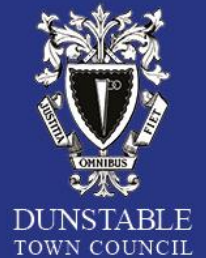


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**Paul Hodson**, Town Clerk and Chief Executive

Notice of a Meeting of the **Finance and General Purposes Committee**

Date: **Friday 8 November 2024**

Dear Councillor,

A meeting of the **Finance and General Purposes Committee** will be held on **Monday 18 November 2024**, at **Grove House; Council Chamber** at **7:00 PM**. To view the meeting live or afterwards use this link: [livestream](#). Members of the public and press are also welcome to attend in person. Members of the public may ask a question during the public session, either in person or online via MS Teams. If you would like to ask a question, please contact the Council via [democratic@dunstable.gov.uk](mailto:democratic@dunstable.gov.uk) or 01582 513000 by 4 pm on Friday 15 November 2024.

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

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

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



Yours faithfully

Paul Hodson

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

Town Clerk and Chief Executive

## **AGENDA**

**265/24 Apologies for Absence**

**266/24 Declarations of Interest**

**267/24 Public Question Time**

**268/24 To approve as an accurate record the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 16 September 2024**

FGP Minutes September 2024.pdf

**269/24 Action Tracker – to review progress of previously agreed actions**

Action Tracker.pdf

**270/24 Finance Report**

1. Finance Report FGP November 2024.pdf

1. Finance Report Appendix 1 - Revenue Budget Position.pdf

1. Finance Report Appendix 2 - Reserves Summary 31.10.24.pdf

1. Finance Report Appendix 3 - Audited AGAR 2023-24.pdf

1. Finance Report Appendix 3 - Completion letter.pdf

**271/24 Corporate Services Budget Report 2025/26**

2. Corporate Services Budget 2025-26.pdf

**272/24 Compliance and Facilities Report**

3. Corporate Compliance and Facilities Report.pdf

3. Appendix 1 - Corporate Plan 24-27.pdf

3. Appendix 2 - CP KPI Summary Poster.pdf

3. APPENDIX 3 - KPI Progress.pdf

3. Appendix 4 - Customer Charter.pdf

**273/24 Marketing and Communications**

4. Marketing Report November 2024.pdf

**274/24 To consider the Town Council becoming a corporate member of Rotary Dunstable at a cost of £180 per year**

5. Rotary Club Report.pdf

**275/24 Reports from Outside Bodies**

Citizen's Advice Management Committee – Councillor Attwell

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

Hospice at Home Management Committee – Councillor Bater

Ashton Almshouses Charity – Councillors O’Riordan and Alderman  
Ashton Schools Foundation – Councillors Hollick and Alderman  
Chew’s Foundation – Councillors Brennan and Kenson Gurney  
Poor’s Land Charity – Councillors Kenson Gurney and Jones  
Lockington Charity and Marshe Charity – Councillors Kenson Gurney and Jones  
Dunstable and District Scout Council Executive – Councillor Kotarski

**276/24 Exclusion of Public and Press**

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

**277/24 Reference up from Personnel Sub-Committee - Report to follow**

**278/24 Date of the next meeting - Monday 20 January 2025 at 7.00 pm**

To: All Members and Officers:

Georgia Pearson (Democratic Services Manager), Peter Hollick (Council Member), Wendy Bater (Council Member), Kenson Gurney (Council Member), Matthew Brennan (Council Member), John Gurney (Council Member), Philip Crawley (Council Member), Liz Jones (Council Member), Johnson Tamara (Council Member), Paul Hodson (Town Clerk and Chief Executive), Gregory Alderman (Council Member), Louise O’Riordan (Council Member), Trevor Adams (Council Member), Mark Davis (Council Member), Matthew Neall (Council Member), Michelle Henderson (Council Member), Nicholas Kotarski (Council Member), Richard Attwell (Council Member), Robert Blennerhassett (Council Member), Sally Kimondo (Councillor), Lisa Scheder (Head of Corporate Services (RFO)), James Slack (Corporate Performance & Compliance Manager), Dunstable Communications (Corporate Communications & Marketing Officer), philip\_666@msn.com,

**DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL**

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

**HELD AT THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, GROVE HOUSE, HIGH STREET NORTH,  
DUNSTABLE**

**ON MONDAY 16 SEPTEMBER 2024 FROM 7 pm**

Present: Councillors Louise O’Riordan (Town Mayor), Sally Kimondo (Deputy Town Mayor), Nicholas Kotarski (Vice-Chair), Wendy Bater, Matthew Brennan, Philip Crawley, John Gurney, Michelle Henderson, Peter Hollick, Liz Jones, and Johnson Tamara.

In Attendance: Paul Hodson (Town Clerk and Chief Executive), Georgia Pearson (Democratic Services Manager), Lisa Scheder (Head of Corporate Services) James Slack (Corporate Compliance and Performance Manager) and Rachel Connor (Marketing and Communications Officer).

Apologies: Councillors Gregory Alderman (Chair), Richard Attwell and Kenson Gurney.

Public: Nil

**189/24 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 17 June 2024 were approved as a correct record and were signed by the Chair.

Councillors Brennan and O’Riordan entered the chamber at 7:02 pm.

**190/24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Jones declared an interest in item 11 due to being a member of the Dunstable Rotary Club.

**191/24 FINANCE**

The Head of Corporate Services summarised the report to members.

It was proposed, seconded and

**RESOLVED:**

- i. To note the revenue budgetary position for the period from 1 April 2024 to 31 July 2024
- ii. To note the current balance of the Council’s earmarked reserves as of 31 July 2024
- iii. To note the current investments

- iv. To confirm the current Direct Debits as of August 2024

## **192/24 COMPLIANCE AND FACILITIES**

The Corporate Compliance and Performance Manager summarised the report to Members.

Councillor Jones enquired if all Councillors should sign in on the new tablets at each location, each time they come into the building. It was advised that Councillors should start to sign in each time they come into the building and the Corporate Compliance and Performance Manager will send out an email to confirm this.

**ACTION** - The Corporate Compliance and Performance Manager

## **193/24 MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS**

The Communications and Marketing Officer summarised the report provided to members.

Councillor Brennan asked if adding old pictures of Dunstable into Talk of The Town could be considered.

**ACTION** - The Communications and Marketing Officer

Councillors asked if the What's on Window and the West Street Window can be used to advertise the council meetings more often to engage the public in what the Council are doing.

**ACTION** - The Communications and Marketing Officer

## **194/24 40<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS**

The Head of Corporate Services summarised the report provided.

Councillor Hollick updated members on the book he is writing for the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. A quote has been obtained of roughly £358 for 100 copies.

Councillor Jones put forward the idea for an exhibition in Grove House with the History Society to allow residents to visit and look through the 40 years of Dunstable.

**ACTION** - The Town Clerk and Chief Executive

It was proposed, seconded and

**RESOLVED:** to approve all options detailed within the report to mark the Town Council's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary year.

## **195/24 HONORARY FREEMAN AND FREEWOMEN**

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive summarised the report to members.

Councillors discuss the recommendations in detail.

It was proposed, seconded and

**RESOLVED:** to begin awarding the honour of Honorary Freeman or Freewoman of Dunstable during the Town Council's 40th year in 2025 /26.

It was proposed, seconded and

**RESOLVED:** to purchase of an Honour Board to commemorate past and future Freemen and Freewomen of the town.

It was proposed, seconded and

**RESOLVED:** to adopt the proposed approach in considering future Freemen or Freewomen of Dunstable, except not with a limit of four.

## **196/24 FLAG FLYING**

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive summarised the report to members.

Councillor Jones asked the quality of our flags used to be checked and replacements made if necessary. .

**ACTION:** Democratic Services Manager

Members requested that information about each flag flying be placed near to the flag as appropriate.

**ACTION:** Democratic Services Manager

It was proposed, seconded and

**RESOLVED:** to approve the proposed revised flag flying schedule with the addition of Merchant Navy Day on 3 September and Emergency Services Day on 9 September.

## **197/24 TO CONSIDER THE TOWN COUNCIL BECOMING A CORPORATE MEMBER OF ROTARY DUNSTABLE AT A COST OF £180 PER YEAR**

Following a discussion this item was deferred to the next meeting pending a report outlining the process and benefits to the Town Council.

**ACTION -** The Town Clerk and Chief Executive

## **198/24 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP**

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive gave a verbal update from the working group meeting held on 12 September 2024 and informed Members that a further report would be provided to Full Council on 18 November 2024.

## **199/24 REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS**

- Citizen's Advice Management Committee – Councillor Richard Attwell

Councillor Henderson left the chamber at 9:04 pm

Councillor Brennan updated members in Councillor Attwell's absence.

Since the last meeting there have been two further meetings, one in August and the AGM in September.

- Dunstable International Town Twinning Association – Councillors Louise O'Riordan, Peter Hollick and Kenson Gurney

No Updated

- Hospice at Home Management Committee - Councillor Wendy Bater

Councillor Bater updated members that she attended her first meeting back in July 2024, which was the AGM. It was advised that Councillor Jones was made Chair of the committee. A further update will be provided at the next meeting.

- Ashton Almshouses Charity – Councillors Louise O'Riordan and Gregory Alderman

No Update

- Ashton Schools Foundation - Councillors Peter Hollick and Gregory Alderman

No Update

- Chew's Foundation - Councillors Matthew Brennan and Kenson Gurney

No Update

- Poor's Land Charity - Councillors Kenson Gurney and Liz Jones

No Update

- Lockington Charity and Marshe Charity - Councillors Kenson Gurney and Liz Jones

Inspections have been carried out on some of the properties. There are couple of properties within the block on Church Street which are being looked at under

health and safety. Some of the residents are collecting rather a lot of items and storing them in their properties, which is being dealt with sensitively.

One property is being refurbished and will be out to let as soon as possible.

- Dunstable and District Scout Council Executive - Councillor Nicholas Kotarski

Councillor Kotarski advised that the AGM was back in June 2024. Roger Pepworth has stepped down as Chair and the new Chair is Philip Spicer.

## **200/24 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

It was proposed, seconded and

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

## **201/24 NEW WEBSITE**

The Corporate Compliance and Performance Manager summarised the report provided. Members discussed and considered the recommendations within the report.

It was proposed, seconded and

**RESOLVED:** that the new Website Development, Hosting and Support contract be awarded to Bidder D for the amount proposed, at a cost of £900.00 per year for hosting, maintenance and support.

It was proposed, seconded and

**RESOLVED:** The approval to release £5,000 from the Corporate Plan Development reserve for the one-off capital contribution for the development of a new website.

It was proposed, seconded and

**RESOLVED:** Members approved the recommendation that any website budget year end surplus is allocated to a new earmarked website reserve for future website development.

## **202/24 NEW TOWN COUNCIL BRANDING**

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive summarised the report to members.



Members discussed the new branding proposed in detail and indicated that the preferred approach would be to retain the main elements of the current crest in some form.

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive advised Members that the new website tender included a significant element of work to clarify user needs and develop electronic content which may help to clarify what changes are possible and needed from the current crest to enable changes to be made which met Members' preferences and the requirements of current websites and social media.

