

FOLKESTONE TOWN COUNCIL



The Town Hall
1-2 Guildhall Street
Folkestone
Kent
CT20 1DY

Telephone: (01303) 257946
Email: enquiries@folkestone-tc.gov.uk
Web: www.folkestone-tc.gov.uk

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AGENDA

Meeting: **Folkestone Town Council**
Date: **13 March 2025**
Time: **7.00 p.m.**
Place: **Town Council Chamber, Town Hall, 1-2 Guildhall Street, Folkestone**

To: **Town Councillors**

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED to attend a meeting of the Folkestone Town Council on the date and at the time and place shown above to transact the business shown on the agenda below. The meeting will be open to the press and public.

Any member who wishes to have information on any matter arising on the agenda which is not fully covered in these papers is requested to contact the Town Clerk prior to the meeting.

Toni Brenchley
Town Clerk

PRAYERS

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Up to 15 minutes shall be allowed for public questions from registered electors to be put to the Council in accordance with the Council's approved Standing Orders. Questions may not be answered at the meeting if they require further investigation, a written response will be sent after the meeting.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive and approve any apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive any declarations of either personal or prejudicial interest that Members may wish to make.

3. MINUTES

To receive the Minutes of the meeting of the Full Council Meeting held on 9 January 2025 and to authorise the Town Mayor to sign them as a correct record.

4. MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

5. MINUTES OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

To receive the Minutes of the above Committee's meetings of 17 December 2024.

6. MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

To receive the Minutes of the above Committee's meeting of 12 December 2024.

7. MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

To receive the Minutes of the above Committee's meetings of 15 October 2024.

8. MINUTES OF THE CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

To receive the Minutes of the above Committee's meetings of 8 October 2024.

9. MATTERS AND RESOLUTIONS FROM COMMITTEES

(items in bold italic have been brought forward for debate, remaining items to be noted)

i) Finance & General Purposes Committee – 13 February 2025

- That the Budget Monitoring Statement to 31 January 2025 be approved. To vire the Provision for Anti-Litter Campaign of £2,000 and Provision for Benches of £100 be transferred to the General Fund.
- To accept the internal auditor's interim report for the financial year 2024/25 report F/25/380 and note that this is in accordance with best practice.
- To approve the proposed additional concessionary fees for charities and not-for-profit organisations on the scale of fees.
- To opt for Option 2 for the three-year firewall system cost of £5,987.60, with a one-off installation cost of £750.
- To approve the repairs on the Mayor's Badge with the estimated cost of £1,375 plus vat, via the insurance claim.
- To apply for the Parish Council Support Scheme Grant – Round 3 on behalf of Sunflower House to support their Loose Ends Sessions of up to £1,000. With the provision that Sunflower House maintains a record and report the number of people the grant has supported ready for reporting to KCC at the end of the scheme.

ii) Climate and Environment Committee – 4 February 2025

- That up to £25,000 be released from the 2025/2026 Flowerbeds & Planters budget to support the F & HDC Schedule for 2025/ 2026 excluding, Dover Road, Lucy Avenue and Canterbury Road as these sites are due to be handed over to KCC in April.
- That the Committee agrees that the proposed work should proceed and recommend the Finance & General Purposes Committee to release Community Infrastructure Levy funds up to £10,000 to install fencing at Naseby Avenue Play Park.
- That FTC's current Climate Action Plan be developed and adapted by the Town Clerk and brought to the next Climate & Environment Committee meeting for Members review and input.
- That Cllr John Renshaw gather further information in respect of water quality monitoring and the Town Clerk obtain contacts within other authorities that are currently carrying out testing, establishing any legal implications, the benefits and how any results would be presented and published, with findings brought back to the next Climate & Environment Committee meeting for further review by members.

iii) Community Services Committee – 11 February 2025

- That the Communities & Events Officer pursue potential youth projects and initiatives with local organisations such as Creative Folkestone, Studio Six, the Leas Cliff Hall, the Tower Theatre and Folkestone Cricket Club. Suggested activities include primary schools Kwik Cricket event, writing competitions, chess tournaments and Makaton training.
Members asked that outcomes and details of potential activities be brought back to the next meeting for Members to review and consider.
- That Councillors Jane Darling and Belinda Walker represent FTC on the

Folkestone Community Forum.

- To approve the disposal of the objects identified in Report CS/25/377.
- The Committee received and noted Report CS/25/379 and requested that a vote of thanks to the Museum Curator be recorded.

10. TERMS OF REFERENCE

To approve the Terms of Reference from the Grants Committee, subject to amending the quorate to one-third of the whole number of members of the Committee.

11. TOWN MAYOR'S AWARDS

Members of the community who have done something particularly noteworthy during the municipal year can be nominated for a Town Mayor's Award. The following awards have been recognised during the 2024/25 municipal year:

- Jay Cross - Recognised for their support to young people by providing training and emotional support, and support to other charities such as KRAN and Construction Youth Trust.
- John Barber - Recognised for their work in organising musical performances at the Bandstand, attracting large crowds into Folkestone, boosting the local economy.
- Paul Reynolds - Recognised for their work in organising various fundraising events for local charities in Folkestone, as well as supporting the local radio station.
- Ram Bahadur Pun - Recognised for their work with the Nepalese community in supporting individuals and their families through cultural and language barriers.
- Go Folkestone Electrical Waste Recycling Project - Recognised for their work in raising awareness of electrical recycling, raising community spirit and making a positive difference to the environment by reducing electrical waste going to landfill.

The recipients were invited to an afternoon tea with the Town Mayor and Deputy Mayor where they were presented with their awards in recognition of their achievements.

12. TOWN MAYOR'S PORTRAITS

Report C/25/382 proposes a change in the procedure for displaying the Mayor's portraits.

13. GUIDANCE FOR WEARING PAST MAYOR AND CONSORT BADGES

The current guidance for wearing Past Mayor and Consort Badges is as follows:

- *At meetings of The Town Council when the Town Mayor is robed.*
- *At all ceremonies or processions when robes are worn (e.g. Remembrance Sunday, Town Sunday etc.).*
- *At Town Council dinners or receptions.*
- *When representing the Mayor at functions within or outside Folkestone at the express invitation or request of the host Mayor, Chair or organiser.*

Council is asked to consider adding the following to the guidance notes:

- *At civic dinners or receptions or other social functions of a civic character within Folkestone, at the request of the host and with the permission of the Mayor.*

14. GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RISK ASSESSMENT AND INSURANCE REVIEW

Report C/25/383 presents the annual business risk assessment and review of the current insurance arrangements for the Council's approval.

15. TREASURY MANAGEMENT REPORT

In line with section 15(1)(a) of the Local Government Act 2003, Report C/25/384 reviews the treasury management activities for 2024/25 and proposes the Investment Policy for 2025/26.

16. POLICY & PROCEDURE REVIEWS

- i) Council is asked to review the new NALC Model Financial Regulations for Local Councils – attached. Please note, following review these will be formally adopted at the Annual Meeting.
- ii) Council is asked to adopt the new Social Media Policy – attached.

17. FOLKESTONE TOWN COUNCIL'S PLAN FOR THE NEXT FOUR YEARS

Council is asked to review and adopt 'FTC's Plan for the next four years 2025-2029' attached.

18. NOTICE OF MOTION

Councillor Peter Gane would like to move a motion that Folkestone Town Council request that F&HDC transfer Cheriton Recreation Ground with any other recreational areas including the rented play areas and the Folkestone Parks and Gardens to the Town Council, since the Town Council, which replaced the Folkestone Borough Council, is closer, more accessible and of more immediate relevance to the people of Folkestone than the proposed new authority, which will be responsible for providing services to a much larger area, with a population of over 500,000.

19. TOWN MAYOR ELECT 2025/26

Town Councillors are requested to select the Town Mayor Elect for the ensuing municipal year 2025/26.

20. OUTSIDE BODIES

- i) To receive verbal reports from Councillors as Council representatives on the following outside bodies:
 - Kent Association of Local Councils (AAK, JD)
 - John Bowley & Sherwood Almshouses Charity (RW)
 - Folkestone Twinning Association (AL)
 - Cinque Ports Champion (BW)
 - Folkestone Municipal Charity (AAK, AL, LM, NK, RW, BW)
 - Folke About Town (BW)
 - Nepalese Twinning Association (AAK, JD, PG, NK, KL, JM, JR, BW)

21. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Annual Statutory Meeting - Tuesday, 6 May 2025
Annual Town Assembly - Tuesday, 13 May 2025

Councillors on Committee

Cllr Abena Akuffo-Kelly
Cllr Charlie Bain Smith
Cllr Bridget Chapman
Cllr Jane Darling
Cllr Laura Davison
Cllr Christine Dickinson
Cllr Peter Gane
Cllr Nicola Keen
Cllr Kieran Leigh
Cllr Adrian Lockwood
Cllr Connor McConville
Cllr Liz McShane
Cllr Lucy McGirr
Cllr Jackie Meade
Cllr Tim Prater
Cllr John Renshaw
Cllr Belinda Walker
Cllr Roger West

Parking available for Councillors @ 6.00pm on the precinct area at the front of the Town Hall.





FOLKESTONE TOWN COUNCIL FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

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1. General

- 1.1. These Financial Regulations govern the financial management of the council and may only be amended or varied by resolution of the council. They are one of the council's governing documents and shall be observed in conjunction with the council's Standing Orders.
- 1.2. Councillors are expected to follow these regulations and not to entice employees to breach them. Failure to follow these regulations brings the office of councillor into disrepute.
- 1.3. Wilful breach of these regulations by an employee may result in disciplinary proceedings.
- 1.4. In these Financial Regulations:
 - 'Accounts and Audit Regulations' means the regulations issued under Sections 32, 43(2) and 46 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, or any superseding legislation, and then in force, unless otherwise specified.
 - "Approve" refers to an online action, allowing an electronic transaction to take place.
 - "Authorise" refers to a decision by the council, or a committee or an officer, to allow something to happen.
 - 'Proper practices' means those set out in *The Practitioners' Guide*
 - *Practitioners' Guide* refers to the guide issued by the Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance (JPAG) and published by NALC in England or Governance and Accountability for Local Councils in Wales – A Practitioners Guide jointly published by One Voice Wales and the Society of Local Council Clerks in Wales.
 - 'Must' and **bold text** refer to a statutory obligation the council cannot change.
 - 'Shall' refers to a non-statutory instruction by the council to its members and staff.
- 1.5. The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) holds a statutory office, appointed by the council. The Town Clerk has been appointed as RFO and these regulations apply accordingly. The RFO;
 - acts under the policy direction of the council;
 - administers the council's financial affairs in accordance with all Acts, Regulations and proper practices;
 - determines on behalf of the council its accounting records and control systems;
 - ensures the accounting control systems are observed;
 - ensures the accounting records are kept up to date;
 - seeks economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of council resources; and
 - produces financial management information as required by the council.
- 1.6. **The council must not delegate any decision regarding:**

- **setting the final budget or the precept (council tax requirement);**
- **the outcome of a review of the effectiveness of its internal controls**
- **approving accounting statements;**
- **approving an annual governance statement;**
- **borrowing;**
- **declaring eligibility for the General Power of Competence; and**
- **addressing recommendations from the internal or external auditors**

1.7. In addition, the council shall:

- determine and regularly review the bank mandate for all council bank accounts;

2. Risk management and internal control

- 2.1. **The council must ensure that it has a sound system of internal control, which delivers effective financial, operational and risk management.**
- 2.2. The Clerk with the Finance Officer shall prepare, for approval by the council, a risk management policy covering all activities of the council. This policy and consequential risk management arrangements shall be reviewed by the council at least annually.
- 2.3. When considering any new activity, the Clerk with the Finance Officer shall prepare a draft risk assessment including risk management proposals for consideration by the council.
- 2.4. **At least once a year, the council must review the effectiveness of its system of internal control, before approving the Annual Governance Statement.**
- 2.5. **The accounting control systems determined by the RFO must include measures to:**
 - **ensure that risk is appropriately managed;**
 - **ensure the prompt, accurate recording of financial transactions;**
 - **prevent and detect inaccuracy or fraud; and**
 - **allow the reconstitution of any lost records;**
 - **identify the duties of officers dealing with transactions and**
 - **ensure division of responsibilities.**
- 2.6. At least once in each quarter, and at each financial year end, a member other than the Chair or a bank signatory shall be appointed to verify bank reconciliations (for all accounts) produced by the Finance Officer. The member shall sign and date the reconciliations as evidence of this. This activity, including any exceptions, shall be reported to and noted by the council Finance and General Purposes Committee.
- 2.7. Regular back-up copies shall be made of the records on any council computer and stored either online or in a separate location from the computer. The council shall

put measures in place to ensure that the ability to access any council computer is not lost if an employee leaves or is incapacitated for any reason.

