



ANNUAL TOWN MEETING OF LYME REGIS ELECTORS
Friday 24 April 2026 at 7pm
To be held at the Woodmead Halls, Hill Road, Lyme Regis

AGENDA

- 1. Introductions and welcome from the mayor, Cllr Philip Evans**
- 2. To receive the minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 25 April 2025 (attached)**
- 3. To receive the Corporate Plan 2026-31 (attached)**
- 4. Feedback from local organisations in receipt of grants and support from Lyme Regis Town Council**
- 5. Reports from:**
 - a) Dorset Council – Leader, Cllr Nick Ireland, and ward member, Cllr Belinda Bawden**
 - b) Dorset Police**
- 6. Open Session**

Priority will be given to written questions received in advance of the meeting.

 - a) Questions from young people
 - b) Questions from Lyme Regis electors
 - c) Questions from others present at the meeting
- 7. Lyme Regis Town Council annual return for the financial year ended 31 March 2025 (attached) comprising:**
 - The statement of accounts
 - Annual governance statement
 - External auditor's certificate and opinion (a copy of the external auditor's report is available for inspection)
 - Annual internal audit report

Cllr Philip Evans MBE
Mayor
08.04.2026

LYME REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING OF ELECTORS HELD ON FRIDAY 25 APRIL 2025 AT THE WOODMEAD HALLS

1. Introductions and welcome from the mayor – Cllr P. Evans

The mayor, Cllr P. Evans welcomed those attending. He said apologies had been given by Dorset Police but a statement had been sent to be read out. Apologies had also been given by Cllrs D. Holland, C. Reynolds and S. Larcombe.

The mayor, Cllr P. Evans reflected on the past year and talked about the council's challenges, last year's achievements, the council's plans from April 2025 to March 2026, and the council's finances.

2. To receive the minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 19 April 2024

Cllr B. Bawden, the Dorset Council ward member, asked for a correction to her report within the minutes, to amend 'local transport plan' to 'community transport plan'.

Proposed by K. Gollop and seconded by N. Ball, the minutes of the Annual Town Meeting on 19 April 2024 were **APPROVED**, with the above amendment, by the majority as a correct record of the meeting.

3. To receive the Corporate Plan 2025-30

The Corporate Plan 2025-30 was received.

N. Ball asked for an update on how successful the drainage works were at Woodmead car park.

The deputy town clerk said the council had approved a budget of £130k for the work but it had cost just over £100k, although the project took six weeks to complete instead of four. The specification had changed during the works, increasing the size of the main drains through the car park. This didn't increase the cost much but it introduced an element of attenuation in the drains so they would be more than capable of dealing with heavy rainfall and would discharge more gradually into the rest of the system. This would also reduce likelihood of storm overflows on the seafront. He said the works should have solved the problems of flooding residential properties.

4. Feedback from local organisations in receipt of grants and support from Lyme Regis Town Council

S. Causley – Lyme Regis Pantomime Society

As producer and director of the pantomime, S. Causley said they staged a show at the Woodmead Halls in February. She had been directing for 10 years and every year the society had received a grant from the council, which helped them put on a high standard show. She said sound and lighting cost them £5,500 this year and the overall cost of the show was £13,000 each year, which they helped to pay for through fundraising and the community bingo, as well as relying heavily on grants and donations. They purchased things they could use year after year so they could make it as professional an amateur show as possible. The council's recent grant had helped to pay for a geyser, which sent a shock of water vapour instead of dry ice, and a low fogger to create atmosphere. She said they were very expensive items and they wouldn't have been able to buy them without the grant from the council. They were a good investment as the equipment could be used every year and they could make some money by

hiring them out to other local theatre companies. She thanked everyone involved in allocating the funds to the society.

A Vian – Lyme Regis Visitor Hub

A. Vian thanked the council for supporting the Visitor Hub. Last year, over 5,000 people had gone into the hub and they had increased their volunteer numbers to 22. They had installed a leaflet rack and had a 24-hour display of local events. They were trying to install broadband as there were other digital things they wanted to do. Exhibitions had taken place at the hub, including one by Woodroffe students of the sculpture trail maquettes, and it had been made available to other organisations.

A. Vian – Lyme Regis Baptist Church

A. Vian thanked the council for a grant towards the restoration of the church, which was yet to be completed and had taken longer than expected. As it was a listed building, there were complex issues involved. The work had included the restoration of 10 windows with zinc, each costing £10,000. He said the church was used by 17 community groups and once the restoration was complete it would be more available. The church also had links to the Waffle House.

A. Vian – Lyme Regis Regatta and Carnival

A. Vian said Regatta and Carnival was the biggest event in Lyme Regis, also attracting 10,000 people for fireworks, and traders said it was the busiest day of the year. He said they were delighted to be in partnership with the council for the fireworks' displays, one in the summer and another in November. He said many local seaside towns put on fireworks' displays and the council paid for them. Regatta and Carnival were happy to put on the display but needed the town council's support. Each display cost £6-7,000 and without the council's help it would not be viable.

P. Morton – Lyme Morris (read out by an officer)

P. Morton thanked the council for its community grant, which would make a big difference in helping the side to keep performing. He said there was a shortage of traditional folk musicians within the local area so they had to try and recruit musicians from further afield. To attract players, they had to pay for their travel expenses and/or for their time. Both players that performed last year travelled nearly an hour each way to get here and this year the performers were travelling roughly the same distances. The grant would enable them to continue performing with live musicians and most of all, to keep performing in and around Lyme Regis providing music, colour, tradition and support to events for the well-being and promotion of the town. He said they were very appreciative of the council's continued support over the years.

C. Matheson – Little Green Change

C. Matheson said Little Green Change was an environmental education and action non-profit social enterprise based in Lyme Regis. They worked with primary and secondary aged children across the UK, with their in-person activities occurring in communities and schools in Devon, Dorset, and South-West Somerset. She said they had been lucky enough to receive a number of grants from the council since their launch in September 2023. These had included a grant to run a successful Children's Christmas Give and Take event at Woodmead Halls in November 2024, a grant to create their community stall with interactive activities, and most recently a grant to undertake activities with The Woodroffe School. This included student work experience, content in their 2025 eco magazine, and an environmental careers' talk highlighting the great environmental organisations based in Lyme Regis including Turn Lyme Green and The River Lim Action Group. She said they were extremely proud to be based in Lyme Regis and were proud of the links they had created with other organisations in the town, including the schools and Lyme Regis Library, where they ran a seed sowing event over the

Easter holiday. She thanked the council and the Environment Committee for the ongoing support of their activities. As a small, non-profit with a limited income, offering all their activities and resources for free to state-funded schools and residents through their community activities, they relied on the financial support from donations and grants like the council's to continue.

