

KIDDERMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL
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17th April 2026.

The next meeting of **KIDDERMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL** will be held at **6:00PM** on **WEDNESDAY 22nd APRIL 2026** in the **COUNCIL CHAMBER, KIDDERMINSTER TOWN HALL** when all Members of the Council are summoned to attend.

Yours Sincerely

Hugh Peacocke
Chief Executive Officer

Membership: Councillors D. Hine,(Mayor), J. Aston, J. Beckingham, B. Brookes, D. Chambers, L. Carroll, V. Caulfield, B. Connor, G. Connolly, M. Crosby, H. Dyke, N. Gale, S. Hollands, M. McDonnell, S. Miah, F. Oborski (MBE), M. Rayner and M. Smith.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence

2. Declarations of interest

To receive declarations under consideration on this agenda in accordance with the Localism Act 2011 S32 and The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012.

Members are reminded that should you declare a pecuniary interest at a meeting, it is your responsibility to inform the Monitoring officer.

3. Public Question Time

In accordance with Standing Order 3(c), to allow members of the public to make representations, ask questions, and give evidence at a meeting which they are entitled to attend in respect of the business on the agenda.

4. Approval of Minutes (Appendix 1)

To approve the minutes of the meeting of Kidderminster Town Council held on 22nd January 2026.

5. Town Mayor's Report (Appendix 2)

To receive a report from the Town Mayor, Councillor Doug Hine.

6. Nomination of Mayor Elect and Deputy Mayor for 2026-27 and approval of Mayor's Charities for 26-27 (Appendix 3)

7. Annual Review of Strategic Risk Register (Appendix 4)

To review the Council's Strategic Risk Register.

8. The Transfer of Parks from Wyre Forest District Council to Kidderminster Town Council (Appendix 5)

To Approve the financial, staffing, maintenance and resource arrangements for the proposed transfer of parks from 1st April 2027.

9. Council Committees for 26-27 (Appendix 6)

- A) To review and approve the terms of Reference for Committees of the Council.
- B) To Approve the membership of the Council's Committees for 2026-27.

10. Minutes of Committee meetings held since the last meeting of Full Council

The minutes/draft minutes of the following meetings have already been circulated and members are asked to note:

- 10.1 The minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on 24th February and 24th March 2026
- 10.2 The minutes of the Town Hall Committee held on 26th February 2026
- 10.3 The minutes of the Services Committee held on 18th March 2026
- 10.4 The minutes of the Staffing Committee held on 19th February 2026
- 10.5 The minutes of the Finance and Overview committee held on 15th April 2026

(Note: the Chairs of each Committee will be asked to introduce each set of minutes and may choose to give a brief overview of notable matters from the meeting, for information. It is the responsibility of each Committee to approve its own minutes)

11. Internal Auditor's Report (Appendix 7)

- A) To receive the interim report from the Council's Internal Auditor (Appendix 7.1)
- B) To approve the Council's response to the Report
- C) To Approve the Internal Control Framework (Appendix 7.2)

12. Review of the Council's Vision- Strategy 2025-2029 (Appendix 8)

To receive the Vision Action Plan at 31st March 2026 and approve any amendments required.

13. The Forward Work Programme (Appendix 9)

To note the Forward Work Programme for Full Council for 2025/26 and consider any additions.

**KIDDERMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL
TOWN COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the meeting held at 6pm on Wednesday 28th January 2026
In the Council Chamber, Kidderminster Town Hall**

Present:

Councillors Doug Hine (Town Mayor), John Beckingham, Ben Brookes, Vickie Caulfield, Darren Chambers, George Connolly, Mark Crosby, Helen Dyke, Nicky Gale, Steve Hollands, Mary McDonnell, Shazu Miah, Fran Oborski (MBE), Mary Rayner and Mike Smith.

In Attendance

Hugh Peacocke, Chief Executive Officer

Before commencing the business of the meeting, the Mayor said how pleased he was that the Council had now returned to their own Council Chamber, in their own Town Hall. He said that this was where the Council belonged, it's "Spiritual Home".

He also thanked Councillor Steve Hollands for all his skill, assistance and time helping staff to reinstate the Mayor's Parlour and the Council Chamber.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors Bernadette Connor, Ben Brookes, John Aston and Liam Carroll.

33. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The CEO told the meeting that all Members of the Town Council have a dispensation when discussing the precept.

Councillor Steve Hollands declared an interest in the Agenda item re the Museum of Carpet, as he was in the process of becoming a trustee of the Museum.

34. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

None

35. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: To approve the minutes of the meeting of Kidderminster Town Council held on 22nd October 2025.

36. TOWN HALL PROJECT REVIEW

The Mayor welcomed to the meeting Mr. Peter Brant and Mr Stephen Jones, of Gleeds, the Council's Project Managers for the Town Hall project.

Members received their evaluation presentation following the completion of the project. This was followed by questions from Members, which raised the following matters:

- The delays caused by the podium construction, including the sourcing of the stone from India. This was especially frustrating as it was still not completed before the formal re-opening event;
- The removal of the liquidated damages clause from the construction contract;
- The value engineering process and the impact it had on the overall project, leading to cost increases when essential elements were added back;
- Changes to personnel and to the Council following the Town council elections in 2024;
- Cost control could have been improved;
- Cadent's delay in reinstating the pavement outside the Courtyard entrance;
- Accessibility issues and the need for a wheelchair lift at the stage and in the King Charles room
- The inclusion of the handrail on the podium, for which councillors had to press.

Overall, the Council was satisfied that a good quality outcome had been achieved and the Council now had a fantastic building. The success of the Town Hall since re-opening vindicated the Council's decision to undertake the project.

The Mayor thanked Mr. Brant and Mr. Jones for their presentation and their attendance at the meeting.

37. THE KIDDERMINSTER MUSEUM OF CARPET

The Mayor told the meeting about the public concern expressed when the Trustees of Museum of Carpet announced its planned closure on 20th December 2025. The Mayor had arranged a meeting with the Museum, the District Council, the Town council and other interested parties and he was very pleased when the museum announced plans to open on a temporary basis during the February school half term break.

The Mayor welcomed to the meeting Mr. Geoff Gilbert, Chairman of the Trustees of The Kidderminster Museum of Carpet and Mr. Gordon Cooper, also a Trustee.

The meeting discussed the issues faced by the Museum and their proposals to retain the Museum. This included plans to widen the Museum offer to include other aspects of the history and heritage of Kidderminster.

Mr. Gilbert told the meeting that the financial details presented depended on volunteers, with no staff costs. This showed a deficit of £19,000 for the year.

The Mayor thanked Mr. Gilbert and Mr. Cooper for coming to the meeting.

RESOLVED: A) That the Council supports the transition of the Museum of Carpet to the Museum of Kidderminster,

B) That the Council would support the District Council and other partners and funding organisations to enable this transition, and

C) Approval for any financial support from the Council be delegated to the Finance and Overview Committee of the Council.

(Councillor Mary Rayner left the meeting at 7.26 pm)

38. TOWN MAYOR'S REPORT

Councillor Doug Hine, Town Mayor, reported on Mayoral activities since the last meeting of the Council.

He thanked staff for their support, and councillors for their attendance, at the following recent events:

- The Town Hall Grand Reopening, Friday, 7th, and Open Day, 8th November
- Remembrance Sunday, 9th November
- Christmas Lights Switch on, Saturday, 15th November
- Santa in the Town, Saturday, 6th December
- The Mayors' Christmas Carol Service, 14th December

He was also looking forward to the Mayor's Charity Ball on Saturday, 28th February.

39. THE KIDDERMINSTER EDUCATION FOUNDATION

The Mayor pointed out that the Council as a corporate body was the sole Trustee of the Kidderminster Educational Foundation.

RESOLVED: That the Council convenes as the Trustee of the Kidderminster Educational Foundation.

The Foundation noted the Annual report for the financial year ended 31st March 2025, which had been submitted to the Charity Commission. The Mayor said that the Foundation held funds totalling £83,399.25 at the end of the year. No grants were awarded during the year 2024-2025. These funds were invested by Wyre Forest District Council.

The CEO told the meeting that the Foundation had appointed a Management Committee of 3 members to consider applications for funding from the Foundation. If one of these members are unable to attend, there would be

only 2 members, which was a small number, and there could be issues in the event of an equality of votes. He recommended that the foundation appoint at least 4 members to the Management Committee, with a quorum of 3 required for all meetings.

It was noted that Councillors Helen Dyke, Fran Oborski and Liam Carroll had been appointed to the management Committee.

RESOLVED: To appoint 6 members to the Management Committee of the Kidderminster Educational Foundation, with a quorum of 3 members for meetings, and to add Councillors Vicky Caulfield, Shazu Miah and Nicky Gale to the Management Committee.

40. COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The Council noted the minutes of the Committee Meetings held since the Council meeting on 22nd October (already circulated to Members and published on the Council's website):

- The Planning Committee meetings held on 29th October, 26th November and 18th December
- The Town Hall Committee held on 16th December 2025
- The Operational Services Committee held on 8th December 2025
- The Finance & Overview Committee held on 16th January 2026
- The Staffing Committee held on 3rd December and 15th December 2025, and
- The Civic, Community and Events Committee held on 14th January 2026.

41. SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS 2026-27

The Council received the Schedule of meetings for the Municipal Year 2026-27. It was agreed that the Operational services committee and the Civic, Community and Events Committee needed to meet more often and additional dates would be added.

The CEO to forward amended schedule to all members.

(Councillor Mike Kelly left the meeting at 7.55 pm)

42. REPORT OF THE EXTERNAL AUDITOR ON THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2025.

The CEO presented the report of the Council's External Auditors (PKF Littlejohn) for the financial year ended 31st March 2025 and his report on the issues arising in the report.

RESOLVED: To receive the report and to note the actions which officers are taking to address the issues raised in the report.

43. Vision 2025-2029 (Appendix 8)

The Mayor told the meeting that each of the Council's Committees had reviewed the current Strategy and some proposals for amendments had been received. The amendments recommended the addition of the following:

- 1.H. *We will exercise best practice as an employer, promoting fairness and equality for our employees and volunteers*
- 3.H. *Support and encourage the understanding of different cultures and peoples through organisations such as the Twinning Association and our various local faith groups*
- 3.I. *Encourage and support the promotion of Kidderminster's history, heritage and tourism.*

To Approve the review of the Council's Vision for 2025 to 2029, with the addition of the above amendments.

44. BUDGET 2026-2027

The CEO presented a draft budget for 2026-2027 which proposed a total revenue spend of £1,943,272, capital £175,000 (The retention money outstanding on the Town Hall contract) and contingencies/ transfer to reserves of £40,000, giving total expenditure of £2,158,272.

This would be funded by Council income of £636,292 and a proposed precept of £1,521,980.

The main items to note in the draft budget were as follows:

- i. Loan Charges next year are estimated to cost £248,000
- ii. Expenditure on events, including events staff: £263,817
- iii. Other Town Hall Salaries: £75,098
- iv. On the plus side, a huge increase in income from the Town Hall, forecast to be almost £600,000 (£593,292)
(Overall, the events accounts for the Town Hall are forecast to yield a profit of £304,972, which is equivalent to 20% of the precept proposed for next year)
- v. The retention money held on the refurbishment contract: £175,000
(A one-off capital payment in 2026-27)

The other main items of revenue expenditure are as follows:

- Staff costs (including Town Hall Staff): £ 625,548 (33%)
- Contracts and SLA's: £ 267,341 (14%)

RESOLVED: To approve an overall budget of £2,158,272 for the financial year 2026-27 and to raise a precept of £1,521,980 towards this expenditure for the financial year 2026/27.

45. FULL COUNCIL FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2025-26

The Mayor presented the Forward Programme and invited members to comment or propose any additions for future meetings.

