RAYLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL
The Pavilion, King George V Playing Field, Bull Lane,
Rayleigh, Essex, SS6 8JD
Tel: 01268 741880
Email: clerk@rayleightowncouncil.gov.uk
www.rayleightowncouncil.gov.uk

Minutes of the meeting of the Town Council held on Monday 10th November 2025 at 7.00pm at The Pavilion, King George V Playing Field, Bull Lane, Rayleigh

MINUTES

077/25   **Those present and apologies for absence**
Present: Cllrs D Balding, E Brewer, N Gallop, L Knell, N Knell, R Linden, J Lumley, J Newport, L Newport, M O'Leary, D Sperring, C Stanley, M Sutton, M Vernon, I Ward, I Wilson, V Wilson
Apologies: Cllrs J Burton, R Lambourne, S J Page, B Newport, C Roe,
Absent: Cllr R Milne
Also in Attendance: Deputy Town Clerk
Motion. The Council to accepted and recorded any apologies for absence

078/25   **Declarations of Members Interests**
Cllrs J Newport and J Lumley declared a non-pecuniary interest in matters relating to Essex County Council due to being members.
Cllrs E Brewer, R Linden, J Newport, L Newport, M O'Leary, M Sutton, I Ward, I Wilson and V Wilson declared a non-pecuniary interest in matters relating to Rochford District Council due to being member.

079/25   **Code of Conduct/Civility & Respect**
It was noted that the meeting will be carried out under the terms of the Local Government Association and Rayleigh Town Council's Code of Conduct policy together with NALC's Civility and Respect pledge with all participants expected to behave in a professional and constructive manner

080/25   **Public Forum**
No members of public present

081/25   **Minutes of the Town Council Meeting**
Motion. The Council to approve the minutes of the Town Council meeting that was held on 13th October 2025 as a true record.

Proposed Cllr M Vernon   **Seconded** Cllr I Wilson   **Unanimous**

082/25   **To Receive and Note Committee Meeting Minutes**
27th October – Open Spaces – noted
23rd October – Personnel - noted

083/25   Arrangements to be made whilst recruiting a new Town Clerk
Members to agreed that whilst the Town Council are in the process of recruitment for a new Town Clerk, to formally appoint the Deputy Town Clerk as the interim Clerk, proper officer and RFO in relation to signing of documents that may be required for submitting the precept and other documentation.

Motion to formally appoint the Deputy Town Clerk as interim Clerk, Proper Officer and RFO whilst recruiting a new Town Clerk

Proposed Cllr M Vernon   **Seconded** Cllr D Balding   **Unanimous**

084/25   Open spaces Committee
Members considered the request from Cllrs S J Page, R Linden and V Wilson to be appointed on to the Open Spaces Committee. There are currently 7 members on this committee and as per terms of reference there can be 10 members. No

Motion – Appoint Cllrs S J Page, R Linden and V Wilson on to the Open Spaces Committee.

Proposed Cllr V Wison   **Seconded** Cllr R Linden   **11 in favour - 6 abstained**

Cllrs S J Page, R Linden and Vilson appointed on to the Open Space Committee

085/25   King George V Playing Field Management Committee

Members to received the information on formation of a King George V Playing Field Management Committee and to agree the terms of reference.

Motion:

- To Agree the Terms of Reference

    Proposed Cllr J Newport   **Seconded** Cllr M O'Leary   **Unanimous**

- To from a King George V Playing Field Management Committee and appoint members to this committee

Members voted for the following councillors to be appointed on to the Geroge V Management Committee – Cllrs J Newport, N Gallop, M O'Leary, M Sutton, D Sperring, J Lumley and M Vernon.

Meeting closed at 7.23pm

Chairman

Chairman Signature.. Date ....

RAYLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL
The Pavilion, King George V Playing Field, Bull Lane,
Rayleigh, Essex, SS6 8JD
Tel: 01268 741880
Email: clerk@rayleightowncouncil.gov.uk
www.rayleightowncouncil.gov.uk

Minutes of the open Space Committee meeting held on **Monday 19th January 2026 at 7.30pm** at **The Pavilion, King George V Playing Field.**

MINUTES

OS45   **Those present and apologies for absence**.
Present: Cllrs E Brewer, J Burton, N Gallop, R Lambourne, D Sperring, C Stanley, M Vernon, SJ Page, V Wilson, R Linden
Apologies: none
Members of Public: 4
Also present: Committee Clerk

OS46   **Non-members and substitutes attending.**
Non-member: Cllr I Wilson

OS47   **Declarations of Members Interests**
Members of the Council are subject to paragraphs 6 (DPIs), 7 (Other Pecuniary Interests) and 8 (non-pecuniary interests) of that Code. Members are also subject to paragraphs 9- 11 of that Code as regards declaration of interests and participation in the meeting insofar as any item of business involves such an interest and as such all members of District and County declared their interests regarding relevant items on the agenda.
RESOLVED that the above information be noted.

OS48   **Code of Conduct/Civility & Respect**
Members noted that the meeting will be carried out under the terms of the Local Government Association and Rayleigh Town Council's Code of Conduct policy together with NALC's Civility and Respect pledge with all participants expected to behave in a professional and constructive manner
RESOLVED that the above information be noted.

OS49   **Public Forum**
Four members of the public were in attendance.

One member of the public expressed a wish to operate a coffee cart in John Fisher, proposing to trade on Saturdays and Sundays and during school pick-up and drop-off times.

Representatives from Rayleigh Boys & Girls Football Club provided an update to members. They advised that the refurbishment of the pavilion has now been completed and includes toilet facilities accessible to all users. The club has very

recently begun serving tea and coffee on football match days for a small charge and hopes to expand the offering to include items such as burgers and bacon rolls. They confirmed that a hygiene licence has been obtained from Rochford District Council.

The club also advised that the "in" barrier at the John Fisher car park had been struck and dented. They confirmed that they had straightened and closed it.

In addition, the club stated that they will organise a working party to weed the car park as a gesture of goodwill, as the area is currently in poor condition.

Action: Include a standing agenda item for Rayleigh Boys & Girls Football Club on all future agendas.
The office to investigate the condition and repair of the car park barrier.

The chair moved OS 57 to this point on the meeting

OS50 Minutes of the Open Spaces Meeting
RESOLVED all present agreed to approve the minutes of the Town Council meeting that was held on 27th October 2025 as a true record.

OS51 Committee Budget
Members noted the budget for 2025/6.

OS52 To decide to pay for mesh boxes to be installed around the badger holes in John Fisher. Cost from 12k.
The Committee Clerk advised that a site survey must be undertaken to establish the extent of the works required before any decision can be made on funding.

Members were informed that a two-tier survey service is available:

- £300 + VAT for a site survey and written report only (non-refundable).
- £500 + VAT for a site survey followed by exclusion works, with the £500 deducted from the final staged payment if works proceed.

The Committee Clerk further advised that badgers have multiple setts and do not occupy all of them continuously. Badgers may relocate to other established setts, and the holes at John Fisher appear to be an annexe, subsidiary, or satellite sett rather than a permanently occupied main sett.

Resolved: To approve funding for a site survey at a cost of up to £300. Proposed by Cllr Burton, seconded by Cllr Sperring and agreed unanimously.

Action: The office to seek the expert opinion of Adam Aldridge at Rochford District Council and to obtain further quotations once the survey has been completed.

OS53 To agree next year's budget for 2026/7.
Members considered the budget for 2026/27.

Not Resolved: Members agreed to leave the budget as it was agreed at the OS meeting on 27/10/25. Proposed by Cllr Linden, seconded by Cllr Vernon, with 5 in favour, 3 against, 2 abstentions.

OS54 **To note RDC have confirmed the 2 footbridges in John Fisher play fields are part of Public Footpath 22 and Essex highways may fund the maintenance and repairs.**
Action: noted

OS55 **To note that the Play Inspection report is to be renewed December 2026.**
Action: noted

OS56 **To note the Work Plan.**
Action: noted
Cllr Gallop suggested that a public survey be conducted for John Fisher to gather residents' views on the facilities and what they would like to see on the playing field.
Action: working group to propose questions for the survey.

OS57 **To note the request to attend John Fisher from a coffee cart vendor.**
This item was discussed under **OS49**
Action: The office to discuss the matter with the new Clerk and report back to the Football Club and the coffee cart vendor.

There being no other business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.05 pm

Signed...Chairman..............................Date

Agenda Item	10.1
Meeting Date	9 February 2026
Report Title	Suspension of Committees & Working Groups
Recommendation/s	1. To agree to suspend meetings of the Communities Committee, Open Spaces Committee, Policy & Finance Committee until May 2026. To suspend all Working Groups with the exceptions listed below. 2. To retain planned committee meetings for the Planning Committee, Personnel Committee and KGV Trust. To retain the Trinity Fair Working Group, Christmas Lights Working and LGR Working Group 3. To hold monthly Full Town Council meetings on the first Monday of the month and to hold Planning Committee meetings on the second Monday of the month.
Appendices to Report	
Prepared By	Shaun Fishenden PSLCC – Town Clerk & RFO
Detailed Information	

The Town Council currently has a number of committees and working groups in existence, some of which have not met recently. The existence of this complex and inefficient committee structure, hinders effective and timely decision-making. It also blurs accountability and responsibility in some aspects.

The Town Clerk is working on proposals to review the committee structure which would take effect from the new municipal year in May 2026. This would see a streamlining of the number of committees into a more efficient structure.

Whilst this review is ongoing, and to enable the Town Clerk to address key operational priorities in the intervening months, it is recommended that a temporary measure is taken to alleviate the officer time spent servicing committee and working group meetings.

During this temporary period, monthly Full Town Council meetings would be held to cover matters that would have been considered by the respective committees. The Town Clerk will ensure agendas are strictly managed efficiently so that agenda items are for decisions

only. The Town Clerk & RFO would clerk the monthly Full Council meetings whilst the Deputy Town Clerk would clerk the Planning Committee meetings.

Under the Local Government Act 1972, the Full Town Council has the ability to suspend or abolish committees at any point during the municipal year, and it does not have to wait until the Annual Council meeting.

Proposed Meeting Schedule for remainder of 2025/26 (if recommendations adopted):

Monday 2 March 2026 at 7:30pm	Full Town Council
Monday 9 March 2026 at 7:30pm	Planning Committee
Monday 6 April 2026 at 7:30pm	Full Town Council
Monday 13 April 2026 at 7:30pm	Planning Committee
Tuesday 21 April 2026 at 11:00am	Personnel Committee
Monday 4 May 2026 at 7:30pm	Annual Council Meeting

The three retained Working Groups would meet as and when required.

Key Implications	
Financial	Adopting the recommendations of this report will have no financial implications
Legislative and Policy	Adopting the recommendations of this report will ensure the Council fulfils it's duty of care towards its employees under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974
Equality Assessment	There are no Equality implications arising
Climate Change	There are no Climate Change implications arising

Rayleigh Town Council

The Pavilion, King George V Playing Field, Rayleigh, SS6 8JD
www.rayleightowncouncil.gov.uk

Agenda Item	10.2
Meeting Date	9 February 2026
Report Title	Internal Auditor for 2026-2027
Recommendation/s	1. To appoint Mulberry Local Authority Services as the Town Council's internal auditor for a three-year period, starting from 2026-2027
Appendices to Report	• Mulberry LAS Quote
Prepared By	Shaun Fishenden PSLCC – Town Clerk & RFO

Detailed Information

Under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, the Town Council must "undertake an effective internal audit to evaluate the effectiveness of its risk management, control and governance processes, taking into account public sector internal auditing standards or guidance".

The Town Council has had it's internal audits be completed by Heelis and Lodge for at least fifteen years. Best practice is that the internal audit provider is reviewed at least every three years.

It is recognised the Town Council has had the same provider for a number of years and that in light of several governance-related issues (e.g. KGV trust separation) being identified that had not been properly detected during the internal audit process for a number of years. A 'fresh look' at the council from a new internal auditor is therefore recommended by officers.