D. Flett – Lyme Regis Bowling Club (read out by an officer)

D. Flett said it was great to be asked give feedback, enabling the council to make improvements where appropriate. He said the council clearly had a comprehensive framework of grant funding in place, which enabled many community groups to potentially access funding at a number of levels based on their operation and circumstances. He said the Community Grant application process was very straightforward and easy to understand with queries answered swiftly by the council team. One suggested improvement would be to amend the application form so it can be completed online and submitted from a PC rather than to handwrite and return. He said it was also beneficial to be able to present the application to the council members in person and to see the transparent approval process at work. He said it was an impressive framework and process which benefitted the community where it was needed.

Ellis Holt – Lyme Regis Town Band (read out by an officer)

E. Holt thanked the council for providing the opportunity to apply for a grant for the 2024/25 period. The grant they received enabled them to secure one of the top brass bands in the UK to come to the area and provide expertise on brass band playing to over 40 players from four counties and 12 different brass bands. The workshop, that the band organised annually, was becoming a sought-after event in the brass band world. It brought players from as far as Wiltshire and either introduced or reminded them of why they should visit. He said the town band was honoured to be asked to play at the town's top events and would continue to support the council in every way they could. The band was set up initially with a grant from the town council in 1981 to support the town, the council and the social and formal calendar and they were proud of that. For the last 40 years, they had continued to do this, and would continue for many more years going forwards. He said the partnership they had formed was extremely strong and by continuing to work with the council, they hoped the band would live on forever. He thanked the council for its continued support of the band and said the funding helped them to achieve so much more than playing on the seafront.

K. Vernon – Axminster and Lyme Cancer Support (read out by an officer)

K. Vernon said Axminster and Lyme Cancer Support were extremely grateful to the council for its generous donation. She said cancer diagnosis was increasing nationally and they worked hard to keep up with the growing demand on their services, while at the same time remaining as accessible as possible. 50% of their clients were from Lyme Regis and the surrounding villages. The council's funding would be available to clients in Lyme Regis through their regular coffee meetings, which were held at The Waffle, Lyme Regis. She thanked the council and said its ongoing support made such a huge difference to their clients.

G. Barr – Turn Lyme Green (read out by an officer)

G. Barr said Turn Lyme Green and Plastic Free Lyme Regis were immensely grateful for the continuing support of the town council and the grants over the years had enabled them to do many things. Not least: connect with the local community with films, talks and other events, an annual Seed Swap, regular litter picks on the beaches and other litter 'hotspots', protests highlighting the negligence of water companies to protect the natural environment, and informative displays at the local fetes. He said members of Turn Lyme Green were delighted to be co-opted onto the Environment Committee where it was hoped they could assist the council further enhance and protect the area of outstanding natural beauty. He said more recently, River Lim Action had come to the forefront with river testing and a tenacious approach to

highlighting drainage faults, misconnections and damaged infrastructure. The recent award of a term grant to River Lim Action for the next five years enabled this important work to continue with renewed confidence.

J. Field – Tanner’s Field Film (read out by an officer)

J. Field thanked the council for the community grant and Adrienne Mullins for her seamless help in administrating it. She said the grant was significant, enabling them to screen the fiction short film they shot in Lyme Regis with local young people. Afterwards they had a lively Q&A session with the crew and cast to discuss with the local audience the themes of the film and their experience of participating in it. They were delighted with the feedback they received from the screening and the sense of communal achievement in discovering new skills and understanding the different crafts in the film-making process. She said it was fantastic to see the amount of engagement from the audience and the positive impact on their participants. She thanked the council for making this possible.

R. Wickremasinghe – Bridport and District Citizens Advice (read out by an officer)

R. Wickremasinghe thanked the council for its support and funding of the CAB’s outreach work in Lyme Regis via a term grant over for the last five years and a further five-year grant from April 2025. The grant enabled them to provide a weekly outreach session by appointment, currently based at the town council offices on Wednesdays, 10am to 3pm and staffed by a trained volunteer adviser. He said the grant helped towards the costs of training and expenses, supervision of the outreach session, management time and equipment costs. Generalist advice was provided on a broad range of issues. He said in 2024-25, they helped 101 clients in the Lyme Regis parish area with 470 separate issues. The top issues were benefits, charitable support and foodbanks, housing and debt. Financial outcomes included income gains of £158,000, and debts written off totalling £30,500. He said thanks to the funding, they could help Lyme Regis residents build financial resilience through maximising income and providing money and debt solutions.

H. Prior – Lyme Regis Gig Club (read out by an officer)

H. Prior thanked the council for its ongoing support over the past 18 years since the club was first formed. She said recently they commissioned a new gig, Ammonite, thanks in part to contributions from the town council towards the build costs. More recently, they identified the need for a protective cover for their GRP gigs, which were stored outdoors on land provided by the town council, located behind the Boat Building Academy. Due to the location, the only feasible solution was a temporary shelter. She said they successfully applied for, and received, a grant from the council to help towards the costs of any build. As the structure was temporary and solely used by the club, to date, they had been unable to secure funding from alternative sources, making the town council’s contribution particularly vital. A roof would shield the gigs and equipment from harsh weather conditions, ensuring their longevity. She said they hoped to commence work on the shelter once the lease on the land was renewed and they had secured the additional funding to cover the remaining costs.

H. Britton – Lyme Regis Society (read out by an officer)

H. Britton said the Lyme Regis Society was successful in being awarded a grant to purchase a new laptop for use at their talks, having previously borrowed an old laptop. From September 2024 they were able to offer speakers a ‘state of the art’ laptop to deliver their presentations. And members, residents and visitors could enjoy talks including video, sound and access to the internet. She said the society was very pleased to have benefited from the grants’ allocation and thanked the council.

5. Report from Dorset Council ward member – Cllr Belinda Bawden

Cllr B. Bawden said it was difficult to underestimate the impact of a new Liberal Democrat administration on Dorset Council (DC) and a Liberal Democrat MP, as well as a new Labour government. The government had reduced funding to local authorities and by abolishing the rural services delivery grant and deferring reform of social care and children's services funding, this placed even more unfair financial burden on council taxpayers in Dorset.

