

**To Councillors:** J Aldridge (*Vice-Chairman*), A Baker (*Chairwoman*), S Compton, B Cummings, M Gemmell Smith, C Jacques, A Layland, M McArthur, S McGregor, V Parker, A Read, M Stockdale, J Streets, S Sumner, B Todd.

Notice is hereby given of a Council Meeting of Edenbridge Town Council to be held in Rickards Hall on 9 March 2026 at 7:30 pm, which Councillors are summonsed to attend.

Town Clerk  
4 March 2026

To assist in the speedy and efficient dispatch of business members wishing to obtain factual information on items included on the Agenda are asked to enquire of the Town Clerk prior to the day of the meeting. Council Meetings may be recorded.

Any person intending to make recordings is advised to notify the Clerk in advance so that appropriate arrangements can be made

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# Meeting Papers & Report

## 1 **To Receive Apologies for Absence**

## 2 **Declaration of Interests or Predetermination**


The disclosure must include the nature of the interest. If an interest becomes apparent to a member during the course of a meeting that has not been disclosed under this item, the member must immediately disclose it.

## 3 **Public Questions and Statements**

Members of the public, and members with prejudicial interests on items on the Agenda, may make representations, answer, ask questions and give evidence at this meeting in respect of items on the Agenda. (This is the only opportunity for members of the public to make a contribution during the meeting.)

Both public and members are limited to three minutes per person to speak and the total time designated for public questions shall not exceed fifteen minutes unless directed by the Chairman of the meeting.

## 4 **To receive, adopt and sign the minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 12 January 2026 (pages 2023-121/1-6).**

 Full Council | 12 January 2026 v.1 - Minutes (Pages 2023-121/1-6)


## 5 **To receive County and District Councillors reports**


### 5.1 **County Councillor**


### 5.2 **District Councillors**

## 6 **To adopt the following reports/minutes of meetings**


### 6.1 **To receive and adopt the minutes of the Planning and Transport Meetings held on 19 January (pages 2023-122/1-5), 9 February 2026 (pages 2023-124/1-2) and 23 February 2026 (pages 2023-126/1-4).**

 Planning and Transport | 09 February 2026 v.1 - Minutes (Pages 2023-124/1-2)

 Planning and Transport | 23 February 2026 v.1 - Minutes (Pages 2023-126/1-4)

 Planning and Transport | 19 January 2026 v.1 - Minutes (Pages 2023-122/1-5)

### 6.2 **To receive and adopt the minutes of the Open Spaces Meeting held on 26 January 2026 (pages 2023-123/1-8).**

 Open Spaces | 26 January 2026 v.1 - Minutes (Pages 2023-123/1-8)

6.3 **To receive and adopt the minutes of the Finance and Governance Meeting held on 17 November 2025 (pages 2023-114/1-6).**

📄 Finance and Governance | 17 November 2025 v.1 - Minutes (Pages 2023-114/1-6)

6.4 **To receive and adopt the minutes of the Community Infrastructure Board Meeting held on 23 February 2026 (pages 2023-127/1-5).**

📄 Community Infrastructure Board | 23 February 2026 v.1 - Minutes (Pages 2023-127/1-5)

6.5 **To receive and adopt the minutes of the Personnel Meeting held on 3 March 2026 (pages 2023-129/1-6).**

📄 Personnel | 03 March 2026 v.1 - Minutes (Pages 2023-129/1-6)

7 **To receive recommendations from Committees**

7.1 **Finance and Governance Committee 16 February**

Members will be aware that the Town Clerk has undertaken a comprehensive review of the Council's data protection and information governance arrangements. This work has been carried out to ensure continued compliance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), the Data Protection Act 2018, and the Freedom of Information Act 2000, and in preparation for the introduction of Assertion 10 within the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR).

The review has focused on ensuring that the Council's documentation is legally up to date and aligned with current legislation and ICO guidance, and that it reflects Council's current operational practices, including digital and cloud-based systems. As a result, the the Privacy Notices, some policies and procedures have been refreshed and strengthened so that Council has provide a clear framework the personal data the Council holds, why, what it publishes, and how individual rights requests are handled in practice.

the Council's core practices remain sound; however, the documentation now more clearly evidences compliance, transparency, and accountability.

In addition, Committee received and confirmed a new Investments Policy. This is different to the Capital and General Reserve Policy, though it does cover Governance and Managing Risk. A Town Council has a duty to manage public funds prudently, transparently, and in a way that safeguards taxpayers' money.


Finance and Governance Committee confirmed recommendation to Council to adopt the below policies.

One question was raised regarding recording of meetings. This is already covered under the Recording and Filming at Meetings Policy (sections 2.4 and 2.5). Meeting recordings are also covered legally in the policies by the UK GDPR (they contain personal data: voices, images, opinions). However, the following additions have been added:

- **Retention Schedule** (Appendix A) new entry - Council Meeting Recordings (audio/video) Audio or visual recordings of Council meetings will be retained and disposed of in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders (currently SO 12(f)). Recordings are destroyed once the minutes have been approved, unless Council resolves otherwise for a specific lawful purpose. (*This also aligns with 2.4 above*)
- **Data Protection Policy** - under records management, added - Audio or visual recordings of Council meetings will be retained and disposed of in accordance with the Council's Retention and Disposal Policy and Standing Orders.

### 7.1.1 **Investment Policy - To receive and adopt the draft policy**


#### **Members are asked to confirm and adopt the Investments Policy?**

 Confidential Annex 1 (omitted from public documents):


### 7.1.2 **Privacy Notices - To receive and adopt the draft Privacy Notices - General Privacy Notice; Website and Digital; Staff; and Councillors**


#### **Members are asked to confirm and adopt the the Privacy Notices for:**

1. **General Privacy Notice**
2. **Website and Digital Privacy Notice**
3. **Staff Privacy Notice**
4. **Councillor Privacy Notice**

 Confidential Annex 2 (omitted from public documents):


### 7.1.3 **Retention and Disposal Policy - To receive and adopt the draft updated policy** **Members are asked to confirm and adopt the Retention and Disposal Policy include Appendix A Retention Documents?**

 Confidential Annex 3 (omitted from public documents):

 Confidential Annex 4 (omitted from public documents):


### 7.1.4 **Freedom of Information Policy and Publication Scheme - To receive and adopt the draft updated policy**

#### **Members are asked to confirm and adopt the updated Freedom of Information and Publication Scheme Policy and the revised Publication Scheme list?**

 Confidential Annex 5 (omitted from public documents):

 Confidential Annex 6 (omitted from public documents):

### 7.1.5 **Subject Access Request (SAR) Procedure - To receive and adopt the draft procedure** **Members are asked to confirm and adopt Subject Access Request (SAR) Procedure?**

 Confidential Annex 7 (omitted from public documents):

## 7.2 **Personnel Committee 3 March**

The Personnel Committee has received and considered a number of personnel matters and makes the following resolutions and recommendations to Council as set out below.

