom entry, as detailed at item 6.
- 1.6. For Members to receive and note the outcome of the External Audit for financial year 2024/2025, at item 9, and receive an update on the requirements for the 2025/2026 Audit.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1. The budgetary control report summarises the net expenditure against budget for each service area as at 30 November 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 the forecasts detailed can only take account of known or estimated income and expenditure at the time of writing the report.

## **3. REVENUE BUDGETARY REPORT**

- 3.1. The summary at Appendix 1 shows the net expenditure at 30 November 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 **£89,723**. 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.

## **4. FORECAST UNDERSPEND APPROVAL**

- 4.1. As detailed at item 3.2 of this report, the forecast underspend for the current financial year is currently £89,723. Together with the unrequired reserve balance of £12,668, as mentioned at item 5.3, there is a total available forecasted at £102,391 for year end.
- 4.2. Members will be aware that officers have prepared the proposed budget for 2026/27, reducing the required precept from an estimated 12%, to 7.92%. When calculating the required budget, Officers considered budget line items that were potentially 'one-off' costs and, rather than adding to the precept, instead using the forecast underspend for 4 items, as summarised at 1.2 of this report.
- 4.3. Members have been made aware of the funding coming to an end in March 2026 for the detached youth work, however, are keen to continue this valuable offer in some capacity in the future. Officers have calculated a value of £31,000 will cover the required staffing to run detached youth activities for 3 nights a week for one year, April 2026 to March 2027. Funding for one year has been confirmed by CBC, however it is proposed to create an ear-marked reserve of £31,000 to ensure continuity is possible for one year should this funding be removed in the future.
- 4.4. Included in the corporate plan for 2024-2027, was a requirement to create a doorway in between the performance area and the side of Grove Corner. This was to make events easier and safer to manage, by creating additional access to the rear of the stage area. The amount of £5,000 has been estimated, based on quotations sort from local suppliers.

- 4.5. The stores to the side of Grove Corner, currently occupied by the town ranger team, are in need of essential roof repair works to make watertight and safe for continued use. An amount of £30,000 has been estimated, to cover the professional fees to ascertain the extent of the repairs and/or replacement of the roof, as well as the completion of the actual works required.
- 4.6. Officers have raised concerns the current year's professional fees revenue budget is largely overspent and heavily relied upon for varying projects, and issues ongoing, where specialist and/or legal advice and instruction are required. Members are therefore requested to approve the allocation of any current year forecast underspend is allocated for these purposes, together with the unrequired balance from reserves, of £12,668.

## **5. RESERVES**

- 5.1. The schedule enclosed at Appendix 2 provides detail of actual contributions to, and expenditure from, reserve funds at 31 December 2025.
- 5.2. At the last meeting of this Committee, Members requested a review of the current earmarked reserves to identify any that could be removed or reduced. Members requested that, once the forecast underspend had been further clarified, a revised budget proposal be submitted, which used any available underspend to reduce the required precept increase for 2026/2027 where possible.
- 5.3. Officers have reviewed the reserves and, as detailed at Appendix 2, provided commentary on the future requirement of each reserve. As Members will note, there is one earmarked reserve that is no longer required for its original purpose – Neighbourhood Development Reserve, as this was not a project that was being progressed at this time. The balance available of that reserve is £12,668.
- 5.4. Officers would therefore recommend that Members approve the removal of this reserve, and the funds available reallocated for known professional fees known, in the coming months. This being in addition to the balance of the current financial year's forecast underspend balance, also for this purpose, as outlined in item 4.6 of this report.

## **6. BRITAIN IN BLOOM – EXPENDITURE APPROVAL**

- 6.1. Some years ago, Members approved the addition of £5,000 to the Civic Hospitality revenue budget, to use for National Celebrations. In prior years, this has predominantly been used as a £4,000 contribution to the National Trust to light the Beacon for significant national events, and £1,000 has been allocated for street party grants, to add to the national event celebrations for the town. There are no significant national events in 2026 that would require the use of this budget, therefore Officers request that Members approve the use of the £5,000 from the 2026/27 proposed budget, for enhancement of the town centre raised beds, large street planters, rain gardens and planted borders, in time for the 2026 Britain in Bloom campaign.

- 6.2. In addition, there is a residue of funding of £4,038 in the earmarked reserve ‘Developer’s contribution’ which is the remainder of the funding provided for the landscape works completed on Court Drive. Officers request Member approval to use his balance of funding, in addition to the £5,000 detailed at 6.1, to refurbish the town centre raised beds, large street planters and planted borders with £1,000 to be specifically allocated to replant the planters on Court Drive.

**7. INVESTMENTS UPDATE**

- 7.1. Dunstable Town Council’s current bank and investment account balances as at 31 December 2025 were as follows:

<b>Account</b>	<b>Balance</b>	<b>Interest earned in month</b>
Current Account	£10,000.00	-
Business Reserve Account	£300,806.09	£244.62
CCLA Deposit Account	£2,468,610.81	£10,004.09

**8. FINANCIAL GOVERNANCE**

- 8.1. Councillors should, as a minimum, view and audit the Council’s accounts on a quarterly basis.
- 8.2. The last quarterly financial Councillor Audit was completed on 5 December 2025 take place this month, where Councillors Nicholas Kotarski and John Gurney taking part. The Councillors carried out a ‘mini-audit’ which included requests for financial information on various purchase ledger invoices paid from months July, August and September 2025.
- 8.3. As chair of this Committee, Councillor Kotarski and the Head of Corporate Services and Responsible Financial Officer signed the bank reconciliations for the second quarter 2025/26, verifying the amounts to the bank statements provided.
- 8.4. Further quarterly audits will be 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.

**9. EXTERNAL AUDIT**

- 9.1. Members will recall that at the last meeting of Finance and General Purposes, the completed External Audit for financial year 2024/2025 was due for completion by 30 September 2025 but was delayed.
- 9.2. Officers can now report that the Council received the completed Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for the financial year 2024/2025 on the 11 December 2025, from the appointed external auditors, Mazars LLP.
- 9.3. Members will be pleased to note the successful completion of the audit, and can view the completion letter, together with the signed AGAR at Appendix 3.

- 9.4. The Audit noted a minor scope for improvement, stating that '*The bank reconciliation initially provided by the Council did not include cash book figures to reconcile to the bank statements. In future the Council should use the standard proforma provided in our guidance or in the Practitioner's Guide when preparing the bank reconciliation*'.
- 9.5. This comment was similar to that of last year's audit and had been discussed with the auditors. It relates to the process we use to reconcile our bank statements each month as, due to the sheer volume of transactions, we group some income streams (card takings for a week's takings at the Splash or at Priory House for example). This is something we will continue to communicate with the auditors about, in future years.
- 9.6. The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) have advised the Council of changes to the audit requirements for financial year 2025/2026. This is an addition of an Assertion 10, over and above the current Assertions requested. Officers keep up to date with updates from the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) and the Head of Corporate Services and Responsible Financial Officer has attended training on the new requirements.
- 9.7. Assertion 10 requires evidence of digital and data compliance and specifically covers 3 areas:
- Emails, Domain and IT
  - Data Protection Act and UK GDPR Compliance
  - Web accessibility
- 9.8. Members can be assured that The Council already have in place and adhere to all relevant requirements and further detail will be provided to the next meeting of this committee.

**10. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS- none**

**11. FINANCIAL IMPACT**

- 11.1. These are inherent in this report.

**12. ENVIRONMENTAL AND BIODIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 12.1. The proposal to allocate funding to refurbish planted features in the town centre will significantly improve the town centre environment.

**13. POLICY AND CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS**

- 13.1. The current Corporate Plan contains an action to 'Create a doorway in the outside Rangers area (Grove House) to access the back of the band stand to allow equipment to be moved easily at events and create a secure area during events for equipment and staff'. This meets objective 1: 'continue to improve the organisational management, efficiency and environmental sustainability of the Town Council' under the Key objective to 'continue to improve Council facilities'.

**14. HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

- 14.1. These are inherent in this report.

**15. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS - none**

**16. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS- none**

**17. APPENDICES**

- 17.1. Appendix 1 – Summary of the Revenue Budget at 30 November 2025
- Appendix 2 – Summary of Earmarked Reserves at 31 December 2025
- Appendix 3 – External Audit completion letter and AGAR 2024/2025

**18. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 18.1. Community Services Committee Agenda 12 January 2026 – <https://www.dunstable.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/2026-01-12-Community-Services-Committee-Meeting-Book.pdf>
- 18.2. Grounds and Environmental Services Committee Agenda Pack 19 January 2026 - <https://www.dunstable.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/2026-01-19-Grounds-and-Environmental-Services-Committee-Meeting-Book.pdf>

**19. AUTHOR**

- 19.1. Lisa Scheder – Head of Corporate Services and Responsible Financial Officer  
[lisa.scheder@dunstable.gov.uk](mailto:lisa.scheder@dunstable.gov.uk)

Dunstable Town Council - Reserves Summary 2025/26

AGENDA ITEM 043/26 APPENDIX 2

	Description	Officer	Bal as at 31.12.25	Commitments/Programme of works, etc	Committed Amount	Bal after committed	26/27 proposed contribution	Notes on uncommitted / plans for future requirement
310	General Reserve	TC&CE / HofCorp	£593,193	FGP 16.06.25- Minute 167/25- Cemetery works (GES 09.06.25)	£27,492	£565,701	-	minimum requirement of 25% of annual salary budget
312	Vehicles Reserve	HofGES	£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	£60,000	10 year replacement programme. Revision to plan and spend proposal to GES in Jan 2026
314	Christmas Lights Reserve	HofCS	£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	£7,000	Ongoing maintenance/replacement - under tender
315	Street Dressing Reserve	HofCS	£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	£79,769	FGP 12.06.23- Minute 141/23= £36,679 & £8,792.55- for 2nd phase roof repairs	£45,472	£34,297	£5,000	2nd phase roof repairs
317	Grove Corner Building Maint Reserve	HofCS	£42,565	Chairmans Approval 17.04.23= bal of £2,000 roof survey & development plans (of £5,000 approved)	£2,000	£40,565	£4,000	Building reserves for future repairs/works to the building
318	Building Security Systems	HofCorp	£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	£4,730	Council 15.04.24- Minute 99/24= £3,075 for periodic inspections and subsequent works	£3,075	£1,655	£1,738	Reserve being built up to fund contractor to undertake testing which is next due in October 2027
320	Priory House Tearooms Equipment	HofCS	£12,000	Council 15.04.24- Minute 99/24= £9,000 for replacement of kitchen/catering equipment	£9,000	£3,000	£3,000	For Priory House reopening costs
321	IT/Equipment Reserve	TC&CE / HofCorp	£21,213			£21,213	£20,000	For replacement/upgrade of IT across all service areas
322	Older People's Day Care Service	HofCS	£12,325			£12,325		Reserve to cover unforeseen costs and still enable the service to continue e.g. CBC ceases funding with no notice or transport/food costs increase considerably
323	Election Reserve	TC&CE / HofCorp	£20,000	Council 15.04.24- Minute 99/24= £20,000 for future election costs due to CBC	£20,000	£0	£20,000	Reserve being built up to fund future election and by election costs
324	Grove House Building Reserve	HofCorp	£162,634	Council 24.06.24- Minute 165/24= £213,276 for essential repair and maintenance works (of £226,550 approved)	£93,634	£69,000	£69,000	For ongoing essential building works
325	Priory House Works Contingency	HofCS	£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		For the Priory House reopening costs
326	Mayoral Reserve	HofCorp	£3,000	FGP 19.01.15-Minute 24 - to be retained for transport/allowance as required	£3,000	£0		
327	Priory House Exhibition	HofCS	£11,149	Council 15.04.24- Minute 99/24= £11,149 for programme of future exhibitions	£11,149	£0		
328	Priory Churchyard	HofGES	£0			£0	£5,000	Buiding reserve up to deal with any maters arising from the church quinquennial report which includes the closed churchyard. Report next due in November 2026