Cllr B. Bawden said in Dorset, taxpayers paid 82% of DC's income, whereas the national average contribution was 56%. This was especially unfair in West Dorset and the more remote rural areas as many people were living with reducing services, cuts to bus services, and a lack of post offices and NHS dentists, while council tax police contributions, house prices, utility bills and the cost of living were all going up. She said the good news was Lyme had many excellent services for residents, visitors and the wider community and DC was not planning to cut any services. It was investing in libraries, leisure centres, and culture, sport and art

Cllr B. Bawden said DC had a genuine interest in what all elected members had to contribute, irrespective of party politics. There was a Green Party member in the DC Cabinet running children's services and all elected members had a variety of opportunities to represent residents and contribute their experiences and ideas. She was on various committees, working groups and outside bodies, including government regional bodies. She was still actively involved in two local river groups in two catchments, covering three counties and two water companies, so cross border matters added complexity and challenge.

Cllr B. Bawden said there had been various presentations locally from DC on new commercial waste regulations, there had been a Low Carbon Dorset exhibition in the Jubilee Pavilion, traffic planners had been looking at schemes in the area, and more attention given to weeds growing in verges and pavements. Although this had been improved, there was still a lot to do due to issues with the contractors carrying out the work.

Cllr B. Bawden was starting to do audits on community adult and social services alongside DC's consultation on day services. She wanted to hear from those running social support networks or events or if people felt there was a gap in provision, but to also take part in the wider consultation.

Cllr B. Bawden said housing was DC's first priority and it would be carrying out a housing needs survey, managed by the Community Land Trust, hopefully in September. This would then feed into the information for the Local Plan, which would re-open for consultation in mid-August. She said the government had increased the five-year land supply targets by 80% for Dorset, which would be a huge challenge. She added that there would be briefing sessions for town and parish councils before the Local Plan consultation.

Cllr B. Bawden said she had regular update meetings with the MP, police inspector, one of the local sergeants and the harbourmaster, she met regularly with the bathing water partnership alliance, the Western Area Transport Action Group, and she was on the Western Local Alliance for Children's Services. She also held surgeries every month in the Community Café and Saturdays in the library and encouraged people to attend and share any concerns.

Cllr B. Bawden said there was a big funding gap for the phase 5 coastal protection works to the Cobb. DC was applying for funding and public engagement sessions were planned for late-2025. DC was aiming to start work in autumn/winter 2026.

Cllr B. Bawden gave an update on beach replenishment. The most suitable time for this to take place would be during the spring tide in May and June, outside the school holidays. However, if it didn't take place at this time, it wouldn't happen at all this year.

Cllr B. Bawden said DC was looking at the best use of the children's centre and early years' provision in Lyme Regis. She said St Michael's and Charmouth Primary Schools had applied

for government funding for early years' provision in the schools, which DC was working with them on. Multigenerational use of the centre was a possibility in future.

Report from Dorset Police – PC Kirsti Frecknall, Lyme Regis neighbourhood policing officer (read out by an officer)

PC Frecknall said the main issue was last summer with a group of girls causing serious issues in Lyme Regis, especially targeting the Town Mill and brewery area. After a lot of work by various officers, all three were arrested for numerous offences and bailed with several conditions. They had all received a Youth Conditional Caution for all but one of the offences. The remaining offence of the burglary was still with the Crown Prosecution Service for a charging decision.

PC Frecknall reported there had been 16 residential burglaries in the last 12 months, five of which were still under investigation for matters such as forensics and ongoing enquiries. There had been five offences of drug possession in the last 12 months and she urged people to contact Dorset Police or Crimestoppers if they had any information on drug dealing in the Lyme Regis area.

PC Frecknall said there had been increased patrols where possible during the Easter holiday around the town and in the gardens. This would continue into the summer months for a 'Good, Safe Summer' and they would do all they could to patrol Lyme Regis. They were hoping to get some other Neighbourhood Teams to come to Lyme Regis to support them to engage with the public and to reduce anti-social behaviour.

PC Frecknall said the police had been made aware of anti-social driving in several of the car parks in Lyme Regis and they would be carrying out increased patrols, including the use of an unmarked police vehicle. She asked anyone who witnessed anti-social driving, and if they were able to do it safely, to obtain the vehicle registration and any video footage of their behaviour. This would help to identify offending vehicles and the police would be able to issue a S.59 Notice, which means that if they were caught again driving in an anti-social manner, the police could seize their vehicle.

PC Frecknall said Lyme Neighbourhood Policing Team were working closely with the Dorset Community Safety Team to collate a Community Protection Warning Notice to safeguard vulnerable members of the community that were being targeted by a local female. She was appearing in court on 28 April 2025 for the theft of money from an elderly male that occurred in October 2024.

PC Frecknall urged people to keep reporting incidents to Dorset Police so they were aware of the issues and could then put resources in to targeting the area in question.

6. Open Session

(a) Questions from young people

There were none.

(b) Questions from Lyme Regis Electors

G. Ford (read out by an officer)

G. Ford expressed concerns about the choice of double decker buses for the park and ride service, as he had witnessed three incidents last week which endangered pedestrians. He said on two occasions, at the corner of Church Street and Bridge Street, he saw bus drivers waving out of their way pedestrians who were standing on the pavement. He had also seen the bus hugging the church wall so closely, making the Church Street pavement inaccessible. He was aware the same double decker buses were used for services east and west out of the

town, and at times when passing each other they could cause chaos in the narrow streets, but said park and ride buses were passing through every five to 10 minutes and this frequency increased the likelihood of injury to pedestrians. He said he accepted it was likely councillors who undoubtedly had the visiting public and the town's interest at heart would not choose this size of vehicle to be operating the park and ride service and that this decision was perhaps made with what is affordable in mind. However, he was also aware the council had adopted and were working towards implementing a travel and transport policy which aimed to make Lyme a safer, cleaner, more attractive and more accessible place for residents, workers and visitors. For this reason, he asked the council to consider doing all within its power to ensure buses of a more appropriate size were used for the park and ride service in future years.

The deputy town clerk said double decker buses were actually shorter and narrower than single deck buses and had a tighter turning radius, therefore moving to single deck wouldn't necessarily help with these problems. He said because of the camber in the road and their height, the double decker buses struggled to go past each other, so they went onto the pavements. He said it was unfair to suggest double decker buses were being foisted on the council by the bus company; in reality, this capacity was needed at times. Park and ride carried 47,000 passengers in 2024, with numbers fluctuating through the day and reaching capacity at times. He added that the number of people using the park and ride was increasing year on year, supporting the principle of keeping vehicles out of town, therefore the double decker buses and the capacity they provided was more important.