Noted that the Annual review of the Asset Register is on the agenda for April Finance and Overview Committee.

Agreed that arrangements for display and storage of Town Council artefacts be delegated to the Town Hall Committee.

The Meeting concluded at 8.55 pm.

Signed: _____
Town Mayor

Date: _____

Mayor's Report for Town Council, 22nd April 2026

Welcome to Councillors for this forth full council meeting in my term.

I would like to thank staff for their support, and councillors for their attendance, at the **Mayor's Charity Ball** on 28th February, which raised over £2,300 and proved an entertaining evening.

We were honoured with a **visit from the High Sherriff of Worcestershire**, Mr Ian Smith, on 25th March and he had a tour (and lunch) at the Town Hall, and visits to Kidderminster Foodbank, Simply Limitless, Spokes (part of the Emily Jordan Foundation), and H.E.L.P. He presented H.E.L.P. with a High Sheriff's Award in recognition of their dedicated and valuable service to the community.

I would like to thank Keith Horsfall and the Gig Caritas Orchestra and Chorus for their fantastic performance of "**The Armed Man: A Mass for Peace**" in the Town Hall on March 21st. They performed at no cost and ticket sales plus donations raised over £2,000 for my mayoral charities.

Looking forward, I am hoping to squeeze in one more fundraiser in the form of a **Curry Night** or **Afternoon Tea** before my term ends.

We have the welcome opening of the refurbished New Meeting House in Church Street as The Church Performance Venue, alongside the restaurant and bar.

On Sunday, April 26th is the popular St George's Day Parade.

It is with sadness that I report the news of Ms Liz Steadman's passing, the partner of former Mayor Martin Stooke. I will be attending her funeral on behalf of the Council on Friday, 24th April.

I remain thankful to Deputy Mayor, Cllr Miah for their support in attending events when it has not been practical for me to attend. Events we have attended since the last full Council meeting of 28th January have been:

30th January – Mayor of Ludlow Charity Music Variety Night

31st January – WFDC Chairman's Charity Dinner

1st February – Mayor of Redditch Civic Service

3rd February – Nova Training Breakfast Briefing

14th February – Mayor of Bewdley's Valentines Dinner

15th February – Mayor of Droitwich Civic Service

26th February – Simply Limitless Grand Opening of new premises on New Road

3rd March – Soroptimists Charity Lunch

7th March – Opening of new store of Mountain Warehouse (Deputy)

9th March – Commonwealth Day Flag flying ceremony

13th March – Mayor of Bewdley Fashion Show (Mayoress)

14th March – Official opening of Revival Fires Church and Community Hub

14th March – Wyre Forest Symphony Orchestra Concert

17th March – Kidderminster Male Choir Spring Concert for KEMP Hospice, featuring choirs and musicians of King Charles School

20th March – Concert by Wyre Forest Young Voices and the Primary Chords

21st March – Mayor’s Charity Concert, “The Armed Man: A Mass for Peace”

25th March – Town Hall Volunteers’ Thank You Event (Deputy Mayor and High Sheriff attended latter part of the event)

26th March – Mayor of Stourport Afternoon Tea

27th March – Chairman of Bromsgrove Comedy Night

28th March – Kidderminster Choral Society concert

2nd April – Mayor of Ludlow Afternoon Tea

2nd April – Wyre Forest Local Group of the Worcestershire Wildlife Trust Evening Talk

7th April – Visit to Wyre Forest Food Bank

10th April – Mayor of Stourport Coffee Morning

16th April – Visit of WF9 (Spennells) Beavers (Scouts) for tour of the Town Hall

17th April – Celebrate one year anniversary of MB Solar showroom

17th April – Mayor of Dudley’s Ball and Civic Awards

18th April – Visit to Kidderminster Greener Living Fair (Town Hall)

18th April – Celebrate 50th anniversary of Mr Tee Records & Dance Room Open Day

Kidderminster Town Council
April 2026

Mayoral Succession Planning

No.	Councillor	Served as Mayor	No of Years Service
1.	John Aston	2012	22
2.	John Beckingham	n/a	2
3.	Ben Brookes	n/a	2
4.	Liam Carroll	n/a	2
5.	Vicky Caulfield	n/a	2
6.	Darren Chambers	Mayor	5
7.	George Connolly	Mayor	5
8.	Bernadette Connor	n/a	2
9.	Mark Crosby	n/a	1
10.	Helen Dyke	2003	30
11.	Nicky Gale	2017 KTC	14
12.	Doug Hine	Mayor	5
13.	Steve Hollands	n/a	2
14.	Mary McDonnell	n/a	2
15.	Shazu Miah	Deputy Mayor	5
16.	Fran Oborski MBE	1984	53
17.	Mary Rayner	2016 KTC	15
18.	Mike Smith	Former Mayor	2+

(Notes:

1. A mayoral succession plan has previously been considered on the basis of length of service of those who have not previously served as Town Mayor, and where there is 'joint seniority' then alphabetical order can separate candidates.
2. Normal convention is that the Deputy Mayor becomes the next Mayor
3. Service: Counts the number of years continuous service on the Town Council and any previous iterations of the Town Council e.g. Charter Trustees.
4. NB: The Council is not bound by any such convention.)

Based on the above, the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Shaz Miah, becomes Town Mayor for 26-27.

Councillor John Beckingham would be the incoming Deputy Mayor.

Councillor Miah's proposed Mayor's Charities are:

1. KYDT (<https://www.kdyt.org.uk/>) and
2. HELP (<https://communityhelpcentre.org.uk/>)

Kidderminster Town Council

Public report to Full Council 22nd April 2026

Agenda Item – 7. Annual Review of Strategic Risk Register

To review the Council's Strategic Risk Register.

1. Purpose

- 1.1 Risk is the threat that an event or action will adversely affect the Council's ability to achieve its objectives or successfully execute its strategies.
- 1.2 Risk management is the process by which risks are identified, evaluated and controlled, and it is a key element of good governance.
- 1.3 This document sets out:
 - a. The risks to the Town Council's strategic roles and functions;
 - b. The likely impact should the event happen (1 to 10);
 - c. The probability of the event happening (1 to 10)
 - d. The inherent risk score (likely impact multiplied by probability)
 - e. The current controls to address the risk
 - f. Other mitigating plans to reduce the impact and/ or likelihood of the event occurring
 - g. The revised impact, probability and risk score after controls and mitigating plans.

2. What and Who is Covered by the Policy

- 2.1 This risk assessment is concerned with higher-level corporate risks that may affect the Town Council's ability to carry out its strategic role as opposed to the more well- known risk assessments concerning physical risks related to health and safety.
- 2.2 This risk assessment is directed mainly to the officers and members of the Town Council, who are responsible for assessing, mitigating and monitoring the risks. Managing risk is the responsibility of all staff, so all employees should be aware of this document.
- 2.3 This document is a public document, to demonstrate to members of the public that the Town Council is taking sufficient measures to protect public money, services and amenities, it will be published on the Town Council's website.

3. Legal Framework

- 3.1 Risk management is an essential part of effective corporate governance.
- 3.2 The Town Council has a statutory duty to ensure that financial, operational and risk management is effective¹.

¹ Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, SI 2015/234, reg 3.

4. Policy Statement

- 4.1 The Town Council recognises that it has a responsibility to manage risk effectively in order to protect employees, assets, liabilities and the community against potential losses; to minimise uncertainty in achieving its goals and objectives; for business continuity and to maximise the opportunities to achieve its vision.
- 4.2 The Town Council is aware that some risks can never be eliminated fully and it has in place a strategy that provides a structured, systematic and focused approach to managing risk.
- 4.3 The objective of the Town Council's Risk Management Strategy are to:
 - 4.3.1. Integrate risk management into the culture of the Town Council;
 - 4.3.2. Manage risk in accordance with best practice;
 - 4.3.3. Anticipate and respond to changing social, environmental and legislative requirements;
 - 4.3.4. Prevent loss, disruption, damage and injury and reduce the cost of risk, thereby maximising resources;
 - 4.3.5. Inform policy and operational decisions by identifying risks and their likely impact; and
 - 4.3.6. Raise awareness of the need for risk management.
- 4.4 These objectives will be achieved by:
 - 4.4.1 Establishing clear roles, responsibilities and reporting lines within the Town Council for risk management;
 - 4.4.2 Providing opportunities for shared learning on risk management across the Town Council;
 - 4.4.3 Providing risk management training and awareness;
 - 4.4.4 Incorporating risk management considerations into the Town Council's management processes;
 - 4.4.5 Effective communication with, and the active involvement of, employees; and
 - 4.4.6 The operation of an effective Risk Management programme.
 - 4.4.7 Monitoring arrangements on an ongoing basis.
- 4.5 The Town Council recognises that it is the responsibility of all employees, Councillors and volunteers to have regard for risk in carrying out their duties. If uncontrolled, risk can result in a drain on resources that could be better directed to front line service provision and the meeting of the Town Council's objectives and community needs.
- 4.6 This Strategic Risk Assessment will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Town Council, incorporating feedback from internal and external audits on areas for improvement, as well as best practice guidance from professional bodies such as the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) and the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC).

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 Officers and Councillors: responsible for embedding risk management in strategic planning, decision making and operational delivery.

5.2 All Employees and volunteers: required to be aware of risks relevant to their roles and to actively contribute to risk management practices.

6. Monitoring and Reporting

6.1 Risks will be recorded in a risk register, which will be reviewed quarterly by the CEO, relevant officers and reported to the Finance and Overview Committee.

6.2 The Town Council will evaluate the effectiveness of its risk management strategy through audits and performance reviews.

6.3 Findings from the risk monitoring process will be used to update the risk management policy and practices.

7. Training and Awareness

7.1 Risk management training will be provided as required

7.2 Training will include workshops, case studies and guidance on using the risk assessment matrix.

7.3 Awareness campaigns will ensure risk management remains a priority across all levels of the Town Council.

8. Communication and Public Accountability

8.1 This document will be published on the Town Council's website to promote transparency and public accountability.

8.2 Where appropriate, the Town Council will engage with the public through consultations and feedback opportunities to ensure the risk management framework aligns with community expectations.

9. Recommendation

This Policy and the attached Risk Register were considered by the Finance and Overview Committee on 15th April and the Committee recommended that Full Council approves both documents, as presented.

Hugh Peacocke, Chief Executive Officer

16th April 2026

*The impact relates solely to the impact on Kidderminster Town Council as a corporate body.

** Inherent Risk is the product of Impact multiplied by Probability. Both Impact and Probability are assessed on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is a low score and 10 the highest. Therefore the higher the Inherent Risk Score, the more significant it is thought to be. Inherent Risk Score provides a means of prioritising management time and effort by highlighting areas of concern on a numerical scale. Subsequent experience and changes in circumstances over time can result in the need to re-value the scores for Impact and Probability.

***Residual Risk is the perceived risk remaining after current and planned actions have been taken. While good controls and mitigating plans are essential in managing strategic risks, some risks cannot be completely eliminated or may take some time to control following an incident.

