



# Morecambe Town Council

## Agenda Morecambe Town Council Full Meeting

<b>Date</b>	30/01/2025
<b>Time</b>	19:00 - 22:00
<b>Location</b>	Morecambe Town Hall, Marine Road Morecambe Lancashire LA4 5AF
<b>Chair</b>	Russell Walsh
<b>Explanation</b>	Dear Councillor,

Dated this **24th** day of **January 2025**, you are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of Morecambe Town Council to be held at **19:00** on the **30th** day of January 2025.

The meeting will be held in Morecambe Town Hall, Marine Road East, Morecambe, LA4 5AF to transact business on the agenda.

### **Note to Councillors:**

If you are unable to attend the meeting, please notify the Proper Officer of your apologies.

### **Note to Public:**

*Electors of the town wishing to address the Council are advised to notify the Proper Officer before 10am on the day of the meeting. Permission to speak at the meeting will be at the discretion of the Chairman. Public participation session at a meeting shall not require response or debate and shall solely consist of matters relating to items on the agenda. If the representation made is considered outside the remit of Morecambe Town Council, electors will be referred to the principal authority or other appropriate body.*

Your sincerely,  
Mr L Trevaskis, CiLCA, PSLCC.  
Chief Executive

### **1 Apologies**

To receive apologies for absence and consider any reasons for acceptance.

([Local Government Act 1972, Section 85](#))

### **2 Declarations**

To record any declared interests relating to the business of the meeting and receive any dispensation requests from the Proper Officer.  
([Localism Act 2011, Section 31](#))

**3 Minutes**

To approve the minutes of the last meeting.  
([Local Government Act 1972, Section 111](#))

**4 Public Participation**

To receive representations from electors that have requested to speak by 10am regarding a matter on the agenda.  
([Morecambe Town Council Standing Orders - Sections 1d-1l](#))

*Note: any electors addressing the Council must not exceed a three minute time limit.*

**5 Halifax Bank - Morecambe Branch**

Motion: Morecambe Town Council is deeply concerned about the announced closure of the Halifax Building Society located in The Arndale Centre. The Halifax is one of the last remaining banks in Morecambe providing a service to customers who might require in-person financial advice. Many people will be concerned about the loss of this facility so therefore it is important as a Town Council we send a letter to The Halifax headquarters, copied to Lizzi Collinge MP asking that they reconsider this closure, highlighting how important this service is to the people of Morecambe, especially residents who may be digitally excluded, disabled, or elderly.

Proposer: Cllr David Whitaker

Seconder: Cllr Margaret Pattison

**6 Neighbourhood Plan Update**

The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has made significant progress in shaping the future of Morecambe through an inclusive, community-driven approach. Recognising the need for a more comprehensive and representative consultation, the group has adopted a fresh strategy to engage residents from all demographics, particularly underrepresented groups such as younger residents, minority communities, and those digitally excluded. This reset ensures that our plan reflects current local needs, community aspirations, and emerging challenges.

Key sessions have centred on “blue sky thinking” exercises to identify what Morecambe should preserve, enhance, and create. Members highlighted priorities like protecting the town's heritage, natural beauty, and sense of

identity, while also identifying opportunities to improve public spaces, housing, and communication channels. Suggestions for new initiatives included creating arts and culture hubs, enhancing visitor infrastructure, and reimagining the promenade for greater accessibility and year-round use.

The group also explored strategies for meaningful community engagement, focusing on reaching diverse audiences such as working families, carers, young people, and communities where English is not the first language. Innovative ideas for outreach were discussed, including targeted events, collaborations with local organisations, and alternative methods to bridge digital exclusion.

To further structure the plan, breakout sessions are being held to delve into specific themes like high street regeneration and skills development. These sessions have so far allowed members to collaboratively design a vision for the town’s retail future and create a “Skill Vision Tree” outlining immediate and long-term priorities for education and employment. Outputs from these activities will inform the upcoming community survey, ensuring alignment with shared goals.

Despite the team’s many strengths, some skill gaps have been identified that require attention to ensure the plan is robust and well-prepared for the next stages. In particular, additional expertise is needed in the area of circular economy principles, which are increasingly being emphasised in key emerging policies at both national and regional levels. To address this, an officer will be undertaking further training in this area, to ensure there is the necessary knowledge to integrate these principles effectively into the plan. This will help ensure that the plan stands the best chance of success at the inspector stage.

Finally, members identified the support they need to remain effective in their roles, reaffirming the group’s commitment to collaboration and transparency. With a draft timeline in place (detailed below) , the next steps include gathering survey feedback by May and using this data to shape an evidence-based, forward-thinking Neighbourhood Plan.

Phase	Description	Timeline
<b>Phase 1</b>	<b>Initial Scoping and Community Engagement</b>  Identifying Steering	December 2024 - May 2025

	<p>Group members who are interested in joining specific working groups is a crucial step to effectively manage the diverse themes within a neighbourhood plan. Each working group will focus on a particular theme, such as housing, transport, environment, and local economy, allowing members to delve deeply into areas where they have interest, expertise, or insights. By forming smaller groups dedicated to research and idea development, the Steering Group can ensure that each theme is thoroughly explored and informed by data, community feedback, and best practices.</p> <p>If you are interested in joining a working group, please let us know your preferred theme(s). Your contributions will be invaluable in shaping a well-rounded and inclusive neighbourhood plan that addresses the community's current and future needs.</p> <p>Development of an outreach plan to engage residents, local</p>	
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	businesses, and stakeholders, and implementation to provide key evidence of community need within each theme.	
<b>Phase 2</b>	<p><b>Evidence Gathering and Analysis</b></p> <p>Analyse evidence from community engagement (which may include surveys, focus groups, and events).</p> <p>Populate data by demographic, to identify key priorities of the community in relation to key themes.</p>	June 2025
<b>Phase 3</b>	<p><b>Assessment of Land</b></p> <p>Review potential sites and assess infrastructure needs.</p>	July 2025 - August 2025
<b>Phase 4</b>	<p><b>Development of Vision and Drafting Policies</b></p> <p>Formulation of a shared vision, with clear evidence base.</p> <p>Write initial policy proposals.</p>	September 2025 - February 2026
<b>Phase 5</b>	<p><b>Draft Consultation</b></p> <p>Conduct workshops to</p>	March 2026

	receive feedback on draft policies and refine ideas.	
<b>Phase 6</b>	<b>Formal Consultation</b>  Share draft plan with the community and invite feedback over a six-week period.	April 2026 - May 2026
<b>Phase 7</b>	<b>Final Adjustments</b>  Make any necessary adjustments based on feedback from the formal consultation.	June 2026 - July 2026
<b>Phase 8</b>	<b>Submission and Examination</b>  Submit to Local Authority, along with a consultation statement. The Plan will be reviewed by an independent examiner to ensure it meets legal requirements.	August 2026 - December 2026
<b>Phase 9</b>	<b>Referendum and Adoption</b>  The Local Planning Authority will arrange a public referendum for local residents to vote on the plan. If the plan passes with majority support, it becomes part of the statutory development plan.	January 2027 - February 2027