N. Ball

N. Ball asked the following questions/statements:

1. Empty shops in the town were in a poor state.
2. Additional housing was putting pressure on the sewage works. He asked what the capacity of the drains were, given the additional housing being built?
3. Weed growth and road sweeping had both improved.

K. Gollop

K. Gollop asked the following questions/statements:

1. Lyme Regis looked scruffy and the seafront wasn't being swept. He said there was a problem with bins, with the bin store at Broad Street car park closing and now 15 bins on Gun Cliff.

The mayor, Cllr P. Evans said the town council was trying its best to keep on top of this and every month there was a seafront inspection carried out. The council was aware there was a problem with the state of public toilets. He said the town council had been talking to DC for some time about taking on some of its assets but this was moving slowly.

Cllr B. Bawden said both councils had provided space for commercial bins, although neither council was obliged to do this. She said the environmental health team had closed the bin store in Broad Street car park and Gun Cliff was the only space available as an alternative. She suggested the businesses needed to take more responsibility for their waste.

The deputy town clerk said the town council had agreed to take on the management of the bin store. He said many of the previous problems occurred because the store was not actively managed and businesses would need to use it responsibly in future.

The mayor, Cllr Philip Evans said the town council would continue to work with DC on these issues. Other issues included the condition of the steps at Bell Cliff, and DC had now allowed

the town council to carry out repair works. The Cobb Gate railings had also been broken for nearly a year, which DC was aware of but didn't have the finances to deal with.

The deputy town clerk said a price had been obtained to repair the railings, which was around £6k, and it was hoped the town council could work collaboratively with DC to get it resolved.

2. He congratulated the town council on all the projects it had completed this year.
3. He suggested a 'car park full' sign could be placed at the top of Cobb Road.

The deputy town clerk said DC didn't support the town council putting signs out in the highway on Cobb Road because it was a narrow road and an obstruction. However, the council could look at electronic signs that were operated remotely, although the view was people would ignore it and try and find a space anyway.

It was agreed this would be brought to a future meeting of the Town Management and Highways Committee.

3. He didn't think sufficient notification was given for this meeting.

The mayor, Cllr P. Evans said one of the reasons for the town council launching a magazine was to get messages out, as there wasn't a great deal of press coverage in Lyme Regis. He clarified that this was not a council meeting and councillors did not have to attend.

K. Gollop said he had not received a copy of the council newsletter in the past.

The mayor, Cllr P. Evans said there had been a problem with the distribution of the newsletter through the Royal Mail, with whole sections of the town not receiving one. He said it was hoped distribution of the magazine would be more successful.

N. Ball

N. Ball asked the following statements/questions:

1. If people saw problems with signage, they should log issues on the DC website.
2. He thanked the council for the town bus service.
3. The gardens were looking good and he thanked the council for the planting in Langmoor Gardens. He said the council must be mindful of weed growth, which needed to be done early in the spring and summer.

A. Vian

A. Vian asked if parking in Cobb Square could be reviewed, as double yellow lines allowed disabled parking, as well as the area next to the harbour railings. This left Cobb Square cluttered up with vehicles.

Cllr Bawden said DC traffic planners had looked at this area and there were plans around Cobb Square to make it safer for pedestrians, as well as plans for Broad Street. However, these plans did not have a very good reception from the town council. She said there was also the matter of enforcement; DC's parking enforcement team was in the town every day but had to cover the whole town and were never here for more than two hours. However, the more issues were reported, the more attention would be paid.

c) Questions from others present at the meeting

There were none.

7. Lyme Regis Town Council Annual Return for the financial year ended 31 March 2024

The meeting noted the annual return.

The meeting closed at 8.48pm.

DRAFT

LYME REGIS TOWN COUNCIL



Corporate Plan 2026-2031



Introduction

Cllr Philip Evans MBE, Mayor of Lyme Regis

As another council year draws to a close, I want to tell you about what is going on at the town council.

When I drafted my contribution to the Corporate Plan last year, I identified our main challenges as land movement at Ware Cliff, fall-out from financial pressures on Dorset Council, member behaviour, the low regard many residents have for the council, and a general lack of understanding about what we do.

Reflecting on the last year, has anything changed? It has.

The immediate issue of land movement at Ware Cliff was addressed with the removal of an estimated 3,000 tonnes of earth. Is this a permanent solution? No, it is not, but it does provide further protection to the chalet park below. Will there be further cliff movement?

Yes, there will, and there is some evidence of this already. We are monitoring the situation closely.

Did the town council suffer from any fall-out from financial decisions made by Dorset council in 2025-26? Thankfully not, but the extent of Dorset Council's 2026-27 budget shortfall is concerning and something we will monitor closely.

Has member behaviour improved? This is and remains my top priority for this council and the answer is a definite yes. Since May last year, meetings have been cordial, and decision-making has been less fraught. Disagreements still exist, and some members remain more passionate than others but, we are getting along most of the time.

Is public perception about the council still negative? In some parts of the town, negativity remains and to be honest, whatever we do, some people will never change their opinion about the council.

But, over the last year I have received an increasing number of unsolicited positive comments about the council's achievements.