In relation to policies, the Staff Handbook sets out the Council's key employment procedures, rules and policies, supporting an efficient, safe and professional working environment. It is not intended to be an exhaustive statement of all policies, and the Council may adopt additional policies as required to ensure compliance and operational clarity.

A copy of the Staff Handbook is available on the Council's website.

### 7.2.1 **Budget 2025-26 - Staffing earmarked reserve**

Personnel Committee has reviewed the updated staffing budget forecast for 2025–26. The revised forecast position indicates an estimated year-end underspend of £6,385.69, reflecting adjustments since the November forecast, including the medical insurance premium increase for 2025–26 which had not been included within the original budget, and other staffing cost updates.

To achieve the previously supported increase in the Staffing Earmarked Reserve from

£37,322 to £45,000, a transfer of £7,678 is required. Based on the revised forecast, £1,292.31 would be funded from the Council's overall year-end surplus.

**Council is therefore asked to confirm the recommendation to increase the Staffing Earmarked Reserve to £45,000, utilising £1,292.31 from the Council's overall year-end surplus to complete the transfer.**

7.2.2 **Medical Insurance Renewal 2026–27**

Personnel Committee considered the 2026–27 medical insurance renewal at its meeting and supported renewal of the scheme, noting the financial implications and the continued inclusion of the benefit within employee contractual terms. Members also suggested Committee should review the eligibility criteria for the scheme at a future meeting. The Committee therefore recommends that Council:

**Members are asked to:**

- **Reconfirm the Council's commitment to the private medical insurance scheme; and**
- **Approve the 2026–27 annual premium of £31,036.32.**

7.2.3 **Annual Leave - year-end position**

Committee reviewed the year-end annual leave position for staff and considered the treatment of any leave remaining at the end of the financial year, and recommends that, where annual leave cannot reasonably be taken before 31 March, payment in lieu may be made. In respect of the Town Clerk, the Committee recommends that payment may be made for up to three weeks' untaken annual leave, if it is not possible for the leave to be taken before the end of the financial year.

**Council is asked to confirm the recommendation.**

7.2.4 **Paternity Leave Policy**

Committee has reviewed the Council's current paternity leave provision and recommends that the policy be amended to provide four weeks' paternity leave at 100% of normal pay.

The Committee also agreed that officers undertake a broader review of family leave provisions, including compassionate leave, to ensure they remain appropriate and competitive. A report will be brought forward in due course.


**Council is therefore asked to:**

- **Approve the amendment to the Staff Handbook to provide four weeks' paternity leave at full pay; and**
- **Note that a wider review of family leave provisions will be presented later in the year.**

7.2.5 **Sexual Harassment policy**

While the Council's Equal Opportunities and Harassment Policy already addresses harassment generally, recent legislative developments have strengthened employers' proactive duty to prevent sexual harassment. Committee recommends to Council to adopt this policy.

**Members are asked to approve and adopt the Sexual Harassment Policy, for incorporation into the Council's Personnel Policies.**

 Confidential Annex 8 (omitted from public documents):

## 7.2.6 **Menopause Policy - reconfirm policy**

Members are asked to acknowledge and reconfirm their satisfaction with the Council's Menopause Policy, as set out in Section 6.2 of the Staff Handbook, which was prepared by Worknest as part of the comprehensive handbook review in 2024. Periodic review and formal acknowledgement by the Personnel Committee and Council demonstrates good governance practice and ensures continued awareness of the Council's commitment to supporting employee wellbeing.

**To reconfirm the Menopause Policy (section 6.2 of Staff Handbook).**

## 7.2.7 **Training and Development Policy**

Section 7 of the Staff Handbook already addresses training, the proposed policy expands upon this to reflect the Council's current practices, including induction training, annual appraisals, use of an E-Learning platform, sector training through KALC, NALC and SLCC, and support for work-related qualifications. It also clarifies approval arrangements and time off in lieu for training undertaken outside normal working hours.

**Members are asked to approve and adopt the policy.**

 Confidential Annex 9 (omitted from public documents):

## 7.2.8 **Community Warden - extend fixed term contract**

**To offer the community Warden a further six months extension to the fixed term contract for 11–15 hours per week.**

## 7.2.9 **Community Warden Role – review of hours and future provision**

Personnel Committee has recommended that a review be undertaken of the Community Warden role and the previously established 22-hour provision.

The review will consider the structure of the role, the allocation of hours, and the wider delivery of Community Warden functions, including potential office support arrangements. A report will be brought forward to Council following completion of the review.

**Council is asked to note and support the proposed review.**

## 7.2.10 **Head Groundsman & Buildings Manager – proposed title change**

Committee has reviewed the current job title of Head Groundsman & Buildings Manager and recommends that the post be retitled Facilities Manager, to reflect the breadth of operational and buildings management responsibilities.

**Council is asked to approve the proposed title change.**

## 7.2.11 **Confirmation of annual pay increments**

Following the staff appraisals, and as per the contracts, staff are all eligible for their annual pay increment: "Subject to satisfactory performance which will be linked to the staff appraisal, you will progress through the range by annual increments until you reach the maximum salary in the range. NB: 'Satisfactory performance' will include continuous development by means of gaining additional/improved abilities and skills through training, experience, achieving target or other means". These have been allowed for in the budget 2026-27. Committee recommends Council to,

**Confirm the staff annual pay increments in line with contracts and NJS pay scales.**

## 7.2.12 Town Clerk – LC Level Progression

Committee considered the progression of the Town Clerk's post from LC3 (Scale 42–45) to the LC4 range (Scale 46–49), following completion of the PIALC qualification and progression to the top of the LC3 scale.

The Committee noted the scope, responsibility and complexity of the role and agreed that the post aligns with the LC4 range under the NJC/SLCC framework. The Committee therefore supports progression into LC4.

