POLICY REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT PANEL REPORT

REPORT TO:	Kings Lynn Area Committee (KLAC)		
DATE:	12th November 2026		
TITLE:	Recommendations on Special Expense Charge for King's Lynn		
TYPE OF REPORT:	Policy Development		
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 2027/28
KEY ISSUES:
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. The Estimated budget presented is subject to the Council setting its own budget for the 2027/2028 year and may therefore be subject to change as a result. In this estimate budget, service costs decrease by £8,410 from 2026/27. Largely as a result of leasing the South Lynn Community Centre and transferring its day to day running to the Purfleet Trust Any recommendations will need to be made in full consideration of the implications on the Special Expenses charge.
OPTIONS CONSIDERED:
1. Make no recommendations for changes to Special Expenses for the 202720/28 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 2027/2028.
RECOMMENDATIONS:
1. That the Committee endorse the Special Expenses charge for 2027/28 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 the current year 2026/27.

	Budget 2026/2027 £
Footway Lighting	57,000
Play Areas	55,850
Community Centres	48,860
Closed Churchyards	13,990
Allotments	8,380
Pavilions	66,580
Dog bins	37,580
Open Spaces	391,240
Bus Shelters	17,620
Public Conveniences	17,470
Gaywood Remembrance Service	2,000
Total	**716,570**
Borough Council Budget Support	(65,760)

Amount funded through special expenses	**650,810**

Taxbase (Council Tax Band D Equivalent)	11,063.2
Band D Charge	**£58.83**
Band D Charge 2025/2026	£55.99
Increase	**£2.84**
Percentage Increase	5.07%

2. Special Expenses 2027/28

2.1 The Band D equivalent council tax base for King's Lynn in 2027/28 is 11,214.9 which is an increase of 151.7 from 2026/27.

2.2 The table below details the estimated cost of Special Expense charges for King's Lynn for 2027/28.

	Proposed Charge 2027/2028 £
Footway Lighting	67,180
Play Areas	56,610
Community Centres	5,410
Closed Churchyards	14,600
Allotments	10,180
Pavilions	63,680
Dog bins	44,620
Open Spaces	406,450
Bus Shelters	18,210
Public Conveniences	19,220
Parish Partnership Traffic Calming	0
Gaywood Remembrance Service	2,000
Total	**708,160**

Borough Council Budget Support (see para 2.6)	-
Amount funded through special expenses (to be confirmed)	-

Taxbase (Council Tax Band D Equivalent)	11,214.9
Band D Charge	**£63.14**
Band D Charge 2026/2027	**£58.83**
Increase	**£4.31**
Percentage increase	7.32%

2.3 The main movements in cost between the Special Expenses charges for 2026/27 and the estimated charges for 2027/28 are as follows.

- Footway Lighting increase of £10,180 – this is due to an expected increase in electricity prices to take effect from 1st April 2027 and reflects actual costs in the current and previous year.

- Community Centres decrease of (£43,450) – this is the net effect after removal of costs and income for South Lynn Community Centre following transfer of the day-to-day business and adoption in 2026/2027 of a peppercorn lease to the Purfleet Trust.

- Allotments increase of £1,800 – this is due to an increase in water charges.

- Pavilions decrease of (£2,900) – this is due to a decrease of the Business Rates budget to reflect the actual charge.

- Dog Bins increase of £5,930 – the charge is levied per bin for each emptying. The increase is reflected retrospectively in Special Expenses and therefore relates to the higher charge that took effect from April 2026.

- Open Spaces increase of £15,210 – this reflects an increase in actual costs from 2026/2027 and estimated increase in staffing costs for 2026/2027.

It should be noted that all the areas are estimated figures at the present time and subject to change when the Council determines its base budget assumptions when setting the 2026 to 2031 Medium Term Financial Strategy. The referendum limits have also not been confirmed by the Government for 2027/2028, which may affect the Borough Council's decision at what level to set its own band D equivalent Council Tax.

2.4 The above figures present a significant increase in the cost of services provided through special expenses. The increase of £4.31 at 7.32% exceeds the 2.99% 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 this 2.99% increase in council tax. For 2027/2028 if the Council determines that it will increase the Band D Equivalent charge by the permitted amount then the following split would apply.

Borough Council	£4.71
Special Expenses	£0.50

2.6 In order to bring the level of increase in special expenses down from £4.31 to £0.50, it will require support from the council's budget. The council will not know the true figure until the budget setting process is near completion, and the council tax resolution can be calculated in detail. 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.

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 2027/28, and corresponding council supplement as set out in the report whilst noting the financial implications also set out in the report.