

**Penshurst Parish Council Annual Assembly 7 April 2026 Report from
KCC Councillor Robert Mayall**

I was elected nearly one year ago in May 2025 as the Kent County Councillor for Sevenoaks Rural South Division. This was slightly to my surprise but I am delighted and proud to represent this division.

Since my election along with 57 of my Reform colleagues, we have been busy putting the Kent County Council back on an even keel.

- Taking control of KCC, Reform UK inherited debts of £732 million and was paying debt interest charges of £84k each day. We set a target of £121 million in savings and increased income to achieve in 2025/26. In the first six months, we reduced the debt by £67 million and £100 million of the savings and income target has been implemented, with an additional £40m of future savings found.
- Ensured a balanced budget for 2026/2027.
- No cuts to services.
- The Council tax was increased by 3.99%. Less than any in last 14 years.

Taking control of the Council having previously had no Reform councillors was not without its problems as we had to elect a leadership team amongst a group of councillors who didn't really know each other. Certain councillors who didn't like the initial leadership election result started stirring the pot. Their rejection from the Reform group, whilst reducing our majority on the Council was a benefit to the cohesiveness of the Reform administration. The rejects have mainly joined the Restore Party and another one is in prison. Their behaviour since has been rather erratic as they have supported various left wing causes.

A big current issue is LGR (Local Government Reform). The Reform council supports a proposal known as Option 1A where there would be a unitary authority for the whole of Kent as there is now. The elected councillors for this council would then sit on 3 local assemblies covering different areas of Kent to deal with issues such as housing and planning. Other proposals put forward by other district councils propose dividing Kent into 3 or 4 unitary authorities. The Reform administration support for the 1A proposal is based on the view that it would cause far less upheaval and expense. The alternative proposals would mean that county wide services such as adult social care and SEND would need to be disaggregated with 3 or 4 new bureaucracies for each of the new unitary administrations instead of one. The KCC Reform proposal would save £69 million a year. The estimated £99 million transition cost would be paid back

within 3 years and would provide an extra £457 million for front line services which is far more cost effective than any of the other proposals. The Reform groups opinion is LGR is a total waste of time and money, but we are forced to go along with it and to submit a proposal along with other councils. Even at this stage we have doubts it is ever going to happen and the whole thing may be kicked into the long grass as the government is overwhelmed by other problems.