Risk No.	Risk or Trigger Event	Impact*	Probability	Inherent Risk Score **	Current Controls	Other Mitigating Plans	Revised Impact	Revised Probability	Residual Risk ***
1.	IT Systems failing (increased probability during changeover to Cloudy IT)	10	4	40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WFDC SLA Disaster recovery service in place. Daily data back-up in place. Hardware replacement service in place. All documents and emails in 'the Cloud' Accounts software hosted with a provider Cyber insurance in place 	Through SLA: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular testing of disaster recovery service and data backup Warranty in place for onsite server with NBD Response Email Backup in place for testing Spare laptops to provide to affected users Coudy IT security arrangements 	7	4	28
2.	Town Hall not delivering	8	3	24	Planning for return, to cover all classes of use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruited business development officer. Commissioning necessary infrastructure and staff to make it work Insured against loss of business 	3	2	6
3.	Grounds Maintenance contractor not performing	8	4	32	Terms of contract	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular review meetings/ Reporting against KPI's 	2	2	4
4.	Sudden loss of key staff	8	4	32	Employment benefits Staff restructured to better enable progression.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff retention programme Buy in outside expertise Review employment Policies 	6	2	12

Risk No.	Risk or Trigger Event	Impact*	Probability	Inherent Risk Score **	• Current Controls	• Mitigating Plans	Revised Impact	Revised Probability	Residual Risk ***
5.	Significant change in funding, sudden large unexpected expenditure, inflation, abnormal materials inflation	10	5	50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget monitoring and reporting. • Insurance to cover major identifiable risks. • Reserves position frequently monitored. • Four-year budget planning in place. • Reserves policy in place. • Procurement arrangements in place. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of Public Works Loan Board and other sources to obtain funds. • Use reserves. • Increase precept. • Increase income from services. • Longer-term financial planning 	3	2	6
6.	Disaster impacting on the town	7	2	14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency contact list and list of resources maintained by the Services Team. • Key individuals will make themselves available. Active monitoring of information sources. • Accept instructions from Category 1 responders, i.e. emergency services, WFDC. WCC. WMP. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take part in consultations and exercises run by Category 1 responders. • Initiate and/or take part in post incident reviews. • Undertake any relevant training. 	5	3	15
7.	Fraud, misconduct, gross underperformance	7	2	14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Regulations in place, including payments authorisation, quarterly internal audits, spot checks. • Audit reports reviewed. • Insurance cover for identifiable risks. • Performance management procedures in place, including monthly reviews and annual appraisals. • List of payments and Income and Expenditure presented quarterly to F & O. • Code of conduct for members and officers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider obtaining news management service if an incident occurs. • Additional management performance training. • Additional risks to be covered by insurance • Extra staff resources for improved compliance 	3	1	3

Risk No.	Risk or Trigger Event	Impact*	Probability	Inherent Risk Score **	• Current Controls	Mitigating Plans	Revised Impact	Revised Probability	Residual Risk ***
8.	Confidential or sensitive information being disclosed.	5	2	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillor and staff induction and • training in place. • Security measures in place, e.g. use of • safe(s), shredder. • (Very little sensitive confidential information is • held). 	Training for Data Protection Regs and use of email Document retention policy in place	5	1	5
9.	Loss of access to offices	4	3	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kit available to facilitate working from home. • Zoom/ Virtual meetings 	Ensure all staff have capability for remote working, where applicable.	1	3	3
10.	Loss of Town Hall contents including civic regalia	6	3	18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All contents including regalia insured. • Most valuable regalia kept in safe place/ storage. • Attendant with Mayor at all times when full chain is worn. • All important paperwork scanned to IT System. 	Return to Town Hall safe when feasible	2	2	4
11.	Injury or accident at an event organised by the Council	9	3	27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk assessments carried out for each event. • Training/ guidance provided to all workers/ volunteers at each event. • Insurances in place. • PPE and hi-vis jackets provided, where required. • Lost/ found, first aid cover provided 	Each event reviewed afterwards New H & S and risk management portal now in place.	9	1	9

Risk No.	Risk or Trigger Event	Impact*	Probability	Inherent Risk Score **	Current Controls	Mitigating Plans	Revised Impact	Revised Probability	Residual Risk ***
12.	Illegal or unauthorised action by the Council	9	2	18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standing orders • Financial Regulations • Code of conduct for Members and officers • Trained officers • Legal SLA with WFDC • Advice from networks-WALC, SLCC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training and development where required for members and officers. • Annual reviews of Standing Orders, Financial regulations and Strategic Risk register 	9	1	9
13.	Injury or accident arising on KTC properties or delivery of KTC services	9	4	36	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insurances in place • Services Dept has comprehensive risk management plans • Relevant staff training • Recruitment of staff with relevant skills and experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Hall will have risk management plan • Health and Safety champion appointed • New H & S and risk management portal now in place. 	7	2	14
14.	Supplier fraud.	8	4	32	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • always call the supplier to check the veracity of a request, using details in your system, rather than those on any associated letter or email. 	<p>training for staff to alert them to the potential risks of providing sensitive company information, by phone or other means, especially contract and account information. (we do call suppliers to verify, on the odd occasion when this arises)</p> <p>The Corporate Services Manager to approve a supplier bank account change after having reviewed the process undertaken to verify the supplier details change</p> <p>Annual review of supplier accounts to be undertaken to remove any dormant accounts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - checking address and financial health details with Companies House? - checking samples of online payments to supplier invoices to ensure the payment has been made to the supplier bank account.? 	8	2	16

Report Title: Localism and Devolution Proposals

Meeting: Full Council

Dat of Meeting: 22 April 2026

Author: Adam Stockhall – Operational Services Manager

Date of report: 1 April 2026

1. Summary

To Agree the Council's approach to this matter, including asset and service transfers and financial arrangements for same.

2. Background

Operational Services Committee held on 18 Mach 2026, recommends Kidderminster Town Council (KTC) agree to the transfer of nine parks and playgrounds, to include the recommended financial, staffing and operational arrangements.

This follows Kidderminster Town Council's response to the report presented to Wyre Forest District Council (WFDC) at its meeting held on 11 February 2026. At that meeting, WFDC agreed in principle to the transfer of parks and listed assets. WFDC has had a **Devolution Policy** in place for some time, which has already established a framework for the potential transfer of certain services and assets to town and parish councils where this supports effective local management and community benefit. The Government is currently advocating a programme of **localism and devolution in local government**, with proposals that seek to streamline governance arrangements at district and unitary levels. The options under consideration include the creation of a single unitary authority for Worcestershire, replacing the existing six district councils, or alternatively the establishment of separate north and south unitary authorities. Under either scenario, WFDC would ultimately cease to exist in its current form, with its responsibilities and assets transferring to a newly created unitary authority structure. This programme of localism and devolution presents both challenges and opportunities for WFDC and Kidderminster Town Council (KTC). It will require careful planning, collaboration, and clarity regarding the future stewardship of community assets to ensure the continued effective management of local services while maintaining decision-making as close as possible to the communities they serve.

3. Purpose of report

WFDC's administration believes that the town councils will wish to retain local ownership of, and provide a sustainable future for, assets that are loved and enjoyed primarily by the district's residents - although some are popular with the many visitors to the district as well.

This document sets out the proposals from WFDC, together with the associated transitional financial support arrangements.

The Town Council needs to:

4. Proposed Asset Transfers

Parks/Play Areas – April 2027	Facilities/Equipment/Features
King George V Park	Play Area, Football, Basketball, Trees, benches and bins.
Willowfield Park	Play Area, benches and bins.
Forester Way Park	Play Area, Trees, benches and bins.
Jerusalem Walk Park	Play Area, Shelter, benches and bins.
Springfield Park	Water Dams, Pool, Stream, Play Area, Outbuilding (Changing Rooms), Café, Car Park, Trees, benches and bins.
Spennells Park	Car Park, BMX Track, MUGA (with goals & basketball), Play Equipment, Trees, benches and bins.
Bewdley Hill Wood	Large Mature Trees, bins
Talbot Park (Large Urban Town Centre)	Play Area, trees, benches and bins
Coronation Gardens (Small Urban Park)	Play area, benches and bins

5. Surveys

We have received a number of surveys which were shared with Services Committee on 18 March and all Members through email. To date we are still awaiting the survey for the Springfield Park outbuilding. The surveys submitted so far do not indicate any immediate concerns. However, it should be noted that, without appropriate financial provision for ongoing maintenance, buildings will naturally deteriorate over time. It is therefore recommended that officers undertake a detailed review of the surveys and report back should any significant issues be identified that require further investigation or remedial action.

6. Talbot Park (Worcester Street, Kidderminster High Street)

It is important to note the initial 24 months, partial maintenance is covered under the Worcester street park Landscape Maintenance Plan which was shared at Services Committee on 18 March and all Members.

7. Service Delivery – Outsourcing - £200,000

It is recommended to engage a third-party grounds maintenance contractor rather than relying solely on an in-house team. While employing two specialist roles, a Technical Officer and a Horticultural Officer alongside an additional general operative and a Community, Commercial and Engagement Officer would provide essential expertise and strengthen the organisation's resilience and seek funding and income opportunities.

Outsourcing grounds maintenance services offers greater operational flexibility and reduces fixed staffing and overhead costs. It transfers responsibility for the

delivery of on-the-ground services, the provision and maintenance of equipment, and compliance with regulatory and safety requirements to the contractor.

This approach ensures the consistent provision of high-quality grounds maintenance and the ability to scale operations efficiently to meet seasonal or changing service demands, while minimising the operational and financial risks associated with managing a larger in-house workforce. Officers recommend an initial two-year fixed term, with an option of a third year, this will give the Council the opportunity to review the business model under a relative short-term contract, with an option considered in the long term to bring grounds maintenance in house.

7.1 Service Delivery – In House - £235,000

An alternative approach to outsourcing is the direct delivery of grounds maintenance services through an in-house team. Based on the scope and operational requirements, this model would necessitate a minimum of six dedicated full-time staff to ensure effective and consistent service delivery across all sites.

To support this workforce, the Council would need to invest in and maintain a range of equipment and resources. This would include the procurement of two additional mowers and trailers, additional strimmers and hedge cutters, and a full suite of hand tools to enable day-to-day horticultural and litter and waste operations. Furthermore, three vehicles would be required to facilitate the transportation of staff, equipment, and green waste between locations.

A key operational consideration within an in-house model is the Council's ability to manage and remove waste arising from maintenance activities. This would require appropriate arrangements for collection, transport, and disposal or recycling, ensuring compliance with environmental regulations and associated costs.

While bringing the service in-house would provide the Council with greater direct control over service standards, scheduling, and workforce management, it would also introduce increased responsibility for staffing, training, equipment maintenance, health and safety compliance, and operational risk. Additionally, the model would involve higher fixed costs and reduced flexibility when responding to seasonal fluctuations in workload.

This approach may be considered as a longer-term option, particularly following an initial outsourced contract period, allowing the Council to assess performance, cost implications, and overall service effectiveness before determining whether a transition to in-house delivery would provide improved value and outcomes.

7.2 Risks of Direct Employment for Grounds Maintenance Delivery.

- **Financial & Cost Risks**

Direct delivery introduces significant fixed costs, including salaries, pensions, National Insurance, and employee benefits. It also requires substantial upfront capital investment in vehicles, equipment, storage, and improvements to welfare facilities, alongside ongoing maintenance and replacement costs. There is increased exposure to redundancy liabilities if service requirements change, reduced ability to benchmark costs competitively, and added complexity in managing waste in-house. The operational depot may also lack capacity and compliance (e.g. welfare standards), creating further financial and logistical pressures.

- **HR & Management Burden**
In-house provision increases organisational overhead through recruitment, training, and day-to-day workforce management. This includes handling absence, performance, disciplinary and grievance processes, as well as ensuring adequate cover and succession planning. Ongoing training (e.g. health and safety, certifications) adds further resource demand.
- **Skills & Expertise Limitations**
Internal teams may lack specialist capabilities in areas such as arboriculture and horticulture. Keeping pace with evolving regulations and industry best practice can be challenging, whereas external contractors typically offer broader expertise across multiple disciplines and sites.
- **Operational Risks**
Service delivery is more vulnerable to disruption from staff absence or turnover. In-house teams often have limited flexibility to scale resources during peak periods and lack the resilience of contractors who can draw on wider labour pools and backup teams.
- **Compliance & Liability**
The organisation assumes full responsibility for compliance with health and safety legislation, including equipment regulations (PUWER/LOLER), risk assessments, and environmental requirements. This increases insurance exposure and the risk of employment-related claims or tribunals.
- **Performance & Innovation**
External contractors are more likely to invest in new technologies, specialist equipment, and sustainable practices. In-house services may face constraints in justifying or funding such capital investment, potentially limiting innovation and efficiency improvements.