It was proposed, seconded and

**RESOLVED:** For officers to explore further options and defer the decision on branding to the next meeting.

**The meeting closed at 9:52 pm.**

AGENDA ITEM 269/24

Committee	Minute	Date	Action	Action Full	Responsible	Update	Status
FGP	192/24	16/09/2024	Compliance and Facilities	Councillor Jones enquired if all Councillors should sign in on the new tablets at each location, each time they come into the building. It was advised that Councillors should start to sign in each time they come into the building and the Corporate Compliance and Performance Manager will send out an email to confirm this.	The Corporate Compliance and Performance Manager		Complete
FGP	193/24	16/09/2024	Marketing and Communications	Councillor Brennan asked if adding old pictures of Dunstable into Talk of The Town could be considered.	The Communications and Marketing Officer	To be considered for 2025	Ongoing
FGP	193/24	16/09/2024	Marketing and Communications	Councillors asked if the What's on Window and the West Street Window can be used to advertise the council meetings more often to engage the public in what the Council are doing.	The Communications and Marketing Officer		Ongoing
FGP	194/24	16/09/2024	40th Anniversary	Councillor Jones put forward the idea for an exhibition in Grove House with the History Society to allow residents to visit and look through the 40 years of Dunstable.	The Town Clerk and Chief Executive		Ongoing
FGP	196/24	16/09/2024	Flag Flying	Councillor Jones asked the quality of our flags used to be checked and replacements made if necessary.	Democratic Services Manager	The quality has been checked, a new Union Flag has been ordered	Complete
FGP	196/24	16/09/2024	Flag Flying	Members requested that information about each flag flying be placed near to the flag as appropriate.	Democratic Services Manager & The Communications and Marketing Officer	The Democratic Services Manager will complete this information sheet in due course	Ongoing
FGP	197/24	16/09/2024	Rotary Dunstable	Following a discussion this item was deferred to the next meeting pending a report outlining the process and benefits to the Town Council.	The Town Clerk and Chief Executive		Agenda Item

**DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL****FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE****18 NOVEMBER 2024****FINANCE REPORT**

<b>Purpose of Report</b>	To: 1.1) provide a revenue budgetary control report 1.2) provide detail of the Council's earmarked reserves 1.3) report the outcome of the External Audit report 1.4) provide detail on current investments
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**1 ACTION RECOMMENDED**

- 1.1 For Members to note the revenue budget position for the period from 1 April 2024 to 30 September 2024.
- 1.2 For Members to note the current balance of the Council's earmarked reserves as at 31 October 2024.
- 1.3 For Members to receive and note the outcome of the External Audit for financial year 2023/24.
- 1.4 For Members to note current investments.

**2 INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 This budgetary control report summarises the net expenditure against the budget for each service area as at 30 September 2024. This forms the basis for the projected outturn at the end of this financial year taking account of current known variances.

**3 REVENUE BUDGETARY REPORT**

- 3.1 The summary at Appendix 1 shows the net expenditure at 30 September 2024 per service area and gives an indication of the anticipated outturn against budget, taking account of seasonal variances and known commitments for the remainder of the financial year.
- 3.2 The summary shows a forecast revenue underspend at the end of the financial year of **£203,835**, which takes account of the National Pay Award for 2024/25 agreed on 23 October 2024 which has resulted in a saving on the budgeted salaries for the current financial year, along with a substantially greater income achieved from interest on the Council's reserves than was budgeted as well as the savings from the Priory House budget during the repair works.

3.3 Members will recall that the in-year underspend from Priory House has been ringfenced to the general reserve, which is currently under the recommended minimum. The General Reserve at the start of the financial year was £419,830. The Council's General Reserve policy is to retain at least 25% of the annual salary costs. For 2024/25 this should be £522,205. The general reserve will need to increase for the next financial year; the amount will depend on the budget set.

3.4

Within the **Town Clerk and Chief Executive's Office** the overall variance is forecast to be £63,491 underspent. Significant variances to the budget are as follows:

- **Staff Costs** is due to be underspent by £18,301, mainly due to the pay award agreed being less than budgeted.
- **Central Services** are predicted to be overspent by £16,488; this is due to the budgeted service charge income not being achieved due to the loss of Creasey Park, together with the cross over of the IT contractors and termination fees incurred.
- **Grove House** is due to be overspent by £2,796; this is mainly due to the loss of rent due to one tenant vacating in year.
- **Corporate Management** is due to overachieve by £62,858, largely due to an increase in investment and bank interest received to date and forecast to achieve throughout the year.
- **Democratic Management** is due to be underspent by £1,616 due to an underspend on Civic Hospitality as the Annual Council Meeting venue being free of charge in May 2024.

3.5

Within **Grounds and Environmental Services**, the overall variance is forecast to be £7,122 underspent. Significant variances in the budget are as follows:

- **Grounds Staff Costs** are predicted to be underspent by £12,092 due to the pay award agreed being less than budgeted together with vacancies in the first quarter of the financial year.
- **Cemetery** is due to overachieve by £41,952, mainly due to burial income exceeding budget.
- **Recreation Grounds** forecast to overspend by £15,951, mainly due to the Creasey Depot lease.
- **Town Ranger Service** is due to be £2,500 overspent due to additional machinery servicing.
- **Bennett Memorial Recreation Ground Splash Park** is due to be overspent by £27,932 due to the manager salary not being included in the original budget.

3.6

**Community Services** the overall variance is forecast to be £92,402 underspent, significant variances to budget are as follows:

- **Staff Costs** are forecast to be underspent by £7,721, due to the pay award agreed being less than budgeted.
- **Older People's Support Service** is due to be underspent by £3,636, mainly due to reduced transport costs, offset by reduced numbers of members during the first half of the year.
- **Grove Corner** is due to be underspent by £1,536, mainly due to the pay award agreed being less than budgeted.
- **Events** is forecast to underspend by £1,572; this is mainly due to sponsorship secured in year.

- *Priory House* is due to underspend by £118,868, due to the savings on salary costs offset by underachieving on income due to ongoing works and partial closure of the building
- *Town Centre Services* is due to overachieve by £1,039, this is mainly due to sponsorship secured in year as well as savings on staff costs due to the pay award being less than budgeted.

#### 4 RESERVES

- 4.1 The schedule enclosed at Appendix 2 provides detail of actual contributions to, and expenditure from, reserve funds as at 31 October 2024.

#### 5 INVESTMENTS UPDATE

- 5.1 Dunstable Town Council's current bank and investment account balances as 30 September 2024 were as follows:

Account	Balance	Interest earned in month
Current Account	£10,000.00	-
Business Reserve Account	£590,209.04	£647.63
CCLA Deposit Account 1	£99,458.60	£423.64
CCLA Deposit Account 2	£2,818,454.51	£9,504.17

#### 6 FINANCIAL GOVERNANCE

- 6.1 Councillors should, as a minimum, view and audit the Council's accounts on a quarterly basis.
- 6.2 The next quarterly financial Councillor audit is due to take place this month, where Councillors Alderman, Kotarski and O'Riordan will be carrying out a 'mini-audit'.
- 6.3 Further quarterly meetings have been arranged, and all Councillors on Finance and General Purposed Committee have been invited to attend any future Financial Governance Audit meetings they can make.

#### 7 EXTERNAL AUDIT 2023/2024

- 7.1 The Council has received the completed Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for the financial year 2023/2024 from our appointed external auditors Mazars LLP, and members will be pleased to note the successful completion of external audit. Please find Appendix 3 attached for information.
- 7.2 The report noted a 'minor scope for improvement in 2024/2025' as follows:  
*The bank reconciliation was difficult to follow because it did not include cash book figures. In future the Council should use the standard proforma provide in our guidance or in the Practitioner's Guide when preparing the bank reconciliation.*
- 7.3 This technical point will be amended in the following year.

**8 APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 – Summary of Net Revenue Expenditure at 30 September 2024  
Appendix 2 – Summary of Earmarked Reserves at 31 October 2024  
Appendix 3 – External Audit Completion letter and AGAR 2023/24

**9 AUTHOR**

Lisa Scheder – Head of Finance and Responsible Financial Officer  
[lisa.Scheder@dunstable.gov.uk](mailto:lisa.Scheder@dunstable.gov.uk)

## Dunstable Town Council

## Summary of Actuals vs Budget

30-Sep-2024

## Corporate Services

	Service Area	Budget 2024/25	Actuals to Date	Year-end Forecast	Year-end Variance
100	Staff Costs	-505,964	-202,025	-487,663	18,301
101	Central Services	-101,561	-63,216	-118,049	-16,488
102	Grove House	-34,616	-23,460	-37,412	-2,796
106	Corporate Management	-73,085	32,360	-10,227	62,858
107	Democratic Management & Representation	-24,600	-6,610	-22,984	1,616
110	Capital & Projects (inc loan charges)	-104,582	-82,573	-104,582	0
	<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>-844,408</b>	<b>-345,524</b>	<b>-780,917</b>	<b>63,491</b>

## Grounds and Environmental Services

	Service Area	Budget 2024/25	Actuals to Date	Year-end Forecast	Year-end Variance
200	Staff Costs	-906,293	-344,768	-894,201	12,092
201	Allotments	2,425	-2,200	2,560	135
202	Cemetery	54,280	67,503	96,232	41,952
205	Recreation Grounds	-74,565	-28,156	-90,516	-15,951
403	Town Centre and Gardens	-32,195	6,058	-32,869	-674
206	Town Ranger Service	-12,760	-4,782	-15,260	-2,500
210	Capital & Projects	-139,950	-115,143	-139,950	0
	Sub Total	-1,109,058	-421,488	-1,074,004	35,054
111	Income: Creasey Park - Football	283,622	-1,868	0	-283,622
111	Costs: Creasey park - Football	-114,080	1,592	0	114,080
112	Income: Bar & Catering	288,049	281	0	-288,049
112	Costs: Bar & Catering	-457,591	-1,268	0	457,591
	Sub Total	0	-1,263	0	0
115	Bennett Memorial RG Splash Park	-37,919	-24,612	-65,851	-27,932
	<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>-1,146,977</b>	<b>-447,363</b>	<b>-1,139,855</b>	<b>7,122</b>

## Community Services

	Service Area	Budget 2024/25	Actuals to Date	Year-end Forecast	Year-end Variance
300	Staff Costs	-310,818	-48,715	-343,917	-33,099
209	Older People's Support Service	-27,840	1,584	-24,204	3,636
303	Community Engagement (inc Grants)	-31,207	-16,588	-31,192	15
304	Grove Corner	-20,340	-10,656	-18,804	1,536
401	Events Programme	-162,931	-94,235	-161,359	1,572
402	Priory House	-329,774	-78,406	-210,906	118,868
405	Town Centre Services (inc Special Markets)	-131,906	-34,551	-130,867	1,039
407	Public Conveniences (Ashton Square)	-6,775	-2,394	-6,775	0
306	High Street Heritage Action Zone	-13,688	-23,641	-14,853	-1,165
310	Capital & Projects	-99,436	-65,135	-99,436	0
	<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>-1,134,715</b>	<b>-372,737</b>	<b>-1,042,313</b>	<b>92,402</b>

	<b>DTC Grand Total</b>	<b>-3,126,100</b>	<b>-1,165,624</b>	<b>-2,963,085</b>	<b>163,015</b>
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192,631

