

LYME REGIS TOWN COUNCIL



Corporate Plan 2025-2030



Introduction

Cllr Philip Evans MBE, Mayor of Lyme Regis

As this council year draws to a close, I want to tell you about the challenges we face, reflect on our achievements, outline our plans for next year and make known my overriding priority for this council.

The main challenges we face include, continued land movement at Ware Cliff, fall out from the financial decisions made by Dorset Council on local services, member behaviour, the low regard many residents have for the council and a general lack of understanding about what we do.

For those of you who don't follow council business, over the last year we've invested significant sums of money into our assets. These include, a refurbished seafront harbour store, a new amenities' hut, a refurbished Garden Pavilion, land stabilisation works at Ware Cliff, and drainage works at Woodmead car park.

We've invested nearly £150,000 in the cemetery, alone; works include repairs to paths, new roof structures for the two chapels and a major refurbishment of the lodge.

We also decided to sell the council's offices in Church Street and move to St Michael's Business Centre; we hope to move in June 2025. This will reduce our office running costs and provide the council with a capital receipt from the sale of the existing office; this capital receipt will support the council's investment in our town.

But the council's work isn't just about buildings.

In June 2024, the council hosted a party in the gardens for residents.

We are about to install a multi-use games area at Anning Road Playing Field. Over the page are just some of the projects we have achieved this council year.

We've upped our investment in community organisations; from 2025 onwards, community organisations will receive up to £140,000 in grants each year.

We've established a working relationship with Lyme Regis Business Association.

We installed gym equipment in the seafront gardens.

We have several exciting initiatives that are scheduled go live in April 2025, including the reintroduction of the town bus service, the opening of a repairs' café and the introduction of a regular publication to provide information about Lyme Regis and the work of the council.

Our finances remain sound and once again we received a clean bill of health from the external auditor.

Finally, my overriding priority for this council is to eradicate the behaviours that have blighted our reputation for as long as I can remember. Things are getting noticeably better but I want, more than anything, for this council to be recognised by the town for the good work it does, not for poor behaviour in the council chamber.

*"from 2025 onwards,
community
organisations will
receive up to £140,000
in grants each year"*

Bursaries
for local
children

FREE gym
equipment in
the gardens

Bid-writing
support for
local groups

Refurbishment
of the
cemetery lodge,
repairs to chapel
roof and repairs
to paths

Refurbishment
of the harbour
store

Refurbished
Garden
Pavilion

Multi use
games area in
Anning Road
Playing Field

Party in
the Park

Projects
2024-25

Improved
drainage at
Woodmead
car park

D-Day
80 events

New
amenities
hut

Supporting
local
events

Investment in
environmental
initiatives

Grants to
local
organisations

Our Finances

Budget Report 2024-25

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 2024, the council started the financial year with a reserve of £2,047,243; this included £815,843 accrued for projects not completed in 2023-24, leaving a net reserve of £1.231 million.

The council set its reserve at £1 million for 2024-25, which meant it could release £231,400 for project spend.

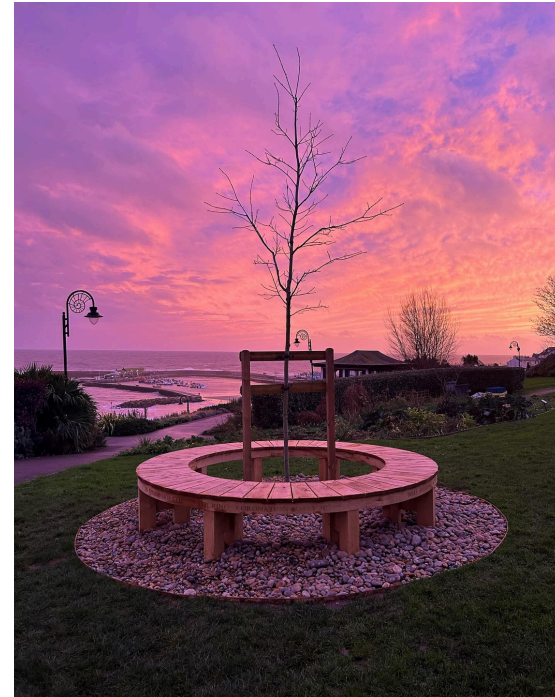
In addition, after routine operating expenditure, e.g., paying staff, maintaining the gardens and cemetery, administering the council, the council budgeted for an annual surplus of £361,795 in 2024-25.