There are a number of Town & Parish Council specific Internal Auditors and quotes were sought from them on the basis of the following specification –

- 1 x Interim Audit held in Autumn, and 1 x EOY audit in April
- Both audits to be held face-to-face in the Town Council office
- A comprehensive report to be produced for presentation to Full Council

Quotes have subsequently been obtained from:

Mulberry Local Authority Services	£80 an hour (estimated 3 hours per visit - £480)
Blue Skies Accounting	Declined to quote
Heelis & Lodge	£640 (£320 per audit visit)

Mulberry Local Authority Services have been used by the Town Clerk at previous councils and an example audit report is provided here - Interim Audit Report (Meopham PC)

Key Implications	
Financial	Adopting the recommendation of this report could represent a small cost saving for the Council, although it is important the Town Council focuses on the quality of an internal audit, rather than on securing the cheapest provider
Legislative and Policy	Adopting the recommendation of this report ensures the Council remains compliant with the Account and Audit Regulations 2025
Equality Assessment	There are no equality issues arising
Climate Change	There are no climate change issues rising

MULBERRY
LOCAL AUTHORITY SERVICES LTD

Eastgate House

Dogflud Way, Farnham

Surrey, GU9 7UD

t 07724 545669

e office@mulberrylas.co.uk

w www.mulberrylas.co.uk

Internal Audit Services for Town and Parish Councils

Overview of Services

As part of our comprehensive support for town and parish councils, **Mulberry Local Authority Services (LAS) Ltd** provides a professional **internal audit service**. This is delivered in full compliance with the **Smaller Authorities Proper Practices Panel (SAPPP) Practitioner's Guide**, reflecting current guidelines and accounting standards.

Audit Schedule

We generally carry out **two audits per year** as standard:

- **Interim Audit**: Focuses on **governance and accountability**, including procedural aspects such as Financial Regulations, Standing Orders, risk assessments, internal control systems, and policies.

- **Final Audit**: Concentrates on **financial matters**, including verification of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) and all supporting documentation for submission to external auditors.

This two-stage approach allows councils to **identify and address weaknesses** before the final internal audit report is completed.

Flexible and Responsive Service

We understand that each council has unique needs, so we're happy to offer **customised audit visit schedules** and respond to queries throughout the year. Our flexible service ensures your council receives the support it requires when it's needed most.

Sector Expertise and Independence

Mulberry LAS are founder members of the **Internal Audit Forum**, who work in partnership with the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) to promote continuous internal audit improvement in the local council sector.

One of our directors, Mark Mulberry, is the internal audit representative on the SAPPP, which is responsible for issuing proper practices about governance and accounts of smaller authorities.

Mulberry LAS, previously operating as part of **Mulberry & Co**, has over **20 years of experience** in conducting internal audits for local councils. Our auditors have deep sector knowledge and can rotate between clients to ensure **full independence** throughout your engagement.

In the 2025/26 financial year, we supported over **330 councils** with their internal audit requirements, including:

- Small councils exempt from limited assurance reviews

- Larger town and parish councils managing **multi-million-pound budgets** and **complex financial systems**

Audits are conducted **either on-site or remotely**, based on your council's preferences and circumstances.

We publish on our website an **annual internal audit guide**, which enables our councils to prepare for their audits by providing details of the information we review at each visit and reminding them of the publication requirements on the council's website.

Fees and Charges

Our pricing for internal audits for the financial year commencing **1 April 2026** is as follows:

- Precept below £1 million **- £80 per hour + VAT**

- Precept £1 million and above **- £85 per hour + VAT**

- **Travel costs** (for on-site visits) are billed at the standard **HMRC rate of 45p per mile**

- No charges for travel time

Audit duration depends on your council's financial complexity. Once appointed, your assigned auditor will be happy to discuss a **personalised estimate** and timeline.

Engagement Options

We offer **one-year** and **three-year** engagement periods. If you commit to a **three-year term**, we guarantee that your hourly rate will remain **fixed for the full duration** of the agreement.

Added Benefits

As a client of Mulberry LAS, you will gain access to **discounted rates** on our **training programme for officers and councillors**. Details of upcoming courses can be found at:
www.mulberrylas.co.uk/training-programme

Contact Us

If you have any questions or require further information, please don't hesitate to get in touch. We look forward to supporting your council's internal audit needs.

Rayleigh Town Council
The Pavilion, King George V Playing Field, Rayleigh, SS6 8JD
www.rayleightowncouncil.gov.uk

COUNCILLOR-OFFICER PROTOCOL

Adopted on	Review Cycle	Review Date
09.02.26	Annual	Feb 2027

Contents

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Protocol is to guide councillors and officers of the council in their relations with one another. The Protocol's intention is to build and maintain good working relationships between councillors and officers as they work together. Employees who are required to give advice to councillors are referred to as "officers" throughout.

A strong, constructive, and trusting relationship between councillors and officers is essential to the effective and efficient working of the council.

This Protocol also seeks to reflect the principles underlying the Code of Conduct which applies to councillors and the employment terms and conditions of officers. The shared objective is to enhance and maintain the integrity (real and perceived) of local government.

The following extract from the Local Government Association guidance on the 2020 Model councillor Code of Conduct states that:

> *"Both councillors and officers are servants of the public and are indispensable to one another. Together, they bring the critical skills, experience and knowledge required to manage an effective local authority.*
>
> *At the heart of this relationship, is the importance of mutual respect. councillor-officer relationships should be conducted in a positive and constructive way. Therefore, it is important that any dealings between councillors and officers should observe reasonable standards of courtesy, should show mutual appreciation of the importance of their respective roles and that neither party should seek to take unfair advantage of their position or seek to exert undue influence on the other party.*
>
> *councillors provide a democratic mandate to the local authority and are responsible to the electorate whom they represent. They set their local authority's policy framework, ensure that services and policies are delivered and scrutinise local authority services.*
>
> *Chairs and vice chairs of committees have additional responsibilities. These responsibilities will result in increased expectations and relationships with officers that are more complex. Such councillors must still respect the impartiality of officers and must not ask them to undertake work of a party-political nature or compromise their position with other councillors or other officers.*
>
> *Officers provide the professional advice and managerial expertise and information needed for decision making by councillors and to deliver the policy framework agreed by councillors. They are responsible for implementing decisions of councillors and the day-to-day administration of the local authority.*
>
> *The roles are very different but need to work in a complementary way.*
>
> *It is important for both sides to respect these differences and ensure that they work in harmony. Getting that relationship right is an important skill. That is why the code requires councillors to respect an officer's impartiality and professional expertise. In turn officers should respect a councillor's democratic mandate as the people accountable to the public for the work of the local authority. It is also important for a local authority to have a councillor-officer protocol which sets out how this relationship works and what both councillors and officers can expect in terms of mutual respect and good working relationships."*

This Protocol covers:

- The respective roles and responsibilities of the councillors and the officer;
- Relationships between councillors and officers;
- Where/who a councillor or an officer should go to if they have concerns;
- Who is responsible for making decisions.

BACKGROUND

This Protocol is intended to assist councillors and officers, in approaching some of the sensitive circumstances which arise in a challenging working environment.

The reputation and integrity of the council is significantly influenced by the effectiveness of councillors and the officer working together to support each other's roles.

The aim is effective and professional working relationships characterised by mutual trust, respect and courtesy. Overly close personal familiarity between councillors and officers is not recommended as it has the potential to damage this relationship

ROLES OF COUNCILLORS AND OFFICERS

The respective roles of councillors and officers can be summarised as follows:

- Councillors and officers are servants of the public and they are indispensable to one another, but their responsibilities are distinct.
- Councillors are responsible to the electorate and serve only for their term of office.
- Officers are responsible to the council. Their job is to give advice to councillors and to the council, and to carry out the council's work under the direction and control of the council and relevant committees.

Councillors

Councillors have four main areas of responsibility:

- To determine council policy and provide community leadership;
- To monitor and review council performance in implementing policies and delivering services;
- To represent the council externally; and
- To act as advocates for their constituents.

All councillors have the same rights and obligations in their relationship with the officer, regardless of their status and should be treated equally.

Councillors should not involve themselves in the day to day running of the council. This is the officer's responsibility, and the officer will be acting on instructions from the council or its committees, within an agreed job description.

In line with the councillors' Code of Conduct, a councillor must treat others with respect, must not bully or harass people and must not do anything which compromises, or is likely to compromise, the impartiality of those who work for, or on behalf of, the council.

Officers can expect councillors:

- to give strategic leadership and direction and to seek to further their agreed policies and objectives with the understanding that councillors have the right to take the final decision on issues based on advice

- to act within the policies, practices, processes and conventions established by the council
- to work constructively in partnership with officers acknowledging their separate and distinct roles and responsibilities
- to understand and support the respective roles and responsibilities of officers and their associated workloads, pressures and reporting lines
- to treat them fairly and with respect, dignity and courtesy
- to act with integrity, to give support and to respect appropriate confidentiality
- to recognise that officers do not work under the instruction of individual councillors or groups
- not to subject them to bullying, intimidation, harassment, or put them under undue pressure.
- to treat all officers, partners (those external people with whom the council works) and members of the public equally, and not discriminate based on any characteristic such as age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.
- not to request officers to exercise discretion which involves acting outside the council's policies and procedures
- not to authorise, initiate, or certify any financial transactions or to enter into any contract, agreement or undertaking on behalf of the council or in their role as a councillor without proper and lawful authority
- not to use their position or relationship with officers to advance their personal interest or those of others or to influence decisions improperly
- to comply at all times with the councillors' Code of Conduct, the law, and such other policies, procedures, protocols and conventions agreed by the council.
- respect the impartiality of officers and do not undermine their role in carrying out their duties
- do not ask officers to undertake work, or act in a way, which seeks to support or benefit a particular political party or gives rise to an officer being criticised for operating in a party-political manner
- do not ask officers to exceed their authority where that authority is given

Chairs and vice-chairs of council and committees
Chairs and vice-chairs have additional responsibilities as delegated by the council. These responsibilities mean that they may have to have a closer working relationship with employees than other councillors do. However, they must still respect the impartiality of officers and must not ask them to undertake work or anything else which would prejudice their impartiality.

Officers
The primary role of officers is to advise, inform and support all members and to implement the agreed policies of the council.

Officers are responsible for day-to-day managerial and operational decisions within the council, including directing and overseeing the work of any more junior officers. councillors should avoid inappropriate involvement in such matters.

In performing their role officers will act professionally, impartially and with neutrality. Whilst officers will respect a councillor's view on an issue, the officer should not be influenced or pressured to make comments, or recommendations which are contrary to their professional judgement or views.

Officers must:

- implement decisions of the council and its committees which are lawful, which have been properly approved in accordance with the requirements of the law and are duly recorded. This includes respecting the decisions made, regardless of any different advice given to the council or whether the decision differs from the officer's view.
- work in partnership with councillors in an impartial and professional manner
- treat councillors fairly and with respect, dignity and courtesy
- treat all councillors, partners and members of the public equally, and not discriminate based on any characteristic such as age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.
- assist and advise all parts of the council. Officers must always act to the best of their abilities in the best interests of the authority as expressed in the council's formal decisions.
- respond to enquiries and complaints in accordance with the council's standards protocol
- be alert to issues which are, or are likely to be, contentious or politically sensitive, and be aware of the implications for councillors, the media or other sections of the public.
- act with honesty, respect, dignity and courtesy at all times
- provide support and learning and development opportunities for councillors to help them in performing their various roles in line with the council's training and development policy
- not seek to use their relationship with councillors to advance their personal interests or to influence decisions improperly
- to act within the policies, practices, processes and conventions established by the council

Officers have the right not to support councillors in any role other than that of councillor, and not to engage in actions incompatible with this Protocol.

In giving advice to councillors, and in preparing and presenting reports, it is the responsibility of the officer to express his/her own professional views and recommendations. An officer may report the views of individual councillors on an issue, but the recommendation should be the officer's own. If a councillor wishes to express a contrary view they should not pressurise the officer to make a recommendation contrary to the officer's professional view, nor victimise an officer for discharging his/her responsibilities.

There are exceptional circumstances where a councillor can fulfil the role of officer, for example where there is a vacancy. This can only be done if the councillor is not paid for the role and should only ever be short-term while the council seeks to fill a vacancy. There will need to be a particular clear understanding of when the councillor is acting as a councillor and when acting as the Proper Officer.

The Relationship: General
Councillors and officers are indispensable to one another. However, their responsibilities are distinct. councillors are accountable to the public, whereas officers are accountable to the council as a whole.

At the heart of this Protocol is the importance of mutual respect and also of civility. councillor/officer relationships are to be conducted in a positive and constructive way. Therefore, it is important that any dealings between councillors and officers should observe standards of courtesy and that neither party should seek to take unfair advantage of their position nor seek to exert undue influence on the other party.

Individual councillors should not actively seek to undermine majority decisions of the corporate body, as this could then bring them into conflict with officers who have been charged with promoting and implementing the council's collectively-determined course of action.

6

Councillors should not raise matters relating to the conduct or capability of an officer, or of officers collectively, in a manner that is incompatible with this Protocol at meetings held in public or on social media. This is a long-standing tradition in public service. An officer has no means of responding to criticisms like this in public.