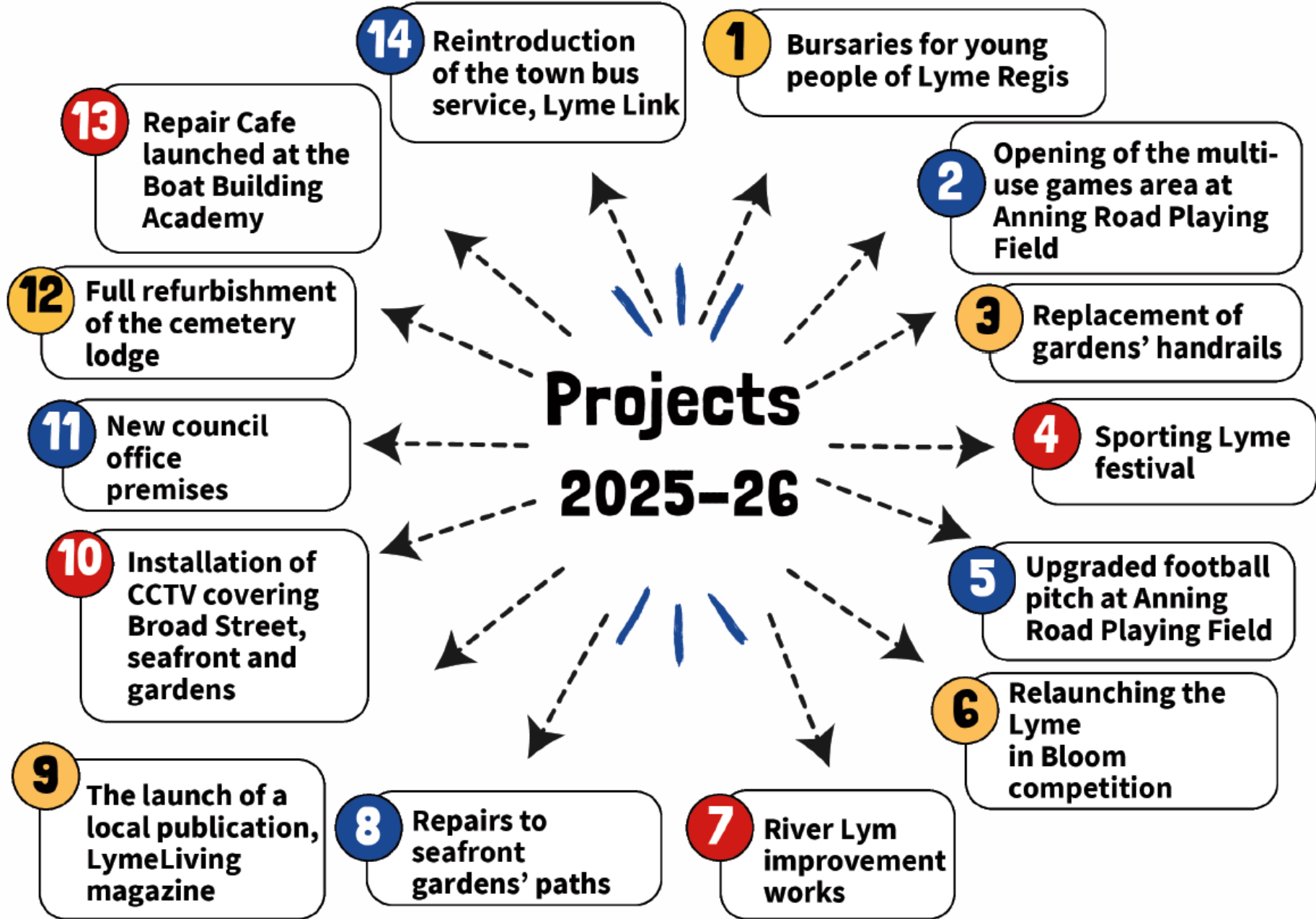
These include, the reintroduction of the town bus service, the building of a children's multi-use games area in Anning Road Playing Field, the Party in the Park, and LymeLiving.

In addition, the financial support given by the town council to local organisations and projects is really appreciated. These grants have benefitted 38 organisations and have helped to make possible the launch of a repair café, and the reintroduction of a post office. Beneficiaries from council grants are detailed elsewhere in this report.

The Corporate Plan goes on to further detail our achievements in 2025-26, identify our objectives for 2026-27 and to explain how we fund ourselves. As I said last year, what I want, more than anything, is for this council to be recognised for the good work it does.

"These grants have benefitted 38 organisations and have helped to make possible the launch of a repair café, and the reintroduction of a post office."

Projects 2025-26



Last Year's Achievements

Despite the complexities of running a council which largely operates as a business, and the inevitable distraction of events and unforeseen issues, the town council has delivered several significant projects in 2025-26.

The most notable include the office move to St Michael's Business Centre, the re-introduction of the town bus service, the refurbishment of the cemetery lodge, the launch of a community-based magazine, Lyme Living, repairs to the footpaths in the Langmoor and Lister Gardens, the installation of a multi-use games area in Anning Road playing field, Party in the Park, VE and VJ Day events, and the financial support given to the Waffle House to reintroduce a post office.

Less visible but equally important projects include investments in the sculpture trail, the launch of an employee assistance programme, preparatory work for Sporting Lyme 2026, the response to Dorset Council's Local Plan which could mean the development of housing at Strawberry Fields, the installation of town-wide CCTV, and a clean bill of health from the external auditor.

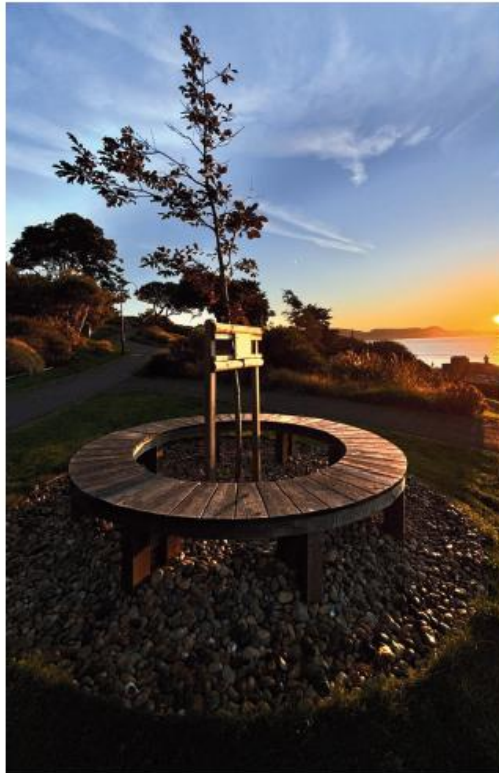
The delivery of projects tends to dominate discussions, and not enough recognition is given to the day-to-day management of the council.

So, to put the record straight, council meetings take place most weeks and up to 180 decisions are actioned by staff each year, staff are trained and developed, external relations are managed, the office is open all day Monday to Friday, the council performs to budget, suppliers get paid on time, health and safety events are managed, recruitment takes place on a timely basis, people issues are dealt with, press enquiries are responded to, briefings get issued to members, businesses and community groups, events are managed, repairs to buildings are undertaken, enforcement is effective, the grass gets cut and the cemetery is a credit to the council. All of this doesn't happen by accident.

One last point, and one the town has always been mindful of, is that tensions in the council chamber, that have plagued the council for years, have eased; business is conducted cordially and decision-making is less fraught. Long may this continue!



"The delivery of projects tends to dominate discussions, and not enough recognition is given to the day-to-day management of the council."



What Are We Doing in 2026-27?

The council's objectives and projects are centred around its key business activities which are essential to the proper running of the organisation and include major repairs to its assets and support for the community.

In 2026-27, the council has agreed a projects' budget of £154,000.