	Description	Officer	Bal as at 31.12.25	Commitments/Programme of works, etc	Committed Amount	Bal after committed	26/27 proposed contribution	Notes on uncommitted / plans for future requirement
330	Town Twinning Reserve	TC&CE / HofCorp	£8,274	Retained for twinning activities to be determined		£8,274		
331	Tree Reserve	HofGES	£22,361	Council 15.04.24- Minute 99/24= bal of £7,361 for programme of tree inspections and subsequent works (from £15,488 approved)	£7,361	£15,000	£15,000	The tree reserve is used every year to fund ongoing inspections and annual tree works to maintain the Council's tree stock in a healthy and safe condition . The 2025/26 contract is out to tender for completion by March 2026.
332	Open Spaces Improvement Plan	HofGES	£73,949	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 Gardens Pergola Repairs (from £15,000 agreed);	£17,705	£56,244	£30,000	The emerging management plans for Recreation Grounds will inform its future use. It has also been used in the past to fund play improvements.
333	Priory House Building Reserve	HofCS	£281,023	FGP Minute 41/23 23.01.23- bal of £113,293- Roof works (of £205,000 agreed); Council 07.04.25 - Minute 115/25= bal of £113,400 - Priory House Exhibition (of £120,000 agreed)	£212,863	£68,160	£50,000	See committee report readditional works
334	Pavilion Buildings Maintenance Res	HofGES	£42,632			£42,632	£15,000	Ringfenced for works on Kingsbury, also to be funded by £169k from the Meadway Capital, £97k of S106.
335	Church Street Phone Box Maintenance	HofGES	£0			£0		
NEW	Health and Safety Reserve	TC&CE / HofCorp	£0			£0	£5,000	For known future requirements to fire panel and electrics in Grove House
NEW	Community Lottery Reserve	HofCS	£0			£0	£1,750	Still in first year of operating so full value and purpose to be determined.
338	Allotments Reserve	HofGES	£26,482	FGP Minute 107 20.06.22= bal for 5 year infrastructure improvement programme (upto £42,800 approved) (includes £5,000 pa contributions to 26/27)	£15,112	£11,370	£5,000	This reserve is used to fund the current improvement programme. A future GES will need to receive a report on progress and the potential reallocation of funding set aside for composting toilets to now fund a security fence at meadway allotment for which quotations have been obtained.
341	Outdoor Leisure (non play) Reserve	TC&CE / HofGES	£27,052			£27,052	£12,000	Repairs to the SkatePark and Splash Pad in time will be expensive so important to gradually build a healthy reserve of £100-200k. Members may also wish to consider seeking ownership of the BMX track to ensure it is better managed as a community facility.
342	Memorial Kerbs Reserve	HofGES	£461	Council 15.04.24- Minute 99/24= £300 for purchase of memorial kerbs	£300	£161		This will be used to assist with funding memorial kerbs and sanctums, which are then leased for 25 or 35 years
343	Cemetery Building Maintenance Res	HofGES	£27,281	GES Minute 150/25= £27,281 for cemetery building works, information board and footpath repairs	£27,281	£0	£10,000	For the general upkeep of the cemetery building and footpaths/driveways.

Description	Officer	Bal as at 31.12.25	Commitments/Programme of works, etc	Committed Amount	Bal after committed	26/27 proposed contribution	Notes on uncommitted / plans for future requirement
344 Fencing Maintenance Reserve	HofGES	£7,088			£7,088	£7,000	For fencing and kneerail repairs across parks and open spaces as required

	Description	Officer	Bal as at 31.12.25	Commitments/Programme of works, etc	Committed Amount	Bal after committed	26/27 proposed contribution	Notes on uncommitted / plans for future requirement
346	HSHAZ/Priory House HAR	HofCS	-£201,695	HSHAZ scheme programme / HAR 1 Priory House works programme- to future claim / claims due	£201,695	£0		
349	Website Development	HofCorp	£900			£900	£900	Building reserve for future website development and / or next tender
353	Neighbourhood Development	TC&CE / HofCorp	£12,668			£12,668		No longer required - Members made decision not to continue with the Neighbourhood Development Plan.
	<b>Earmarked Reserves Total</b>		<b>£1,441,142</b>		<b>-£367,460</b>	<b>£1,073,682</b>		

Capital Receipt - Sale of Land at Meadway

	Description	Officer	Bal as at 31.12.25	Commitments/Programme of works, etc	Committed Amount	Bal after committed		
371	White Lion Land Landscaping	HofGES	£10,000	Council 05.12.22 Minute 210- creation of new reserve from capital receipt received July 2022		£10,000		Reserve specifically set up for this area works
372	New Cemetery Development	HofGES	£147,361	FGP 18.09.23- Minute 187/23= balance of £32,135.50 for development of the new cemetery (of £76,775 approved)	-£32,136	£115,225		Reserve specifically set up for purpose
373	Grounds Depot Extension	HofGES	£97,235	FGP 17.06.24- Minute 141/24= bal of £94,235 - Depot Extension (of £100,000 approved)	-£97,235	£0		
374	Luton Road MUGA	HofGES	£42			£42		
375	Priory House Furniture	HofCS	£26,000	Council 17.04.23 Minute 93/23- release from capital receipt received July 2022 for Priory House furniture	-£26,000	£0		
376	Kingsbury Pavilion Refurbishment	HofGES	£166,250	Chairs Approval 11.04.25- bal of £1,830 (from £2,830 approved) - Professional Fees	-£166,250	£0		
377	Splash Canopies	TC&CE	£57		-£57	£0		
	<b>Capital Receipts Total</b>		<b>£446,945</b>		<b>-£446,945</b>	<b>£0</b>		

S106/External Funding/Ringfenced Expenditure specified by funding body

352	Development Contributions- REV	HofGES	£34,316	£8,000 committed in annual 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)	-£34,167	£149		Included in report to FGP 26.01.26 for Court Drive balance of £4,038 for - use for central reservation planters, rain gardens and pots, as well as refresh of the plants for court drive
570	Joint Committee Fund	HofCS	£50,021	Bal in holding code as committed Joint Committees fund only = not DTC	-£50,021	£0		
	<b>S106/External Funding Total</b>		<b>£84,337</b>		<b>-£84,188</b>	<b>£149</b>		
			<b>£1,972,424</b>		<b>-£898,593</b>	<b>£1,073,831</b>		

Key:

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

**DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL**

**FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

**MONDAY 26 JANUARY 2026**

**BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR 2026/27**

<b>Purpose of Report:</b>	1.1) For members to consider and comment on the draft budget and fees and charges proposals for Corporate Services for financial year 2026/27 1.2) For members to consider and comment on the proposed budget for the Council, fees & charges and precept for 2026/27, taking into account any comments and recommendations from Community Services Committee and Grounds and Environmental Services Committee and to make recommendations to full Council accordingly 1.3) For members to consider and comment on proposed reserves
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**1. ACTION RECOMMENDED**

- 1.1 For Members to consider and comment on the updated draft budget proposals and fees and charges for Corporate Services for 2026/27, as well as indicative budget proposals for the following three years. This includes:
- Amendment of the salary budgets across all sites due to the saving on employer's pension contributions from 1 April 2026
  - Increase to rates on Grove House, in line with the UK Autumn budget announcement
  - Increase to professional fees and Health and Safety revenue budgets in light of known additional requirements / works in progress
- 1.2 That the proposed budget for 2026/27, including the changes above, be presented to Council for approval (at appendix 1).
- 1.3 For members to consider and comment on current reserve balances and proposed contributions to reserves for 2026/27.

**2. CORPORATE SERVICES PROPOSED BUDGET 2026/27**

- 2.1. Members of the Committee considered proposals for the draft 2026/27 revenue budget for Corporate Services at the meeting held on 17 November 2025.
- 2.2. At that meeting, members were presented with highlight budget proposals. Since this report, Central Bedfordshire Council have provided the Council Tax Base, which has increased from 13,335 to 13,596. This is largely due to changes to Council Tax Relief; these are confirmed for 2026/27 but not for following years.
- 2.3. In addition, following the previous cycle of meetings in November and at Full Council on 1 December 2025, Officers have received further detail or updates, resulting in adjustments to the budget presented, these include:

- Bedfordshire Pension Fund reduction of required employers' contributions
- Business rates increases announced by the government
- Priory House opening date bought forward
- Additional health and safety requirements
- Additional professional fees required
- Removal of Priory Pictures from the events programme

2.4. This has resulted in a draft budget for Corporate Services of £1,039,081. This represents an increase of £152,352 on the current year's budget. This includes an income target of £140,407, giving a gross budget of £1,179,488.

2.5. Details of the proposed budget and fees and charges for Corporate Services for 2026/27 are included in Appendices 1 and 2 of this report.

### 3. OVERALL BUDGET PROPOSAL 2026/27

3.1. Members considered proposals for the draft 2026/27 revenue budget for Community Services at meetings held on 3 November 2025 and 12 January 2026, Grounds and Environmental Services at meetings held on 10 November 2025 and 19 January 2026, and Corporate Services at the meeting held on 17 November 2025 and included in this report.

3.2. The proposed net budget for **all** service areas is **£3,611,546** which equates to £265.63 per year or £5.11 per week on a Band D council tax charge. The Council Tax base has increased for 2026/27 to 13,596, resulting in a Council Tax charge increase of 7.92%, being £19.50 per year, or 37.5p per week for a Band D property. The following table shows the increase per band:

Band	Actual number of properties	Effective number of properties	Appropriate fraction	Effective number of Band D properties	Increase	Weekly increase
<b>Band A</b>	2,659	1,708	6/9	1,139	£13.00	0.25
<b>Band B</b>	3,575	2,868	7/9	2,231	£15.17	0.29
<b>Band C</b>	5,263	4,492	8/9	3,993	£17.33	0.33
<b>Band D</b>	4,395	3,963	9/9	3,963	£19.50	0.38
<b>Band E</b>	1,249	1,152	11/9	1,408	£23.83	0.46
<b>Band F</b>	479	448	13/9	648	£28.17	0.54
<b>Band G</b>	179	164	15/9	273	£32.50	0.63
<b>Band H</b>	10	6	18/9	12	£39.00	0.75

### 4. RESERVES

#### General Reserve

4.1. It is the Council's policy to maintain a minimum general reserve of 25% of the salary budget. Based on the proposed budget for 2026/27 the Council would require a general reserve minimum balance of £548,703.