**Council is asked to confirm the Town Clerk's placement within the LC4 range, commencing at Scale 46.**

## 8 To receive reports and any recommendations from working groups; delegated reports; clerk's and officers' reports

### 8.1 Clerk's report

**Byelaws:** Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government has responded with further questions to the draft byelaws. Of note: Schedule of grounds – Churchyards and cemeteries; Market Yard Car Park and Forge Green & Swan Lane Allotment; the clause on cycling. A response will be drafted and presented to Open Spaces Committee.

**First Aid Training:** Following resolution at Council September meeting, training for all office and groundstaff is booked as 6-hours e-learning and 2 full days 11 & 14 May.

**GDPR and Privacy Policy audit and compliance:** A considerable amount of work has gone towards ensure Council policies and procedure are compliant with the Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR UK, and to ensure readiness for the new Assertion 10 part of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) under assertion 10.

**Leases - Forge Theatre Group:** Amendments to the draft Lease have been viewed by the solicitor and an updated clean draft has been issued. A date to meet to go through the new revised draft Lease is expected late April.

**Market Archway:** This was installed in February and has received a number of positive comments. Once signage has been put up to advise that the access area will be used for the Markets on Thursday and letters sent to both neighbours, we will look to utilise the bollards on Wednesdays to prevent parking ready for the Thursday market.

**NABMA Market Assessment:** January Open Spaces Committee confirmed expenditure for a market professional to visit to the market and provide a detailed understanding of issues and opportunities. This has been booked, with visit in March.

**Kent farmers market Association:** Officers have met with KFMA to discuss membership and listing on their website. This will help promote the market as well as advertise to other traders, the cost is low approx £60 per year. The benefits are different to the NABMA who also provide legal advice, webinars, and sector updates.

**NALC annual conference:** Cllr Aldridge, Town Clerk, RFO/Deputy Clerk, and Open Spaces Officer are booked to attend this year's event on 24 June.

**Personnel:** Appraisals for all staff were carried out during January and February. Training records have been reviewed with new monitoring records created. Some job descriptions were updated.

**Principles of Internal Auditing Local Councils (PIALC):** The Town Clerk started this in February, aiming to complete by end of March.

**ETC Communications work – September 2025 to February 2026**

This report summarises communications activity over the past six months, covering routine operations and project work. After a particularly busy first half of the year finalising the Council's new website, the last few months have been an opportunity to refocus on day-to-day responsibilities and set goals/aspirations for the year ahead. Day-to-day responsibilities have included managing the Council's website and social media channels, producing marketing and communications materials, maintaining our online presence, and preparing media releases. Alongside this ongoing work, support has been provided for a number of key initiatives and one-off projects such as Sevenoaks District Council's Local Plan Regulation 18 consultation.

**• NEW WEBSITE**

- Launched the Council's new website in September, integrating the Council Papers software.
- Reviewed and updated the Council's Privacy Statement and created an Accessibility Statement, strengthening transparency and compliance.

**• LOCAL PLAN**

- Helped to promote Sevenoaks District Council's Regulation 18 consultation in the autumn and encouraged residents to participate. Website, social media, newsletter spread, posters, banner on railings.
- Produced a 4pp A4 leaflet to promote the consultation, which was delivered direct to households. This also gave details of the Town Council's drop-in sessions.

**• AWARDS & GRANTS**

- Entered Edenbridge Market into NABMA's Great British Market Awards.
- Helped promote the Tesco Stronger Starts campaign and encouraged residents to vote for Edenbridge Games Club. The Council was awarded £500.
- Shared grant and funding opportunities with local organisations and individuals where appropriate e.g. shared SDC Community Mobilisation Grant details on social media, as well as emailing relevant contacts.
- Promoted ETC CIL and Grant application windows. Used examples of previous recipients.

**• GOOGLE BUSINESS PROFILES**

- Ensured key information is kept up-to-date i.e. holiday opening hours.
- Created posts to promote events and special activities i.e. new traders at Edenbridge Market, CIL and Grant applications.

**• PRESS RELEASES**

- Sent press releases to various media such as The County Chronicle, and industry publications from KALC, SLCC, NABMA and Clerks & Councils magazine.

**• EDENBRIDGE MAGAZINE (BI-MONTHLY)**

- Produced double-page spreads to communicate the Council's activities, news and events.

**• SOCIAL MEDIA**

- Generated regular content such as posts, reels, stories, events and cover photos to communicate Council activity and matters of interest.
- Shared partner content and information relevant to Edenbridge residents.

- **ANNUAL REPORT**
  - Produced the Annual Report 2024-25 and published on website and social media.
- **EVENTS/ACTIVITIES**
  - SELF DEFENSE CLASSES
    - Helped gauge interest for the classes and encouraged people to sign up via various channels.
  - EDENBRIDGE GARDENS IN BLOOM
    - Having helped promote the competition earlier in the year, final work was to produce the certificates and publicise the winners.
  - REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY
    - Communicated the event details – before and with an after story/photos.
    - Did a special write-up on one of our local residents and war veteran – Eric Bateman – celebrating his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday.
  - CIVIC MEDALLIONS
    - Designed invites and publicised the awards via website, social media, Edenbridge Magazine and press release.
  - ANNUAL TOWN MEETING
    - Promoting the upcoming ATM and helping to put together the presentation for the evening.
- **EDENBRIDGE MARKET**
  - Publicised the new market archway – our most liked Facebook post to date.
  - Produced a trader newsletter.
  - Ran adverts across Meta platforms during December.
  - Communicated changes to market dates over Christmas and New Year period.
- **BUDGET/COUNCIL TAX COMMUNICATIONS**
  - Communicated the Council’s budget and precept via various channels. This included an infographic to highlight key information and make it easier for readers to digest.
- **OPEN SPACES**
  - Starting to promote key open spaces and buildings projects such as the new Stangrove Park bandstand, new playground at Marsh Green and boiler/heating works at the Recreation Ground Pavillion.

9 **Draft Local Plan - Update Since Last Council Meeting**

Following submission of the Town Council’s detailed response to Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) on the draft Local Plan (Regulation 18, Phase 3) consultation in December 2025, SDC has confirmed that 5,103 representations were received across the District.

Of these, 721 responses related to Edenbridge, representing the highest level of response from any settlement in the District. By comparison, Kemsing recorded 507 responses and Sevenoaks Town 503. This reflects the significant engagement of Edenbridge residents, alongside the awareness-raising undertaken by the Town Council, NEDRA and community groups.