A councillor who is unhappy about the actions taken by, or conduct of, an officer should:

- avoid personal attacks on, or abuse of, the officer at all times
- ensure that any criticism is well founded and constructive
- ensure that any criticism is made in private
- take up the concern with the chair

Neither should an officer raise with a councillor matters relating to the conduct or capability of another councillor or officer or to the internal management of the council in a manner that is incompatible with the objectives of this Protocol.

Potential breaches of this Protocol are considered below.

Expectations
All councillors can expect:

- A commitment from officers to the council as a whole, and not to any individual councillor, group of councillors or political group;
- A working partnership;
- Officers to understand and support respective roles, workloads and pressures;
- A timely response from officers to enquiries and complaints;
- Officer's professional and impartial advice, not influenced by political views or personal preferences;
- Timely, up to date, information on matters that can reasonably be considered appropriate and relevant to their needs, having regard to any individual responsibilities or positions that they hold;
- Officers to be aware of and sensitive to the public and political environment locally;
- Respect, courtesy, integrity and appropriate confidentiality from officers and other councillors;
- Training and development opportunities to help them carry out their role effectively;
- Not to have personal issues raised with them by officers outside the council's agreed procedures;
- That officers will not use their contact with councillors to advance their personal interests or to influence decisions improperly.

Officers can expect from councillors:

- A working partnership;
- An understanding of, and support for, respective roles, workloads and pressures;
- Leadership and direction;
- Respect, courtesy, integrity and appropriate confidentiality;
- Not to be bullied or to be put under undue pressure;
- That councillors will not use their position or relationship with officers to advance their personal interests or those of others or to influence decisions improperly;
- That councillors will at all times comply with the council's adopted Code of Conduct.

7

Some general principles

Close personal relationships between councillors and officers can confuse their separate roles and get in the way of the proper conduct of council business, not least by creating a perception in others that a particular councillor or officer is getting preferential treatment.

Special relationships with particular individuals are not recommended as it can create suspicion that an employee favours that councillor above others.

The Proper Officer (usually called the Clerk) is the head of paid services and has a line-management responsibility to all other staff. Communications should be made directly with the Proper Officer, unless it is agreed by the Proper Officer that such communications may take place directly with other officers over a particular matter. Councillors should not give instructions directly to the Proper Officer's staff without the express approval of the Proper Officer.

COUNCILLORS' ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND TO COUNCIL DOCUMENTS

Councillors are free to approach officers to provide them with such information, explanation and advice as they may reasonably need in order to assist them in discharging their role as members of the council. This can range from a request for general information about some aspect of the council's activities to a request for specific information on behalf of a constituent. Such approaches should normally be directed to the Officer.

The legal rights of councillors to inspect council documents are covered partly by statute and partly by the common law.

The common law right of councillors is based on the principle that any member has a prima facie right to inspect council documents so far as their access to the documents is reasonably necessary to enable the member properly to perform their duties as a member of the council. This principle is commonly referred to as the "need to know" principle.

The exercise of this common law right depends therefore upon the councillor's ability to demonstrate that they have the necessary "need to know". In this respect a member has no right to "a roving commission" to go and examine documents of the council. Mere curiosity is not sufficient. The crucial question is the determination of the "need to know". This question must be determined by the officer.

In some circumstances (e.g. a committee member wishing to inspect documents relating to the functions of that committee) a councillor's "need to know" will normally be presumed. In other circumstances (e.g. a councillor wishing to inspect documents which contain personal information about third parties) a councillor will normally be expected to justify the request in specific terms. Any council information provided to a councillor must only be used by the councillor for the purpose for which it was provided i.e. in connection with the proper performance of the councillor's duties as a member of the council.

For completeness, councillors do, of course, have the same right as any other member of the public to make requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

CORRESPONDENCE

Correspondence between an individual councillor and an officer should not normally be copied (by the officer) to any other councillor. Where exceptionally it is necessary to copy the correspondence to another councillor, this should be made clear to the original councillor. In other words, a system of "silent copies" should not be employed. Acknowledging that the "BCC" system of e-mailing is used, it should be made clear at the foot of any e-mails if another councillor has received an e-mail by adding "CC councillor X."

8

Official letters or emails on behalf of the council should normally be sent out under the name of the officer, rather than under the name of a councillor. It may be appropriate in certain circumstances (e.g. representations to a Government Minister) for a letter or email to appear over the name of the chair, but this should be the exception rather than the norm. Letters or emails which, for example, create obligations or give instructions on behalf of the council should never be sent out in the name of a councillor.

Correspondence to individual councillors from officers should not be sent or copied to complainants or other third parties if they are marked "confidential". In doing so, the relevant officer should seek to make clear what is to be treated as being shared with the councillor in confidence only and why that is so.

PRESS AND MEDIA
Councils are accountable to their electorate. Accountability requires local understanding. This will be promoted by the council, explaining its objectives and policies to the electors and customers. Councils use publicity to keep the public informed and to encourage public participation. The council needs to tell the public about the services it provides. Good effective publicity should aim to improve public awareness of the council's activities. Publicity is a sensitive matter in any political environment because of the impact it can have. Expenditure on publicity can be significant. It is essential to ensure that decisions on publicity are properly made in accordance with the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity and the council's Media Protocol.

The officer may respond to press enquiries but should confine any comments to the facts of the subject matter and the professional aspects of the function concerned. On no account must an officer expressly or impliedly make any political opinion, comment or statement.

Any press release that may be necessary to clarify the council's position in relation to disputes, major planning developments, court issues or individuals' complaints should be approved by the officer.

The chair (or chair of a committee) may act as spokespersons for the council in responding to the press and media and making public statements on behalf of the council but should liaise with the officer on all forms of contact with the press and media. The council may also appoint individual councillors as spokespeople where there is an area of particular expertise but this should only be done with the agreement of the council.

The council must comply with the provisions of the Local Government Act 1986 ("the Act") regarding publicity. All media relations work will comply with the national Code of Practice for Local Government Publicity. The Code is statutory guidance and the council must have regard to it and follow its provisions when making any decision on publicity.

The LGA has produced useful guidance on the Publicity Code - https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/short-guide-publicity-during-pre-election-period

For more detailed information and guidance regarding the role of councillors in connection with the use of social media, reference should be made to the council's Social Media Protocol where there is one in place.

IF THINGS GO WRONG

Procedure for officers:

From time to time the relationship between councillors and the officer (or other employees) may break down or become strained. Whilst it is always preferable to resolve matters informally, it is important that the council adopts a formal grievance protocol or procedure.

The principal council's monitoring officer may be able to offer a mediation/conciliation role or it may be necessary to seek independent advice. The chair of the council should not attempt to deal with grievances or work related performance or line management issues on their own. The council should delegate authority to a small group of councillors to deal with all personnel matters.

The law requires all employers to have disciplinary and grievance procedures. Adopting a grievance procedure enables individual employees to raise concerns, problems or complaints about their employment in an open and fair way.

Where the matter relates to a formal written complaint alleging a breach of the councillors' Code of Conduct the matter must be referred to the principal council's monitoring officer in the first instance in line with the Localism Act 2011. The council may however try to resolve any concerns raised informally before they become a formal written allegation.

Procedure for councillors:

If a councillor is dissatisfied with the conduct, behaviour or performance of the officer or another employee, the matter should be reported to the chair and then raised with the officer in the first instance. If the matter cannot be resolved informally, it may be necessary to invoke the council's disciplinary procedure.

Scribe

Making local communities Smarter

&

Rayleigh Town Council

Proposal created 2nd February 2026 and valid for 30 days

Who are we?

Scribe is a dedicated partner to local councils in England and Wales, offering a suite of intuitive, cloud-based applications to facilitate efficient and secure management of your council's core operations.

For over twenty years Scribe has been streamlining the way Clerks & RFO's manage their council's accounts.

Designed to reduce complexity, Scribe enhances transparency while ensuring secure management of public funds.

Compliant with UK and EU data protection laws and hosted securely on AWS, Scribe prioritises accurate reporting and data protection.

We offer free, unlimited training and support through Scribe Academy.

Trusted by over 1,600+ councils and 5,000 users, Scribe ensures effective, transparent council management with no lock-in contracts and a 4.9-star Trustpilot rating.

What we hear the most

Manual/inefficient processes

- Time-consuming methods, duplicate entries, clunky processes

Staying on top data & reporting

- AGAR, VAT, Budgeting - Needing to easily gain insight to data and efficiently producing your required reports

No support, no training

- Left to figure things out on your own, no expertise to call upon

Limited Collaboration

- Whether software, or spreadsheets, there is often limited options to be able to use their systems collaboratively

Data Security Risks

- Spreadsheets lack encryption, and desktop software provides little option for backups

Benefits – Commercial vs Bespoke Software

Spreadsheets

- **Flexible & Customisable** – Can be tailored to various needs, from budgeting to reporting
- **Low Cost** – Often free or included in office software packages like Microsoft 365 or Google Workspace
- **Prone to errors - reliance on advanced spreadsheet knowledge**

Commercial Software

- **Reliable & Supported** – Customer support, updates, and security patches
- **Feature-Rich** – Designed for general business needs with built-in integrations and automation
- **Not built for Parish, Town and Community Councils**

Industry-Specific Software (excl Scribe)

- **Tailored Workflows** – Designed specifically for the needs of a particular sector
- **Compliance & Regulation** – Often includes features that help meet industry standards
- **Improved Accuracy** – Reduces errors compared to generic tools by following best practices for the industry
- **Inefficient, slow support, and expensive options to host on the cloud**

Scribe

- **Built for Local Councils**

  Specifically designed for parish and town councils in England and Wales, ensuring a perfect fit for their needs.

- **Time-Saving Automation**

  Reduces manual admin with automated financial reports, invoicing, and record-keeping.

- **Easy-to-Use & Cloud-Based**

  Accessible from anywhere with an intuitive interface, no IT expertise required.

- **Compliant & Accurate**

  Helps councils meet statutory requirements like AGAR, VAT returns, and financial reporting with built-in compliance checks.

- **Integrated Modules**

  Accounts, cemeteries, venue bookings, and allotments in one seamless system.

- **Dedicated UK-Based Support**

  Expert customer support team with deep knowledge of council operations, always ready to assist.

- **Secure & Reliable**

  Cloud-hosted with regular backups, ensuring data security and peace of mind.

So, How Do You Choose?

We recommend that you use the following criteria

Accessibility

Is the system fully cloud-based? I.E. can you use it from anywhere, on any device?

Will they lock you into a contract limiting flexibility and charging you for leaving/ exporting your data?

Usability

Is the system easy to learn and use? I.e it looks clean and straightforward, easy to navigate pages
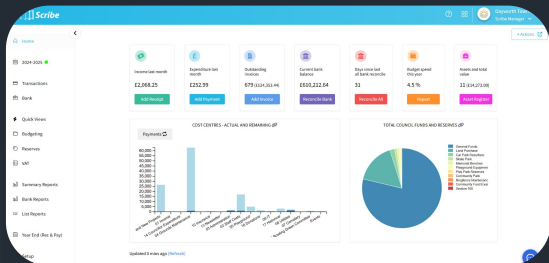
Functionality

Does it have features your current software doesn't that will save you time?

Functionality Accessibility Usability

Let's have a look at Scribe!

Accounts — Scribe Accounts

Bookings — Scribe Bookings

Cemetery — Scribe Cemetery

Allotments — Scribe Allotments

The Software – An Integrated Solution

Scribe offers a comprehensive, cloud-based platform designed specifically for local councils.

The system includes a suite of integrated modules tailored to the unique needs of councils, helping with everything from financial management to asset management and compliance.