**Recommendation:**

**That the Council:**

1. **Accepts the contents of the Neighbourhood Plan update.**
2. **Notes that the Neighbourhood Plan is progressing in accordance with the Terms of Reference previously approved by the Council.**
3. **Anticipates that the resulting detailed document will provide a valuable framework to influence and shape local development both now and in the future.**

**7 Addressing the Challenges Facing Young People in Morecambe**

Through recent discussions with residents in Poulton, and Lizzi Collinge MP, the Council acknowledges the significant challenges facing young people in Morecambe, particularly as a coastal community with limited opportunities and facilities. We recognise the acute need for investment in local youth services, especially in areas such as Poulton, where a lack of provision further compounds the difficulties experienced by young people.

This Council notes the announcement of the new National Youth Strategy and the forthcoming Local Youth Transformation pilot (2025–2026), which aims to rejuvenate local authority capabilities in the youth space. This initiative offers a unique opportunity to ensure Morecambe’s young people are involved in shaping solutions that directly affect them.

**Recommendations:**

The Council resolves to:

1. Mandate officers to work collaboratively with Lizzi Collinge MP to better understand and address the issues facing local young people.
2. Prioritise exploring opportunities through the National Youth Strategy, with a specific focus on whether Morecambe could feed into the co-creation process with young people and position itself as a pilot area for the Local Youth Transformation programme.
3. Identify and pursue funding, tools, and resources available through the pilot to develop impactful local youth offers.
4. Develop a specific focus on improving facilities for young people in Poulton and other underserved areas of the town.
5. Incorporate this work into the emerging Neighbourhood Plan, addressing the previously noted lack of evidence gathered from young people. This will help ensure the outcomes of the

Neighbourhood Plan are robust, evidence-based, and meet the minimum requirements of the inspectors.

By taking these steps, we aim to ensure Morecambe's young people have access to the opportunities and support they need to thrive, play an active role in shaping their future, and contribute to a Neighbourhood Plan that reflects the aspirations of all generations in the community.

## **8 Policies**

To consider and approve a new Website Accessibility Statement ahead of the launch of the new website. Progress on the Council's website is moving forward, with improvements aimed at enhancing functionality and accessibility for residents and visitors alike. Recent Council strategy meetings have highlighted the potential benefits of refreshing Morecambe Town Council's brand appearance to support greater outreach with young people. As part of the ongoing website development project, variations of branding are being explored, with options to be presented to members for consideration at future meetings. This approach aims to modernise the Council's image while retaining its identity, ensuring it appeals to a broader and more diverse audience.

## **9 Budget (Financial Year 2025/2026)**

To review and accept the draft budget, and precept, for the financial year 2025/2026, as recommended by the Finance and Governance Committee.

## **10 NALC - MHCLG CPO Consultation**

NALC has been made aware of a compulsory purchase order policy (CPO) consultation, where Q.1 relates directly to local councils. This consultation has application to England and Wales and it is clear that MHCLG are trying to make it easier for CPO to be used to enable more affordable housing to be built in scheme areas in England.

NALC will be responding to consultation Q1 below:

### **"Question 1**

Do you agree that directions to remove compensation payable for prospective planning permissions ("hope value") should be allowed to be included in CPOs made on behalf of parish/town or community councils by local authorities under section 125 of the Local Government Act 1972 where the schemes underlying the orders are providing affordable or social housing?"

This relates to para.14 from the consultation as below:

*"We are aware of evidence collected by other government departments on the use of compulsory purchase that there is an appetite amongst some*



*town and community councils for a more proactive approach to be taken to the use of CPOs on their behalf. Pre-consultation engagement with select town councils has indicated there is scope for an increased use of CPOs on their behalf to enable small schemes where back-to-back agreements could be arranged with registered providers of affordable housing".*

NALC are attempting to establish more details of the interest in CPO from our sector. The presence of this consultation question indicates to NALC that MHCLG see this as a potential way of promoting some smaller scale housing projects. It is also felt that the changes in areas such as Right to Buy make it easier to ensure that these types of smaller scale housing are retained for local people.

The full consultation can be accessed here [Compulsory Purchase Process and Compensation Reforms - GOV.UK](#)

This consultation is highly relevant to Morecambe Town Council if the Council is considering, or would be open to, promoting smaller-scale affordable housing schemes within the community. The proposed reforms to the compulsory purchase order (CPO) process could provide an opportunity for the Council to work proactively with Lancaster City Council to address local housing needs, particularly in light of high levels of deprivation in Morecambe.

Key points of relevance:

- **Affordable Housing Needs:** morecambe faces social and economic challenges, and increasing access to affordable housing could be a strategic priority. These reforms aim to make it easier for smaller housing projects to be delivered, with housing retained for local people.
- **Use of CPO Powers:** if the Council is interested in addressing vacant or underutilised land, this consultation could pave the way for the principal authority to use CPOs on the Council's behalf, potentially speeding up developments.
- **Community-Led Initiatives:** the mention of back-to-back agreements with registered providers aligns with Morecambe Town Council's interest in taking a proactive approach to housing that directly benefits the community, and taking a more proactive approach to controlling the development that doesn't meet Morecambe's needs.
- **Influence on Policy:** by responding to the consultation through NALC, the Council has an opportunity to express support or

concerns about the proposed reforms, ensuring that its voice is heard on this important issue.