The town council believes it should use its surplus finances to maintain its assets and support its local community and economy; the council invests significant resources in its cemetery, playing fields, seafront, and gardens to create a highly presentable town for residents and visitors. It also subsidises the summer park and ride service.

Starting in April 2026, the town council aims to link its CCTV cameras to Dorset Council's control centre in Dorchester, achieve Community Safety Accreditation for the council's enforcement officers (this extends their powers to deal with low-level policing issues), secure the transfer of Dorset Council toilets to the town council and establish a local cleaning service, between 1 May and 30 September trial a weekend shuttle bus between Bridport and Lyme Regis, install new webcams at the Jubilee Pavilion and The Cobb, deliver a sporting festival from May to September, run Lyme in Bloom, undertake a biodiversity audit, and undertake repairs to the steps and railings at Bell Cliff, a section of the Church wall, and the passageway and windows at the Guildhall.

"The town council believes it should use its surplus finances to maintain its assets and support its local community and economy."





"Lyme Regis Town Council operates a unique business model; for the year ending 31 March 2025, 94% of the council's income came from commercial trading activities."

Money Matters

Lyme Regis Town Council operates a unique business model; for the year ending 31 March 2025, 94% of the council's income came from commercial trading activities.

Unlike most councils, only a relatively small amount is raised through the precept; the precept is the amount residents pay for the services delivered directly by town or parish councils.

The council's business model has its origins in the local government reorganisation of 1974; the reorganisation saw the abolition of Lyme Regis Borough Council and the absorption of most of its functions into a newly created West Dorset District Council. At the time, the council won the argument that Lyme Regis should keep some income-generating assets, particularly car parks, to offset the high cost of maintaining a seaside town.

This has meant that, compared to other councils, Lyme Regis Town Council has had a high degree of financial independence. Moreover, successive town councils have worked hard to ensure the cost of delivering services aren't onerously borne by its residents, who share this beautiful town with visitors.

To put this into context, Lyme Regis Town Council's precept has only been increased twice in the past 15 years and currently stands at £70 for a band D property. This compares favourably with local town councils.

If you check your council tax bill for 2026-27, you'll notice the Lyme Regis precept has reduced; this is mainly because there has been an increase in the number of properties in the town, while the total charge to residents for services provided by the town council has remained the same as the previous year.

Budget Report 2025-26

The prudent assumptions that inform the council's budget-setting generally mean financial performance exceeds budget, i.e., the surplus at the end of a financial year is greater than we estimated when we put the budget together.

On 1 April 2025, the council started the financial year with a reserve of £1,665,046; this included £553,705 accrued for projects not completed in 2023-25, leaving a net reserve of £1.111 million. The council set its reserve at £1 million for 2025-26.

Officers forecast a reserve of £126,642 at 31 March 2025.

In addition, after routine operating expenditure, e.g., paying staff, maintaining the gardens and cemetery, administering the council, the council budgeted for an annual surplus of £168,485 in 2025-26.

In total, the council had £295,127 available for projects in 2025-26. It was decided that the council would install two new beach huts on Marine Parade that would be available for purchase. These were anticipated to generate approximately £120,000 in further income. The additional income would be used for the implementation of further projects in 2025-26, bringing the total available to £415,127.

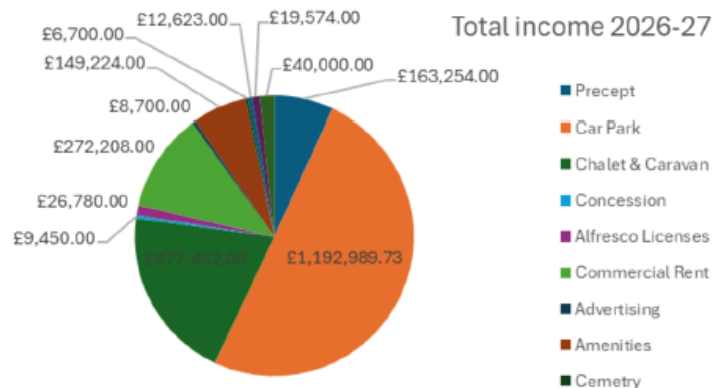
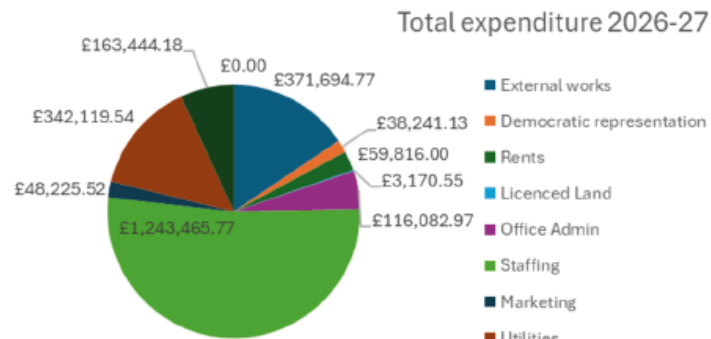
The projects are principally aimed at maintaining the council's assets and supporting the community. Details of the council's 2025-26 projects are detailed on the previous page of the Corporate Plan.

During the course of 2025-26, some areas of income have exceeded budget, e.g., car parking income and the council received unbudgeted income from chalet and beach hut sales.

The estimated surplus increases the council's budget reserve from £1 million at 31 March 2026 to £1,185,285. The probability is the council's financial position will improve during the last three months of the financial year.



"Lyme Regis Town Council has only increased the precept twice in 13 years."



Five-year Plan

The council's five-year financial plan shows modest in-year deficits; however, these estimates are based on deliberately prudent assumptions to ensure the council can respond effectively to unexpected costs or economic changes. The assumptions that inform these forecasts do not include adjustments for inflation and other increases. This approach helps maintain long-term financial stability.

2026-27: -£7.3k, 2027-28: -£44.9k, 2028-29: -£57.5k, 2029-30: -£61.5k, 2030-31: -£65.8k

The council will shortly embark on a consultation exercise to obtain the electorate's views on its investment priorities for 2027 and beyond.

Budget Report 2026-27

The council is reasonably confident it can continue to reduce its total reserve to £1 million; a reserve of £1 million represents over 40% of the council's annual income.

This allows the release of the excess reserve, i.e., £185,285, for projects in 2026-27.

After routine operational and staffing expenditure, the council has a 2026-27 budget deficit of £7,296.

The additional 2025-26 year-end surplus minus the 2026-27 budget deficit allows the council to release £154,000 to invest in its assets and the community in 2026-27.

