



5<sup>th</sup> June 2026.

The meeting of **KIDDERMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL** will be held at **6:00PM** on **THURSDAY 11<sup>th</sup> June 2026** in the **COUNCIL CHAMBER, KIDDERMINSTER TOWN HALL, VICAR STREET, KIDDERMINSTER DY10 1DB**, when all Members of the Council are summoned to attend.

Yours Sincerely

Hugh Peacocke  
Chief Executive Officer

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**Membership:** Councillors Shazu Miah (Mayor), John Aston, John Beckingham, Ben Brookes, Darren Chambers, Liam Carroll, Vicky Caulfield, George Connolly, Bernadette Connor, Mark Crosby, Helen Dyke, Nicky Gale, Doug Hine, Steve Hollands, Mary McDonnell, Fran Oborski (MBE), Mary Rayner and Mike 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 1.1 and Appendix 1.2)**

To approve the minutes of the meetings of Kidderminster Town Council held on 22<sup>nd</sup> April and 12<sup>th</sup> May 2026.

### **5. TOWN MAYOR'S REPORT (Appendix 2)**

To receive a report from the Town Mayor, Councillor Shazu Miah.

## 6. NOTICE OF MOTIONS:

### 6.1 the People's Emergency Briefing film

Proposed by Councillor Vicky Caulfield, seconded by Councillor Helen Dyke:

“This council notes the findings of the National Emergency Briefing, which outlines the significant and immediate risks of the climate and nature crisis to the UK’s food systems, infrastructure, economy, and public health.

This Council resolves to:

1. Host a community screening of the People's Emergency Briefing film in the Town Hall, supported by the Wyre Forest Green Alliance. (see <http://www.wfgall.org.uk/>)
2. Instruct the Climate Change working group to consider the findings and report back on how Council's local risk assessments and emergency planning align with this evidence.

(See <https://www.nebriefing.org/the-film> for further information)

### 6.2 Kidderminster Harriers FC Promotion

Proposed by Councillor George Connolly, seconded by Councillor Fran Oborski:

This Council congratulates Kidderminster Harriers F.C. on their outstanding victory away to South Shields in the National League North play-off final, securing promotion to the National League.

This Council recognises the exceptional efforts throughout the season of the players, management team, coaching staff, board, volunteers and supporters of the club, including the many fans who travelled to South Shields to support the team.

This Council acknowledges the important role that football plays in bringing together people from across our community and across all backgrounds and political views.

This Council further recognises the positive impact the success of Kidderminster Harriers F.C. has on the town, helping to promote civic pride, community spirit and wider economic benefits for Kidderminster.

Accordingly, this Council asks the Mayor of Kidderminster to explore, in liaison with the Chairman of Wyre Forest District Council, Kidderminster Harriers and relevant partners, an appropriate civic recognition or celebration event to mark this achievement.

### 6.3 A travel policy that favours use of the less carbon-intensive method of travel for staff and councillors (Appendix 3)

Proposed by Councillor Doug Hine, seconded by Councillor George Connolly:

The Council notes that the Climate Emergency Action Plan recommends adoption of “a travel policy that favours use of the less carbon-intensive method of travel for staff and councillors.”

This policy will also be consistent with our Vision:

4. Take actions to address the climate emergency
- 4.C Actively encourage and support actions that will make Kidderminster more environmentally sustainable.

## **6.4 Information for visitors and residents of Kidderminster:**

Proposed by Councillor Doug Hine, seconded by Councillor George Connolly:

The Council notes that the Council website is rather sparse in information about Kidderminster's history, and signposting for residents on local charities, faith groups and services.

We move that volunteers be called upon to contribute information that would be relevant to visitors to, and residents of the Town, and submit this to the Corporate Services Team for collating into a web-based information on our website.

By outsourcing the time required to research, consolidate and write this information, it will reduce officer time and cost to Council.

This initiative is consistent with our Vision:

3. Foster a real sense of community and civic pride

3.A To be the "voice of Kidderminster"

3.B Upholding the Civic and Mayoral heritage of Kidderminster

3.H Support and celebrate the understanding of different cultures and peoples...

3.I Support and celebrate Kidderminster's history, heritage and tourism.

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

## **7. MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS HELD SINCE THE APRIL MEETING OF FULL COUNCIL**

The minutes or draft minutes have already been circulated and members are asked **to note** the minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on 28<sup>th</sup> April and 22<sup>nd</sup> May.

(Note: the Chair of the 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)

## **8. CLIMATE CHANGE AND BIODIVERSITY WORKING GROUP (Appendix 4)**

**To receive** the Report from the Climate Change and Biodiversity Working Group

## **9. FINANCIAL REGULATIONS (Appendix 5)**

**To review** the Council's Financial Regulations.

## **10. OUTSIDE BODIES**

10.1 **To appoint** members to outside bodies for 2026/27 (Appendix 6) and

10.2 **To receive** any reports from members on outside bodies. (Appendix 6.1)

## **11. INTERNAL AUDITOR'S REPORT 2025-2026 (Appendix 7)**

**To receive** the report from the Council's Internal Auditor

## **12. INTERNAL CONTROLS (Appendix 8)**

**To receive** The Annual review of Internal Controls

**13. END OF YEAR ACCOUNTS 2025-2026 (Appendix 9)**

**14.1 To receive** the Annual Return (subject to external audit) for the financial year 2024/25,

**14.2 To receive** and note the Annual Internal Audit Report,

**14.3 To approve** each individual paragraph (1-9) of the Annual Governance Statement as defined at Section 2 of the Annual Return

**14.4 To adopt the accounts and to authorise** the signing of the Annual Return (subject to external audit) by The Town Mayor and the Chief Executive Officer, in line with the regulatory requirement to sign the accounts by 30 June 2026.

**14. PUBLIC WORKS LOAN (Appendix 10)**

**To authorise** the drawing down of the final instalment of approved loan, if required or in the best interests of the Council.

**15. THE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME (Appendix 11)**

**To note** the Forward Work Programme for Full Council for 2026/27 and consider any additions.

The Town Council meeting will be followed by a meeting of **The Kidderminster Educational Foundation**, for which the Town Council is the sole trustee. A separate agenda and papers will issue for this meeting.

**KIDDERMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL  
TOWN COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the meeting held at p.m. on Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2026  
In the Council Chamber, Kidderminster Town Hall**

**Present:**

Councillors Doug Hine (Town Mayor), John Aston, John Beckingham, Liam Carroll, Vicky Caulfield, Darren Chambers, George Connolly, Bernadette Connor, 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  
Adam Stockhall, Operational Services Manager.

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Councillor Ben Brookes.

**46. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None

**47. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

None

**48. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The draft minutes of the previous Full Council were amended to show Councillor Ben Brookes as not present and Councillor Mike Smith left the meeting at 7.55 pm.

**RESOLVED:** To approve, as amended, the minutes of the meeting of Kidderminster Town Council held on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2026.

**49. TOWNMAYOR'S REPORT**

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

He thanked members and officers for their support at the Mayor's charity ball and told the meeting that he was planning one further charity fund-raising event, a Curry evening on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2026.

**50. Nomination of Mayor Elect and Deputy Mayor for 2026-27 and approval of Mayor's Charities for 26-27**

**50.1** Nomination of Mayor Elect: The Mayor advised the meeting that it was the accepted practice of the Council that the Deputy Mayor succeeds the Mayor at the Annual meeting.

It was proposed by Councillor Fran Oborski, seconded by Councillor Mary Rayner and unanimously

**RESOLVED:** That Councillor Shazu Miah, the current Deputy Mayor, be elected Town Mayor for 2026-27 at the Annual Meeting of the Council on Tuesday 12th May.

## **50.2 Approval of Mayor's Charities for 2026-27**

Councillor Miah thanked his proposer and seconder and told the meeting that his chosen charities for his Mayoral Year would be Kidderminster and District Youth Trust and HELP, the community help centre, based at The Tulip Tree Centre in Kidderminster.

**RESOLVED:** That the Council approved KDYT and HELP as the Mayor's charities for 2026-27.

## **50.3 Nomination of Mayor Elect and Deputy Mayor for 2026-27**

The Mayor pointed out that the CEO had circulated a copy of the Council's Mayoral succession plan to all members. Under this arrangement, the next Deputy Mayor would be Councillor John Beckingham.

**RESOLVED:** That Cllr. John Beckingham be nominated for election as Deputy Mayor for 2026-27, at the Council's Annual meeting on 12th May 2026.

## **51. Annual Review of Strategic Risk Register**

The Mayor advised the meeting that risk management is an essential part of the Council's governance structure and a legal requirement for the Council. To assist in this, the Council has a risk register which is reviewed annually.

The CEO presented the report, with proposed amendments to the register. The amendments addressed the risks around devolution and local government reorganisation.

**RESOLVED:** That the Council's Strategic Risk Register for 2026-27, as amended, be approved.

## **52. The Transfer of Parks from Wyre Forest District Council to Kidderminster Town Council**

The Mayor invited the Operational Services Manager, Adam Stockhall, to present his report outlining the arrangements approved at District Council level and the recommendations of the Council's Services Committee, regarding further devolution of parks from the District Council.

Adam reported that the Cabinet at Wyre Forest District Council had approved the transfer of a further 9 parks to the Town Council from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2027 and a financial assistance package to support the transfers.

He gave a comprehensive overview of the issues around the transfers and proposed staffing and resources commitments which would be required to deliver the transfers. These arrangements had been considered by the Council's Services Committee who recommended them for approval by the Full Council.

In answer to Members' questions, the following points were noted:

- The Town Council would engage its own legal adviser to handle the transfers;

- The District Council had confirmed that there were no TUPE implications arising from the proposed transfers;
- The grounds maintenance programme would be outsourced, offering a 3 years' contract, with 12 months' review and break clauses;
- Social value and local employment would form part of the criteria for awarding the grounds maintenance contracts;
- The Community Engagement Officer's role would encompass making bids for grants and other external funding pots, as well as enhancing working relations with friends' groups, and
- The Town Council would explore opportunities to partner with neighbouring towns, where economies of scale might be possible.

**RESOLVED:** That the Council approve the transfer of parks as set out in the report and endorses the recommendations of the KTC Services Committee, and

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.

### 53. Council Committees for 26-27

The Mayor told the Council that there were now 5 groups on the Council and the composition of the Council was as follows:

Conservative group: 5 members, Labour group 4, Independents 4, Liberals 2 and Free 2, which made a total of 17 members in groups.

The group leaders had met to review this and to make recommendations to the Council. Excluding the Finance & Overview Committee, the proposal was to appoint members to committees in proportion to the numbers in each group, and to allow the smaller groups to be represented on each committee. This resulted as follows:

- Conservative group: 10 appointments
- Labour group: 8 appointments
- Independents: 8 appointments
- Liberals: 5 appointments, and
- Free group: 5 appointments.

This gave a total of 36 appointments for 2026-27, 1 more than last year, which was 35.

The Committee numbers agreed were as follows:

- Operational Services: 7 Members
- Town Hall: 7 members
- Planning Committee: 8 Members
- Civic, community & Events: 7 members
- Staffing: 7 members

It was agreed that the Terms of Reference for committees should be presented in a standard format.

**RESOLVED:** For Mayoral year 2026-27,

- A) That the Council appoints the members and Chairs to the above Committees, as per Appendix 1 to the minutes.
- B) That the Finance & Overview Committee comprise the Mayor of the Council, the Chairs of the above Committees and the leaders of the 5 groups on the Council, and
- C) That the Council approves the Terms of Reference for each of the above Committees, with one addition, that arrangements for display and storage of Town Council artefacts be delegated to the Town Hall Committee.

**54. Committee Meetings**

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

- The minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on 24th February and 24th March 2026, presented by the committee Chair, Councillor Bernadette Connor;
- The minutes of the Town Hall Committee held on 26th February 2026, presented by the committee Deputy Chair, Councillor John Beckingham;
- The minutes of the Services Committee held on 18th March 2026, presented by the Committee Chair, Councillor John Beckingham;
- The minutes of the Staffing Committee held on 19th February 2026, presented by the Committee Chair, Councillor Helen Dyke;
- The minutes of the Finance and Overview Committee held on 15th April 2026, presented by the Committee Chair, Councillor Steve Hollands.