Precept -2,933,469

## Dunstable Town Council - Reserves Summary 2024/25

	Description	Officer	Balance as at 01.04.24	Contributions Revenue/ Other	Expenditure in year	Bal as at 31.10.24	Commitments/Programme of works, etc	Committed Amount	Bal after committed
310	General Reserve	TC&CE / HofCorp	£757,573			£757,573	Council 05.02.24- Minute 47/24- £192,631 contribution to 24/25 budget & contributions to reserves totalling £145,112	£337,743	£419,830
311	Corporate Plan Development Reserve	TC&CE / HofCorp	£5,000		£5,000	£0			£0
312	Vehicles Reserve	HofGES	£80,017	£15,000	£36,850	£58,167	FGP 17.06.24- Minute 141/24- bal of £55,487 for 2 replacement vehicles & 1 additional ride on mower (of £32,337 approved)	£55,487	£2,680
313	CPCFC Reserve	TC&CE	£33,965		£3,798	£30,167	Council 15.04.24- Minute 99/24= release of £30,167 for finalising CP contract end with CBC	£30,167	£0
314	Christmas Lights Reserve	HofCS	£2,094	£8,434	£0	£10,529	5 year replacement lighting plan 21/22-25/26 ; Council 15.04.24- Minute 99/24= release of £8,731 for replacement and repairs of lights	£9,095	£1,434
315	Street Dressing Reserve	HofCS	£5,427	£5,000	£3,856	£6,571	FGP 16.09.24- Minute 194/24= bal of reserve £6,571 for 40th anniversary street dressing (of £7,467 approved)	£6,571	£0
316	Downside Building Maintenance Res	HofCS	£53,002	£3,000	£2,735	£53,267	FGP 12.06.23- Minute 141/23= £36,679 & £8,792.55- for 2nd phase roof repairs	£45,472	£7,795
317	Grove Corner Building Maint Reserve	HofCS	£34,565	£4,000		£38,565	Chairmans Approval 17.04.23= bal of £2,000 roof survey & development plans (of £5,000 approved)	£2,000	£36,565
318	Building Security Systems	HofCorp	£5,357			£5,357	Council 15.04.24- Minute 99/24= £5,357 for improved security for Grove House	£5,357	£0
319	Cemetery Memorial Safety	HofGES	£1,500	£1,575		£3,075	Council 15.04.24- Minute 99/24= £3,075 for periodic inspections and subsequent works	£3,075	£0
320	Priory House Tearooms Equipment	HofCS	£7,434	£3,000	£1,434	£9,000	Council 15.04.24- Minute 99/24= £9,000 for replacement of kitchen/catering equipment	£9,000	£0
321	IT/Equipment Reserve	TC&CE / HofCorp	£55,902	£20,000	£74,689	£1,213	FGP 18.03.24- Minute 84/2= bal of £1,213 for new IT contract (of £75,902 approved)	£1,213	£0
322	Older People's Day Care Svce	HofCS	£12,325			£12,325	Revenue budget committed= £1,200	£1,200	£11,125
323	Election Reserve	TC&CE / HofCorp	£0	£20,000		£20,000	Council 15.04.24- Minute 99/24= £20,000 for future election costs due to CBC	£20,000	£0
324	Grove House Building Reserve	HofCorp	£177,550	£49,000	£13,275	£213,276	Council 24.06.24- Minute 165/24= £213,276 for essential repair and maintenance works (of £226,550 approved)	£213,276	£0
325	Priory House Works Contingency	HofCS	£29,864			£29,864	FGP 12.06.23- Minute 141/23= £29,864- for Priory House contingency	£29,864	£0
326	Mayoral Reserve	HofCorp	£3,000			£3,000	FGP 19.01.15-Minute 24 - to be retained for transport/allowance as required	£3,000	£0
327	Priory House Exhibition	HofCS	£11,149			£11,149	Council 15.04.24- Minute 99/24= £11,149 for programme of future exhibitions	£11,149	£0
329	Performance Area Reserve	HofCS	£609		£609	£0			£0
330	Town Twinning Reserve	TC&CE / HofCorp	£8,739			£8,739	Retained for twinning activities to be determined		£8,739
331	Tree Reserve	HofGES	£4,448	£15,000	£2,980	£16,468	FGP 12.06.23- Minute 141/23- Bal of £980 for 23/24 work requirements (from £17,090 agreed) Council 15.04.24- Minute 99/24= £15,488 for programme of tree inspections and subsequent works	£16,468	£0
332	Open Spaces Improvement Plan	HofGES	£59,089	£30,000	£5,700	£83,389	FGP 20.01.20- Minute 8- Bal of £4,723 for improvement works (from £26,688 agreed); Council 29.06.20- Minute 85- £15,000 agreed for Priory Gardens Pergola Repairs; FGP 17.06.24- Minute 141/24- £10,277 agreed for Frenchs Avenue Open Space works; FGP 17.06.24- Minute 141/24- £35,600 agreed for Pergola and Kneerall project in Priory Gardens Council 30.09.24- Minute 220/24- £11,960 agreed for Frenchs Avenue path works	£77,560	£5,829
333	Priory House Building Reserve	HofCS	£235,646	£29,357		£265,003	Chairmans Approval 08.07.22= bal of £9,446 - lease of bean machine (£10,000 approved); FGP Minute 41/23 23.01.23- £21,200- drainage, infill and electrical works; FGP Minute 41/23 23.01.23- £205,000- tendering process for additional works	£235,646	£29,357
334	Pavilion Buildings Maintenance Res	HofGES	£23,644	£15,000	£3,012	£35,632			£35,632
335	Church Street Phone Box Maintenance	HofGES	£5,000			£5,000	FGP 15.04.24- Minute 99/24= £5,000 for Church Street phone box maintenance	£5,000	£0



337	Member Training Reserve	TC&CE / HofCorp	£1,000			£1,000	Council 15.04.24- Minute 99/24= £1,000 for future requirements	-£1,000	£0
338	Allotments Reserve	HofGES	£23,300	£5,000	£4,675	£23,625	FGP Minute 107 20.06.22= bal for 5 year infrastructure improvement programme (upto £42,800 approved) (includes £5,000 pa contributions to 26/27)	-£12,256	£11,370
339	Investment Account Interest	TC&CE	£13,261	£2,557		£15,819	Interest accrued on ringfenced deposit account		£15,819
341	Outdoor Leisure (non play) Reserve	TC&CE / HofGES	£10,319	£12,000	£4,341	£17,979			£17,979
342	Memorial Kerbs Reserve	HofGES	£461			£461	Council 15.04.24- Minute 99/24= £300 for purchase of memorial kerbs	-£300	£161
343	Cemetery Building Maintenance Res	HofGES	£12,281	£5,000		£17,281			£17,281
344	Fencing Maintenance Reserve	HofGES	£0	£7,000		£7,000			£7,000
346	HSHAZ/Priory House HAR	HofCS	£3,341	£551,863	£517,091	£38,114	HSHAZ scheme programme / HAR 1 Priory House works programme- to future claim	-£38,114	£0
348	Unfulfilled Orders	HofCorp	£3,351			£3,351	Unfulfilled orders committed in previous year/s	-£3,351	£0
353	Neighbourhood Development	TC&CE / HofCorp	£10,888	£9,112	£4,058	£15,943	Council 15.04.24- Minute 100/24= £2,943 for scoping exercise for a Neighbourhood Plan (from £7,000 agreed)	-£2,943	£13,000
<b>Earmarked Reserves Total</b>			<b>£1,691,105</b>	<b>£810,899</b>	<b>-£684,102</b>	<b>£1,817,901</b>		<b>-£1,176,305</b>	<b>£641,596</b>

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

	Description	Officer	Balance as at 01.04.24	Contributions Revenue/ Other	Expenditure in year	Bal as at 31.10.24	Commitments/Programme of works, etc	Committed Amount	Bal after committed
371	White Lion Land Landscaping	HofGES	£10,000			£10,000	Council 05.12.22 Minute 210- creation of new reserve from capital receipt received July 2022	-£10,000	£0
372	New Cemetery Development	HofGES	£36,776	£116,000	£4,215	£148,561	FGP 18.09.23- Minute 187/23= balance of £34,650 for development of the new cemetery (of £36,775 approved)	-£32,561	£116,000
373	Grounds Depot Extension	HofGES	£100,000			£100,000	FGP 17.06.24- Minute 141/24= Depot Extension	-£100,000	£0
374	Luton Road MUGA	HofGES	£1,873			£1,873	Council 05.12.22 Minute 210- bal of £1,873 for a MUGA at Kingsbury Recreation Ground (previously known as Luton Road) (of £100,000 approved)	-£1,873	£0
375	NEW - Priory House Furniture	HofCS	£26,000			£26,000	Council 17.04.23 Minute 104/23- creation of new reserve from capital receipt received July 2022	-£26,000	£0
376	NEW - Kingsbury Pavilion Refurbishment	HofGES	£170,000			£170,000	Council 17.04.23 Minute 104/23- creation of new reserve from capital receipt received July 2022	-£170,000	£0
377	NEW - Splash Canopies	TC&CE	£2,873		£2,816	£57	FGP 12.06.23- Minute 141/23- bal of £57 for purchase and installation of Splash Canopies, benches and parasols (from £18,000 approved)	-£57	£0
<b>Capital Receipts Total</b>			<b>£347,522</b>	<b>£116,000</b>	<b>-£7,031</b>	<b>£456,491</b>		<b>-£456,491</b>	<b>£0</b>

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

350	Developers Contributions- CAP	HofGES	£11,723			£11,723	FGP 17.06.24- Minute 141/24- £10,277 agreed for Frenchs Avenue Open Space works	-£11,723	£0
351	CPCFC Capital	TC&CE	£83,641			£83,641	CBC Funds relating to CPCFC to return		£83,641
352	Development Contributions- REV	HofGES	£34,316			£34,316	£8,000 committed in 23/24 revenue budget from Bal of £22,129 for Willoughby (from S106 £47,645) Bal of £4,038 for Court Drive Landscaping (from CBC £15,000)	-£12,038	£22,278
570	Joint Committee Fund	HofCS	£50,021	£38		£50,059	Bal in holding code as committed Joint Committees fund only = not DTC	-£50,059	£0
<b>S106/External Funding Total</b>			<b>£179,701</b>	<b>£38</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£179,739</b>		<b>-£73,819</b>	<b>£105,919</b>
			<b>£2,218,327</b>	<b>£926,936</b>	<b>-£691,133</b>	<b>£2,454,131</b>		<b>-£1,706,616</b>	<b>£747,515</b>

Key:

= Finance and General Purposes Committee

= Grounds and Environmental Services Committee

= Community Services Committee

## Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2023/24 Form 3

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

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

### Guidance notes on completing Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2023/24

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 2024.
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 2024. 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 2024
  - 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 2023/24

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

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

### Publication Requirements

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

Before 1 July 2024 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 2023/24**, approved and signed, page 4
- **Section 2 - Accounting Statements 2023/24**, approved and signed, page 5

Not later than 30 September 2024 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) 2023/24

- 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 2024.
- The Annual Governance Statement (Section 1) must be approved on the same day or before the Accounting Statements (Section 2) and evidenced by the agenda or minute references.
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) must certify the accounts (Section 2) before they are presented to the authority for approval. The authority must in this order; consider, approve and sign the accounts.
- The RFO is required to commence the public rights period as soon as practical after the date of the AGAR approval.
- **You must inform your external auditor about any change of Clerk, Responsible Financial Officer or Chair, and provide relevant authority owned generic email addresses and telephone numbers.**
- Make sure that the copy of the bank reconciliation to be sent to your external auditor with the AGAR covers all the bank accounts. If the authority holds any short-term investments, note their value on the bank reconciliation. The external auditor must be able to agree the bank reconciliation to Box 8 on the accounting statements (Section 2, page 5). An explanation must be provided of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8. More help on bank reconciliation is available in the *Practitioners' Guide\**.
- Explain fully significant variances in the accounting statements on page 5. Do not just send a copy of the detailed accounting records instead of this explanation. The external auditor wants to know that you understand the reasons for all variances. Include complete numerical and narrative analysis to support the full variance.
- If the bank reconciliation is incomplete or variances not fully explained then additional costs may be incurred.
- Make sure that the accounting statements add up and that the balance carried forward from the previous year (Box 7 of 2023) equals the balance brought forward in the current year (Box 1 of 2024).
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), on behalf of the authority, must set the commencement date for the exercise of public rights of 30 consecutive working days which must include the first ten working days of July.
- The authority must publish on the authority website/webpage the information required by Regulation 15 (2), Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, including the period for the exercise of public rights and the name and address of the external auditor **before 1 July 2024**.

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 the dates set for the period for the exercise of public rights, 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 31 March 2024 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? NB: 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 2023/24

## DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

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

During the financial year ended 31 March 2024, 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 2023/24 has been carried out in accordance with this authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this authority.

Internal control objective	Yes	No*	Not covered**
A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.	✓		
B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	✓		
D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	✓		
E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
F. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.	✓		
G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	✓		
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	✓		
I. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.	✓		
J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	✓		
K. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2022/23, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2022/23 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.	✓		
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 2023-24 AGAR period, were public rights in relation to the 2022-23 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 2022/23 AGAR (see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).	✓		
O. (For local councils only) 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

24/11/2023 01/03/2024 30/05/2024

Name of person who carried out the internal audit

SF Christopher for Auditing Solutions Ltd

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit

*SF Christopher*

Date

30/05/2024

\*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 2023/24

We acknowledge as the members of:

### DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2024, 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 took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.	✓		<i>has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.</i>
4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	✓		<i>during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.</i>
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	✓		<i>considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.</i>
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.	✓		<i>arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.</i>
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	✓		<i>responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.</i>
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.	✓		<i>disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.</i>
9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	Yes	No	N/A
			✓

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

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

24/06/2024

and recorded as minute reference:

162/24

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

Chair

None Required

Clerk

None Required

WWW.DUNSTABLE.GOV.UK

## Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2023/24 for

### DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2023 £	31 March 2024 £	
			<i>Please round all figures to nearest £1. Do not leave any boxes blank and report £0 or Nil balances. All figures must agree to underlying financial records.</i>
<b>1. Balances brought forward</b>	2,196,772	2,860,550	<i>Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.</i>
<b>2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies</b>	2,480,490	2,791,245	<i>Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.</i>
<b>3. (+) Total other receipts</b>	2,268,793	1,856,248	<i>Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.</i>
<b>4. (-) Staff costs</b>	1,987,336	2,200,520	<i>Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.</i>
<b>5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments</b>	109,364	125,813	<i>Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).</i>
<b>6. (-) All other payments</b>	1,988,805	3,013,403	<i>Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).</i>
<b>7. (=) Balances carried forward</b>	2,860,550	2,168,307	<i>Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).</i>
<b>8. Total value of cash and short term investments</b>	2,821,081	2,277,012	<i>The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – To agree with bank reconciliation.</i>
<b>9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets</b>	7,901,976	8,207,590	<i>The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.</i>
<b>10. Total borrowings</b>	998,395	920,242	<i>The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).</i>

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

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2024 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**

 SIGNED REQUIRED

Date

13/06/2024

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

24/06/2024

as recorded in minute reference:

MIN 162/24

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

 SIGNED REQUIRED

## Section 3 – External Auditor’s Report and Certificate 2023/24

In respect of

**Dunstable Town Council**

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

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

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

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

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2024; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

### 2 External auditor’s limited assurance opinion 2023/24

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

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

Not applicable.