7.3 Additional Posts – These roles are essential to provide specialist expertise and strengthen the resilience of a currently small team of two officers. They would be expected to deliver key functions, provide technical, commercial and operational support, and ensure continuity of service, enabling the team to meet both routine and strategic objectives effectively. **To note there would be an additional £5,000 per post for additional costs, ER, NI Contributions, Pension and recruitment costs.**

- **Technical Officer - SCP 17-21 £30,060 - £33,143** - This role will support the delivery of statutory compliance, operational safety, and risk assurance across all parks, playgrounds and open spaces. The postholder will play a key role in ensuring that facilities, assets, and activities across the service are managed in accordance with health and safety legislation, internal policies, and recognised industry standards.

Key responsibilities will include preparing, reviewing, and updating risk assessments for parks operations, activities, and facilities to ensure risks are appropriately identified, mitigated, and documented. The postholder will support the safe planning and delivery of events within parks and open spaces by reviewing event management plans, advising on safety requirements, and ensuring appropriate control measures are in place.

The Technical Officer will oversee safety compliance for play areas across Kidderminster, including coordinating routine and annual inspections, monitoring

inspection reports, and ensuring that any defects or hazards are addressed in a timely manner. The role will also be responsible for coordinating repairs and maintenance to play equipment, park infrastructure, and street furniture, liaising with contractors and internal teams to ensure works are completed to the required standards.

A key element of the role will involve monitoring contractor documentation, including **Risk Assessments and Method Statements (RAMS)**, to ensure that all works carried out within parks and open spaces are undertaken safely and in line with contractual and regulatory requirements. The postholder will also maintain accurate records relating to compliance, inspections, incidents, and remedial actions, helping to provide a clear audit trail and support organisational risk management.

The role will contribute to asset management across parks and open spaces by supporting condition monitoring of facilities and infrastructure, identifying maintenance priorities, and assisting with planned maintenance programmes to ensure assets remain safe, accessible, and fit for purpose.

In the longer term, the postholder could also support the management and operational oversight of the **Brinton Park splash pad**, including assisting with compliance monitoring, maintenance coordination, seasonal preparation and shutdown, and ensuring the facility operates safely and effectively for public use.

Through these responsibilities, the Technical Officer will help ensure that parks and open spaces are safe, compliant, and well maintained, supporting both day-to-day operations and the long-term sustainability of key assets and facilities.

- **Grounds and Horticultural Officer - SCP 17-21 £30,060 - £33,143** – The postholder will provide specialist horticultural expertise to ensure that parks, green spaces, and planted areas across the district are maintained to a high standard, contributing to attractive, well-managed, and environmentally sustainable public spaces.

The role will support the planning, development, and ongoing management of planting schemes, floral displays, and landscaped areas across parks and the wider public realm. This will include advising on appropriate plant selection, seasonal planting programmes, and sustainable horticultural practices that enhance the visual quality of parks while ensuring long-term resilience and cost effectiveness.

The Grounds and Horticultural Officer will work closely with the contractors teams to help guide horticultural standards, monitor the condition of planted areas, and identify opportunities for improvement, restoration, or redesign where appropriate. The postholder will also provide professional advice to support the development of new landscape projects, park improvements, and regeneration initiatives.

A key element of the role will involve working collaboratively with **Friends groups**, community organisations, volunteers, and council officers to support community-led planting initiatives and environmental improvement projects. This will include offering technical guidance, helping coordinate community planting

activities, and encouraging greater community participation in the care and enhancement of local green spaces.

The role will also play an important part in promoting and championing the Council's **biodiversity aims and objectives**, supporting the delivery of initiatives that enhance habitats, increase pollinator-friendly planting, and improve ecological value across parks and open spaces. This may include advising on wildflower meadows, tree and shrub planting, habitat creation, and sustainable land management approaches that contribute to wider environmental and climate resilience goals.

In addition, the postholder will support the development of horticultural strategies and maintenance plans, contribute to monitoring the quality of grounds maintenance, and help ensure that parks continue to meet recognised quality standards. Through these responsibilities, the Grounds and Horticultural Officer will help ensure that the district's parks and green spaces remain vibrant, welcoming, and environmentally rich places for residents and visitors to enjoy.

Operational Services Operative - SCP 2-4 £23,656 - £24,404 - Grounds Maintenance, Horticultural works, and Public Realm Services. Horticultural responsibilities would include routine and seasonal grass cutting, verge maintenance, strimming, edging, and the cultivation and maintenance of shrubs, hedges, and planted areas. This would encompass pruning, hedge cutting, weed control, soil preparation, planting, and general landscape management to ensure that green spaces remain healthy, attractive, and well maintained throughout the year.

In addition to horticultural works, the service would support the day-to-day delivery of **cleansing, maintenance, and environmental upkeep across the Town Centre, parks, and open spaces**, helping to ensure that public areas remain clean, safe, and welcoming for residents and visitors. Core duties would include routine cleansing activities such as litter picking, bin emptying, and the removal of debris across parks, footpaths, and key public spaces. Staff would undertake regular patrols to identify and address cleanliness issues, ensuring that standards are maintained consistently across the service area.

The service would also incorporate **Lengthsman duties**, responding to minor environmental maintenance issues within the public realm. This would include clearing small obstructions, reporting or addressing minor defects, maintaining signage, and assisting with small-scale repairs to improve the appearance and safety of local environments. Responsibilities would further include supporting the monitoring and basic maintenance of Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS), undertaking checks, reporting faults, and ensuring signage remains operational and visible.

Additional duties would include maintaining public realm infrastructure such as benches, railings, planters, noticeboards, and other street and park furniture through cleaning, painting, and minor repairs. The team would also support periodic deep cleaning activities, including jet washing, removal of staining or graffiti where appropriate, and assisting with enhanced cleansing requirements during peak periods or following events.

- **Community, Commercial and Engagement Officer - SCP 17-21 £30,060 - £33,143 (Post Title to be agreed at the next Operational Services Committee)** - will play a key role in strengthening community involvement and ensuring the successful delivery of engagement initiatives across the service. The role will provide day-to-day support to the Operational Services Manager while also supporting the effective functioning of the wider team.

The role will actively work to strengthen income opportunities for Operational Services, through various methods, ticketed events (festivals, outdoor cinemas), seasonal attractions (Christmas markets, funfairs, car boots) leasing space to operators (café operators, food trucks, Ice cream, coffees and snack concessions), sport and recreation events, 5 a side football, tennis tournaments, outdoor fitness classes, yoga, bootcamps, parking charges, sponsorship opportunities, for example sponsoring BMX track, playgrounds.

Key responsibilities will include supporting back-office functions, acting as a first point of contact for public and stakeholder enquiries, and managing incoming queries to ensure they are handled efficiently and directed to the appropriate team members. The postholder will assist the Operational Services Manager with administrative coordination, reporting, partnership liaison, and the delivery of service priorities.

The role will actively work to strengthen relationships with local communities, volunteers, and partner organisations. This will include supporting and developing **Friends groups**, encouraging wider community participation, and identifying opportunities to expand volunteer engagement.

A central aspect of the role will be helping to secure and manage **external funding**, including contributing to funding applications, supporting project monitoring requirements, and assisting with reporting to funders. The postholder will support the planning and delivery of **Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF)** projects, ensuring activities meet funding objectives, community engagement targets, and reporting obligations.

The Community, Commercial and Engagement Officer will also be responsible for coordinating and delivering community events, outreach activities, and engagement programmes that promote participation and raise awareness of services and heritage assets. This will include developing and managing communications across appropriate channels, including digital platforms, newsletters, and community networks, to ensure information is shared effectively with stakeholders and the public.

In the longer term, the role could also support the delivery of **Brinton community commitments**, ensuring that obligations linked to HLF funding are met and that the site continues to deliver meaningful community benefit. This will involve monitoring engagement outcomes, maintaining relationships with community partners, and supporting the development of sustainable community programmes linked to the Brinton site.

Through these responsibilities, the postholder will contribute to building stronger community partnerships, enhancing participation in heritage and cultural

activities, and ensuring the organisation meets both its operational priorities and its external funding commitments.

8. Financial Overview

To consider WFDC three-year grant support, to note that this is a final proposal and no further negotiation to be undertaken.

KTC Support	Year
£180,000	2027-2028
£120,000	2028-2029
£60,000	2029-2030
Total £360,000	

Category – Ground’s Maintenance Service Delivery	Full Contractor Control	In House 6 x Full Time Operational Services Operatives, 1 x Technical and Horticultural Officer
Estimated Annual Cost	£200,000	£203,000 – £212,710
Grass Cutting	Contractor	
Waste Management, Litter Picking, Bin Emptying, Fly Tipping & Disposal	Contractor	
Herbaceous, Shrub & Hedge Maintenance	Contractor	
Annual Tree Surveys	Contractor	
Children’s Playground Operational Inspections	Contractor	
Children’s Play Areas – Litter & Bin Emptying	Contractor	
Graffiti Removal	Contractor	
Jet Washing Furniture (Twice Annually)	Contractor	
Gritting	Contractor	
Repairs & Maintenance (Quotes, Repairs, Maintenance)	Contractor	

Repair and Maintenance (Annual)	Year
£20,000	2027-2028

Additional Role’s	Cost estimate (£)
Technical Officer	SCP 17-21 £30,060 - £33,143
Horticultural Officer	SCP 17-21 £30,060 - £33,143
Operational Services Operative	SCP 2-4 £23,656 - £24,404
Community, Commercial and Engagement Officer	SCP 17-21 £30,060 - £33,143
TOTAL	£113,836 – 123,833

Outsourcing Grounds Maintenance	
Vehicles (All Electric)	Lease 3-5 Year (Per Annum £)
Caged Tipper Vehicle x 1	9,500 Includes maintenance
Connect Van x 2 (Small Enclosed Van)	15,500 Includes maintenance
Total	25,000

In House Grounds Maintenance	
Vehicles (All Electric)	Lease 3-5 Year (Per Annum £)
Caged Tipper Vehicle x 3,	28,500 Includes maintenance
Connect Van x 3 (Small Enclosed Van)	23,250
Mowers, Trailers, Hand and Power Tools	£45,000
Waste Removal	£6,000
Uniforms and Training	£5,000
Total	107,750

Uniform/PPE - Outsourcing	Budget (Annual £)
Safety Boots, Hi Vis, waterproofs, Jackets etc	1,000

Uniform/PPE – In House	Budget (Annual £)
Safety Boots, Hi Vis, waterproofs, Jackets etc	3,000

Equipment	Budget (Annual £)
Phones/Tablets	1,000 (Outsourcing) – 2,000 (In house)
Miscellaneous Equipment, tools etc	2,000
Office Provision, Desks, laptops etc	2,000-3,000
Total	6,000 (outsourcing) -7,000 (In House)

Electric Charging and associated costs	Budget (Annual £)
Charging Points and electricity	2,000 (Outsourcing) 4,000 (In house)

Outsourcing Ground Maintenance					
Year	Total Costs	WFDC Support £	Estimated Increased net cost £	Precept	% increase in precept
27-28	£367,836	£180,000	£187,836	1,640,560	8

In House Ground Maintenance					
Year	Total Costs	WFDC Support £	Estimated Increased net cost £	Precept	% increase in precept
27-28	£387,603	£180,000	£207,603	1,660,327	9

9. Financial Conclusion

The proposed financial package is **based on the distribution of funds offered by WFDC to KTC** to support the transfer and delivery of grounds maintenance and associated services.