**55. Internal Auditor's Report**

The CEO presented the first interim report from the Council's new Internal Auditors, LCC. He told the meeting that the report and the responses had been considered by the finance and Overview Committee, who received the report and approved the proposed actions and response from the Council.

**RESOLVED:**

- A) To receive the interim internal audit report for 2025-26,
- B) To approve the Council's response to the Report and to Approve the Internal Control Framework, and
- C) To add the internal control Checklist to the Forward Work Programme for Full Council on 11<sup>th</sup> June 2026.

**56. Vision 2025-2029**

The meeting heard that the Finance and Overview Committee had considered this matter last week and recommended that Full Council review the objectives relating to "Kidderminster in Bloom" and Community Awards", both of which are currently showing as red on the Council's Action Plan.

As no provision had been made for these objectives in this year's budget, the committee recommended that the Council review them.

The amendment for "In Bloom" was that the Council would support any organisation wishing to promote this campaign in Kidderminster, through the budgets for floral displays, Town centre planting and where possible, through parks works.

It was recommended that Community Awards be considered in the context of Local Government reorganisation and what support or assistance might arise at that stage.

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

**57. FULL COUNCIL FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2026-27**

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

Noted that the following items would be included in the agenda for Full Council on 11<sup>th</sup> June:

- Approval of the internal control checklist, as recommended by the internal auditor,
- End of Year Statutory Accounts
- To review the Council's Financial Regulations
- Appointments to outside bodies and Reports from Outside body representatives
- Bus companies?
- West Mercia Police? (Town Centre team)
- To review Standing Orders and make any amendments agreed.
- The Climate Emergency and Biodiversity Working Group is to meet before the end of May and report to the next meeting
- A final report on the Town Hall Transformation project to be presented to a future meeting.

The Meeting concluded at 7.35 pm.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Town Mayor

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**KIDDERMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL  
Minutes of the Annual Meeting  
12<sup>th</sup> May 2026 at 7.30 pm  
In the Music Room, Town Hall, Kidderminster**

**Present:**

Councillors John Beckingham, Liam Carroll, George Connolly, Vicky Caulfield  
Darren Chambers, Bernadette Connor, Nicky Gale, Doug Hine (Mayor)  
Steve Hollands, Mary McDonnell, Shazu Miah, Fran Oborski (MBE), Mary Rayner  
and Mike Smith

**In Attendance:**

Mr H. Peacocke, Chief Executive

**Apologies:**

Councillors Ben Brookes, Helen Dyke, Darren Chambers and Mark Crosby.

**1. ELECTION OF THE TOWN MAYOR**

**RESOLVED: That Councillor Shazu Miah be elected as the Town Mayor for the  
Mayoral year 2026/2027**

(Proposed by Councillor Oborski, Seconded Councillor Rayner, all in favour)

**2. ELECTION OF THE DEPUTY TOWN MAYOR**

**RESOLVED: That Councillor John Beckingham be elected as the Deputy Town  
Mayor for the municipal year 2026/2027**

(Proposed by Councillor Hollands, seconded Councillor Connolly, all in favour)

The meeting concluded at 8.50 pm

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Town Mayor.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Proposed Kidderminster Town Council Travel Policy**

Kidderminster Town Council is committed to encouraging less carbon-intensive travel by its staff and Elected Members. Reducing carbon in transport provides benefits in:

- Reducing emissions and thereby improving air quality and health
- Protecting the environment
- Reducing costs

To do so the Council endorses the following principles:

- To reduce the need to travel;
- To increase awareness among staff and councillors of travel choices and their implications;
- To facilitate and promote more active modes of travel;
- To encourage staff to commute to work by walking, cycling and using public transport and reduce in particular, single occupancy car journeys;
- To encourage the use of sustainable and cost-effective forms of transport on business journeys;
- To maximise the efficiency of fleet vehicles and hire availability vehicles where these are identified as the most sustainable and cost-effective form of travel
- To ensure the Travel Policy is embedded into existing corporate and departments processes reviewed on a regular basis.

#### **The travel hierarchy upon which this Travel Policy is based is provided below:**

1. Is there a need to travel – can a telephone call, tele-conference, video conference, email exchange or use of google maps (etc.) deliver the same outcome;
2. Walking / cycling – the healthiest and cheapest forms of transport, negligible carbon emissions flexibility;
3. Public transport (bus and train) – reduced carbon emissions particularly if travelling as a group but does come with issues or reliability and congestion.
4. Private and Council vehicles that are low or no emission are preferred to those with higher emissions, typically full internal combustion vehicles.
5. Air Travel – sometimes the only viable option. High in carbon emissions and thus high in cost but sometimes may be cheaper in monetary terms for other long distance modes of travel.

#### **Inclusion and Safety Protocols**

Policies must ensure that green travel guidance is balanced with practical needs:

- Reasonable Adjustments: Accommodations are made for staff with disabilities, caring responsibilities, or those who need to transport heavy equipment.
- Personal Safety: Ensuring staff feel secure during lone working, late-night shifts, or in poor weather conditions.

#### **Supporting Infrastructure**

- EV Charging: Installing EV charging points at council depots and office buildings.
- Facilities: Providing secure cycle storage, showers, and changing rooms for employees.

**Kidderminster Town Council**

**Climate Change and Biodiversity Working Group**

Notes of Meeting, 6.00 pm, 21<sup>st</sup> May 2026.

Present: Councillor Doug Hine (Chairman), Hugh Peacocke ( KTC CEO)

Observing: Ben ( a member of the public)

Apologies: Councillors John Beckingham and Nicky Gale

**Agenda.**

1. To review the Action Plan approved at the meeting of Full Council on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2025 and consider any actions within the budget provided.

Progress and responses were received and noted (See attached). Other actions arising:

- Promote/ partner with organisations such as the monthly Repair café and Incredible/ Edible
- Contact emergency services and Environmental Agency re planning for extreme conditions

2. To review the Council's Biodiversity programme and report on same.

Noted the programme.

Update from Adam Stockhall:

*We will continue to work closely with Natural England to enhance biodiversity gains across our parks and open spaces. This will be achieved through the creation and management of natural meadow areas, targeted native planting schemes, and the improvements of wetland and pond habitats.*

*Existing no-mow areas will continue to be maintained to encourage wildflower meadow establishment and support pollinators and other wildlife. Where appropriate, we will prioritise the planting of native trees and plants to strengthen local ecosystems and improve habitat connectivity.*

*We will also continue to explore opportunities to enhance wildlife infrastructure, including the installation of bird and bat boxes and other habitat features. In addition, interpretive signage and information boards will be further improved to provide visitors with greater awareness and understanding of the wildlife species and planting schemes present within the parks.*

*We do not use herbicides or weed killer on any of our parks.*

3. Working with Utility Aid on Carbon Reduction initiatives.

Ask Utility Aid about a carbon audit and any other assistance/support they might be able to provide

# Kidderminster Town Council

## Climate Emergency Action Plan

This Action Plan was adopted by Kidderminster Town Council on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2025  
Progress to be reviewed twice annually by the Finance & Overview Committee of the Council.

### Introduction

The Climate Emergency refers to the urgent and significant threat posed by climate change, which is primarily driven by human activities such as burning fossil fuels, deforestation, and industrial processes. This situation has led to rising global temperatures, increased frequency and severity of extreme weather events (such as hurricanes, droughts, and floods), melting ice caps, and rising sea levels.

Globally, our current trajectory is moving us rapidly towards more than 2.0C of warming, which for the UK will bring hotter, drier summers and milder, wetter winters with an increase in the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events<sup>1</sup>, combined with sea level rise,<sup>2</sup> The consequences of these changes are already being felt. Over recent years, severe floods have caused major damage to property and businesses across the UK. Other far-reaching effects will be on ecosystems, biodiversity, agriculture, water resources, and human health, while also exacerbating social inequalities.

Within the framework set by the UK government to be Carbon Neutral by 2050, Kidderminster Town Council declared a Climate Emergency in 2021. The Council has joined with over 600 councils across Britain – big and small – covering 96% of the population who are setting ambitious targets and taking meaningful action.<sup>3</sup> Measures that Kidderminster Town Council can take in its own activities will have some limited effect. However, it will set an example and allow the Council to take an active role in encouraging and enabling others to act.

1. MET Office, What is Climate Change:

<https://weather.metoffice.gov.uk/climate-change/what-is-climate-change>

2. MET Office, UKCP18 Marine Climate Change: <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/binaries/content/assets/metofficegovuk/pdf/research/ukcp/ukcp18-infographic-headline-findings-marine.pdf>

3. As of 16th October 2025, source: climateemergency.uk

<https://climateemergencydeclaration.org/climate-emergency-declarations-cover-15-million-citizens>

Action	Timescale	Cost £ low ££ medium £££ high	Committee/ Service Responsibility	Notes
<b>Lobbying, Leadership and Community Engagement</b>				
Organisational Review of Policies to align with Climate Emergency Commitment	Short	£	Working Group/ All	Review in line with Policy review periods Ask MT to identify relevant policies in their areas
Publicise commitment and promote energy-efficient and green measures to residents in public seminars, leaflets and website – in conjunction with local expertise	Short	££	Corporate Services	Newsletters, Press release
<p>Make reference to Climate Emergency and need for renewable energy measures when commenting on Relevant planning matters (i.e. planning applications and Local Plan consultations):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Stronger energy efficiency (insulation, passive solar, heat pumps) in building standards;</li> <li>2. More thorough solar energy capture, on North-South facing houses;</li> <li>3. More domestic battery storage;</li> <li>4. New build housing to have appropriate local infrastructure (shops, schools, café, community hall, open space) to improve wellbeing and reduce car dependence;</li> <li>5. Design better, and more, public transport, cycling and walking routes;</li> <li>6. Protect natural resources, including streams, trees and community fabric;</li> <li>7. Remodelling the town centre to improve the environment for pedestrians and cyclists, reduce the impact of traffic to improve town centre health.</li> </ol>	Short	£	Planning	Advise Planning Committee- reminded today
Add Climate Emergency References in all new contract specifications and Tenders and add to the evaluation process.	Short	£	All	Update tender documentation- especially new parks contract
Encourage councillors and staff to undertake Carbon Literacy training	Medium	££	All	One day courses are available quite cheaply
Encourage Councillors to promote climate change	Short	£	Corporate Services	Ongoing- posters and social media

Publicise and promote achievements in reducing the Council's carbon footprint on website and in the Newsletters	Medium	£	Corporate Services	Matt Smith and solar panel; LED lighting
Adopt a travel policy that favours use of the less carbon-intensive method of travel for staff and councillors	Short	£	Corporate Services	CEO commutes by train; adopt policy at F & O
<b>Carbon Reduction - Assets</b>				
Undertake Carbon Footprint Audit	Short	££	CEO	Essential evidence base against which to measure progress. Secure price to undertake audit by 2026 To be reviewed.
Use carbon accounting tools such as the Worcestershire Decarbonisation Portal, and promote to other organisations	Short	£	Operational Services / Working Group	Evidence for next meeting
Commit to Carbon Neutral council by 2035	Long	£	All	In the Council's Vision
Undertake a Buildings Audit to identify any efficiency measures	Short	££	Town Hall/ Operational Services	Understand when last undertaken to consider next review date
Replace all Council lighting with LED	Short	££	Town Hall/ Operational Services	Agree schedule for replacement programme- this year's budget?-Town Hall
Consider climate impact on new purchases of plant & machinery	Medium	££	Operational Services	Next year, parks transfers
Support retro-fitting of existing housing with improved energy efficiency measures	short	£	Corporate Services	Promote on website, social media, etc.
Consider carbon footprint of any buildings to be taken on by the Town Council in the future	Long	£	Operational Services	
Reduce carbon footprint of Town Council office activities	Short	£	Corporate Services	Reduce printing, request minimal packaging on items ordered e.g. paper All appliances with exception of phones and CCTV turned off at plug each weekend. Turn off copiers at end of each day Use bicycle for travel to meetings / inspections within the town Reduce printing for all staff and councillors Town Hall Manager investigating solar panels for roof

Agree approach to "Carbon Neutral"	Medium	£	<b>Working Group/ All</b>	At what stage might offsets be considered/ permitted?
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Action	Timescale	Cost £ low ££ medium £££ high	Committee/ Service Responsibility	Notes
<b>Renewable Energy</b>				
Request energy from Town Council's electricity providers is renewable	Medium	£	Corporate Services	If existing provision is not from renewable sources, assess alternative renewable tariffs and costs to switch.
Explore potential for installing Solar/Wind mitigating measures on Council Land/Buildings	Long	£££	Town Hall/ Operational Services	
<b>Transport</b>				
Explore infrastructure requirements and power capacity for electric vehicles	Long	££	Operational Services	
Encourage increased use of public transport by: 1. Lobbying for improvement of Kidderminster Bus Station 2. Enhancing our bus stop 3. Consider subsidising a Saturday discount bus fare 4. Work for more EV car charging in public spaces where private driveway charging is unavailable/limited.	Short Short Medium Medium	£ £ £££ ££	Operational Services	This year's budget?
<b>Waste Minimisation</b>				
"Paper-light" Council Meetings	Short	£	Corporate Services	Councillors still want hard copies
Encourage a policy of "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Compost" prior to landfill or incineration for contractors and Council operations	Short	£	All	Office waste is recycled, slightly more difficult with waste collected on recreation ground and bins as this is labour intensive also concerns for health and safety of staff-Courtyard café?
Promote schemes that can improve resource and waste efficiency, such as community waste reduction initiatives, repair cafes, reuse schemes, composting programmes and local exchange schemes	Short	£	Operational Services / Corporate Services	Councillors' Ward grants?