**Meeting with SDC Planning Policy Officers**

In February, representatives of the Town Council met with officers from SDC’s Planning Policy Team. The meeting was attended by the Town Council’s Planning Consultant, Cllrs Aldridge, Baker and Layland, and the Town Clerk. The purpose of the meeting was to raise Edenbridge-specific concerns prior to preparation of the Regulation 19 (Publication) version of the Local

Plan.

The Town Council emphasised:

- That proportionately, Edenbridge's proposed allocation is high relative to other settlements in the District.
- That Edenbridge is less suitable for strategic growth than Sevenoaks and Swanley.
- The importance of infrastructure provision aligning with any development scale.

The discussion was described as constructive and informative. Officers acknowledged the concerns raised in relation to the scale of development proposed for Edenbridge and confirmed that all representations are being reviewed as part of the preparation of the Regulation 19 Plan. It was also noted that it is not uncommon, following a Regulation 18 consultation, for some sites not to progress to the Regulation 19 stage. However, no assurances were given regarding potential changes to site allocations or overall housing numbers at this stage.

### **Housing Numbers and Options**

Under Regulation 18, two growth options were presented:

- Option 1: 16,321 dwellings (shortfall of 854 dwellings against requirement)
- Option 2 (including Pedham Place): 18,900 dwellings

If Option 2 were to proceed into Regulation 19, this would result in a surplus above the identified housing requirement. As the Local Plan is not required to provide a surplus, in theory this could allow scope to reduce or remove less suitable allocations elsewhere in the District, potentially including sites in Edenbridge.

However, uncertainties remain, including:

- The acceptability of development at Pedham Place (within the National Landscape).
- Whether it can be delivered in full within the plan period.
- SDC will need to resolve these matters before finalising the Regulation 19 Plan.

The Town Council suggested that, should a surplus remain in the overall housing supply, consideration should be given to reducing allocations in settlements where constraints are more significant, including Edenbridge.

### **Site Densities – Policy H7**

Discussion also included density assumptions within allocation sites.

Policy H7 sets out minimum density expectations. Some proposed allocations across the District (not limited to Edenbridge) appear to fall below the policy's stated density approach.

SDC confirmed it is reviewing all allocation figures to ensure internal consistency with Policy H7. If density assumptions increase on certain sites, this may create flexibility to reduce or remove other less suitable allocations elsewhere in the District.

### **Infrastructure and Transport**

SDC advised that:

- Further transport modelling is being undertaken in conjunction with Kent County Council Highways.
- Mitigation measures at identified junction hotspots will accompany sites progressing into Regulation 19.
- The Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) has been further developed.

In relation to education provision, Kent County Council has indicated that development at the scale proposed in Edenbridge would likely require primary school expansion or provision of a new primary school; and new secondary school. Indicative costs are in excess of £50m–£60m depending on form entry.

No confirmation was provided at this stage regarding how or when such infrastructure would be secured or delivered.

### **SDC Timetable**

SDC confirmed it intends to maintain its delivery timetable:

- Regulation 19 draft to Development & Infrastructure Advisory Committee – 30 June 2026
- Consideration by Full Council thereafter
- Regulation 19 consultation – July/August 2026
- Submission to the Planning Inspectorate – December 2026

Examination hearings – anticipated 2027

SDC is mindful of local government reorganisation and the move toward unitary structures and has indicated its intention to progress the Plan under the current National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), but noting upcoming NPPF policy changes.

### **SDC Development & Infrastructure Advisory Committee – 5 March**

The agenda includes a Local Plan Consultation Update, with the following reports published:

- Response Analysis (Policies)
- Response Analysis (Sites)
- Response Analysis (Evidence Base)

The summary analysis indicates that, across the 17 sites consulted upon under Regulation 18, the majority of public responses objected to development, with limited exceptions, and overall support for the Leatermarket site.

### **Next Steps for the Town Council**

- Review published consultation responses, including developer representations.
- Meet with the Planning Consultant to assess implications.
- Prepare for formal representations at Regulation 19 stage.

Consider engagement of Planning Consultation for the at Hearing/Examination in Public (2027), where site allocations and overall housing numbers will be scrutinised.

At Examination, there will be competing representations from community groups, land promoters and developers. The Inspector's primary focus will be on whether the Plan meets the District's housing requirement and is legally compliant and sound.

## 10 **Matters arising from the minutes for report and not elsewhere on the agenda**

### 10.1 **Internal Auditor - to receive interim report (February)**

Following Council's resolution in January to appoint Mike Platten as the Council's new Internal Auditor, the Town Clerk and RFO/Deputy Clerk met with him last month. He carried out a comprehensive review of the finances and procedures. Overall it was a good audit with no issues. Recommendations included:

- Council should establish a panel of at least 4 signatories on each bank account (currently only 2) - The annual meeting of the Town Council does confirm signatories (approved 4 for main accounts with 3 for the CCLA). New signatories paperwork requires completion.
- Buildings valuations should be checked annually (currently 3-yearly valuations inline with insurance 3-yearly term agreement).
- For 25-26, an additional assertion has been added to the Annual Governance Statement, this covers digital and data compliance. The Council is largely compliant with the requirements of the Practitioners' Guide in this area. For clarity, it is recommended that the Council considers compliance with paragraphs 1.47 to 1.54 on page 14 of the Practitioners' Guide at a meeting before the end of the financial year. *See agenda item 11.4.*
- Petty cash count should be countersigned by the Clerk at least annually, although I understand the Council is considering closing the petty cash account. *This has since been bank and there is no longer any petty cash.*
- 6-years of AGARs to be published on the website. *This is now complete.*

### **Do Members have any questions?**

<https://www.edenbridgetowncouncil.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/2026-february-interim-audit-report.pdf>

10.2

### **Annual Town Meeting - 30 March 2026**

Members are asked to receive the draft agenda for the Annual Town Meeting, 30 March. The event will follow a similar format to previous years

#### Agenda

6.30pm: Registration - tea and coffee will available and an opportunity to meet your councillors

7.00pm: Presentations will commence promptly

- Minutes of the last Annual Town Meeting (2025)
- Introductions by Cllr Angela Baker, Chair of Edenbridge Town Council
- Council Report to include highlights from 2025-26; financial report; overview of what's coming for 2026-27

#### Presentations:

- Update Kent County Councillor - Cllr Robert Mayall
- Update on District matters and the draft Local Plan - Cllr Kevin Maskell, Leader, Sevenoaks District Council
- Local Policing - Kent Police Neighbourhood Beat Team – PC Fergus Maunsell, Beat Officer
- News from Tom Tugendhat MP office - TBC
- Reorganisation - Edenbridge Town Council
- Emerging Local Plan - update on how this might look for Edenbridge (tbc)

#### Other presentations

- Older Persons Services - Duncan Wilson, West Kent Housing Association
- Everyone Active TBC
- Bonfire Society

Displays: Community Warden - Games Club and volunteering

SDC Chair, Cllr Lynda Harrison has confirmed she will attend (if she is unable to Cllr McArthur as Vice-Chair will be attending).