**Recommendation:**

**Given these factors, it is recommend that Morecambe Town Council express its interest in engaging with the principal authority on the potential use of CPO powers for affordable housing schemes. This could align well with the Council's goals and contribute to addressing local housing needs.**

**It is also recommended that members review any potential land areas in Morecambe that could benefit from this approach that we can use as examples with which to demonstrate to NALC the importance of this issue in Morecambe.**

**11 MHCLG Consultation on Local Government Standards**

MHCLG has issued a consultation on strengthening the standards and conduct framework for local authorities in England.

This consultation seeks views on introducing measures to strengthen the standards and conduct regime in England and ensure consistency of approach amongst councils investigating serious breaches of their member codes of conduct, including introducing the power of suspension.

The consultation covers topics such as introducing a mandatory minimum code of conduct, standards committees, the power of suspension, a new category of disqualification, and a national body to deal with appeals. It also seeks views on empowering victims affected by councillor misconduct to come forward and what additional support would be appropriate to consider.

NALC will be responding to the consultation, and Councillors are encouraged to review the consultation to understand the potential implications for local governance.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/strengthening-the-standards-and-conduct-framework-for-local-authorities-in-england>

**Recommendation:**

**To mandate officers to respond to the consultation advocating for an enhanced standards regime.**

**12 Exclusion of the Press and Public**

The Council is recommended to pass the following recommendation in relation to the following items:

*"That, in accordance with Section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following business, on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons arising from the nature of that business or of the proceedings."*

[\(Public Bodies \(Admission to Meetings\) Act 1960 - Section 1\)](#)

### **13 Discussion and Agreement on the Emerging Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Lancaster City Council**

#### **Motion:**

To discuss and agree on the direction of travel for the emerging Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Morecambe Town Council and Lancaster City Council.

#### **Key Considerations:**

1. Alignment with Ambitions:  
Evaluate whether the draft MoU accurately reflects the Town Council's ambitions, particularly in advancing further localism and delivering meaningful outcomes for residents.
2. Time Constraints:  
Acknowledge the limited time remaining before the next elections to plan, implement, and complete projects. Assess whether the MoU provides a robust framework to achieve measurable progress within this period.
3. Risk Mitigation:  
Consider lessons learned from previous electoral cycles, including the risk of policy reversals or delays, and whether the MoU provides sufficient safeguards against such setbacks.
4. Collaborative Working:  
Underscore the importance of strong collaboration between the Town Council and Lancaster City Council to ensure the MoU enables effective joint working that delivers tangible outcomes for residents.

#### **Decision Required:**

To agree on the next steps for finalising the MoU, any amends, and any specific projects for inclusion, to ensure it provides a clear and actionable foundation for achieving shared goals within the available timeframe.

### **14 Devolution and the Future of Governance in Morecambe**

The recent devolution white paper for local government is a pivotal document outlining the potential redistribution of powers and responsibilities between different tiers of government. It sets the stage for parish and town councils to play an increasingly central role in shaping the communities they serve. For Morecambe, this presents both opportunities and risks.

Discussions are already underway about possible changes to Lancashire's administrative arrangements, including a move towards unitary authorities. Without a clear voice from local people about their aspirations and priorities, there's a real danger that Morecambe could be overlooked in future governance decisions. This could result in decisions being made *for* the town (and at a much further distance from the town), rather than *with* it, potentially limiting the Town Council's ability to positively impact its future.

Across the country, some town councils are stepping up to take on new roles in service delivery. However, others are finding themselves blindsided - forced to manage services or take ownership of assets they neither wanted nor were resourced to handle through fear of them being lost completely. This underscores the need to have proactive conversations now. By determining what Morecambe's residents want, and by presenting a united front in discussions about devolution, the town can ensure it is front and centre, shouting about its ambitions and advocating for the best outcomes.

This is also an opportunity for Morecambe Town Council to consider what role it may wish to play. Could the Council become a key player in delivering services locally? Should it step forward as a voice for the community, ensuring assets and decisions remain within the town's control? To answer these questions, it's essential to begin meaningful conversations, starting with the people of Morecambe.

### **Recommendations to the Council:**

1. Survey Residents:  
Resolve to mandate officers to survey residents to establish their priorities, concerns, and aspirations for localism and devolution. Lancaster City Council should be invited to co-create this survey, fostering collaboration and ensuring residents' voices are heard from the outset.
2. Engage with the MP:  
Write to Morecambe's MP, expressing the Council's appetite for a

proactive role in future devolution discussions. This letter should request that the Town Council is included in any ongoing conversations, at a minimum in an observational capacity, while it explores how best to contribute.

3. Welcome Devolution to Government:

Mandate officers and the Chairman to write to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (now called Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government) and the MP, welcoming the concept of devolution in Morecambe. The correspondence should outline the strong local sentiment for greater empowerment and control over decisions and assets. It should also highlight challenges the Council has faced, such as obstructions in taking on local land parcels for community projects, and the impact this has had on its ability to deliver for a community in significant need.

Further discussions on devolution will be explored through MTC strategy meetings. By acting now, Morecambe Town Council can not only ensure it has a seat at the table but also assume the role of a forward-thinking advocate for its community. Proactive efforts to communicate and engage with residents, stakeholders, and decision-makers will pave the way for a brighter, more empowered future for Morecambe, and closely align to all the work being undertaken with the emerging Neighbourhood Plan.



## Morecambe Town Council

Morecambe Town Hall,  
Marine Road  
Morecambe  
Lancashire  
LA4 5AF

[www.morecambe.gov.uk](http://www.morecambe.gov.uk)  
[clerk@morecambe.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@morecambe.gov.uk)

Proper Officer: Mr Luke Trevaskis

### Members of Morecambe Town Council

*Cllr R Walsh - Chairman*  
*Cllr G Knight - Vice Chairman*

*Cllr C Ainscough, Cllr J Ainscough, Cllr D Blacow, Cllr D Bottoms, Cllr L Bradbury, Cllr P Clarke, Cllr B Cooper, Cllr F Cooper, Cllr C Cozler, Cllr R Dennison, Cllr W Dixon, Cllr K Gee, Cllr P Hart, Cllr J Goodrich, Cllr J Hanson, Cllr C Kent, Cllr D Knight, Cllr J Livermore, Cllr M Pattison, Cllr J Pilling, Cllr J Rogerson, Cllr J Slater, Cllr M Stenneken, Cllr D Whitaker*

## **Minutes of Morecambe Town Council's Full Council Meeting held at 7pm on the 21st November 2024 at Morecambe Town Hall, Marine Road, Morecambe, LA4 5AF.**

### **Record of Attendance:**

**Councillors:** R Walsh (Chairman), C Ainscough, J Ainscough, D Blacow, D Bottoms, L Bradbury, B Cooper, R Dennison, W Dixon, J Goodrich, J Hanson, P Hart, C Kent, D Knight, G Knight, J Livermore, M Pattison, J Rogerson, J Slater, D Whittaker.