3. Accounts and audit

- 3.1. All accounting procedures and financial records of the council shall be determined by the RFO in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 3.2. **The accounting records determined by the RFO must be sufficient to explain the council's transactions and to disclose its financial position with reasonably accuracy at any time. In particular, they must contain:**
 - **day-to-day entries of all sums of money received and expended by the council and the matters to which they relate;**
 - **a record of the assets and liabilities of the council;**
- 3.3. The accounting records shall be designed to facilitate the efficient preparation of the accounting statements in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return.
- 3.4. The RFO shall complete and certify the annual Accounting Statements of the council contained in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with proper practices, as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year. Having certified the Accounting Statements, the RFO shall submit them (with any related documents) to the council, within the timescales required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 3.5. **The council must ensure that there is an adequate and effective system of internal audit of its accounting records and internal control system in accordance with proper practices.**
- 3.6. **Any officer or member of the council must make available such documents and records as the internal or external auditor consider necessary for the purpose of the audit** and shall, as directed by the council, supply the RFO, internal auditor, or external auditor with such information and explanation as the council considers necessary.
- 3.7. The internal auditor shall be appointed by the Finance and General Purposes Committee and shall carry out their work to evaluate the effectiveness of the council's risk management, control and governance processes in accordance with proper practices specified in the Practitioners' Guide.
- 3.8. The council shall ensure that the internal auditor:
 - is competent and independent of the financial operations of the council;
 - reports to council in writing, or in person, on a regular basis with a minimum of one written report during each financial year;
 - can demonstrate competence, objectivity and independence, free from any actual or perceived conflicts of interest, including those arising from family relationships; and
 - has no involvement in the management or control of the council

3.9. Internal or external auditors may not under any circumstances:

- perform any operational duties for the council;
- initiate or approve accounting transactions;
- direct the activities of any council employee, except to the extent that such employees have been appropriately assigned to assist the internal auditor.

3.10. For the avoidance of doubt, in relation to internal audit the terms 'independent' and 'independence' shall have the same meaning as described in The Practitioners Guide.

3.11. The RFO shall make arrangements for the exercise of electors' rights in relation to the accounts, including the opportunity to inspect the accounts, books, and vouchers and display or publish any notices and documents required by the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, or any superseding legislation, and the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

4. Budget and precept

4.1. **Before setting a precept, the council must calculate its council tax (England) budget requirement for each financial year by preparing and approving a budget, in accordance with The Local Government Finance Act 1992 or succeeding legislation.**

4.2. Budgets for salaries and wages, including employer contributions shall be reviewed by the Personnel Committee at least annually in February for the following financial year and the final version shall be evidenced by a hard copy schedule signed by the Clerk and the Chair of the Council or relevant committee.

4.3. No later than November each year, the RFO shall prepare a draft budget with detailed estimates of all income and expenditure for the following financial year

4.4. Each committee (if any) shall review its draft budget and submit any proposed amendments to the Finance and General Purposes Committee no later than the end of November each year.

4.5. The draft budget with any committee proposals, including any recommendations for the use or accumulation of reserves, shall be considered by the Finance and General Purposes Committee and a recommendation made to the council.

4.6. Having considered the proposed budget, the council shall determine its council tax (England) requirement by setting a budget. The council shall set a precept for this amount no later than the end of January for the ensuing financial year.

4.7. **Any member with council tax unpaid for more than two months is prohibited from voting on the budget or precept by Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and must and must disclose at the start of the meeting that Section 106 applies to them.**

4.8. The RFO shall **issue the precept to the billing authority no later than the end of February** and supply each member with a copy of the agreed annual budget.

- 4.9. The agreed budget provides a basis for monitoring progress during the year by comparing actual spending and income against what was planned.

5. Procurement

- 5.1. **Members and officers are responsible for obtaining value for money at all times.** Any officer procuring goods, services or works should ensure, as far as practicable, that the best available terms are obtained, usually by obtaining prices from at least three suppliers.
- 5.2. Every contract shall comply with these the council's Standing Orders and these Financial Regulations and no exceptions shall be made, except in an emergency.
- 5.3. **For a contract for the supply of goods, services or works where the estimated value will exceed the thresholds set by Parliament, the full requirements of The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 or any superseding legislation ("the Legislation"), must be followed in respect of the tendering, award and notification of that contract.**
- 5.4. Where the estimated value is below the Government threshold, the council shall (with the exception of items listed in paragraph 5.10) obtain prices as follows:
- 5.5. For contracts estimated to exceed £60,000 including VAT, the Clerk shall seek formal tenders from at least three suppliers agreed by the Finance and General Purposes Committee OR advertise an open invitation for tenders in compliance with any relevant provisions of the Legislation. Tenders shall be invited in accordance with Appendix 1.
- 5.6. **For contracts estimated to be over £30,000 including VAT, the council must comply with any requirements of the Legislation¹ regarding the advertising of contract opportunities and the publication of notices about the award of contracts.**
- 5.7. Where the value is between £1,000 and £3,000 excluding VAT, the Clerk shall try to obtain 3 estimates which might include evidence of online prices, or recent prices from regular suppliers.
- 5.8. Where the value is between £3,001 and £25,000, the Clerk shall try to obtain 3 quotes from suppliers.
- 5.9. For smaller purchases, the clerk shall seek to achieve value for money.
- 5.10. **Contracts must not be split into smaller lots to avoid compliance with these rules.**
- 5.11. The requirement to obtain competitive prices in these regulations need not apply to contracts that relate to items (i) to (iv) below:
- i. specialist services, such as legal professionals acting in disputes;

¹ The Regulations require councils to use the Contracts Finder website if they advertise contract opportunities and also to publicise the award of contracts over £30,000 including VAT, regardless of whether they were advertised.

- ii. repairs to, or parts for, existing machinery or equipment;
 - iii. works, goods or services that constitute an extension of an existing contract;
 - iv. goods or services that are only available from one supplier or are sold at a fixed price.
- 5.12. When applications are made to waive this financial regulation to enable a price to be negotiated without competition, the reason should be set out in a recommendation to the council or to the Finance and General Purposes Committee. Avoidance of competition is not a valid reason.
- 5.13. The council shall not be obliged to accept the lowest or any tender, quote or estimate.
- 5.14. Individual purchases within an agreed budget for that type of expenditure may be authorised by:
- the Clerk, under delegated authority, for any items below £3,000 excluding VAT.
 - the Clerk, in consultation with the Chair of the Council or Chair of the Finance and General Purposes Committee for any items above £3,000 and below £10,000 excluding VAT.
 - Finance and General Purposes Committee or council for all items of expenditure within their delegated budgets for items above £10,000 excluding VAT.
 - In respect of grants, a duly authorised committee within any limits set by council and in accordance with any policy statement agreed by the council.
- 5.15. No individual member, or informal group of members may issue an official order unless instructed to do so in advance by a resolution of the council or make any contract on behalf of the council.
- 5.16. In cases of serious risk to the delivery of council services or to public safety on council premises, the clerk may authorise expenditure of up to £10,000 excluding VAT on repair, replacement or other work that in their judgement is necessary, whether or not there is any budget for such expenditure. The Clerk shall report such action to the Chair as soon as possible and to the council or relevant committee as soon as practicable thereafter.
- 5.17. No expenditure shall be authorised, no contract entered into or tender accepted in relation to any major project, unless the council or relevant committee is satisfied that the necessary funds are available and that where a loan is required, Government borrowing approval has been obtained first.
- 5.18. Copies of orders shall be retained.

6. Banking and payments

- 6.1. The council's banking arrangements, including the bank mandate, shall be made by the RFO or Finance Officer and authorised by the council; banking arrangements shall not be delegated to a committee. The arrangements shall be reviewed annually for security and efficiency.

- 6.2. The council must have safe and efficient arrangements for making payments, to safeguard against the possibility of fraud or error. Wherever possible, more than one person should be involved in any payment, for example by dual online authorisation or dual cheque signing.
- 6.3. All invoices for payment should be examined for arithmetical accuracy, analysed to the appropriate expenditure heading and verified to confirm that the work, goods or services were received, checked by the RFO. Where the certification of invoices is done as a batch, this shall include a statement by the RFO that all invoices listed have been 'examined, verified and certified' by the RFO.
- 6.4. Personal payments (including salaries, wages, expenses and any payment made in relation to the termination of employment) may be summarised to avoid disclosing any personal information.
- 6.5. All payments shall be made by online banking or cheque
- 6.6. The Clerk and Finance Officer shall have delegated authority to authorise payments in the following circumstances:
 - i. any payments of up to £3,000 excluding VAT, within an agreed budget.
 - ii. payments of up to £10,000 excluding VAT in cases of serious risk to the delivery of council services or to public safety on council premises.
 - iii. any payment necessary to avoid a charge under the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998 or to comply with contractual terms, where the due date for payment is before the next scheduled meeting of the council, where the Clerk and Finance Officer certify that there is no dispute or other reason to delay payment, provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of council or Finance and General Purposes Committee.

7. Electronic payments

- 7.1. Where internet banking arrangements are made with any bank, the RFO and Finance Officer shall be appointed as the Service Administrator. The bank mandate agreed by the council shall identify a number of councillors who will be authorised to approve transactions on those accounts and a minimum of two people will be involved in any online approval process. The Clerk may be an authorised signatory, but no signatory should be involved in approving any payment to themselves.
- 7.2. No employee or councillor shall disclose any PIN or password, relevant to the council or its banking, to anyone not authorised in writing by the council or a duly delegated committee.
- 7.3. Two councillors who are authorised signatories shall check the payment details against the invoices before approving each payment using the online banking system.
- 7.4. Evidence shall be retained showing which members approved the payment online and a printout of the transaction confirming that the payment has been made shall be appended to the invoice for audit purposes.

- 7.5. A full list of all payments made in a month shall be provided to the next Finance and General Purposes meeting.
- 7.6. Members and officers shall ensure that any computer used for the council's financial business has adequate security, with anti-virus, anti-spyware and firewall software installed and regularly updated.
- 7.7. Remembered password facilities other than secure password stores requiring separate identity verification should not be used on any computer used for council banking.

8. Cheque payments

- 8.1. Cheques or orders for payment in accordance with a resolution or delegated decision shall be signed by two bank signatories.
- 8.2. A signatory having a family or business relationship with the beneficiary of a payment shall not, under normal circumstances, be a signatory to that payment.
- 8.3. To indicate agreement of the details on the cheque with the counterfoil and the invoice or similar documentation, the signatories shall also initial the cheque counterfoil and invoice.

9. Payment cards

- 9.1. Any Debit Card issued for use will be specifically restricted to the Clerk and the Finance Officer will also be restricted to a single transaction maximum value of £1,000.
- 9.2. A pre-paid debit card may be issued to employees with varying limits. These limits will be set by the RFO.
- 9.3. Any corporate credit card or trade card account opened by the council will be specifically restricted to use by the Clerk and Finance Officer and any balance shall be paid in full each month.