### 3 External auditor certificate 2023/24

We certify that we have completed our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2024.

\*We do not certify completion because:

Not applicable.

External Auditor Name

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

External Auditor Signature

*Forvis Mazars LLP*

Date

**30 September 2024**

The Corner  
Bank Chambers  
26 Mosley Street  
Newcastle upon Tyne  
NE1 1DF



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Dunstable Town Council  
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Date: 30 September 2024

Dear Mrs Scheder

### Completion of the audit for the year ended 31 March 2024

We have completed our audit for the year ended 31 March 2024 and I have pleasure in enclosing the certified Annual Governance and Accountability Return. The External Auditor's Certificate and Report is given in Section 3.

If there are any significant matters arising from the audit, they are summarised in the External Auditor's certificate in Section 3. If we have identified minor scope for improvement we have recorded this on page 2 of this letter. The Council must consider these matters and decide what action is required. In most cases this will be self-evident. In some instances we have referred to further guidance available, in particular, in the publication "*Governance and Accountability for Local Councils – A Practitioners' Guide (England) 2023*". This can be obtained via your NALC or SLCC branch, or downloaded free of charge.

### Action you are required to take:

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

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

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



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

**Minor scope for improvement in 2024/2025**

The bank reconciliation was difficult to follow because it did not include cash book figures. In future the Council should use the standard proforma provided in our guidance or in the Practitioner's Guide when preparing the bank reconciliation.

**Accessibility regulations**

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

**Audit fee**

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

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

Yours sincerely



**James Collins**

Director

For and on behalf of Forvis Mazars LLP

**DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL**

**FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

**MONDAY 18 NOVEMBER 2024**

**BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR 2025/26**

<b>Purpose of Report:</b> For members to consider and comment on highlight budget proposals for the Corporate Services department for 2025/26
---

**1 ACTION RECOMMENDED**

- 1.1. For members to consider and comment on draft budget proposals and fees and charges for the Corporate Services Department for 2024/25, as well as indicative budget changes for the following three years.

**2 INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1. A budget for 2025/26 has been drafted and is included below. This year each committee is being given two opportunities to review in the budget; for Corporate Services area this will be on 18 November 2024 and 20 January 2025. This will enable members to review proposed changes in the first meeting, to enable officers to prepare a full budget for the second meeting.
- 2.2. In drafting the budget, officers have had to make assumptions about the salary increase being forecast for 2025/26. Staff contracts specify that pay will increase by the amount set by the national agreement each year. For 2025/26 this has been estimated at 3%. For Communities and Grounds and Environmental Services Committees this was given for information only; the decision on salary increases will be recommended to Full Council.
- 2.3. It is not yet possible to be precise about the impact of the proposed budget on the precept and individual Council Tax payers because the Council Tax Base has not yet been provided by Central Bedfordshire Council. This will be available for the next budget round.

## 2.4. Growth items over £1,000 other than salary increases:

Cost Centre	Nominal Code	Description	Reasons	Growth
101	1003	Central Services – Service Charge	Budgeted in 2024/25 based on managing CPCFC so now lost income	-£10,359
101	4010	Central Services – Payroll Services	HR package, increased costs	-£1,644
101	4021	Central Services – Telephones/Data Links	Internal transfer to centralise costs to this budget	-£16,950
101	4025	Central Services – Subscriptions/Publications	Additional requirements	-£1,500
101	4037	Central Services – IT Equipment/Maintenance/Support	Internal transfer to combine costs for all sites	-£7,500
101	4058	Central Services – Professional Fees	Includes IIP cost in 2025	-£4,500
102	1002	Grove House – Rent Receivable	Vacated ground floor space	-£12,500
102	4011	Grove House - Business Rates	Increased costs – responsibility for larger space	-£2,000
106	4033	Corporate Management – Talk of the Town Newsletter	Inflationary increase	-£1,050
110	4724	Capital and Projects – Grove House Building Maintenance Reserve		-£20,000

## 2.5. Savings over £1,000:

Cost Centre	Nominal Code	Description	Reasons	Saving
102	1001	Grove House – Lettings / Facilities Hire	Lettings in additional space	£2,000
102	4014	Grove House – Electricity	New contract	£6,400
102	4015	Grove House – Gas	New contract	£6,188
106	1096	Corporate Management – Investment / Bank interest receivable	Interest rates increase	£20,000
106	4021	Corporate Management – Telephones / Datalinks	Internal transfer to central services budget	£2,175
106	4026	Corporate Management - Insurance	Current cost plus inflationary increase	£10,203
106	4030	Corporate Management – Advertising / Recruitment	Full budget not required	£2,000
106	4034	Corporate Management – Website	New contract	£2,000
106	4061	Corporate Management – Annual Report	Printing not required	£1,000
106	4096	Corporate Management – Bank Charges	Reduced banking requirement	£2,000
110	4051	Capital and Projects – Loan Charges	Reduced loan costs	£1,083

2.6. Corporate Services draft budget (excluding salaries/staff costs);

**CENTRAL SERVICES - 101**

			Budget	Proposed	Proposed	Proposed	Proposed
			2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
Nominal Code	Nominal Description						
<b>Income:</b>							
101	1003	INC - Service charges	10,359	0	0	0	0
<b>Expenditure:</b>							
101	4007	Staff Training	-22,500	-23,000	-23,500	-24,000	-24,500
101	4010	Payroll Services	-5,350	-6,994	-7,344	-7,711	-8,096
101	4021	Telephones / Data Links	-7,200	-16,650	-17,150	-17,664	-18,194
101	4022	Postage	-1,000	-1,000	-1,000	-1,000	-1,000
101	4023	Stationery	-3,000	-3,000	-3,000	-3,000	-3,000
101	4025	Subscriptions/Publications	-6,000	-7,500	-7,875	-8,269	-8,682
101	4037	Equipment Maintenance / Software	-39,370	-46,870	-48,276	-49,724	-51,216
101	4039	Equipment Hire (Photocopier rental)	-7,000	-6,400	-6,400	0	0
101	4058	Professional Services	-20,500	-25,000	-26,250	-27,563	-28,941

**GROVE HOUSE - 102**

			<b>Budget</b>	<b>Proposed</b>	<b>Proposed</b>	<b>Proposed</b>	<b>Proposed</b>
	<b>Nominal Code</b>	<b>Nominal Description</b>	<b>2024/25</b>	<b>2025/26</b>	<b>2026/27</b>	<b>2027/28</b>	<b>2028/29</b>
		<b>Income:</b>					
102	1001	Lettings/Facility Hire	500	2,500	3,000	4,000	5,000
102	1002	Rents and Rates (Tenants)	37,572	25,072	26,326	27,642	29,024
		<b>Expenditure:</b>					
102	4011	Rates	-14,100	-16,100	-16,422	-16,750	-17,085
102	4012	Water	-1,000	-1,000	-1,000	-1,000	-1,000
102	4014	Electricity	-15,400	-9,000	-9,000	-9,000	-9,000
102	4015	Gas	-16,188	-10,000	-10,000	-10,000	-10,000
102	4016	Cleaning	-11,130	-11,464	-11,808	-12,162	-12,527
102	4017	Waste disposal	-950	-979	-1,008	-1,039	-1,070
	4018	Security	0	-200	-200	-200	-200
102	4021	Telephones/data links	-300	0	0	0	0
102	4036	Building Maintenance Contracts	-2,870	-3,708	-3,819	-3,934	-4,052
102	4038	Repairs and Maintenance	-7,000	-7,000	-7,210	-7,426	-7,649
102	4040	Equipment/Materials/Tools	-3,750	-3,863	-3,979	-4,098	-4,221

**CORPORATE MANAGEMENT - 106**

			<b>Budget</b>	<b>Proposed</b>	<b>Proposed</b>	<b>Proposed</b>	<b>Proposed</b>
	<b>Nominal Code</b>	<b>Nominal Description</b>	<b>2024/25</b>	<b>2025/26</b>	<b>2026/27</b>	<b>2027/28</b>	<b>2028/29</b>
		<b>Income:</b>					
106	1096	Investment/Bank Interest	71,000	91,000	91,000	91,000	91,000
		Beds FA Buildings and ATP					
106	1099	Insurance + recharges	6,150	6,150	6,150	6,150	6,150
			<u>77,150</u>	<u>97,150</u>	<u>97,150</u>	<u>97,150</u>	<u>97,150</u>
		<b>Expenditure:</b>					
106	4003	Pension/HR Related Costs	-7,920	-7,920	-7,920	-7,920	-7,920
106	4006	Health & Safety	-10,000	-10,300	-10,609	-10,927	-11,255
106	4019	DBS Checks	-500	-550	-550	-550	-550
106	4021	Telephone	-2,175	0	0	0	0
106	4026	Insurance	-61,500	-71,703	-73,854	-76,070	-78,352
106	4030	Advertising - Recruitment	-2,000	0	0	0	0
106	4032	Publicity / Marketing	-5,500	-5,500	-5,500	-5,500	-5,500
106	4033	Newsletter	-35,000	-36,050	-37,132	-38,245	-39,393
106	4034	Website	-6,500	-4,500	-4,500	-4,500	-4,500
106	4056	Audit Fees - External	-3,440	-3,543	-3,649	-3,759	-3,872
106	4057	Audit Fees - Internal	-2,450	-2,524	-2,599	-2,677	-2,757
106	4061	Annual Report	-2,250	-1,250	-1,250	-1,250	-1,250
		HR Related Costs - (inc Uniform					
106	4062	workwear)	-3,500	-3,605	-3,713	-3,825	-3,939
106	4063	Uniform	-3,000	-3,090	-3,183	-3,278	-3,377
106	4096	Bank Charges	-4,500	-2,500	-2,750	-3,000	-3,250

**DEMOCRATIC MANAGEMENT AND REPRESENTATION - 107**

			Budget	Proposed	Proposed	Proposed	Proposed
Nominal Code	Nominal Description		2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
<b>Expenditure:</b>							
107	4007	Member Training	-1,000	-1,000	-1,000	-1,000	-1,000
107	4024	Printing Costs (Civic Events)	-1,250	-1,250	-1,250	-1,250	-1,250
107	4025	Subscriptions	-2,250	-2,300	-2,369	-2,440	-2,513
107	4501	Mayoral Transport	-3,500	-3,500	-3,500	-3,500	-3,500
107	4502	Mayoral Allowance	-4,500	-4,500	-4,500	-4,500	-4,500
107	4503	Civic Hospitality	-8,600	-8,600	-8,858	-9,124	-9,397
107	4504	Civic Regalia	-500	-500	-500	-500	-500
107	4515	Remembrance Services	-3,000	-3,090	-3,183	-3,278	-3,377

**CAPITAL AND PROJECTS - 110**

			Budget	Proposed	Proposed	Proposed	Proposed
Nominal Code	Nominal Description		2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
<b>Expenditure:</b>							
110	4051	Loan Interest Payable (Grove House)	-12,015	-10,932	-9,849	-8,766	-7,683
110	4052	Loan Capital Repaid (Grove House)	-23,567	-23,567	-23,567	-23,567	-23,567
110	4721	Cont. to Reserves (IT)	-20,000	-20,000	-25,000	-35,000	-35,000
110	4723	Cont. to Election Reserve	0	0	0	45,000	45,000
110	4724	Cont. to Reserve (Grove House Building)	-49,000	-69,000	-69,000	-69,000	-69,000
110	4730	Cont. to Town Twinning Reserve	0	0	0	0	0
110	4936	Cont. To Personnel Reserve	0	0	-1,000	-1,000	-1,000
110	4949	Cont. to Website Development	0	-900	-900	-900	-900



### **3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

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

### **4 POLICY AND CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS**

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

### **5 HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1. The draft general health and safety budget for 2025/26 has been increased in line with known cost rises.

