

**Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2025-26**

**1. Balances brought forward:**

Difference 6%.

**2. Precept:**

Difference: 13%

The Council saw an increase in its tax base from 2024-25 to 2025-26 of 466.46 (from 5338.76 to 5805.22), a 9% increase.

The Council agreed an increase in the budget of £111,405 (14%), which included, amongst other things:

- An increase in funds to allocated to maintain the council’s parks and recreation grounds (including earmarked reserves for future works) from £62,450 to £117,493, an 88% increase.
- An increase in the budget for work at the Council’s community hall of £6,310 (13%) including £30,000 earmarked reserved.
- Increased staff costs (see below).

**3. Total other receipts:**

Difference: 14%

The Council’s receipts decreased by £13,389 in 2025-26 compared with 2024-25.

In 2024-25 the Council received a £25,000 grant from Muscular Dystrophy UK for a Changing Places Toilet. Removing that from the 2024-25 figure, the total other receipts would be £72,786.86. The difference would therefore 16%. A comparison table has been prepared.

<b>Receipts Comparison</b>	<b>2024/25</b>	<b>2025/26</b>	<b>variance</b>
Bank Interest	£7,206.64	£8,461.48	17%
Mayor's Civic event(s)	£3,447.52	£10,778.73	213%
Tennis court hire	£5,367.85	£6,260.98	17%
Hall Hire	£21,237.50	£22,884.08	8%
Allotment rent	£1,307.30	£1,228.10	6%
Boat Park permits	£2,868.72	£2,185.79	24%
Grass cutting grant (DCC)	£4,846.00	£4,992.00	3%
Grass cutting neighbouring parish	£2,772.00	£2,772.00	0%
Annual May Fair	£3,281.72	£3,727.52	14%
Rent for Appledore car park	£5,062.50	£4,812.50	5%
Rent for Appledore car park - back payment	£2,500.00	£0.00	100%
Admin recharge	£5,833.33	£7,000.00	20%
Postage recharge	£0.00	£2,470.80	100%
Councillor’s grant to support summer tennis camps	£2,050.00	£0.00	100%
Footpath P3 Scheme	£2,500.00	£190.00	92%
Locality budget (DCC) grant	£796.32	£2,623.00	229%
Sale of mower (part exchange)	£0.00	£2,500.00	100%
Other receipts	£1,709.46	£1,511.17	12%
<b>Total</b>	<b>£72,786.86</b>	<b>£84,398.15</b>	<b>16%</b>

**4. Staff costs:**

Difference: 11%

All staff received the nationally agreed pay award of 3.2%. Northam Town Council started 2025-26 with 7 full time and 2 part time staff (both 24hr/week).

The increase in the salaries and PAYE costs of £33,557 was to cover the increases in salaries applied nationally and annual increments.

Turnover of staff meant that staff were on lower spinal column points than those they replaced.

All staff but one advanced one spinal column point. The maintenance team was expanded by one full-time member of staff in July 2025.

The Council ended 2025-26 with 8 full time and 2 part time staff (both 24hr/week).

**5. Loan repayments:**

Difference: 2%      The difference was less than 15%, no explanation required.

**6. All other payments:**

Difference: 6%      The difference was less than 15%, no explanation required.

**7. Balances carried forward:**

Difference: 8%      The difference was less than 15%, no explanation required.

**8. Total value of cash and short-term investments:**

Difference: 8%      The difference was less than 15%, no explanation required.

**9. Fixed assets:**

Difference: 2%      The difference was less than 15%, no explanation required.

**10. Total borrowings:**

Difference: 3%

The Council's borrowing reduced in line with its repayments. All borrowings are with the Public Works Loan Board (PWLb). The outstanding amounts at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026 were:

PW494644	£43,500
264236	£118,754
322659	£94,343
Total	£256,597

**Precept vs Reserves ratio:**

Precept: £644,337: Reserves: £243,740 (2.6:1)

The Council's precept in 2025-26 was greater than its budgeted reserves, therefore no further explanation is required.



G Langton (Town Clerk and RFO)

11<sup>th</sup> June 2026