10. Petty Cash

- 10.1. The RFO can maintain a petty cash float/impress account of up to £300 and may provide petty cash to officers for the purpose of defraying operational and other expenses.
 - a) Vouchers for payments made from petty cash shall be kept, along with receipts to substantiate every payment.
 - b) Cash income received must not be paid into the petty cash float but must be separately banked, as provided elsewhere in these regulations.

11. Payment of salaries and allowances

- 11.1. **As an employer, the council must make arrangements to comply with the statutory requirements of PAYE legislation.**
- 11.2. **Councillors allowances (where paid) are also liable to deduction of tax under PAYE rules and must be taxed correctly before payment.**
- 11.3. Salary rates shall be agreed by the council, or by the Personnel Sub-Committee. No changes shall be made to any employee's gross pay, emoluments, or terms and

conditions of employment without the prior consent of the council or by the Personnel Sub-Committee.

- 11.4. Payment of salaries shall be made, after deduction of tax, national insurance, pension contributions and any similar statutory or discretionary deductions, on the dates stipulated in employment contracts.
- 11.5. Deductions from salary shall be paid to the relevant bodies within the required timescales, provided that each payment is reported, as set out in these regulations above.
- 11.6. Each payment to employees of net salary and to the appropriate creditor of the statutory and discretionary deductions shall be recorded in a payroll control account or other separate confidential record, with the total of such payments each calendar month reported in the cashbook.
- 11.7. Any termination payments shall be supported by a report to the council or to the Personnel Sub-Committee, setting out a clear business case. Termination payments shall only be authorised by the full council or by the Personnel Sub-Committee.
- 11.8. Before employing interim staff, the council must consider a full business case.

12. Loans and investments

- 12.1. Any application for Government approval to borrow money and subsequent arrangements for a loan must be authorised by the full council or Finance and General Purposes and recorded in the minutes. All borrowing shall be in the name of the council, after obtaining any necessary approval.
- 12.2. Any financial arrangement which does not require formal borrowing approval from the (such as Hire Purchase, Leasing of tangible assets or loans to be repaid within the financial year) must be authorised by the full council or by the Finance and General Purposes, following a written report on the value for money of the proposed transaction.
- 12.3. The council shall consider the requirement for an Investment Strategy and Policy in accordance with Statutory Guidance on Local Government Investments, which must be written in accordance with relevant regulations, proper practices and guidance. Any Strategy and Policy shall be reviewed by the council at least annually.
- 12.4. All investment of money under the control of the council shall be in the name of the council.
- 12.5. All investment certificates and other documents relating thereto shall be retained in the custody of the RFO.
- 12.6. Payments in respect of short term or long-term investments, including transfers between bank accounts held in the same bank, shall be made in accordance with these regulations.

13. Income

- 13.1. The collection of all sums due to the council shall be the responsibility of and under the supervision of the RFO or Finance Officer.

- 13.2. Any sums found to be irrecoverable and any bad debts shall be reported to the council by the RFO and shall be written off in the year. The council's approval shall be shown in the accounting records.
- 13.3. All sums received on behalf of the council shall be deposited intact with the council's bankers, with such frequency as the RFO considers necessary. The origin of each receipt shall clearly be recorded on the paying-in slip or other record.
- 13.4. Personal cheques shall not be cashed out of money held on behalf of the council.
- 13.5. The RFO shall ensure that VAT is correctly recorded in the council's accounting software and that any VAT Return required is submitted from the software by the due date.
- 13.6. Any income that is the property of a charitable trust shall be paid into a charitable bank account. Instructions for the payment of funds due from the charitable trust to the council (to meet expenditure already incurred by the authority) will be given by the Managing Trustees of the charity meeting separately from any council meeting.

14. Payments under contracts for building or other construction works

- 14.1. Where contracts provide for payment by instalments the RFO shall maintain a record of all such payments, which shall be made within the time specified in the contract based on signed certificates from the architect or other consultant engaged to supervise the works.
- 14.2. Any variation of, addition to or omission from a contract must be authorised by the Clerk to the contractor in writing, with the council being informed where the final cost is likely to exceed the contract sum by 5% or more, or likely to exceed the budget available.

15. Stores and equipment

- 15.1. The officer in charge of each section shall be responsible for the care and custody of stores and equipment in that section.
- 15.2. Delivery notes shall be obtained in respect of all goods received into store or otherwise delivered and goods must be checked as to order and quality at the time delivery is made.
- 15.3. Stocks shall be kept at the minimum levels consistent with operational requirements.
- 15.4. The RFO shall be responsible for periodic checks of stocks and stores, at least annually.

16. Assets, properties and estates

- 16.1. The Clerk shall make arrangements for the safe custody of all title deeds and Land Registry Certificates of properties held by the council.
- 16.2. The RFO shall ensure that an appropriate and accurate Register of Assets and Investments is kept up to date, with a record of all properties held by the council, their location, extent, plan, reference, purchase details, nature of the interest,

tenancies granted, rents payable and purpose for which held, in accordance with Accounts and Audit Regulations.

16.3. The continued existence of tangible assets shown in the Register shall be verified at least annually, possibly in conjunction with a health and safety inspection of assets.

16.4. No interest in land shall be purchased or otherwise acquired, sold, leased or otherwise disposed of without the authority of the council, together with any other consents required by law. In each case a written report shall be provided to council in respect of valuation and surveyed condition of the property (including matters such as planning permissions and covenants) together with a proper business case (including an adequate level of consultation with the electorate where required by law).

16.5. No tangible moveable property shall be purchased or otherwise acquired, sold, leased or otherwise disposed of, without the authority of the council, together with any other consents required by law, except where the estimated value of any one item does not exceed £1,000. In each case a written report shall be provided to council or Finance and General Purposes with a full business case.

17. Insurance

17.1. The RFO shall keep a record of all insurances effected by the council and the property and risks covered, reviewing these annually before the renewal date in conjunction with the council's review of risk management.

17.2. The Clerk shall give prompt notification to the Finance Officer of all new risks, properties or vehicles which require to be insured and of any alterations affecting existing insurances.

17.3. The RFO shall be notified of any loss, liability, damage or event likely to lead to a claim, and shall report these to the Finance and General Purposes at the next available meeting. The Finance Officer shall negotiate all claims on the council's insurers in consultation with the Clerk.

17.4. All appropriate members and employees of the council shall be included in a suitable form of security or fidelity guarantee insurance which shall cover the maximum risk exposure as determined.

18. Charities

18.1. Where the council is sole managing trustee of a charitable body the Clerk and RFO shall ensure that separate accounts are kept of the funds held on charitable trusts and separate financial reports made in such form as shall be appropriate, in accordance with Charity Law and legislation, or as determined by the Charity Commission. The Clerk and RFO shall arrange for any audit or independent examination as may be required by Charity Law or any Governing Document.

19. Suspension and revision of Financial Regulations

19.1. The council shall review these Financial Regulations annually and following any change of Clerk or Finance Officer. The Clerk shall monitor changes in legislation or

proper practices and advise the council of any need to amend these Financial Regulations.

19.2. The council may, by resolution duly notified prior to the relevant meeting of council, suspend any part of these Financial Regulations, provided that reasons for the suspension are recorded and that an assessment of the risks arising has been presented to all members. Suspension does not disapply any legislation or permit the council to act unlawfully.

19.3. The council may temporarily amend these Financial Regulations by a duly notified resolution, to cope with periods of absence, local government reorganisation, national restrictions or other exceptional circumstances.

Appendix 1 - Tender process

- 1) Any invitation to tender shall state the general nature of the intended contract and the Clerk shall obtain the necessary technical assistance to prepare a specification in appropriate cases.
- 2) The invitation shall in addition state that tenders must be addressed to the Clerk in the ordinary course of post, unless an electronic tendering process has been agreed by the council.
- 3) Where a postal process is used, each tendering firm shall be supplied with a specifically marked envelope in which the tender is to be sealed and remain sealed until the prescribed date for opening tenders for that contract. All sealed tenders shall be opened at the same time on the prescribed date by the Clerk in the presence of at least one member of council.
- 4) Where an electronic tendering process is used, the council shall use a specific email address that will be monitored to ensure that nobody accesses any tender before the expiry of the deadline for submission.
- 5) Any invitation to tender issued under this regulation shall be subject to Standing Order and shall refer to the terms of the Bribery Act 2010.
- 6) Where the council, or duly delegated committee, does not accept any tender, quote or estimate, the work is not allocated and the council requires further pricing, no person shall be permitted to submit a later tender, estimate or quote who was present when the original decision-making process was being undertaken.

This report will be made
public on 7 March 2025

**Folkestone
Town Council**



Report Number **C/25/384**

To: Full Council
Date: 13 March 2025
Status: Public Report
Responsible Officer: Town Clerk

Subject: **TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY REPORT
C/25/384**

SUMMARY: This report provides an update on the treasury management activities that have taken place during 2024/25 and attaches the proposed Investment Policy for 2025/26.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

The Council is asked to agree the recommendations set out below because:-

- a) The Council must have regard to the Financial Codes when carrying out its duties under Part 1 of the Local Government Act 2003.
- b) The Financial Standing Orders require that the Council receives an annual report on its treasury management activities.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1. To receive and note Report C/25/384.
- 2. To adopt the Investment Policy, as attached for the financial year 2025/26.

Aims and Objectives – *Quality Council Status*
Financial Implications – *To maximise investment income at no risk to the Council*
Equal Opportunities – *Equal access to services*
Environmental Issues – N/A

1. REVIEW OF ACTIVITIES FOR 2024/25

- 1.1 The Council's main source of income for 2024/25 was the Precept. In accordance with good practice and the Council's approved policy, majority of the surplus monies were invested in Folkestone & Hythe District Council and CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund.

- 1.2 The bank rate decreased steadily throughout the year from 5.25% in August 2024 to 4.50% in February 2025.
- 1.3 Some additional funds have been held on deposit and interest of approximately £6,319 has been received.
- 1.4 The Council opened a new investment account with CCLA this year with an initial deposit of £240,000 using the investment balance from Folkestone & Hythe District Council's investment account. The Council is committed to diversify the Council funds to secure capital and reserves invested, ensure the funds are readily available for expenditure when needed and potentially receive additional investment interest.
- 1.5 The Council had the following amounts invested/on deposit at the dates shown:-

	<u>Investment</u>	<u>Savings Accounts</u>
At 31 March 2024:	£480,000	£28,168
At 3 March 2025:	£240,000	£396,112

The following bank balances as at 3 March 2025 are listed below:

HSBC Current Account

- Primarily used for processing payments to suppliers and staff salaries.
- Account bank balance at £87,875.16.

Unity Trust Bank Current Account

- Secondary current account for processing payments to suppliers and staff salaries.
- Account bank balance at £74,268.63.

HSBC Receipts Account

- Used for collecting payments on the reception till for Museum workshops, retail and allotment payments.
- Receipts Account bank balance £8,052.

HSBC Deposit Account

- Used for holding precept funds and earn interest on investments.
- Current AER interest at 1.69%.
- Interest received from 1 April 2024 to 28 February 2025 is £4,761.
- Deposit Account bank balance £314,554.

Cambridge Building Society Council Saver Account

- Variable interest is received annually in April.
- Current AER interest at 2.40%
- Interest received from April 2024 to February 2025 is £1,558
- Savings account bank balance at £81,558

Folkestone & Hythe District Council Investment Account

- Loan to Folkestone & Hythe District Council current balance of £240,000
- Variable interest average at 3.8%
- Interest is received half yearly from 1 April 2024 to January 2025 is £18,345.
- Next investment interest will be received in April 2025.

2. INVESTMENT POLICY 2025/26

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to approve the attached Investment Policy for 2025/26 which complies with the requirements of the Local Authorities Regulations 2003.



Folkestone Town Council's Social Media Policy

1. About this policy

The aim of this policy is to set out guidelines and principles to Councillors, Council staff and others who engage with the Council using online communications, collectively referred to as social media.

It deals with the use of all forms of social media, including Facebook, LinkedIn, X (Twitter), Google+, WhatsApp, Wikipedia, Instagram, Tumblr and all other social networking sites, internet postings and blogs. It applies to use of social media for Council purposes as well as personal use that may affect the Council in any way.