The Precept

The precept, which is the charge Lyme Regis residents pay for services delivered by the town council, has remained the same at £163,254. Lyme Regis Town Council has only increased the precept twice in 13 years.

To place this increase in context, the amount payable for a Band D council tax property has decreased from £68.82 to £66.10 due to the tax base increasing from 2,382.30 to 2,469.90.

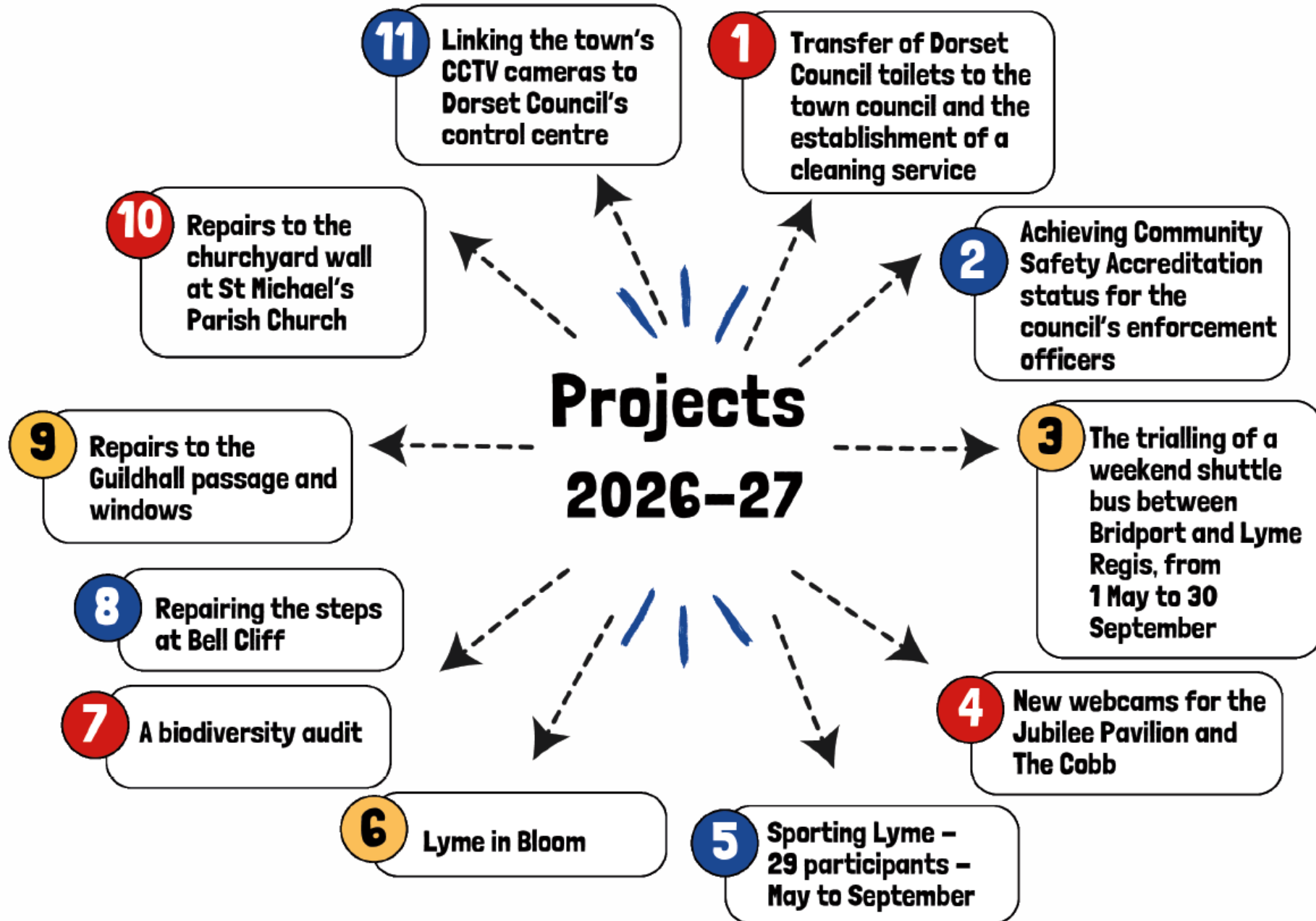
Treasury Management

The council's historic approach to treasury management is for low-risk investments, only. This means the council's reserve is tucked away in reputable high street banks.

Increases in the Bank of England's base rate over the last two years means treasury management is now a more important part of the council's overall financial management.

The majority of the council's reserve now attracts an interest rate in excess of 3%.

Projects 2026-27



Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2024/25 Form 3

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

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

Guidance notes on completing Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2024/25

1. Every smaller authority in England that either received gross income or incurred gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 **must** complete Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return at the end of each financial year in accordance with *Proper Practices*.
2. **The Annual Governance and Accountability Return is made up of three parts, pages 3 to 6:**
 - The **Annual Internal Audit Report** must be completed by the authority's internal auditor.
 - **Sections 1 and 2** must be completed and approved by the authority.
 - **Section 3** is completed by the external auditor and will be returned to the authority.
3. The authority **must** approve Section 1, Annual Governance Statement, before approving Section 2, Accounting Statements, and both **must** be approved and published on the authority website/webpage **before 1 July 2025**.
4. An authority with either gross income or gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 or an authority with neither income nor expenditure exceeding £25,000, but which is unable to certify itself as exempt, or is requesting a limited assurance review, **must** return to the external auditor by email or post (not both) **no later than 30 June 2025**. Reminder letters will incur a charge of £40 +VAT:
 - the Annual Governance and Accountability Return Sections 1 and 2, together with
 - a bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2025
 - an explanation of any significant year on year variances in the accounting statements
 - notification of the commencement date of the period for the exercise of public rights
 - Annual Internal Audit Report 2024/25

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

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

Publication Requirements

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

Before 1 July 2025 authorities **must** publish:

- Notice of the period for the exercise of public rights and a declaration that the accounting statements are as yet unaudited;
- **Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement 2024/25**, approved and signed, page 4
- **Section 2 - Accounting Statements 2024/25**, approved and signed, page 5

Not later than 30 September 2025 authorities **must** publish:

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

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

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

Guidance notes on completing Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2024/25