### **6 HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

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

### **7 EQUALITIES AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1. There are none arising directly from this report.

### **8 SEPARATE ENCLOSURES**

- 8.1. None

### **9 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 9.1. None

### **10 AUTHORS**

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Paul Hodson – Town Clerk and Chief Executive  
Email – [paul.hodson@dunstable.gov.uk](mailto:paul.hodson@dunstable.gov.uk)

**DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL**

**FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

**MONDAY 18 NOVEMBER 2024**

**CORPORATE COMPLIANCE AND FACILITIES**

**Purpose of Report:**

- i. To update Members on progress with the Council's Corporate Compliance and Facilities Management
- ii. For Members to approve the updated Customer Charter

**1 ACTION RECOMMENDED**

- 1.1 To approve the updated Customer Charter.

**2 COMPLIANCE**

- 2.1 The Town Council is in the final stages of achieving Cyber Essentials certification in accordance with the new IT contract.
- 2.2 Staff responsible for building management have completed Legionella Awareness training.
- 2.3 The Corporate Performance & Compliance Manager has completed the Asbestos 'Duty to Manage Buildings' training.

**3 FACILITIES**

**Grove House**

- 3.1 Churchill Healthcare gave early notice on their lease, which terminated on 1 November 2024. This means that the ground floor toilets are now available for use by visitors to the Council Chamber, the parking issues will be resolved, and the Council will be able to use the space to host a much wider range of meetings and events. The vacated space will be repurposed for external bookings and will also be usable for internal meeting / breakout rooms. Plans are being developed to introduce weddings at Grove House although this will take some time to determine if possible. The early termination of the lease will have an impact on the Grove House room hire income budget.
- 3.2 Brasier Freeth (the Councils appointed Building Surveyors) were on site on 7 November inspecting the rear parapet and front elevations. From these inspections a specification for works will be produced from which a tender exercise will proceed for repair works to take place in 2025.
- 3.3 Morton Solicitors, the current ongoing ground floor tenants, have approached the Council about renting the large ground floor meeting room and adjoining storerooms, and vacating the small first floor meeting room they took on earlier in the year. These

rooms would be added to their current lease which runs to September 2029. This request is being considered as it will help to lessen the financial impact of Churchill's early departure and there are, as mentioned above, now available replacement staff meeting rooms.

### **Meadway Store**

- 3.4 Men in Sheds have now signed a 7-year lease for the use of the Meadway Store, as per original member approval.

## **4 PROJECTS & PROCUREMENT**

- 4.1 Waste Management Tender documents will be issued in early December, with the plan for a new contract to start April 2025

## **5 HEALTH AND SAFETY**

- 5.1 The Council underwent a Health & Safety audit in late September conducted by WorkNest. This was primarily for Grove House with other council facilities undergoing an audit or workplace assessment in the coming months. Grove House received an 89% score with only minor amendments to be made. The WorkNest consultant was very happy with how Health & Safety was being managed.

## **6 ENVIRONMENTAL AND BIODIVERSITY**

- 6.1 The Corporate Performance & Compliance Manager continues to work with the Carbon Baseline Assessment contractor to determine the Council's new carbon level and associated objectives to reduce the Council's carbon impact.
- 6.2 Smart Meters have now been fitted at all Council buildings.

## **7 CORPORATE PLAN**

- 7.1 The Town Council's Corporate Plan 2024-27 is now just over 6 months into operation. Appendix 1 shows the full plan. A designed version will now be prepared for publication. An update on progress against each action will be committee twice a year.

## **8 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

- 8.1 Following agreement of the Corporate Plan, a new set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) has been developed. These indicators are designed to enable Members and managers to understand the Council's overall performance against the six corporate objectives. The KPIs do not necessarily align to particular actions. The KPIs have been reached through the following process:
- 8.2 Each service area reviewed what data is collected or could be collected with minimum additional resource. The KPIs were then selected to ensure they relate to at least one Corporate Objective. Each KPI has specific targets set for each year of the 4 years the

Corporate Plan covers. These targets then provide a benchmark for performance and help in evaluating success and identifying areas for discussion.

- 8.3 Method statements outline how data will be gathered by staff and measured for each KPI. This ensures that there is a clear process for tracking performance. The method statements sit behind the KPIs and provide detailed instructions on data collection.
- 8.4 Any feedback on the coverage and clarity of the new KPIs would be welcome.
- 8.5 A summary of the Council's Corporate Plan and associated KPI's progress is quarterly updated to all staff via visual summary poster, example seen in Appendix 2. All staff receive this poster electronically and posters are displayed in all council buildings.
- 8.6 A summary of progress to date against the Council's 50 Key Performance Indicators is outlined in Appendix 3.

## **9 CUSTOMER CHARTER**

- 9.1 The annual review of the Town Council's Customer Charter resulted in recommended minor changes aimed at improving the service provided to customers and residents. The proposed Customer Charter recommended for approval is found in Appendix 4.

## **10 APPENDICES**

- 10.1 Appendix 1 – Corporate Plan 2024-2027  
Appendix 2 – Corporate Plan and KPI Summary Poster  
Appendix 3 – Key Performance Indicators progress report  
Appendix 4 – Customer Charter

## **11 AUTHOR**

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**DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL**

**CORPORATE PLAN**

**2024 - 2027**

## DUNSTABLE

Dunstable is the oldest charter town in the area now known as Central Bedfordshire and is currently home to over 40,000 people, who regularly elect their own Town Council and Central Bedfordshire Council representatives to manage local affairs. The earliest recorded residents of Dunstable lived on the Downs, the northern most point of the Chilterns, on hills that originated at the same time as the Himalayas. Nowadays the settlement nestles between the Downs. Dunstable is fiercely proud of its rich heritage yet, whilst it may be steeped in history, it is very much a town in the present, working towards a bright future. Dunstable is situated some 25 miles to the north-west of London, with excellent access to the heart of the national motorway network.

### DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

Dunstable Town Council was established in 1985 following a local petition for the Council to be created. Since its creation 40 years ago, the Council has developed into one of the largest town councils in the country. It is an Investors in People Silver standard organisation under a nationally recognised scheme that demonstrates that the organisation is managed effectively

The Council comprises 18 elected representatives that are democratically elected every four years. Town Councillors serve voluntarily and do not receive any payment or allowances. Dunstable is divided into 5 political wards:

Ward	Number of Councillors
North	4
South	2
East	5
West	5
Central	2

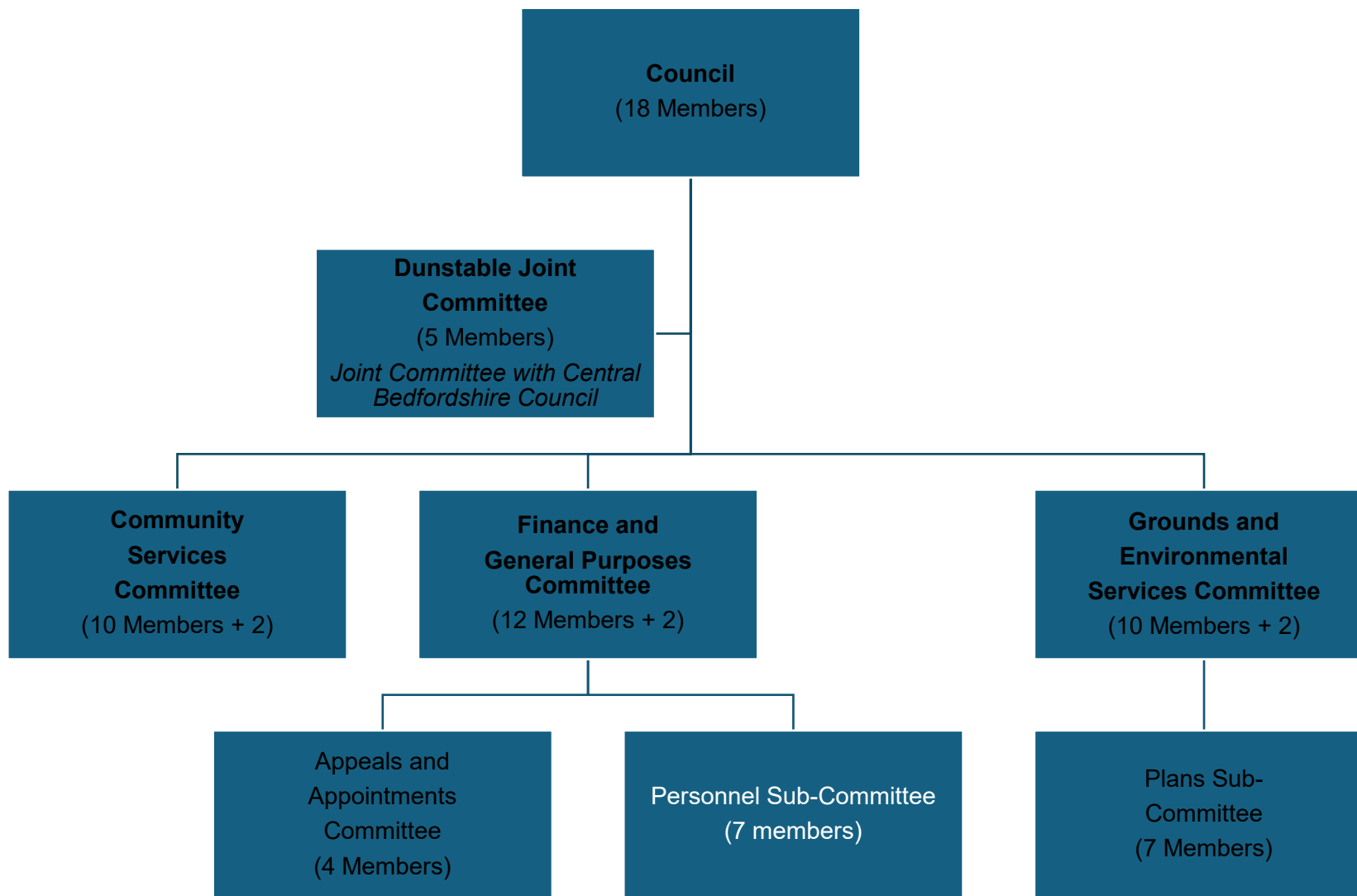
The Council is the body that makes decisions, with the support of Committees and Sub-Committees. The Council is chaired by the Town Mayor who typically serves one year of office and is elected from the Council itself. The Council then has four main Committees that govern the strategic direction and much of the day to day business of the Council. One of these Committees is the Dunstable Joint Committee comprising members from the Town Council and Central Bedfordshire Council. The Council is not politically controlled, and the Mayor's role is a-political.

The Council is entirely funded by the residents of Dunstable through what is known as a precept on the council tax charge and by generating income through services delivered. The 2024/25 budget set a total precept target of £2,933,469 which equates to a council tax charge of £219.93 per council tax band D household. The Council's total gross expenditure for 2024/25 is budgeted to

be £4,224,771. In addition, the Council had an allocated capital reserve of approximately £1.8million and a general reserve of £632,279 (as at 1 April 2024).

The Council appoints a Town Clerk and Chief Executive who employ staff to carry out the services and functions decided on. He in turn is supported by three Heads of Service who are responsible for the Council's three service departments. The Head of Finance and Support Services is the Council's statutory Responsible Financial Officer. The Council also employs a range of external support services including legal, HR and property support.

