

POLICY REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT PANEL REPORT

REPORT TO:	<i>Kings Lynn Area Committee (KLAC)</i>		
DATE:	13 th November 2025		
TITLE:	Recommendations on Special Expense Charge for King's Lynn		
TYPE OF REPORT:	<i>Policy Development</i>		
PORTFOLIO(S):	Cllr Chris Morley, Portfolio Holder for Finance		
REPORT AUTHOR:	Carl Holland, Assistant Director - Finance		
OPEN/EXEMPT	Open	WILL BE SUBJECT TO A FUTURE CABINET REPORT:	Yes

REPORT SUMMARY

PURPOSE OF REPORT/SUMMARY:
To consider the proposed King's Lynn Special Expenses for the year 2026/27
KEY ISSUES:
<p>The terms of reference for the King's Lynn Area Committee (KLAC) describe one of its roles as acting as a forum, on the funding raised by, and utilisation of the King's Lynn Special Expenses including the determination of where surplus funding raised in connection with King's Lynn Special Expenses should be utilised in the area. KLAC can also determine the spend of any budget allocated to them and provide recommendations to Cabinet on new priorities for King's Lynn Special Expenses.</p> <p>Any recommendations will need to be made in full consideration of the implications on the Special Expenses charge.</p>
OPTIONS CONSIDERED:
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Make no recommendations for changes to Special Expenses for the 2026/27 financial year 2. Make recommendations to Cabinet on the priorities for, and utilisation of, the Special Expenses charge for King's Lynn, for the period 2026/27
RECOMMENDATIONS:
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the Committee endorse the proposed Special Expenses charge for 2026/27 as set out in section 2.2 of the report
REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:
Making recommendations on the utilisation of Special Expenses for King's Lynn was within the original terms of reference of the Committee.

1. Introduction

1.1 The Terms of Reference for KLAC set out the following:

- To determine the spend of any budgets allocated to KLAC
- To determine where surplus funding raised in connection with King's Lynn Special Expenses should be utilised within the area
- To provide recommendations to Cabinet on new priorities for King's Lynn Special Expenses
- To monitor King's Lynn Special Expenses throughout the financial year

1.2 The Local Government Finance Act 1992 defines a Local Authority's Special Expenses. It states that Special Expenses are any expenses incurred by the authority in performing in a part of its area, a function performed elsewhere by a Parish Council.

1.3 Special Expenses are currently charged for:

- Footway Lighting
- Play Areas (including capital scheme)
- Community Centres
- Closed Churchyards
- Allotments
- Pavilions
- Dog Bins
- Open Spaces
- Bus Shelters
- Public Conveniences (80% of costs of Walks Broadwalk and Management Building facilities)
- Gaywood Remembrance Service

- 1.4 The total cost of Special Expenses is met by the Council Taxpayers of King's Lynn. The annual charge to the residents is made through an addition to the Council Tax bill. The table below details the Special Expenses charge for 2025/26.

Special Expenses	Charge 2025/2026
	£
Footway Lighting	55,940
Play Areas	52,430
Community Centres	54,720
Closed Churchyards	13,350
Allotments	10,640
Pavilions	66,210
Dog bins	36,300
Open Spaces	375,610
Bus Shelters	17,470
Public Conveniences	16,780
Gaywood Remembrance Service	2,000
Total	701,450
Less: Borough Council Budget Support	-122,630
Net Total Charged as Special Expenses	578,820
Tax Base	11,192.10
Band D Charge 2025/26	£51.72

2. Special Expenses 2026/27

- 2.1 The council tax base for King's Lynn in 2026/27 is 11,063.20 which is a decrease of 128.9 from 2025/26.
- 2.2 The table below details the estimated cost of Special Expense charges for King's Lynn for 2026/27.

Special Expenses	Proposed Charge 2026/27
	£
Footway Lighting	57,000
Play Areas	54,818
Community Centres	62,096
Closed Churchyards	13,992
Allotments	11,230
Pavilions	57,578
Dog bins	37,425
Open Spaces	387,254
Bus Shelters	17,618
Public Conveniences	17,468
Gaywood Remembrance Service	2,000
Total	718,479
Less: Borough Council Budget Support (See para. 2.6)	0
Net Total Charged as Special Expenses	718,479
Tax Base	11,063.20
Band D Charge 2026/27	£64.94
Band D Charge 2025/26	£51.72
Increase	£13.23
Percentage increase	25.6%

2.3 The main movements in cost between the Special Expenses charges for 2025/26 and the estimated charges for 2026/27 are as follows.

Increase

- **Footway Lighting £1,060** – this is due to an expected increase in prices to take effect from 1st April 2026. This is an estimated figure and subject to change
- **Play Areas £2,388** – this is due to an estimated increase in staffing costs of 4.8%. This is subject to change
- **Community Centres £7,376** – this is due to an estimated increase in staffing costs of 4.8%. This is subject to change
- **Open Spaces £11,644** – this is due to an estimated increase in staffing costs of 4.8%. This is subject to change.

Decrease

- **Pavilions £8,632** this is due to estimated increases in lettings (grass pitches) and revised estimates on utilities. This is an estimated figure and subject to change

Gaywood Remembrance Service – this cost has been built in for the cost of the road closure and stewards in relation to the Gaywood Remembrance Services as a longer-term funding solution. It is currently estimated that there will be no change from 2025/26.

It is worth noting that all the areas are estimated figures at the present time and subject to change when our base budget assumptions are confirmed and approved later in the month. The referendum limits may also change when the December Budget is announced, which may allow us to charge more before breaching the limits.

- 2.4 The above figures present a significant increase in the cost of services provided through special expenses. The increase of £13.23 exceeds the £5.00 increase in council tax that the council is permitted to levy without going through a referendum exercise.

- 2.5 The Council applies a notional split of the £5.00 increase in council tax as follows:

Borough Council	£4.50
Special Expenses	£0.50

- 2.6 In order to bring the level of increase in special expenses down from £13.23 to £0.50 it will require support from the council's budget. The council will not know the final figure until the budget setting process is near completion and the council tax resolution can be calculated in detail. At this point in time, it is estimated the required level of support from the council will be £140,759. The Council will maximise the £0.50 increase across all special expenses and arrive at a balancing figure. This will take into account the overall level of special expenses across all parishes.
- 2.7 The Council Tax base for Band D equivalents reduces on the previous year by 128.9 to 11,063.2. This is because there has been an increase in the volume of properties where people eligible for the single resident discount; Council Tax Support claims and that are empty properties, which are exempt from payment. This impacts on the formula for calculating the band D equivalents.

3. New Schemes

- 3.1 There are currently no proposals for new schemes for consideration at the time of writing this report. However, as can be seen from the detail in the report, there is no spare capacity to fund any new schemes at this point in time.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 There will be financial implications associated with the allocation of Special Expenses. The implications will be dependent on the recommendations which the Committee make to Cabinet.
- 4.2 As can be seen from the report, increases in the level of special expenses will have an impact on the council's core budget. If the Council exceeds the £5.00 Council Tax referendum limit (subject to confirmation) on increasing Council Tax overall, it may be necessary to make further amendments to comply with the legislation on Council Tax increases. These will be reported back accordingly.
- 4.3 Due to the significant increase in special expense cost, the financial implications may impact on future years also which will limit the possibility of any new schemes being brought forward unless fully funded.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 The Committee is asked to consider and endorse the Special Expenses charge for 2026/27, and corresponding council supplement as set out in the report whilst noting the financial implications also set out in the report.