Accounts

- Financial management
- 1-Click AGAR
- Bank reconciliations
- Budgeting
- VAT returns (MTD compliant)

Cemetery

- Advanced Record Management
- Invoicing
- Filtering & Sorts
- Mapping
- Inspections & Condition Reports

Bookings

- Online Bookings
- Invoicing
- Smart Dashboard
- Advanced Calendar Filtering
- Venue Booking Reports

Allotments

- Manage tenancies
- Invoicing
- Mapping
- Waiting Lists
- Inspections & Notices

Civic.ly

- Asset Management
- Inspection Tasks
- Compliance Tracking
- Task Automation
- Data & Financial Tracking

Proposal for Rayleigh Town Council

Greyed out services are not included in totals

Product	Initial Payment	Monthly Payment
Accounts	-	-
Bookings	-	-
Cemetery	-	-
Allotments (200 plots)	£411	£56
Civic.ly	-	-

Professional Services	Initial Payment	Monthly Payment
See following slide for details		
Transactions Import	-	-
Setup Structure	-	-
Allotments Import	£399	-
Cemetery Import	-	-
Mapping (Allotments)	On Request	-
Mapping (Cemetery)	On Request	-
Bookings - Fee Structure	-	-

Total (Excl VAT)	£810	£56

Professional Services

Optional Services To Streamline Your Onboarding and Data Migration

Accounts

Account Setup
Includes set up of: Cost Centres, Codes, Bank Accounts & Restating Last Financial Year

Transactions Import
Standard pricing includes: 1 year* of history

*please ask for longer/shorter periods

Asset Register and Contacts
Including in standard onboarding

Cemetery

Cemetery Import
Includes import of: Plots, Burials, Exclusive Rights and Memorials*
RIALTAS IMPORTS ONLY - Includes Inspections also

*requires confirmation of total volume of records

Mapping Services
Upon request - existing maps to be reviewed for quotation

Allotments

Allotments Import
Includes import of: Tenants, Plots and Waiting Lists
RIALTAS IMPORTS ONLY - Includes Inspections also

Mapping Services
Upon request - existing maps to be reviewed for quotation

Bookings

Fee Structure
Our support team will take your current pricing structure, review with you, and set up in Scribe

Support Team

Unlimited Free Training:

Scribe offers unlimited training to ensure your team is fully equipped to use the system efficiently. This includes our specialised training platform which offers on-demand sessions to get you up and running.

Dedicated Customer Support:

Our UK-based support team is always available via email or Zoom to assist with any issues or questions. We pride ourselves on fast, friendly, and helpful service to keep your council running smoothly.

Scribe Academy:

Gain access to our extensive knowledge base, video tutorials, and live webinars through Scribe Academy, ensuring your team always has resources to improve their skills and stay up to date.

Ongoing Assistance:

Whether it's a technical issue or a quick question, Scribe provides continuous support to ensure you get the most from our platform. We're here every step of the way to guarantee your success.

Hannah Driver
Head of Accounts

Jane Dafforn
Head of Support

Tracy Fisher
Scribe Accounts Specialist

Jess Shackley
Scribe Accounts Specialist

Jasmine Amezi
Data Integration Specialist

Eve Nyarango
Customer Support Specialist

Esther Danso
Customer Support Specialist

Jo Peters
Customer Success Manager

Lucy Fagan
Operations Manager

Q&A
&
Additional content

The Security

High Availability & Resilience:

- 99.99% uptime in 2024, supported by Amazon Web Services (AWS) with automatic scaling, backups, and 5-minute point-in-time recovery for data.

Robust Encryption:

- All platform data is encrypted in transit using TLS v1.3 and at rest, including user credentials secured with HMAC-SHA256 encryption.

Regular Penetration Testing:

- Comprehensive in-house penetration testing using OWASP ZAP to identify and address security vulnerabilities, with high-risk issues resolved immediately.

AWS Cloud Security:

- Hosted within AWS Virtual Private Cloud (VPC) with restricted access to web servers and databases, providing enhanced isolation and security.

Data Backup & Recovery:

- Daily and monthly backups with 30-day retention, ensuring quick recovery of customer data in case of emergencies or system failure.

Role-Based Access Control (RBAC):

- Strict management of roles and permissions for accessing internal systems, with secure connections via SSL and cloud service usage monitored through AWS IAM.

Onboarding

Pre-signup - let us know what professional services you are signing up for and we will sort them.

Day 1 - Upon joining us, you will receive a call from our customer support team, who will provide your account access, and advise on the steps you can take to add your data, so you can get started immediately.

You will join our exclusive scribe community, Providing full onboarding training to get you up and running as quickly as possible!

Day 90 - After you have completed your onboarding, you will be assigned a dedicated Customer Success Manager to ensure your happiness and success forever.

Signing Up / Next Steps

Today - You will receive these slides including pricing information and a summary as to how Scribe can benefit your council specifically to take to your council meeting

Before Your Meeting - Your dedicated Sales Executive will be on hand to promptly answer any additional questions you or your council may have

After Approval - When you are ready, you will receive access to Scribe and the support team will contact you to guide you through your onboarding and system set-up

When You Have Started - The support team and your Customer Success Manager will be on hand to help and support you with using Scribe forever

Why Now is the Time to Upgrade to Scribe

Using Spreadsheets?

- Eliminate errors with automated processes, reducing manual data entry mistakes.
- Ensure compliance with built-in tools for AGAR, VAT, and audit reporting.
- Collaborate securely with real-time access and advanced security features.

Scribe Customers
2024 | 1350

Outgrowing your Current System?

- Enjoy a better user experience with Scribe's intuitive, cloud-based platform.
- Benefit from unmatched support, including unlimited training and assistance.
- Customise your tools to fit your council's specific needs, with flexible modules.

2022 | 900

2020 | 500

Scribe Customer Testimonial

Sally Ferguson
Lympsham Parish Council

"What have I done with the extra time?

I have used it to become better at **obtaining grants** for my small community, this financial year we have secured grants of £52,650, over triple our income of £16,400.

With this grant I have made **Climate Change** friendly facelifts to the Sports Cub and Manor Hall, and have opened the Community cafe 6 days

a week in the club, **employing local youngsters**"

Securing Grants and Making an Impact
My Journey as a Clerk at Lympsham Parish Council

Sally Ferguson

Scribe

Making local communities Smarter

&

Rayleigh Town Council

Who are we?

Scribe is a dedicated partner to local councils in England and Wales, offering a suite of intuitive, cloud-based applications to facilitate efficient and secure management of your council's core operations.

For over twenty years Scribe has been streamlining the way Clerks & RFO's manage their council's accounts.

Designed to reduce complexity, Scribe enhances transparency while ensuring secure management of public funds.

Compliant with UK and EU data protection laws and hosted securely on AWS, Scribe prioritises accurate reporting and data protection.

We offer free, unlimited training and support through Scribe Academy.

Trusted by over 1,600+ councils and 5,000 users, Scribe ensures effective, transparent council management with no lock-in contracts and a 4.9-star Trustpilot rating.

What we hear the most

Manual/inefficient processes

- Time-consuming methods, duplicate entries, clunky processes

Staying on top data & reporting

- AGAR, VAT, Budgeting - Needing to easily gain insight to data and efficiently producing your required reports

No support, no training

- Left to figure things out on your own, no expertise to call upon

Limited Collaboration

- Whether software, or spreadsheets, there is often limited options to be able to use their systems collaboratively

Data Security Risks

- Spreadsheets lack encryption, and desktop software provides little option for backups

What do YOU need? 🪄

1. **Easy-to-Understand Reporting**
2. **Automated Allotment Invoicing**
3. **Cloud-Based Accessibility**
4. **Integrated Allotment Management**
5. **Professional Onboarding & Data Setup**

Others have said:

🔄 **Automated Processes** *Bank reconciliation to budgeting*

⚠️ **Compliance and Security Measures** *GDPR and secure data storage*

☁️ **Cloud-Based Software** *No desktop software*

👥 **Support and Training** *Dedicated support team*

💡 **Purpose-built software** *CIL, S137, file uploads etc*

🙂 **Easy to use System** *Simple to use and easy to learn*

🕐 **Time-Saving Features** *Single click AGAR, VAT etc*

Benefits – Commercial vs Bespoke Software

Spreadsheets

- **Flexible & Customisable** – Can be tailored to various needs, from budgeting to reporting

- **Low Cost** – Often free or included in office software packages like Microsoft 365 or Google Workspace

- **Prone to errors - reliance on advanced spreadsheet knowledge**

Commercial Software

- **Reliable & Supported** – Customer support, updates, and security patches

- **Feature-Rich** – Designed for general business needs with built-in integrations and automation

- **Not built for Parish, Town and Community Councils**

Industry-Specific Software (excl Scribe)

- **Tailored Workflows** – Designed specifically for the needs of a particular sector

- **Compliance & Regulation** – Often includes features that help meet industry standards

- **Improved Accuracy** – Reduces errors compared to generic tools by following best practices for the industry

- **Inefficient, slow support, and expensive options to host on the cloud**

Scribe

- **Built for Local Councils**

  Specifically designed for parish and town councils in England and Wales, ensuring a perfect fit for their needs.

- **Time-Saving Automation**

  Reduces manual admin with automated financial reports, invoicing, and record-keeping.

- **Easy-to-Use & Cloud-Based**

  Accessible from anywhere with an intuitive interface, no IT expertise required.

- **Compliant & Accurate**

  Helps councils meet statutory requirements like AGAR, VAT returns, and financial reporting with built-in compliance checks.

- **Integrated Modules**

  Accounts, cemeteries, venue bookings, and allotments in one seamless system.

- **Dedicated UK-Based Support**

  Expert customer support team with deep knowledge of council operations, always ready to assist.

- **Secure & Reliable**

  Cloud-hosted with regular backups, ensuring data security and peace of mind.

So, How Do You Choose?

We recommend that you use the following criteria

Accessibility

Is the system fully cloud-based? I.E. can you use it from anywhere, on any device?

Will they lock you into a contract limiting flexibility and charging you for leaving/ exporting your data?

Usability

Is the system easy to learn and use? I.e it looks clean and straightforward, easy to navigate pages
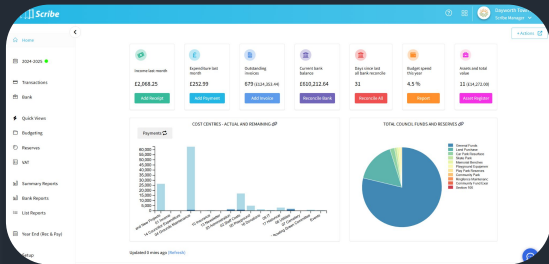
Functionality

Does it have features your current software doesn't that will save you time?

Functionality

Accessibility
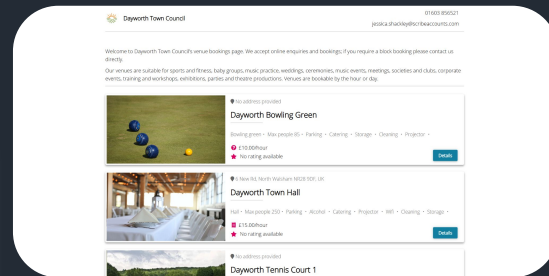
Usability

Let's have a look at Scribe!

Accounts — Scribe Accounts

Bookings — Scribe Bookings

Cemetery — Scribe Cemetery

Allotments — Scribe Allotments

The Software - An Integrated Solution

Scribe offers a comprehensive, cloud-based platform designed specifically for local councils.

The system includes a suite of integrated modules tailored to the unique needs of councils, helping with everything from financial management to asset management and compliance.

Accounts

- Financial management
- 1-Click AGAR
- Bank reconciliations
- Budgeting
- VAT returns (MTD compliant)

Cemetery

- Advanced Record Management
- Invoicing
- Filtering & Sorts
- Mapping
- Inspections & Condition Reports

Bookings

- Online Bookings
- Invoicing
- Smart Dashboard
- Advanced Calendar Filtering
- Venue Booking Reports

Allotments

- Manage tenancies
- Invoicing
- Mapping
- Waiting Lists
- Inspections & Notices

Civic.ly

- Asset Management
- Inspection Tasks
- Compliance Tracking
- Task Automation
- Data & Financial Tracking

Proposal for Rayleigh Town Council

Greyed out services are not included in totals

Product	Initial Payment	Monthly Payment
Accounts	£899	£129
Bookings	-	-
Cemetery	-	-
Allotments	-	-
Civic.ly	-	-

Professional Services *See following slide for details*	Initial Payment	Monthly Payment
Transactions Import	-	-
Setup Structure	£249	-
Allotments Import	-	-
Cemetery Import	-	-
Mapping (Allotments)	On Request	-
Mapping (Cemetery)	On Request	-
Bookings - Fee Structure	-	-

Total (Excl VAT)	£1,148	£129

Professional Services

Optional Services To Streamline Your Onboarding and Data Migration

Accounts

Account Setup
Includes set up of: Cost Centres, Codes, Bank Accounts & Restating Last Financial Year

Transactions Import
Standard pricing includes: 1 year* of history

*please ask for longer/shorter periods

Asset Register and Contacts
Including in standard onboarding

Cemetery

Cemetery Import
Includes import of: Plots, Burials, Exclusive Rights and Memorials*
RIALTAS IMPORTS ONLY - Includes Inspections also

*requires confirmation of total volume of records

Mapping Services
Upon request - existing maps to be reviewed for quotation

Allotments

Allotments Import
Includes import of: Tenants, Plots and Waiting Lists
RIALTAS IMPORTS ONLY - Includes Inspections also

Mapping Services
Upon request - existing maps to be reviewed for quotation

Bookings

Fee Structure
Our support team will take your current pricing structure, review with you, and set up in Scribe

See Slide 9: Proposal for pricing

Support Team

Unlimited Free Training:

Scribe offers unlimited training to ensure your team is fully equipped to use the system efficiently. This includes our specialised training platform which offers on-demand sessions to get you up and running.