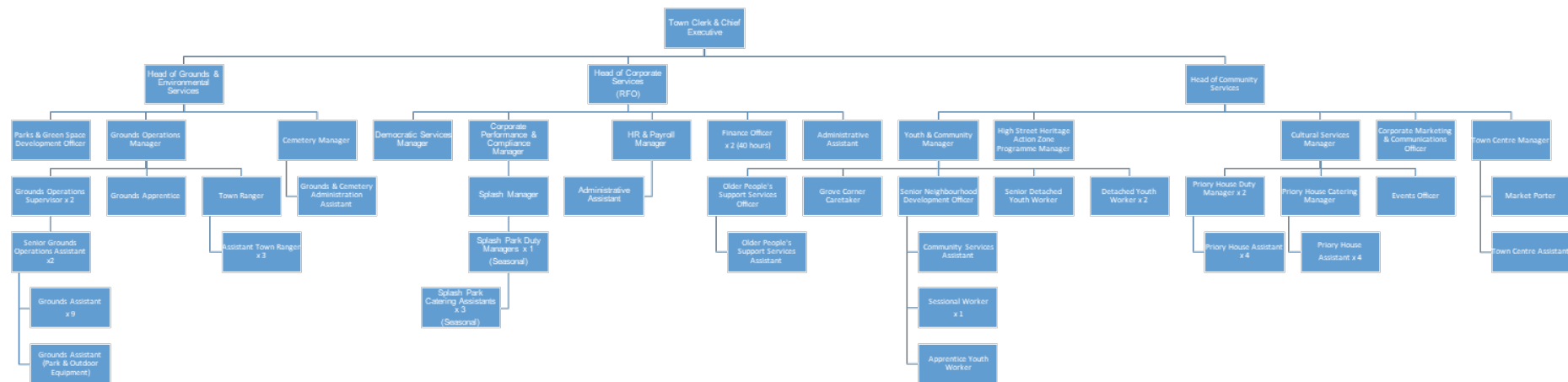
### COUNCIL COMMITTEE STRUCTURE





## FUNCTIONS AND SERVICE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COUNCIL

<b>DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL</b>		
<b>Town Clerk and Chief Executive</b>		
<b>Corporate Services</b>	<b>Community Services</b>	<b>Grounds and Environmental Services</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Mayoral enquiries</b></li> <li>• <b>Councillor enquiries</b></li> <li>• <b>Committee enquiries</b></li> <li>• <b>Civic events</b></li> <li>• <b>Council finances</b></li> <li>• <b>Council audit (internal and external)</b></li> <li>• <b>Personnel, jobs and recruitment</b></li> <li>• <b>Compliance and Performance Management</b></li> <li>• <b>Internal ICT support</b></li> <li>• <b>Management of Grove House</b></li> <li>• <b>Town Twinning</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Management of Priory House</b></li> <li>• <b>Management of Grove Corner</b></li> <li>• <b>Town centre management</b></li> <li>• <b>Christmas lights</b></li> <li>• <b>Council events programme</b></li> <li>• <b>Young people's activities</b></li> <li>• <b>Older people's day care service</b></li> <li>• <b>Community grants scheme</b></li> <li>• <b>Community development projects</b></li> <li>• <b>Peter Newton Pavilion and Downside Community Centre enquiries</b></li> <li>• <b>Dunstable Markets</b></li> <li>• <b>Ashton Square Public Toilets</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Dunstable Cemetery</b></li> <li>• <b>Allotments</b></li> <li>• <b>Parks and recreation grounds</b></li> <li>• <b>Hire of sports pitches</b></li> <li>• <b>Play areas</b></li> <li>• <b>Town centre maintenance</b></li> <li>• <b>Grove House Gardens</b></li> <li>• <b>Priory Gardens</b></li> <li>• <b>Floral displays</b></li> <li>• <b>Dunstable in Bloom</b></li> <li>• <b>Town Rangers</b></li> <li>• <b>Bennett's Splash and Splashside café</b></li> <li>• <b>Grove Skate Park</b></li> </ul>



## DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL'S VISION

The Council agreed its *Vision, Mission Statement* and *Values* in 2009 and these were all re-affirmed in 2024 with the adoption of this new Corporate Plan. They are as follows:

### VISION

***TO HELP MAKE DUNSTABLE A BETTER PLACE***

### MISSION

***Dunstable Town Council will do all it can to create a lively and vibrant town, promoting civic pride and improving the quality of life for all those who live, work and visit Dunstable.***

### VALUES

The Council will at all times:

- Be an advocate and campaigning voice for the people of Dunstable
- Work to the highest standards of integrity and openness and deliver services to the best of our abilities
- Work in partnership with other organisations to improve services and deliver value for money for the Dunstable council taxpayer

### Corporate Priorities

The document sets out the Council's 6 Corporate Priorities, which are to:

1. Continue to improve the organisational management, efficiency and environmental sustainability of the Town Council
2. Preserve and enhance the history and identity of the town, creating a sense of pride in Dunstable
3. Further improve and develop the provision of green and open space in the town
4. Continue to improve services targeted to all community sectors in the town
5. Contribute to the regeneration of the town centre and development of neighbourhoods in the town
6. Represent residents, businesses and community groups of Dunstable on key strategic issues facing the town

This document sets out the vision, mission, values and key priorities and objectives for Dunstable Town Council from 2024 to 2027.

## APPENDIX 1

The aim of the document is to give Dunstable's residents a clear understanding of what the Council is aiming to achieve and how it intends to deliver. It sets out what the Council will focus on and in doing so also defines what the Council will *not* necessarily focus on as it may be that other public sector bodies are better placed for other areas of service provision. The document will be reviewed on an annual basis and updates on achievements will be reported through the Council's annual reporting process.

## **CORPORATE PRIORITIES AND KEY OBJECTIVES**

In seeking to **promote civic pride**, make Dunstable a **lively and vibrant place** and improve the **quality of life** for its residents, the Council currently delivers a range of different services and functions. The Council has adopted the General Power of Competence which gives it the “power to do anything that individuals generally may do”.

The Council has adopted the following 6 Corporate Priorities, to:

- 1. Continue to improve the organisational management, efficiency and environmental sustainability of the Town Council**
- 2. Preserve and enhance the history and identity of the town, creating a sense of pride in Dunstable**
- 3. Further improve and develop the provision of green and open space in the town**
- 4. Continue to improve services targeted to all community sectors in the town**
- 5. Contribute to the regeneration of the town centre and development of neighbourhoods in the town**
- 6. Represent residents, businesses and community groups of Dunstable on key strategic issues facing the town**

What follows over the next few pages are key objectives for the next 4 years, with key actions that the Town Council will pursue over the lifespan of this document. They are indicative actions that are supplemented by the Council’s internal service planning process and monitored through the Council’s Key Performance Indicators.

## 1. Continue to improve the organisational management, efficiency and environmental sustainability of the Town Council

Key Objective	Actions	Committee	Resources	Timescale
Continue to improve staff management	1 Deliver Investors In People action plan	FGP	Using current budgets	Mar-27
Continue to improve the Council's facilities	2. Carry out internal refurbishment of Kingsbury sports pavilion and renew the roof.	GES	Using current budgets	Mar-25
	3. Carry out a planned maintenance programme at Grove House to ensure the building is safe and suitable for ongoing use by the Council.	FGP	Using current budgets	Mar-25
	4. Scope the viability of expanding the Council's wedding and event offer to include Grove House.	Communities	Business plan to be provided; self-funding	Mar-25
	5. A doorway created in the outside Rangers area (Grove House) to access the back of the band stand to allow equipment to be moved easily at events and create a secure area during events for equipment and staff.	FGP	Aspirational	Mar-25
Continue to Improve the Environmental Sustainability of the Town Council	6. Work towards making Dunstable Town Council a carbon neutral organisation by 2030, including by investigating the possibility of installing solar panels on suitable Council venues, beginning with the Dunstable Cemetery	FGP	Using current budgets	Mar-27
Continue to Improve the Environmental Sustainability of the Town Council	7. Create and implement a Biodiversity Policy and Plan.	GES	Using current budgets	Mar-27

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	8. Carry out a programme of replacing existing vehicles with more fuel efficient, hybrid or electric vehicles where appropriate.	GES	Using current budgets	Mar-27
Improve efficiency through the use of ICT	9. Develop the organisation's use of IT to include all data being stored externally and all staff being able to work flexibly.	FGP	Using current budgets	Mar-25
	10. Ensure the Council is transparent and residents are able to find out what they need to know about how the Council is run.	FGP	Using current budgets	Mar-25
	11. Obtain and keep Cyber Essentials accreditation	FGP	Using current budgets	Mar-25
Improve management of the Council's facilities	12. Review the use and functionality of the current chapel; scope providing new chairs, a screen, music streaming system and webcast facility.	GES	Business plan to be provided; self-funding	Mar-27
	13. Scope providing a weatherproof cover over the seating area at Priory House.	Communities	Aspirational	Mar-27
	14. Provide new office accommodation / mess facilities for grounds staff.	GES	Using current budgets	Mar-27
	15. Improve events infrastructure by installing additional power points and better configuration of outside stores.	Communities	Part UKSFP funded	Mar-25
	16. Increase the use of Bennett's Splashside Café outside of the splash park season.	GES	Business plan to be provided; self-funding	Mar-25
Improve the efficiency of the Town Council	17. Purchase and install an external LED board to replicate the information provided from the information window on the High Street.	Communities	Aspirational	Mar-27

## 2. Preserve and enhance the history and identity of the town, creating a sense of pride in Dunstable

Key Objective	Actions	Committee	Resources	Timescale
Create a sense of pride in Dunstable	18. Celebrate the Town Council's 40th anniversary in 2025: Enhance the events programme and all services to reflect and celebrate 40 years of achievement. Hold at least one civic event.	FGP	Using current budgets	Dec-25
	19. Support Dunstable in Bloom to enter Anglia in Bloom each year.	GES	Using current budgets	Mar-27
Preserve and enhance the history and identity of the town	20. Invest in and increase public art. Provide a sculpture trail, additional Middle Row art and virtual trail.	Communities	Aspirational and UKSPF	Mar-27
	21. Review and expand the Town Rangers Service.	GES	Using current budgets	Mar-25
	22. Retain the Heritage Flag for Priory Gardens. Improve access to historical information and interpretation of the site.	GES	Using current budgets	Mar-27
	23. Reopen Priory House and engage users in line with funders' requirements. Promote Priory House as an important heritage destination.	Communities	Funding in place	Mar-27

## 3. To further improve and develop the provision of green and open space in the town

Key Objective	Actions	Committee	Resources	Timescale
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Develop the provision of green space in the town	24. Take ownership and create garden by White Lion busway stop - College Drive.	GES	Using current budgets	Mar-27
	25. Work with Dunstable Town Bowls Club to ensure future provision of outdoor bowling opportunities in Dunstable.	GES	To be funded by DTBC	Mar-26
	26. Plan for and open new cemetery in Dunstable.	GES	Public Works Loan to be sought	Mar-29
	27. Provide one new allotment site.	GES	Aspirational	Mar-27
Improve the provision of green space in the town	28. Improve the provision of waste bins on Council property. Combine all general and dog waste to increase the capacity overall and reduce costs.	GES	Using current budgets	Mar-25
	29. Support allotment holders at one site to create an allotment association to maintain and oversee activities, build a sense of community and engage with the local area.	GES	Using current budgets	Mar-27
	30. Carry out a feasibility study to identify an open space in one of our current parks that could be used for dog activities.	GES	Using current budgets	Mar-25

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<p>31. Develop and implement green space management plans for each recreation ground. Each plan will involve public consultation consider the headings used for Green Flag management plans along with developing play areas, accessibility and inclusivity, benches, gym trails etc.</p> <p><b>Year 1 - 2024/25:</b> Kingsbury Recreation Ground , Downs Road Recreation Ground Brewers Hill Recreation Ground.</p> <p><b>Year 2 - 2025/26:</b> Ridgeway Avenue Recreation Ground, Downside Recreation Ground +Mentmore Recreation Ground.</p> <p><b>Year 3 - 2026/27:</b> Newton Recreation Ground, Markham Crescent Public Open Space , Frenchs Avenue Public Open Space + Olma Road Recreation Ground</p>	GES	Plans created using current budgets	Mar-27
32. Replace Priory Gardens pergola and knee rail.	GES	Fundraising	Mar-26
33. Look to maintain more of the grass verges across our town and smarten them up.	GES	Funding to be sought from CBC	Mar-27
34. Resurface the Bennett's Rec Tennis Courts with a safer surface that can be played on all year round.	GES	Aspirational	Mar-27
35. Undertake feasibility study and consider the creation of a Pickleball Court in one of our open spaces that incorporates other sporting / activities.	GES	Aspirational	Mar-27
36. Install disabled / inclusive play equipment at larger play sites.	GES	Aspirational	Mar-27

#### 4. Continue to improve services targeted to all community sectors in the town

Key Objective	Actions	Committee	Resources	Timescale
Continue to improve services for older people	37. Increase the Big Lunch Opportunities to 150 older people.	Communities	Using current budgets	Mar-25
	38. Launch additional lunch club or other activities for older people.	Communities	Aspirational	Mar-26
Continue to improve services for younger people	39. Extend Grove Corner buildings, creating a proper hub for youth services in the town.	Communities	Aspirational	Mar-27
	40. Deliver current programme of detached work to March 2026 and secure ongoing resources.	Communities	Funding in place / Aspirational	Mar-26