The financial profile of the proposal shows a **front-loaded cost in 2027–2028**, reflecting the initial establishment of the service, including mobilisation costs, staffing, vehicles, equipment, and operational setup. The WFDC grant in the early years helps offset these initial costs and provides transitional support as the service is established.

Overall, the grant structure proposed by WFDC provides **transitional financial support that helps smooth the impact on the precept over the three-year period**, allowing KTC to establish the service in a financially manageable and sustainable way.

10. Legal Representation

We are required to engage legal representation to assist with the transfer of assets. Previously, we have relied on WFDC Legal support under the current Service Level Agreement. However, due to a conflict of interest, we recommend retaining 1-2-1, based in Kidderminster, who have successfully supported prior asset transfers.

11. TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment))

WFDC has confirmed that, under TUPE regulations, the current Parks team will not be transferred as part of the parks and playgrounds transfer.

12. Service Delivery and Operational Services Staffing

The current service model is provided under a Grounds Maintenance contract, which is due to expire on 31 March 2027. This contract was awarded following a formal procurement process. The selected Ground's Maintenance provider must be implemented by 1 April 2027, with the necessary structures and arrangements in place to ensure a smooth transition and uninterrupted delivery of services if this is the chosen model.

13. Procurement and Recruitment

13.1 Procurement – Grounds Maintenance Contractor

It is recommended that the procurement process for the Grounds Maintenance Contractor be progressed from October 2026, with a proposed contract commencement date of 1 April 2027. Initiating procurement during this period will allow sufficient time for the preparation of tender documentation, market engagement (if required), evaluation, and contract award in accordance with governance and approval processes.

This approach will help ensure that contractual arrangements are in place to support a smooth commencement on 1 April 2027, minimising service disruption and enabling appropriate mobilisation and transition planning. As part of this process, consideration may also be given to opportunities for **local employment and community benefit**, ensuring that where possible the delivery model supports the employment of local staff and contributes to the local economy while maintaining high standards of grounds maintenance across the town.

13.2 Recruitment

It is recommended that recruitment commence in January 2027, with successful candidate(s) appointed to commence employment on 1 April 2027.

This timeline will:

- Allow adequate time for advertising, shortlisting, interviews, pre-employment checks, and any required notice periods.
- Align staff commencement with the start of the new operational and financial year.
- Support effective mobilisation alongside the grounds maintenance contract arrangements.

The proposed sequencing of procurement and recruitment activities will ensure continuity of service delivery and provide a structured transition into the 2027/28 operational year.

15. Conclusion

In conclusion, the proposed transfer of parks and associated assets presents a significant opportunity for KTC to take greater local control of valued community spaces, aligning with the wider localism and devolution agenda. The report demonstrates that, with the transitional financial support provided by WFDC, that KTC is in a viable position to assume responsibility for these assets in a structured and sustainable manner.

Officers have given full and careful consideration to both delivery options for grounds maintenance. It is recognised that **both the outsourced and in-house models are achievable** and could be implemented successfully with appropriate planning, resourcing, and governance. However, the assessment clearly identifies that the **in-house option carries a higher level of operational, financial, and organisational risk** when compared to outsourcing. These risks include increased exposure to fixed costs, staffing and HR pressures, compliance responsibilities, and reduced flexibility in responding to changing service demands.

By contrast, outsourcing the grounds maintenance contract offers a more flexible and resilient approach to service delivery. It transfers operational risk to a specialist contractor, provides access to a wider range of expertise and equipment, and helps ensure consistent service standards while maintaining cost control. In addition, this approach enables KTC to review performance over an initial contract period, while retaining the option to consider a future transition to an in-house model should it deliver improved value or outcomes.

The proposed staffing structure, including key specialist roles, will ensure that KTC retains sufficient oversight, technical expertise, and strategic capacity to manage the contract effectively, support community engagement, and maximise income and funding opportunities.

Overall, the combination of asset transfer, transitional funding, and a phased, lower-risk service delivery model positions KTC to successfully deliver high-quality parks and open spaces for residents, while maintaining financial sustainability and operational resilience.

16. Resolution

That Full Council approves the transfer of parks as set out in this report and endorses the recommendations of the KTC Services Committee.

That Full Council proceeds with the preferred option to **outsource the grounds maintenance contract**, while continuing to monitor performance and review future delivery options as part of a longer-term strategic approach.

**Kidderminster Town Council
CIVIC & Events Committee Terms of Reference**

- Maximum 7 Members – Quorum: 3 Members.
- ~~Where the Mayor or Deputy Mayor choose not to be a member of the committee, they are non-voting ex-officio members.~~

Functions of Committee
CIVIC
To approve the protocols, arrangements and support that the Town Council provides for the Mayor of Kidderminster
To agree arrangements for any Civic events approved by the Full Council and the protocol for these events
To allocate any Community grants provided by the Council
To liaise with any other partners or stakeholders promoting civic pride, culture or heritage in Kidderminster
Honorary Freemen: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To make recommendations to Full council regarding the awarding of this honour 2. To Liaise with the honorary Freemen of Kidderminster
EVENTS
To approve any applications for external funding for projects not included in the Town Council’s budget
To set and monitor policies in relation to the management of Town Council’s organised and/or sponsored events, including community events and events organised by other parties for the benefit of the communities in Kidderminster.
To approve the formation and Terms of Reference to working or advisory groups supporting delivery of Town Council events.
Where necessary, to provide recommendations to the Council from time to time on matters within the Terms of Reference.
FINANCES
To inform the budget planning process.
To oversee the budget spends, related to the events activities as agreed by Council.
To vire funds between Council approved Events Committee Cost Centres

Draft presented to Council 22nd April 2026

Kidderminster Town Council
Finance and Overview Committee

Terms of reference

Membership: The Mayor, Chairpersons of all the other principal Committees of the Council and all Group Leaders shall be members of the Finance and Overview Committee.

Quorum: 4 Councillors

Substitutes: All members of the Committee should endeavour to attend meetings; where this is not possible, their deputies may substitute.

The Committee

- (a) Is responsible for the financial and property resources of the Council, except for setting the precept, which is reserved for Full Council.
- (b) Takes action on behalf of the Council on any matter not delegated to another Committee.
- (c) Monitors the action plan for the delivery of the Council's Strategy and vision 2025-2029
- (d) Reviews the Strategy and Vision for 2025-2029 and makes recommendations to Full Council
- (e) Administers the Corporate Services allocated budget and may vire unspent funds within that budget
- (e) Monitors spending and income against the Council's agreed budgets
- (f) Prepares the Council's annual budget so that Full council can set the Precept requirement
- (g) Receives the internal auditor's reports and approves any actions arising therefrom, with recommendations to Full Council.
- (h) Sets the membership and delegated powers of its Sub-Committees and the terms of reference of its working groups.

KIDDERMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL
OPERATIONAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

Terms Of Reference

1. Scope

Kidderminster Town Council has delegated the functions listed below to the Operational Services Committee. The Committee will provide an opportunity where Officers and Members can bring together their knowledge, skills, and experience in pursuit of Services excellence. The Committee will consider and determine Operational and Health and Safety of Public Realm amenities relevant to the Town Council and any items raised from this service area.

2. Terms of Reference

- A. To manage and control Allotments, Markets, Parks, Toilets, Open Spaces, Street Furniture to include Benches, Bus Shelters, Finger Posts, Monuments and Clocks, Boundary Signs, Floral Displays, Grit bins, Christmas Lights, Water Feature and Paddling Pool in the ownership of Kidderminster Town Council
- B. To set and monitor policies in relation to the management of the Town Council's Parks
- C. To set and monitor policies in relation to the management of Street Furniture including Benches, Bus Shelters, Finger Posts, Monuments and Clocks, Boundary Signs and Grit Bins.
- D. To monitor the effectiveness of operational activities
- E. To ensure that all operational activities support and inform the budget planning process.
- F. To approve applications for external funding for any projects which are not already in the Council's budget and monitor their delivery, where successful.
- G. To monitor the effectiveness of the Kidderminster Town Council Lengthsman.
- H. To function as the Council's operational Health and Safety Committee.
- I. To approve formation and issue Terms of Reference to working or advisory groups supporting delivery of Town Council operational services.
- J. Where necessary, to provide recommendations to the Council from time to time on matters within the Terms of Reference.

3. Membership

- A. The Operational Services Committee will comprise of 7 Members of the Town Council.
- B. The quorum for any meeting will be 3 members.
- C. It will be supported by the Kidderminster Town Council Public Realm and Operations Manager and, when required, the Public Realm and Operations Officer.
- D. All meetings will be open to the public and Guests may be invited to attend the Services Committee meetings for a specific agenda item or meeting.

4. Review of Terms of Reference

The Town Council will formally review the Terms of Reference annually.

5. Amendments to Terms of Reference

Amendments to the Terms of Reference may only be made by the Town Council.

8. Terms of Reference (meetings)

- A. The Committee shall meet as often as required to effectively conduct its business
- B. The Public real and Operations Manager, or the Committee Chairman may call a meeting at any time, subject to proper notice procedures, etc.
- C. Minutes will be kept, and a copy supplied to each member of the Council as soon as reasonably practicable.
- D. Every effort will be made to re-arrange cancelled meetings as soon as is reasonably practicable.

9. Meeting Dates

- A. All representatives should actively participate in the meetings and be committed to following through actions allocated to them.
- B. Agenda and notice of the time and place of the meeting to be published and circulated to members at least 3 clear days prior to meetings.
- C. Please arrive in readiness for the meeting to start promptly at the allocated time.

KIDDERMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Terms Of Reference

1. Scope

Kidderminster Town Council has delegated the functions listed below to the Planning Committee. The Committee will provide an opportunity where Officers and Members can bring together their knowledge, skills, and experience in pursuit of Services excellence. The Committee will consider and respond to planning applications, highways schemes and consultations from Government, County and District Councils relating to planning, transport and development affecting the Town.

2. Objective

The main objective of the Committee is to fulfil the role of statutory consultee for the Council and to respond in the best interests of the people and communities of Kidderminster.

3. Terms of Reference

- A. To respond, on behalf of the Council, to consultations on planning applications received from local planning authorities.
- B. To respond, on behalf of the Council, to consultations about the local development plan or equivalent documents, so far as they relate to Kidderminster.
- C. To respond, on behalf of the Council, to consultations by Government, national or regional organisations relating to land use, planning, legislation or policy that affects Kidderminster.
- D. To make any recommendations required to Full Council arising from these reports
- E. To oversee the Committee's budgets and inform the budget-making process
- F. To vire funds between Council approved Committee Cost Centres
- G. To approve applications for external funding for any projects which are not already in the Council's budget and monitor their delivery, where successful.

4. Membership

- A. The Committee will comprise of 7 Members of the Town Council. This should include 1 member from each of the Town Council's electoral wards. It will be supported by an officer appointed by the CEO.
- B. All meetings will be open to the public and Guests may be invited to attend the Planning Committee meetings for a specific agenda item or meeting.

5. Review of Terms of Reference

The Town Council will formally review the Terms of Reference annually.

6. Amendments to Terms of Reference

Amendments to the Terms of Reference may only be made by the Town Council.

7. Terms of Reference (meetings)

- A. The Committee shall meet as often as required to meet consultation deadlines.
- B. Minutes will be kept, and a copy supplied to each member of the group as soon as reasonably practicable.
- C. Every effort will be made to re-arrange cancelled meetings as soon as is reasonably practicable.
- D. All representatives should actively participate in the meetings and be committed to following through actions allocated to them.
- E. Agenda and notice of the time and place of the meeting to be published and circulated to members at least 3 clear days prior to meetings.
- F. Please arrive in readiness for the meeting to start promptly at the allocated time.

KIDDERMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

4. STAFFING COMMITTEE

Terms Of Reference

1. Scope

Kidderminster Town Council has delegated the functions listed below to the Staffing Committee. The Committee will provide an opportunity where Officers and Members can bring together their knowledge, skills, and experience in pursuit of Services excellence. The Committee will ensure the Council is adequately staffed and appropriate training and support is available for all Councillors and staff. The Committee will approve staffing levels, performance management and staff terms and conditions.

2. Objective

The main objective of the Committee is to determine the best staffing arrangements for the effective delivery of the Town Council's services.

The Committee will exercise best practice as an employer, promoting fairness and equality for our employees and volunteers (Paragraph 1.H of the Council's Vision/ Strategy 2025-2029

3. Terms of Reference

1. The Staffing Committee has authority to approve appointment, recruitment and terms and conditions for all employees for the Council, excluding the Council's CEO.
2. The Staffing Committee reviews all employment policies for Council Staff and makes appropriate recommendations to the Finance & Overview Committee.
3. In respect of the Chief Executive Officer, to appoint a panel of 3 members of the Committee, including the Chairperson, to carry out the CEO's annual appraisal and report back to the Committee with any relevant recommendations.
4. In respect of the Chief Executive Officer & Responsible Finance Officer, to:
 - i. recommend to the Full Council appropriate staffing arrangements for the posts and relevant salary scales and conditions;
 - ii. provide the Town Council with recommended Job Description and Person Specification; and
 - iii. propose to the Town Council such recruitment and selection processes as are required for appointment to the post
5. In respect of all other staff, to:
 - i. determine terms and conditions for posts established by the Town Council;
 - ii. agree and implement appropriate recruitment and selections processes for each post; and
 - iii. formally confirm appointments
6. The Chief Executive Officer may consult with the Committee in connection with any staffing related matter.

7. To oversee the Council's appraisal process and to approve any recommendations arising from the annual appraisals, including training and development needs, salary progressions and merit awards.
8. To approve salary scales, terms and conditions and to make any relevant recommendations to the Finance and Overview Committee on salary scale reviews.
9. To review and address staff training and development needs
10. Termination of employment of staff and in the case of the Chief Executive Officer to make recommendations to the Full Council
11. To review and make recommendations to the Finance and Overview Committee with regard to the appointed Personnel consultancy services
12. To review the Council's staffing budget each year, prior to the annual budget-setting process
13. To approve applications for external funding for any projects which are not already in the Council's budget and monitor their delivery, where successful.
14. To establish Sub-Committees and working groups, and to appoint advisers as and when necessary to assist in its work.

Grievance and Disciplinary matters

15. To act as the Council's Grievance and Disciplinary Panel with the necessary delegated decision-making powers in relation to grievance and disciplinary issues for members of the Council's Management Team.

Meetings of the Panel will be called on an ad hoc basis as required, called by the Chief Executive Officer and with notice given to the relevant employee. A minute taker will be present throughout the proceedings.

When carrying out this role the Committee will follow the procedure set out in the Town Council's Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures.

16. To act as the Appeals Panel in relation to any appeal against the decision of the Disciplinary Panel or the outcome of a Grievance.
17. Any Member who has been involved in the original Grievance or Disciplinary Panel shall not form part of the Appeals Panel. Additional Members may be appointed to the Appeals Panel by the Sub-Committee, in the event of a conflict of interests.
18. The Appeals Panel will consider any appeals against dismissal, grading, disciplinary proceedings and grievances by employees of the Council.
19. The Chief Executive Officer will call the meeting and notice will be given to the employee.
20. A minute taker will be present throughout the proceedings.
21. The Panel will follow the procedure set out in the Town Council's Disciplinary Procedure.

4. Membership

- The Committee will comprise of 7 Members of the Town Council. It will be supported by the Chief Executive Officer.
- The quorum for a meeting is 4 members.
- All meetings will be open to the public and Guests may be invited to attend the Committee meetings for a specific agenda item or meeting.

5. Review of Terms of Reference

The Town Council will formally review the Terms of Reference annually.

6. Amendments to Terms of Reference

Amendments to the Terms of Reference may only be made by the Town Council.

7. Terms of Reference (meetings)

- The Committee shall meet as often as necessary to carry out its duties, as set out in these terms of reference.
- The CEO, or the Committee Chairman may call a meeting at any time, subject to proper notice procedures, etc.
- Minutes will be kept, and a copy supplied to each member of the group as soon as reasonably practicable.
- Every effort will be made to re-arrange cancelled meetings as soon as is reasonably practicable.

8. Meetings

- All representatives should actively participate in the meetings and be committed to following through actions allocated to them.
- Agenda and notice of the time and place of the meeting to be published and circulated to members at least 3 clear days prior to meetings.
- Please arrive in readiness for the meeting to start promptly at the allocated time.

KIDDERMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

3. TOWN HALL COMMITTEE

Terms Of Reference

1. Scope

Kidderminster Town Council has delegated the functions listed below to the Town Hall Committee. The Committee will provide an opportunity where Officers and Members can bring together their knowledge, skills, and experience in pursuit of Services excellence. The group will consider and determine how the Town Hall can maximise its value as a major civic, community, cultural and commercial asset for the Council and the Communities we service.

2. Objective

The main objective of the Committee is to support the Council in delivering the Town Hall Transformation project and to work to ensure a safe, thriving and attractive Town Hall for all its various uses and functions.

3. Terms of Reference

1. ~~To oversee the transformation of the Town Hall~~
2. To receive regular updates from the Town Hall Manager, including risk assessments
3. To oversee the ~~return of~~ operations to the Town Hall
4. To receive regular updates from the Town Hall Manager ~~on the return~~, including risk assessments
5. If required, to make any recommendations required to Full Council arising from these reports
6. To oversee Town Hall budgets and inform the budget-making process
7. To vire funds between Council approved Town Hall Committee Cost Centres
8. To approve applications for external funding for any projects which are not already in the Council's budget and monitor their delivery, where successful.

4. Membership

- The Town Hall Committee will comprise of 7 Members of the Town Council. It will be supported by the Town Hall Manager.
- The quorum for a meeting shall be 4 members.
- All meetings will be open to the public and Guests may be invited to attend the Committee meetings for a specific agenda item or meeting.

5. Review of Terms of Reference

The Town Council will formally review the Terms of Reference annually.

6. Amendments to Terms of Reference

Amendments to the Terms of Reference may only be made by the Town Council.

7. Terms of Reference (meetings)

- The group shall meet as often as necessary to carry out the duties in these Terms of reference.
- The Town Hall Manager, or the Committee Chairman may call a meeting at any time, subject to proper notice procedures, etc.
- Minutes will be kept, and a copy supplied to each member of the group as soon as reasonably practicable.
- Every effort will be made to re-arrange cancelled meetings as soon as is reasonably practicable.

8. Meeting Dates

- All representatives should actively participate in the meetings and be committed to following through actions allocated to them.
- Agenda and notice of the time and place of the meeting to be published and circulated to members at least 3 clear days prior to meetings.
- Please arrive in readiness for the meeting to start promptly at the allocated time.



**LCC REPORT FOR
KIDDERMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL
INTERIM INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT FOR 2025-2026**

6TH March 2026

Ref: LCC 25-167

LCC Auditor: Claire Tilley

**Local Council Consultancy (LCC)
Collar Factory, Suite 2.03
112 St. Augustine Street
Taunton
Somerset
TA1 1QN**

**Email: consultancy@localcouncilconsultancy.co.uk
Website: www.localcouncilconsultancy.co.uk**

To Kidderminster Town Council

I performed my first remote audit on the 14th February, by viewing the Minutes and other Documents on the Town Council website <https://www.kidderminstertowncouncil.gov.uk/> I subsequently sent several queries to Hugh Peacocke, the Chief Executive, in readiness for my in person visit on the 27th February 2026. I would like to thank Hugh and his colleagues for their hospitality and assistance.

BASIS OF REPORT

This internal audit report is based upon the Practitioners Guide (Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance) Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England 2023 publication.

The scope of this internal audit is focused on assessing the effectiveness of the Council's internal controls and was outlined in the original Letter of Engagement. Where any such controls are found to be deficient, the internal audit will help lead to improvement in those processes.

By applying the principles of internal auditing, outlined in the current Accounts and Audit Regulations and applying the approach to internal audit testing outlined above, every effort is made to ensure that all internal audits are conducted with due professional care, integrity and independence. All conclusions derived from the audit are based upon objective and traceable evidence.

Please note it would be incorrect to view internal audit as the detailed inspection of all records and transactions of the Council in order to detect error or fraud. It is the periodic independent review of a Council's internal controls resulting in an assurance report designed to improve effectiveness and efficiency of the activities and operating procedures under the Council's control. Managing the Council's internal controls should be a day-to-day function of the staff and Councillors and not left for internal audit. (Source: Governance and Accountability for Smaller Councils - A Practitioners' Guide 2023 – Section 4).

Annual Return Section	Process	Findings	Recommendations and actions	KTC Response
A	Bookkeeping Arrangements	<p><i>The Bookkeeping arrangements of the Council are currently administered by Wyre Forest District Council using Aggressor software . I was unable to access any of this at the in-person audit</i></p>	<p>I will need remote access, or comprehensive reports from this package at year end, in order for me to assess this Objective.</p> <p>I understand that the Council are going to be moving the bookkeeping in-house and I would approve of this course of action</p>	<p>We will seek remote access from WFDC. If not, comprehensive reports will be provided</p>
B	Council's Financial Regulations have been met with regard to expenditure	<p><i>I understand that Invoices are submitted to the council and kept electronically – with the Council being supplied with a retrospective list for approval. Purchase Orders and Invoices to customers are raised in house then sent to the District for input and payment. The Council’s Financial Regulations have been met in that appropriate authorisations have been given for each level of expenditure.</i></p> <p><i>I had selected a good number of transactions which were able to be matched to invoices, showing correct VAT treatment</i></p>	<p>As above.</p>	

Annual Return Section	Process	Findings	Recommendations and actions	KTC Response
		<p><i>However, there is no process in place for the use of the debit cards</i></p>	<p>Five bank cards are currently issued to members of staff for the purchase of small incidental items. During the review, several instances were identified where receipts were not available to support expenditure.</p> <p>To strengthen financial control and accountability, consideration should be given to the following options:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reducing the number of bank cards in circulation and implementing a policy requiring staff to retain and submit receipts, together with clear guidance on authorised expenditure. 2. Introducing a petty cash system supported by an appropriate policy and defined procedures for recording, monitoring, and reconciling expenditure. 3. Establishing accounts with frequently used local suppliers to minimise the need for ad hoc purchases using bank cards. 	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>We are looking at ways to improve this, including reducing the number of cards, opening accounts for monthly settlement in approved local stores, and/ or a petty cash account.</p>

Annual Return Section	Process	Findings	Recommendations and actions	KTC Response
C	Risk Management	<i>I have noted that Council has assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives using their Risk Assessment and have seen the document- last reviewed in April 2025.</i>	To be reviewed in April 2026, as references to Town Hall Building project can be updated	For F& O and Full council in April
C	Insurance Cover	<i>I was provided with the Schedule from Zurich, which provides cover from Sept 25- March 31st 2026</i>	A thorough review of the policy should be made in relation to the Asset register prior to renewal at the end of this month. There does not currently appear to be any provision for Play Equipment and Machinery. More importantly, the Town Hall is not listed under Buildings- is this insured elsewhere?	New quotes to be in place from 1 April. Updated asset register at 31/3/26. The council has taken the decision to self-insure playground equipment. The Council had to separately insure the Town hall when the building was vacant (during construction project).
C	Monitoring of Assets	<i>I cannot see where this occurs at present</i>	Please provide details of your asset monitoring before my final audit	Being reviewed at the moment

Annual Return Section	Process	Findings	Recommendations and actions	KTC Response
C	Internal Control – The council must ensure that it has a sound system of internal control, which delivers effective financial, operational and risk management- which should be reviewed at least once a year	<i>I am satisfied that the council approve invoices, review the budget and risk management.</i>	Adopt a formal Internal Control Review process	The IA has provided a template, which is attached and will, be presented for approval.
D	Budgetary Controls (Precept requirement)	<i>The annual Precept requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process resulting in a request of £1,521,980</i>		Noted
D	Budgetary Controls (Budget monitoring)	<i>Progress against the budget was monitored and minuted regularly.</i>		Noted
D	The final Outturn is in line with expectations	<i>To be confirmed at year end</i>		For next review
E	Income controls	<i>The council is now operating a large venue, with a dedicated booking officer, and income is above expectations Aged Debtor list to be reviewed at year end</i>		The council has identified the loss of Town Hall income as a new risk and insured against this.