### **Do members have any questions?**

**EDGE IT Systems -software contract renewal and the annual expenditure of £2,099.55**

The Council currently uses the AdvantEDGE software suite provided by EDGE IT Systems for a number of operational functions including: Finance, Epitaph (cemetery records), Asset Manager, and Facilities (hall bookings).

The current contract expires on 22 April 2026.

In March 2021 the Finance Committee considered whether to remain with EDGE or investigate alternative financial software. At that time the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) was newly in post and it was agreed that transferring to a new system would represent a significant project and operational disruption.

Since then the Council has expanded its use of the EDGE system with additional integrated modules, including Epitaph, hall bookings and asset management. Officers and Members are familiar with the reports produced by the system, and the RFO has worked with EDGE to enhance the finance module and improve financial reporting and transparency.

Changing financial software providers would require significant officer time and resource to migrate historic data, reconfigure reporting and retrain users. Experience from other councils indicates that while different systems are available, each has limitations and none present earmarked reserves particularly clearly.

The RFO/Deputy Clerk has undertaken work to improve reporting and transparency within the existing system, including integrating invoicing and improving financial codes and reporting.

The Town Clerk and RFO/Deputy Clerk are therefore content to continue using the EDGE system.

**Proposed Contract Renewal**

EDGE has provided a quotation for renewal of the hosted software services covering:

- AdvantEDGE Finance (Band 7 – unlimited income)
- Epitaph Classic
- Asset Manager
- Facilities

The quote includes applicable multi-module discounts. The annual cost under the proposed 5-year contract would be £2,099.55 per annum (net) / £2,519.46 including VAT

This represents an increase from the current annual cost of £1,765.90 net.

EDGE offers contract terms of 1, 3 or 5 years, with longer terms providing greater discount on the software licensing fees.

**Recommendation:** Given the Council's reliance on the integrated software modules and the significant work that would be required to migrate systems, officers consider that renewing the contract represents the most practical and cost-effective option at this time. If Members wish to continue using the system, the 5-year contract option provides the greatest financial discount.

**Members are asked to:**

- **Consider the renewal of the AdvantEDGE software contract with EDGE IT Systems.**
- **Agree to enter into a 5-year contract from 23 April 2026 for the continued provision of Finance, Epitaph, Asset Manager and Facilities modules.**

- **Authorise the Town Clerk to sign the contract on behalf of the Council.**

🔒 Confidential Annex 10 (omitted from public documents):

#### 10.4 **NABMA Subscription 2026/27 - expenditure of £434**

The NABMA Board will shortly be considering the subscription rates for 2026/27 and they may be recommending an increase on current rates. However, they are offering an opportunity to continue your membership of NABMA at the same subscription which we have had for the past few years, £434 if payment is made before 31st March 2026.

**Members are asked to confirm the annual subscription at the discounted rate.**

### 11 **OTHER BUSINESS including items referred from Committees for decision**

#### 11.1 **Forge Musical Theatre - complaint received**

Members are advised that a letter dated 21 January 2026 was received from a representative of the Forge Musical Theatre requesting that the matter be treated as a formal complaint under the Council's Complaints Procedure. The complaint related to the handling of three items of post addressed to the Forge Musical Theatre and received at the Council office.

In accordance with the Council's Complaints Procedure, the Town Clerk has investigated the matter and provided a written response to the complainant setting out the dates on which the correspondence was received and the steps taken by the Council to notify Forge Musical Theatre.

The investigation confirmed that one item of post was received on 14 January 2026 and two items on 15 January 2026. A telephone message was left on the contact number held by the Council within 24 hours of receipt and the correspondence was subsequently collected on 16 January 2026.

No further response or request to progress the complaint to the next stage of the procedure has been received.

For completeness of record, copies of the complaint letter and the Town Clerk's response are attached under confidential papers.

**Members are asked to receive the complaint letter and the Town Clerk's response issued in accordance with the Council's Complaints Procedure.**

🔒 Confidential Annex 11 (omitted from public documents):

🔒 Confidential Annex 12 (omitted from public documents):

#### 11.2 **Policies – Review and Adoption**

As part of the Council's commitment to maintaining strong governance, internal controls and regulatory compliance, Council policies are reviewed periodically and, where necessary, updated or newly introduced.

The policies set out below are presented for Council's review and adoption. They reflect updates to strengthen existing procedures and ensure alignment with current legislation, guidance and best practice.

These policies have not been considered by the Governance Committee, as the revisions are primarily updates and enhancements to existing frameworks rather than substantive changes to policy direction.

### 11.2.1

#### **Data Protection Policy**

As Members are aware, the town Clerk and Council has recently undertaken a comprehensive review of its information governance framework, including updated Privacy Notices, a refreshed Retention and Disposal Policy (including Appendix A), a revised Freedom of Information and Publication Scheme, and the introduction of a Subject Access Request (SAR) Procedure. These documents have been considered by the Finance and Governance Committee and recommended to Council for adoption (agenda items above).

As part of this programme of work, the Council's existing Information and Data Protection Policy (2018) has been reviewed. That document is now outdated and does not fully reflect current legislation, operational practice, or the strengthened governance framework recently developed.

A new Data Protection Policy has therefore been drafted. The purpose of this Policy is to:

- Set out the Council's overall approach to compliance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.
- Clearly define roles and responsibilities for councillors and officers.
- Outline how the Council ensures lawful processing, data security, breach management, and respect for individual rights.
- Provide an overarching governance statement linking together the Council's Privacy Notices, Retention and Disposal Policy, SAR Procedure, and Freedom of Information arrangements.

This Policy does not duplicate the detail contained within those individual documents but instead provides the high-level framework demonstrating accountability and compliance.

The adoption of this updated Policy will complete the Council's refreshed data protection and information governance suite and ensure that documentation accurately reflects current legal requirements and Council practice.