#### 5. Contribute to the regeneration of the town centre and development of neighbourhoods in the town

Key Objective	Actions	Committee	Resources	Timescale
Contribute to the regeneration of the town centre	41. Create a pop-up meanwhile space.	Communities	UKSFP funded	Mar-26
	42. Create a parklet/Green Space in Town Centre.	Communities	Aspirational	Mar-27
	43. Implement the Town Centre Management Business Plan.	Communities	Using current budgets	Mar-25
	44. Make physical improvements such as: Install solar benches with USB ports in appropriate locations, water refill stations, living columns + art trails.	Communities	UKSFP funded	Mar-25

## APPENDIX 1

	45. Install Self-clean pop-up toilets in the town and gardens, increasing the toilets in the town and offering more choice to the public.	Communities	Aspirational	Mar-27
Improve services provided to the community	46. Review the Council's support for the Community and Voluntary Sector.	Communities	Using current budgets	Mar-27
	47. Strengthen and develop cultural services and activities in the town; deliver cultural capacity development programme funded by UKSPF.	Communities	UKSFP funded	Mar-25
	48. Establish a community Lottery to enable local community groups to raise funds.	FGP	Business plan to be provided; self-funding	Mar-27

## 6. Represent residents, businesses and community groups of Dunstable on key strategic issues facing the town

Key Objective	Actions	Committee	Resources	Timescale
Represent residents on key strategic issues	49. Scope a Neighbourhood Plan to give the Dunstable more say over its own future, be it to protect the town from unwanted development or have more control over the developments that do take place in the town.	Communities	Using current budgets for scoping work	Mar-27
	50. Ensure best use of developer contributions and key developments in the town.	FGP	Using current budgets	Mar-27

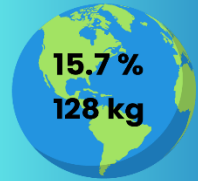
# Dunstable Town Council Performance Overview

2024 -25 Qtr 2

Overview of the performance to date against the the Corporate Plan & Key Performance Indicators. Including successes, good practice and customer satisfaction.

**Continuing to improve the organisational management, efficiency & environmental sustainability of the town council.**

### Recycling weight %



Increase the use of Bennett's Splashside Café outside of the splash park season.



7 new groups or hires inc, Youth Cafe, Knit & Natter, Wildlife talks

**Preserve and enhance the history and identity of the town, creating a sense of pride**

### Review and expand the Town Rangers Service

**From 3 to 4**



### Develop the provision of green space in the town



To annually retain ICCM Charter for the Bereaved silver status at Dunstable Cemetery.



Number of volunteers working directly with the Council to enhance the town's green spaces

**Target 24 Current 6 Regular**

**Also 60 Tree plant & 40 Maintenance days**



**Continue to improve services targeted to all community sectors in the Town**



### Total number of events

**Year End Target 47**

**Current 40**

**Youth & Community 18**

**Market 11**

**Events Programme 11**

**Make physical improvements such as: Install solar benches with USB ports in appropriate locations, water refill stations, living columns + art trails**

**Water - done**

**USB - shortly**

**Columns / Trails - on order**

**Contribute to the regeneration of the Town Centre and development of neighbourhoods in the Town**

Number of new traders on markets etc.	48/40
Number of trading businesses on the market	100/89
Number of markets run	16/27
Number of businesses engaged with each year	150/140

**Represent residents, businesses and community groups of Dunstable on key strategic issues facing the Town**



**Percentage of recommendations to main committees approved**

**96%**

**Number of views of Council meetings online**

**768**



### facebook

**Number of people reached via**

**Target 324,220**

**Actual to date 362,900**

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2024- 2025

APPENDIX 3

Priority	Key Objective	Responsible Committee	Service Area	KPI NO.	Performance Indicator	2024-25 Target	Progress
1	Improve the efficiency of the Town Council	Finance and General Purposes	Corporate	CPPI -1	Number of bids/tenders submitted	6	3
1	Improve the efficiency of the Town Council	Finance and General Purposes	Finance	CPPI -2	Income secured as a percentage of gross expenditure outside of the council tax collection	31.63%	Awaiting Data
1	Improve the efficiency of the Town Council	Council	Corporate	CPPI -3	Percentage of residents satisfied overall with Council services	79%	Awaiting Data
1	Continue to improve staff management	Finance and General Purposes	HR	CPPI -4	IIP accreditation maintained at a minimum of Silver standard	Silver	Awaiting Data
1	Improve the efficiency of the Town Council	Finance and General Purposes	Finance	CPPI -5	General Reserve level maintained at minimum 25% of salary bill	25%	Awaiting Data
1	Continue to improve staff management	Finance and General Purposes	HR	CPPI -6	Average no. of sick days	7.7	5.71
1	Continue to improve staff management	Finance and General Purposes	HR	CPPI -7	Staff retention	NEW	Awaiting Data
1	Improve the efficiency of the Town Council	Finance and General Purposes	Finance	CPPI -8	Annual Governance Accountability Return (AGAR) completed with no exceptions	Yes	Awaiting Data
1	Improve management of the Council's facilities	Council	Corporate	CPPI -9	Provide/facilitate a minimum of 7 publicly accessible community facilities across the town per annum	7	7
1	Improve the efficiency of the Town Council	Finance and General Purposes	Corporate	CPPI -10	Percentage of Performance Indicators/Objectives achieved	NEW	Awaiting Data
1	Continuing to improve the organisational management, efficiency and environmental sustainability of the town council	Council	HR	CPPI -11	% of contracted staff undergoing training	75%	100%

1	Continuing to improve the organisational management, efficiency and environmental sustainability of the town council	Council	Corporate	CPPI -12	Reduce energy consumption	NEW	Awaiting Data
1	Continuing to improve the organisational management, efficiency and environmental sustainability of the town council	Council	Corporate	CPPI -13	% of low emission vehicles in fleet	40%	40%
1	Continuing to improve the organisational management, efficiency and environmental sustainability of the town council	Council	Corporate	CPPI -14	% of recycling in weight collected	NEW	15.70%
2	Preserve and enhance the history and identity of the town	Community Services	Priory House	CPPI -15	Increase in income year on year from actual	from 25/26	Awaiting Data
2	Preserve and enhance the history and identity of the town	Community Services	Priory House	CPPI -16	Percentage of users satisfied with service	NEW	Awaiting Data
2	Preserve and enhance the history and identity of the town	Community Services	Priory House	CPPI -17	Increase in visitors/customers year on year with 2025/26 being the baseline	NEW	Awaiting Data
3	Develop the provision of green space in the town	Grounds & Environmental Services	Bennett's Splash	CPPI -18	Percentage of users satisfied with service	NEW	Awaiting Data
3	Develop the provision of green space in the town	Grounds & Environmental Services	Bennett's Splash	CPPI -19	Increase in income year on year	NEW	Awaiting Data
3	Develop the provision of green space in the town	Grounds & Environmental Services	Green Spaces	CPPI -20	Percentage of residents satisfied overall with green and open spaces	92%	Awaiting Data

3	Develop the provision of green space in the town	Grounds & Environmental Services	Green Spaces	CPPI -21	To retain Green Flag accreditation at four sites	4	4
3	Develop the provision of green space in the town	Grounds & Environmental Services	Green Spaces	CPPI -22	% of play equipment faults fixed within 2 working days.	New so no baseline	Awaiting Data
3	Develop the provision of green space in the town	Grounds & Environmental Services	Cemetery	CPPI -23	To annually retain ICCM Charter for the Bereaved silver status at Dunstable Cemetery.	Silver	Silver Attained
3	Develop the provision of green space in the town	Grounds & Environmental Services	Green Spaces	CPPI -24	Number of volunteers working directly with the Council to enhance the town's green spaces	24	6 Regular 60 treeplanting 40 on maintenance days
3	Improve the provision of green space in the town	Grounds & Environmental Services	Green Spaces	CPPI -25	The completion of 10 new management plans for recreation grounds and large open spaces over 3 years – 3 in Year 1, 3 in Year 2 and 4 in Year 3.	3	Awaiting Data
4	Improve the provision of green space in the town	Grounds & Environmental Services	Green Spaces	CPPI -26	Town Ranger income achieved	£6,000	£1,638
4	Continue to improve services to all community sectors	Community Services	Events	CPPI -27	Percentage of people satisfied with events	98%	Awaiting Data
4	Continue to improve services to all community sectors	Finance and General Purposes	Corporate	CPPI -28	Total number of events	47	40
4	Continue to improve services to all community sectors	Finance and General Purposes	Corporate	CPPI -29	Total number of volunteers	27	Awaiting Data
4	Continue to improve services for younger people	Community Services	Grove Corner	CPPI -30	Total number of young people visits to services for young people	4,000	7,363
4	Continue to improve services for younger people	Community Services	Grove Corner	CPPI -31	Total number of individual young people engaging in youth provision run by DTC		Awaiting Data



4	Continue to improve services for younger people	Community Services	Grove Corner	CPPI -32	Hours of youth provision delivered to young people	804.5	877
4	Continue to improve services to all community sectors	Community Services	Grove Corner	CPPI -33	Meet budgeted income year on year	10,750	3,474
4	Continue to improve services for older people	Community Services	Older People	CPPI -34	Total number of older people visits to council delivered older people services	2,000	1,809
4	Continue to improve services for older people	Community Services	Older People	CPPI -35	Increase provision offered to the older community	1	1 trialled
4	Continue to improve services to all community sectors	Community Services	Community engagement	CPPI -36	Number of community led initiatives supported	1	0
4	Continue to improve services to all community sectors	Community Services	Community engagement	CPPI -37	New community groups engaged with	2	3
5	Contribute to the regeneration of the town centre	Community Services	Town Centre	CPPI -38	Number of new traders on markets etc.	40	48
5	Contribute to the regeneration of the town centre	Community Services	Town Centre	CPPI -39	Number of trading businesses on the market	89	100
5	Contribute to the regeneration of the town centre	Community Services	Town Centre	CPPI -40	Number of markets run	27	16
5	Contribute to the regeneration of the town centre	Community Services	Town Centre	CPPI -41	Number of businesses engaged with each year	140	150
6	Improve efficiency through the use of ICT	Finance and General Purposes	Communications	CPPI -42	Percentage increase in the number of followers on all social media platforms	12500	Awaiting Data
6	Improve efficiency through the use of ICT	Finance and General Purposes	Communications	CPPI -43	Number of website visits per year	60000	48000
6	Improve efficiency through the use of ICT	Finance and General Purposes	Communications	CPPI -44	Number of people reached via Facebook	324,220	362,900
6	Improve the efficiency of the Town Council	Finance and General Purposes	Communications	CPPI -45	Number of articles published	NEW	19

6	Improve efficiency through the use of ICT	Finance and General Purposes	Democratic	CPPI -46	Number of views of Council meetings online	NEW	768
6	Improve the efficiency of the Town Council	Council	Democratic	CPPI -47	Percentage physical councillor attendances at all main committees	72%	85%
6	Improve the efficiency of the Town Council	Council	Democratic	CPPI -48	Percentage of recommendations to main committees approved	NEW	96
6	Create a sense of pride in Dunstable	Council	Democratic	CPPI -49	Percentage of events attended by the Mayor which are in Dunstable per annum	65%	91% (100/110)
6	Create a sense of pride in Dunstable	Council	Democratic	CPPI -50	Number of Councillor led surgeries (open public meetings)	10	5

## Dunstable Town Council Customer Charter

### **What you can expect from us**

We will:

- Treat everyone fairly and with respect
- Make our services easy to use, giving you choices whenever possible
- Deliver services in a way that gives good value for money
- Use customers' views of services to make improvements
- Put matters right as quickly as possible if we get something wrong
- All staff will be identifiable as representing the Town Council
- To make reasonable adjustments to enable you to access the Council and or its services and amenities

### **When you contact us**

We will:

- Answer calls to the main line within 10 seconds and deal with your enquiry at that point, wherever possible
- Ensure that calls made directly to specific extensions will either be answered or transferred to voicemail after 10 seconds. Any automated message will be clear and concise
- Social Media messages will be responded to within 48 hours
- Respond to letters within 10 working days of receipt
- Provide an immediate auto response to e-mails
- Send a full response to e-mails within 10 working days
- Ensure you know at all times who is responsible for handling your query
- Be polite and helpful when you visit us and if we cannot answer your query immediately, we will tell you when we have the information you need
- Aim to see you on time when you have an appointment with us
- When visiting customers, staff will carry their identity badge to reassure customers of their identity and purpose of visit

### **What we expect from you**

- We expect you to treat staff politely and with the same courtesy that you would expect of us
- Refrain from using aggressive behaviour, bad language or discriminatory comment as this will not be tolerated
- Provide us with all the relevant information we need wherever possible
- Be on time for an appointment and let us know if you need to cancel

### **Comment, Compliment or Complaint**

Dunstable Town Council is committed to providing the best possible level of service to its customers. In the event you have any cause for complaint against

the Council, wish to compliment our services or make suggestions for improvements, we will be pleased to hear from you.