In total, the council had £593,000 available for projects in 2024-25. The projects are principally aimed at maintaining the council's assets and supporting the community. Details of the council's 2024-25 projects are detailed on the previous page of the corporate plan.

During the course of 2024-25, some areas of income have exceeded budget, e.g., car parking income and the council received unbudgeted income from chalet and beach hut sales.

On the other side of the equation, expenditure on some projects increased. The net result of these income and expenditure variances produces an estimated additional year-end surplus of £126,642 on 31 March 2025.

This estimated surplus increases the council's budget reserve from £1 million at 31 March 2025 to £1,126,642. The probability is the council's financial position will improve during the last three months of the financial year.



"The council set its reserve at £1 million for 2024-25 which meant it could release £231,400 for project spend."



Budget Report 2025-26

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., £126,642, for projects in 2025-26.

After routine operational and staffing expenditure, the council has a 2025-26 budget surplus of £168,485. The council is confident it can release all this surplus to support the completion of projects in 2025-26.

The additional 2024-25 year-end surplus of £126,642 and the 2025-26 budget surplus of £168,485 allows the council to invest a total of £295,127 in its assets and the community in 2025-26.

The Precept

The precept, which is the charge Lyme Regis residents pay for services delivered by the town council, has increased to £163,254; £18,753 is income from the second homes' levy imposed by Dorset Council. This is only the second increase in 13 years.

To place this increase in context, the amount payable for a Band D council tax property has increased from £64.32 to £68.80, an increase of £4.48 per annum; less than 9p per week.

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 3.5%.

"the amount payable for a Band D council tax property has increased from £64.32 to £68.80 an increase of £4.48 per annum; less than 9p per week"

Objectives and Projects

The council identifies its objectives and projects during its budget-setting process; the budget-setting process takes place during the autumn of the preceding year. A total of £593,195 was allocated to objectives and projects in 2024-25.

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.

The council's projects tend to be one-off activities.

In 2025-26, the council has agreed a projects' budget of £295,127.

The council's main projects for 2025-26 are detailed on the following page.

They include the re-introduction of the town bus, after it was scrapped by Dorset Council in August 2024. This will be the second time the town council has stepped in to save this vital service for local people.

We will also continue with the local bursary scheme for young people. This was introduced two years ago to provide funding for children and teenagers in Lyme Regis to allow them to pursue their hobbies and attend clubs, as well as discretionary funding to Woodroffe School to support pupils who need extra financial support. It has proven to be a very successful scheme and we want to carry on supporting those who need it.

Our current residents' newsletter will be enhanced with a comprehensive monthly publication for residents, including useful and interesting articles about Lyme Regis and the work of the council.

Continuing our theme of community initiatives, we will also re-launch the much-loved Lyme in Bloom competition, celebrating all the beautiful gardens, floral displays and vegetable patches in our town and recognising the growers behind them.

Following the success of the first Party in the Park in June 2024, this will now be an annual event in the Lyme Regis calendar. Midsummer Party in the Park will be held in June 2025, aimed at residents, and will include live music, open-air theatre, children's entertainment and food and drink. Watch this space for more details.

This year marks the 80th anniversary of VE Day and we will mark this with a programme of events on Thursday 8 May, to include the lighting of the beacon, a service at the war memorial, and a cream tea for the over 70s. More details to follow.



Reintroduction
of the town
bus

Repairs'
cafe
launches

Repairs to
seafront
gardens'
footpaths

VE Day 80
events

Biodiversity
Projects

Tree
Planting

Bursaries for
local young
people

Youth
Council

River Lym
Improvement
projects

Projects
2025-26

Local
publication

New council
offices

Works to the
Guildhall

Replacement
of gardens'
handrails

Re-launching
the Lym in
Bloom
competition

Sporting
Lym
Festival