**Officers:** Luke Trevaskis, Peter Fisher, Joel Turner, Helen Freeborough

**Press:** Beyond Radio

**Public:** 0

### **Minute 2024/25 - 052- Apologies**

Apologies for non-attendance received from Cllrs J Rogerson, R Walsh (Chairperson).

The meeting was chaired by Cllr G Knight (Vice Chairperson).

### **Minute 2024/25 - 053- Declarations of Interest**

Cllrs M Pattinson and D Bottoms declared as a member of Lancaster City Council Planning Committee.

Cllrs R Dennison, P Hart, M Pattison, M Bottoms, J Livermore, J Ainscough declared an interest as a Councillor of Lancaster City Council.

Cllrs C Ainscough and D Whittaker declared they are employees of Lancashire County Council.

Cllr M Pattison declared an interest as a Councillor of Lancashire County Council.

Cllr D Bottoms declared an interest in Item 8 regarding the Post Office.

### **Minute 2024/25 - 054 - Minutes**

The minutes of the last full council meeting were approved.

### **Minute 2024/25 - 055 - Public Participation**

None members of the public attended the meeting.

### **Minute 2024/25 - 056 - Planning Application 24/00943/FUL**

Members were asked to discuss the Planning Application for change of use to residential flats (C3) to three short-term lets (sui generis) at 36 Sandylands Promenade, Heysham, Lancashire, LA3 1DW

The Council resolved the below recommendations for the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group:

- Establish a framework to control the quality, quantity and type of short term lets in Morecambe
- Conduct impact assessments to understand how short-term lets affect housing, infrastructure, and local cohesion
- Explore designation of specific zones for short-term lets to ensure a balanced distribution across the town
- Explore policies to preserve affordable housing stock and protect long-term residents from being displaced
- Implement a system to regularly review the impact of short-term lets on the local economy, housing market and community well being.

### **Minute 2024/25 - 057 - Community Safety**

Cllr G Knight updated members on Community safety and asked Members to consider as follow

1. *To consider appointing a member to become a Police Liaison to attend monthly meetings at Morecambe Police station.* Cllr Paul Hart reported that he attended a meeting with the local Police in November and reported that the Police are very willing to do things if they can get evidence and reminded members that evidential requirements are very strict. Cllr Brett Cooper suggested that each party should nominate one Councillor who is willing to be a Police Liaison Officer and that they

should work together on representing the council. The Council approved the following members as Police Liaison member for Morecambe Town Council - Cllr Claire Cozler (Labour), Cllr Paul Hart (Liberal Democrat), Cllr Geoff Knight (MBI).

The Council voted not to pass the resolution to join Lancashire Partnership Against Crime (LANPAC).

### **Minute 2024/25 - 058 - Frontierland Project Board**

Members received an update on the Frontierland site from a representative of Lancaster City Council.

He reported that a Project Board has been established for over 12 months with members drawn from a range of organisations.

A recent Property Developers event took place at the Winter Gardens to receive an update and a site visit to the old Frontierland site. It was reported that there is a healthy level of interest in the site.

In response to questions from Members, it was confirmed that the City Council is looking for a single site approach, that interested parties should contain parking considerations in their bid and that all bids need to clearly answer how they will deliver social value through their plans. The question of whether the land is either going to be freehold or leasehold will depend on the final use of the land.

A scoring framework was detailed to the Council, and some questions were raised. The Council was advised the timescale for the project is that scoring will be completed by February 2025, outline plans to be submitted by end July 2025, evaluated by Summer 2025, reported to Cabinet end November 2025 with a contract award January 2026. The Council requested further clarification regarding the scoring matrix that was being used, and the weightings given to responses to each criteria.

### **Minute 2024/25 - 059 - Morecambe Post Office**

Members were asked to consider writing a letter to Post Office Limited to advocate for the retention of the Post Office in Morecambe.

Following a discussion about the potential Post Office closure and the impact this would have on the town.

*Members voted in favour of sending a letter to Post Office Limited.*

Cllr G Knight also updated council members that MP Lizzie Collinge has already written to the post office.

### **Minute 2024/25 - 060 - Remote Meeting Consideration**

Members were asked to consider the draft responses to the remote meeting consultation which is an initiative the Government is now considering restarting to enable remote meeting attendance of elected members (during the Pandemic draft legislation was introduced to allow local governance to be carried out remotely - this legislation has now expired).

Cllr G Knight reminded members that at this stage this is simply a consultation exercise by the Government.

Members considered the draft responses and voted to support the plans. However, there was no support agreed for proxy voting.

### **Minute 2024/25 - 061 - Exclusion of the Press and Public**

- The Council resolved that, in accordance with Section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following business, on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons arising from the nature of that



business or of the proceedings". ([Public Bodies \(Admission to meetings\) Act 1960 Section 1](#))

## **Minute 2024/25 - 062 - Events**

Members received an update regarding the Council's Events Schedule for 2025.

**80th Anniversary of VE Day:** members agreed that this would be facilitated by officers and the Festival and Events Committee.

**Kite Festival:** members considered the proposal and agreed to delegate the progress of the event to officers, and the Festivals and Events Committee, in accordance with the content and recommendations within the report.

## **Minute 2024/25 - 063 - Environment Committee**

1. Members were asked to consider quotes for new noticeboards across the town and the recommendation of the Environment Committee to accept the proposed budget and preferred supplier.

*Members approved the recommendation and costs as outlined within the report.*

2. Members were asked to consider the report regarding the Council's fleet vehicles and consider the recommendation of the Environment Committee.