**Recommendation: That Members adopt the Data Protection Policy as presented, replacing the previous Information and Data Protection Policy (2018).**

 Confidential Annex 13 (omitted from public documents):

### 11.2.2

#### **Strategic Risk Management Policy**

Members are asked to consider and adopt the attached Strategic Risk Management Policy. While the Council currently undertakes annual Governance Risk Assessments across its key areas of responsibility, the Practitioners' Guide (SAPPP) and recognised good governance principles recommend that councils also adopt a clear overarching policy setting out their approach to strategic risk management. The proposed policy formalises existing practice, clarifies roles and responsibilities, and strengthens the Council's governance framework by embedding risk consideration within decision-making processes. Adoption of this policy will further support compliance with the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) assertions and demonstrate the Council's commitment to transparency, accountability and continuous improvement.

**Recommendation: Members are asked to adopt the Strategic Risk Management Policy as presented.**

 Confidential Annex 14 (omitted from public documents):

### 11.2.3

#### **Gifts and Hospitality Protocol**

The existing protocol was adopted in 2011. Since that time there have been developments in governance expectations, transparency requirements and best practice guidance for local councils, particularly in relation to:

- The Bribery Act 2010
- The Localism Act 2011
- Enhanced transparency and public accountability standards
- Alignment with Standing Orders and Financial Regulations

The revised policy provides clearer definitions, introduces a formal register process, clarifies reporting thresholds, and strengthens links to procurement integrity and conflict of interest requirements.

The review period has been amended to four years so that the policy aligns with each Council term.

**Recommendation: That Council:**

- **Adopts the revised Gifts and Hospitality Policy.**
- **Approves publication of the policy and declaration form on the Council's website.**
- **Authorises the Town Clerk to maintain and publish the Register of Gifts and Hospitality.**

 Confidential Annex 15 (omitted from public documents):

11.2.4

**Grants Policy including validation and evaluation criteria**

Edenbridge Town Council allocates a grants budget annually to support local organisations and projects that benefit residents of the parish. The existing Grants Policy has not been formally reviewed for several years. Whilst it has remained operationally sound, it was considered timely to undertake a review to ensure the document reflects current governance practice, legislation and Council procedures.

The review has included:

- The Grants Policy
- The Grants Application Form (Appendix A)
- Introduction of an internal Validation Checklist (for officer use)
- Updated Evaluation Form for grant recipients

The purpose of the review has been to strengthen clarity, consistency and transparency without materially altering the Council's established approach to awarding grants. The revised documentation, improves structure, clarity and presentation, updates references to current legislation, including UK GDPR and the Equality Act 2010, clarifies eligibility criteria and permitted expenditure.

It also introduces a formal validation process undertaken by the Responsible Finance Officer and the Chair of the Finance and Governance Committee prior to Committee consideration. Updates the evaluation form to ensure proportionate monitoring and financial accountability following award.

The fundamental principles of the Council's grants scheme remain unchanged, an annual grants budget is set by Full Council; there remains a published application window, consideration by the Grants Committee, awards made for the benefit of Edenbridge residents, and post-award monitoring and evaluation.

No scoring system has been introduced; the Committee retains discretion to determine awards within the approved grants budget.

There are no direct financial implications arising from this review. The grants budget will continue to be set annually as part of the Council's budget-setting process.

## **Recommendation: Members confirm and adopts:**

- **The revised Grants Policy.**
- **Notes the updated Application Form (Appendix A).**
- **Notes the introduction of the internal Validation Checklist.**
- **Approves the updated Evaluation Form for use in future grant rounds.**

🔒 Confidential Annex 16 (omitted from public documents):

🔒 Confidential Annex 17 (omitted from public documents):

🔒 Confidential Annex 18 (omitted from public documents):

11.3

### **Governance Annual Risk Assessment Review - to receive and confirm**

Each year, two members from the Finance and Governance Committee are asked to review the Council's Governance Risk Assessment:

- Council Governance
- Financial
- Open Spaces
- Buildings
- Personnel

Cllrs Baker and Compton together with the Town Clerk, reviewed the risk assessments. There were no issues, and some areas had had improvements in controls which were noted on the RAs. Copies are published on the Council's website, link below.

### **Members are asked to confirm the annual Governance Risk Assessments for Council, Finance, Open Spaces, Buildings, and Personnel.**

🔗 [https://www.edenbridgetowncouncil.gov.uk/document\\_category/governance-risk-assessments/](https://www.edenbridgetowncouncil.gov.uk/document_category/governance-risk-assessments/)

11.4

### **Assertion 10 - Review of Compliance with Data Protection Legislation**

Assertion 10 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) requires the Council to confirm that it has “complied with the requirements of data protection legislation.”

During the current year, the Council has undertaken a comprehensive review of its information governance framework. As a result, the Council has:

- Adopted updated Privacy Notices, ensuring transparency and clarity of lawful bases for processing;
- Reviewed and refreshed its Retention and Disposal Policy, including a detailed Retention Schedule;
- Adopted a Data Protection Policy providing overarching governance and accountability;
- Implemented a Subject Access Request (SAR) Procedure to ensure individual rights are upheld within statutory timescales;
- Updated its Freedom of Information and Publication Scheme arrangements;
- Reviewed arrangements for meeting recordings and their disposal in accordance with Standing Orders;
- Confirmed appropriate technical and organisational security measures are in place, including secure systems and controlled access;
- Begun reviewing and updating written agreements with service providers where data processing occurs on the Council's behalf.

The Council recognises and upholds the eight individual rights under UK GDPR and has procedures in place to manage data breaches, including reporting to the Information Commissioner's Office where required.

The Council has also adopted updated Digital IT and Cyber Security and Digital

Communications and Social Media policies (March 2025).

Compliance with Practitioners' Guide (SAPPP 1.47–1.54)

In accordance with the Smaller Authorities Proper Practices Panel (SAPPP) Practitioners' Guide, the Council confirms that:

- It operates a generic email account hosted on an authority-owned domain (.gov.uk).
- Its website complies with applicable legal requirements and accessibility standards, including Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.2 AA and the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) Accessibility Regulations 2018.
- It processes personal data in accordance with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.
- It recognises its role as a data controller and, where applicable, engages data processors under appropriate written agreements.
- It maintains an IT and Cyber Security Policy governing the secure use of authority-owned and personal equipment for Council business.

**Recommendation: Members are asked to confirm that they are satisfied that appropriate policies, procedures, and operational controls are in place and that the Council can give a positive response to Assertion 10 for the purposes of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return.**

11.5 **Open Spaces: Path Installation – Mowshurst car park to Millennium Wood and the expenditure of up to £3,000**

The next Open Spaces Committee is in April, so the purpose of this report is to seek Members' approval to proceed with accessibility improvements at Millennium Wood within the current financial year, as well as other path repairs.

