



Councillor Mike Sole's monthly report

Kent County Councillor : Canterbury South
Canterbury City Councillor : Nailbourne



*Working for you all
all year round*

As we come to the end of the year and look forward to 2026, I would like to wish everyone and happy & healthy New Year, and I hope that you had an enjoyable Christmas with family and friends.

It has been a privilege to serve as both a Canterbury City Councillor and Kent County Councillor during the last year and I remain committed to working on your behalf, listening to your concerns, celebrating our successes and building a positive future together.

I was delighted to be re-elected to KCC in May, and it has certainly been an interesting few months as part of the Liberal Democrat group who are the official opposition to the Reform UK administration - that started with 57 councillors and just seven months later is down to 48.

There has been a lot of noise, media stunts and chaos without much substance, but the first real test of the new administration will be the setting of the budget for 2026/27 in the next few weeks. With the overspend in the current year currently predicted to be over £46 million, it will be interesting to see if Reform have been able to find any real savings to balance the books, or whether its all been smoke and mirrors.

There are currently strict spending controls and recruitment freezes in place at KCC to control spending which is hitting front line services, but despite this, Reform councillors have voted to recruit political assistants at a cost to the taxpayer that will exceed £100,000, a move that the opposition groups voted against.

I shall be keeping a very close eye on the KCC budget, especially to see how much council tax is increased by, whether there are increases in the cost of school bus passes, and what cuts in the care budgets might mean for the most vulnerable in Kent.

On Canterbury City Council, the budget consultation that has been running since November, closes on 6 January. We now know how much funding will be received from government and the final budget will be agreed in February. Unlike the KCC budget, it does contain a number of positive measures such as increased garden waste collections, no increases to most car parking charges with just a 10p increase in Band 1 car parks and a reduction in the Reculver Country Park parking rates, reduction in bulky waste collection charges and clearing of litter from the slip roads on the A2.



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