*Members approved the recommendation, noting that it was unable to secure a better price for comparable vehicles based upon current supplies. Members agreed that there should not be a tender process for this expenditure, and instead the chosen supplier identified within the report should be used, and it was agreed that the cost was delivering good value for money.*

3. Part A: Members asked to note the update to the Environment Committee Terms of Reference to include the additional area of responsibility as follows:

- ix - delegated to facilitate and deliver a phased Spring Planting Scheme in Morecambe within pre-agreed annual budgets

*Members voted to approve the environment committee recommendations.*

Part B: that the Council agrees to review and adjust the current expenditure limits and delegation processes, enabling more effective decision making within the Environment Committee to avoid delays and ensure project meet their required timescales,

*Members voted to approve the recommendation, removing the cap on expenditure of individual items or projects. With the Environment Committee now delegated to incur expenditure within the limits set by its budget allocations.*

## **Accessibility statement for Morecambe Town Council website**

This accessibility statement applies to the [morecambe.gov.uk](http://morecambe.gov.uk)

This website is run by Morecambe Town Council. We want as many people as possible to be able to use this website. For example, that means you should be able to:

- change colours, contrast levels and fonts using browser or device settings
- zoom in up to 400% without the text spilling off the screen
- navigate most of the website using a keyboard or speech recognition software
- listen to most of the website using a screen reader (including the most recent versions of JAWS, NVDA and VoiceOver)

We've also made the website text as simple as possible to understand.

AbilityNet has advice on making your device easier to use if you have a disability.

### **How accessible this website is**

We know some parts of this website are not fully accessible:

- some older PDF documents are not fully accessible to screen reader software
- live video streams do not have captions
- there's a limit to how far you can magnify the map on our 'contact us' page, which is provided by a third party (Google)

### **What to do if you cannot access parts of this website**

If you need information on this website in a different format like accessible PDF, large print, easy read, audio recording or braille, please contact us.

Email: [hello@morecambe.gov.uk](mailto:hello@morecambe.gov.uk)

Call: 01524 956026

Write: Morecambe Town Council, Morecambe Town Hall, Marine Road East, Morecambe, LA4 5AF

We'll consider your request and get back to you within 10 working days.

If you cannot view the map on our 'contact us' page, call or email us for directions using the contact details above.

### **Reporting accessibility problems with this website**

We're always looking to improve the accessibility of this website. If you find any problems not listed on this page or think we're not meeting accessibility requirements, please contact us.

Email: [hello@morecambe.gov.uk](mailto:hello@morecambe.gov.uk)

Call: 01524 956026

Write: Morecambe Town Council, Morecambe Town Hall, Marine Road East, Morecambe, LA4 5AF

## **Enforcement procedure**

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) is responsible for enforcing the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018 (the 'accessibility regulations'). If you're not happy with how we respond to your complaint, contact the [Equality Advisory and Support Service \(EASS\)](#).

## **Technical information about this website's accessibility**

Morecambe Town Council is committed to making its website accessible, in accordance with the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018.

## **Compliance status**

The website has been tested against the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.2 AA standard.

The website framework is compliant with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.2 AA standard. Some content is partially compliant due to the non-compliances and exemptions listed below.

## **Non-accessible content**

The content listed below is non-accessible for the following reasons.

### **Non-compliance with the accessibility regulations**

Maps displayed by Google Maps - we don't control how Google Maps displays information, but where possible we provide addresses within the web page's text (via HTML). When Google makes their map output accessible, we will update our technology accordingly.

Pictures of event or information posters, when provided by a third party - where possible we provide the information from the picture, within the web page's text (via HTML). We encourage all providers of these pictures to provide accessible alternatives.

Some PDFs published since September 2018 are not in an accessible format, so people using a screen reader cannot access the information.

We do not add captions to live video streams because live video is exempt from the accessibility regulations.

## **What we're doing to improve accessibility**

A new website was launched in January 2025, built by an industry-leading company with expertise in designing accessible and compliant websites, with all Council-supplied content designed to meet WCAG 2.2AA standard.

All new webpages and Council-produced documents uploaded to the website will be considered against accessibility standards before and after publishing, with any issues remedied as soon as possible.

Some PDFs published since September 2018 are not in an accessible format. We plan to replace these wherever possible with alternatives – whether accessible pdfs or as HTML webpages – by December 2025.

Where any content remains inaccessible, users will be invited to contact the Council to request content in an alternative format.

Website administrators and staff members preparing documents for the website will have undertaken website accessibility training.

The website will be tested quarterly by our website provider to highlight any issues, which will then be remedied as soon as possible.

The Council will continue to encourage third-parties to provide any content that may be published on the website, such as community event images, documents or reports, in compliant formats or with the appropriate information to conform to WCAG 2.2AA standard.

### **Preparation of this accessibility statement**

This statement was prepared on 7 January 2025. It was last reviewed on 7 January 2025.

This website was last tested on [date] against the WCAG 2.2 AA standard.

The test was carried out by Aubergine 262. The most viewed pages were tested using automated testing tools by our website team. A further audit of the website was carried out to the WCAG 2.2 AA standard.

You can read the full accessibility test report [add link to report].

**INCOME**

Title	2025-2026
GENERAL INCOME	Proposed Budget
Precept	£ 1,046,671.93
Subsidy	£ 125,000.00
Underspend from 24/25	£ 55,000.00
Weeding Contract	£ 73,828.07
<b>Total</b>	<b>£ 1,300,500.00</b>

**EXPENDITURE**

Title	2025-2026
CORPORATE SERVICES	Proposed Budget
Office Rent/Room Hire	£ 25,000.00
Staffing	£ 338,500.00
Admin and Office Supplies	£ 12,500.00
Professional Services	£ 22,500.00
Insurance	£ 6,000.00
Audits	£ 10,000.00
Training (Cllr)	£ 5,000.00
IT Infrastructure	£ 15,000.00
Civic Expenses/Cllr Expenses	£ 3,000.00
Staffing Ancillary	£ -
<b>SUB TOTAL</b>	<b>£ 437,500.00</b>