Dedicated Customer Support:

Our UK-based support team is always available via email or Zoom to assist with any issues or questions. We pride ourselves on fast, friendly, and helpful service to keep your council running smoothly.

Scribe Academy:

Gain access to our extensive knowledge base, video tutorials, and live webinars through Scribe Academy, ensuring your team always has resources to improve their skills and stay up to date.

Ongoing Assistance:

Whether it's a technical issue or a quick question, Scribe provides continuous support to ensure you get the most from our platform. We're here every step of the way to guarantee your success.

Hannah Driver
Head of Accounts

Jane Dafforn
Head of Support

Tracy Fisher
Scribe Accounts Specialist

Jess Shackley
Scribe Accounts Specialist

Jasmine Amezi
Data Integration Specialist

Eve Nyarango
Customer Support Specialist

Esther Danso
Customer Support Specialist

Jo Peters
Customer Success Manager

Lucy Fagan
Operations Manager

Q&A
&
Additional content

The Security

High Availability & Resilience:

- 99.99% uptime in 2024, supported by Amazon Web Services (AWS) with automatic scaling, backups, and 5-minute point-in-time recovery for data.

Robust Encryption:

- All platform data is encrypted in transit using TLS v1.3 and at rest, including user credentials secured with HMAC-SHA256 encryption.

Regular Penetration Testing:

- Comprehensive in-house penetration testing using OWASP ZAP to identify and address security vulnerabilities, with high-risk issues resolved immediately.

AWS Cloud Security:

- Hosted within AWS Virtual Private Cloud (VPC) with restricted access to web servers and databases, providing enhanced isolation and security.

Data Backup & Recovery:

- Daily and monthly backups with 30-day retention, ensuring quick recovery of customer data in case of emergencies or system failure.

Role-Based Access Control (RBAC):

- Strict management of roles and permissions for accessing internal systems, with secure connections via SSL and cloud service usage monitored through AWS IAM.

Onboarding

Pre-signup - let us know what professional services you are signing up for and we will sort them.

Day 1 - Upon joining us, you will receive a call from our customer support team, who will provide your account access, and advise on the steps you can take to add your data, so you can get started immediately.

You will join our exclusive scribe community, Providing full onboarding training to get you up and running as quickly as possible!

Day 90 - After you have completed your onboarding, you will be assigned a dedicated Customer Success Manager to ensure your happiness and success forever.

Signing Up / Next Steps

Today - You will receive these slides including pricing information and a summary as to how Scribe can benefit your council specifically to take to your council meeting

Before Your Meeting - Your dedicated Sales Executive will be on hand to promptly answer any additional questions you or your council may have

After Approval - When you are ready, you will receive access to Scribe and the support team will contact you to guide you through your onboarding and system set-up

When You Have Started - The support team and your Customer Success Manager will be on hand to help and support you with using Scribe forever

Why Now is the Time to Upgrade to Scribe

Using Spreadsheets?

- Eliminate errors with automated processes, reducing manual data entry mistakes.
- Ensure compliance with built-in tools for AGAR, VAT, and audit reporting.
- Collaborate securely with real-time access and advanced security features.

Outgrowing your Current System?

- Enjoy a better user experience with Scribe's intuitive, cloud-based platform.
- Benefit from unmatched support, including unlimited training and assistance.
- Customise your tools to fit your council's specific needs, with flexible modules.

Scribe Customers

2024 | 1350

2022 | 900

2020 | 500

Scribe Customer Testimonial

Sally Ferguson
Lympsham Parish Council

"What have I done with the extra time?

I have used it to become better at **obtaining grants** for my small community, this financial year we have secured grants of £52,650, over triple our income of £16,400.

With this grant I have made **Climate Change** friendly facelifts to the Sports Cub and Manor Hall, and have opened the Community cafe 6 days a week in the club, **employing local youngsters**"

Rayleigh Town Council

The Pavilion, King George V Playing Field, Rayleigh, SS6 8JD

www.rayleightowncouncil.gov.uk

Agenda Item	11.2
Meeting Date	9 February 2026
Report Title	Office Opening Hours
Recommendation/s	1. To agree that the Town Council office be open to members of the public from 9am-2pm from Monday to Thursday.
Appendices to Report	
Prepared By	Shaun Fishenden PSLCC – Town Clerk & RFO

Detailed Information

Currently the Town Council office is open Monday to Fridays from 9am to 3:30pm. During these opening times, the office can be visited by members of the public and telephone calls are answered. It is recognised that at present, the Town Council does not provide a single day in the working week where there is interruption-free time for officers to be able to complete tasks.

It is therefore recommended that the Town Council adopts revised opening hours for the office to be available to members of the public, in order to enable officers to better plan their workloads and have guaranteed time where they can focus on tasks without being disturbed.

The Town Clerk & RFO is recommending that the new hours be 9am-2pm Monday-Thursday. This enables a few hours after 2pm where officers continue to be working, but can do so without the expectation that they will be disturbed by visitors or the telephone. It also provides them with sufficient time for if they need to make any site visits to council land/assets outside of the opening hours.

It is further recommended that the office is closed entirely on Fridays to members of the public, officers will continue to work from the office on Fridays, but they can do so in the knowledge this day can be allocated for meetings/site visits as required.

Key Implications	
Financial	Adopting the recommendations of this report will have no financial implications
Legislative and Policy	Adopting the recommendations of this report will ensure the Council fulfils it's duty of care towards its employees under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974

Equality Assessment	There are no Equality implications arising
Climate Change	There are no Climate Change implications arising

New council website proposal
Rayleigh Town Council

Prepared by: Mark Tomkins, Director
Prepared for: Shaun Fishenden, Rayleigh Town Council

02 February 2026

Aubergine®

Snapshot – Rayleigh Town Council

You have asked us to prepare a proposal and quotation for the provision of a new, fully compliant and accessible website for your council. Thank you. This document sets out an explanation of the legal requirements for compliance with accessibility regulations, how our system meets the requirements – both in terms of compliance as well as the features and functions of the website and then the costing and inclusions, which are on the next page.

The background to website accessibility

Since the introduction of The Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No.2) Accessibility Regulations 2018 (to give its full title) came into force on 23 September 2018 you have identified your Council needs a new compliant website. The aim of the Regulation is to ensure public sector websites and mobile apps are accessible to all users, especially those with disabilities. This means that all new public sector websites will need to meet accessibility standards and publish an accessibility statement unless they are exempt. Those affected include:

• Central government and local government organisations (including city, town and parish councils)
• Some charities and other non-government organisations

The breadth of WCAG (Website Content Accessibility Guidelines) compliance in respect to a website covers many areas, some relate to how it is technically constructed, how the information is presented and the alternative options for users if they cannot access the website's information in a way that works for them. You can read a helpful article here: *'Website W3C & WCAG 2.1 accessibility compliance: What it means for councils & public sector websites and what you need to do'*.

WCAG has 3 ratings, A, AA & AAA. The following proposal outlines the provision of a WCAG 2.2 AA rated compliant website, the costs involved, what's included and what's not. It also outlines your responsibilities moving forward.

Meeting Accessibility Requirements

Since the release of the WCAG 2.1AA guidance, we have developed a website package solution that meets the compliance requirements that is both cost effective and provides clerks and those who manage a public body website with the tools needed to run the website.

In October 2024, the regulations rose to the requirement being WCAG2.2AA standard – which our platform already meets.

The Aubergine W3C & WCAG compliant website package service meets the requirements in terms of providing an AA-rated compliant framework and website at the point of launch. Once live, we also maintain your site to ensure the underlying code is supported correctly and kept up to date with all software requirements. Optionally, we can provide regular compliance scans of your website pages.

Aubergine®

What you get with our service:

- ✓ A W3C & WCAG2.2AA compliant website built on the easy-to-use WordPress-based CMS.
- ✓ A well-designed, professional and fully mobile-friendly website.
- ✓ Website admin tools to add new and update all the content on your website yourself.
- ✓ Training to get you started plus ongoing support.
- ✓ SSL-protected website hosting on our UK servers.
- ✓ We'll manage all software updates, so you don't have to.
- ✓ We will provide you with on-going support when you need it – email, online or phone.
- ✓ Access to our Website & Accessibility Learning Centre, full of helpful guidance videos on managing the website and making website content accessible.
- ✓ Free monthly drop-in Zoom training sessions to top up your web accessibility knowledge.
- ✓ We will ensure your website remains GDPR compliant.
- ✓ We will manage your domain name and make sure this remains active, should you need it.
- ✓ All our team & hosting data centre are UK-based (Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire).

Costing

Set up & year 1 consists of:

1. One-off set up and build of website: £999 + VAT (£899 + VAT for SLCC members)
2. Annual SSL-protected hosting with up to 2GB file storage & 2 hours of support
3. Transferring/Inputting and uploading of content (documents, words and pictures) to your new website: 1 year of essential content transferred <u>free of charge – see opposite for details</u>.
4. Training on the system: <u>free of charge</u>, via our monthly group training sessions
5. Access to our support team & Website Learning Centre: <u>free of charge</u>, included in the support
6. Access to monthly drop-in Council Website Zoom training refresher sessions: <u>free of charge</u>, included in the support

Total: £999 + VAT (£899 + VAT for SLCC members)

<u>**Additional (optional)**</u> **items:**

1. Transfer of all other content charged at £10 + VAT per page (+£1 per document down/upload).

2. Forms, poll & consultations builder module: £50 + VAT per year *recommended
3. Planning portal integration (where supported) £100 + VAT per year
4. Private members area: £100 + VAT per year
5. Online Payments Module (Sum Up/Gov Pay/Stripe/Worldpay compatible): £500 + VAT
6. Event Tickets Module (Online Payments module also required to sell tickets): £250 + VAT
7. WCAG compliance website compliance and monitoring scan & reports: £299 + VAT <u>per year</u>

Years 2 costs:

1. Subscription to WCAG-compliant website platform, with up to 2GB file storage & 2 hours of support: £299 + VAT per year
2. .gov.uk domain name renewal and DNS management (£100 + VAT per year)

= Total year two renewal: £399 + VAT pa (+ any additional optional services)

Website Content (linked documents, words and images)

Website content ranges from words and pictures on a page to multiple files for meeting documents and other regulatory aspects.

Content included in transfer: 2 full year of agendas & minutes, policies, councillors' details, finance & 6x years of AGAR plus 1x year of news and recent / planned events.

Optional, additional content transfer: Often councils decide to have more years of document archives on their website. Your current website may also have additional, non-regulatory pages such as additional council and community information. We can provide you with a quote to transfer these additional archives and pages, if required.

Email services

You will require the services of a .gov.uk email IT specialist service to provide mail services for the domain if you do not already have email/IT support services. We work with a recommended Microsoft-based email provider across hundreds of towns and parishes in a symbiotic way:

Cloudy IT (contact: hello@cloudyit.co.uk)

- Microsoft-based email service (cost depends on the Microsoft package you choose, usually from c.£5+VAT per email address, per month)
- UK-based, GDPR-compliant services
- Microsoft Office Suite services can be provided at extra cost.

  "A Managed service" - Cloudy help you set up email addresses and devices → This option is best for councils who are willing to spend more for the full Microsoft package and setup / installation support.

Things to note

The above costing is based on your requirement specification and includes a 1.5hr video call group training session (additional remote training can be arranged, see overleaf), full admin area access, access to our Council Website Learning Centre library and our continued support to ensure the system continually meets WCAG requirements.

We will discuss with you the pages and documents that you require on your new website and provide a quote, should you request our help with further years of content transfer. If the size of your files that need transferring exceeds 2GB (enough for 15,000 typical agenda PDFs), you will be required to purchase additional server host space for the storage and future files. This is charged at £100 + VAT per year for an additional 1GB storage.

Key Council Website Features

The website framework is configured to fully support all relevant content types to provide to your community in a fully WCAG 2.2AA compliant environment. The key functionality includes **meeting information and dates, document links**, **full page creation and building tools** to support your key messaging, **announcement tools for major alerts, reporting tools** that include **forms** and **redirections to County Council & District services, contact forms, news and other features** that include **digital noticeboards**, **events**, **community areas**, **community content**, **venue & feature areas and FAQs** - all of which controlled through the Wordpress admin system.