Annual Return Section	Process	Findings	Recommendations and actions	KTC Response
F	Petty cash controls	<i>Petty cash is not operated by the Council.</i>	This may be something to consider, in order to negate the use of multiple bank cards – see my comments at B	Agreed- see B above
G	Payroll controls	<i>Salaries to employees are currently administered and paid out via Wyre Forest DC. These are paid before the Council are able to check them. Therefore I had limited access to process and procedures, but would expect that a DC would be administering them correctly. A payroll report was viewed.</i>	I understand that the Council is considering bringing payroll administration in-house. However, as payroll is a complex and compliance-sensitive function, consideration may be given to outsourcing this service to a reputable payroll bureau. Such providers can work closely with the Council to ensure appropriate checks and controls are maintained. For example, the payroll bureau could undertake the calculation of payroll and production of payslips, while the Council retains responsibility for authorising and making the payments.	This is now outsourced to DCK, a recognised supplier in the local council sector
H	Asset Controls - all material assets correctly recorded	<i>The current asset register is comprehensive and appears to have correctly recorded all material Assets. The correct basis of valuation has been applied.</i>	I was unable to find reference to the Tennis Court Floodlights, as appears on the Insurance Schedule	Register is under review

Annual Return Section	Process	Findings	Recommendations and actions	KTC Response
H	Asset Controls - all additions correctly recorded	<i>I will check whether Additions in the year have been correctly recorded within the Cash Book and Register- when I have sight of the accounts</i>		For next review
H	Asset Controls - all Deeds and Titles established and shown on register?	<i>All appropriate Deeds and Titles have been established and are shown on the Register.</i>		Noted
I	Bank Reconciliations	<i>Periodic reconciliations were properly carried out. Year -end to be established at that time</i>		For next review
J	Accounting Statements	<i>To be confirmed at year end</i>		For next review
K	Limited Assurance Review Exemption	<i>The Council does not meet the exemption criteria.</i>		Noted
L	Information published on website in line with relevant legislation	<i>As the council have a turnover exceeding £200,000 they need to follow the Local Government Transparency Code 2015- see Compliance below</i>		See below
L	1) Expenditure over £500 is recorded on the Council website and with all information requirements	<i>All cashbook transactions appear as Appendices to the Finance & Oversight Committee Agendas</i>		Noted

L	2) Government Procurement Card	<i>Nonapparent on website-although there is a page for 'Accounts, Policies and Tenders'</i>	Are there any of relevance that need to be published?	KTC Response
L	3) Tender for contracts to provide goods with a value exceeding £5,000	<i>Nonapparent on website-although there is a page for 'Accounts, Policies and Tenders'</i>	As above	As above
L	5) all other annual publication requirements e.g. Land and Asset Grants Organisation Chart Staff salaries exceeding £50K Parking Spaces	<i>Asset register published Not present Not present Staff costs as a whole are contained within the F&O Agendas</i>	The Council should ensure that all relevant requirements are met. Consideration may also be given to creating a dedicated Transparency Code section on the Council's website where all required information can be published and easily accessed in one place.	This will be implemented
M	Exercise of Public Rights	<i>The Parish Council published the exercise of public rights notice on the website and noticeboard with the following dates: Monday 30th June 2025-Friday 8th August 2025</i>		Noted
N	AGAR publication Requirements	<i>The Parish Council complied with the publication requirements for the 2024/25 AGAR</i>		Noted

Annual Return Section	Process	Findings	Recommendations and actions	KTC Response
O	Trust funds (if applicable) – the Council met its responsibilities as a trustee	<i>The Parish Council does operate as a trustee for the Kidderminster Educational Foundation. Returns have been filed with the Charities Commission</i>	As the Council acts as the Sole Trustee of the charity, it is important that the charity’s governance is demonstrated through appropriate trustee meetings with clear records of decisions made in relation to the charity. I note that the Agenda and Minutes section on the website is ‘under construction’ Consideration should also be given to holding an annual meeting to review the charity’s activities, finances, and compliance with its governing document, to support transparency and good governance.	Agreed. The foundation met on 28/1/2026 and the Management committee met on 19/2/2026.

Other

Process	Criteria	Findings	Recommendations and actions	KTC Response
Review of Internal audit action plan has been considered and actioned?	Good Practice – but ensures there is overall internal control effectiveness	<i>The Internal Audit had been reviewed the previous year- but Council have determined that this should be delegated in subsequent years to the Finance and Oversight Committee</i>	<p>At section 1.13 of the Financial Regulations, the reference to the Internal Auditor has been removed from the bolded wording which states that “addressing recommendations in any report from the External or Internal Auditors shall be a matter for the Full Council only.”</p> <p>However, section 1.1 of the Financial Regulations states that bold text indicates legal requirements which a council cannot change or suspend.</p> <p>The removal of the reference to the Internal Auditor therefore appears inconsistent with this provision. It is recommended that this is reviewed and that recommendations arising from Internal Audit reports are considered by Full Council in accordance with the Financial Regulations. A summary or précis of the Internal Audit report may be presented where appropriate.</p>	Recommendation accepted. Reggs to be amended.
External Audit recommendations have been considered and actioned.	Good Practice	<i>The Conclusion of Audit report had been received for 24/25 and had been published on the website.</i>		Noted
Qualifications made, if any have been addressed in 2024/25.		<i>Findings: Risk Management not reviewed Incorrect Staff costs included in Box 4</i>	<p>Risk Management reviewed this year</p> <p>To be reviewed at year end to ensure compliance</p>	Noted. Will be addressed in Annual return 2025-26



Conclusion

The above are recommendations to help the Council improve its processes and in no way detract from the work it, the Chief Executive and staff, has already done.

This report should be noted and taken to the next meeting of the Full Council for minuting to inform them of the Internal Audit work carried out.

I hope that this report is of help to the Council. If you would like any further assistance or clarification, please do contact me.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Tilley', is positioned above the name of the signatory.

Claire Tilley Internal Auditor

KIDDERMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL.**SYSTEM OF INTERNAL CONTROL**

This document outlines the Town Council's internal control framework. It supports compliance with the Accounts & Audit Regulations 2015 and provides a structured overview of how the Council ensures effective financial and governance control.

1. Financial Regulations

The Council maintains up-to-date Financial Regulations, reviewed annually. These set out the procedures for financial management, authorisation, procurement, and responsibilities of officers and members.

2. Delegation Arrangements

The Council operates under a clear Scheme of Delegation, approved by Full Council. This defines the authority of the Clerk/RFO, committees, and appointed members for expenditure, decision-making, and operational actions.

3. Budget Setting and Monitoring Procedures

An annual budget is prepared, scrutinised, and approved before the financial year begins. Regular monitoring reports are presented to Council/Finance Committee, with variances investigated. Reserves levels are reviewed to ensure financial stability.

4. Bank Reconciliation Processes

Bank reconciliations are carried out monthly by the RFO and independently verified by a member who is not a signatory. Reconciliations are signed and reported to Council.

5. Proper Book-keeping

The Council maintains accurate and up-to-date accounting records using recognised software/manual systems. Entries are supported by documentation and follow a clear audit trail.

6. Controls Over Payments and Receipts

All payments are authorised by Council or under approved delegation. Invoices are checked and approved. Income is recorded, receipted where required, and banked promptly. Online banking controls protect against fraud, including dual authorisation where applicable.

7. Payroll Controls

Payroll is processed accurately and in accordance with employment contracts. PAYE, National Insurance, and pensions are correctly accounted for. Staff payments are approved and documented.

8. Asset Register Management

The Council maintains an accurate Asset Register, updated annually and whenever assets are acquired or disposed of. Values comply with Governance & Accountability guidelines.

9. Risk Management Procedures

The Council carries out an annual risk assessment covering financial, operational, and governance risks. Insurance cover is reviewed alongside the assessment. Data protection and business continuity risks are included.

10. Internal Audit Arrangements

An independent internal auditor is appointed regularly, but at least once in every 3 years. The scope of audit work is approved by Council. Reports are considered by Council, and recommendations are acted upon.

Approved by Full Council 22nd April 2026.

Review date: April 2027

ANNUAL REVIEW OF INTERNAL CONTROLS

Accounts & Audit Regulations 2015 – Regulation 6

1. GOVERNANCE

- The Council has up-to-date Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.
- Decisions are made lawfully and recorded clearly in the minutes.
- The Council receives sufficient information to make informed financial decisions.

2. BUDGET & FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

- An annual budget was prepared and approved before the start of the financial year.
- Actual income/expenditure is monitored during the year and variances are reported.
- The level of reserves is reviewed and considered adequate.

3. ACCOUNTING & BANK RECONCILIATION

- The accounting records are kept up to date.
- Bank reconciliations are carried out monthly and reported to Council.
- VAT is properly accounted for.

4. PAYMENTS & INCOME CONTROLS

- All payments are authorised by Council or under delegated authority.
- Supporting invoices/receipts are retained.
- Income is recorded and banked promptly.
- Controls are in place for online banking access and signatories.

5. ASSETS & INSURANCE

- The asset register is accurate and up to date.
- Insurance cover (including Fidelity Guarantee) is reviewed annually.

6. RISK MANAGEMENT

- A general and financial risk assessment has been carried out within the last year.
- GDPR/Data Protection arrangements are in place and reviewed.
- Business continuity and security arrangements have been considered.

7. INTERNAL & EXTERNAL AUDIT

- An independent internal auditor was appointed and their report has been considered.
- The Council has taken action on any recommendations.
- The Annual Governance Statement (AGS) has been completed with proper consideration.

8. OVERALL CONCLUSION

- The system of internal control is judged to be effective.
- OR
- Areas requiring improvement have been identified and an action plan agreed.