This policy is in place to minimise the risks to the Council through the use of social media. Social media content that is contentious, which disparages or reflects poorly on the Town Council should not be responded to, but instead reported to the Town Clerk or Deputy Town Clerk.

This policy covers all Councillors, employees, contractors and volunteers of the Town Council, all of whom have a responsibility to ensure the success of this policy.

2. Principles Guiding Use of Social Media

Social Media will be used as follows.

- a) To inform the community and to promote to a variety of audiences, the work of Folkestone Town Council; through promotion of its actions, decisions and the services and facilities it provides.
- b) To advertise and promote engagement in the democratic process and to widen participation across the community in the affairs of the Town Council and the community it represents.
- c) To advertise and promote the work of its partner agencies such as the Borough and County Councils, Police, and other local service providers.
- d) To disseminate community news of interest such as road closures, planning and licensing applications, events and so on.
- e) To listen to conversations and issues relevant to the local area.

Social Media will not be used as follows.

- a) To enter or participate in, online debates or arguments about the Town Council's work or activities.
- b) Bring the Council into disrepute, or post content that is contrary to the democratic decisions of the Council.
- c) Post controversial or potentially inflammatory remarks; engage in personal attacks, online fights or hostile communications.
- d) To canvas, promote or advertise any political ideological policy or any political party or the decisions or actions of any individual Councillor.

- e) Social media should never be used in a way that breaches any other Town Council policy.
- f) Saying anything which might be interpreted as abusive, defamatory, in contempt of court or that could be interpreted as such, or by endorsing comments from others, for example, by liking or reposting.
- g) To make false or misleading statements; or to impersonate colleagues or third parties.
- h) to defame or disparage the Council's, staff, Councillors or any third party;
- i) to harass, bully or unlawfully discriminate against staff or third parties; to make false or misleading statements; or to impersonate colleagues or third parties.
- j) Social media will not be used to:
 - i. harass or bully in any way;
 - ii. unlawfully discriminate against others;
 - iii. breach the council's GDPR policies;
 - iv. breach any other laws or regulatory requirements.

3. Guidance for Councillors

If Councillors communicate on any social media platforms on behalf of themselves or any other organisations with which they are affiliated with they should state on any such profile that any views expressed do not represent those of the Council. Councillors should not present personal opinions as that of the Council or present themselves in a way that might cause embarrassment to the Council.

Councillors should be mindful of how they communicate in a private capacity, especially on social media. Postings on social media sites, places information into the public domain - even when the social media platform is limited to 'friends' or a small group of people. This is because anyone reading the post can forward it on and share the information. Councillors must, therefore, avoid criticising the Council or their colleagues on any social media platform, even if they have made it clear that the views expressed are not necessarily those of the Council.

Social media accounts on behalf of the Council or the services it runs or appearing to represent the Council should only be created with the approval of the Town Clerk or Deputy Town Clerk.

Should guidance be needed, advice should be sought from the Town Clerk or Deputy Town Clerk.

4. Guidance for employees, volunteers and contractors

This and all clauses below are intended for staff - to include employees, workers, apprentices, contract, agency workers and volunteers.

Individuals should make it clear in social media postings, or in their personal profile, that they are speaking on their own behalf.

Individuals must be respectful to others when making any statement on social media and be aware that they are personally responsible for all communications which will be published on the internet for anyone to see.

If an individual discloses their affiliation with the Town Council on their profile or in any social media postings, they must state that their views do not represent those of the Council, (unless authorised to speak on the Council's behalf). They should also ensure that their profile and any content posted is consistent with the professional image that is presented to the public and colleagues.

Should guidance be needed, advice should be sought from the Town Clerk or Deputy Town Clerk.

Personal use of social media during working hours

Occasional personal use of social media during working hours is permitted so long as it is accessed on the individual's own device, does not involve unprofessional or inappropriate content. Personal use must not interfere with employment responsibilities or productivity and must be compliant with this policy.

Prohibited use for Staff

Staff must avoid making any social media communications that could damage the Town Council's interests or reputation, even indirectly and should not express opinions on the Council's behalf via social media, unless expressly authorised to do so by the Town Clerk or Deputy Town Clerk. Any staff member who is contacted for comments about the organisation for publication anywhere, including in any social media outlet, should direct the enquiry to the Town Clerk/Deputy Town Clerk and should not respond without their written approval.

Staff may be required to undergo training before posting on the Council's behalf, the Town Clerk or Deputy Town Clerk may impose certain requirements and restrictions with regard to staff activities.

Any misuse of social media should be reported to the Town Clerk or Deputy Town Clerk.

5. Social media and public comments

In order to ensure that comments posted on the Council page are productive, respectful and consistent with the Council's aims and objectives, the public are asked to adhere to the following guidelines:

- Be considerate and respectful of others. Vulgarity, threats or abuse of language will not be tolerated.
- Differing opinions and discussion of diverse ideas are encouraged, but personal attacks on anyone, including the Council members or staff, will not be permitted.
- Share freely and be generous with official Council posts, but be aware of copyright laws; be accurate and give credit where credit is due.
- Stay on topic.
- Refrain from using the Council's social media accounts for commercial purposes or to advertise market or sell products.

Messages sent via social media will not be considered as contacting the Town Council for official purposes and therefore the Council, is not obliged to monitor or respond to requests for information through these channels. Instead, please make direct contact with the Town Clerk and/or members of the Council by emailing.

The Town Council retains the right to remove comments or content that includes any of the following.

- Obscene or racist content.
- Personal attacks, insults, or threatening language.
- Potentially libellous statements.
- Plagiarised material; any material in violation of any laws, including copyright.
- Private, personal information published without consent.
- Information or links unrelated to the content of the forum.
- Commercial promotions or spam.
- Material which alleges a breach of the Council's policy or the law.

The Council's response to any communication which fails to meet the above criteria will be to either ignore, inform the sender of our policy or send a brief response as appropriate. This will be at the Council's discretion based on the message received, given our limited resources available. Any comments posted on the Facebook page not in line with the above criteria will be removed as quickly as practically possible. Repeat offenders will be blocked from the Facebook page. The Council may post a statement that 'A post breaching the Council's Social Media Policy has been removed'. If the post alleges a breach of a Council policy or the law the person who posted it will be asked to submit a formal complaint to the Council or report the matter to the Police as soon as possible to allow due process.

6. Monitoring

The Town Council reserves the right to monitor and review, without further notice, staff and Councillor activities, social media postings and activities, to ensure that its rules are being complied with and used for legitimate business purposes.

Day-to-day responsibility for the operation of this policy will be undertaken by the Town Clerk/Deputy Town Clerk.

7. Breach of this policy

Breach of the policy by a Councillor

Any breach of this Social Media policy, by a Councillor, may constitute a breach of the Council's Code of Conduct. The Council's Code of Conduct applies to online activity in the same way that it does to written or verbal communication.

Breach of this policy by a Staff Member/Volunteer

Breach of this policy by a staff member or volunteer may result in invocation of the Council's Disciplinary Procedure.

Breach of this policy by a Contractor

Any breach of this policy by a contractor will be handled under the terms of their contract.

Any breach of this policy may lead to a requirement to remove any social media content considered to constitute a breach of this policy. Failure to comply with such a request may in itself result in subsequent action such as recourse to disciplinary procedure or action as a potential Code of Conduct breach.

8. Review of Policy

This Policy will be reviewed every four years by the Personnel Sub-Committee following consultation with staff. However, interim revisions will be made if required.

<i>Date Adopted</i>	<i>???? (Full Council Min. ???)</i>	<i>Review Date</i>	<i>???? 2027</i>
<i>Revised Dates</i>			

This report will be made public on
7 March 2025

**Folkestone
Town Council**



Report Number **C/25/382**

To: Full Council
Date: 13 March 2025
Status: Non-Exempt
Responsible Officer: Town Clerk

Subject: MAYORAL PORTRAITS

SUMMARY: This report outlines a change to procedure in relation to the Mayoral portraits.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

The Council is asked to approve the recommendations set out below because:

- a) The space where the Past Mayor's portraits are currently located in the Meeting Room at the Town Hall is limited.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. To receive and note Report C/25/382
2. To approve the reduction in size for each individual Mayoral portrait
3. To approve the gifting of the current Mayoral portraits to each relevant Past Mayor

Aims and Objectives – To preserve and enhance the culture and historic traditions of the town.

Financial Implications – One off cost for replacement portraits est. £200. Annual reduction in cost of producing future Mayor's portraits.

Equal Opportunities – Access to all.

Environmental Issues - No material implications.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Since the establishment of Folkestone Town Council in 2004, Mayor's portraits have been produced for each Mayor which are displayed in the Meeting Room.

2.0 CURRENT ARRANGEMENT

The Mayor's portraits are currently produced as A1 portraits, professionally framed and hung in the Mayor's Parlour, moving to the Meeting Room at the end of each Mayor's term.

3.0 PROPOSED ARRANGEMENT

To reproduce the existing Past Mayor's portraits as framed 12 x 8 inch portraits and to gift the existing 16 no. large portraits to Past Mayors, where ever possible.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Replacement Portraits (16 x £12)

Printing & Frames £192

Annual Cost

Current		Proposed	
Photographer	£85	Photographer	£85
Printing	£24	Printing & Frame	£12
Frame	£70		
Total	£179		£97

5.0 CONCLUSION

The Council is asked to consider a change in procedure to allow sufficient space to continue displaying the Mayor's portraits in the Meeting Room. This will incur an initial one-off cost of £200 but would mean a small reduction in the annual cost for future Mayoral portraits.

CONTACT OFFICER

If you have any queries about this report, please contact The Town Clerk of the Council.

Tel: 01303257946 or email toni.brenchley@folkestone-tc.gov.uk prior to the meeting.

Folkestone Town Council

Governance and Accountability

Risk Assessment

2025/26

No.	Risk Description	Impact	Probability	Existing Measures Taken	Recommendations
1.	Failure to attract sufficient candidates for vacancies or elections	Low	Medium	Council activities published on website and in community magazine. Publicise elections & vacancies on notice boards, social media and website.	
2.	Councillors lack relevant skills, commitment or work in isolation.	Low	Medium	Councillors' skills are reviewed upon election. In-house and external training offered. Members Welcome Pack & Good Councillor Guide Town Clerk and officers roles clearly defined.	
3.	Lack of Strategy and Forward Planning.	Medium	Low	Council adopts a four year Corporate Plan which sets out key aims and objectives. Councillors skills are reviewed and appointments to committees are made utilising individual strengths and interests wherever possible.	
4.	Adverse publicity and the impact on the services and facilities offered to the public. Lack of consultation.	Low	Medium	Good working relationship with the local media to ensure that the public are informed of any future projects or events. Agendas and minutes of Council meetings are available to the public. The Council promotes full disclosure and transparency. Decisions delegated to the Town Clerk relating to the granting of a permission or license, affecting the rights of an individual or awarding a contract or incurring material expenditure are made available for viewing by the public and retained by the Council for 6 years	
5.	Breaking and entering into the Town Hall offices & museum.	High	Low	Intruder alarms and fire extinguishers fitted. Secure locks fitted. Record of key holders maintained. Emergency call-out measures in place. Alarms and fire protection equipment serviced at least annually. CCTV Coverage. Security Grille to rear door corridor.	