**Ear-marked Reserves**

- 4.2. At the last meeting of Finance and General Purposes Committee, Members requested a review of the earmarked reserves. Following initial consideration of the proposed budgets by each committee, officers reviewed the proposed contributions to reserves for 2026/27 and the following three years. This has been included in the Finance Report being presented to this committee.
- 4.3. Proposed contributions to ear-marked reserves in 2026/27 are as follows:

<b>Corporate Services:</b>	
IT reserve	£20,000
Elections reserve	£20,000
Grove House building maintenance reserve	£69,000
New Health and Safety reserve	£5,000
Website Development reserve	£900

<b>Community Services:</b>	
Christmas Lights reserve	£7,000
Downside Community Centre building maintenance reserve	£5,000
Grove Corner building maintenance reserve	£4,000
Tea Rooms equipment reserve	£3,000
Priory House building maintenance reserve	£50,000
New Community Lottery reserve	£1,750

<b>Grounds and Environmental Services:</b>	
Vehicle reserve	£60,000
Cemetery memorial safety reserve	£1,738
Priory Churchyard reserve	£5,000
Tree reserve	£15,000
Open Spaces Improvement Plan reserve	£30,000
Pavilions buildings maintenance reserve	£15,000
Allotment reserve	£5,000
Outdoor Leisure (non-play) reserve	£12,000
Cemetery building maintenance reserve	£10,000
Fencing renewal reserve	£7,000

**5. CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2026/27**

- 5.1. The provisional year-end balances on the Allocated Reserve are based on the figures detailed in the budget monitoring report included elsewhere on this agenda.
- 5.2. The Council's Financial Regulations authorise the Town Clerk and Chief Executive and Heads of Service to incur expenditure of up to £10,000 against the agreed capital programme (Allocated Reserve) following consultation with the appropriate Committee Chair.

**6. TOTAL DEBT AND ASSOCIATED REPAYMENTS**

- 6.1. Members will be aware that the Council currently has a number of debts, serviced through the revenue budget. Listed below is a schedule of debts and associated repayments:

<b>AREA</b>	<b>TOTAL LOAN OUTSTANDING AT 31.03.26</b>	<b>PRINCIPAL PAYMENT DUE 2026/27</b>	<b>TERM</b>
Luton Road Pavilion	£1,593.75	£1,062.50	Nov 2026
Priory House loans 1&2	£133,333.04 £37,183.53	£16,666.68 £4,374.58	Nov 2033 May 2034
Priory House loan 3	£182,750.00	£10,750.00	Oct 2042
Grove House loans 1&2	£62,100.00 £158,333.06	£6,900.00 £16,666.68	Nov 2034 May 2035
2nd Cemetery extension	£195,000.00	£15,000.00	Nov 2038
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£770,293.38</b>	<b>£71,420.44</b>	

## **7. COUNCIL ASSETS**

- 7.1. In contrast to the schedule of debt show above, the Council does own land, buildings, and physical assets such as vehicles. It is very difficult to put a value on most of the Council's assets as most have restricted use, such as public open space, therefore undermining their value. The Council's two most valuable assets are Grove House and Priory House. The most recent valuations completed in March 2025 of both buildings value them at £745,000 and £660,000 respectively for non-specialist existing use.

## **8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1. 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.

## **9. POLICY AND CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1. The Council has set itself a number of challenges and aspirations within the Corporate Plan for 2024-2027. The budget proposed would enable the Council to progress with proposed initiatives while maintaining the current range and quality of services provided.

## **10. HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1. The draft health and safety budget for 2026/27 has been increased to account for known cost increases and requirements in the coming year. In addition, a new earmarked reserve for health and safety has been proposed to enable additional required improvement works to be completed in the coming period.

**11. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1. The staffing costs included in the proposed budget assume that the national pay negotiation will result in an increase of 4% for all staff.

**12. EQUALITIES AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 12.1. The Council has a legal obligation to set a balanced budget.

**13. APPENDICES**

- 13.1. Appendix 1 – Proposed Draft Budget 2026/27  
Appendix 2 - Proposed Fees and Charges 2026/27  
Appendix 3 – Council Tax breakdown 2026/27

**14. AUTHOR**

- 14.1. Lisa Scheder – Head of Corporate Services and Responsible Financial Officer  
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**DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL**  
**PROPOSED BUDGET SUMMARY 2026/2027**

APPENDIX 1

**CORPORATE SERVICES**

Cost Centre	Cost Centre Description	2025/26	Prospective			
		Budget	2026/27 budget	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
100	STAFF COSTS	-544,549	-550,680	-567,200	-584,216	-601,743
101	CENTRAL SERVICES	-131,414	-136,630	-138,547	-145,141	-147,960
102	GROVE HOUSE	-35,742	-35,984	-40,035	-44,665	-46,162
106	CORPORATE MANAGEMENT	-45,885	-78,111	-83,108	-88,255	-93,556
107	DEMOCRATIC SERVICES	-24,740	-26,360	-26,813	-27,280	-27,761
110	CAPITAL AND PROJECTS	-104,399	-211,316	-163,233	-172,150	-171,066
		<b>-886,729</b>	<b>-1,039,081</b>	<b>-1,018,937</b>	<b>-1,061,707</b>	<b>-1,088,247</b>

**GROUNDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES**

Cost Centre	Cost Centre Description	2025/26	Prospective			
		Budget	2026/27 budget	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
200	STAFF AND VEHICLE COSTS	-987,404	-997,061	-1,014,988	-1,045,438	-1,076,800
201	ALLOTMENTS	3,418	3,596	4,008	4,444	4,906
202	CEMETERY	68,458	-29,944	-44,431	-94,401	-111,546
205	RECREATION GROUNDS	-84,527	-88,270	-93,747	-103,680	-106,642
206	TOWN RANGER SERVICES	-14,038	-11,280	-11,618	-11,967	-12,326
403	TOWN CENTRE GARDENS	-32,114	-29,721	-30,349	-30,995	-31,661
210	CAPITAL AND PROJECTS	-141,815	-186,085	-200,829	-201,624	-201,003
		<b>-1,188,022</b>	<b>-1,338,766</b>	<b>-1,391,954</b>	<b>-1,483,660</b>	<b>-1,535,072</b>

**COMMUNITY SERVICES**

Cost Centre	Cost Centre Description	2025/26	Prospective			
		Budget	2026/27 budget	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
300	STAFF COSTS	-351,165	-369,323	-380,403	-391,815	-403,569
	OLDER PEOPLE'S DAY CARE					
209	SERVICE	-31,493	-25,823	-27,314	-28,850	-30,431
303	COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	-32,207	-27,505	-27,566	-27,629	-27,693
304	GROVE CORNER	-20,795	-20,929	-21,671	-22,696	-23,081
	BENNETT MEMORIAL RECREATION					
115	GROUND - SPLASH PARK	-69,353	-74,164	-76,767	-79,670	-81,947
401	EVENTS PROGRAMME	-192,557	-191,685	-197,173	-202,826	-208,648
402	PRIORY HOUSE	-134,707	-270,408	-291,864	-295,957	-301,576
405	TOWN CENTRE SERVICES	-125,750	-125,773	-128,970	-132,263	-135,655
	PUBLIC CONVENIENCES (ASHTON					
407	SQUARE)	-7,575	-7,802	-8,036	-8,277	-8,525
310	CAPITAL AND PROJECTS	-241,815	-120,287	-120,166	-127,045	-125,423
		<b>-1,207,417</b>	<b>-1,233,699</b>	<b>-1,279,930</b>	<b>-1,317,028</b>	<b>-1,346,549</b>

<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>-3,282,168</b>	<b>-3,611,546</b>	<b>-3,690,821</b>	<b>-3,862,395</b>	<b>-3,969,869</b>
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<b>PRECEPT</b>	<b>-3,611,546</b>
<b>BAND D COUNCIL TAX</b>	<b>-265.63</b>
<b>TAX BASE</b>	<b>13,596</b>

**CORPORATE SERVICES**

**STAFF COSTS**

Cost Centre	Nominal Code	Nominal Description	Prospective				
			2025/26 Budget	2026/27 budget	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
100	4001	Salaries	-544,549	-550,680	-567,200	-584,216	-601,743
			<b>-544,549</b>	<b>-550,680</b>	<b>-567,200</b>	<b>-584,216</b>	<b>-601,743</b>

**CENTRAL SERVICES**

Cost Centre	Nominal Code	Nominal Description	Prospective				
			2025/26 Budget	2026/27 budget	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
101	4007	Training	-22,500	-20,000	-20,600	-21,218	-21,855
101	4010	Payroll Services	-6,994	-7,344	-7,564	-7,791	-8,025
101	4021	Telephones/Data Links	-16,650	-14,150	-14,575	-17,012	-15,522
101	4022	Postage	-1,000	-1,000	-1,000	-1,000	-1,000
101	4023	Stationery	-3,000	-3,000	-3,000	-3,000	-3,000
101	4025	Subscriptions/Publications	-7,500	-8,827	-9,092	-9,365	-9,646
101	4037	Eqpt/IT Maintenance/Support	-46,870	-49,384	-50,866	-52,391	-53,963
101	4039	Equipment Hire	-6,400	-6,400	-4,000	-4,120	-4,244
101	4058	Professional Services	-20,500	-26,525	-27,851	-29,244	-30,706
			<b>-131,414</b>	<b>-136,630</b>	<b>-138,547</b>	<b>-145,141</b>	<b>-147,960</b>

**GROVE HOUSE**

Cost Centre	Nominal Code	Nominal Description	Prospective				
			2025/26 Budget	2026/27 budget	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
102	1001	INC - Lettings/Facility Hire	2,500	5,000	5,000	6,000	6,000
102	1002	INC - Rent Receivable	25,072	28,072	28,072	28,072	28,072
102	4011	Rates	-16,100	-18,032	-21,278	-25,959	-26,478
102	4012	Water	-1,000	-1,000	-1,000	-1,000	-1,000
102	4014	Electricity	-9,000	-9,000	-9,000	-9,000	-9,000
102	4015	Gas	-10,000	-10,000	-10,000	-10,000	-10,000
102	4016	Cleaning	-11,464	-14,308	-14,737	-15,179	-15,635
102	4017	Waste Disposal	-979	-1,008	-1,039	-1,070	-1,102
102	4018	Security	-200	-200	-200	-200	-200
102	4036	Maintenance Contracts	-3,708	-4,319	-4,449	-4,582	-4,719
102	4038	Repairs & Maintenance	-7,000	-7,210	-7,426	-7,649	-7,879
102	4040	Equipment/Materials/Tools	-3,863	-3,979	-3,979	-4,098	-4,221
			<b>-35,742</b>	<b>-35,984</b>	<b>-40,035</b>	<b>-44,665</b>	<b>-46,162</b>

**CORPORATE SERVICES**

**CORPORATE MANAGEMENT**

Cost Centre	Nominal Code	Nominal Description	Prospective				
			2025/26 Budget	2026/27 budget	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
106	4032	Publicity / Marketing	-5,500	-5,500	-5,500	-5,500	-5,500
106	4033	Newsletter	-36,050	-40,132	-41,336	-42,576	-43,853
106	4034	Website	-4,500	-4,500	-4,500	-4,500	-4,500
106	4006	Health & Safety	-10,300	-30,609	-31,527	-32,473	-33,447
106	4003	Pension Payments (early retire)	-7,920	-8,157	-8,402	-8,654	-8,913
106	4019	DBS Checks (prev CRB)	-550	-550	-550	-550	-550
106	4062	HR Related Costs	-3,605	-3,713	-3,824	-3,939	-4,057
106	4063	Uniform	-3,090	-3,183	-3,278	-3,377	-3,478
106	1096	INC - Interest Receivable	101,000	101,000	101,000	101,000	101,000
106	1099	INC - Recharges etc	6,150	6,335	6,525	6,721	6,922
106	4026	Insurance	-71,703	-80,854	-83,280	-85,778	-88,351
106	4056	Audit Fees - External	-3,543	-3,649	-3,758	-3,871	-3,987
106	4057	Audit Fees - Internal	-2,524	-2,599	-2,677	-2,757	-2,840
106	4061	Annual Report	-1,250	0	0	0	0
106	4096	Bank Charges	-2,500	-2,000	-2,000	-2,000	-2,000
			<b>-45,885</b>	<b>-78,111</b>	<b>-83,108</b>	<b>-88,255</b>	<b>-93,556</b>

**DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**

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

**CORPORATE SERVICES**

**CAPITAL AND PROJECTS**

Cost Centre	Nominal Code	Nominal Description	Prospective				
			2025/26 Budget	2026/27 budget	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
110	4051	Loan Interest Payable	-10,932	-9849	-8,766	-7,683	-6,599
110	4052	Loan Capital Repaid	-23,567	-23567	-23,567	-23,567	-23,567
110	4721	Tfr to IT/Equipment Reserve	-20,000	-20000	-25,000	-35,000	-35,000
110	4723	Tfr to Election Reserve	0	-20000	-30,000	-30,000	-30,000
110	4724	Tfr to Building Maint Res	-49,000	-69000	-69,000	-69,000	-69,000
110	4952	NEW Health and Safety Reserve		-5000	-5,000	-5,000	-5,000
110	4936	Res Exp- Personnel Reserve			-1,000	-1,000	-1,000
110	4949	Res Exp- Website Development	-900	-900	-900	-900	-900
110	NEW	NEW Capital tax base contingency		-63000			
			<b>-104,399</b>	<b>-211,316</b>	<b>-163,233</b>	<b>-172,150</b>	<b>-171,066</b>

**SUMMARY**  
**Prospective**

Cost Centre	Cost Centre Description	2025/26 Budget	2026/27 budget	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
100	STAFF COSTS	-544,549	-550,680	-567,200	-584,216	-601,743
101	CENTRAL SERVICES	-131,414	-136,630	-138,547	-145,141	-147,960
102	GROVE HOUSE	-35,742	-35,984	-40,035	-44,665	-46,162
106	CORPORATE MANAGEMENT	-45,885	-78,111	-83,108	-88,255	-93,556
107	DEMOCRATIC SERVICES	-24,740	-26,360	-26,813	-27,280	-27,761
110	CAPITAL AND PROJECTS	-104,399	-211,316	-163,233	-172,150	-171,066
		<b>-886,729</b>	<b>-1,039,081</b>	<b>-1,018,937</b>	<b>-1,061,707</b>	<b>-1,088,247</b>

**GROUNDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES**

**STAFF AND VEHICLE COSTS**

Cost Centre	Nominal Code	Nominal Description	Prospective				
			2025/26 Budget	2026/27 budget	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
200	4001	Salaries	-933,559	-945,195	-961,566	-990,413	-1,020,125
200	4005	Overtime	-13,600	-18,125	-18,669	-19,229	-19,806
200	4045	Vehicle Fuel	-22,050	-15,000	-15,450	-15,914	-16,391
200	4145	Vehicle Maintenance Costs	-18,195	-18,741	-19,303	-19,882	-20,479
			<b>-987,404</b>	<b>-997,061</b>	<b>-1,014,988</b>	<b>-1,045,438</b>	<b>-1,076,800</b>

**ALLOTMENTS**

Cost Centre	Nominal Code	Nominal Description	Prospective				
			2025/26 Budget	2026/27 budget	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
201	1002	INC - Rent Receivable	11,150	11,485	12,059	12,662	13,295
201	1091	INC - Miscellaneous	500	500	500	500	500
201	1099	INC - Recharges etc	3,000	3,090	3,183	3,278	3,377
201	4012	Water	-4,000	-4,120	-4,244	-4,371	-4,502
201	4014	Electricity	-3,000	-3,000	-3,000	-3,000	-3,000
201	4017	Waste Disposal	-1,622	-1,671	-1,721	-1,773	-1,826
201	4038	Repairs & Maintenance	-2,060	-2,122	-2,186	-2,251	-2,319
201	4041	Tree Planting/Surgery	-550	-567	-583	-601	-619
			<b>3,418</b>	<b>3,596</b>	<b>4,008</b>	<b>4,444</b>	<b>4,906</b>

**CEMETERY**

Cost Centre	Nominal Code	Nominal Description	Prospective				
			2025/26 Budget	2026/27 budget	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
202	1021	INC - Burial Fees	175,000	175,000	183,750	192,938	202,584
202	1022	INC - Book of Remembrance	600	600	600	600	600
202	1023	INC - Memorials	54,450	56,084	58,888	61,833	64,924
202	1027	INC - Kerb Blocks	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
202	1028	INC - Sanctums	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500
202	4001	Salaries	-96,865	-94,352	-97,183	-100,098	-103,101
202	4011	Rates	-9,100	-10,192	-12,027	-14,672	-14,966
202	4012	Water	-4,000	-4,120	-4,120	-4,244	-4,371
202	4014	Electricity	-5,000	-5,000	-5,000	-5,000	-5,000
202	4015	Gas	-2,200	-2,200	-2,200	-2,200	-2,200
202	4016	Cleaning	-6,489	-6,684	-6,885	-7,091	-7,304
202	4017	Waste Disposal	-8,868	-9,134	-9,408	-9,690	-9,981
202	4018	Security	-3,550	-3,657	-3,767	-3,880	-3,996
202	4023	Stationery	-600	-600	-600	-600	-600
202	4036	Maintenance Contracts	-3,000	-3,090	-3,183	-3,278	-3,377
202	4037	Eqpt/IT Maintenance/Support	-5,520	-5,686	-5,857	-6,032	-6,213
202	4038	Repairs & Maintenance	-8,240	-8,487	-8,742	-9,004	-9,274
202	4040	Equipment/Materials/Tools	-7,210	-7,426	-7,649	-7,878	-8,115
202	4041	Tree Planting/Surgery	-1,650	-1,700	-1,751	-1,804	-1,858
202	4047	GREEN FLAG	-400	-400	-400	-400	-400
202	4127	Kerb Blocks	-500	-500	-500	-500	-500
202	4128	Sanctums	-1,500	-1,500	-1,500	-1,500	-1,500
202	4201	Book of Remembrance	-400	-400	-400	-400	-400
202	NEW	NEW - New Cemetery Development		-100,000	-120,000	-175,000	-200,000
			<b>68,458</b>	<b>-29,944</b>	<b>-44,431</b>	<b>-94,401</b>	<b>-111,546</b>

**GROUNDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES**

**RECREATION GROUNDS**

Cost Centre	Nominal Code	Nominal Description	Prospective				
			2025/26 Budget	2026/27 budget	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
205	1009	INC - Pitch Hire	7,500	7,875	8,269	8,682	9,116
205	1024	INC - Maintenance	2,400	2,400	2,400	2,400	2,400
205	4011	Rates	-4,110	-4,603	-5,432	-6,626	-6,759
205	4012	Water	-3,000	-3,090	-3,183	-3,278	-3,377
205	4013	Rent Payable - Depot	-17,000	-17,500	-18,375	-19,294	-20,258
205	4014	Electricity	-11,800	-11,800	-11,800	-11,800	-11,800
205	4016	Cleaning	-2,000	-2,060	-2,122	-2,185	-2,251
205	4017	Waste Disposal	-9,517	-9,803	-10,097	-10,400	-10,712
205	4018	Security	-10,440	-10,753	-11,076	-11,408	-11,750
205	4036	Maintenance Contracts	-2,750	-4,333	-4,463	-4,597	-4,735
205	4038	Repairs & Maintenance	-15,000	-15,000	-15,450	-15,914	-16,391
205	4040	Equipment/Materials/Tools	-5,760	-5,933	-6,111	-6,294	-6,483
205	4041	Tree Planting/Surgery	-1,650	-1,700	-1,751	-1,804	-1,858
205	4046	Play Areas Equipment/Maintenan	-19,000	-19,570	-20,157	-20,762	-21,385
205	4047	GREEN FLAG	-400	-400	-400	-400	-400
205	4834	Tfr from Pavlions Mtce Rsv	8,000	8,000	6,000	0	0
			<b>-84,527</b>	<b>-88,270</b>	<b>-93,747</b>	<b>-103,680</b>	<b>-106,642</b>

**TOWN RANGER SERVICES**

Cost Centre	Nominal Code	Nominal Description	Prospective				
			2025/26 Budget	2026/27 budget	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
206	1024	INC - Maintenance	6,000	8,240	8,487	8,742	9,004
206	4017	Waste Disposal	-1,298	-1,337	-1,377	-1,418	-1,461
206	4036	Maintenance Contracts	-618	-637	-656	-676	-696
206	4038	Repairs & Maintenance	-4,532	-4,668	-4,808	-4,952	-5,101
206	4040	Equipment/Materials/Tools	-3,090	-3,183	-3,278	-3,377	-3,478
206	4045	Vehicle Fuel	-4,000	-3,000	-3,090	-3,183	-3,278
206	4145	Vehicle Maintenance Costs	-6,500	-6,695	-6,896	-7,103	-7,316
			<b>-14,038</b>	<b>-11,280</b>	<b>-11,618</b>	<b>-11,967</b>	<b>-12,326</b>

**TOWN CENTRE GARDENS**

Cost Centre	Nominal Code	Nominal Description	Prospective				
			2025/26 Budget	2026/27 budget	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
403	1009	INC - Pitch Hire	2,500	1,751	1,804	1,858	1,913
403	1051	INC - Town Centre Agency CBC	38,007	39,147	40,321	41,531	42,777
403	4012	Water	-800	-824	-849	-874	-900
403	4014	Electricity	-5,000	-5,000	-5,000	-5,000	-5,000
403	4016	Cleaning	-1,500	-1,545	-1,591	-1,639	-1,688
403	4017	Waste Disposal	-9,135	-9,409	-9,691	-9,982	-10,281
403	4036	Maintenance Contracts	-7,746	-8,978	-9,247	-9,525	-9,811
403	4038	Repairs & Maintenance	-4,120	-4,244	-4,371	-4,502	-4,638
403	4040	Equipment/Materials/Tools	-2,060	-2,122	-2,186	-2,251	-2,319
403	4041	Tree Planting/Surgery	-1,650	-1,700	-1,751	-1,804	-1,858
403	4043	Bedding Plants	-34,750	-30,875	-31,801	-32,755	-33,738
403	4047	GREEN FLAG	-800	-800	-800	-800	-800
403	4075	Skateboard Park	-3,000	-3,000	-3,000	-3,000	-3,000
403	4540	Parks Development	-2,060	-2,122	-2,186	-2,251	-2,319
			<b>-32,114</b>	<b>-29,721</b>	<b>-30,349</b>	<b>-30,995</b>	<b>-31,661</b>

**GROUNDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES**

**CAPITAL AND PROJECTS**

Cost Centre	Nominal Code	Nominal Description	Prospective				
			2025/26 Budget	2026/27 budget	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
210	4051	Loan Interest Payable	-10,098	-9,285	-8,473	-7,708	-6,991
210	4052	Loan Capital Repaid	-16,062	-16,062	-15,531	-15,000	-15,000
210	4712	Tfr to Vehicles Reserve	-20,000	-60,000	-61,000	-62,000	-44,000
210	4719	Tfr to Cem Memorial Safety	-1,655	-1,738	-1,825	-1,916	-2,012
210	4728	Tfr to Priory Churchyard		-5,000	-10,000	-12,000	-12,000
210	4731	Tfr to Tree Reserve	-15,000	-15,000	-15,000	-15,000	-15,000
210	4732	Tfr to Open Spaces Improvement	-30,000	-30,000	-30,000	-30,000	-30,000
210	4734	Tfr to Pavilions Building Main	-15,000	-15,000	-15,000	-15,000	-15,000
210	4738	Tfr to Allotments Reserve	-5,000	-5,000	-5,000	-5,000	-5,000
210	4741	Tfr to Outdoor Leisure (non play)	-12,000	-12,000	-12,000	-12,000	-12,000
210	4743	Tfr to Cemetery Building Mai	-10,000	-10,000	-10,000	-10,000	-10,000
210	4744	Tfr to Fencing Reserve	-7,000	-7,000	-7,000	-7,000	-7,000
			<b>-141,815</b>	<b>-186,085</b>	<b>-190,829</b>	<b>-192,624</b>	<b>-174,003</b>