Action	Timescale	Cost £ low ££ medium £££ high	Committee/ Service Responsibility	Notes
<b>Open Spaces</b>				
Develop Open Space Management Plans	Short	£	Operational Services	Already done
Any future Public Open Space adoption to include any Climate Emergency Needs	Short	£	Operational Services	Parks transfers?
Develop a long-term approach to tree planting, including, encouraging community tree planting and identifying locations for bulk planting	Long	££	Operational Services	Ward grants?
Support allotments and domestic food production	Long			New allotment agreements coming to next Services Committee
Encourage community orchards and tree planting to include fruit and nut trees	short			Ward grants?
Use own compost, then subsequently purchase Peat-Free Compost	Medium	£	Operational Services	Refer to services/ GM contractor
Reduce the amount of herbicides used by the council	Short	£	Operational Services	Already progressing
Continue replacement of floral planters with built-in water reservoirs to reduce the need for watering	Medium	££	Operational Services	Move towards drought resistant planting. Move towards rainharvesting.
<b>Food</b>				
Encourage the consumption of less meat and more plant-based food	Medium	£	All	Website/ social media
Reduce food waste	Short	£	All	Courtyard?

Action	Timescale	Cost £ low ££ medium £££ high	Committee/ Service Responsibility	Notes
<b>Extreme Weather Events</b>				
Work to assess past and future risks to residents, organisations and the council from extreme weather events or hazards arising from a changing climate. This should include the impact of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surface water flooding from extreme rainfall</li> <li>• Extreme heat and cold in homes especially at night</li> <li>• Extreme temperatures in workplaces</li> <li>• Extreme wind, hail, rainfall and drought</li> </ul>	Medium	£££	<b>Operational Services/ Town Hall</b>	Allow flexible working, such as working from home, or reallocate hours/ days
Produce a plan and estimated costings for the adaptation and resilience measures required to protect the Council from the disruption due to future extreme weather events.  Identify methods of funding this work	Medium	££	<b>Operational Services/ Town Hall</b>	Refer to services committee and Town hall committee
Coordinate with Emergency Plans of the Environment Agency, Councils, emergency services, etc. during extreme weather events	Short	£	<b>All</b>	Hold meeting with agencies to determine their plans and how KTC can assist/ support
<b>Working with Partners</b>				
Work with Worcestershire (or successor) Council, surrounding parish and town councils, district and other councils and relevant partners including businesses, educational establishments and civil society organisations, to determine and implement best practice on Climate Change and Environmental Protection	Medium	£	<b>Corporate Services/ CEO</b>	Hold meeting with agencies to determine their plans and how KTC can assist/ support
<b>Monitoring</b>				
Climate Actions should be a consideration of all committees	Short	£	<b>All</b>	Climate change to be on the agendas for meetings. CEO to action.
Report twice annually reviews against plan	Short	£	<b>CEO</b>	Dates to be calendared... April and October.
Undertake annual carbon footprint audit	Short	££	<b>CEO</b>	Evidence base

**KIDDERMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL BIODIVERSITY POLICY**

**PREAMBLE**

In accordance with the duty imposed on town and parish councils by Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, updated by Section 102 of the Environment Act 2021, **Kidderminster Town Council** will in exercising all its functions have regard to the purpose of conserving biodiversity.

This duty also means that town and parish councils can spend funds in conserving biodiversity.

**DEFINITION**

According to Defra (Biodiversity 2020), biodiversity is the variety of all life on Earth. It includes all species of animals and plants – everything that is alive on our planet.

Biodiversity is important for its own sake and has its own intrinsic value. A number of studies have shown this value also goes further. It is the building block of our 'ecosystems'. These provide us with a wide range of goods and services that support our economic and social wellbeing. These include essentials such as food, fresh water and clean air, but also less obvious services such as protection from natural disasters, regulation of our climate, and purification of our water or pollination of our crops. Biodiversity also provides important cultural services, enriching our lives.

**AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

The object of this policy is to work towards enhancing and protecting the biodiversity within land owned by Kidderminster Town Council.

All committees of Kidderminster Town Council will consider sustainability, environmental impact and biodiversity when making decisions and will develop and implement policies and strategies as required.

In particular, Kidderminster Town Council will aim to improve the biodiversity of the area in the following ways:

- Ask the Planning Authority to consider the potential impact on biodiversity represented by relevant planning applications.
- manage its land and property using environmentally friendly practices that will promote biodiversity.
- support local businesses & council operations in the adoption of low impact practices.
- support residents and local organisation activities to enhance and promote biodiversity.

## **ACTIONS**

### **Planning applications**

- The council, when commenting on relevant planning applications, will support site and building design that benefits biodiversity through the conservation and integration of existing habitats or provision of new habitats.
- It will support protection of sensitive habitats from development and will ask the planning authority to consider whether the development would mean the loss of important habitats for wildlife in respect of all applications.
- It will consider what each proposed development might make in terms of biodiversity net gain. This is a legal requirement, no need for KTC to do this.

### **Land and property management**

- The council will carry out a biodiversity audit of its landholdings, subject to funding being available.
- The council will encourage the conservation and promotion of local biodiversity with regards to the management of its open spaces. This will include adopting beneficial practices with regarding to cutting and removal of vegetation, application of chemicals and timing of maintenance work.
- Special care will be taken in the specification of grounds maintenance contracts to ensure that the work, whilst reaching acceptable standards, does not harm the natural environment.
- The council will consider biodiversity issues and the implementation of changes when managing its buildings.

### **Local community**

Subject to resources being available,

- The council will raise public awareness of biodiversity issues, including through its website and other media.
- The council will engage with local businesses and residents regarding biodiversity in the community and how members of the community can assist and make a difference.
- It will, where feasible, involve the community in biodiversity projects on its land including for example tree planting, wildflower meadows, birdbox making.

### **Partners**

- Kidderminster Town Council will work in partnership with other organisations to protect, promote and enhance biodiversity within areas of the town.
- Subject to resources being available, it will review any local nature recovery strategies, species conservation strategies, or protected site strategies in respect of local sites of special scientific interest (SSSIs) and consider how it may become more involved in implementing the strategies' recommendations.

This policy will be reviewed each year together with a summary of how the policy has been implemented in the previous twelve months.



# Kidderminster Town Council

## Financial Regulations

Document Control		Authority
Adopted on	28 <sup>th</sup> June 2025	
Review Date	11 <sup>th</sup> June 2016	Full Council

**KIDDERMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL**

**FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

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## 1. GENERAL

- 1.1. These financial regulations govern the conduct of financial management by the Council and may only be amended or varied by resolution of the Council. Financial regulations are one of the Council's three governing policy documents providing procedural guidance for members and officers. Financial regulations must be observed in conjunction with the Council's standing orders and any individual financial regulations relating to contracts. **Bold text indicates legal requirements, which a Council cannot change or suspend.**
- 1.2. **The Council is responsible in law for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that the Council has a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of the Council's functions, including arrangements for the management of risk.**
- 1.3. The Council's accounting control systems must include measures:
  - for the timely production of accounts;
  - that provide for the safe and efficient safeguarding of public money;
  - to prevent and detect inaccuracy and fraud; and
  - identifying the duties of officers
- 1.4. These financial regulations demonstrate how the Council meets these responsibilities and requirements.
- 1.5. **At least once a year, prior to approving the Annual Governance Statement, the Council must review the effectiveness of its system of internal control which shall be in accordance with proper practices.**
- 1.6. A breach of these Regulations by an employee may be gross misconduct.
- 1.7. Members of Council are expected to follow the instructions within these Regulations and not to entice employees to breach them. Failure to follow instructions within these Regulations brings the office of Councillor into disrepute and therefore may be a breach of the Code of Conduct.
- 1.8. The Responsible Financial Officer holds a statutory office to be appointed by the Council. The CEO has been appointed as Responsible Financial Officer for this Council and these regulations will apply accordingly.
- 1.9. The CEO:
  - acts under the policy direction of the Council;
  - administers the Council's financial affairs in accordance with all Acts, Regulations and proper practices;
  - determines on behalf of the Council its accounting records and accounting control systems;
  - ensures the accounting control systems are observed;

## Financial regulations (adopted on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2025)

- maintains the accounting records of the Council up to date in accordance with proper practices;
  - assists the Council to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of its resources; and
  - produces financial management information as required by the Council.
- 1.10. The accounting records determined by the CEO shall be sufficient to show and explain the Council's transactions and to enable the CEO to ensure that any income and expenditure account and statement of balances, or record of receipts and payments and additional information, as the case may be, or management information prepared for the Council from time to time comply with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 No. 234.
- 1.11. The accounting records determined by the CEO shall in particular contain:
- entries from day to day of all sums of money received and expended by the Council and the matters to which the income and expenditure or receipts and payments account relate;
  - a record of the assets and liabilities of the Council; and
  - wherever relevant, a record of the Council's income and expenditure in relation to claims made, or to be made, for any contribution, grant or subsidy.
- 1.12. The accounting control systems determined by the CEO shall include:
- procedures to ensure that the financial transactions of the Council are recorded as soon as reasonably practicable and as accurately and reasonably as possible;
  - procedures to enable the prevention and detection of inaccuracies and fraud and the ability to reconstruct any lost records;
  - identification of the duties of officers dealing with financial transactions and division of responsibilities of those officers in relation to significant transactions;
  - procedures to ensure that uncollectable amounts, including any bad debts are not submitted to the Council for approval to be written off except with the approval of the CEO and that the approvals are shown in the accounting records; and
  - measures to ensure that risk is properly managed.
- 1.13. The Council is not empowered by these Regulations or otherwise to delegate certain specified decisions. In particular any decision regarding:
- **setting the final budget or the precept (Council tax requirement);**
  - **approving accounting statements;**
  - **approving an annual governance statement;**

- **borrowing;**
  - writing off **bad debts** at or above £**250** (the CEO shall have delegated authority to write off debts below £**250**);
  - **declaring eligibility for the General Power of Competence; and**
  - **addressing recommendations in any report from the external auditors,**
- shall be a matter for the full Council only.

1.14. In addition the Council or relevant Committee must:

- determine and keep under regular review the bank mandate for all Council bank accounts;
- in respect of the annual salary for any employee have regard to recommendations about annual salaries of employees made by the relevant committee in accordance with its terms of reference.

1.15 In these financial regulations, 'Accounts and Audit Regulations' means the regulations issued under Sections 32, 43(2) and 46 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, or any superseding legislation, and then in force, unless otherwise specified.

- "Approve" refers to an online action, allowing an electronic transaction to take place.
- "Authorise" refers to a decision by the Council, or a committee or an officer, to allow something to happen.
- 'Proper practices' means those set out in *The Practitioners' Guide*
- *Practitioners' Guide* refers to the guide issued by the Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance (JPAG) and published by NALC in England or Governance and Accountability for Local Councils in Wales – A Practitioners Guide jointly published by One Voice Wales and the Society of Local Council CEOs in Wales.
- "The Council" may include the relevant committee, where the Terms of Reference include delegations under these Regulations.