No.	Risk Description	Impact	Probability	Existing Measures Taken	Recommendations
6.	Damage to third party property or individuals.	High	Low	Public Liability Insurance with reputable insurance provider. Staff awareness of health and safety policy.	
7.	Loss or damage to Council properties, furniture and equipment.	High	Medium	Town Hall building and contents insured with reputable insurance provider. Furniture and equipment insured by the Town Council with reputable insurance provider. Maintenance of asset register. Regular maintenance of equipment including alarms and fire extinguishers. Staff presence during Museum opening hours. CCTV Coverage.	
8.	Loss of cash through theft or dishonesty.	Medium	Low	Fidelity Guarantee with reputable insurance provider - sufficient to cover a minimum of total reserves plus half of precept. Regular banking of cash receipts. Thorough vetting process for job applicants and annual staff reviews. Minimise distance between office and bank. Carry out banking at random times.	
9.	Loss of Council funds held in bank accounts.	High	Low	Fidelity Guarantee with reputable insurance provider - sufficient to cover a minimum of total reserves plus half of precept. Monthly bank reconciliations. Two approved signatures for all payments. Regular schedule of payments reports to Finance & General Purposes Committee. Internal Audit. External Audit.	
10.	Insolvency of insurance company.	High	Low	Use of one of the largest companies providing specialist cover for Councils.	Seek advice from the Financial Services Authority if in doubt regarding insurance company.
11.	Failure to keep proper financial records in accordance with statutory requirements.	High	Low	Regular financial reporting. Adoption of Financial Regulations. Internal Audit checks. Annual External Audit.	

No.	Risk Description	Impact	Probability	Existing Measures Taken	Recommendations
				Appropriate staff training.	
12.	Non-payment of bills.	High	Low	Efficient financial systems. Appropriately trained staff.	
13.	Insufficient precept to provide Council services.	High	Low	Approval of budget by full Council. Provision of regular budget monitoring statements.	
14.	Insufficient reserves to meet unexpected expenditure.	High	Low	Regular monitoring of general reserves. Prudent budgeting.	
15.	Failing to comply with legislation and council policies.	High	Low	Qualified Town Clerk. All key legal and regulatory requirements are identified. Regular Committee meetings. Internal Audit. External Audit. Councillor and staff training. FTC employs the services of Peninsula as both HR and H&S consultants to assist with risk mitigation and competent person.	
16.	Failure to ensure that employment law, pension and PAYE/N.I. regulations are adhered to.	High	Low	Contracts of employment for all staff. Systems in place for updating records for changes in relevant legislation. Maintenance of accurate personnel files. Organogram in operation providing clarity of posts.	
17.	Unfair dismissal claims.	High	Low	Disciplinary policy and grievance procedure in place. All staff are offered training. All staff have an annual appraisal and regular meetings with the Town Clerk. All staff have a job description and receive a copy of the employee handbook. Seek advice from Peninsula to ensure regulations are correctly administered.	
18.	Loss of Key Staff	High	Low	Systems, plans and processes are documented wherever feasible.	Succession planning.

No.	Risk Description	Impact	Probability	Existing Measures Taken	Recommendations
				More than one member of staff trained in particular functions wherever possible. Training is offered to all staff. Formal Notice Period written into Contracts.	
19.	Physical and/or verbal abuse of staff and/or visitors.	High	Medium	CCTV coverage. Staff awareness of health and safety policy. Appropriate training for frontline staff. Employers' liability cover with reputable insurance provider. Risk assessments carried out for all activities undertaken by employees. Lone working policies, procedures and risk assessments	
20.	Failure to ensure HMRC regulations are met with regard to VAT and the construction industry scheme.	High	Low	Regular returns to HMRC. Systems in place for updating records for changes in relevant legislation. Appropriately experienced/trained staff.	
21.	Failure to comply with Health & Safety and Fire regulations.	High	Low	Annual review of Health & Safety Policy. Prominent display of Health & Safety and Fire Safety advice. Appropriately trained staff. External Competent Person appointed.	
22.	Failure to provide accurate reporting of Council business.	Medium	Low	Minutes properly numbered and paginated with a master copy in safekeeping. Minutes circulated appropriately. Minutes placed on website (in draft initially). Minutes approved at next meeting.	
23.	Failure to ensure the proper use of funds granted to local community groups.	Low	Low	Schedule of payments reported to Finance & General Purposes Committee. Internal Audit. External Audit. Feedback forms.	Review of feedback forms from successful applicants to confirm appropriate use of grants.
24.	Failure to respond to electors wishing to	Low	Low	Minutes placed on website. Meet statutory dates and comply with legislation.	

No.	Risk Description	Impact	Probability	Existing Measures Taken	Recommendations
	exercise their rights of inspection.			Advertising of end of year accounts and making them available to the public for inspection, as required under the Financial Regulations.	
25.	Failure to record members' interests, gifts and hospitality received.	Medium	Low	Register of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest and a register of gifts and hospitality received, kept by Town Clerk. Disclosures of interest as item on agendas. Internal Audit check. Update declarations of interest by Councillors is Councillors responsibility when circumstances change.	Annual reminder sent to Councillors requesting that they update the disclosure of pecuniary interests register.
26.	Inappropriate use of amenities/facilities by third parties and community groups.	Medium	Low	Leases and agreements in place for use/hire of amenities/facilities by third parties and community groups. Annual review of Leases & Agreements.	
27.	Failure of Computer System in whole or part.	High	Medium	Service contract with reputable organisation. Virus protection and data backup via Microsoft Azure Cloud and physical disk. Multi-factor authentication enabled. Cyber Essentials certification. All PCs running Windows 11 and Microsoft 365 Business Premium. Staff Training.	
28.	Failure to comply with codes of practice for procurement of goods and services.	Medium	Low	Purchase order system. Contracts awarded in line with Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Procurement Policy. Adherence to codes of practice for procurement.	Review of Financial Regulations & Procurement Policy
29.	Failure to comply with GDPR & Freedom of Information Act	High	Low	Town Clerk appointed as Data Protection Officer. GDPR Fundamentals certification. Annual review of Data Protection and associated audits & procedures. Council adheres to the model publication scheme. The Council is registered with the ICO. Staff Training.	

No.	Risk Description	Impact	Probability	Existing Measures Taken	Recommendations
30.	Government Policy and changes in legislation	High	High	All proposed legal and regulatory changes affecting local authorities monitored and reviewed. Membership of NALC. KALC & SLCC ensures Council is always informed of any proposed changes.	



Folkestone Town Council's Investment Policy

Investment Policy

1.0 POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1 Folkestone Town Council acknowledges its responsibility on behalf of the community and the importance of prudently investing any reserves held by the council.
- 1.2 This strategy complies with the revised requirements set out in the Guidance on Local Government Investments issued by the Department of Housing, Communities and Local Government.
- 1.3 The council defines its treasury management objective as “the management of the council’s cash flows, its banking and money market transactions, the effective control of the risks associated with those activities, and the pursuit of best value performance consistent with those risks.”
- 1.4 The Local Government Act 2003 states that a local authority may invest: - for any purpose relevant to its functions under any enactment - for the purpose of management of its financial affairs.
- 1.5 Where a council builds up balances these must be safeguarded by investing in an appropriate account. Investing balances must be done prudently.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 The general policy establishes formal objectives, practices and reporting arrangements for the effective management and control of the Council’s treasury management activities and the associated risks.

The council’s investment priorities are:

1. Security – Protecting the capital and reserves invested from loss.
2. Liquidity – Ensuring the funds invested are available for expenditure when needed.
3. Optimum return on investment.

The council’s investment duties are:

1. All investments to be made in sterling.
2. Investments to be spread over different providers where appropriate to minimise risk.

3. The council to monitor the risk of loss on investments reviewed on a regular basis.
- 2.2 The procedure for undertaking investments, considering the need for timely and speedy placing of deals shall be documented by the Responsible Financial Officer and approved by the Finance and General Purposes Committee or Council before any investments are placed.
- 2.3 The Council shall diversify its reserves between multiple relatively highly rated UK banks and building societies.
- 2.4 A significant percentage of the Council's bulked reserves shall be placed on interest bearing term/notice deposits.
- 2.5 The Town Council may also invest in the CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund.

3.0 REPORTS

- 3.1 Investment forecasts for the coming financial year are considered when the budget is prepared.
- 3.2 During each financial year, the Finance and General Purposes Committee or Council and Town Clerk shall report to the full Council any investments made in line with this Strategy.

4.0 REVIEW OF THIS POLICY

- 4.1 Any revisions to this policy shall be approved by the Finance and General Purposes Committee or Full Council.
- 4.2 The Finance and General Purposes Committee or Full Council shall review this policy annually and recommend any proposed changes prior to the commencement of the new financial year.

<i>Date Adopted</i>	<i>25 Jan 2024 (F&GP 1627)</i>	<i>Review Date</i>	<i>2025</i>
<i>Revised Dates</i>			

———— **POLICY ENDS HERE** ————

This report will be made
public on 7 March 2025

Folkestone
Town Council



Report Number **C/25/383**

To: Full Council
Date: 13 March 2025
Status: Public Report
Responsible Officer: Town Clerk

Subject: **GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RISK
ASSESSMENT AND INSURANCE REVIEW 2025/26
C/25/383**

SUMMARY:

This report updates the Governance and Accountability Risk Assessment and reviews the current levels of insurance.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

The Council is asked to agree the recommendations below because:

- a) The Council is required to demonstrate that it has considered any risks which may affect its business.
- b) The Council must be adequately insured.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1. To receive and note Report C/25/383
- 2. To approve and adopt the Governance and Accountability Risk Assessment 2025/26
- 3. To approve the Insurance Review and any recommended amendments to insurance cover

Aims and Objectives – To carry out a business risk assessment and make certain that the Council has adequate insurance cover

Financial Implications – The present budget for insurance premiums is adequate

Equal Opportunities – Equal opportunities for all

Public Liability		£15,000,000	
Employer's Liability		£10,000,000	
Hirer's Liability		£2,000,000	
Libel and Slander		£250,000	
<i>Motor Vehicle:</i>			
Damage to Property		£5,000,000	
Repairs		No limit	
Motor Legal Expenses and Uninsured Loss Recovery		£100,000	
Fidelity Guarantee (All Members and Employees)		£2,000,000 (See Note 2)	
Personal Accident (Accident and Assault Cover)		£500,000 any one person £2,000,000 any one incident	

** It is an Audit requirement that assets, as shown in the balance sheet, are not revalued but remain at purchase price. However, they are insured at replacement or rebuild value.*

Notes

1. The Council's Civic Regalia was professionally valued by a NAG Registered Valuer in August 2006. The Insurance Company has applied its standard annual increase (index linked) to all items.
2. The external auditor recommends that the fidelity guarantee insurance should be at least equivalent to cash and investments at year end plus half the precept. At the end of 2023/24 this equated to:

Cash and Investments	£653,880
Half Precept	<u>£476,485</u>
	<u>£1,130,365</u>

The cover of £2,000,000 is sufficient to comply with the external auditor's advice.

FOLKESTONE TOWN COUNCIL'S PLAN FOR THE NEXT FOUR YEARS

2025 – 2029

Folkestone Town Council's Plan aims to give residents a clear understanding of what the Council does and how it intends to deliver its objectives.





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1. Introduction

Welcome to FTC's Plan 2025-29, which supersedes the Corporate Plan 2020-25. This plan has been developed following a review of the Corporate Plan 2020-25, to provide an overview of Council's plans to improve the quality of life for all residents, businesses and visitors to Folkestone, as well as developing and underpinning its identity.

FTC works for and on behalf of the community it serves and is committed to improving and enhancing the Town of Folkestone having regard to the identified needs and wishes of all sections of the community. The Town Council is funded by the residents through what is known as a precept of the council tax charge and by generating income through services delivered. The 2025/26 precept is £1,082,720 which equates to a charge of £71.09 per band D household per annum (£1.37 per week).



At the most local tier of local government, FTC felt it was important to hear the views of residents to help make Folkestone a better place to live, work and visit. Therefore, during 2024, residents were asked to complete a survey as part of a review of the priorities for FTC to deliver on over the next four years. Areas that scored particularly high with respondents being 'Very Happy' were flower beds, hanging baskets, play areas, Folkestone Museum, community events and the community magazine. Areas that many respondents felt could be improved, in particular, were highways, litter bins, salt bins and the number of allotments, with many respondents being unaware of the Proof of Life service and ReferKent Hub offered at the Town Hall, noticeboards and CCTV.