**SUMMARY**  
**Prospective**

Cost Centre	Cost Centre Description	2025/26 Budget	2026/27 budget	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
200	STAFF AND VEHICLE COSTS	-987,404	-997,061	-1,014,988	-1,045,438	-1,076,800
201	ALLOTMENTS	3,418	3,596	4,008	4,444	4,906
202	CEMETERY	68,458	-29,944	-44,431	-94,401	-111,546
205	RECREATION GROUNDS	-84,527	-88,270	-93,747	-103,680	-106,642
206	TOWN RANGER SERVICES	-14,038	-11,280	-11,618	-11,967	-12,326
403	TOWN CENTRE GARDENS	-32,114	-29,721	-30,349	-30,995	-31,661
210	CAPITAL AND PROJECTS	-141,815	-186,085	-200,829	-201,624	-201,003
		<b>-1,188,022</b>	<b>-1,338,766</b>	<b>-1,391,954</b>	<b>-1,483,660</b>	<b>-1,535,072</b>

**COMMUNITY SERVICES**

**STAFF COSTS**

Cost Centre	Nominal Code	Nominal Description	2025/26	Prospective			
			Budget	2026/27 budget	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
300	4000	Salaries - Funded	-81,722	-81,722			
300	4001	Salaries	-351,165	-369,323	-380,403	-391,815	-403,569
300	1071	INC - Rev Grant Rec'd	81,722	81,722			
			<b>-351,165</b>	<b>-369,323</b>	<b>-380,403</b>	<b>-391,815</b>	<b>-403,569</b>

**OLDER PEOPLE'S DAY CARE SERVICE**

Cost Centre	Nominal Code	Nominal Description	2025/26	Prospective			
			Budget	2026/27 budget	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
209	1004	INC - Activities	1,640	2,520	2,520	2,520	2,520
209	1006	INC - CBC Contribution/Grant	9,156	9,656	9,656	9,656	9,656
209	1007	INC - Fees O P Day Care Serv	14,000	16,000	16,000	16,000	16,000
209	4001	Salaries	-28,064	-27,362	-28,183	-29,028	-29,899
209	4036	Maintenance Contracts	0	-100	-100	-100	-100
209	4064	Hall Hire	-5,525	-3,500	-3,605	-3,713	-3,825
209	4065	Lunchclub Catering	-11,000	-13,837	-14,252	-14,680	-15,120
209	4066	Entertainment/Activities	-4,200	-4,200	-4,200	-4,200	-4,200
209	4313	OPHLP - Transport	-7,500	-5,000	-5,150	-5,305	-5,464
			<b>-31,493</b>	<b>-25,823</b>	<b>-27,314</b>	<b>-28,850</b>	<b>-30,431</b>

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Cost Centre	Nominal Code	Nominal Description	2025/26	Prospective			
			Budget	2026/27 budget	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
303	1001	INC - Lettings/Facility Hire	7,000	7,000	7,000	7,000	7,000
303	1004	INC - Activities	2,200	2,200	2,200	2,200	2,200
303	1071	INC - Rev Grant Rec'd		31,000	31,930	32,888	33,875
303	4001	Salaries (Detached)		-31,000	-31,930	-32,888	-33,875
303	1013	INC - Community Lottery		2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500
303	4068	EXP - including licence costs		-750	-750	-750	-750
303	4032	Publicity / Marketing	-300	-300	-300	-300	-300
303	4038	Repairs & Maintenance	0	-1,000	-1,030	-1,061	-1,093
303	4040	Equipment/Materials/Tools	-1,000	-1,030	-1,061	-1,093	-1,126
303	4066	Entertainment/Activities	-8,507	-8,500	-8,500	-8,500	-8,500
303	4067	Community Projects	-8,100	-10,125	-10,125	-10,125	-10,125
303	4069	ACTIVITIES- DETACHED	-10,000	-4,000	-4,000	-4,000	-4,000
303	4321	Service Level Agreements	-13,500	-13,500	-13,500	-13,500	-13,500
			<b>-32,207</b>	<b>-27,505</b>	<b>-27,566</b>	<b>-27,629</b>	<b>-27,693</b>

**COMMUNITY SERVICES**

**GROVE CORNER**

Cost Centre	Nominal Code	Nominal Description	Prospective				
			2025/26 Budget	2026/27 budget	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
304	1001	INC - Lettings/Facility Hire	11,000	11,330	11,670	12,020	12,381
304	1032	INC - Bar & Catering Sales	750	0			
304	4001	Salaries	-9,549	-9,263	-9,541	-9,827	-10,122
304	4002	Wages	-4,000	-3,772	-3,885	-4,002	-4,122
304	4011	Rates	-2,510	-2,811	-3,317	-4,047	-4,128
304	4012	Water	-1,200	-1,236	-1,273	-1,311	-1,351
304	4014	Electricity	-2,500	-2,500	-2,500	-2,500	-2,500
304	4015	Gas	-3,125	-3,125	-3,125	-3,125	-3,125
304	4016	Cleaning	-618	-637	-656	-676	-696
304	4027	Licences	-500	-700	-500	-500	-500
304	4032	Publicity / Marketing	-400	-250	-400	-400	-400
304	4036	Maintenance Contracts	-2,987	-3,487	-3,592	-3,699	-3,810
304	4038	Repairs & Maintenance	-1,428	-1,470	-1,514	-1,560	-1,606
304	4040	Equipment/Materials/Tools	-978	-1,008	-1,038	-1,069	-1,101
304	4060	Bar & Catering Stock	-750	0			
304	4066	Entertainment/Activities	-2,000	-2,000	-2,000	-2,000	-2,000
			<b>-20,795</b>	<b>-20,929</b>	<b>-21,671</b>	<b>-22,696</b>	<b>-23,081</b>

**BENNETT MEMORIAL RECREATION GROUND - SPLASH PARK**

Cost Centre	Nominal Code	Nominal Description	Prospective				
			2025/26 Budget	2026/27 budget	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
115	1001	INC - Lettings/Facility Hire	4,500	3,500	3,605	3,713	3,825
115	1004	INC - Activities	0	1,800	1,854	1,910	1,967
115	1032	INC - Bar & Catering Sales	55,500	45,000	46,350	47,741	49,173
115	1092	INC - Concessions	5,000	5,500	5,500	5,500	5,500
115	4001	Salaries	-44,412	-43,530	-44,836	-46,181	-47,566
115	4002	Wages	-37,874	-38,745	-39,907	-41,105	-42,338
115	4011	Rates	-2,670	-2,990	-3,529	-4,305	-4,391
115	4012	Water	-1,250	-1,250	-1,250	-1,250	-1,250
115	4014	Electricity	-6,300	-6,300	-6,300	-6,300	-6,300
115	4016	Cleaning	-2,575	-2,652	-2,732	-2,814	-2,898
115	4017	Waste Disposal	-3,000	-3,090	-3,183	-3,278	-3,377
115	4027	Licences	-220	-420	-433	-446	-459
115	4032	Publicity / Marketing	-300	-300	-300	-300	-300
115	4036	Maintenance Contracts	-8,652	-8,912	-9,179	-9,455	-9,738
115	4038	Repairs & Maintenance	-1,500	-1,545	-1,591	-1,639	-1,688
115	4040	Equipment/Materials/Tools	-1,000	-1,030	-1,061	-1,093	-1,126
115	4059	Kitchen/Catering Expenses	-2,600	-2,000	-2,060	-2,122	-2,185
115	4060	Bar & Catering Stock	-22,000	-16,000	-16,480	-16,974	-17,484
115	4066	Entertainment/Activities	0	-1,200	-1,236	-1,273	-1,311
			<b>-69,353</b>	<b>-74,164</b>	<b>-76,767</b>	<b>-79,670</b>	<b>-81,947</b>

**COMMUNITY SERVICES****EVENTS**

Cost Centre	Nominal Code	Nominal Description	Prospective				
			2025/26 Budget	2026/27 budget	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
401	1092	INC - Concessions	13,000	11,979	12,338	12,709	13,090
401	4001	Salaries	-48,392	-46,807	-48,211	-49,658	-51,147
401	4002	Wages	-4,147	-4,411	-4,543	-4,680	-4,820
401	4014	Electricity	-2,750	-2,750	-2,750	-2,750	-2,750
401	4017	Waste Disposal	-18,150	-17,884	-18,421	-18,973	-19,542
401	4032	Publicity / Marketing	-6,000	-6,000	-6,000	-6,000	-6,000
401	4035	Cultural/National Event	-10,915	-11,242	-11,579	-11,927	-12,284
401	4036	Maintenance Contracts	-300	-309	-318	-328	-338
401	4040	Equipment/Materials/Tools	-1,030	-1,061	-1,093	-1,126	-1,159
401	4055	External Contracts	-7,134	-7,348	-7,568	-7,795	-8,029
401	4511	St Georges Day Event	-4,851	-6,497	-6,692	-6,893	-7,099
401	4512	Party in the Park	-25,593	-26,361	-27,152	-27,966	-28,805
401	4514	Torchlight Carols Event	-12,202	-12,568	-12,945	-13,333	-13,733
401	4518	Band Concerts	-3,465	-3,569	-3,676	-3,786	-3,900
401	4522	Dunstable Live	-10,915	-11,242	-11,579	-11,927	-12,284
401	4523	Proms In The Park	-12,128	-12,492	-12,867	-13,253	-13,650
401	4524	Priory Pictures	-14,553	0	0	0	0
401	4526	Motor Rally	-3,032	-3,123	-3,217	-3,313	-3,413
401	4527	NEW - Soapbox		-20,000	-20,600	-21,218	-21,855
401	4525	Events	-20,000	-10,000	-10,300	-10,609	-10,927
			<b>-192,557</b>	<b>-191,685</b>	<b>-197,173</b>	<b>-202,826</b>	<b>-208,648</b>

**PRIORY HOUSE**

Cost Centre	Nominal Code	Nominal Description	Prospective				
			2025/26 Budget	2026/27 budget	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
402	1001	INC - Lettings/Facility Hire	0	1,000	6,000	6,000	6,000
402	1004	INC - Activities	1,200	1,200	1,200	1,200	1,236
402	1030	INC - Retail Sales	20,000	20,600	21,218	21,855	22,511
402	1032	INC - Bar & Catering Sales	8,000	45,000	135,000	135,000	139,050
402	4001	Salaries	-72,305	-177,520	-294,282	-303,110	-312,204
402	4005	Overtime	-6,802	-14,751	-15,194	-15,649	-16,119
402	4011	Rates	-7,200	-17,250	27,140	33,111	33,773
402	4012	Water	-2,500	-2,500	-2,575	-2,652	-2,732
402	4014	Electricity	-17,000	-17,000	-17,000	-17,000	-17,000
402	4015	Gas	-5,500	-5,500	-5,500	-5,500	-5,500
402	4016	Cleaning	-600	-10,000	-16,275	-16,763	-17,266
402	4017	Waste Disposal	-2,300	-2,369	-2,440	-2,513	-2,589
402	4020	Miscellaneous Expenses	-1,500	-3,543	-1,500	-1,500	-1,500
402	4027	Licences	-3,000	-3,000	-3,000	-3,000	-3,000
402	4032	Publicity / Marketing	-1,000	-7,500	-7,500	-7,500	-7,500
402	4036	Maintenance Contracts	-10,000	-14,200	-14,626	-15,065	-15,517
402	4038	Repairs & Maintenance	-5,000	-7,500	-7,725	-7,957	-8,195
402	4039	Equipment Hire	-4,700	-4,700	-4,700	-4,700	-4,700
402	4040	Equipment/Materials/Tools	-1,500	-3,500	-3,605	-3,713	-3,825
402	4059	Kitchen/Catering Expenses	-2,000	-4,375	-8,500	-8,500	-8,500
402	4060	Bar & Catering Stock	-8,000	-30,000	-65,000	-65,000	-65,000
402	4601	Retail Purchases	-9,000	-9,000	-9,000	-9,000	-9,000
402	4611	Education/Events	-4,000	-4,000	-4,000	-4,000	-4,000
			<b>-134,707</b>	<b>-270,408</b>	<b>-291,864</b>	<b>-295,957</b>	<b>-301,576</b>