## **2. ACCOUNTING AND AUDIT (INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL)**

- 2.1. All accounting procedures and financial records of the Council shall be determined by the CEO in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations, appropriate guidance and proper practices.
- 2.2. bank reconciliations (for all accounts) produced by the CEO will be reported to Finance & Overview Committee for monitoring and approval.
- 2.3. **The accounting records determined by the RFO must be sufficient to explain the Council's transactions and to disclose its financial position with reasonably accuracy at any time. In particular, they must contain: day-to-day entries of all sums of money received and expended by the Council and the matters to which they relate;**

**a record of the assets and liabilities of the Council**

- 2.4. The accounting records shall be designed to facilitate the efficient preparation of the accounting statements in the Annual {Governance and Accountability} Return.
- 2.5. The RFO shall complete and certify the annual Accounting Statements of the Council contained in the Annual {Governance and Accountability} Return in accordance with proper practices, as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year. Having certified the Accounting Statements, the RFO shall submit them (with any related documents) to the Council, within the timescales required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 2.6. **The Council must ensure that it has a sound system of internal control, which delivers effective financial, operational and risk management.**
- 2.7. Any officer or member of the Council shall make available such documents and records as are necessary for the purpose of the audit and shall supply the CEO, internal auditor, or external auditor with such information and explanation as is considered necessary for that purpose.
- 2.8. **At least once a year, the Council must review the effectiveness of its system of internal control, before approving the Annual Governance Statement. The accounting control systems determined by the RFO must include measures to:**
- **ensure that risk is appropriately managed;**
  - **ensure the prompt, accurate recording of financial transactions;**
  - **prevent and detect inaccuracy or fraud; and**
  - **allow the reconstitution of any lost records;**
  - **identify the duties of officers dealing with transactions and**
  - **ensure division of responsibilities.**
- 2.9. The internal auditor shall be appointed by the Council and shall carry out the work in relation to internal controls required by the Council in accordance with proper practices.
- 2.10. The internal auditor shall:
- be competent and independent of the financial operations of the Council;
  - report to Council in writing, or in person, on a regular basis with a minimum of one annual written report during each financial year;
  - demonstrate competence, objectivity and independence, be free from any actual or perceived conflicts of interest, including those arising from family relationships; and
  - have no involvement in the financial decision making, management or control of the Council.
- 2.11. Internal or external auditors may not under any circumstances:
- perform any operational duties for the Council;
  - initiate or approve accounting transactions; or

- direct the activities of any Council employee, except to the extent that such employees have been appropriately assigned to assist the internal auditor.

2.12. For the avoidance of doubt, in relation to internal audit the terms 'independent' and 'independence' shall have the same meaning as is described in proper practices.

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

2.14. The CEO shall, without undue delay, bring to the attention of all Councillors any correspondence or report from internal or external auditors.

### **3. ANNUAL ESTIMATES (BUDGET), PRECEPT AND FORWARD PLANNING**

3.1. The CEO must each year, by no later than January, prepare detailed estimates of all receipts and payments including the use of reserves and all sources of funding for the following financial year in the form of a budget to be considered by the Council.

3.2. The Council shall consider annual budget proposals in relation to the Council's three year forecast of revenue and capital receipts and payments including recommendations for the use of reserves and sources of funding and update the forecast accordingly.

3.3. The Council shall fix the precept (Council tax requirement), and relevant basic amount of Council tax to be levied for the ensuing financial year not later than the end of February each year. The CEO shall **issue the precept to the billing authority no later than the end of February** and shall supply each member with a copy of the approved annual budget. **Before setting a precept, the Council must calculate its requirement for each financial year by preparing and approving a budget, in accordance with The Local Government Finance Act 1992 or succeeding legislation.**

3.4. The approved annual budget shall form the basis of financial control for the ensuing year.

### **4. BUDGETARY CONTROL AND AUTHORITY TO SPEND**

4.1. Where an allocation for a class of expenditure is set out in the approved budget for a financial year, the CEO has delegated authority to incur expenditure up to the limit of that allocation subject to other provisions in these Regulations (such as regulation 11 on contracts).

4.2. No expenditure may be incurred:

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- (a) on a class of expenditure for which no provision has been made in the approved budget; or
- (b) that will exceed the amount provided in the budget for that class of expenditure other than by resolution of the Council, or duly delegated committee. During the budget year and with the approval of Council, having considered fully the implications for public services, unspent and available amounts may be moved to other budget headings or to an earmarked reserve as appropriate ('virement').

- 4.3. Unspent provisions in the revenue or capital budgets for completed projects shall not be carried forward to a subsequent year, unless approved by the Council, as an "Earmarked Reserve"
- 4.4. In cases of extreme risk to the delivery of Council services, or risk to the public health and safety, or the health and safety of Council officers or members, the CEO may authorise revenue expenditure on behalf of the Council which in the CEO's judgement it is necessary to carry out. Such expenditure includes repair, replacement or other work, whether or not there is any budgetary provision for the expenditure, subject to a limit of £25,000. The CEO shall report such action to the Finance & Overview Committee as soon as possible and to the Council as soon as practicable thereafter.
- 4.5. No expenditure shall be authorised in relation to any capital project, and no contract entered into or tender accepted involving capital expenditure, unless the Council has approved allocation of funds in advance and they are available for use and, if relevant, the Council has approved in advance that borrowing should be undertaken.
- 4.6. All capital works shall be administered in accordance with the Council's standing orders and financial regulations relating to contracts.
- 4.7. The RFO shall regularly provide the Council with a statement of receipts and payments to date under each head of the budgets, comparing actual expenditure to the appropriate date against that planned as shown in the budget. These statements are to be prepared at least at the end of each financial quarter and shall show explanations of material variances. For this purpose "material" shall be in excess of £1000 or 15% of the budget.
- 4.8. Changes in earmarked reserves shall be approved by Council as part of the budgetary control process.

## **5. BANKING ARRANGEMENTS AND AUTHORISATION OF PAYMENTS**

- 5.1. The Council's banking arrangements, including the bank mandate, shall be made by the CEO and approved by the Council; banking arrangements may not be delegated to a committee. They shall be regularly reviewed for safety and efficiency.
- 5.2. Wherever possible, transactions shall be conducted on line or via other electronic or automated means such as BACS, CHAPS, standing order or internet transfers. Cheques shall be used for payments only as a last resort.

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- 5.3. All invoices for payment shall be examined, verified and certified by the CEO to confirm that the work, goods or services to which each invoice relates has been received, carried out, examined and represents expenditure previously approved by the Council.
- 5.4. invoices shall be examined for arithmetical accuracy and charged to the appropriate expenditure heading. The CEO shall take all steps to pay all invoices submitted, and which are in order, within 28 days of receipt.
- 5.5. The CEO shall prepare and make arrangements for the custody of schedules of payments which shall be authorised by Council.
- 5.6. Members are subject to the Code of Conduct that has been adopted by the Council and shall comply with the Code and Standing Orders when a decision to authorise or instruct payment is made in respect of a matter in which they have a disclosable pecuniary or other interest, unless a dispensation has been granted.
- 5.7. The CEO shall maintain a record of details of suppliers, such as bank account records. Any changes in the recorded details of suppliers shall be approved in writing by the CEO.

## **6. INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE MAKING OF PAYMENTS**

- 6.1. The Council will make safe and efficient arrangements for the making of its payments.
- 6.2. Payments shall be made by one of the following methods wherever possible:
  - (a) by variable direct debit (for example for utility supplies (energy, telephone and water) and National Non-Domestic Rates);
  - (b) by banker's standing order, for any other regular payment, the amount of which is known in advance;
  - (c) by BACS or CHAPS methods;
  - (d) by internet banking transfer.
- 6.3. Instructions to set up payments under the methods in regulation 6.2 shall be made in accordance with the bank mandate, which may require authorisation of payment methods or individual payments by one or more officers in addition to or instead of the CEO. If an officer who is involved in authorising a payment or signing a cheque has declared a disclosable pecuniary interest, or has any other interest, in the matter in respect of which the payment is being made, that officer shall be required to consider Standing Orders and the Officer's Code of Conduct, and thereby determine whether it is appropriate and / or permissible to be a signatory to the transaction in question.
- 6.4. In respect of the internet banking arrangements, the CEO shall be appointed as the Service Administrator. The bank mandate approved by the Council shall identify a number of officers who will be authorised to approve transactions on those accounts. The bank mandate will state clearly the amounts of payments that can be instructed

## Financial regulations (adopted on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2025)

by the use of the Service Administrator alone, or by the Service Administrator with approval by one or more officers.

- 6.5. Where a computer requires use of a personal identification number (PIN) or other password(s), for access to the Council's records on that computer, a note shall be made of the PIN and Passwords and shall be handed to and retained by the RFO in a sealed dated envelope. This envelope may not be opened other than in the presence of the Mayor . After the envelope has been opened, in any circumstances, the PIN and / or passwords shall be changed as soon as practicable. The fact that the sealed envelope has been opened, in whatever circumstances, shall be reported to all members immediately and formally to the next available meeting of the Council.
- 6.6. No employee or Councillor shall disclose any PIN or password, relevant to the working of the Council or its bank accounts, to any person not authorised in writing by the CEO
- 6.7. Regular back-up copies shall be made of the records relating to the Council's finances on any computer and shall be stored securely away from the computer in question, and preferably off site.
- 6.8. The Council, shall ensure that anti-virus, anti-spyware and firewall software with automatic updates, together with a high level of security, is used.
- 6.9. Access to any internet banking accounts will be directly to the access page (which may be saved under "favourites"), and not through a search engine or e-mail link.
- 6.10. Account details for suppliers, which are used for internet banking, may be changed only on written hard copy notification by the supplier and supported by hard copy authority for change signed by the CEO and another officer.. A programme of regular checks of standing data with suppliers will be undertaken by the CEO.
- 6.11. Where cheques are used for payments, they shall be signed by the CEO and another authorised officer and reported to Council.
- 6.12. A signatory having a family or business relationship with the beneficiary of a payment shall not, under normal circumstances, be a signatory to that payment.
- 6.13. To indicate agreement of the details on the cheque with the counterfoil and the invoice or similar documentation, the signatories shall also initial the cheque counterfoil and invoice.
- 6.14. The Council may provide bank debit cards to officers, at limits to be determined by the RFO. Personal credit or debit cards of staff shall not be used for Council business under any circumstances.
- 6.15. As a last resort, petty cash may be provided to officers for the purpose of defraying operational and other expenses, subject to the following rules:
  - a) The CEO shall maintain a petty cash float of £500 for the purpose of defraying operational and other expenses.

- b) Vouchers for payments made shall be forwarded to the CEO with a claim for reimbursement, together with receipts for expenditure incurred where available. The vouchers for payments made from petty cash shall be kept to substantiate the payment.
- c) Income received must not be paid into the petty cash float but must be separately banked, as provided elsewhere in these regulations.
- d) Payments to maintain the petty cash float shall be shown on the schedule of payments prepared under regulation 5.5 above.

## **7. PAYMENT OF SALARIES**

- 7.1. **As an employer, the Council shall make arrangements to meet fully the statutory requirements placed on all employers by PAYE and National Insurance legislation.**
- 7.2. **the Mayor's allowance (where paid) are also liable to deduction of tax under PAYE rules and must be taxed correctly before payment, , unless the Mayor submits an invoice for payment of the allowance, when they will become liable for their own tax affairs**
- 7.3. The payment of all salaries shall be made in accordance with payroll records and the rules of PAYE and National Insurance currently operating, and salary rates shall be as agreed by Council, or duly delegated committee.
- 7.4. No changes shall be made to any employee's pay, emoluments, or terms and conditions of employment without the prior consent of the Council or the appropriate delegated committee.
- 7.5. Any termination payments shall be supported by a clear business case and reported to the Council. Termination payments shall be authorised by Council or the appropriate delegated committee.