Consideration

Website hosting
Your new website will be hosted on our UK-based, SSL-protected servers. That way we can ensure GDPR and WCAG compliance of the system.

Your domain name
We can become your domain name registrar for a new domain and manage the domain and its DNS moving forward and are Cabinet Office & Nominet approved to manage the .gov.uk domain framework.

We also recommend looking into registering a shorter .gov.uk domain to reduce misspelling issues.

Branding & logos
We will require your brand media pack of logos, colours and other visual assets that your council use in its online identity. If you do not have one, we can provide a logo & identity design service by our experience graphic design team.

Project timeline

Whilst every website is slightly different in the number of pages and content, we recommend you consider the following timeline for the development of your website:

Stage 1	Discovery & scoping (sitemap/content planning):	**2 weeks from initial enquiry**
Stage 2	Development:	**4 weeks from planned date**
Stage 3	Content importing & your training:	**4 weeks after development**
Stage 4	Testing / snagging – then go-live:	**1 week after content input**

Final testing and debugging on development server before launching and making live. These timings are estimates based on a typical and average site size and content but may be subject to alteration subject to sight of content required for migration. You may require additional time to review the content.

Aubergine

Other aspects to note

You will need to ensure you have full DNS control and access to the domain your website will use. We can become your registrar and permitted to manage all forms of domains, including .gov.uk domains. If we are not your registrars, we will need access to the domain (or whoever has DNS control) to get the website live. We can include Google Analytics for performance reporting to ensure that a fuller picture of the website's traffic and use is understood and allow you to learn user behaviour and make subsequent improvements to the website. A Google Analytics account will be needed and is free. We also provide free training on using Google Analytics.

Training Staff

Training on a new website system is vital. As part of the basic package, we provide you with access to our Council Website Learning Centre that contains a library of simple, short videos to watch and learn how to use all areas of the website as well as remote-based training session for you and your staff members. Also included is a 1.5hr video call group training session for your staff by one of our experts. Our UK-based team is always on hand during office hours to provide any additional support.

We also hold free-to-attend Zoom sessions twice per month for all our members to join for refresher training on the website admin tools and functions.

Certification & accreditations

To provide assurance of both our processes and abilities, we are **Cyber Essentials certified**, **CDDO Cabinet Digital Data Office Authorised**, **Nominet Accredited** and are **Official Crown Commercial Suppliers for the UK Government**. View certification.

Credibility

✓ We are official SLCC Collaborators and have developed the WCAG compliant website package in partnership with them.

✓ We work with both SLCC & NALC to produce both written articles and present webinars and conferences on website accessibility.

✓ We work with regional CALCs, SLCC Branches and Council Associations to support their members with website accessibility queries.

✓ We are official Crown Commercial Suppliers of WCAG digital services to public bodies.

✓ We are members of the CDDO (Cabinet Digital Data Office) .gov.uk domain advisory group.

✓ We are the authors of the NALC Website Accessibility & Publishing Guidebook:
https://www.aubergine262.com/nalc-guide-to-website-accessibility-and-publishing/

✓ We work with hundreds of town & parish councils using our platform and providing support and guidance on website compliance and publishing.

Compliance testing, limitation & ongoing

Both W3C & WCAG compliance are driven by many factors, some you have control over and others you don't. In most cases, as long as the base website build has been created in a natively compliant format, any deviation from compliance will typically be as a result of content being added to a web page is not compliant and then renders it non-compliant.

As such, the provision of our service to you is limited to:

1) the creation of a W3C & WCAG2.2AA compliant website plus its hosting and support

2) an optional quarterly report of your site that highlights any pages that may have rendered the website non-compliant and a recommended solution. (excludes uploaded documents)

We can also provide an optional technical support package to assist you with running the site, which you may choose to help you in meeting those ongoing support needs. Once live, it is your responsibility to ensure that any words, images or documents that you add are compliant.

We recommend you perform regular checks of the site using free online checkers or browser extension to ensure continued compliance – particularly for new pages and documents added since its launch. As part of our optional service to you we provide 4 checks and reports per year highlighting any problem areas, but recommend you review the site after each time you add content and to use any of the online free checkers as referenced by the Government's Digital Guidance department.

We will ensure that your website complies with W3C & WCAG compliance from a technical position at the point of launching and will notify you if we spot any page that is non-compliant as a result of content incompatibility for you to address prior to launch. Please note that this does not include uploaded documents.

In the event that you become aware of any part of your site that you feel falls outside of WCAG compliance, it is your responsibility to notify us so that it may be assessed by us and, should a problem be found, a solution scheduled for fixing.

Regular review

It's important to emphasise that your organisation needs to agree to a frequency of how often the website is checked for compliance and set that in your accessibility statement.

Delivering on Specification of Work

Given the requirements, it is our recommendation that the site be built on our **custom built WCAG 2.2AA compliant Wordpress framework designed specifically for councils.** It is the world's most

![Aubergine logo]

popular website platform and allows you to have full control over the site's pages and content in the most efficient way.

The website system is **natively search engine friendly** and **well supported.** We ensure that the Core Wordpress framework and its plugins are kept up to date to ensure full functionality is maintained.

We also recommend a multiple layer of admin user permission controls so that you can have multiple administrators of the content but provide publishing, content and member control to only those you wish.

Our proposal includes:

- ✓ Project scheduling and planning
- ✓ Technical analysis of your existing set-up to ensure continuation of services ✓ Development of the website from your choice of our preconfigured design templates ✓ Review and compliance testing ✓ Content migration (optional) ✓ Analytics integration (optional)
- ✓ Website training and access to Learning Centre. In person training available at extra cost
- ✓ Pre-live WCAG compliance check and report ✓ Ongoing support and website hosting
- ✓ Domain registration & management

Additionally, the following "behind the scenes" features will be built into the website:

- ✓ High speed page loading
- ✓ Anti-spam features on contact forms
- ✓ WCAG, W3C & GDPR best practice guidance for the website framework

Support

We ensure that all sites are tested thoroughly prior to launch and Wordpress and plugin updates are handled by us as part of the package. Nonetheless, we recommend an additional support package be put in place to help you manage the website after it is set live.

Support package options available on the 'costs' page in this document.

References

1) Sarah Sandiford, head of central services, Leighton Linslade Town Council
sarah.sandiford@leightonlinslade-tc.gov.uk 01525 631920: www.leightonlinslade-tc.gov.uk

2) Sheryl Birtles, Nantwich Town Council, www.nantwichtowncouncil.gov.uk

3) Emma Coleman, Anglesey Parish Council, clerk@anglesey.staffslc.gov.uk

4) Arren Roberts, Oswestry Town Council, www.oswestry-tc.gov.uk

5) Cliff Spong, Teignmouth Town Council, www.teignmouth-devon.gov.uk, facilities@teignmouth-devon.gov.uk

6) Joe Cooney, Keighley Town Council, www.keighley.gov.uk joe.cooney@keighley.gov.uk

Frequently asked questions

Why do you use WordPress?
WordPress is open source content management software and currently powers around 30% of all websites on the Internet. The project is contributed to by tens of thousands of developers all over the world and is growing from strength to strength. WordPress allows us to develop flexible and customisable websites to modern standards and observes web development best practices. Furthermore, the community of web developers that use WordPress reaches far and wide and allows us to tap into this collective intelligence and bring that wealth of experience to your project. WooCommerce is an eCommerce engine and extension that integrates with the WordPress CMS.

What is information architecture?
Information architecture is the relationship of how all the different pages of a website are related to each other. This is communicated visually through a sitemap.

Where is the website hosted?
Your website needs to be hosted by a hosting company that specialises in business hosting. We provide UK-based WordPress-optimised hosting services for all our clients' websites to better able provide support and software updates.

Who do I call if something goes wrong with the website or I can't figure something out? Provided you subscribe to one of our ongoing website support packages, we will be your first point of call should something go wrong with your website. In accordance with our SLA, we will determine what the problem is and respond with a fix-time or the information for you to address the solution yourself. We will provide training and tutorials to assist you in using your website once it is launched.

What happens after the website is launched?
Once your website is launched, we will provide 3 months of support to make sure any bugs have been ironed out and that you are confident using your new website. After this you will need to subscribe to one of our ongoing website care plans to make sure your website is looked after and maintained. These website care plans include updating your software, regular backups, security checks and making sure your website is online and open for business 24/7/365.

How long will it take to appear at the top of Google?
The time it takes for your website to appear on page 1 of Google depends on a number of factors. It depends on the search people are using to find your website and the number of other websites that are also available for those searches. Nobody can truly say how long it will take for your website to appear at the top of search engine results pages (including people who actually work for Google), however there are a number of factors that can improve your chances. Building your website on WordPress is a good start as WordPress has some great Search Engine Optimisation fundamentals built-in.

Creating unique and interesting content on a regular basis for your website is also critical to increase your visibility amongst search engines. Launching your website and then forgetting about it is a surefire way to get lost amongst the noise. We are happy to talk to more about your search engine strategy (if we haven't already.)

How will I know if anyone is visiting my website?
We will install Google Analytics tracking on your new website and show you how to log into your Google Analytics account where you can see a wide range of statistics about your website including number of visits, pageviews the amount of time people are spending on your website.

Once you subscribe to one of our website support plans you can choose to receive more detailed analysis about your website performance and recommendations on how to improve. Please ask for more details about what's included in these support plans.

What happens if I want to add some features to the website while you're building it?
Whilst we like to be flexible and responsive to your needs, we also like to deliver what we promise within the timeframes and budgets we have allowed. If you ask us to add new features to your website while we are building it, we will most likely ask why? If we all agree that your new request will help us achieve our objectives then we will be more than happy to oblige. If this new feature is something you would like to add to your website but is not directly tied to your original objectives then we will suggest to schedule it for a second iteration of the website once it has been launched. This will require a new proposal.

Payment terms

All build and hosting fees are due on engagement and agreement of project inclusions. Work can only begin upon cleared funds or an approved PO.

Your support and renewal date will commence from the date the website goes live.

If you are paying monthly on a 12-month contract package, you will be invoiced in the month prior to the fee falling due and it must be paid by the last day of the month.

Payment is to be made by BACs or cheque in GBP. We do not accept credit or debit card. Any failure to meet these payment terms will result in the deactivation of your site until the cleared fees are received.

If we are inputting content for you and are unable to supply all of the right content at each stage we require, it does not mean we have not done our job. Once the site has been built & tested and is ready to go live, either with your content or placeholder images and dummy text, we will issue the final invoice. Once the final invoice is paid we will 'hand over the keys' and make the site live to the public internet but will ensure that you are fully trained to maintain the content yourself thereafter.

If any final invoice is not paid within the credit terms we have given you, we are under no obligation to keep the site on our testing server or continue with the project in anyway.

Renewals
Your hosting, support and any extra services, such as domain name registrations are annually renewable and you will be sent an invoice 60 days prior to the expiration date of your annual service contract. If payment is not received by the due date, your service will be suspended until the payment is made.

All sound good? The next steps:

To accept the proposal by replying in writing with your acceptance of the proposal.

1) Please reply by email to the person you received the proposal from notifying them of your intention to accept the proposal.
2) We will send you our KYC (Know Your Customer) questionnaire to perform our required due diligence and gather necessary information to begin the project.
3) We will send you an invoice for the work along with an engagement letter for signing. This will set out a schedule of works.
4) Submit your payment of the project fees. We prefer a BACs payment rather than a cheque to avoid the need to go to the bank.

Once these steps have been completed, we will begin the project.

Terms, service level agreement (SLA) and definitions

The full terms & conditions of our service, to which you are agreeing, are available on our website here www.aubergine262.com/terms-of-trade, along with our Service Level Agreement (SLA) & definitions.

What Do Both Parties Agree To Do?
As our customer, you have the power and ability to enter into this contract on behalf of your company or organisation. You agree to provide us with everything that we'll need to complete the project – including text, images and other information – as and when we need it and in the format we ask for. You agree to review our work, provide feedback and approval in a timely manner too.

Prices at the beginning of this document are based on the amount of work we estimate we'll need to accomplish everything that you have told us you want to achieve. If you do want to change your mind, add extra pages or templates or even add new functionality, that won't be a problem.

However, you will be charged accordingly and these additional costs will need to be agreed to before the extra work commences. This additional work will affect deadlines and they will be moved accordingly.