We will respond in writing or by telephone within 10 working days of receiving your complaint or suggestions.

We will advise you of the expected timescale if we are unable to resolve your query at this stage.

Comment, Compliment or Complaint forms can be completed electronically at all Town Council buildings as well as hardcopies being available. Forms are also available to download from our website: [www.dunstable.gov.uk](http://www.dunstable.gov.uk) or you can telephone us on 01582 513000.

You can also write to us at:           Dunstable Town Council  
  76 High Street North  
  Dunstable  
  Beds  
  LU6 1NF

Where required, information will be provided in alternative languages or formats to accommodate the needs of our customers.

**DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL****FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE****MONDAY 18 NOVEMBER 2024****MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS**

**Purpose of Report:** To update members on current marketing and communications, and for members to agree the creation of and appoint to a working group with the purpose of reviewing the look and branding used on the website.

**1 RECOMMENDATION**

- 1.1 It is recommended that the Council set up a Working Group of around 5 Councillors to informally review and comment on the new website's design and use of branding.

**2 SOCIAL MEDIA**

- 2.1 The Corporate Marketing and Communications Officer will continue to use Instagram Stories, which are also linked with Facebook Stories to enhance follower engagement. Stories receive greater exposure since users typically view them before scrolling through their social media feed. The on-going use of both stories and posts appears to be effectively engaging our followers.
- 2.2 Officers will continue to use of Facebook's '@followers' feature for selective posts, as these seem to make sure followers are aware of a new post being published. This feature will be used sparingly and only when necessary.
- 2.3 Dunstable Town Council's Facebook account has reached another milestone with over 13,000 followers. Officers believe that Dunstable Town Council is the leading Town Council in England and Wales with the highest number of Facebook followers.

**Facebook page followers:**

Dunstable Town Council	13,070 (+194)
Bennett's Café/ Splash Park	4,801 (+42)
Town Ranger Services	1,468 (+16)
Grove Corner	1,377 (+35)
Priory House	1,377 (+50)

**Instagram followers:**

Dunstable Town Council	683 (+38)	
Bennett's Café/ Splash Park	20	(+9)
Grove Corner	484 (+9)	

**LinkedIn followers:**

Dunstable Town Council	260 (+7)
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**TikTok followers:**

Dunstable Town Council 70 (+12)




2.4 These figures are accurate as of 7 November 2024 and show how many followers have been gained since the previous report date.

2.5 Dunstable Town Council insights:

*Top three social media Facebook posts over the last two months (September to November) by interactions:*

1. *Christmas Twilight Markets, (this is the first time on this post where a boosted ad was paid for, targeting the perimeter of the local area),*
2. *Street Food Heroes – jumping on a TikTok trend for older demographic using Gen Z slang, and*
3. *The new solar benches video.*

**f Top posts by interactions**

 <p><b>Get ready for a magical afternoon at the...</b></p> <p>29 October 05:45</p> <p>315 216 56 70</p>	 <p><b>Street Food Heroes tonight (12...</b></p> <p>12 September 09:00</p> <p>147 147 22 16</p>	 <p><b>Our how-to video is live—showing you all...</b></p> <p>30 October 05:04</p> <p>139 94 69 16</p>
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2.6

*Top three social media Facebook stories over the last two months (September to October) by interactions:*

1. *Post for Christmas Carols and Torchlight Procession shared to the story,*
2. *Post for Ground Team winter/spring planting bedding shared to story and*
3. *Middle Row Market.*

**f** Top stories by interactions

**Your video**  
25 October 03:21  
6 6  
0 0

18 October 03:25  
4 4  
0 0

17 October 00:08  
4 3  
0 1

2.7 Top three social media **Instagram posts** over the last two months (October to November) by interactions:

1. Solar benches video,
2. Grounds team leaf clearing and
3. Christmas Twilight Markets.

**ig** Top posts by interactions

**Our how-to video is live—showing you all...**  
30 October 05:07  
-- 19  
0 1

**The Grounds Team have begun clearing...**  
29 October 04:32  
-- 21  
1 0

**Get ready for a magical afternoon at the...**  
29 October 03:00  
-- 19  
1 0

2.8 Top three social media **Instagram stories** over the last two months (October to November) by reach: were all Middle Row Market:

 Top stories by reach



2.9 Video content will continue to be used to promote each councillor, enhancing councillors’ visibility and approachability. The Marketing and Communications Officer will collaborate closely with the Democratic Service Manager to ensure timely and effective communication regarding any upcoming surgeries.

**3 INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS**

3.1 Monthly staff newsletters are produced to keep employees regularly informed and updated with relevant information to ensure employees are advocates for the Council.

**4 EMAIL MARKETING**

4.1 Monthly Councillor newsletters are sent with all relevant information which includes bulletins and Dunstable Town Council events. Officers would welcome feedback or suggestions on the Councillor newsletters.

4.2 A Dunstable Town Council email newsletter will be produced in 2025, with a sign up integrated into the new website to ensure the public can keep up to date with regularly news and bulletins from the Town Council.

**5 WEBSITE**

4.1 The figures below show the number of hits for the most popular Town Council website pages between September and October 2024.

**Top five web pages that have received the most views**

- 1 Home page
- 2 Priory House
- 3 What’s on



- 4 CPCFC
- 5 Job vacancies

5.1 The figures below show where those who visit the town council website in September and October 2024 have originated from.

Organic search (google, Bing etc.)	2,943
Direct	335
Organic social (from social)	929

5.2 Over the two months (September to November 2024) there were 4,300 website visitors

5.3 Figures for September and October 2024 saw the continuing trend of people accessing the Town Council website via a mobile device (66.4%) as opposed to other methods.

Desktop users	31.1%
Tablet users	2.4%

5.4 A new Google Analytics account has been set up since 1 October 2024, which indicates from the figures shown from the previous report, that the figures are lower than previously reported, due to the new tracking setup and data collection adjustments. Potentially July and August have seasonally greater numbers.

5.5 Since the last report, the Town Council has appointed the new website supplier, and they have been working closely with the Marketing and Communications Officer and website project team to develop the website's structure, design, functionality, and content strategy to ensure it meets the needs of the community and aligns with the council's objectives.

5.6 A community user group, representing various groups, was formed to provide input on the website's branding and usability. The feedback received from the community group has been both valuable and positive.

5.7 The Marketing and Communication Officer is working on ensuring there is new and updated content for the new website where necessary to ensure it remains current, engaging, and informative for users.

## 6 WEBSITE WORKING GROUP

6.1 As part of this project there is a need to ensure that the branding of the Town Council works within the new website. It is acknowledged that whilst it is important for the website designers to measure this and its effectiveness with the general public it is also important to ensure that the council and its members owns the branding too. It is recommended that Members form a working group (of approximately 5) to review the design and branding used on the website to ensure that it meets the requirements of the Council and the wider community.

## 7 EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

7.1 Noticeboards across the wards are regularly updated showcasing a range of local services and events. The Corporate Marketing and Communications Officer ensures

the information showcased is in date with a preferred uniform design (A4 size). The noticeboards continue to be regularly updated with the help of the Town Rangers.

7.2

The Corporate and Marketing Communications Officer is currently working on a corporate Marketing and Communications Strategy that will complement and align with the Marketing Plans of Service Areas.

7.3

The Corporate Marketing and Communications Officer will be working on a branding style guide to ensure consistency across the council services.

8

## **TALK OF THE TOWN**

8.1

The October/Christmas edition of *Talk of the Town* was delivered starting on 25 October. An extra 600 copies were distributed through the distribution company, with no issues reported. An additional 200 copies of *Talk of the Town* will be printed to ensure sufficient availability for further distribution and to meet community demand.

8.2

An audio version of *Talk of the Town* will continue to be produce, as well as an online version PDF on the website.

8.3

*Talk of the Town* is made available for the public to pick up at various locations, including Ashton Square Toilets, Priory House, Grove Theatre, The Dunstable Centre, and Bennett's Café/Splash Park. Additionally, copies are distributed to town centre businesses by the Town Centre team.

8.4

9

Officers continue to seek other advertisers for *Talk of the Town*.

9.1

## **MEDIA AND PUBLIC RELATIONS**

The Corporate Marketing and Communications Officer continues to produce and circulate press releases to a dedicated distribution list after events or achievements. These include the SLCC, Luton News and Dunstable Gazette, The Vine, Clerks & Councils Direct and other Trade magazines. Whether the press release gets featured, is a solely down the to the discretion of the press.

9.2

Seven press release were issue in September to October. All seven were published on Luton News and Dunstable Gazette; using their online portal makes it easy to identity if the publication is published. Going forward when press releases are sent, officers will ask for a link to publication to be sent if they are published.

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## **AUTHOR**

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**DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL**  
**FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**  
**MONDAY 18 NOVEMBER 2024**  
**CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP OF THE ROTARY CLUB**

<p><b>Purpose of Report:</b> To decide whether the Town Council should become a member of Dunstable Rotary Club</p>
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**1 RECOMMENDATION**

- 1.1 Members are asked to decide whether the Town Council will become a Corporate Member of Dunstable Rotary Club.

**2 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Committee was asked to agree to the Town Council becoming a corporate member of Rotary Dunstable at the meeting held on 16 September 2024. Following a discussion this item was deferred to the next meeting pending a report outlining the process and benefits to the Town Council. **(197/24)**
- 2.2 Dunstable Town Council has a long history of working with the Rotary Club. Councillors, including Past Mayors, and previous officers have been and remain members. Mayors are often invited to speak at Rotary meetings. Rotary, while a registered charity is a service organisation, not a charity. Core funding is provided by Members; all fundraising is for other causes, not the Rotary. Service can include financial support, locally, nationally or internationally.
- 2.3 2025 will mark the 80<sup>th</sup> year of Rotary Dunstable as well as the 40<sup>th</sup> year of the Town Council. The Rotary Club have invited the Town Council to become a corporate member in order to raise awareness of their presence in the town, to highlight what Rotary can do for the community and to encourage more people to join Rotary. The terms of Corporate Membership can vary. It is suggested that the Club would agree a set number of members per year, probably the mayor and chairs. These members would be able to attend any meeting (if they pay for meal). These members would also be able to attend other Rotary Clubs as guests. This would then emphasise the Council's commitment to serving the town.

- 2.4 The Town Council would also be able to add corporate member of rotary to letterhead

**3 BENEFITS**

- 3.1 The Rotary Club have provided the following list of benefits of Corporate Membership to Dunstable Town Council and Dunstable Rotary Club:

- 1 *Rotary although it has charitable status is not a Charity but a Service Organisation.*

- 2 *Service can include practical or financial support both locally, nationally or international.*
- 3 *Connects community groups.*
- 4 *Elevates Dunstable Town Council as a community partner in service, business and support.*
- 5 *Offers Dunstable Town Council members access to regular Dunstable Rotary meetings.*
- 6 *Emphasizes Dunstable Town Council commitment to serving others as part of its corporate culture.*
- 7 *Connects Dunstable Town Council to a global network of 1.2 million*
- 8 *Rotarians. Access to Rotary Club meetings worldwide.*
- 9 *Mutual support from Dunstable Town Council and Dunstable Rotary expanding profiles amongst the local community and active groups.*
- 10 *Ability for Dunstable Town Council to suggest service/financial support to Dunstable Rotary Club.*
- 11 *Connect Contribute Support Celebrate Service Enhance*

#### **4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The cost to the Council would vary depending on the precise arrangement agreed.

#### **5 AUTHOR**

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