One clear target arising from the feedback, was the development of a Neighbourhood Plan, with 80% of respondents indicating they felt it would benefit the residents and businesses of Folkestone. In addition to this, 82% of respondents indicated that 'addressing anti-social behaviour and crime' was very important with only 2% indicating it was unimportant.

This plan therefore outlines FTC's mission, vision, purpose, objectives and values over a four-year period, with targets and key performance indicators (KPIs) to help Council assess progress against objectives set. FTC will continue to examine in detail its responsibilities, continually review them and align our objectives to continue to strive to make significant improvements within the local community by working closely or in partnership with other organisations. These organisations are key contributors and represent the diversity of the local community and include voluntary, business and public sectors.

Interesting times may be ahead, with the Government's recent English Devolution White Paper setting out to unleash power from Whitehall back into local communities allowing local councils to make important decisions closer to where residents live and work. Although nothing is confirmed, at some point in the future, this could see Kent and Medway County and District authorities combining into unitary councils which will undoubtedly impact local Town and Parish Councils.



2. Overview of Folkestone Town Council

2.1 Folkestone Town Council was established in 2004 following a Referendum of the town's people in May 2003 and the subsequent approval of the Secretary of State, although Folkestone had been a Borough Council up until 1974. Since its creation some 20 years ago the Council has developed into one of the largest town councils in the country.

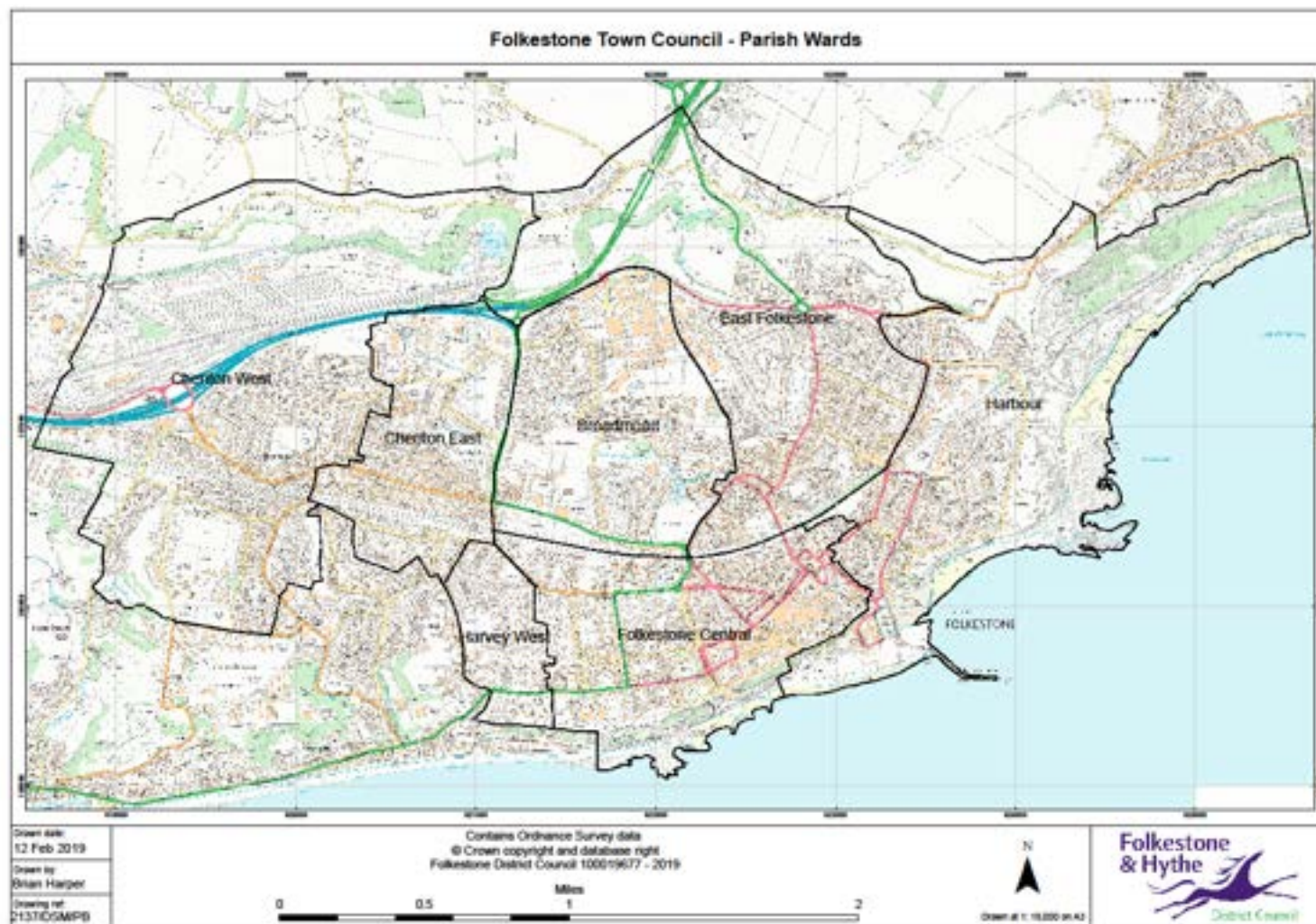
2.2 The Council comprises eighteen Town Councillors that are democratically elected every four years to seven wards:

Broadmead Ward	2 Town Councillors
Central Ward	4 Town Councillors
Cheriton East Ward	1 Town Councillor
Cheriton West Ward	3 Town Councillors
East Folkestone Ward	4 Town Councillors
Harbour Ward	3 Town Councillors
Harvey West Ward	1 Town Councillor





2.3 Ward Boundary Map





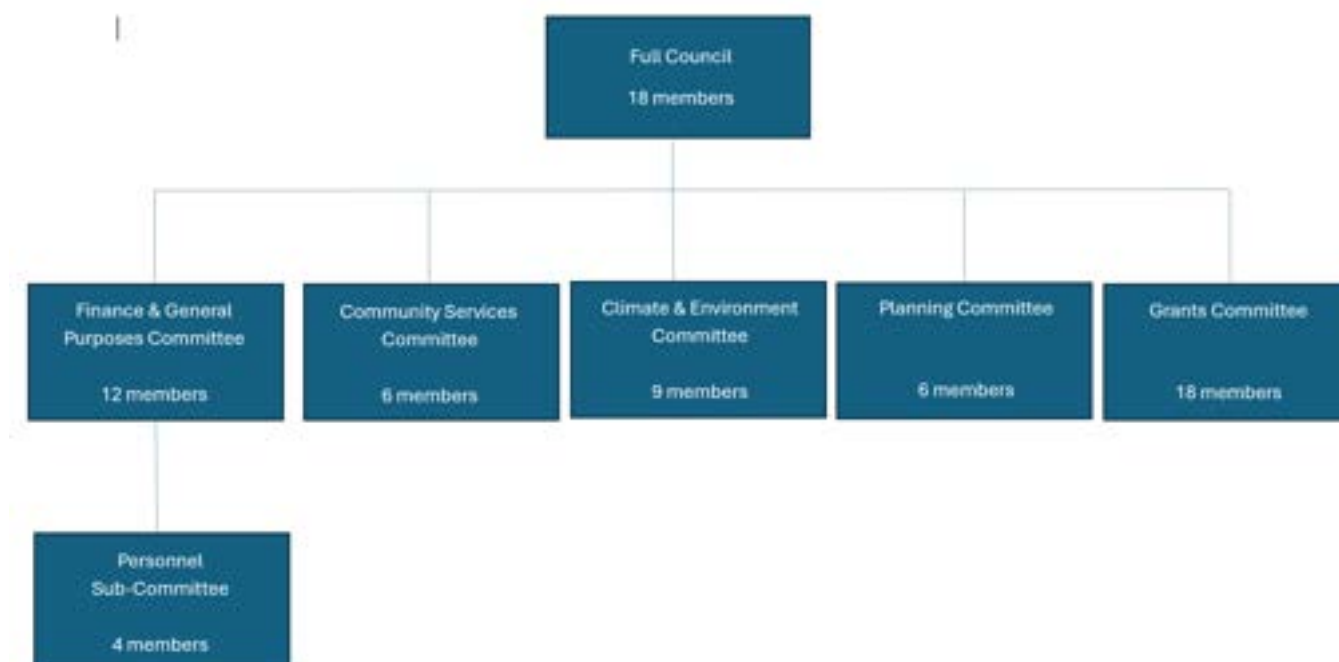
3 Functions and Service Responsibilities of Folkestone Town Council

Financial & Democratic Services	Community Support	Environmental & Grounds
Councillor Support	Visitor Information	Allotments
Committee Administration	Community Events	Litter & Bins
Mayoralty	Christmas Lights/Festivities	Bus Shelters
Civic Events	Town Centre Regeneration	Tree Management
Council Finances and Audits	Youth Facilities	Street Furniture
Human Resources	Heritage Preservation/Museum	Climate Change
Community Grants	Crime and Disorder	Play Parks
Town Twinning/Friendship Links	Community Minibus	Tree Management
Proof of Life	Community Resilience	Street Furniture
Planning (consultee)	Highways Improvements	Climate Change
	ReferKent Hub	Play Parks
	Kent Advice Hub	Flower Beds & Planters



4 Committee Structure

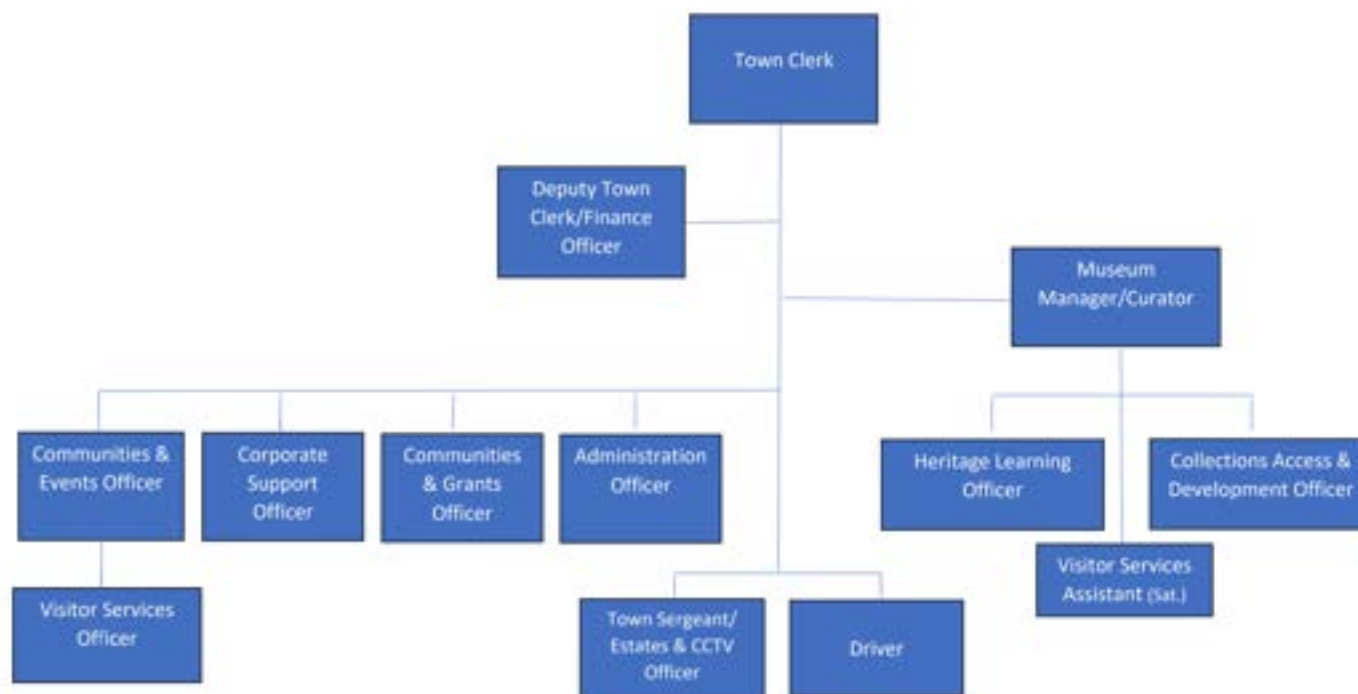
The Town Council is a corporate body that makes decisions via committees that have delegated authority in line with adopted Standing Orders and through delegation of authority to the Town Clerk (please see the Council's website at www.folkestone-tc.gov.uk for further details). The Council itself is chaired by the Town Mayor who typically serves one year of office and is elected from the Council itself. The Council has five main Committees that govern the strategic direction and much of the day-to-day business of the Council, the Finance & General Purposes (supported by the Personnel Sub-committee), Community Services, Climate and Environment, Planning and Grants Committees.