**COMMUNITY SERVICES****TOWN CENTRE SERVICES**

Cost Centre	Nominal Code	Nominal Description	Prospective				
			2025/26 Budget	2026/27 budget	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
405	1011	INC - Hire of Stalls & Pitches	12,000	12,360	12,731	13,113	13,506
405	1093	INC - Advertising/Sponsorship	800	800	800	800	800
405	1094	INC - Licences	1,000	1,030	1,061	1,093	1,126
405	4001	Salaries	-73,072	-71,749	-73,901	-76,119	-78,402
405	4002	Wages	-4,458	-4,590	-4,728	-4,870	-5,016
405	4027	Licences		-500	-515	-530	-546
405	4032	Publicity / Marketing	-1,000	-1,000	-1,000	-1,000	-1,000
405	4040	Equipment/Materials/Tools	-5,220	-5,220	-5,377	-5,538	-5,704
405	4066	Entertainment/Activities	-30,000	-30,900	-31,827	-32,782	-33,765
405	4520	Christmas Lights	-19,000	-19,000	-19,000	-19,000	-19,000
405	4715	Street Dressing	-6,800	-7,004	-7,214	-7,431	-7,653
			<b>-125,750</b>	<b>-125,773</b>	<b>-128,970</b>	<b>-132,263</b>	<b>-135,655</b>

**PUBLIC CONVENIENCES (ASHTON SQUARE)**

Cost Centre	Nominal Code	Nominal Description	Prospective				
			2025/26 Budget	2026/27 budget	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
407	4016	Cleaning	-3,000	-3,090	-3,183	-3,278	-3,377
407	4036	Maintenance Contracts	-1,575	-1,622	-1,671	-1,721	-1,772
407	4038	Repairs & Maintenance	-3,000	-3,090	-3,183	-3,278	-3,377
			<b>-7,575</b>	<b>-7,802</b>	<b>-8,036</b>	<b>-8,277</b>	<b>-8,525</b>

**CAPITAL AND PROJECTS**

Cost Centre	Nominal Code	Nominal Description	Prospective				
			2025/26 Budget	2026/27 budget	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
310	4051	Loan Interest Payable	-19,666	-17,745	-16,124	-14,503	-12,881
310	4052	Loan Capital Repaid	-31,792	-31,792	-31,792	-31,792	-31,792
310	4740	Tfr to Community Lottery Res		-1,750	-1,750	-1,750	-1,750
310	4714	Tfr to Christmas Lights Res	-7,000	-7,000	-7,000	-7,000	-7,000
310	4716	Tfr to Downside Building Maint	-27,000	-5,000	-5,000	-5,000	-5,000
310	4717	Tfr to Grove Corner Building M	-4,000	-4,000	-4,000	-4,000	-4,000
310	4720	Tfr to Tearooms Equipment Res	-3,000	-3,000	-3,000	-3,000	-3,000
310	4733	Tfr to Priory House Building M	-149,357	-117,872	-51,500	-60,000	-60,000
			<b>-241,815</b>	<b>-188,159</b>	<b>-120,166</b>	<b>-127,045</b>	<b>-125,423</b>

**SUMMARY  
Prospective**

Cost Centre	Cost Centre Description	2025/26 Budget	2026/27 budget	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
300	STAFF COSTS	-351,165	-369,323	-380,403	-391,815	-403,569
	OLDER PEOPLE'S DAY CARE					
209	SERVICE	-31,493	-25,823	-27,314	-28,850	-30,431
303	COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	-32,207	-27,505	-27,566	-27,629	-27,693
304	GROVE CORNER	-20,795	-20,929	-21,671	-22,696	-23,081
	BENNETT MEMORIAL RECREATION					
115	GROUND - SPLASH PARK	-69,353	-74,164	-76,767	-79,670	-81,947
401	EVENTS PROGRAMME	-192,557	-191,685	-197,173	-202,826	-208,648
402	PRIORY HOUSE	-134,707	-270,408	-291,864	-295,957	-301,576
405	TOWN CENTRE SERVICES	-125,750	-125,773	-128,970	-132,263	-135,655
	PUBLIC CONVENIENCES (ASHTON SQUARE)					
407	SQUARE)	-7,575	-7,802	-8,036	-8,277	-8,525
310	CAPITAL AND PROJECTS	-241,815	-120,287	-120,166	-127,045	-125,423
		<b>-1,207,417</b>	<b>-1,233,699</b>	<b>-1,279,930</b>	<b>-1,317,028</b>	<b>-1,346,549</b>

**DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL**  
**PROPOSED FEES AND CHARGES 2026/27**

**CORPORATE SERVICES**

<b>GROVE HOUSE - MEETING ROOM HIRE (figures shown inclusive of VAT)</b>	<b>2025 / 26 £ per hour</b>	<b>2026 / 27 £ per hour</b>
<b>Council Chamber:</b>		
Dunstable Voluntary Organisations	17.30	18.20
Commercial/Organisations outside Parish of Dunstable	34.60	36.30
<b>Marriage Room:</b>	MAX	
Dunstable Voluntary Organisations	15.00	15.80
Commercial/Organisations outside Parish of Dunstable	25.00	26.30
<b>Waiting Area:</b>	MAX	
Dunstable Voluntary Organisations	15.00	15.80
Commercial/Organisations outside Parish of Dunstable	25.00	26.30
<b>Registrar Room:</b>	MAX	
Dunstable Voluntary Organisations	15.00	15.80
Commercial/Organisations outside Parish of Dunstable	25.00	26.30
<b>Whole Area (excluding Council Chamber):</b>		
Dunstable Voluntary Organisations	36.00	37.80
Commercial/Organisations outside Parish of Dunstable	60.00	63.00
Weekend Hirings double fee		

<b>Weddings at Grove House (bookings taken via Priory House):</b>		<b>2026/27 £</b>
Standard Ceremony (all year round)	Monday to Friday	250.00
Standard Ceremony (1 March to 31 October)	Saturday	300.00
Standard Ceremony (1 November to 29 February)	Saturday	250.00
Standard Ceremony (all year round)	Sunday	400.00
Outdoor Ceremony	Monday to Saturday	650.00
Twilight Ceremony (1 October to 31 March)	Monday to Friday 5 pm ONLY	350.00

<b>Central Bedfordshire Council</b>										
<b>Taxbase calculation breakdown for 2026-27 financial year</b>										
<b>Dunstable Town Council</b>										
	<b>Band A</b>	<b>Band B</b>	<b>Band C</b>	<b>Band D</b>	<b>Band E</b>	<b>Band F</b>	<b>Band G</b>	<b>Band H</b>		
Actual number of properties	2,659	3,575	5,263	4,395	1,249	479	179	10	17,809.0	
J Effective number of properties **	1,708.0	2,868.2	4,491.7	3,962.8	1,152.1	448.3	163.5	5.8	14,800.3	
Appropriate fraction	6/9	7/9	8/9	9/9	11/9	13/9	15/9	18/9		
K Effective number of Band D properties	1,138.7	2,230.8	3,992.6	3,962.8	1,408.2	647.5	272.6	11.5	13,664.6	
L Total number of Band D properties	13,664.6									
less: Allowance for non-collection at 0.5%	68.3									
Band D total for parish	13,596.3			Rounded to	13,596.3					

**DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL**

**FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

**MONDAY 26 JANUARY 2026**

**CORPORATE COMPLIANCE AND FACILITIES**

<b>Purpose of report:</b> for information
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**1. COMPLIANCE**

1.1. Cyber Essentials – Annual accreditation is now complete.

**2. FACILITIES**

**Grove House Building Works**

2.1. Step 1 of the proposed strategy for Grove House works is in progress.

<b>Step 1: Full Structural Appraisal</b>	A comprehensive structural survey for Grove House has now been commissioned and the first visit completed. Await final version before consultant seeks planning permission from CBC for packaged of works.
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**Grove House – General**

2.2. CBC have approved the marriage venue licence and new furniture has been ordered for the ceremony room. The Priory House team are planning to hold a wedding fayre open day at Grove House on Saturday 14 February 2026 to launch the venue and advertise.

2.3. Grove House Tenant lease reviews are in progress as per lease agreements and are ensuring they are in line with current RPI.

**3. PROJECTS AND PROCUREMENT**

3.1. Quotation received from our current contracted supplier, ACE. The works are a complete fire alarm system upgrade. These include all recommendations from the most recent Fire Risk Assessment. ACE would continue with maintenance and support.

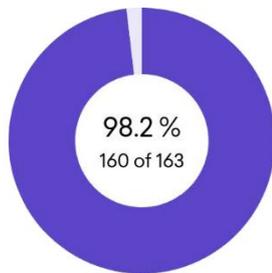
<b>Fire alarm system replacement &amp; additional recommended safety devices</b>	FRA and Fire safety contractor recommends that the Council consider upgrading the current fire alarm system. Including	£12,974.00
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	smoke detectors and heat sensors.	
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- 3.2. Food Waste Contracts are now in place for Grove House, Priory House and Bennetts Splash Park.

**4. HEALTH AND SAFETY**

- 4.1. Scoping of CCTV in collaboration with The Grounds anti-social behaviour working group have been paused. Further discussions are pending, with focus on high priority safety projects. Such as a door entry system at the Cemetery and lone working devices.
- 4.2. WorkNest - The Council’s Health and Safety Support Service is working well. CP&CM is working closely with colleagues across all Dunstable Town Council Sites. A small number of corrective actions are now required to achieve 100%.
- 4.3. FRA Completed Audit Actions



**5. FINANCIAL IMPACT**

- 5.1. These are inherent within this report. The fire alarm system upgrade will be met from existing budgets.

**6. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS – none**

**7. HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1. The report highlights an example of additional works required to meet health and safety requirements. The additional reserve proposed for 2026/27 for Health & Safety will assist towards these proposed works.