- The authority **must** comply with *Proper Practices* in completing Sections 1 and 2 of this AGAR. *Proper Practices* are found in the *Practitioners' Guide** which is updated from time to time and contains everything needed to prepare successfully for the financial year-end and the subsequent work by the external auditor.
- Make sure that the AGAR is complete (no highlighted boxes left empty) and is properly signed and dated. Any amendments must be approved by the authority and properly initialled.
- The authority **should** receive and note the Annual Internal Audit Report before approving the Annual Governance Statement and the accounts.
- Use the checklist provided below to review the AGAR for completeness before returning it to the external auditor by email or post (not both) no later than 30 June 2025.
- The Annual Governance Statement (Section 1) must be approved on the same day or before the Accounting Statements (Section 2) and evidenced by the agenda or minute references.
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) must certify the accounts (Section 2) before they are presented to the authority for approval. The authority must in this order; consider, approve and sign the accounts.
- The RFO is required to commence the public rights period as soon as practical after the date of the AGAR approval.
- **You must inform your external auditor about any change of Clerk, Responsible Financial Officer or Chair, and provide relevant authority owned generic email addresses and telephone numbers.**
- Make sure that the copy of the bank reconciliation to be sent to your external auditor with the AGAR covers all the bank accounts. If the authority holds any short-term investments, note their value on the bank reconciliation. The external auditor must be able to agree the bank reconciliation to Box 8 on the accounting statements (**Section 2, page 5**). An explanation **must** be provided of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8. More help on bank reconciliation is available in the *Practitioners' Guide**.
- Explain fully significant variances in the accounting statements on **page 5**. Do not just send a copy of the detailed accounting records instead of this explanation. The external auditor wants to know that you understand the reasons for all variances. Include complete numerical and narrative analysis to support the full variance.
- If the bank reconciliation is incomplete or variances not **fully** explained then additional costs may be incurred.
- Make sure that the accounting statements add up and that the balance carried forward from the previous year (Box 7 of 2024) equals the balance brought forward in the current year (Box 1 of 2025).
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), on behalf of the authority, **must** set the commencement date for the exercise of public rights of 30 consecutive working days which **must** include the first ten working days of July.
- The authority **must** publish on the authority website/webpage the information required by Regulation 15 (2), Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, including the period for the exercise of public rights and the name and address of the external auditor **before 1 July 2025**.

Completion checklist – 'No' answers mean you may not have met requirements		Yes	No
All sections	Have all highlighted boxes have been completed?	✓	
	Has all additional information requested, including the dates set for the period for the exercise of public rights , been provided for the external auditor?	✓	
Internal Audit Report	Have all highlighted boxes been completed by the internal auditor and explanations provided?	✓	
Section 1	For any statement to which the response is 'no', has an explanation been published?	✓	
Section 2	Has the Responsible Financial Officer signed the accounting statements before presentation to the authority for approval?	✓	
	Has the authority's approval of the accounting statements been confirmed by the signature of the Chair of the approval meeting?	✓	
	Has an explanation of significant variations been published where required?	✓	
	Has the bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2025 been reconciled to Box 8?	✓	
	Has an explanation of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8 been provided?	✓	
Sections 1 and 2	Trust funds – have all disclosures been made if the authority as a body corporate is a sole managing trustee? NB: do not send trust accounting statements unless requested.	✓	

**Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices*, can be downloaded from www.nalc.gov.uk or from www.ada.org.uk

Annual Internal Audit Report 2024/25

Lyme Regis Town council

www.lymeregistowncouncil.gov.uk / AVAILABLE WEBSITE/WEBPAGE ADDRESS

During the financial year ended 31 March 2025, this authority's internal auditor acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with the relevant procedures and controls in operation and obtained appropriate evidence from the authority.

The internal audit for 2024/25 has been carried out in accordance with this authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this authority.

Internal control objective	Yes	No*	Not covered**
A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.	✓		
B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	✓		
D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	✓		
E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
F. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.	✓		
G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	✓		
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	✓		
I. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.	✓		
J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	✓		
K. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2023/24, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2023/24 AGAR tick "not covered")			✓
L. The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation.	✓		
M. In the year covered by this AGAR, the authority correctly provided for a period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations (during the 2024-25 AGAR period, were public rights in relation to the 2023-24 AGAR evidenced by a notice on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set).	✓		
N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2023/24 AGAR (see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).	✓		
O. (For local councils only) Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.			✓

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

Date(s) internal audit undertaken

18/11/2024 21/11/2024 27/02/2025 28/02/2025 20/05/2025

Name of person who carried out the internal audit

Mrs R Darkin-Miller LLB(Hons) BFP FCA

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit



Date 02/06/2025

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

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

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2024/25

We acknowledge as the members of:

Lyme Regis Town Council
ELECTED MEMBERS OF AUTHORITY

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2025, that:

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

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

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

18/06/2025

and recorded as minute reference:

25/25/REFERENCE

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

Chair

SIGNED

Clerk

SIGNED

www.lymeregistowncouncil.gov.uk AVAILABLE WEBSITE/WEBPAGE ADDRESS

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2024/25 for

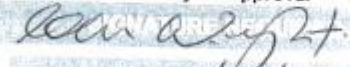
Lyme Regis Town Council

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2024 £	31 March 2025 £	
1. Balances brought forward	1,540,306	1,930,357	Please round all figures to nearest £1. Do not leave any boxes blank and report £0 or Nil balances. All figures must agree to underlying financial records. Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	132,779	132,779	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	2,191,159	2,396,056	Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.
4. (-) Staff costs	920,526	1,000,304	Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).
6. (-) All other payments	1,013,361	1,898,889	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).
7. (=) Balances carried forward	1,930,357	1,559,999	Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).
8. Total value of cash and short term investments	2,047,243	1,655,046	The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – To agree with bank reconciliation.
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	8,068,444	8,291,239	The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.
10. Total borrowings	0	0	The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).

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

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2025 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

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


Date 18/06/2025

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

18/06/2025

as recorded in minute reference:

25/25/C

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



Section 3 – External Auditor’s Report and Certificate 2024/25

In respect of

Lyme Regis Town Council

1 Respective responsibilities of the auditor and the authority

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

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

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

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2025; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

2 External auditor’s limited assurance opinion 2024/25

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

(continue on a separate sheet if required)

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

The council has not formally minuted the following:

- Considered and agreed the internal audit programme of work including reference to any identified risks
- Considered the competence of the internal auditor and agreed a letter of engagement

The council have provided an adequate explanation and details of the actions necessary to address weaknesses identified.

(continue on a separate sheet if required)

3 External auditor certificate 2024/25

We certify that we have completed our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2025.

External Auditor Name

ENTER NAME OF EXTERNAL AUDITOR
BDO LLP - Southampton

External Auditor Signature

DocuSigned by:
BDO LLP
467DFB745A6A428

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date

22 September 2025 YY