

RTW Town Council

How much will it cost?

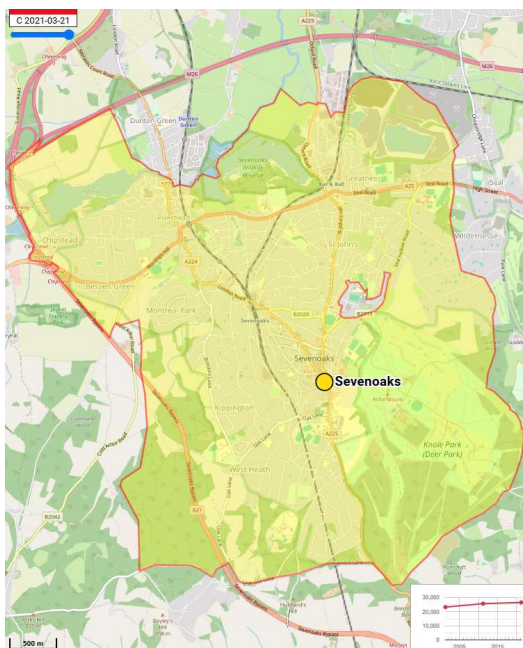
Depends on:

What it will do?

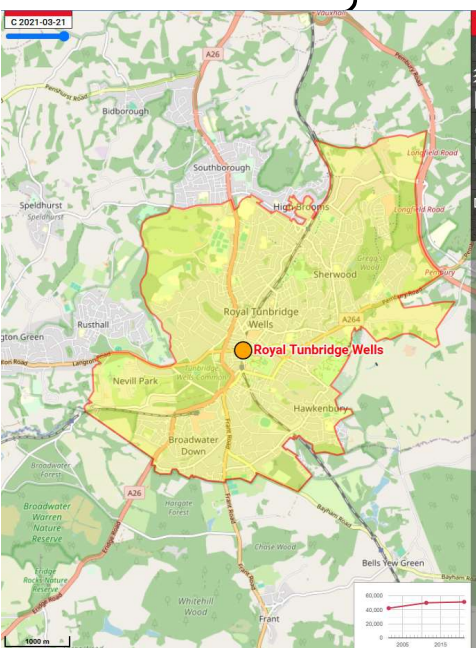
A comparison with Sevenoaks Town Council

(All figures - as per budgets 2025/26)

Sevenoaks (town) compared to Royal Tunbridge Wells



Name	County / District	Population Census 2001-04-29	Population Census 2011-03-27	Population Census 2021-03-21
Sevenoaks	Kent	23,202	25,654	26,479
Sevenoaks				
● 26,479 Population [2021] – Census				
◦ 11.31 km² Area				
● 2,341/km² Population Density [2021]				
● 0.32% Annual Population Change [2011 → 2021]				



Name	County / District	Population Census 2001-04-29	Population Census 2011-03-27	Population Census 2021-03-21
Royal Tunbridge Wells	Kent	42,278	49,892	51,232
Royal Tunbridge Wells				
● 51,232 Population [2021] – Census				
◦ 12.66 km² Area				
● 4,046/km² Population Density [2021]				
● 0.27% Annual Population Change [2011 → 2021]				

NB: Boundaries shown are close to but vary slightly to defined parishes.

Comparison Income **Sevenoaks** ↔ **RTW**

SEVENOAKS ANNUAL PRECEPT £1,545,147

- 77% of the budget comes from the domestic ratepayer's precept (council tax). The Town Council does not receive any portion of business rates or government grants.

RTW TOWN COUNCIL PRECEPT £2,560,075

- TWBC Council Tax (larger due to RTW's relative size) Already collected as part of TWBC Council Tax as Special Services.

(All figures - as per budgets 2025/26)

SEVENOAKS INCOME FROM SERVICES £451,949

- 22% of the budget comes from fees and services such as community halls, sports pitches, markets, cemetery, and cafe.

RTW INCOME FROM SERVICES £258,925 plus?

- Depends on assets and services retained by RTW Town Council.
- Assumes limited services retained as per TWBC budget). Could be substantially expanded based on assets and services within RTW and/or owned prior to TWBC.