Title	2025-2026
PUBLIC REALM	Proposed Budget
Equipment	£ 10,000.00
Staffing (Public Realm)	£ 307,500.00
Fleet Repair	£ 5,000.00
Fleet Purchase	£ 45,000.00
Utilities	£ 2,000.00
Weed Control (LCC)	£ 10,000.00
Weed Control (MTC)	£ 12,500.00
Software/Mobiles	£ 6,000.00
Casual Staff	£ 32,000.00
PPE	£ 5,000.00
Public Realm Enhancements	£ 50,000.00
Contingency	£ 15,000.00
Allotments	£ 5,000.00
Spring Planting	£ 10,000.00
Staffing Ancillary (PR)	£ -
<b>SUB TOTAL</b>	<b>£ 515,000.00</b>

Title	2025-2026
COMMUNITY GRANTS	Proposed Budget
Grants	£ 37,500.00
<b>SUB TOTAL</b>	<b>£ 37,500.00</b>

Title	2025-2026
FESTIVALS AND EVENTS	Proposed Budget
Festivals/Events (Grants Awarded)	£ 63,000.00
Morecambe Lights	£ 25,000.00
Equipment	£ 15,000.00
Council Events/Partnerships	£ 63,000.00
Staffing/Casual	£ 69,500.00
<b>SUB TOTAL</b>	<b>£ 235,500.00</b>

Title	2025-2026
COMMUNICATIONS	Proposed Budget
General Communications	£ 15,000.00
Community Engagement	£ 15,000.00
Tourism	£ 5,000.00
Website	£ 5,000.00
<b>SUB TOTAL</b>	<b>£ 40,000.00</b>

Title	2025-2026
NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN	Proposed Budget
Neighbourhood Plan	£ 15,000.00
<b>SUB TOTAL</b>	<b>£ 15,000.00</b>

Title	2025-2026
EARMARKED RESERVES	Proposed Budget
Election Costs (already exists)	£ 31,000.00
Traffic Regulation Order	£ 20,000.00
<b>SUB TOTAL</b>	<b>£ 20,000.00</b>

<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£ 1,300,500.00</b>
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Morecambe Town Council's

# **Financial Plan 2025-2026**

**Delivering, protecting and  
enhancing services for the  
community.**

## Executive Summary

Morecambe Town Council's 2025/2026 budget retains its primary focus of delivering value for residents and precept payers of Morecambe whilst including scope for growth, additional service and project delivery.

## Foreword

Morecambe Town Council is committed to continuing to deliver, protect and enhance services for the community. Through a shared vision of protecting the past and working to shape a vibrant future, improvements to the environment, local events, community activities, and a tourism offer, have positively influenced discussions amongst elected representatives this year, and will see Morecambe become an even better place to live, work, and visit.

This report accompanies the full draft budget and contains the recommendations of the Finance and Governance Committee which reviewed all budget lines at its meeting held on 14/01/2025.

## Background

The Council is required to set an annual budget to deliver its services, and its income is balanced through a combination of the parish precept, service fees, grants and other revenue.

The Council is also required to determine the necessary levels of reserves it will require for the financial year, which commences annually on 1 April.

The precept is the most local element of council tax levied by Lancaster City Council on properties within the administrative boundary and **is ring-fenced for the sole benefit of taxpayers within Morecambe Town Council's administrative boundary (which includes Heysham North.)**

The precept set by the Council must enable it to continue its business-as-usual functions at acceptable service levels. It must also be able to fund agreed service enhancements, in addition to asset maintenance and operational improvements.

To best support management in the delivery of services, some budget headings, ledger codes and subjective lines have been reviewed and updated. Such reviews facilitate the ongoing and effective management and monitoring of income and expenditure.

## Legal Obligations

The Council must set a balanced budget and comply with all statutory requirements pertaining to the setting of its budgets as set out in the Local Government Act 2003, Part 2, Section 25 and 26, which holds under clause 25 (1) that the Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) must report on the robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the calculations and on the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves.

To satisfy the requirements of the Local Government Act 2003, Councillors must have due regard to this report when making decisions on the budget and precept. They must also approve a precept which:



- meets the Council's objectives and service level responsibilities.
- maintains an appropriate level of reserves.
- provides stability in the event of any unforeseeable demands.

## **Introduction**

Over the past few years, the Council has made efforts to establish a realistic budget. Morecambe Town Council has gone through a rapid period of growth over the last few years, with annual precept increases required to reflect this. These would have been less significant if there had been reasonable annual increments applied during the past 15 years.

## **Morecambe Town Council's precept history**

When the Council was founded in 2009, its precept was set at £19.31. Over the following 12 years this remained virtually static, staying below £20 up until 2021-22. While this produced an overall saving for taxpayers for over a decade, it effectively resulted in real-term budget cuts throughout most of the Council's existence. Simultaneously, this also reduced the Council's ability to build an adequate reserve, as the precept was primarily required to resource the Council's annual expenditure.

During this period the Council's role was primarily a reactive one, responsible for distribution of community grants and management of the occasional event. The level of staffing and budget reflected this.

Across a similar period (from 2007 to present day) the second-tier authority, Lancaster City Council, experienced a near 40% cut in central government funding while the third-tier authority, Lancashire County Council, had to regularly find multi-million-pound savings.

In reaction to these circumstances, Morecambe Town Council resolved to try and play a more proactive role and reduce the potential risk of watching a decline of services in Morecambe. This resulted in consecutive c.50% rises in the precept, bringing it to £44.11 in 2022-23 - still £33.10 below the national average.

For 2023 - 2024, the Council set a revenue budget of £739K (including VAT). It also raised a £1M Community Action Fund (CAF) to pursue a regeneration project on the former Frontierland site.

Whilst the Council froze the precept collected in 2023 - 2024 for its revenue budget, it required an overall increase in the precept of 231% to raise the CAF.

Since collecting the CAF Reserve, a new administration has been elected and a new direction established, exploring alternative ways of responding to current community needs.

Discussions have been held with elected representatives regarding the reallocation of CAF funds, and careful consideration has been given to all options by the Council's Finance and Governance Committee, with their recommendation following.

## **Reserves**

Prior to 2021 and the significant period of growth that followed, the Council held little to no reserves:

- In 2021/22 general reserves were held at just 8% against a projected c.£450,000 expenditure.
- In 2022/23 general reserves were held at just 7% against a projected c.£550,000 expenditure.