## **8. LOANS AND INVESTMENTS**

- 8.1. All borrowings shall be effected in the name of the Council, after obtaining any necessary borrowing approval. Any application for borrowing approval shall be approved by Council as to terms and purpose. The application for borrowing approval, and subsequent arrangements for the loan, shall be approved only by full Council.
- 8.2. Any financial arrangement which does not require formal borrowing approval from the Secretary of State (such as Hire Purchase or Leasing of tangible assets) shall be subject to approval by the relevant committee. In each case a report in writing shall be provided in respect of value for money for the proposed transaction.
- 8.3. The Council will arrange with the Council's banks and investment providers for the sending of a copy of each statement of account and for it to be reported to Council.

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- 8.4. All loans and investments shall be negotiated in the name of the Council and shall be for a set period in accordance with Council policy.
- 8.5. The Council shall adopt a Treasury Management and Investment Strategy which shall be in accordance with relevant regulations, proper practices and guidance. The Strategy is reviewed at least annually.
- 8.6. All investments of money under the control of the Council shall be in the name of the Council.
- 8.7. The CEO shall make appropriate arrangements for the custody of all investment certificates and other documents relating thereto.
- 9. Payments in respect of short term or long term investments, excluding transfers between bank accounts held in the same bank, or branch, shall be made in accordance with Regulation 5 (Authorisation of payments) and Regulation 6 (Instructions for payments).INCOME**
- 9.1. The collection of all sums due to the Council shall be the responsibility of and under the supervision of the CEO. Wherever possible, income shall be collected by means of electronic or automated payment to the Council's bank accounts, and this shall include the ability to issue invoices electronically.
- 9.2. Particulars of all charges to be made for work done, services rendered or goods supplied shall be agreed annually by the Council.
- 9.3. The Council will review all fees and charges at least annually, following a report of the CEO.
- 9.4. Any sums found to be irrecoverable and any bad debts of £250 or more shall be reported to the Council and shall be written off in the year. The CEO has delegated authority to write off bad debts below £250.
- 9.5. All sums received on behalf of the Council in the guise of cheques or cash shall be banked intact as directed by the CEO. In all such cases, all receipts shall be deposited with the Council's bankers with such frequency as the CEO considers necessary. The origin of each receipt shall be entered on the paying-in slip.
- 9.6. Personal cheques shall not be cashed out of money held on behalf of the Council.
- 9.7. The CEO shall promptly complete any VAT Return that is required. Any repayment claim due in accordance with VAT Act 1994 section 33 shall be made at least annually coinciding with the financial year end.
- 9.8. Where any significant sums of cash are regularly received by the Council, the CEO shall take such steps as are agreed by the Council to ensure that more than one person is present when the cash is counted in the first instance, that there is a reconciliation to some form of control such as ticket issues, and that appropriate care is taken in the security and safety of individuals banking such cash.
- 9.9. Any income arising which is the property of a charitable trust shall be paid into a charitable bank account. Instructions for the payment of funds due from the

charitable trust to the Council (to meet expenditure already incurred by the authority) will be given by the Managing Trustees of the charity meeting separately from any Council meeting(see also Regulation 14 below).

## 10. ORDERS FOR WORK, GOODS AND SERVICES

- 10.1. An official order or letter shall be issued for all work, goods and services unless a formal contract is to be prepared or an official order would be inappropriate. Copies of orders shall be retained.
- 10.2. Order records shall be controlled by the CEO.
- 10.3. **All members and officers are responsible for obtaining value for money at all times.** An officer issuing an official order shall ensure as far as reasonable and practicable that the best available terms are obtained in respect of each transaction, usually by obtaining three or more quotations or estimates from appropriate suppliers, subject to any *de minimis* provisions in Regulation 11.1 below.
- 10.4. A member may not issue an official order or make any contract on behalf of the Council.
- 10.5. The CEO shall verify the lawful nature of any proposed purchase before the issue of any order. In the case of new or infrequent purchases or payments, the CEO shall ensure that the statutory authority for the activity shall be included in the schedule to be prepared under regulation 5.5 above, so that it acts as a record of the power being used.

## 11. CONTRACTS

- 11.1. Procedures as to contracts are laid down as follows:
  - a. Every contract shall comply with these financial regulations, and no exceptions shall be made otherwise than in an emergency provided that this regulation need not apply to contracts which relate to items (i) to (vi) below:
    - i. for the supply of gas, electricity, water, sewerage and telephone services;
    - ii. for specialist services such as are provided by solicitors, accountants, surveyors and planning consultants;
    - iii. for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which consist of repairs to or parts for existing machinery or equipment or plant;
    - iv. for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which constitute an extension of an existing contract by the Council. The extension may only be in accordance with the terms of the contract and, in any case, an

extension shall not exceed £10,000 in value without the prior approval of the Council;

- v. for additional audit work of the external auditor up to an estimated value of £500 (in excess of this sum the CEO shall act after consultation with the Mayor or the Deputy Mayor and the Chair of the F & O Committee); and
  - vi. for goods or materials proposed to be purchased which are proprietary articles and / or are only sold at a fixed price.
- b. For a contract for the supply of goods, services or works where the estimated value will exceed the thresholds set by Parliament, the terms and thresholds of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and the Utilities Contracts Regulations 2006 (or any successor legislation) , must be followed in respect of the tendering, award and notification of that contract.**
- c. For contracts estimated to be over £30,000 including VAT, the Council must comply with any requirements of the Legislation regarding the advertising of contract opportunities and the publication of notices about the award of contracts. (The Regulations require Councils to use the Contracts Finder website if they advertise contract opportunities and also to publicise the award of contracts over £30,000 including VAT, regardless of whether they were advertised.)**
- d. Where it is intended to enter into a contract exceeding £50,000 (excluding VAT) in value for the supply of goods or materials or for the execution of works or specialist services other than such goods, materials, works or specialist services as are excepted as set out in paragraph (a) the CEO shall invite tenders from at least three firms to be taken from the appropriate approved list.
  - e. Such invitation to tender shall state the general nature of the intended contract and the CEO shall obtain the necessary technical assistance to prepare a specification in appropriate cases. The invitation shall in addition state that tenders must be addressed to the CEO in the ordinary course of post. Each tendering firm shall be supplied with a specifically marked envelope in which the tender is to be sealed and remain sealed until the prescribed date for opening tenders for that contract.
  - f. All sealed tenders shall be opened at the same time on the prescribed date by the CEO in the presence of at least one member of Council.
  - g. If less than three tenders are received for contracts above £50,000 or if all the tenders are identical the Council may make such arrangements as it thinks fit for procuring the goods or materials or executing the works.
  - h. Any invitation to tender issued under this regulation shall be subject to Council Standing Orders.
  - i. When it is intended to enter into a contract of less than £50,000 in value for the supply of goods or materials or for the execution of works or specialist services

other than such goods, materials, works or specialist services as are excepted as set out in paragraph (a) the CEO shall obtain 3 quotations (priced descriptions of the proposed supply); where the value is below £3,000 and above £100 the CEO shall strive to obtain 3 estimates. Otherwise, Regulation 10.3 above shall apply.

- j. The Council shall not be obliged to accept the lowest or any tender, quote or estimate. Social value and environmental factors may also be criteria for awarding contracts.
- k. When applications are made to waive financial regulations relating to contracts to enable a price to be negotiated without competition the reason shall be embodied in a recommendation to the Council.
- l. If it occurs that the Council, or duly delegated committee, does not accept any tender, quote or estimate, the work is not allocated and the Council requires further pricing, provided that the specification does not change, no person shall be permitted to submit a later tender, estimate or quote who was present when the original decision making process was being undertaken.

## **12. ASSETS, PROPERTIES AND ESTATES**

- 12.1. The CEO shall make appropriate arrangements for the custody of all title deeds and Land Registry Certificates of properties held by the Council. The CEO shall ensure a record is maintained of all properties held by the Council, recording the location, extent, plan, reference, purchase details, nature of the interest, tenancies granted, rents payable and purpose for which held in accordance with Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 12.2. No tangible moveable property shall be sold, leased or otherwise disposed of, without the authority of the full Council or the relevant committee, together with any other consents required by law, except where the estimated value of any one item of tangible movable property does not exceed £2,000.
- 12.3. No real property (interests in land) shall be sold, leased or otherwise disposed of without the authority of the full Council, together with any other consents required by law, In each case a report in writing shall be provided to Council in respect of valuation and surveyed condition of the property (including matters such as planning permissions and covenants) together with a business case.
- 12.4. No real property (interests in land) shall be purchased or acquired without the authority of the full Council. In each case a report in writing shall be provided to Council in respect of valuation and surveyed condition of the property (including matters such as planning permissions and covenants) together with a business case.
- 12.5. The CEO shall ensure that an appropriate and accurate Register of Assets in excess of £500 value, and Investments is kept up to date. The continued existence of tangible assets shown in the Register shall be verified at least annually, possibly in conjunction with a health and safety inspection of assets.

### **13. INSURANCE**

- 13.1. Following the annual risk assessment (in accordance with Financial Regulation 15), the CEO shall effect all insurances and negotiate all claims on the Council's insurers.
- 13.2. The CEO shall keep a record of all insurances effected by the Council and the property and risks covered thereby and annually review it.
- 13.3. The CEO shall be notified of any loss liability or damage or of any event likely to lead to a claim, and shall report these to Council at the next available meeting.
- 13.4. All appropriate members and employees of the Council shall be included in a suitable form of security or fidelity guarantee insurance which shall cover the maximum risk exposure as determined by the Council, or duly delegated committee.

### **14. CHARITIES**

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

### **15. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 15.1. **The Council is responsible for putting in place arrangements for the management of risk.** The CEO shall prepare, for approval by the Council, risk management policy statements in respect of all activities of the Council. Risk policy statements and consequential risk management arrangements shall be reviewed by the Council at least annually, and this shall include an assessment of risks.
- 15.2. When considering any new activity, that requires approval by the Council or a committee, the CEO shall prepare a draft risk assessment including risk management proposals for consideration by the Council or Committee as part of the report dealing with the proposal.

### **16. SUSPENSION AND REVISION OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

- 16.1. It shall be the duty of the Council to review the Financial Regulations of the Council from time to time or at least annually. The CEO shall make arrangements to monitor changes in legislation or proper practices and shall advise the Council of any requirement for a consequential amendment to these financial regulations.

Financial regulations (adopted on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2025)

- 16.2. The Council may, by resolution of the Council duly notified prior to the relevant meeting of Council, suspend any part of these Financial Regulations provided that reasons for the suspension are recorded and that an assessment of the risks arising has been drawn up and presented in advance to all members of Council.

**APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES,****Full Council 11<sup>th</sup> June 2026.****RESOLVED:** To make the following appointments:

	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Councillor Appointments</b>
1)	Carpet Museum Trustees	Mike Smith
2)	CALC NALC Super Councils Network	Doug Hine (Deputy Helen Dyke) John Beckingham
3)	Friends of St Mary's Church Committee	Steve Hollands
4)	Historical Societies Group	Darren Chambers
5)	Community Transport in Wyre Forest	George Connolly
6)	Fairtrade	Bernadette Connor
7)	Wyre Forest Young People's Forum	Vicky Caulfield
8)	Kidderminster BID- Observer at Board meetings	Liam Carroll
9)	The Kidderminster Dementia Action Alliance	John Aston
10)	The Civic Society	Ben Brookes
11)	Historic Opportunities Group	Fran Oborski, Darren Chambers and Bernadette Connor
12)	Clare Witnell and Blount Charity	Bernadette Connor

**Report from councillor Steve Hollands- the Friends of St Mary's Church.**

It has been a pleasure since 2024 to be appointed as a KTC rep to the Friends of St Mary's Church. St Mary and All Saints is the largest parish church in Worcestershire and dates mainly from the 15th and 16th centuries with the oldest part dates from 1300. There have been additional buildings added in the 19th and early 20th centuries. The church is also associated with Richard Baxter, the great 17th century divine and he wrote some of his best-known works during his stay in Kidderminster. The friends work closely with the church authorities through the church wardens and clergy. A challenge to the friends and the church congregation is that there isn't a current incumbent vicar, which means they continue to rely heavily on the goodwill of local retired clergy. These retired vicars give generously of their time.