We'll be up front about all of this if and when it happens to make sure we're all on the same page before proceeding. We may also ask you to put requests in writing so we can keep track of changes.

If the nature or functions of the project change significantly throughout the process, we reserve the right to deem the current project cancelled. At this point you will pay us in full for all the work we have done and may commission us to complete the new project based on the new requirements. This will require a new quote and contract.

Technical Support
You may already have professional website hosting, you might even manage that hosting in-house; if that's the case, great. If you don't manage your own website hosting, or your current hosting environment does not support the solution we are providing, we can provide you with professional, business-class WordPress hosting for your website. The basic hosting package includes 2 hours free support during the time of your hosting that can be used against general support, bug-fixing or guidance you may need. All support requirements outside of the use of these 2 hours will require you to provide us with a full specification of your requirements against which we will issue a quotation for the work. Any work we provide as part of a separate contract of service falls without our standard terms of support and service.

If you require technical support services that exceed 2 hours annually, we recommend you discuss these requirements with us and a suitable support plan can be provided at additional cost.

Service level agreement (SLA)
We provide our support services in accordance with our service level agreement. The full description of what support is provided and when, along with the definition of terms, can be found here:
www.aubergine262.com/terms

Legal stuff
We can't guarantee that the functions contained in any web page templates or in a completed website will always be error-free and so we can't be liable to you or any third party for damages, including lost profits, lost savings or other incidental, consequential or special damages arising out of the operation of or inability to operate this website and any other web pages, even if you have advised us of the possibilities of such damages. If any provision of this agreement shall be unlawful, void, or for any reason unenforceable, then that provision shall be deemed severable from this agreement and shall not affect the validity and enforceability of any remaining provisions.

GDPR – General Data Protection Regulation compliance
It is your responsibility to ensure that your website remains GDPR compliant. The website will be launched and conform to GDPR compliance guidance, but we cannot be responsible for any aspect once it is launched. You must maintain your own data protection review processes to ensure that any data you capture on the site conforms to current laws. If we are your website hosts, as Data Processors, we will share with you our Privacy Statement that explains ours and your responsibilities in relation to GDPR.

Copyrights
You guarantee to us that any elements of text, graphics, photos, designs, trademarks, or other artwork that you provide us for inclusion in the website are either owned by your good selves, or that you have permission to use them.

When we receive your final payment, copyright is automatically assigned as follows:

Aubergine

You own the graphics and other visual elements that we create for you for this project. If you like, we'll give you a copy of all files and you should store them really safely as we are not required to keep them or provide any native source files we used to make them.

You also own text content, photographs and other data you provided, unless someone else owns them. We own the HTML markup, CSS and other code and we license it to you for use on only this project. We love to show off our work and share what we have learned with other people, so we reserve the right to display and link to your completed project as part of our portfolio and to write about the project on websites, in magazine articles and in books about web design.

But where's all the horrible small print?
Just like a parking ticket, you can't transfer this contract to anyone else without our permission. This contract stays in place and need not be renewed. If, for some reason, one part of this contract becomes invalid or unenforceable, the remaining parts of it remain in place. Although the language is simple, the intentions are serious, and this contract is a legal document under exclusive jurisdiction of the courts of the United Kingdom.

Our full terms and conditions can and must be read at: www.aubergine262.com/terms If you have a few questions give us a call on 07810 753878 as it makes sense to talk over the finer detail in person.

Aubergine 262 Ltd, 12 Church Square, Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire, LU7 1AE. 01525 373020. Offices: Leighton Buzzard, Milton Keynes and London. Visit our website: www.aubergine262.com

This proposal is prepared in good faith and knowledge provided and is subject to our terms of business, EO&E.

Shaun Fishenden PSLCC
Town Clerk & RFO
Rayleigh Town Council
The Pavilion
King George Playing Field V
Bull Lane
Rayleigh
Essex
SS6 8JD

Bee Happy Payroll Limited
8 Gibbetts
Langton Green
Tunbridge Wells
Kent
TN3 0DG

M: 0790 313 5972
E: beehappypayroll@gmail.com
www.beehappypayroll.com

27th January 2026

Dear Shaun

QUOTE FOR PROVISION OF PAYROLL SERVICES

Thank you for asking me for a quote to deliver payroll services for **Rayleigh Town Council**.

In terms of the **services** that I offer, I am here to take the stress away from payroll and RTI compliance by:

- Processing your PAYE, national insurance, other deductions and additions* to allow you to pay your employees correctly
- Where required, processing Members' Allowances by deducting the appropriate PAYE and NI
- Providing reports, payslips and year-end P60s to comply with requirements and for your record keeping
- Processing Starters and Leavers (including P45s) efficiently
- Creating and making submissions to HMRC on your behalf
- Providing your monthly/quarterly reports and pension calculations so that you can ensure correct payment to employees, councillors, pension providers and HMRC
- Support in setting up pensions/auto-enrolment requirements
- Making pension submissions on your behalf if required
- Completion of end of year returns

Overtime, statutory pay, holiday pay, pro-rata and back pay calculations, National pay agreements and much more!

As both a fully qualified and registered Payroll Agent *and* an experienced local council Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer, I have the knowledge and experience to handle your payroll needs and I also understand the council sector.

My aim is simple: to offer a friendly, supportive, and value-for-money service that makes payroll straightforward and stress-free for town/parish councils and their clerks/RFOs.

Registered Address:
Bee Happy Payroll Limited
8 Gibbetts
Langton Green
Tunbridge Wells
Kent TN3 0DG

Company No: 16103455

THE INSTITUTE
OF CERTIFIED
BOOKKEEPERS

Licence No: 24668

Regarding your **quote**, thank you for confirming that you currently have 3 members of staff* and that 23 councillors receive a Members' Allowance on a monthly basis. I offer 2 tiers of payment plans for town and parish councils as follows:

Tier 1 Payment Plan would be **£984 per year***
Included: All your payroll needs met as described here/on my website Services - Councils | My Site - Bee Happy Payroll Ltd
In addition: + one off £10 admin fee for new Starters added within contract (replacing an existing staff member)
In addition: + £10 per employee P11D (Benefits in Kind) submissions if required

Tier 2 Payment Plan would be **£1,104 per year***
Included: All your payroll needs met as described here/on my website Services - Councils | My Site - Bee Happy Payroll Ltd
Also included: new Starters added within contract (replacing an existing staff member)
Also included: P11D (Benefits in Kind) submissions if required

(*_Should you employ further staff, taking your employee numbers over 3, there would be an additional fee of £24 per year pro rata per additional employee_)

I am not VAT registered.

I thought that you might find it interesting to know that if you were to change the frequency of your councillor allowances to quarterly my quote would reduce by £322 for either tier.

In terms of what I do and what you would do, I would ensure that your payroll is correct and compliant as per the services outlined above, and provide the relevant reports to enable you to make payments to your employees, pension provider and HMRC. As requested, within my quote I would assist with making your monthly pension submissions via _i-connect_.

Should you have any questions at all, and/or if you would like to discuss my quote in more detail, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Otherwise, I hope that Rayleigh Town Council approves my quote and I look forward to hearing from you.

With kind regards,

Debbie

Deborah Siddle PM.Dip & CiLCA
Director
Bee Happy Payroll Limited

PAYROLL SERVICES QUOTATION

Prepared for: Rayleigh Town Council

ABOUT US

Originally a payroll department within the long established and well respected DCK Accounting Solutions, DCK Payroll Solutions evolved in response to continued growth, success and a desire to expand the services we offer to payroll clients. Our main focus is town & parish councils and we offer service packages to suit all sizes.

At DCK Payroll Solutions we pride ourselves on our ability to adapt our process to meet individuals clients changing needs and requirements. This means, we adapt to suit you - if you want your reports by a certain date, in a certain way, you like your payslips wording just so, then that is what we do, to the very best of our abilities and system capabilities.

Should you choose us as your payroll service provider you can rest assured that whatever changes may come up, we have the flexibility, skill and adaptability to meet those new requirements, whilst still providing an uninterrupted, smooth, robust payroll service.

We are dedicated to providing the highest level of professional service at competitive prices.

OUR SERVICES

Our Payroll Services are aimed specifically at Town & Parish Councils that wish to outsource for convenience, quality, audit and improved internal controls purposes. Our Standard Payroll Service includes:

- Processing payroll information including additional payments such as expenses, overtime, statutory deductions/payments
- Pension contributions for both employee and employer
- Submissions to HMRC
- Retrieval and application of P6's, P9's, Student Loan notifications etc
- Full reports including as standard: Month End Summary, Pension Summary, Payslips, P30 Summary. Others are also available at no charge, this is not an exhaustive list.
- Reminders/advisories regarding overdue PAYE payments & cut-off dates

- Paperless process with prompt efficient turnaround
- Free fully encrypted & secure Employer Portal via My ePay Windows which can be used instead of email for the secure transfer of payroll information/documents.
- Employee Portal which stores employee payroll history
- Excellent customer service and attention to detail.
- PAYE Tax Year End is charged as a standard monthly payroll and includes issue of full year end reports, P60's, P9's, HMRC submission.
- Updates & News via Employer Portal & social media
- Payment Facility - via our pre-funded account we make salary, LGPS and pension payments on your behalf.

Existing Clients of DCK Payroll Solutions

Just a snapshot of some of our existing clients ranging from sole employee to 70+
 We treat every client as if they are our only client - each one matters.

NEW MILTON TOWN COUNCIL

Kidlington Parish Council

WALC
Representing and Advising Town and Parish Councils

Didcot Town Council
Faith in Service

Bramshott & Liphook
Parish Council

Thorne Moorends Town Council

Lancing Parish Council

CHEARSLEY Parish Council
where community matters

Northway Parish Council

Chesham Town Council

Newport Pagnell Town Council

Newton Abbot Town Council

STANDARD CHARGES (PER MONTH)

The quotation below is based on information provided to us at this stage regarding your payroll requirement.

Standard Month 3 employees , 23 Councillors

Standard 1-4 Employees	£33.00
Each additional employee/ Councillor	£7.75 per person

Total standard monthly fee: £229.50

DISCOUNT FOR STATIC PAYROLL

1-4 Employees	£33.00
Each Councillor	£4.50 per person

NEW Total standard monthly fee: £136.50

ADD ON FEE/CHARGES (PER MONTH)

The quotation below is based on information provided to us at this stage regarding your payroll requirement.

Add on/Optional extras	
Payment Facility - Employee HMRC & LGPS	£37.00 PER MONTH
LGPS Pension uploads & submissions	£25.75 PER MONTH

These add-on services can be added or removed at any time you choose, with no additional admin fee incurred.

Occasionally a time charge might be applied. This could arise for time consuming calculations or works, ad-hoc works, projections etc
Employee payslips and P60's are issued via My ePay Window which is 40p per document sent.

ONE OFF SET UP FEES

One off fees are applied when setting you up on our payroll system, registering with HMRC as your authorised agent and doing a full check on year to date information if applicable.

Client set up	£40.00
Employee set-up	£8.00 per person

DISCOUNT APPLIED : STATIC

Client set up	Now £32.00
Employee set-up	NOW £6.40 per person
Councillor set-up	NOW £4.00 per person

Please note the reduced set-up fees are offered on the basis that the payroll account is in order & full and correct information will be provided to us in an organised & timely manner. CTAEO/DEA's etc may be additional. All fees are subject to VAT at standard rate.

THANK YOU!

I hope you find this proposal of interest. Whilst we may initially appear pricier than other providers out there, you can rest assured that the excellent service we promise, we deliver. Thus saving you valuable time and resource that can be put to better use elsewhere, as well as saving you money by avoiding costly corrections and fines or penalties by HMRC or TPR.

Everyone, whatever their role and whatever their salary, wants to be paid correctly and on time. We never lose sight of that at DCK Payroll Solutions.

We are the solution to all your payroll problems.