Review completed by: Hugh Peacocke, CEO

Date: June 2026

Approved by Council on: 11th June 2026

Quarterly report to Finance and Overview Committee Meeting 15th October 2025

	What are we doing	What else will we do in the future	KPI/ How is success measured?	Service Area	Status (R/A/G)	Comment/ notes
1.A Providing services/ amenities and working with other partners and stakeholders to help to deliver a well-presented and safer town centre	Street furniture, memorials, street cleaning, hanging baskets, floral displays, Lengthsman, street sweeping	We will continue our programme of floral displays and planting in the town Centre. We will support any partner or organisation to promote a Kidderminster in Bloom Campaign	Number of complaints/ compliments received.	Operational Services	G	Floral Displays, have been a success, online compliments.
			Works completed in line with annual operations work programme.	Operational Services	G	On going, works planned and on target.
			Launch of competition in 2026.	Operational Services	R	Officers will need additional resource support to successfully deliver._Review at Full council 22.06.26
			Number of entries.	Operational Services	R	
1B. Provide outstanding parks, playgrounds and public spaces	Providing 3 parks, with playgrounds and other facilities.		Number of complaints/ compliments received.	Operational Services	G	
			Grass cutting 17 annual cuts Litter picking & Empty Bins April – Sep 4 x weekly, Oct – March x 2 weekly	Operational Services	G	
			Quarterly & Annual Play Inspections Completed and reported.	Operational Services	G	
			Trees will be surveyed ...	Operational Services	G	
	Planning to take on other parks and open spaces.	When parks are transferred	Operational Services	G	Report to Full council 22/4/2026	
	Achieve Green Flag Status for our parks.	Broadwaters first, then the other 2 parks	Achieving Green Flag status	Operational Services	G	Green Flag for Broadwaters achieved
	Supporting Tennis Club		Public access to tennis courts- number of public bookings per month?	Operational Services	G	
1C. Provide public toilets	Providing toilets at Market Street, Broadwaters Park and	Future provision in Town Hall only?	Toilets opened and cleaned every day	Operational Services	G	
			Measure how many days closed	Operational Services	G	
		Charge for use?	Quarterly management meetings	Operational Services	A	Agenda item to discuss at Operational Services Committee

2. Make Kidderminster Town Hall a key community and civic asset

Aims	What are we doing	What else will we do in the future	KPI/ How is success measured?	Service Area	Status (R/A/G)	Comment/ notes
2A. To make the Town Hall accessible and inclusive for all our communities	Transformation project	Podium	Number of complaints/ compliments received.	Town Hall	G	KTC looking to resolve issue with tarmacadam at the entrance to the Courtyard
2B. Protecting and preserving the Town Hall, its artefacts and its heritage, on behalf of all of our communities.	Running and Maintaining. Loan Charges (£150K), Re-opening 2025 (£100K)	Encourage community knowledge and enjoyment of these assets	Number of visitors		G	Artefacts restored
	NLHF Project				G	Full varied programme of events and tours scheduled
	Insuring the assets				G	All insured.
2C. Providing top class culture and entertainment events,	Transformation project	Hiring a business development executive to attract first class events and drive income generation through sales, including the Courtyard bar and café.	Achieving income targets		G	Full programme of events underway
			Number of successful events held		G	
			Occupation rates		G	
			Survey and feedback	G	Very Positive feedback received.	
2D. Supporting the community use and enjoyment of the Town Hall	Transformation project	Hiring a business development executive to attract first class events	Number of successful events held	Town Hall/ Civic, Community & Events	G	Events programme underway and Café operating 5 days a week.
			Occupation rates		G	
2E. To provide accessible, inclusive Civic Offices to deliver services for the people of Kidderminster	Transformation project	Move back into Town Hall	Number of complaints/ compliments received.	Town Hall/ Corporate Services	G	Feedback on accessibility seating we are reviewing our policy. CEO, Town Hall Staff, Corporate Services and Civic Community and Events have moved back into the Town Hall.

3. Foster a real sense of Community and Civic Pride

Aims	What are we doing	What else will we do in the future	KPI/ How is success measured?	Service Area	Status (R/A/G)	Comment/ notes
<p>3.A. To be “The Voice of Kidderminster”, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> By lobbying and working in partnership with WFDC, WCC, Kidderminster BID, and others on matters relating to Kidderminster 	Partnership working Outside Bodies reps	Consult relevant partners and stakeholders	Number of complaints/ compliments received.	Civic, Community & Events/ Operational Services	G	None to date
		No. of referrals	Responses from other bodies			G

Aims	What are we doing	What else will we do in the future	KPI/ How is success measured?	Service Area	Status (R/A/G)	Comment/ notes
3.A. To be “The Voice of Kidderminster”, by: • By lobbying and working in partnership with WFDC, WCC, Kidderminster BID, and others on matters relating to Kidderminster			1 Press release per week	Corporate Services	G	
			1 newsletter (A4) per month		G	Resources applied
		Support public involvement	Outcomes from matters raised	All	A	More engagement required
Responding to public consultations on behalf of the people of Kidderminster,	Taking consultations to Council/ Committees for response		Outcomes from consultations	Corporate Services/ Planning Committee	G	By consulting with KTC councillors and the BID we will be taking the concerns of the people of Kidderminster to the local planning authority around buildings and plots of land which detract from the Kidderminster, we will feedback to the planning committee on a quarterly basis which will then allow the responses to be shared with the community, this process helps make sure that local views shape planning decisions.
Fulfilling our role as a statutory consultee for planning applications within the parish area,	Commenting on all applications within our parish area	Consult relevant partners and stakeholders	Submission of comments within the consultation period	Corporate Services/ Planning Committee	G	
Raising concerns with the relevant local and national organisations on behalf of the people of Kidderminster	Responding to concerns raised	Encourage Members to submit motions.	No. of Motions	All	A	
		Support public involvement	Outcomes from matters raised	All	A	More engagement required

Aims	What are we doing	What else will we do in the future	KPI/ How is success measured?	Service Area	Status (R/A/G)	Comment/ notes
3B. Upholding the Civic and Mayoral heritage of Kidderminster	Civic protocols; regalia, civic team; Mayor's allowances	Review protocol.	Number of events the Mayor attends	Civic, Community & Events	G	Mayor has attending approx. 75+engagements plus attending and officiating KTC events such as Mayor Making, Mayors Sunday, Armed Forces Flag Flying, VJ Day, Green Flag celebration and attendance of Husum Twinning meetings. Mayor and Mayoress also visited Husum this year. In addition to this: The Mayor's charity events, including the Mayors Ball and Concert were successful, raising monies for charities. The High Sheriff visit to Kidderminster with the Mayor was also a success.
			Number of visits to Mayor's parlour	Civic, Community & Events	G	Many tours have taken place since the opening of the Town Hall. Positive and enthusiastic feedback received.
3C. Inspiring Civic events and Mayoral calendar	Established events, such as Remembrance Sunday, Mayor-making, Mayor's Sunday, etc	Special events, such as VE 80	Size of attendance	Civic, Community & Events	G	Events thus far such as Mayor Making, Mayors Sunday, VJ Day, Armed Forces Flag Flying, have all been well attended by dignitaries and the community. Positive feedback throughout. A key takeaway for future 'national' events is to condense timings, especially during colder months.
			Number of visits to Mayor's parlour		G	
3D. Enjoyable and inclusive community events	Established events, such as Christmas Lights, Santa in the town Hall,	Publicise and promote community events on our website/ social media	Size of attendance	Civic, Community & Events	G	Established events upcoming
			Review and feedback		G	Established events upcoming. Attendance: improved, increasing every year.
	Supporting community organisations to hold their own events through financial assistance (grants)		Size of attendance		G	Review and lessons learnt take place after each event. Established events upcoming.
			Review and feedback			
3E. Celebrate and recognise individual and community achievements	Letters from the Mayor		Aim for 1 per week	Civic, Community & Events	A	A few Mayors letters sent out. Send reminder to councillors
		Community Awards? We will review this in the context of the No Barriers	Consider for budget 26-27?		R	No budget- review this item? 59

		Awards following local government reorganisation.				
3.F Encourage and support contributions to our public and community life	Financial assistance (grants)	Promote/ publicise	Public engagement	Civic, Community & Events	G	Done so via Mayors letters and social media
		Community Awards?	Consider for budget 26-27?		R	

Aims	What are we doing	What else will we do in the future	KPI/ How is success measured?	Service Area	Status (R/A/G)	Comment/ notes
3.G Promote “Kidderminster in Bloom”		See 1A above				

4. Take actions to address the climate emergency

Aims	What are we doing	What else will we do in the future	KPI/ How is success measured?	Service Area	Status (R/A/G)	Comment/ notes
4.A. To Ensure the activities of the Town Council are carbon neutral by 2035.	Working Group set up	Prepare action plan	Consider for budget 26-27?	All	G	Convene the Working group within 2 months
4.B Promote biodiversity across our parks and open spaces	Working Group set up	Update reports to Operational services Committee	??	Operational Services	G	One meeting held to date, with action plan agreed.
					G	Biodiversity policy implemented June 2024. Due to review.
	Policy agreed and being implemented				G	Promoted Biodiversity projects on Broadwaters in line with the friends. Much more work could be achieved through a designated Community post to drive forward.
4.C Actively encourage and support actions that will make Kidderminster as a whole more environmentally sustainable.	Supporting community organisations involved in community projects through financial assistance (grants).	Publicise and promote projects and messages on our website/ social media	Review and feedback	Operational Services	G	Consulted Groups with works carried out on parks. Biodiversity policy in place
		Consult relevant groups regarding relevant issues, where they arise.	Outcomes and level of engagement		G	

5. Provide focused support for young people, the elderly, minorities and the vulnerable

Aims	What are we doing	What else will we do in the future	KPI/ How is success measured?	Service Area	Status (R/A/G)	Comment/ notes
5.A. Provide funding to organisations which support these groups in Kidderminster	Supporting community organisations involved in community projects through financial assistance (grants).	Publicise and promote projects and messages on our website/ social media	Review and feedback	Corporate Services	G	Kidderminster Education foundation- promoted through extensive social media and press coverage
		Consult relevant groups regarding relevant issues, where they arise.	Outcomes		G	Ward grants supporting
5.B. Support and promote initiatives to make Kidderminster a more inclusive town	Supporting community organisations involved in community projects through financial assistance (grants).	Publicise and promote projects and messages on our website/ social media	Review and feedback	Corporate Services	G	Addition of E Learning platform will allow us to assign inclusivity training i.e ED&I
		Consult relevant groups regarding relevant issues, where they arise.	Outcomes and level of engagement.			Favouring local suppliers where able to do so
						Website has added accessibility options allowing us to remove barriers for people with disabilities
						Later this year, we will add webcasting to our committee meetings to ensure inclusivity to people who may not be able to attend in person
						In the process of creating a booklet, which will go through social media and website, signposting where to go for support in the local area, this document will be comprehensive and inclusive
					A	

Kidderminster Town Council

Work Programme for Full Council Meetings for the Municipal Year 2025/26.

Standing Items on each (ordinary meeting) agenda:

1. Apologies
2. Declarations and Dispensations
3. Questions/ Petitions from members of the Public
4. Approval of Minutes of previous meeting and noting Committee minutes
5. Town Mayor's Report
6. Town Hall Update
7. St. George's Paddling Pool update

Other items of Business

Meeting Date	Item
15 May 2025 (Annual Meeting and Mayor-making)	Election of mayor and Deputy Mayor for 25-26
25 June 2025	End of Year Statutory Accounts
	To review the Council's Financial Regulations
	Reports from Outside body representatives
	Bus companies?
	West Mercia Police? (Town Centre team)
22 October 2025	To review Standing Orders and make any amendments agreed.
	Kidderminster BID Presentation
	The Climate Emergency
	External Auditor's report
	Timetable for Budget 25-26
	Review of Standing Orders
	St. George's Park Paddling Pool
Appoint a member to the Claire Witnell Trust	
28 January 2026	Review of Town Council Vision 2025-2029
	External Auditor's Report
	Town Hall Project Review
	2026/27 Budget and Precept
	Schedule of meetings for the municipal year 2026/27
22 April 2026	Nomination of Mayor Elect and Deputy Mayor and approval of Mayor's Charities 26-27
	Annual Review of Strategic Risk register
	Review of Committees' Terms of reference for 26-27
	Committee Appointments To appoint memberships of Committees of the Council for 26-27

2026/27:

22/6: To approve the Internal Control checklist to be presented to Council on 11th June 2026 (Appendix 5.3)

Possible presentations: The Police, The Buses, Incredible Edible.

October 26- Climate Change Action Plan Report