Given the age of the church buildings a big part of the Friends time is spent raising funds to help maintain the fabric of the church. Current projects include the ongoing preservation of the church tower, with a major project coming up, that will cost a great deal of money, and the project will take at least a year to complete. The recent project to install some railings on the parade ground steps, to the church, is now complete. I have attended several meetings along with a number of civic events. The meetings are well attended, and the attendees are enthusiastic in their support for the work of the church. I have been able to assist the church wardens on several issues where local councils are involved.



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

**4<sup>th</sup> June 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](mailto:consultancy@localcouncilconsultancy.co.uk)  
Website: [www.localcouncilconsultancy.co.uk](http://www.localcouncilconsultancy.co.uk)**

To Kidderminster Town Council

I performed my final remote audit on the 4<sup>th</sup> June 2026, to review the Annual Accounting Statements, accounts in general and further review of my previous interim findings. I would like to thank Hugh and his colleagues for their assistance in proving the required documentation. The Town Council has undergone many changes this year- due to the redevelopment of the Town Hall, which has not surprisingly, had an impact on Finances. The CEO is fully aware of these implications and provided a thorough explanation of the variances that appear on the Accounting Statements this year.

This report brings together my findings from the two Interim Audits I conducted- first remotely, on the 13<sup>th</sup> February 2025 and then in person on the 27<sup>th</sup> of February 2026.

## **BASIS OF REPORT**

This internal audit report is based upon the Smaller Authorities Proper Practices Panel (formerly the Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance) [Practitioners' Guide 2025](#) 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: *Practitioners' Guide 2025* – Section 4).

Cont.

Annual Return Section	Process	Findings	Recommendations and actions
A	Bookkeeping Arrangements	Appropriate books of account have been kept properly throughout the year and are well kept with sound audit trails. In 2025-2026 the Council finances were administered by Wye Forest District Council. I was provided with a cashbook of transactions. In 2026-2027, the accounts are moving in house, which is recommended.	
A	Minutes	Minutes for the year are complete and have been signed / initialled as approved by the Chair of the following meeting.	
B	Council's Financial Regulations and Standing Orders are in place and were reviewed	The Council's Financial Regulations were reviewed at a meeting on 25 <sup>th</sup> June 2025  The Council's Standing Orders were reviewed at a meeting on 22 <sup>nd</sup> 2025	
B	Council's Financial Regulations have been met with regard to expenditure following review of a random sample of transactions	Invoices are submitted to the Council and retained electronically, with Members receiving a retrospective schedule of payments for approval. Sample testing confirmed that expenditure was appropriately authorised, supported by invoices where available, and that VAT had been correctly accounted for.	

Annual Return Section	Process	Findings	Recommendations and actions
		<p>Whilst approximately 140 expenditure transactions were identified where supporting invoices were not available, this represented a relatively small proportion of the Council's overall expenditure activity and was largely confined to low-value routine purchases and invoices not retained from supplier portals. Although this represents a weakness in document retention procedures, there was no evidence from the sample testing undertaken to indicate a systemic failure to comply with the Council's Financial Regulations.</p>	<p><i>The Council should continue to strengthen its procedures for obtaining and retaining supporting documentation for all expenditure transactions, including debit card purchases and invoices accessed through supplier portals. This will ensure a complete audit trail is maintained, improve transparency, and support compliance with the Council's Financial Regulations. The Council has already recognised this issue and has implemented measures intended to improve invoice retention going forward</i></p>
B	Payment process	<p>Purchase Orders and Invoices to customers are raised in house then sent to the District for input and payment.</p>	<p><i>As accounts are now moving in house- it is recommended that the Council review bank mandate and payment processes</i></p>
B	Debit card payments	<p>Five bank cards are currently issued to members of staff for the purchase of small incidental items. During the in person review, several instances were identified where receipts were not available to support expenditure.</p>	<p><i>To strengthen financial control and accountability, adopt a debit card policy to clarify use and controls in consideration of the following.</i></p> <p><i>1.Reduce the number of bank cards in circulation and ensure retain and submit receipts, together with clear guidance on authorised expenditure.</i></p>

Annual Return Section	Process	Findings	Recommendations and actions
		I note this was mentioned in the previous Internal Audit as well.	<p>2. Introduce a petty cash system supported by an appropriate policy and defined procedures for recording, monitoring, and reconciling expenditure.</p> <p>3. Establishing accounts with frequently used local suppliers to minimise the need for ad hoc purchases using bank cards.</p>
B	Review of S137 expenditure	No s137- the Council has General Power of Competence	
B	General Power of Competence	The Council adopted GPC at the first meeting after the elections in 2024, having met the criteria of two thirds elected Councillors and a CiLCA qualified Clerk.	
C	Review of Internal Controls	During 2025-26 there was no specific Internal Control Policy – but indirectly a review is conducted.	<i>The earlier Internal Audit recommendation to adopt a Policy was actioned and a policy is in place -April 2026</i>
C	Risk Management	The Council has assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives using their Risk Assessment; the document was reviewed and discussed adopted at a Finance ad Overview meeting on 22 <sup>nd</sup> January 2026 and has been published.	
C	Review of insurance	Insurance was renewed on It is a sector specific policy, adequate for purposes, covers all assets, plus Employer and Public Liability.	

Annual Return Section	Process	Findings	Recommendations and actions
C	Monitoring of Assets	The council has an entire Operations Services department and committee to look after council assets.	
D	25/26 Precept receipt	The 25/26 Precept request matched the submission form to Council	
D	26/27 Budget and Precept consideration	The 26/27 Precept requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process which was agreed on by Full Council with the amount of £1,521,980	
D	Budget monitoring	Progress against the budget was monitored and minuted regularly.	
D	Reserves were appropriate	Reserves were adequately accounted for.  A Reserves Policy was adopted on 23 <sup>rd</sup> Feb 2023	<i>Ensure this is reviewed annually. If this is the case update Policies on line to reflect this</i>
D	The final Outturn is in line with expectations	The final outturn was materially in line with expectations	
E	Income controls	Expected income was fully received and properly recorded.  The correct Precept amounts were received and match the accounting statements and precept request  A number of historic debts remain outstanding and are currently under review by the Council. Officers have	<i>The Council should review outstanding historic debts and, where recovery is no longer considered feasible, present these to Council for formal</i>

Annual Return Section	Process	Findings	Recommendations and actions
		identified these balances as potentially irrecoverable	<i>consideration and write-off in accordance with Financial Regulation 13.3.</i>
E	VAT	The Council is VAT registered; the appropriate quarterly VAT returns were submitted to HMRC	
F	Petty cash controls	<p>Although Petty Cash of £500 was in place, and shows in the bank reconciliation- the intention was to phase it out. This has not been practical. There has been some confusion over money being returned to the District Council.</p> <p>I understand that the amount has now been changed to two – one for £100 and the other £200 reduced to £100</p>	<i>As this is now moving in-house, I would expect a more robust system to be implemented</i>
G	Payroll controls	<p>Salaries are administered and paid by Wyre Forest District Council before the Council can review them. I therefore had limited access to the process, but would expect the District Council to administer payroll correctly. A payroll report was viewed.</p> <p>The Mayor currently sends an invoice for their allowance.</p>	<i>Fin Regs 7.2 state 'the Mayor's allowance (where paid) are also liable to deduction of tax under PAYE rules and must be taxed correctly before payment.</i>

Annual Return Section	Process	Findings	Recommendations and actions
		I note from the Previous Internal Audit report that there were outstanding payments due to HMRC regarding Mayor Allowances - <i>the town council has communicated with HMRC regarding the way forward and HMRC have referred the issue to the Employer Technical Team</i>	<i>Please confirm whether this situation is now resolved</i>
G	HMRC Registration	The Council is registered with HMRC as an employer. Payments in respect of PAYE were verified.	
G	Payroll rates	The current hourly rate of pay is based on the 2025/26 NJC National Salary Award (issued July 2025) [which have been applied and back pay made in October 2025]	
G	Home Working Allowance	The HMRC agreed amount of Home Working Allowance of £6 a week is not paid as staff work from Council office	
G	Pensions Regulator	The Council is registered and in compliance with the Pensions Regulator – the re-declaration was made 1 <sup>st</sup> November 2023	
H	Asset Controls - all material assets correctly recorded	The current asset register-approved on 16 <sup>th</sup> April 2026 correctly records all material assets at purchase cost. The value on the Accounting Statements is	<i>It is better to approve the asset register within the financial year in question</i>

Annual Return Section	Process	Findings	Recommendations and actions
		that of the register as of 31-3-26	
H	Asset Controls - all additions correctly recorded	Purchases and acquisitions within 2025/2026 have been recorded	
H	Asset Controls - all Deeds and Titles have been established and shown on register	All appropriate Deeds and Titles have been established and are shown on the Register.	
H	Investment Registers	The Investment Strategy in place- states that Council has £100K in CCLA Jan 2023 However, on discussion, it was revealed that there is only £1000 in there	<i>Please update the Investment Strategy document to reflect the current situation and review annually</i>
H	Loans	The Council has a Public Works and Loans Board Loan – current value £3,069,385 The correct payments have been made.  Reserves Policy states they have an agreement to draw down a loan of £500K PWLB  In January, the Finance Minutes state a drawdown of £450K to occur	<i>Please review the Reserves Policy annually to take into account current circumstances</i>
I	Bank Reconciliations	Periodic and year-end reconciliations were properly conducted and reviewed.	
J	Accounting Statements	The Accounting Statements prepared during the year were prepared on Income and Expenditure accounting basis and were supported by an adequate audit trail.	

Annual Return Section	Process	Findings	Recommendations and actions
J	AGAR Accounting Statements	Line 2 matched the Precept amount.	
J	AGAR Accounting Statements	Lines 2 and 3 equal the total receipts in the cashbook.	
J	AGAR Accounting Statements	Line 4 only contains staff costs.	
J	AGAR Accounting Statements	Lines 4, 5 and 6 equal the total payments in the cashbook	
J	AGAR Accounting Statements	Year-end bank statements match line 8 of the Accounting Statement.	
J	AGAR Accounting Statements	Line 9 agrees to the value of the asset register	
K	Limited Assurance Review Exemption 24/25	The Council did not meet the exemption criteria for the year 24/25.	
L	Information published on website-	While the Council does not fall into the criteria for Councils below the £25k threshold, <a href="#">transparency-code-for-smaller-authorities</a> it is good practice for Town Councils above the threshold to comply- and has done so	
L	The Council is in compliance with the <a href="#">The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015</a>	The Council has five years of AGARs and associated documents published.	
L	Compliance with the <a href="#">local-government-transparency-code-2015</a> turnover exceeding £200K)	As the council have a turnover exceeding £200,000 they need to follow the Local Government Transparency	

Annual Return Section	Process	Findings	Recommendations and actions
		Code 2015- where applicable.	
L	Expenditure over £500 is recorded on the Council website and with all information requirements	All cashbook transactions appear as Appendices to the Finance & Oversight Committee Agendas	<i>Better practice to produce a separate quarterly table showing expenditure over £500 (not staff costs) in accordance with guidelines</i>
L	Tender for contracts above £5K and Government procurement	Non on website- although there is a page for 'Accounts, Policies and Tenders'	<i>If no contracts are currently in place, it may be helpful to state this on the relevant page rather than leaving it blank.</i>
L	Register of Assets	Asset register not published	<i>Publish annually</i>
L	Organisational chart and staff salaries	No organisational chart apparent on website	<i>See guidance</i>
L	Grants Awarded	Grants appear on cash book, but no specific detail on website	<i>See guidance</i>
M	Exercise of Public Rights for 24/25	The Council published the exercise of public rights notice on the website and noticeboard with the following dates:30 <sup>th</sup> June 2025 to 8th August 2025  The notice was dated: 27 <sup>th</sup> June 2025	<i>Recommend that the dates are also Minuted when AGAR is approved</i>
N	AGAR publication Requirements	Full Council approved the AGAR and complied with the publication requirements for the 24/25 AGAR by publishing Sections 1 and 2. They were approved on the 25 <sup>th</sup> June 2025 Min ref 17 C and D	
N	24/25 Internal Audit has been published and the recommendations have	The AIAR has not been published on the website-	<i>It is good practice to publish the AIAR and written narrative report</i>