RECOMMENDED PAYROLL SERVICE PROVIDER BY:

PAYROLL SERVICES FEE LIST

Fees effective 1st April 2026

Payroll   Services   Provision

Monthly, Weekly & Bi-Weekly	Includes standard payroll & FPS Submission	
	1-4 Employees	£33.00
	Each additional employee	£7.50
Bi-Monthly	Includes standard payroll, FPS & EPS Submission	
	1- 4 Employees	£35.00
	Each additional employee	£7.35
Quarterly	Includes standard payroll, FPS & two EPS Submissions	
	1 - 4 Employees	£39.00
	Each additional employee	£7.35
Annual	Please call to discuss your requirements	POA
Tax Year End	Includes issuing of P60's, Year End Reports & Final Submission	Charged as a standard payroll fee

Additional Charges & Optional Services

Masterfile changes (new starter/leaver)	£7.75 per person
Payroll Re-run	50% of payroll fee
Dealing with HMRC on client's behalf & by agreement	£77.00 per hour
Additional salary, holiday pay calculations, uplifts, AEO's etc	£77.00 per hour
Other ad-hoc work as requested	£77.00 per hour
i-Connect /Pension Fund Submissions and forms	£77.00 per hour
My ePay Window (payslips, P45s, P60s, documents)	40p per individual send
Employer Portal	Free
Paying of staff salaries up to 20 employees	£37.00 per month minimum charge*
Paying of staff salaries 20+ employees	£1.75 per additional payment
Set up/close down PAYE scheme	£77.00 per hour
Workplace Pension set up/adjustment	£77.00 per hour

New Client Set-Up Fees	One off implementation fee (new tax year start only)	£40.00
	One off implementation fee all other times	£80.00
Employee Set-Up Fees	One off implementation fee per employee (start of tax year)	£8.00
	One off implementation fee per employee (during tax year)	£16.00

All fees effective 01st April 2026. Prices subject to VAT at Standard Rate

Payroll Reports

Payslips, Month End Summary including gross and net pay also amounts due to HMRC
Pension reports, P6s, Student loan stop/start notices if applicable
Further reports for example, payroll analysis per employee, departmental reports are available on request

Exit Fees

After the initial minimum term, three months notice of cancellation of services required. Exit fees are applied based on payroll size, frequency, data transfer requirements and if process involves scheme closure.
* Initial set up of payments /bank detail changes may take longer and so may attract an additional time charge

DCK
Payroll
Solutions

TEL: 01793 550347

payroll@dckpayrollsolutions.co.uk

www.dckpayrollsolutions.co.uk

RE: Quote Enquiry

From Diane Malley <diane@dmpayrollservices.co.uk>

Date Wed 28/01/2026 8:25 AM

To Clerk - Rayleigh Town Council <clerk@rayleightowncouncil.gov.uk>

Good morning Shaun

The quotation to provide payroll services for 3 employees plus 23 councillors paid monthly is £488 + VAT a year plus a one off set up fee of £100 +VAT.

The service includes

- processing the payroll, calculating PAYE, NI & pension

- providing payslips and pay reports accessed via online portal, you will be given a secure log in

- completing the monthly online RTI submission to HMRC

- Completing the monthly pension I-Connect returns

- Processing leavers and submitting P45 to HMRC

- Calculating any statutory payments

- Completing year end p60s

Any requests for re-run of the payroll not the fault of DM Payroll Services Ltd will be charged at £10 + VAT per time.
New starters added during contract are £10 + VAT per new starter.
If any submission of P11D's are required there is a fee of £10 + VAT per submission.

I ask that the council make payments direct to employees, HMRC and pension in accordance with the payroll reports as I do not have the capacity to do this.

Kind regards

Diane Malley M.A.A.T. M.C.I.P.P.
7 New Road
Far Forest
Kidderminster
Worcestershire
DY14 9TQ
Tel: 01299 269188

From: Clerk - Rayleigh Town Council <clerk@rayleightowncouncil.gov.uk>
Sent: 26 January 2026 19:36

To: Diane Malley <diane@dmpayrollservices.co.uk>
Subject: Quote Enquiry

Hi Diane,

Are you able to provide me with a quote please for doing payroll for

- 3 x permanant staff (paid monthly - no overtime)

- 23 x councillor allowances (paid monthly)

We'd be looking for the I-Connect returns to be done for the three staff as well please.

Kind Regards,

Shaun Fishenden

Shaun Fishenden PSLCC
Town Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer
Tel: 01268 741880
www.rayleightowncouncil.gov.uk

Rayleigh Town Council

The Pavilion, King George V Playing Field, Rayleigh, SS6 8JD

www.rayleightowncouncil.gov.uk

Agenda Item	11.4
Meeting Date	9 February 2026
Report Title	Payroll Provider
Recommendation/s	1. To appoint DM Payroll Services to process the council's payroll, effective from 1st April 2026
Appendices to Report	• DM Payroll Services quote • Bee Happy Payroll quote • DCK Payroll quote
Prepared By	Shaun Fishenden PSLCC – Town Clerk & RFO
Detailed Information	

The Council's current payroll provider is J&M Payroll. The cost for this service is £65.00 + VAT per month (£780 per annum) for processing staff salaries and £66 + VAT per quarter (£264 per annum) for processing the councillor allowances. This represents a total annual cost of £1044 per annum.

Quotes for the processing of payroll have been sought on the following specification:
- 3 x salaried staff paid monthly
- 23 x councillor allowances paid monthly
- Payslips to be provided digitally via email

Quotes were sought from payroll providers that appear on the SLCC's Supplier Directory, thereby recognising they are sector-specific providers and the following quotes were received:

	Set-up Cost (one-off)	Annual Cost
DM Payroll Services	£100.00	£488.00 + VAT
DCK Payroll Solutions	£143.20	£1947.00 + VAT
Bee Happy Payroll	N/A	£984.00

For transparency, a copy of all the quotations are contained as appendices to this report.

The Town Clerk & RFO has reviewed the quotations provided and recommends the Council appoints DM Payroll Services as it's provider from the commencement of the new financial year; 1st April 2026. This being on the basis, their quotation is the

The Town Clerk & RFO formally notes he has experience of using DM Payroll Services at previous councils and has found them to provide a high-quality service, responsive to the needs of the council.

Key Implications	
Financial	Adopting the recommendation of this report will result in a cost saving of £456.00 per annum compared to the existing provider
Legislative and Policy	Adopting the recommendations of this report will ensure the Council satisfies the requirements of Employment Rights Act 1996.
Equality Assessment	There are no Equality issues arising
Climate Change	Adopting the recommendations of this report contributes towards the Council reducing its paper usage, as the delivery of payslips would change from paper copies to online.

LGR and Devolution Working Group Meeting Notes

Date: 14/11/25

Members Present: Cllr James Newport, Cllr Lisa Newport, Cllr Dave Sperring, Cllr Richard Linden, Cllr Chris Stanley

- The group confirmed five members.
- The group selected James Newport as chair.
- The group reviewed the draft terms of reference and agreed to recommend them to full council.
- The group discussed the current position of reorganisation proposals in Essex and agreed that there was still a lot of uncertainty.
- The group examined governance options and representation models, with a focus on opportunities for residents.
- The group highlighted the need for strong community engagement and discussed to cost options for delivering information to every household in Rayleigh.
- The group explored ways to gather resident feedback, including the Wednesday market, an in person event, online surveys, and social media.
- The group reviewed the RDC asset list and agreed to use a traffic light system as a high level sifting tool, this would then be presented to Full Council for feedback before further exploration and 'weighting'
- The group agreed there is a need for RTC to provide feedback to the group from any RDC 'LGR event'
- A single point of contact for RTC officers will be sought from RDC

Rayleigh Town Council

Local Government Reorganisation Working Group

First Meeting – Draft Agenda

1. **Welcome and Introductions**
   - o Confirm membership of the group (5)
   - o Elect a Chair
2. **Purpose of the Working Group**
   - o Review and agree the draft Terms of Reference
3. **Overview of Local Government Reorganisation Proposals**
   - o Current status of proposals in Essex (3UA, 4UA, 5UA models)
   - o Timescales and decision-making processes
4. **Implications for Rayleigh Town Council**
   - o Governance and representation
   - o Service delivery and responsibilities
   - o Opportunities and risks for the community
5. **Community Engagement**
   - o How to communicate with residents
   - o Mechanisms for capturing feedback
6. **Partnerships and Stakeholder Engagement**
   - o Liaison with Rochford District Council, Essex County Council, and neighbouring councils
   - o Involvement of MPs, local groups, and associations
7. **Work Programme and Next Steps**
   - o Evidence gathering and research needs
   - o Frequency of meetings
   - o Reporting to Full Council
8. **Any Other Business**
9. **Date of Next Meeting**

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) Working Group

Draft Terms of Reference

1. Purpose

The Working Group will consider the potential impacts of Local Government Reorganisation on Rayleigh Town Council and the wider community. It will provide recommendations to Full Council to ensure that the Town Council is informed, prepared, and representing the interests of residents.

2. Objectives

- Monitor proposals for Local Government Reorganisation in Essex.
- Assess the potential impacts on Rayleigh Town Council's role, responsibilities, and services.
- Ensure effective communication with residents and stakeholders.
- Develop a work programme to gather evidence and respond to consultations.
- Report findings and recommendations to Full Council.

3. Membership

- Membership to be drawn from Town Councillors, appointed by Full Council.
- The Working Group may invite officers, external experts, or representatives from other councils to contribute where appropriate.

4. Meetings

- Meetings will be held as required, but not less than quarterly.
- The Chair will be elected from among the group members at the first meeting.
- Notes and recommendations will be reported to the next available Full Council meeting.

5. Scope

The group will focus on:

- Reviewing government and council proposals for reorganisation.
- Financial, service delivery, and governance implications.
- Opportunities for stronger local decision-making.
- Risks to representation and local services.
- The role of Rayleigh Town Council in shaping future structures.

6. Limitations

- The group has no delegated decision-making powers.
- Recommendations must be referred to Full Council for approval.

7. Duration

The Working Group will remain active until the Local Government Reorganisation process is concluded or Full Council decides it is no longer required.

UK TOWN OF CULTURE
toolkit

Department
for Culture,
Media & Sport

Every town has a unique story to tell

We're celebrating the unique creativity, history and identity of towns across the UK, encouraging them to take part in the first ever UK Town of Culture competition.

This toolkit provides key information about the competition, along with suggested copy and assets to help you amplify it and encourage towns to apply.

Applications must detail:
• Your story – the unique story of the town
• Culture for everyone – how the town will design a cultural programme for all
• Making it happen – how the town will then deliver a successful programme

Deadline to submit an initial Expression of Interest (EOI): **31 March 2026**

Background

01

UK Town of Culture

Background

UK Town of Culture

Inspired by the success of the UK City of Culture, the new UK Town of Culture competition aims to shine a spotlight on the unique contributions towns make to our national story. By engaging towns nationwide, we are building a more socially cohesive country where communities take pride in their local identity and are empowered to celebrate it.

We will select the best small, medium and large towns from the applications received. One of these entries will be named the UK Town of Culture 2028 and receive £3 million to deliver a cultural programme during 2028. The remaining two finalists will each receive £250,000 to carry forward significant elements detailed in their entry bid.
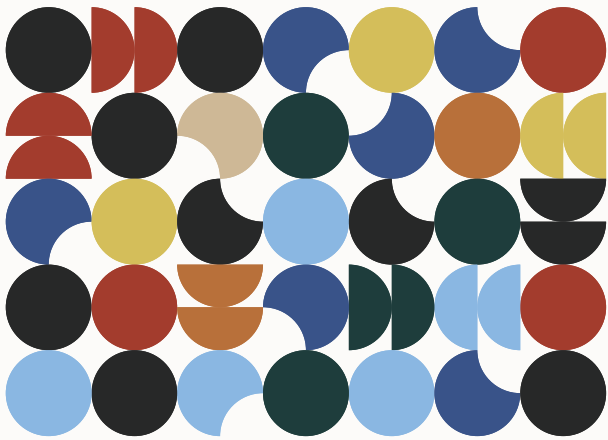
UK TOWN OF CULTURE

01

Competition Benefits

UK Tow of Culture

Competition Benefits

› Empowers Towns

Empowers towns to tell their unique story on the national stage, fostering local pride and strengthening social cohesion.

› Brings Together Communities

Brings local organisations, grassroots artists, creatives, local leaders and residents together to shape an impactful bid and build lasting partnerships, drawing on the best of art, heritage and creative industries in the area.

› Breaks Down Barriers

Breaks down barriers to participation, ensuring arts and culture are accessible and delivering local impact.

› Cultural Investment

Provides a significant funding boost to support a town's cultural infrastructure.

How to Apply

How to Apply

› For Bidders

Contact:

uktownofculture2028-competition@dcms.gov.uk

if you have any questions.

› Read the Expression of Interest guidance for bidders document

AVAILABLE HERE

› Attend the virtual information session, 21 January, 2026
Email uktownofculture2028-competition@dcms.gov.uk to register.

› Complete the EOI form
Submit the form which addresses the three core criteria: Your Story, Culture for Everyone, and Making it Happen.

Deadline: Ensure your completed EOI is submitted by **31 March 2026**. The DCMS bid team will not accept any EOIs submitted after this date.

03