In order to raise the CAF in 2023/24, the Council pooled all its reserves. Had the Council not raised the £1M CAF, it would still have had to raise the precept by approximately £70 per Band D household across the following two years to resource the expanded services delivered by the Council and create a minimum general reserve of 25% against projected annual expenditure.

The CAF was reallocated to general reserves and £150k used to subsidise the 24-25 precept. This returned the precept trajectory to that of a more traditional, stable path as it would have otherwise been should the precept have increased naturally over time. The average band D figure of 24/25 was £97.56.

Projected reserves as of 2024/25 financial year end will be £850,000 (plus any remaining underspend from the 24/25 budget, and interest). The proposed FY2526 budget recommends a subsidy from reserves of £125,000.00.

The Town Council's Reserve Policy requires it 'to hold a sum equivalent to 50% of its revenue budget as reserves'. Practically, this requires Morecambe Town Council to hold £650,250.00 in reserve to remain compliant. This figure is exactly 50% of the forecasted FY2526 expenditure budget of £1,300,500.00.

### **In-Year Adjustments**

To ensure the budget remains fit-for-purpose throughout the Council's changing operational landscape, there have been in-year reviews to ensure the budget is performing in line with expectations.

The Council introduced a treasury management system as of November 2024. A new cost code (62) has been introduced where interest obtained will be credited.

As of 31/12/2024, it is anticipated that there will be a budgetary underspend in the 2024/25 financial year in the region of £150k.

A selection of the main reasons for this are detailed below:

It is anticipated be underspend in Corporate Services - Staffing (02) due to employee turnover. It is anticipated there will be minor underspends in other cost codes in this area.

It is anticipated there will be underspend in 03 Town Maintenance due to recruitment taking place in December 2024. The budget included a full complement of staff as of April 2024. It is anticipated there will be minor underspends in other cost codes in this area

It is anticipated there will be underspend in 05 Cultural Services. The Council are yet to appoint an events officer (58). This combined with cost code 45 council events/partnerships may result in a moderate underspend within this area.

It is anticipated there will be underspend in 05 Cultural Services. The website project (61) has resulted in a small underspend due to extensive officer research. It is also anticipated there will be a small underspend in other cost codes in this area.

## BUDGET LINE EXPLANATIONS

### CORPORATE SERVICES

#### STAFFING (INC. ANCILLARY)

Staffing payments for corporate services include annual salary adjustments, medical/occupational fees, reasonable adjustments for protected characteristics, contractual obligations, team building costs, training, parking, contingencies for cover staff, and other possible costs which may arise from unexpected circumstances such as terminations.

*Budget delegation: Proper Officer (operational day-to-day expenditure in line with Contracts of Employment, reasonable adjustments, team building, parking, continuous, personal development plans, and training for role-related outcomes such as H&S) + Personnel Committee (Medicals, terminations etc)*

#### ADMIN AND OFFICE SUPPLIES

Office furniture, administrative equipment, printing costs, meeting supplies.

*Budget delegation: Proper Officer*

#### PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

The council does not employ specific staff to undertake specialist roles relating to legal, IT, HR and planning areas. Therefore, budgets have been in place to commission advice in these areas when it is needed.

*Budget delegation: Proper Officer (LALC, Legal) + Personnel Committee (HR) + Finance and Governance (Legal)*

#### OFFICE RENT / ROOM HIRE / SECURITY

The Council's current rental obligations to Lancaster City Council are £15k pa. There will also be National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR) to be collected. In addition to these costs the Council is also required to hire space in order to host larger meetings such as the Council Chamber and ensure appropriate security arrangements are made in line with hiring stipulations.

*Budget delegation: Proper Officer*

#### INSURANCE

Includes: Asset Insurance, public liability insurance and motor insurance. It is anticipated that there will be an increase in annual premium/s due to the addition of a further public realm vehicle.

*Budget delegation: Proper Officer*

#### AUDITS

During the past few years, the Council has received challenges to its end of year audit. This has resulted in substantial delays to the conclusion of the audit, and significantly increased the workload of officers, resulting in a backlog of day-to-day work. This budget has increased to accommodate heightened auditor's bills and an appropriate level of staffing to simultaneously resource challenge correspondence whilst providing continuity to normal operations. This budget line has been reduced versus 2024/25 financial year but remains higher than previously to support the response to any audit challenges arising in the 2025/26 financial year.

*Budget delegation: Full Council (IA + EA Costs) + Proper Officer (Staffing/Resource Costs)*

## TRAINING

Training for members and volunteers (particularly for events) is essential in ensuring the safety of the public is upheld and the Council has appropriate oversight and scrutiny.

*Budget delegation: Proper Officer*

## IT INFRASTRUCTURE

There will be a review of IT infrastructure in the new financial year. Councillors currently do not have effective IT infrastructure to access council documentation and communications.

*Budget delegation: Proper Officer + Full Council*

## CIVIC EXPENSES

Town Councillors do not receive any annual allowance. This budget accommodates expenses (such as parking and childcare) that may be incurred whilst undertaking council business.

*Budget delegation: Proper Officer*

## COMMUNICATIONS

### WEBSITE

This budget accommodates the ongoing hosting, maintenance, following the development of a new website ensuring the Council's shop window is fit for purpose and accessible at all times.

*Budget delegation: Proper Officer*

### GENERAL COMMUNICATIONS

This budget includes subscriptions to design software and activities to raise awareness of the Council's activities.

*Budget delegation: Proper Officer*

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

This budget will provide an annual sum to ensure full engagement with the community is undertaken with regular consultations, and the production of an annual report that can be delivered to all households.

*Budget delegation: Proper Officer*

## TOURISM

Residents have expressed concern at the closure of Morecambe's Visitor Information Centre and Councillors have expressed an interest in exploring opportunities to support the tourism sector within the town as Eden Project Morecambe approaches. This budget will support that purpose.

*Budget delegation: Full Council*

## COMMUNITY GRANTS

### GRANTS COMMITTEE

This budget provides community grants to local organisations. The Community Grants committee meet to review all appropriate applications and accompanying documentation before deciding on awarding any potential funding.