5 Staffing Structure

Supporting the Council is an officer structure that is employed to deliver Council services under the directorship of the Town Clerk. The Town Clerk is the statutory Proper Officer, Responsible Financial Officer and Head of the Paid Service and is accountable for ensuring that all Council's decisions are lawful.





6 Folkestone Town Council's Vision, Mission Statement & Values

The Council's Vision

“To work together with all sectors of the community to promote the social, environmental and economic well-being of the people of Folkestone so that it is an even better place to live, work and visit.”

The Council's Mission Statement:

“To revitalise our town of Folkestone, restore civic pride and regenerate a community spirit.”

The Council's Values:

- To work to the highest standards of integrity, transparency and openness to deliver services to the best of our abilities.
- To work in partnership with other organisations to improve services and deliver value for money for the Folkestone council taxpayers.
- To be an advocate and campaigning voice for the people of Folkestone.



7. Town Council's Corporate Priorities and Key Objectives

In endeavouring to promote civic pride, improve the quality of life and help to make Folkestone a vibrant community for its residents, Folkestone Town Council currently delivers a range of different functions and services.

The following pages outline the range of actions which Folkestone Town Council will pursue over the lifespan of this document.

The Town Council aims to deliver its vision by:

- Creating a better environment for Folkestone.
- Representing residents, businesses and community groups on issues facing the town.
- Preserving and enhancing the history and identity of the town.
- Improving services targeted to all community sectors in the town.
- Contributing to the regeneration of the town.





The Town Council aims to support its mission by:

- Continuing to improve the appearance and quality of the environment in which we live.
- Encouraging a greater participation in the governance of our town by all sectors of society and representing the views of residents.
- Working in partnership with Folkestone & Hythe District Council, Kent County Council and other organisations to improve the public services in the town.
- Working in partnership with the business and leisure communities to improve the experience of our visitors and thereby encourage the growth of tourism.
- Supporting the work of community groups and voluntary organisations with grant aid and co-ordinating their activities to improve the social fabric of our community.
- Working in partnership with Folkestone & Hythe District Council's Community Safety Unit to reduce the level of crime and anti-social behaviour in the town and encouraging the socially excluded back into the fold.





8 Four Year Financial Forecast 2025/26 to 2028/29

The figures from Year 2 onwards are based on assumptions and are subject to adjustment to reflect any amendments to priorities and the annual budget making process. A breakdown of the annual budget is available on the Town Council website.

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
	(£)	(£)	(£)	(£)
EXPENDITURE				
GRANTS	54,000	54,540	55,085	55,636
DEMOCRATIC	12,600	12,852	12,981	13,110
PREMISES & HIRE	169,700	174,791	180,035	183,635
PROFESSIONAL FEES	6,100	6,222	6,284	6,347
MUSEUM MAINT & DEV	26,500	27,560	28,387	28,955
COMMUNITY SERVICES	72,550	74,727	76,968	78,508
SALARIES & WELLBEING	592,750	610,533	622,743	641,425
CLIMATE & ENVIRONMENT	29,500	30,385	30,993	31,303
OFFICE & ADMINISTRATION	50,250	51,255	52,793	53,321
CCTV MONITORING & MAINT	57,000	58,140	58,721	59,896
CIVIC EVENTS & MAYORALTY	44,370	45,257	45,710	46,624
CHRISTMAS LIGHTING & FESTIVITIES	46,500	47,430	48,853	49,341
	1,161,820	1,193,691	1,219,553	1,248,101
INCOME				
PRECEPT	1,082,720	1,113,536	1,138,098	1,165,554
PREMISE RENTAL	20,700	20,907	21,325	21,538
INVESTMENT INTEREST	30,000	30,300	30,603	30,909
ALLOTMENTS & OTHER SERVICES	15,200	15,352	15,659	15,816
MUSEUM SERVICES & DONATIONS	13,200	13,596	13,868	14,284
	1,161,820	1,193,691	1,219,553	1,248,101



9 Corporate Priorities

Folkestone Town Council has set the following Priorities for the next four years to continuously improve its efficiency.

Priority One - Creating a Better Environment for Folkestone

No.	Action	Committee/ Working Group	Lead Officer	Timescale	Budget 2025/26 (If applicable)
1.1	Ensure street furniture is well maintained and where possible painted in town colours to create a common identity.	Community Services	Estates Officer	Ongoing	£2,150
1.2	Work with others to maintain and improve the appearance of the town to create a welcoming environment.	Community Services	Town Clerk	Ongoing	Internal
1.3	Continue to contribute towards improving the street scene by investing in flowers, trees & plants throughout Folkestone.	Climate & Environment	C&E Officer	Ongoing	£40,000
1.4	Retain the Town's Fairtrade status by actively encouraging and promoting Fairtrade initiatives to the community, schools and local community groups.	Climate & Environment	C&E Officer	Ongoing	Internal
1.5	The Council currently has an eco-friendly civic car and will continue to improve upon this with even lower emissions and greener technology if possible.	Finance & General Purposes	Finance Officer / Driver	Ongoing	£5,000



1.6	Consider the environmental impact of all decisions and commit to becoming carbon-neutral by 2030 and ban single use plastics within the Town Hall and encourage a plastic free Folkestone.	Council	Town Clerk	2030	Internal
1.7	Use recycled paper and minimise paper use as a matter of course.	Council	Town Clerk	Ongoing	Internal
1.8	Reduce paper and postage use by sending documents by email and amalgamated mailings.	Council	Town Clerk	Ongoing	£5,400
1.9	To investigate and work towards producing a Climate Action Plan.	Climate & Environment	Town Clerk / C&E Officer	Jan 2026	Internal
1.10	To investigate and work towards producing a Community Resilience Plan.	Community services	Town Clerk / C&G Officer	July 2025	Internal
1.11	Investigate the independent monitoring of the water quality on Folkestone beaches (Sunny Sands and the Mermaid beach).	Climate & Environment	C&E Officer	June 2025	£4,500
1.12	Continue to maintain and improve the 8 x Play Parks under FTC's responsibility.	Climate & Environment	C&G Officer	Ongoing	£25,000
1.13	Maintain FTC owned assets, i.e. bus shelters, salt bins and litter bins.	Community Services	C&E Officer	Ongoing	£1,500
1.14	Provide a cost-effective opportunity for local businesses to advertise on bus shelters.	Finance & General Purposes	Finance Officer	Ongoing	£1,000



Priority Two – Crime and Community Safety

No.	Action	Committee/ Working Group	Lead Officer	Timescale	Budget 2025/26 (If applicable)
2.1	Continue to provide a public realm CCTV system that is monitored and recorded on a 24/7 basis.	Council / CCTV Working Group	Town Clerk / Town Sergeant	Ongoing	£57,000
2.2	Work in partnership with other bodies, i.e. community policing and Safer Streets, to improve the safety and well-being of residents, businesses and visitors.	Community Services	Town Clerk	Ongoing	Internal
2.3	Where appropriate, identify and offer support to community safety initiatives and activities which promote community safety.	Community Services/Grants Committee	Town Clerk	Ongoing	£54,000



Priority Three - Transport and Accessibility

No.	Action	Committee/ Working Group	Lead Officer	Timescale	Budget 2025/26 (If applicable)
3.1	Encourage active travel initiatives providing alternatives to car journeys, i.e. cycling, walking, car sharing and use of public transport.	Community Services	Town Clerk / C&E Officer	Ongoing	Internal
3.2	Encourage the use of Police approved speed watch equipment to help ensure that speed limits are respected and observed.	Community Services / HIP WG	C&G Officer	Ongoing	Internal
3.3	Work in partnership with KCC to develop a Highways Improvement Plan (HIP), encouraging residents to provide suggestions for highways improvements and safety requests.	Council / HIP WG	C&G Officer	Ongoing	Internal



Priority Four - Housing Needs and Planning

No.	Action	Committee/ Working Group	Lead Officer	Timescale	Budget 2025/26 (If applicable)
4.1	Pursue partnership working with those seeking to improve the fabric of the town as a vital part of the regeneration of Folkestone.	Council	Town Clerk	Ongoing	Internal
4.2	Through the Council's statutory consultee status, engage fully in all consultative planning processes relating to developments and licensing applications that impact the town.	Planning	Town Clerk	Ongoing	Internal
4.3	Seek Section 106 and CIL agreements for new developments to encourage planning gain as a method of benefiting the community.	Finance & General Purposes	Town Clerk / Finance Officer	Ongoing	Internal
4.4	Investigate and progress the introduction of a Neighbourhood Plan for Folkestone.	Council	Town Clerk	Dec 2026	Internal



Priority Five - Learning Skills and Development

No.	Action	Committee/ Working Group	Lead Officer	Timescale	Budget 2025/26 (If applicable)
5.1	Ensure adequate resources are available to deliver Council's aspirations.	Personnel Sub	Town Clerk	Ongoing	Ongoing
5.2	Encourage employees to develop their full potential through training.	Personnel Sub	Town Clerk	Ongoing	£3,600
5.3	Offer Councillors training opportunities to increase their effectiveness and efficiency in serving the people of Folkestone.	Personnel Sub	Town Clerk	Ongoing	£600
5.4	Encourage members of the public to attend Council meetings and ask questions.	Council	Town Clerk	Ongoing	Ongoing



Priority Six - Business, Retail, Town Centre and Community

No.	Action	Committee/ Working Group	Lead Officer	Timescale	Budget 2025/26 (If applicable)
6.1	Continue to produce a cost neutral, quarterly newsletter, the Folkestone Community Magazine, to keep residents, businesses and visitors informed of the activities of the Council.	Community Services	Administration Officer	Ongoing	Internal
6.2	Maintain the Town Hall Clock in good working order.	Community Services	Town Clerk	Ongoing	£500
6.3	The Town Mayor, assisted by the Deputy Town Mayor, to attend and/or host a wide variety of functions held by local groups and represent the town in meetings and civic functions both nationally and internationally when the need arises.	Council	Corporate Support Officer	Ongoing	£8000
6.4	Continue to organise and promote civic and community functions to commemorate and celebrate the key events and people associated with Folkestone.	Council	Corporate Support Officer / C&E Officer	Ongoing	£30,000
6.5	Continue to advertise Council and Committee meetings that are open to the public.	Council	Administration Officer	Ongoing	£1,000
6.6	Continue to maintain, install and remove Christmas lighting and host annual Christmas festivities.	Community Services	C&E Officer	Ongoing	£46,000



6.7	Seek to utilise third party noticeboards and improve use of social media to improve awareness of events and areas of community interest.	Community Services	C&E Officer	Ongoing	Internal
6.8	Scrutinise any proposals in respect of the devolution of services and transfer of assets from F&HDC and KCC, to achieve the best outcome for Folkestone residents.	Council	Town Clerk / Finance Officer	Ongoing	Internal
6.9	Continue to provide Ward and Town Grants for local projects and encourage applications from across all sectors of the community.	Grants	C&G Officer	Ongoing	£54,000
6.10	Support hospitality and shelters that are available to homeless people throughout the coldest period of winter.	Grants	C&G Officer	Ongoing	As above
6.11	Provide a Community Minibus and investigate opportunities for the Community Minibus to be utilised effectively within the community.	Finance & General Purposes	Town Clerk / C&G Officer	Aug 2025	£8,500