**Background:** Millennium Wood was recently awarded a Silver Gilt award in the South & South East in Bloom Scheme and won the category "Small Conservation Area of the Year." Judges commended the site but recommended improvements to pathways within the wood and better access from Mowshurst car park to further enhance the site and support future award submissions.

The site experiences significant wet conditions during the winter months, which impacts accessibility. The Head Groundsman has identified that the most feasible solution is the installation of a new path from the car park to the entrance of Millennium Wood.

**Proposal**

Installation of a 70m x 2m path from Mowshurst car park to the entrance of Millennium Wood, comprising:

- Timber edging
- Beadon grit surface (similar to that used at The Recreation Ground)
- Associated plant hire and materials

The total cost is estimated at up to £3,000, inclusive of materials and plant hire.

The costing also includes surplus materials to:

- Improve internal pathways within Millennium Wood
- Enhance the existing play park access path at The Recreation Ground

The Grounds Team, supported by the Open Spaces Officer, have undertaken significant work in recent months to enhance Millennium Wood as a community asset. These

accessibility improvements would further support its development as a destination for residents of all ages.

### **Financial Implications**

The Open Spaces budget is forecast to underspend by approximately £9,000–£10,000. In addition there is an earmarked reserve movement for the Football Grant which will have funded some of the pitch maintenance and improvements (approx. £7k).

External Services budget is currently underspent by £3,980.

The proposed works can therefore be funded from existing budget underspends within the current financial year.

### **Recommendation**

#### **Members are asked to:**

- **Approve the installation of a 70m x 2m path from Mowshurst Car Park to Millennium Wood at a cost of up to £3,000.**
- **Agree that the works be funded from the forecast underspend within the Open Spaces and/or External Services budgets in the current financial year.**

11.6

### **Review of Speedwatch**

At the request of Kent Police, I am placing this item on the March agenda for formal consideration.

#### **Background**

Edenbridge Town Council has supported the Community Speedwatch initiative for a number of years. The scheme aligns with the Council's community safety objectives and complements the Community Warden role.

Approximately five to six years ago, following difficulties relating to volunteer conduct and the impact on other volunteers and the Community Warden, Members reviewed the operational arrangements. At that time, Council resolved that Speedwatch sessions facilitated by the Town Council should require the presence of three people, including either the Community Warden or a councillor, in order to:

- Ensure appropriate oversight and support for volunteers and staff
- Maintain a safe and non-contentious operating environment
- Provide resilience should any incidents arise during sessions
- Support accurate recording of vehicle data

#### **Current Position**

Kent Police have requested that the Council review the requirement for the Community Warden or a councillor to be present at each session. Their position is that:

- Speedwatch is a Kent Police scheme operating under Kent Police risk assessments and insurance.
- No other scheme in the county operates with a requirement for councillor or staff attendance.
- Incidents of members of the public stopping or challenging volunteers can occur regardless of who is present (including when a police officer attends).
- If sessions are described as Town Council sessions or subject to additional Council conditions, this may affect the application of Kent Police insurance cover.

- SID/UDD devices are commonly recorded on insurance asset registers nationally without necessarily requiring councillor presence at sessions (Kent Police have not specified whether this refers to council or police asset registers).

Kent Police have asked that the Council formally confirm whether it wishes to maintain or remove its current requirement.

### **Insurance and Governance Considerations**

Members should note:

- The Unipar Dual Display device is currently recorded on the Council's asset register for insurance purposes.
- Where the Council is organising or facilitating an activity, the Council's insurance requires a nominated responsible person to be identified. (A query has been submitted to the Council's insurer to clarify, if the Council recruits Speedwatch volunteers, to whom those volunteers are deemed responsible and whose insurance would be expected to provide cover.)
- The Council has a duty of care toward its employees, councillors and volunteers where activities are facilitated under its auspices.

Members may therefore wish to consider whether retaining the current requirement reinforces the Council's role as facilitator/organiser, and whether removing the requirement would clarify that the scheme operates solely under Kent Police governance and insurance.

### **Key Questions for Members**

In determining the Council's position, Members may wish to consider:

- Does the Council wish to continue to require the presence of the Community Warden or a councillor at each session?
- If so, does this indicate that the Council is co-organising or overseeing sessions, and are Members satisfied with the associated governance and insurance implications?
- Alternatively, does the Council wish to confirm that Speedwatch sessions operate solely as a Kent Police scheme, with the Town Council providing support only (e.g. asset provision and promotion), and no requirement for staff or councillor attendance?

If the requirement is removed, are Members satisfied that appropriate safeguards remain in place for volunteers and Council staff?

### **Options for Resolution**

- Maintain the current requirement for three persons including the Community Warden or a councillor.
- Remove the requirement for staff/councillor attendance and confirm that sessions operate solely under Kent Police governance and insurance.
- Amend the current arrangement in another way as Members see fit.

### **Recommendation**

**For Members to consider the above and resolve the Council's formal position.**

11.7

### **Solar Farm (Land North West Of Little Browns Railway Bridge Hilders Lane) - Community Benefit Fund**

Kybo Solar Farm Limited, the developer of the Solar Farm (Planning Ref: 23/00505/FUL approved January 2024), has offered Edenbridge Town Council a one-off Community

Benefit Fund contribution of £40,000 to support the installation of electric vehicle (EV) chargers within the Town Council's administrative area.

The contribution will be made within 30 days of the solar farm commencing commercial electricity generation and will be governed by a formal agreement between the developer and the Council (copy attached confidential papers).

The agreement requires that the funding is used to support EV charging infrastructure for community use. It does not set a timeframe for expenditure and does not preclude feasibility or investigative work relating to potential installation sites.

It is proposed that, upon receipt, the funds are transferred to an Earmarked Reserve for EV Infrastructure until suitable locations and delivery options are identified.

Previously suggested Council sites that may warrant further investigation include:

- Recreation Ground Pavilion car park
- Mowshurst
- Blossoms Park

These potential locations will require further consideration, including discussion with the Open Spaces Committee and liaison with Kent Highways, who have undertaken some previous initial investigations when Market Yard car park was being considered.

