

TITLE
Corporate Debt Policy
DATE
10 January 2026
LEAD OFFICER.
Karen Powell Head of Income Payments and Corporate Debt
1 Summary description of the proposed change
What is the change to policy / service / new project that is being proposed? How does it compare with the current situation?
To update and refresh the Corporate Debt Policy to reflect current economic pressures, including rising interest rates, reduced disposable income, and general financial instability. Incorporate data-driven intelligence and tools that categorise residents by risk, enabling a tailored and holistic approach to debt management. To embed the principles of the Government's Debt Management Vulnerability Toolkit to ensure supportive and consistent treatment of residents experiencing vulnerability. At the same time, maintain a strong commitment to the fair and ethical recovery of public funds.
2 Summary of evidence used to support this assessment
E.g. Feedback from consultation, performance information, service user. E.g. Comparison of service user profile with Medway Community Profile
The Corporate Debt Policy should be reviewed annually. The last review took place in 2022 and given the ongoing economic instability and increased cost-of-living pressures, an update is now essential.

3 What is the likely impact of the proposed change?
Is it likely to: Adversely impact on one or more of the protected characteristic groups Advance equality of opportunity for one or more of the protected characteristic groups Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't (insert Yes when there is an impact or No when there isn't)

Protected characteristic groups (Equality Act 2010)	Adverse impact	Advance equality	Foster good relations
Age	No	No	Yes
Disability	No	No	Yes

Diversity impact assessment

Protected characteristic groups (Equality Act 2010)	Adverse impact	Advance equality	Foster good relations
Gender reassignment	No	No	No
Marriage/civil partnership	No	No	No
Pregnancy/maternity	No	No	Yes
Race	No	No	Yes
Religion/belief	No	No	No
Sex	No	No	No
Sexual orientation	No	No	No
Care experience	No	No	Yes
Other (e.g. low-income groups)	No	No	Yes

4 Summary of the likely impacts

Who will be affected?

How will they be affected?

The Policy positively impacts residents and the organisation:

It supports early intervention, a coordinated / collaborative approach, adjustments for personal circumstances, support for vulnerable residents and compliance with legislation.

It promotes prepayment, clear, accurate and timely billing, prompt resolution to disputes, recognition of vulnerability and financial difficulty, data driven intelligence and innovation, joined up approach with other teams / services.

It covers our commitment to residents, how we treat multiple debts and how we manage write offs.

5 What actions can be taken to mitigate likely adverse impacts, improve equality of opportunity or foster good relations?

What alternative ways can the Council provide the service?

Are there alternative providers?

Can demand for services be managed differently?

Diversity impact assessment

There is more likelihood to be an adverse impact if the policy is not implemented:

Without clear guidance, staff may apply different standards

Vulnerable residents without support are more likely to disengage, resulting in escalating debt and enforcement costs.

It upholds our statutory duties and positively supports our income collection strategy.

6 Action plan

Actions to mitigate adverse impact, improve equality of opportunity or foster good relations and/or obtain new evidence

Action	Lead	Deadline or review date
Circulate the updated policy amongst the teams dealing with debt.	Karen Powell	30/06/2026

7 Recommendation

The recommendation by the lead officer should be stated below. This may be: to proceed with the change, implementing the Action Plan if appropriate, consider alternatives, gather further evidence

If the recommendation is to proceed with the change and there are no actions that can be taken to mitigate likely adverse impact, it is important to state why.

It is recommended to approve the updated Corporate Debt Policy, which reflects the current economic challenges, outlines how we will support residents, and sets out our approach to income maximisation.

8 Authorisation

The authorising officer is consenting that the recommendation can be implemented, sufficient evidence has been obtained, and appropriate mitigation is planned, the Action Plan will be incorporated into the relevant Service Plan and monitored

Assistant Director

Date of authorisation