Priority Seven - Tourism and Visitors to the Town Hall

No.	Action	Committee/ Working Group	Lead Officer	Timescale	Budget 2025/26 (If applicable)
7.1	Continue to provide an accessible visitor information point and dedicated area where visitors can seek and be provided with information on attractions and accommodation across the Town, accessible on the phone, by email, in the Town Hall, on the website and via social media.	Community Services	C&E Officer / Tourist Info Officers	Ongoing	£2,000
7.2	Work, where possible, with other bodies on the development of local tourist information leaflets, signage in the town and display boards.	Community Services	C&E Officer / Tourist Info Officers	Ongoing	Internal
7.3	Train volunteers to support the visitor information area.	Community Services	C&E Officer / Tourist Info Officers	Ongoing	Internal
7.4	Support the twinning link with Etaples-Sur-Mer and the friendship link with Mechinagar, Nepal.	Community Services	Town Clerk	Ongoing	Internal
7.5	Deliver advice and support to residents by signposting and offering assistance via ReferKent and Kent Advice Hubs within the Town Hall.	Community Services	Tourist Information Officers	Ongoing	Internal



Priority Eight - Healthy Communities / Sports / Open Spaces / Leisure & Culture

No.	Action	Committee/ Working Group	Lead Officer	Timescale	Budget 2025/26 (If applicable)
8.1	Work with others to help to make available to the community as many leisure, sport and cultural opportunities as possible.	Community Services	Town Clerk	Ongoing	Internal
8.2	Promote allotment holdings, seek to provide the best possible facilities in a cost neutral manner consulting regularly with allotment holders.	Climate & Environment	Town Clerk / Allotments Manager	Ongoing	£10,000
8.3	Seek to find new land that is suitable to be turned into allotments to address the demand.	Community Services	Town Clerk / Allotments Manager	Dec 2025	Internal
8.4	Continue to encourage youth involvement by hosting sporting events or alternative activities (i.e. dance/drama).	Community Services	C&E Officer / C&G Officer	Ongoing	£3,000
8.5	Support and engage with community groups who are aiming for improved sporting provision within the town for people of all ages and abilities.	Community Services Grants	C&E Officer / C&G Officer	Ongoing	Internal



Priority Nine – Improve the Corporate Management and Efficiency of the Town Council

No.	Action	Committee/ Working Group	Lead Officer	Timescale	Budget 2025/26 (If applicable)
9.1	Maintain a General Reserve of 20-25% of precept.	Finance & General Purposes	Town Clerk / Finance Officer	Ongoing	N/A
9.2	Maintain computerised systems to record all HR, contacts, issues & accidents.	Council	Town Clerk	Ongoing	£4,000
9.3	Develop Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and SMART objectives to help improve efficiency.	Council	Town Clerk	April 2025	N/A
9.4	Continue to improve budget forecasts and further develop Capital Reserves.	Finance & General Purposes	Town Clerk / Finance Officer	Ongoing	Internal
9.5	To continue to achieve an unqualified external Audit result.	Finance & General Purposes	Town Clerk / Finance Officer	Ongoing	Internal
9.6	Maintain "Power of General Competence".	Council	Town Clerk	Ongoing	Internal
9.7	Review staffing structure to ensure sufficient resource to deliver corporate priorities.	Personnel Sub	Town Clerk / Finance Officer	Ongoing	Internal
9.8	Maintain Council owned property and Asset Register.	Finance & General Purposes	Finance Officer	Ongoing	Internal
9.9	Encourage BACs or card payments for Council paid services.	Finance & General Purposes	Finance Officer	Ongoing	Internal
9.10	Promote community service awards to local people who make a real difference to the community.	Council	Corporate Support Officer	Ongoing	Internal



Priority Ten – Preserve the Town’s Heritage and Regenerate Community Spirit

No.	Action	Committee/ Working Group	Lead Officer	Timescale	Budget 2025/26 (If applicable)
10.1	Audience development for the Folkestone Museum (FM) – increase visitor numbers and hold wellbeing activity sessions throughout the year.	Community Services	Museum Manager/Curator	Ongoing	£3,000
10.2	Increase planned activities, outreach and informal engagement within FM.	Community Services	Museum Manager/Curator	Ongoing	£11,700
10.3	Update and improve the exhibitions and displays within FM in preparation for the 10 th anniversary of the Museum opening.	Community Services	Museum Manager/Curator	Nov 2027	£1,000
10.4	Programme a variety of exhibitions and activities in the temporary exhibition space.	Community Services	Museum Manager/Curator	Ongoing	Internal
10.5	Write a training plan for FM staff and volunteers.	Community Services	Museum Manager/Curator	Ongoing	Internal
10.6	Signpost training opportunities to FM volunteers to improve skills.	Community Services	Museum Manager/Curator	Ongoing	Internal
10.7	Resolve the backlog of missing and un-accessioned objects in FM’s collection.	Community Services	Museum Manager/Curator	Ongoing	Internal
10.8	Continue to find opportunities to share FM collection with others.	Community Services	Museum Manager/Curator	Ongoing	Internal



10.9	Develop the FM collection to tell wider stories of Folkestone and fill acknowledged gaps.	Community Services	Museum Manager/Curator	Ongoing	Internal
10.10	Continue preventative and interventive conservation to preserve FM's collection.	Community Services	Museum Manager/Curator	Ongoing	Internal
10.11	Develop ways to encourage donations for FM each year.	Community Services	Museum Manager/Finance Officer	Ongoing	Internal
10.12	Increase cross over training within FM team to ensure the museum can continue core activities	Community Services	Museum Manager/Curator	Ongoing	Internal
10.13	Continue to maintain Council owned memorials to a high standard.	Council	Corporate Support Officer	Ongoing	£1,800
10.14	Continue to support a location for the Cinema in the Town Hall.	Council	Town Clerk / Finance Officer	Ongoing	Internal
10.15	Maintain the Town Hall adhering to listed building status.	Council	Town Clerk / Finance Officer	Ongoing	£30,000



10 Performance Measures, Service Planning and Monitoring Arrangements

To effectively monitor how Folkestone Town Council is performing in relation to its priority objectives and targets, a series of key performance indicators (KPIs) have been developed.

KPIs are reviewed, monitored, developed and improved upon and the intention is to continue to review the relevance of the KPIs and to further develop them in the coming years.

Councils measure performance to establish:

- How well the Council is performing
- How the precept and other income should be spent
- How the Council is seen by stakeholders and the wider community
- What improvements need to be made

A Quality Performance Report will be submitted to the appropriate Committees annually, so that the Committees can track and monitor performance, making recommendations for improvements accordingly. The KPIs will also be reported on the website.



Council Committee	KPI No.	Key Performance Indicator	Annual Target
Council	C1	Number of members of the public attending Council meetings.	Council: 100 Committees: 50
Council	C2	% Councillor attendance at meetings delivering local democracy.	Council: 80% Committees: 80%
Council	C3	Number of Code of Conduct complaints.	Less than 5
Council	C4	Number of Mayoral engagements.	300
Council	C5	Number of Civic Events held.	15
Council	C6	Number of Press Releases and Community Magazine Articles issued.	PR: 20 CM: 50
Council	C7	Number of visitors to the Town Hall.	20,000
Council	C8	Number of Freedom of Information requests responded to within required period.	100%



Council	C9	Number of consultation exercises carried out.	2
Council	C10	Increase annual hits on Council websites.	<i>FTC tba</i>
			<i>FM 10,000</i>
Council	C11	Increase annual Facebook followers by 5% each year.	<i>FTC 2024 = 2,300</i>
			<i>FM 2024 = 3,800</i>
Council	C12	Number of training sessions attended by staff and councillors.	30
Finance & General Purposes	F1	Total revenue income (excluding precept).	8% of precept
Finance & General Purposes	F2	Total grant income.	£20,000
Finance & General Purposes	F3	Percentage of invoices paid within 30 days.	95%
Finance & General Purposes	F4	Accounts receivable turnover: Income received within 30 days from customers.	85%
Finance & General Purposes	F5	Maintain General Reserve.	Minimum 20% of precept
Personnel-Sub	P1	Average percentage of employee sick days.	2%



Grants	G1	Number of Town Grant Applications approved.	30
Grants	G2	Number of Town Grant applications from new organisations.	10%
Grants	G3	Number of Ward Grant Applications approved.	70
Community Services	CS1	Number of Community Events held.	2
Community Services	CS2	Number of Youth Events held.	2
Community Services	CS3	Number of bookings of the Temporary Exhibition Room.	2
Community Services	CS4	Number of volunteer hours per annum helping to deliver Museum services.	500
Community Services	CS5	Number of wellbeing activity sessions.	12
Community Services	CS6	Number of formal education activity sessions.	90
Community Services	CS7	Loan Box bookings.	18



Community Services	CS8	Young people involved in informal engagement activities.	2,000
Community Services	CS9	Engagement of adults in Museum outreach activities.	500
Community Services	CS10	Uplift in donations.	10%
Climate & Environment	CE1	Vacant allotments for longer than 1 month.	0
Climate & Environment	CE2	Number of allotment inspections undertaken.	6
Climate & Environment	CE3	Number of new trees planted by KCC on FTC's behalf.	30



11 Glossary of Terms

Asset Register - A list of the Council's assets, including their condition, location, and value.

CIL Funding - Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding is money that local authorities use to fund infrastructure projects in response to new development. The funds are raised from developers through the planning process.

Community Resilience - The ability of a community to prepare for, respond to, and recover from difficult situations.

Freedom of Information - The right of the public to access information held by public authorities.

General Reserve - Funds held without any specific purpose, serving as a financial safety net for unforeseen expenses, emergencies, or fluctuations in revenue. These reserves help maintain stable finances and ensure the council can continue to deliver essential services during challenging circumstances.

Head of the Paid Service – Statutory role in a local authority.

Kent Advice Hub – Free money advice from Citizens Advice.

Loan Box – A collection of objects, documents, and photographs that can be borrowed from a museum for educational purposes.

Neighbourhood Plan – A way for communities to have a say in the future of the places where they live and work.

Power of General Competence – This gives councils the power to do anything an individual can do provided it is not prohibited by other legislation. It applies to all principal councils (district, county and unitary councils etc) and to eligible parish and town councils.

Precept - A tax that funds the council's annual budget. Each year, as part of the budget making process, the Town Council will submit a request to the District Council for an amount to be included in the Council Tax demand to tax payers.

Proof of Life Service – If you are a British, Irish, Commonwealth or European Union citizen and receive a pension from another country, this is a stamp on your 'Proof of Life' form to confirm residency in the UK.

Proper Officer – The person employed by a local authority to perform a specific function.



ReferKent – A platform that aims to help adults and families who are experiencing or are at risk of financial hardship, by connecting them with relevant services.

Section 106 Agreements – Contributions from local developers to help pay for infrastructure needed to support new development.

Un-accessioned – Objects that a museum has not yet formally accepted into its collection.

Unitary Council - A unitary council combines the functions of a county council and a district council providing local government services for a specific area.

Unqualified External Audit – This is when an independent auditor reviews a council's financial records and concludes that the accounts are presented fairly and accurately, with no significant issues found.



12 How to Comment on this Document and Contact the Council

Folkestone Town Council would very much appreciate your views on the content of this plan as well as any comments, queries or complaints regarding the services provided by the Council.

Folkestone Town Council also welcomes suggestions from all sections of the community regarding further service development or on other issues that are important to the Town that the Council may be able to have an impact on.

If you do wish to comment, or for specific help and advice on matters concerning the Council, please contact the Town Clerk:

Telephone: 01303 257946
Email: townclerk@folkestone-tc.gov.uk
Write to: Folkestone Town Council
Town Hall
1-2 Guildhall Street
Folkestone
Kent
CT20 1DY
Website: www.folkestone-tc.gov.uk



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FTC's Plan 2025-2029