**Council is asked to:**

- **Note the offer of a £40,000 Community Benefit Fund contribution from Kybo Solar Farm Limited.**
- **Confirm acceptance of the funding and the associated agreement.**
- **Agree that the funds be placed into an Earmarked Reserve for EV Infrastructure upon receipt.**
- **Agree that potential EV charging locations be investigated and brought back to Council/committee for further consideration.**

🔒 Confidential Annex 19 (omitted from public documents):

🔒 Confidential Annex 20 (omitted from public documents):

11.8

**Edenbridge Town Guide 2026**

**Background** - The Edenbridge Town Guide has been produced for at least 20 years and is a popular and extremely useful local directory for residents. It includes contact details for local clubs, groups and organisations, as well as local authorities, housing associations and other key services.

Historically, it was produced every two to three years and distributed to residents and businesses across Edenbridge. Production costs were met through advertising sales arranged by the publisher, meaning there was no direct cost to the Council beyond editorial input.

**Current Position** - The publishers of the previous guides have ceased trading. As they were responsible for securing advertising revenue and managing production, the Council now needs to consider alternative arrangements for producing an updated guide.

The Tourism Officer has historically collated and updated the information for the Town Guide. For the 2026 edition, the Communications Officer would also be able to assist with content coordination and production oversight, should Members wish to proceed.

**Options to Consider**

The Council will need to determine how best to collate, publish and distribute updated information for both existing residents and those new to the town.

Laura Lawrence (Edenbridge Magazine) was approached to explore whether she may wish to be involved. Whilst she felt the guide would be relatively straightforward to produce, she is not in a position to take on the project. She suggested that the Council:

- Determine the number of copies required
- Obtain printing costs
- Calculate potential advertising rates to ensure production costs are covered

She is also able to recommend a printer.

The Communications Officer and Tourism Officer have discussed alternative approaches, including:

- Producing a simplified booklet with fewer pages, containing essential local information only and no advertising; or
- Including limited advertising (e.g. inside front cover and inside/outside back cover) to help offset printing costs.

For context, the 2022 Town Guide comprised 44 pages plus covers. The text content included:

- 5 pages – Clubs and Groups
- 8½ pages – Local Information
- 5 pages – Council information and town history

This equates to approximately 18½ pages of core content (including 2½ pages of photographs). A revised version could potentially be reduced to approximately 16–18 pages plus cover.

### **Next Steps**

Initial indicative printing costs (for example, based on 1,000 copies, with unit cost reducing at higher volumes) are being sought and will be available for further consideration. It is hoped to have this for verbal reporting at the meeting. A fuller financial report can be brought to the May meeting.


### **Members are asked to:**

- 1. Consider whether they wish to proceed with the production of a 2026 Town Guide.**
- 2. Provide direction on preferred format (advertising-supported, limited advertising, or information-only booklet).**
- 3. Indicate the intended distribution method, for example:**
  - Town-wide distribution to households and businesses; or**
  - Targeted distribution (e.g. via the Council Offices, estate agents, welcome packs and community locations).**
- 4. Agree that detailed costings and a proposed funding model (with the aim of minimising or avoiding cost to the Council) be brought back to a future meeting for formal approval.**

- 11.9 **Eden Twinning - to receive a request for free hire of Rickards Hall.**  
Members are asked to consider waiving the the hiring fees for Rickards hall on Friday 22 May, costs would normally be £113.90 for 5 hours.

Eden Twinning is preparing to welcome our French friends from the Town twinning/Jumelage of Mont Saint Aignan and Edenbridge. Attached is a copy of the letter requesting Council's support. In addition, they invite Councillors to join them s in welcoming the French delegation.

**How do Members want to proceed?**

 Confidential Annex 21 (omitted from public documents):

- 11.10 **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) - refund request**  
Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) has advised that it is reclaiming £9,648.03 in CIL funding which was previously paid to the Town Council in April 2024. This related to the development at Bella Vita, 25 High Street (20/00335/FUL) and was reported in CIL reporting period 18 (October 2023 – March 2024).

Since the CIL payment was received by SDC, the applicant has confirmed that they will not be progressing with the development. This has been verified by the SDC Planning Team. As a result, the applicant has requested a refund of the CIL payment, and SDC has therefore requested that the parish portion of £9,648.03 be returned to them.

SDC has acknowledged that this situation is not ideal and may cause disruption, particularly where CIL funding has already been allocated to planned projects. They have advised that the amount could be deducted from the Town Council's future CIL payments, either from the April 2026 payment run, or split across the April 2026 and October 2026 payments.

However, as the financial year end is approaching, it would also be possible for the Town Council to repay the amount in full to SDC.

At the most recent CIL Board meeting, funding allocations totalling £57,000 were approved, leaving a balance of £135.75 in unallocated CIL funds (before any additional interest receipts). It is anticipated that some previously allocated funding may be released; however, at this stage it is unlikely that sufficient funds will be available to cover the full amount of £9,648.03.

**Members are asked to consider and confirm whether they wish to:**

- **Have the amount deducted from future CIL payments (April 2026 or across April and October 2026); or**
- **Repay the amount in full to SDC from Council funds.**

- 12 **Devolution and local government reorganisation**  
At the end of November last year Councils across Kent & Medway submitted five different options for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) to the Government. The next stage in the process is for Government to consult on the options presented to them before they reach a final decision on which option will be taken forward. That decision is due towards the end of July this year. This consultation is open now and closes 26 March. The Government is now welcoming views on each of the options for Kent & Medway. Alongside Folkestone & Hythe, Maidstone, Tonbridge & Malling and Tunbridge Wells, the Sevenoaks District Council supported option 3a for three unitary Councils.

**CIL payments and impacts of reorganisation:** This was reported to the February CIL Board. To summarise, national law continues to protect parish and town councils' entitlement to a neighbourhood share of CIL under the CIL Regulations 2010. The Localism Act 2011 provides

the policy foundation for this community benefit. Any risk to CIL income in Sevenoaks arises solely from potential changes to local discretionary policy once a new unitary authority has established its policies and practices across the county. At this stage, it is not yet known the approach the new unitary authority will adopt.

**Do members have any further comments?**

<https://kentcouncilleaders.org.uk/lgr-consultation/>

13 **Consultations**

13.1 **Proposals for Local Government Reorganisation in Kent and Medway - Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government - closing date 26 March**

Reorganisation consultation - closes 26 March Consultation on the Proposals for Local Government Reorganisation in Kent and Medway - Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government - Citizen Space

<https://consult.communities.gov.uk/local-government-reorganisation/kent-and-medway/>

14 **Press release**

15 **Date of Next meeting - 11 May - Annual Meeting of the Town Council**