**8. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS – none**

**9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS – none**

**10. BACKGROUND PAPERS - none**

**11. AUTHOR**

11.1. Corinne Gilmore - Corporate Performance & Compliance Manager  
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**DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL****FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE****MONDAY 26 JANUARY 2026****MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS****Purpose of report:** For information**1. SOCIAL MEDIA**

- 1.1. The Marketing and Communications Officer, along with other officers, continue 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 Instagram account reached a milestone of 1,000 since the last report. TikTok has seen significant growth in followers and so has Dunstable Town Council's main Facebook account. Officers hope to set another milestone on Facebook for Dunstable Town Council of 16,000 followers in the next coming months. The Council continues to have the highest number of followers of any Town Council in England.
- 1.4. The following figures are accurate as of 12 January and show how many followers have been gained since the previous report:

Platform	Entity	Followers	Change
Facebook	Dunstable Town Council	15,499	+406
	Bennett's Café & Splash Park	5,339	+ 66
	Town Ranger Services	1,505	+9
	Grove Corner	1,546	+12
	Priory House	1,550	+47
Instagram	Dunstable Town Council	1,028	+39
	Bennett's Café & Splash Park	67	+1
	Grove Corner	518	+4
LinkedIn	Dunstable Town Council	372	+6
TikTok	Dunstable Town Council	318	+132

- 1.5. **Dunstable Town Council Facebook insights.**  
**Top three social media Facebook posts from 1 November to 1 January 2026 by interactions:**  
 1. Remembrance day

2. Voting for Christmas window competition
3. Promoting twilight markets

**f Top posts by interactions**

 <p><b>Yesterday we remembered the falle...</b></p> <p>10 November 06:27</p> <p>↗ 307    ❤️ 288 💬 12    ➦ 7</p>	 <p><b>IT'S TIMEEEEE!!! To vote for Your Favouri...</b></p> <p>27 November 02:00</p> <p>↗ 306    ❤️ 15 💬 264    ➦ 27</p>	 <p><b>Make magical memories at Dunstab...</b></p> <p>🚀 22 November 06:00</p> <p>↗ 278    ❤️ 205 💬 29    ➦ 32</p>
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- 1.6. **Top three social media Facebook stories from 1 November to 1 January by views:**
1. Video of town centre manager promoting middle row (20 dec)
  2. Video of town centre manager promoting middle row (20 dec)
  3. Video of town mayor's carols by candlelight

**f Top stories by views**

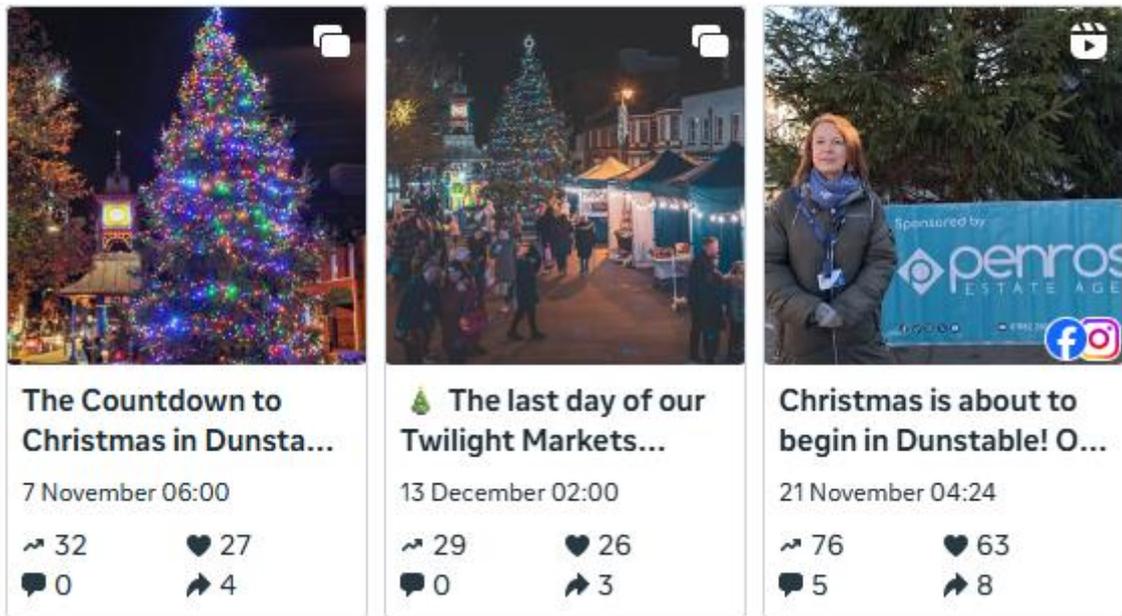
 <p><b>Your story</b></p> <p>20 December 02:19</p> <p>👁 1.7K    ❤️ 21 💬 0    ➦ 2</p>	 <p><b>Your story</b></p> <p>20 December 02:20</p> <p>👁 1.0K    ❤️ 7 💬 0    ➦ 0</p>	 <p><b>Your story</b></p> <p>22 December 10:13</p> <p>👁 1.0K    ❤️ 29 💬 0    ➦ 0</p>
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1.7. **Top three social media Instagram posts from 1 November to 1 January 2026 by interactions:**

1. Promoting torchlight
2. Promoting twilight market

1.8. 3. Video of town centre manager promoting torchlight in front of tree

 **Top posts by interactions**

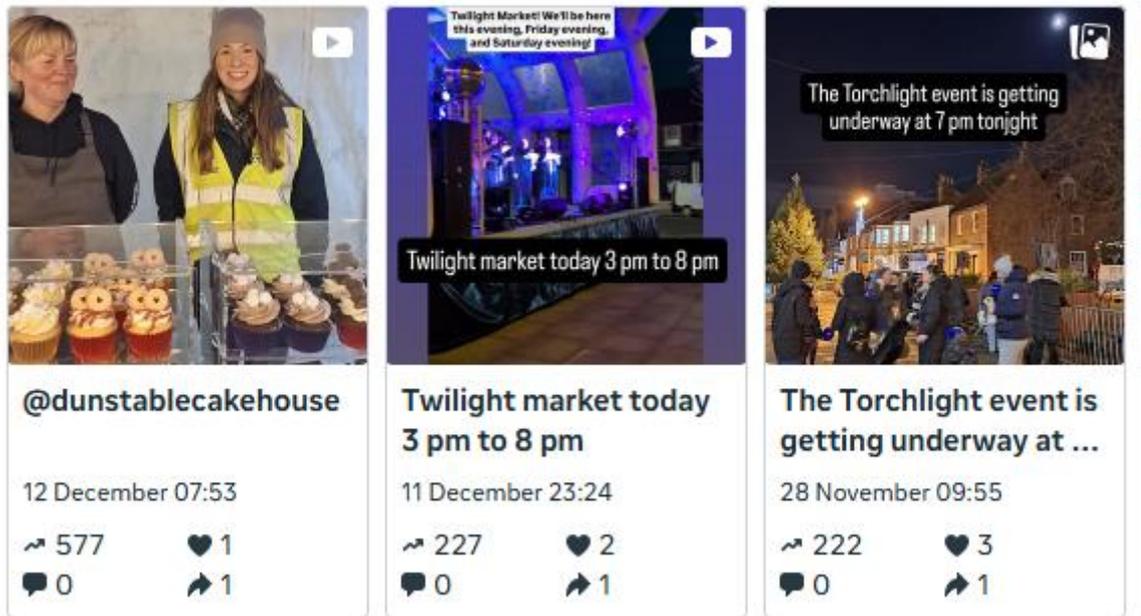


1.9. **Top three social media Instagram stories from 1 November to 1 January 2026 by reach:**

1. Town centre assistant promoting cake house at twilight
2. Promoting twilight market with singing video

3. Promoting torchlight event

 Top stories by reach



**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 Since the last report, the council's website continues to operate effectively, with no reported issues or negative feedback. All functions appear to be running as expected.

3.2 Officers are currently in the process of putting together an accessibility audit and accessibility statement on this website.

3.3 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:

<b>Pages viewed using the tool</b>	93
<b>How many users</b>	42
<b>Screen reader</b>	55%
<b>Translation</b>	23%

<b>Mobile</b>	50%
<b>Desktop</b>	49%

3.4 The figures below show how users have visited the Town Council website from 1 November to 1 January 2026:

1. Twilight Christmas event
2. What's on page
3. /news/torchlight-event-2025
4. /event/Christmas-carols-torchlight
5. /news/newest-store-opening-this-friday

<b>Organic search (google, Bing etc.)</b>	10,541
<b>Direct:</b>	19,955
<b>Organic social (Facebook, Instagram)</b>	1,674
<b>Mobile:</b>	25.7%
<b>Desktop:</b>	73.5%
<b>Tablet:</b>	0.9%

3.5 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 January what's on edition has now been printed and will be distributed from 16 January to households. Additional copies of *Talk of the Town* will also be available at Priory House, Bennett's Café, the cemetery, Grove House, and the Ashton Square toilets for residents to collect. This is the short edition which promotes the events calendar for the year.

5.2 Officers are continuing efforts to attract additional advertisers for *Talk of the Town*. There was no advert in the January edition.

#### 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.

6.2 There will be a range of campaigns on social media on the next coming weeks, such as beat the January blues, the January super draw and linking to awareness days.

**7. AUTHOR**

- 7.1 Rachel Connor – Corporate Marketing & Communications Officer  
[communications@dunstable.gov.uk](mailto:communications@dunstable.gov.uk)

**DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL**

**FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

**MONDAY 26 JANUARY 2026**

**COMMUNICATIONS POLICIES**

<p><b>Purpose of report:</b> 1.1) To approve the amended social media policy 1.2) To adopt a new filming and photography policy</p>
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**1. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1.1. To adopt the amended Social Media Policy, incorporating the updates, as detailed in this report.
- 1.2. To adopt the new Filming and Photography Policy, to provide clear guidance for residents, businesses, and staff within Council managed spaces.

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 **Social Media Policy;** The digital landscape changes fast. The Council's existing Social Media Policy has been reviewed to reflect current best practices in digital engagement. The amendments aim to clarify the standards of behaviour expected.
- 2.2 **Filming and Photography Policy;** As Dunstable increases its profile through events and community projects, a formal policy is needed to manage how we effectively use filming and photograph in public spaces.

**3. FINANCIAL IMPACT – none**

**4. POLICY AND CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1. Adopting the two polices will contribute to the corporate objective to *continue to improve the organisational management, efficiency and environmental sustainability of the Town Council.*

**5. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1. The Social Media Policy includes provisions to ensure that online interactions remain respectful and free from harassment, supporting a diverse and inclusive digital environment.

**6. HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS- none**

**7. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS- none**

**8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS- none**

**9. ENVIRONMENTAL AND BIODIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS – none**

**10. APPENDICES**

10.1. Appendix 1 - Social Media Policy

10.2. Appendix 2 - Filming and Photography Policy

**11. AUTHOR**

11.1. Rachel Connor – Corporate Marketing and Communications Officer  
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## DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL Social media policy

Reviewed and Updated: October 2025

### Introduction

Dunstable Town Council is committed to transparency, accountability, and meaningful engagement with our residents, businesses, visitors, and partners. We embrace digital and social media platforms to enhance two-way communication and ensure that community voices help shape the services we provide. This policy ensures everyone associated with the Council can use social media effectively, safely, and responsibly.

Social media is a key tool in our communications strategy and will be used thoughtfully, responsibly, and safely to support Council objectives and reflect our values.

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### Definition of Social Media

‘Social media’ includes, but is not limited to:

- Social networking platforms (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, LinkedIn, YouTube)
- Messaging services (e.g. WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger)
- Blogs, vlogs, and podcasts
- Forums and discussion boards (e.g. online community groups)
- Microsites or campaign-specific websites
- Reviews and comments sections on third-party sites

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### Scope of this Policy

This policy applies to:

- All Dunstable Town Council employees and casual staff
- Contractors, agency, or freelance workers acting on behalf of the Council
- Third-party service providers engaging via council channels
- Volunteers and interns
- Elected members of the Council

All users must comply with this policy when representing or engaging in council-related activity on social media—whether via official or personal accounts.