Potential Services – Comparison

Sevenoaks – Existing

- Grants to local organisations £67K
- Cemetery
- Bus shelters
- 7 play areas
- 6 community buildings
- 17 public open spaces
- 2 allotment sites
- Community events
- Markets
- Public seats
- Youth Café & Youth Council
- 11 Sports Pitches
- Floral displays and Christmas Lights
- Litter bins and litter collecting
- Public toilets

RTW – Potential

There are comparable services and assets held in RTW which COULD be retained by the Town Council. Examples of note:

- Our **Cemetery** is a larger income producer
- Our multi story **car parks** are more significant.
- The **Town Hall** is a substantial asset currently over half used to generate income from shared working space.
- **RVP** is on land originally owned by Tunbridge Wells (predating TWBC)
- The Camden Centre, TN2, The Pump Room, The Amelia, The Assembly Hall provide **Community spaces**
- The **St John's sports centre** is leased by TWBC to the existing operator, earning money for both
- Several buildings (shops, homes and facilities) are owned by TWBC **earning rental income**
- **Each service and asset needs to be reviewed**

What will be the budget for **RTW Town Council?**

SEVENOAKS ANNUAL BUDGET

Total Annual Revenue
Budget £1,997,096

I. Annual Income from
Services £451,949

II. Annual Town Council Tax
£1,545,147

**Annual Cost per Household
(Band D) £153.67 per year /
£2.96 per week**

RTW COUNCIL potential BUDGET

Total Annual Revenue
Budget £2,819,000

I. Annual Income from
Services £258,925
*(based on limited services
retained)*

II. Annual Town Council
Tax £2,560,075

**Annual Cost per Household
(Band D) £134.79 per year /
£2.59 per week**

(All figures
- as per budgets 2025/26)

RTW Town Council – Challenges and opportunities

Challenges and Strategic Goals for RTW Town Council will need to be developed amid the challenge of the formation of West Kent Unitary Authority. Their focus will be on the difficult financial challenges of providing obligatory services and the funding of the sizeable debts inherited.

Some initial potential issues and goals:

1. TWBC does not have debt but does own substantial assets in RTW.
2. The Town Council's priorities will be ensuring existing services in RTW continue to operate cost effectively. Sevenoaks makes substantial use of the Volunteer Sector. We should do likewise, reinforcing the invaluable work of existing local voluntary groups by enhancing funding opportunities.
3. We need to address town specific issues inherent in our town with its long linear form and steep hill – to unite activities to benefits our residents, preferably on a self funded basis.
4. We should support “free to attend” community events such as Local & Live, The Mela, Lantern Parade and paid for events which also generate income and community.
5. Reviewing and consulting on the future of Community Assets subject to the local Government re-organisation.



Ensuring Community Engagement

Royal Tunbridge Wells








compared to

Sevenoaks



Existing local government structure



District / Borough Council				
Town Council		Elected on a political basis Popn. 26,000		Proposed new RTW Town Council Popn. 51,000
Residents Organisations	 Town Team Partnership	Comprises of Cllrs, residents' assoc., businesses, police, not for profit bodies	 ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS TOWN FORUM	No longer supported by the Borough. Residents' assoc., not for profit bodies
Business Improvement District (BID)	 Being formed for whole area	Being formed by Town Team Partners. Supported by the Town Council	 ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS TOGETHER BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT	Formed as a community Interest Company (CIC), taxing ability

Likely local government structure - many questions to be answered

West Kent Unitary Authority

Likely: Maidstone, Sevenoaks, Tonbridge and Malling, Tunbridge

Will some power, services, assets and revenue be devolved down to Town Councils and parishes

Town Council		Elected on a political basis	New RTW Town Council	Political or not? What will be its powers, assets, services?
Residents Organisations		Redefining its role to ensure greater community involvement.		Now has a CIC. Can it take a similar partnership role?
Business Improvement District (BID)	 Being formed for whole area	Should it link with other West Kent town organisations		Should it work more closely with the proposed Town Council and Town Forum?

