

Borough Council update March 2026

1- **MBC parking charges** in the town centre have been frozen since covid. The current administration is **increasing the charge by 15%** which will remain cheaper than the Mall or Fremlin car parks which are privately owned.

2- **Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS)**

For one year the Council proposes to reduce the maximum reduction of council tax up to 100% for low income and extreme circumstances. That cost to MBC is £182,000 and is justified by reduced officer time which can be spent on more productive work. A detailed report will be produced next year.

3- **Funding** is available for improving **flood defences**. This fund has been available since 2013 after flooding of the town and rural areas. Land owners and farm owners are encouraged to come forward with plan for the available £900,000. River and wet land restoration is one way to protect against flooding and improve water penetration into the soil. It is suggested that Parish Councils should be asked whether they have any ideas for flood mitigation, especially around the Beult area.

4 -**Pride of Place:** central government have awarded a **£20 million budget** for improvements to the **Park Wood, Senacre and Shepway areas**. This will be community led and a Board will be created to oversee spending in line with the community survey request and need. The project will run **over a 10 year period**.

5- **Two-year plan for corporate strategy spending at MBC –**

It is clear that MBC are preparing to spend as much of their reserve as they can before the introduction of unitary authorities. The aim is to spend the money for Maidstone people.

£7.3 million is going to be spent on the refurbishment of Maidstone House

£4.9 million has been set aside for the Earl Street pedestrianisation and a new design is currently at feasibility stage.

£150,000 is to be spent on the museum

£2.2 million is to be spent on the Archbishops Palace refurbishment and updating for compliance.

Another project is being put forward to create a cycle bridge across the Medway river in Maidstone. The view is to facilitate cycle access to the town centre, avoiding pedestrians and cycles using the same bridge. The project is at feasibility study stage.

MBC is still trying to acquire more property for social and affordable housing, to reduce their current private rental costs.

The question has been raised regarding the Langley by-pass. But also councillors would like this to come forward. It is realistically impossible as KCC is the current highway authority. In the past few years Maidstone councillors have worked hard to collect contributions from developers to mitigate the impact of added traffic by improving junctions like the Wheatsheaf and Linton cross roads.

Yet KCC have been sitting with the money in their bank, refusing to upgrade these junctions. Even the current Reform administration of KCC are not changing their plan.

It is very disappointing to see that those millions of pounds in tax could be clawed back by developers because of KCC inactivity and refusal in the matter.

6- New Maidstone Borough Council budget to tackle poverty, support regeneration and boost nature recovery approved

- **The Council agreed a 3% increase in its share of Council Tax, equivalent to £9 per year for a Band D property.**
- **Additional investment will support river restoration, nature recovery, climate action and community cohesion.**
- **Funding has been agreed for town centre regeneration, including Earl Street and creative and leisure provision.**
- **£8 million over two years will be transferred into the Housing Investment Fund.**
- **£300,000 has been set aside to meet Maidstone-specific costs linked to local government reorganisation.**
- **Earmarked reserves have been released to support economic development, tackling poverty and rural initiatives.**
- **Major capital investment was approved, including housing delivery, a new park at Maidstone East and a new River Medway bridge.**