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### Relevant Legislation and Guidance

All activity must comply with:

- **UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018**
- **Freedom of Information Act 2000**
- **Equality Act 2010**
- **Malicious Communications Act 1988**
- **Online Safety Act 2023**
- **LGA Guidance for Councillors on Social Media**
- Council's own **Code of Conduct, Safeguarding Policy, and Dignity at Work Policy**

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## SECTION ONE – PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

### 1.1 Official Use of Dunstable Town Council’s accounts by Employees

#### Employees must:

- Represent the Council professionally and accurately
- Be aware that posts are publicly visible
- Avoid expressing personal opinions on official channels
- Report offensive, false, or harmful content immediately to platform and to the Marketing and Communications Officer

#### Community Forums and unofficial platforms

- Dunstable Town Council **does not routinely post in or manage** unofficial community forums (e.g. *Spotted Dunstable*, *Dunstable Chat*).
- In exceptional cases—such as public misinformation, major community impact issues, or urgent update, members (Councillors) or a representative officer may post factual, neutral information and direct users to verified channels (e.g. the Council’s website, social media pages) for accurate information.
- All new official social media accounts must be approved by the Town Clerk and Chief Executive and the Marketing and Communications Officer.

### 1.2 Use of Personal Accounts by Employees

#### Employees must not:

- Disclose confidential or sensitive Council information
- Share internal decisions or documents
- Post comments that could bring the Council into disrepute
- Identify themselves as council employees in contentious conversations
- Accept friend/follow requests from vulnerable clients or minors
- Use personal accounts to routinely share or cross-post information about Council events or services as part of their role with the Council
  
- Employees are advised **not to engage in debate or comment** about Council matters in local community groups or forums (e.g. *Spotted Dunstable*, *Dunstable Chat*, etc.), even from personal accounts. Posts in these forums are often taken out of context, lack moderation, or can quickly escalate into public criticism or misinformation.
  
- Where employees **feel compelled to correct misinformation**, they should post factual, neutral information and direct users to verified channels (e.g. the Council’s website, social media pages) for accurate information.
  
- Personal accounts should include disclaimers if commenting on public matters (e.g., “*Views my own, not those of my employer*”).

#### Staff are encouraged to:

- Regularly review privacy settings on social media platforms

- Avoid engaging in political, controversial, or emotionally charged topics while identifying as a Council employee
- Report abusive or inappropriate interactions involving their role
- Only where essential - helpfully and respectfully to public queries in local forums (e.g., *Spotted Dunstable*, *Dunstable Chat*) by providing factual information or directing residents to official channels (e.g., “You can find more about this on the Dunstable Town Council website”). Be clear you are commenting in a personal capacity
- If someone is asking for advice or information about a Town Council service or event in local groups such as *Spotted Dunstable* or *Dunstable Chat*, officers may respond in a polite and neutral tone to help ensure they receive accurate information—ideally linking to an official source or contact

## SECTION TWO – SAFEGUARDING CONSIDERATIONS

### 2.1 Digital Safeguarding

**All employees working with children, young people, or vulnerable adults must:**

- Use only council-approved platforms and equipment to communicate, do not follow/add as friend.
- Avoid private/direct messaging or connections on personal accounts
- Immediately report online content or disclosures that raise safeguarding concerns

**Key Resources:**

- CEOP - ThinkUKnow
- NSPCC Online Safety
- UK Safer Internet Centre

Training in **Online Safety Awareness** is mandatory for relevant roles.

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## SECTION THREE – SOCIAL MEDIA CONDUCT

### 3.1 Acceptable Use by the Public

While we encourage open discussion, we will moderate and, where necessary, act against posts or messages that:

- Are abusive, harassing, or threatening
- Are discriminatory, hateful, or use slurs
- Include libel, slander, or defamation
- Breach copyright, data protection or court restrictions
- Spread misinformation or incite illegal acts
- Target individual employees or councillors with personal attacks

### 3.2 Our Response to Unacceptable Content

Inappropriate content will be:

- Removed without warning
- Reported to the platform and/or police if necessary
- Blocked from further engagement if appropriate
- The Head of Service will consider any requests to be unblocked and each will be considered separately with no precedent on future requests.

The Council reserves the right to take legal action against individuals responsible for defamatory or criminal content.

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## SECTION FOUR – EMPLOYEE BEST PRACTICES

When engaging on any social media platform (professionally or personally), employees should:

- Always assume content is public and permanent
- Be accurate, respectful, and constructive
- Avoid using council branding on personal accounts
- Not engage in arguments or trolling
- Report harassment or abuse via official channels

If in doubt, speak to the **Head of Community Services** or **Town Clerk and Chief Executive** before posting.

## SECTION FIVE – USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA BY COUNCILLORS/MEMBERS

Elected members (Councillors) are always subject to the Council's Code of Conduct when acting, claiming to act, or giving the impression of acting in their capacity as a member of Dunstable Town Council including on social media.

Social media posts made in a personal capacity can still be subject to the Code if they reference Council business, engage with residents in that capacity, or could reasonably be perceived as representing the Council.

### 5.1 Responsibilities under the Code of Conduct

Councillors must ensure that their use of social media upholds the following principles of the Code of Conduct:

- **Respect:** Avoid offensive, inflammatory, or insulting language. Do not post content that targets individuals or groups in a derogatory or discriminatory manner.
- **Confidentiality:** Do not disclose confidential or exempt information obtained through Council work.
- **Impartiality and Objectivity:** Do not make statements that compromise, or appear to compromise, your impartiality—particularly in relation to planning, licensing, or quasi-judicial matters.
- **Integrity:** Do not use social media to secure advantage for yourself or others or to unfairly disadvantage others.
- **Accountability:** You are accountable for your public conduct online, even on personal accounts. Assume that anything posted may be screenshot and widely shared.

## 5.2 Personal Use of Social Media

### Councillors are advised to:

- Clearly state when they are expressing **personal opinions** (e.g., by using a disclaimer such as “*Views are my own and not those of Dunstable Town Council*”)
- Avoid engaging in political or partisan debate when referring to Council matters on personal accounts
- Not use personal platforms to attack other members, staff, or residents
- Use privacy settings appropriately, but remain aware that content can still be shared publicly

## 5.3 Engaging with the Public

### Councillors may engage with residents online but must:

- Treat residents with courtesy and professionalism, even during disagreement
- Direct residents to official channels (e.g., Council website or social media accounts) for accurate or service-specific information
- Avoid making commitments, promises, or policy statements that may misrepresent the Council’s position
- Be cautious about sharing or commenting on posts in local forums (e.g. *Spotted Dunstable, Dunstable Chat*) that involve Council issues—especially if the information is speculative or contentious

## 5.4 Allegations and Complaints

Any social media conduct by a councillor that may breach the Code of Conduct could be subject to a standards complaint. Examples include:

- Posting discriminatory, defamatory, or bullying content
- Bringing the Council into disrepute through public commentary
- Undermining the integrity of council officers
- Disclosing confidential Council business

Complaints will be handled under the Council’s adopted procedures for dealing with alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct.

## 5.5 Support and Guidance

### Councillors are encouraged to:

- Attend any training on social media, public conduct, and digital safety provided by the Council or relevant bodies (e.g., LGA)
- Consult the **Monitoring Officer, Town Clerk and Chief Executive, or Head of Community Services** for clarification or support regarding online conduct
- Refer to the **LGA Social Media Guide for Councillors** for further best practice: <https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/improving-digital-citizenship-practical-guide-councillors>

## SECTION SIX – MONITORING AND REVIEW

6.1 The Council reserves the right to monitor activity on its own social media platforms to ensure safety and compliance with this policy. Activity on personal accounts may be reviewed only if it relates to Council business, breaches this policy, or affects an individual's professional role. This policy will be reviewed annually or in response to changes in legislation, best practice, or emerging digital risks.

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# DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

## Dunstable Town Council

### Photography & Filming Policy Statement

#### 1. Purpose & Scope

This policy outlines Dunstable Town Council's commitment to ensuring children, young people, adults (and any vulnerable individuals) are protected when photography or filming occurs during Council-led events or activities. It applies to all staff, councillors, volunteers, contractors, and media representatives involved.

#### 2. Principles & Legal Context

- Dunstable Town Council believes everyone has the right to a safe environment, free from misuse of images.
- Dunstable Town Council acknowledges that images can celebrate community events, promote our civic activities, and document Council initiatives, while safeguarding individuals' welfare and legal rights.
- Dunstable Town Council operates in alignment with UK legislation, including data protection (GDPR), child protection, and relevant safety guidelines.

#### 3. Consent Requirements in centre based services/activities

- **Children under 13:** Written consent must be obtained from a parent or legal guardian, and by the young person themselves before any images are taken, used, or shared.
- **Children 13 and up to and including 17:** Seek the young person's informed consent; consider informing parents, depending on context.
- **Vulnerable adults:** Seek express, informed consent; if lacking capacity, obtain consent from a responsible adult or representative.

#### 4. Public Open Spaces & Notification

- Dunstable Town Council recognises that many Council events and activities take place in open public spaces where complete control over photography and filming is not possible.
- At all such events, clear signage will be displayed to inform attendees that photography and filming may take place.

- If a member of the public subsequently sees an image of themselves online or in Council materials and does not wish for it to be used, they are asked to contact the Council. Dunstable Town Council will respect their request and remove the image wherever reasonably possible.

## **5. Usage Categories & Controls**

- **Personal Use (Parents/Families):** Allowed, but families should obtain consent before sharing images of others online.
- **Council Use (Promotional/Record-Keeping):** Ensure consent is obtained and documented; use only for appropriate, respectful purposes.
- **External Media (Journalists, Students):** Must seek prior permission and follow safeguarding and consent rules.

## **6. Safeguarding Image Standards**

- Use wide-angle or back of heads shots and avoid close-ups of children or vulnerable individuals unless explicitly consented.
- Ensure images are appropriate, dignified, and protective of privacy.
- Avoid publishing identifying details such as full names, uniforms, or specific locations.

## **7. Storage & Data Protection**

- Store images electronically and restricted to Dunstable Town Council staff only

## **8. Rights to Withdraw Consent**

- At any time, individuals may withdraw consent and request image removal from Council records or platforms. If the individual would need to identify the image/s they wish to have removed.
- This applies both to those who provided written consent and to members of the public photographed at open events.

## **9. Reporting Concerns & Procedures**

- Any concerns (inappropriate images, exploitation risks, misuse) must be reported to the Council's Designated Safeguarding Officer, on the day of an event it must be reported to the event/service manager.
- Council safeguarding and child protection procedures will then be followed.

## **10. Communication & Training**

- This policy will be published on the Town Council's website and make it accessible to the community and regularly reviewed.
- Communicate it to all staff, volunteers, event partners, and contracted media.
- Provide training or briefing on consent, safeguarding, and data protection responsibilities.

**DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL**

**FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

**MONDAY 26 JANUARY 2026**

**REFERRAL REPORT FROM PERSONNEL SUB-COMMITTEE**

**Purpose of Report:** For Members to approve recommendations made by the Personnel Sub-Committee held on 15 January 2026.

**1. DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD STRUCTURE**

Members considered the proposal to amend the Designated Safeguarding Lead structure.

**RESOLVED:** to recommend to the Finance and General Purposes Committee that the Town Clerk & Chief Executive be the sole Designated Safeguarding Lead, supported by three Deputy Safeguarding Leads.

**Minute Number (019/26)**

**2. HONORARIUM**

Members considered the proposal for an honorarium payment.

**RESOLVED:** to recommend to the Finance and General Purposes Committee that a non-consolidated honorarium payment be recommended for approval by the Finance and General Purposes Committee as per the report provided.

**Minute Number (021/26)**

**3. YOUTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES STAFFING STRUCTURE**

Members considered the proposal for a new staffing structure within the Youth and Community Services.

**RESOLVED:** to recommend to the Finance and General Purposes Committee that the proposed new staff structure for post 31 March 2026 be approved.

**Minute Number (022/26)**

**4. AUTHOR**

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