*Budget delegation: Grants Committee (Up to £10K limit, or subject to Terms of Reference agreed by the Council) + Full Council*

## CULTURAL SERVICES

### FESTIVALS / EVENTS (GRANTS AWARDED)

This budget provides community grants to local organisations for events and festivals. The Festivals and Events committee meet to review all appropriate applications and accompanying documentation before deciding on awarding any potential funding.

*Budget delegation: Festival and Events Committee (Up to £10K limit, or subject to Terms of Reference agreed by the Council) + Full Council*

## MORECAMBE LIGHTS

This budget provides a sum (agreed in principle) to support Baylight.

*Budget delegation: Proper Officer (for years 2025, 2026, 2027 which have already been approved by full council)*

## EQUIPMENT

Provision of equipment for Festivals and Events.

*Budget delegation: Proper Officer + Festivals and Events Committee*

## COUNCIL EVENTS / PARTNERSHIP

This budget provides a sum to cover expenditure for council events and partnerships.

*Budget delegation: Proper Officer + Festivals and Events Committee*

## STAFFING / CASUAL

This budget provides a sum to cover expenditure for an Events Officer and casual staff for events.

*Budget delegation: Proper Officer (in line with Contracts of Employment)*

## TOWN MAINTENANCE / PUBLIC REALM

### STAFFING (PERMANENT) (INCLUDES ANCILLARY)

Staffing payments for public realm services include annual salary adjustments, medical/occupational fees, reasonable adjustments for protected characteristics, contractual obligations, team building costs, training, parking, and other possible costs which may arise from unexpected circumstances such as terminations.

*Budget delegation: Proper Officer (in line with Contracts of Employment, reasonable adjustments, team building, parking, and obligatory training such as health and safety) + Personnel Committee (Medicals, terminations, and continuous personal development plans)*

### CASUAL STAFF

This budget provides a sum to cover expenditure for temporary public realm workers.

*Budget delegation: Proper Officer*

### PUBLIC REALM ENHANCEMENTS

The environment committee included a public realm enhancements budget line as part of their bid. This sum will be used to increase the attractiveness of the Morecambe area including but not limited to: additional noticeboards in the town, additional alleyway clearances and provides scope to enhance bedding plant operations and respond to taxpayer queries and issues in the public realm.

*Budget delegation: Environment Committee + Full Council*

### EQUIPMENT

Public Realm Equipment purchases.

*Budget delegation: Proper Officer (delivery of public realm service and hand-held equipment), Environment Committee + Full Council*

### FLEET REPAIR

Fleet maintenance and repair.

*Budget delegation: Proper Officer*

## FLEET PURCHASE

The purchase of new vehicle/fleet for Public Realm Service delivery

*Budget delegation: Full Council / Environment Committee / Proper Officer*

## WEED CONTROL (LCC)

This budget line includes the purchase of products to control the growth of weeds. This expenditure is reclaimed from Lancashire County Council as part of the weeding agreement.

*Budget delegation: Proper Officer*

## WEED CONTROL (MTC)

This budget line details the purchase of products to control the growth of weeds in the Morecambe Town boundary. These products are purchased separately to the weeding agreement.

*Budget delegation: Proper Officer*

## SOFTWARE / MOBILES

A budget to cover costs associated with the delivery of a public realm services, including computers, geo-tracking location apps, and integrated work schedule solutions.

*Budget delegation: Proper Officer*

## PPE

Provision of personal protective clothing for employees.

*Budget delegation: Proper Officer*

## SPRING PLANTING

Budget to re-introduce a spring planting scheme across Morecambe.

*Budget delegation: Proper Officer + Environment Committee*

## UTILITIES

Budget for electricity/gas/water in relation to Public Realm services.

*Budget delegation: Proper Officer*

## ALLOTMENTS

The Council owns North Heysham and West End Allotment Site. This sum defrays any costs associated with fulfilling its legal obligations.

*Budget delegation: Proper Officer + Environment Committee*

## CONTINGENCY

A sum for unanticipated costs which may arise during the financial year.

*Budget delegation: Environment Committee + Full Council*

## PLANNING & REGENERATION

A sum to continue work on the Neighbourhood Plan.

*Budget delegation: Proper Officer*

## RESERVES

### ELECTION RESERVE

A sum to cover the full cost of a by-election in each ward.

*Budget delegation: Full Council*

### TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDER

To encourage higher tier authorities to implement a road traffic order resulting in an overnight ban on camper van stays on Morecambe Promenade. This reserve will not be spent unless an order has been confirmed by Lancashire County Council.

*Budget delegation: Full Council*

### GENERAL RESERVE

A required sum held to cover the future costs of the Council and improve its financial resilience.

*Budget delegation: Full Council*



## Precept Calculation

With the budget and reserves as presented, the precept is calculated as follows:

It is predicted that expenditure in 2025 - 2026 will total: £1,300,500.00

Budgeted income will total £73,828.07 from the Weeding Service delivered on behalf of Lancashire County Council. This, alongside a Reserves Subsidy of £125,000.00, and an anticipated Underspend from the prior year of £55,000.00, provides a total sum of £253,828.07 which will offset the budget.

Therefore, the total precept request required for 2025 - 2026 is: £1,046,671.93

The tax base is calculated annually by Lancaster City Council. The tax base represents the equivalent number of Band-D tax-paying properties in the town and accounts for homes receiving discounts/exemptions and the different council tax bands, allowing for a 99% collection rate. The tax base for 2025 - 2026 is 9922.82. This represents a year-on year increase in the number of homes covering the cost of the precept.

The tax base and precept are used to determine the final amount each household will pay through council tax.

Based on the total precept required for 2025 - 2026, a Band D household would receive a charge of £105.48. This represents a year-on-year increase of £8.44 (8.7%), which equates to a £0.16p increment per week. As the majority of homes within Morecambe fall within a Band A-C, this would mean the weekly increment for most households would be £0.11 - £0.14.

Recommendations:

- 1) That the Council approves to set its budget at: £1,300,500.00
- 2) That the Council use £125K from its Reserves to subsidise the budget.
- 3) That the Council use £55K from its prior year underspend to subsidise the budget.
- 4) That the Council approves to set its precept at: £1,046,671.93