Annual Return Section	Process	Findings	Recommendations and actions
	been considered and actioned	per se, but is not currently a mandatory requirement. Findings had been reviewed	
N	24/25 Conclusion of Audit Notice	The Conclusion of Audit was received by Council on the 24 <sup>th</sup> October and published on the 25 <sup>th</sup> October, due to a delay from External Auditors	
N	24/25 External Audit Certificate has been published and the recommendations have been considered and actioned	<p>External Auditors and published on the website on the 25<sup>th</sup> October, and was presented at the next Full Council meeting on the 28<sup>th</sup> January.</p> <p>Findings: Findings: Sec 1 Assertion 5 incorrectly completed as no Risk review carried out. <i>A review has been completed this year.</i></p> <p>Sec 2- Box 4 contained non-staff costs. However, the External Auditors advisory figures are incorrect. <i>The Council have correctly restated Box 4 and Box 6.</i></p> <p>The report also stated that 'it failed to make proper provision during the year 2025/26 for the exercise of public rights, since the approval date was after the start of the period for the exercise of public rights. As a result, the smaller authority must answer 'No' to Assertion 4 of the Annual</p>	

Annual Return Section	Process	Findings	Recommendations and actions
		<p>Governance Statement for 2025/26 and ensure that it makes proper provision for the exercise of public rights during 2026/27.</p> <p><i>The published notice on the Council website was dated 27<sup>th</sup> June 2025, for an inspection period of 30<sup>th</sup> June to 8<sup>th</sup> August, so the Council did make proper provision for the year the AGAR covered- ie 2024-2025.</i></p> <p><i>2025/2026 provision will be made June 2026.</i></p>	<p>Council can answer yes to Assertion 4.</p>
O	Website domain name and accessibility	<p>The Council has an authority owned domain name: <a href="https://www.kidderminstertowncouncil.gov.uk/">https://www.kidderminstertowncouncil.gov.uk/</a></p> <p>The website has an Accessibility Statement dated: 19<sup>th</sup> Feb 2026</p> <p>The Council has published a Privacy Notice</p>	
O	Authority owned email accounts to align with GDPR principles	<p>The Council has council-owned domain email accounts for the Clerk and Councillors which are in use.</p>	
O	IT Policy	<p>The Council adopted an IT Policy in January 2026 which demonstrates protection of equipment</p>	<p><i>Ensure Policies available on line have adoption and reviewed dates</i></p>

Annual Return Section	Process	Findings	Recommendations and actions
		and mandates for authority owned email accounts.	
O	Data protection	The Council is registered with the ICO reference ZA179595 has a data protection policy in place readopted: February 2023	<i>The Council should review and update its Data Protection Policy and introduce supporting documentation, including a Privacy Notice, Data Retention Schedule and Subject Access Request Procedure, to strengthen its data governance framework and provide clearer evidence of compliance with Internal Control Objective O.</i>
[ P ]	Trust funds (If applicable) – the Council met its responsibilities as a trustee	<p>The Parish Council operates as a Sole Trustee for the Kidderminster Educational Foundation- Charity number 527537. Filing of Accounts are stated as not required, due to levels of sums held.</p> <p>The Annual returns for 2022 and 2024 are showing as not filed with the Chrity Commission</p>	<p><i>Recommend the overdue returns are filed. Monitor levels of income- if exceed £25K accounts must be filed.</i></p> <p><i>Please note that line 11 of the Accounting statements will change next year relating to trust transactions from 'exclude' to 'include'.</i></p>

#### Further Recommendations:

Following the completion of the Internal Audit, the Council should undertake a review of effectiveness as per Regulation 6 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. A blank form can be supplied.

## Conclusion

The above are recommendations to help the Council improve its processes and in no way detract from the work it, the CEO and staff have already done. I have noted that many of the actions which the previous auditor recommended last year have been completed; the staff and Council should be commended for this.

Kidderminster Town Council has an electorate in the region of 77,000 and the Precept for the year 2025/2026 was set at £1,224,286

In general, I believe that the Council has competent arrangements in place to satisfy itself that its systems of internal financial control are transparent and effective. There are approval and authorisation controls to minimise risk. The audit and management trail for financial transactions is good. I was able to agree that all of the relevant Internal Objectives, except L- publication requirements, have been met.

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

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



Claire Tilley CiLCA PIALC  
Internal Auditor

**Figures presented to me at the time of Audit for Section 2**

	Year ending 31 March 2025	Year ending 31 March 2026
1. Balances brought forward	1,251,968	1,332,502
2. Annual precept	1,024,716	1,224,286
3. Total other receipts	7,943,283	2,451,184
4. Staff costs	363,495	509,965
5. Loan interest/capital repayments	109,605	119,689
6. Total other payments	8,414,365	3,868,774
7. Balances carried forward	1,332,502	509,544
8. Total cash and investments	2,069,518	533,645
9. Total fixed assets and long-term assets	227,541	350,642
10. Total borrowings	1,971,353	3,069,385

**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.

Review completed by: Hugh Peacocke, CEO

Date: 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2026

Approved by Council on: 11<sup>th</sup> June 2026

**KIDDERMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL**

**11 June 2026**

**PUBLIC REPORT TO TOWN COUNCILLORS**

**1. AGENDA ITEM 10: End of Year Accounts 2025-2026**

- 10.1 To receive the Annual Return (subject to external audit) for the financial year 2024/25
- 10.2 To receive and note the Annual Internal Audit Report
- 10.3 To approve each individual paragraph (1-10) of the Annual Governance Statement as defined at Section 2 of the Annual Return
- 10.4 To adopt the accounts and to authorise the signing of the Annual Return (subject to external audit) by The Town Mayor and the Chief Executive Officer, in line with the regulatory requirement to sign the accounts by 30 June 2025.

**BACKGROUND**

**Legal Provisions and Requirements**

The statutory provisions for the Council's annual audit can be found in the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, the Accountant Audit Regulations 2015 and the Local Audit (Smaller Authorities) Regulations 2015.

Local Councils with a gross income or expenditure not exceeding £6.5 million (whichever is the higher) are classed as "smaller authorities".

Where the income or expenditure exceeds £200,000 but not exceeding £6.5 million for the year, they must produce an income and expenditure account and a statement of balances in relation to that financial year.

As soon as possible after the 31st of March the accounts must be made up. The record of receipts and payments or the balance sheet must be signed by the Responsible Financial Officer, and it must be approved by a Council resolution by 30th June. (See attached Accounting statements 2025-26, bank reconciliation at 31 March 2026 and the explanation of variances from last year, as required).

The accounts of every local Council and of any officer who handles money or property for which they should account to the Council are liable to audit. The audit is supposed to take place annually as soon as maybe after the close of the financial year on the 31st of March.

PKF Littlejohn have been appointed to audit smaller Councils and have issued detailed advice and guidance regarding the returns and forms which should be submitted.

This advice also includes deadlines for submission. The deadline for submission to our auditors this year is Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> June 2026.

The Council's accounts must be made up to the 31st of March, balanced, certified by the Responsible Financial Officer and signed by them. As soon as reasonably possible thereafter the RFO must begin the period for the exercise of the rights of the public to inspect the accounting records and also notify the auditor of the date on which that begins.

The public rights of inspection questioning the auditor and objection are exercisable for a single period of 30 working days after the notice given by the RFO (working days excludes Saturdays, Sundays and bank holidays.) The period must include the first working the first 10 working days in July. The 30-day period starts on the day after the information is published.

The RFO must ensure that:

- a) the statement of accounts with any certificate or opinion entered by the auditor;
- b) the annual governance statement; (See attached)
- c) a statement giving details of the period during which the public may exercise their rights of inspection and how a member of the public may give notice of an intention to exercise that right;
- d) the name and address of the auditor
- e) details of what documents can be inspected and how to make an objection are published including publication on the Council's website.

Publication must take place not later than 30th of September of the financial year immediately following the financial year to which the audit relates

1. DISCUSSION/ COMMENT

The attached statements are completed up to date.

Approval and signing of the accounts to be resolved by Full council on 11th June 2026.

2. POINTS TO NOTE:

In section 2- Accounting Statements 2025/26:

- Increases in Total other receipts (Line 3) and all other payments (Line 6) arising from the Town Hall project.
- The increase in total borrowings (Line 10), again, arising from the Town Hall project.

The full back up information is attached for the information of Members.

Hugh Peacocke  
Chief Executive Officer

5th June 2026.

# Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2025/26 Form 3

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

- where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure exceeded £25,000 but did not exceed £15 million; or
- where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure was £25,000 or less but that:
  - are unable to certify themselves as exempt (fee payable); or
  - have requested a limited assurance review (fee payable)

## Guidance notes on completing Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2025/26

1. Every smaller authority in England that either received gross income or incurred gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 **must** complete Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return at the end of each financial year in accordance with *Proper Practices*.
2. **The Annual Governance and Accountability Return is made up of three parts, pages 3 to 6:**
  - The **Annual Internal Audit Report must** be completed by the authority's internal auditor.
  - **Sections 1 and 2 must** be completed and approved by the authority.
  - **Section 3** is completed by the external auditor and will be returned to the authority.
3. The authority **must** approve Section 1, Annual Governance Statement, before approving Section 2, Accounting Statements, and both **must** be approved and published on the authority website/webpage **before 1 July 2026**.
4. An authority with either gross income or gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 or an authority with neither income nor expenditure exceeding £25,000, but which is unable to certify itself as exempt, or is requesting a limited assurance review, **must** return to the external auditor by email or post (not both) **no later than 30 June 2026** Reminder letters will incur a charge of £40 +VAT:
  - the Annual Governance and Accountability Return Sections 1 and 2, together with
  - a bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2026
  - an explanation of any significant year on year variances in the accounting statements
  - notification of the commencement date of the period for the exercise of public rights
  - Annual Internal Audit Report 2025/26

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

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

## Publication Requirements

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

Before 1 July 2026 authorities **must** publish:

- Notice of the period for the exercise of public rights and a declaration that the accounting statements are as yet unaudited;
- **Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement 2025/26** approved and signed, page 4
- **Section 2 - Accounting Statements 2025/26** approved and signed, page 5

Not later than 30 September 2026 authorities **must** publish:

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

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

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

# Guidance notes on completing Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2025/26

- The authority **must** comply with *Proper Practices* in completing Sections 1 and 2 of this AGAR. *Proper Practices* are found in the *Practitioners' Guide\** which is updated from time to time and contains everything needed to prepare successfully for the financial year-end and the subsequent work by the external auditor.
- Make sure that the AGAR is complete (no highlighted boxes left empty) and is properly signed and dated. Any amendments **must** be approved by the authority and properly initialled.
- The authority **should** receive and note the Annual Internal Audit Report before approving the Annual Governance Statement and the accounts.
- Use the checklist provided below to review the AGAR for completeness before returning it to the external auditor by email or post (not both) no later than 30 June 2026
- The Annual Governance Statement (Section 1) **must** be approved before the Accounting Statements (Section 2) and evidenced by the agenda or minute references, even where approved on the same day.
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) **must** certify the accounts (Section 2) before they are presented to the authority for approval. The authority **must** in this order; consider, approve and sign the accounts.
- The RFO is required to commence the public rights period which **must** be a single period of 30 working days for inspection ( this excludes weekends and public holidays) which **must** include the first 10 working days of July.
- **You must inform your external auditor about any change of Clerk, Responsible Financial Officer or Chair, and provide relevant authority owned generic email addresses and telephone numbers.**
- Make sure that the copy of the bank reconciliation to be sent to your external auditor with the AGAR covers all the bank accounts. If the authority holds any short-term investments, note their value on the bank reconciliation. The external auditor **must** be able to agree the bank reconciliation to Box 8 on the accounting statements (**Section 2, page 5**). An explanation **must** be provided of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8. More help on bank reconciliation is available in the *Practitioners' Guide\**.
- Explain fully significant variances in the accounting statements on **page 5**. Do not just send a copy of the detailed accounting records instead of this explanation. The external auditor wants to know that you understand the reasons for all variances. Include complete numerical and narrative analysis to support the full variance.
- Additional costs may be incurred if additional audit work is required.
- Make sure that the accounting statements add up and that the balance carried forward from the previous year (Box 7 of 2025) equals the balance brought forward in the current year (Box 1 of 2026).
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), on behalf of the authority, **must** set the commencement date for the exercise of public rights which **must** be a single period of 30 working days for inspection (this excludes weekends and public holidays) which **must** include the first 10 working days of July.
- The authority **must** publish on the authority website/webpage the information required by Regulation 15 (2), Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, including the period for the exercise of public rights and the name and address of the external auditor **before 1 July 2026**

Completion checklist – 'No' answers mean you may not have met requirements		Yes	No
All sections	Have all highlighted boxes have been completed?		
	Has all additional information requested, including <b>the dates set for the period for the exercise of public rights</b> , been provided for the external auditor?		
Internal Audit Report	Have all highlighted boxes been completed by the internal auditor and explanations provided?		
Section 1	For any statement to which the response is 'no', has an explanation been published?		
Section 2	Has the Responsible Financial Officer signed the accounting statements before presentation to the authority for approval?		
	Has the authority's approval of the accounting statements been confirmed by the signature of the Chair of the approval meeting?		
	Has an explanation of significant variations been published where required?		
	Has the bank reconciliation as at <b>31 March 2026</b> been reconciled to Box 8?		
	Has an explanation of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8 been provided?		
Sections 1 and 2	Trust funds – have all disclosures been made if the authority as a body corporate is a sole managing trustee? <b>NB:</b> do not send trust accounting statements unless requested.		

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

# Annual Internal Audit Report 2025/26

Kidderminster Town Council

<https://www.kidderminstertowncouncil.gov.uk/>

During the financial year ended 31 March 2026, this authority's internal auditor acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with the relevant procedures and controls in operation and obtained appropriate evidence from the authority.

The internal audit for 2025/26 has been carried out in accordance with this authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this authority.

Internal control objective	Yes	No*	Not covered**
A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.	✓		
B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	✓		
D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	✓		
E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
F. Cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.	✓		
G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	✓		
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	✓		
I. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.	✓		
J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	✓		
K. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2024/25, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2024/25 AGAR tick "not covered")			✓
L. The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation. <i>Please see written report.</i>		✓	
M. In the year covered by this AGAR, the authority correctly provided for a period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations (during the 2025/26 AGAR period, were public rights in relation to the 2024-25 AGAR evidenced by a notice on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set).	✓		
N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2024/25 AGAR (see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).	✓		
O. The authority has complied with laws, regulations & proper practices relating to digital and data compliance.	✓		
<b>P. (For local councils only)</b> Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.	Yes	No	Not applicable
	✓		

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

Date(s) internal audit undertaken


Name of person who carried out the internal audit

13/02/2026

27/02/2026

Claire Tilley CiLCA PIALC

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit



Date

05/06/2026

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

\*\*Note: If the response is 'not covered' please state when the most recent internal audit work was done in this area and when it is next planned; or, if coverage is not required, the annual internal audit report must explain why not (add separate sheets if needed).

## Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2025/26

We acknowledge as the members of:

ENTER NAME OF AUTHORITY

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2026, that:

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

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

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

DD/MM/YYYY

and recorded as minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

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

Chair

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Clerk

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

ENTER PUBLICLY AVAILABLE WEBSITE/WEBPAGE ADDRESS

## Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2025/26 for

### Kidderminster Town Council

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2025 £	31 March 2026 £	
1. Balances brought forward	1,251,968	1,332,502	Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value <b>must</b> agree to Box 7 of previous year.
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	1,024,716	1,224,286	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	7,943,283	2,451,184	Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.
4. (-) Staff costs	Restated 363,495	509,965	Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	109,605	119,689	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).
6. (-) All other payments	Restated 8,414,365	3,868,774	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).
7. (=) Balances carried forward	1,332,502	509,544	Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. <b>must</b> equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).
8. Total value of cash and short term investments	2,069,518	533,645	The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – <b>To agree with bank reconciliation.</b>
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	227,541	393,013	The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.
10. Total borrowings	1,971,353	3,069,385	The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).

For Local Councils Only	Yes	No	
11 Do the figures in the accounting statements above exclude any trust transactions?	✓		For guidance refer to the Practitioners' Guide sections 2.31 to 2.33.

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2026 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

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

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date 05/06/2026

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

DD/MM/YYYY

as recorded in minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

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

SIGNATURE REQUIRED



**BANK RECONCILIATION PERIOD ENDED 31st March 2026**

**KIDDERMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL**

	£	£
Balance per bank statement as at 31st March 2026 - Mixed Payments Plan	18,692.37	
Balance per bank statement as at 31st March 2026 - Events	0.00	
Balance per bank statement as at 31st March 2026- Business Premium Account	513,852.85	
<b>Outstanding Items</b>		
Less unpresented cheques as at 31st March 2026:		
		0.00
		532,545.22
Plus any petty cash balance held at 31st March 2026		500.00
Plus Short Term Investment		1,000.00
<b>TOTAL - NET BANK BALANCES AS AT 31st March 2026</b> (Box 8 on Annual Return)		<b><u>534,045.22</u></b>

*The net balances reconcile to the Cash Book for the year, as follows:*

	£
<b>CASH BOOK</b>	
Opening Balance:	2,069,517.82
Add: Receipts in the year	4,525,401.25
Less: Payments in the year:	6,060,873.85
<b>CLOSING BALANCE PER CASH BOOK @31st March 2026</b> (Box 8 on Annual Return)	<b><u>534,045.22</u></b>

		£
<b>Represented by</b>	Cash book	532,545.22
	Short Term Inv	1,000.00
	Petty Cash	500.00
		<b><u>534,045.22</u></b>
		0.00

**Public report:**

Kidderminster Town Council meeting, 11<sup>th</sup> June 2026

Agenda Item 14: PUBLIC WORKS LOAN

To authorise the drawing down of the final instalment of approved loan, if required or in the best interests of the Council.

**Background**

On 16<sup>th</sup> April 2025 the Council resolved to seek approval to borrow up to £1,250,000 in order to complete the Town Hall transformation project and that if approval was granted for the loan, the times and instalments of the borrowing, to be determined as required, subject to approval of the Finance and Overview Committee.

Approval to borrow was received from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2025. The approval is for 12 months and is valid until 29<sup>th</sup> September 2026.

Following approval, the Council has drawn down the following instalments:

1. £800,000 on 30<sup>th</sup> October 2025, and
2. £350,000 on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2026.

The balance of £50,000 remains and the Council needs to consider if this amount should also be borrowed, to the overall approval limit of £1,250,000.

**The Current Situation**

The Town Council has completed the Town Hall transformation project. The total cost of the finished project is expected to be in the region of £12.5M. This was funded largely through grants from the Government's Levelling Up Fund (65%), borrowings from the Public Works Loans Board (25%) and the remaining 10% mainly from the Council's reserves. This is reflected in the reserves position shown in the end of year accounts for the Council which show a total of reserves at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026 at £533,645 ( down from £1.1 M at 30<sup>th</sup> November 2023, just before the project commenced.)

**The Council's financial position and cash flow projections**

The attached table shows the most recent cashflow projections for the Council, up to May 2027. The Council has set a minimum reserves level at a quarter of the precept, which is £380,000. The lowest level of reserves reached on the projection is at 30/04/2027, which is £357,000. The following month, May 2027, we will receive the first instalment of next year's precept.

### **The cost of borrowing**

The Council can borrow from the Public Works Loans Board at competitive rates- currently 6.29% for a 25-year annuity loan. However, we can also hold money on short term deposit with CCLA, which attracts interest at 3.8% at the moment. The repayment costs over 25 years would be £3,994 per annum, and the interest we might get on short term investment could be £1,900, leaving a net cost of £2,094 per annum.

### **Conclusion and recommendation**

The preferred position is not to add any further to the Council's overall borrowings of £3,069,385 at 31.03.2026 as reported earlier in this meeting. If the attached cash flow projections are accurate, then the Council may not need to draw down the remaining approved £50,000. However, any unforeseen costs (such as the Town Hall clock, or any other emergencies) could result in the Council failing to meet its minimum level of reserves. The cash flow position will be carefully monitored between now and mid-September. The remaining £50,000 would not be drawn down unless necessary to maintain this level.

Recommended: To authorise the CEO to draw down the remaining £50,000 of approved loan, if required or in the best interests of the Council.

( Before doing so, the CEO should consult the Chairman of the council's Finance and Overview Committee and have regard to the council's position, that the funds are necessary in order to maintain the minimum level of reserves).

Report author: Hugh Peacocke, CEO

Dated: 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2026

	Date													
	19/05/2026	31/05/2026	30/06/2026	31/07/2026	31/08/2026	30/09/2026	31/10/2026	30/11/2026	31/12/2026	31/01/2027	28/02/2027	31/03/2027	30/04/2027	31/05/2027
B/f		1,086,637	1,019,072	671,517	555,958	463,403	420,848	983,734	904,620	787,506	713,392	634,277	555,163	357,049
Salaries		0	59,000	59,000	59,000	59,000	59,000	59,000	59,000	59,000	59,000	59,000	59,000	59,000
Other expenditure		60,000	285,000	0	0	0	0	0	38,000	0	0	0	0	15,000
Loan Charges		0	0	0	0	0	124,000	0	0	0	0	0	124,000	0
Monthly Expenditure		30,000	68,555	100,000	68,555	68,555	68,555	68,555	68,555	68,555	68,555	68,555	68,555	68,555
Monthly Income		22,435	65,000	43,441	35,000	85,000	53,441	48,441	48,441	53,441	48,441	48,441	53,441	48,441
Precept		0	0	0	0	0	761,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	761,000
Balance	1,086,637	1,019,072	671,517	555,958	463,403	420,848	983,734	904,620	787,506	713,392	634,277	555,163	357,049	1,023,935
actual	1086637	1,014,028												
Difference		-5,044												
%	0	0												

Rates 20,000  
WFDC 45,000  
Monthly

	KTC "Monthly" Expenditure		KTC Monthly income		Balance 19/05/2026
Total	2,118,272		Total	2,118,272	186,784 TC Acc
Less Retention	200,000 June		Less Precept	1,521,980 May and Oct	398,853 Premium
Less salaries	625,611		Less Santander	15,000 (Quarterly	501,000 CCLA
less reserves	40,000 end		Net	581,292	1,086,637 Total
Less Elections	40,000 end		Monthly	48,441 Subject to Town Hall variations	
Less insurances	12,000 April				
Less SGP	10,000 April				
Less hanging basket	17,000 June				
Less TH insurance	20,000 June				
Less Loan Charges	248,000 April and October				
Less event staff (Sal.	45,000 each month				
Less Christmas Ligh	38,000 dec				
Monthly from May	822,661				
Each Month	68,555				

**Kidderminster Town Council**

Work Programme for Full Council Meetings for the Municipal Year 2026/27.

**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

**Other items of Business**

<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Item</b>
<b>12 May 2026</b> (Annual Meeting and Mayor-making)	Election of mayor and Deputy Mayor for 26-27
<b>11 June 2026</b>	Approval of the internal control checklist, as recommended by the internal auditor
	End of Year Statutory Accounts
	To review the Council's Financial Regulations
	Reports from Outside body representatives
	Climate Change and Biodiversity Working Group
<b>October 2026</b>	To review Standing Orders and make any amendments agreed. (Reviewed Oct 25- move to Oct meeting)
	<b>Kidderminster BID Presentation</b>
	<b>The Climate Change and Biodiversity Working Group</b>
	<b>External Auditor's report</b>
	<b>Timetable for Budget 25-26</b>
	<b>Final report on the Town Hall Transformation project</b>
	<b>Accessibility statement and GDPR</b>
	<b>To review Standing Orders and make any amendments agreed.</b>
<b>Climate Change and Biodiversity Working Group</b>	
<b>January 2027</b>	<b>Review of Town Council Vision 2025-2029</b>
	<b>External Auditor's Report</b>
	<b>2026/27 Budget and Precept</b>
	<b>Schedule of meetings for the municipal year 2026/27</b>
<b>April 2027</b>	<b>Nomination of Mayor Elect and Deputy Mayor and approval of Mayor's Charities 26-27</b>
	<b>Annual Review of Strategic Risk register</b>
	<b>Review of Committees' Terms of reference for 26-27</b>
	<b>Committee Appointments</b>
	To appoint memberships of Committees of the Council for 27-28
<b>Climate Change and Biodiversity Working Group</b>	

2026/27: Possible presentations: The Police, The Buses, Incredible Edible.