



Andover Town Council

Item
No.

To consider and approve the 2026/2027 budget.

That Full Council:

1. **approve** the budget, **Option 3**, (in compliance with statutory requirements and Financial Regulations) see [spreadsheet](#) as per recommendation from the Policy and Resources Committee.
The budget was considered and recommended to protect reserves and deliver a balanced budget while accommodating predicted spending.
2. **approves removal or population of** all zero-value budget lines.

Produced for: Full Council

By: Town Clerk/RFO and Cllr S Hardstaff

Date of Report: 8 January 2026.

Annual Budget and Precept Approval

In accordance with the Local Government Finance Act 1992, parish councils are required to set an annual budget and approve a precept to fund council services. It is unlawful to set a precept without a formally approved budget.

Further, under Andover Town Council's Financial Regulations (Section 4.6), the Council must review and approve the annual budget prior to determining the precept.

In accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations, budget proposals have undergone thorough review by each relevant committee on two occasions, and the full budget has been considered twice by the Policy and Resources Committee. This final proposal is now presented to Full Council for approval, following careful scrutiny by all committees.

The budget has been prepared in line with Andover Town Council's agreed Business Plan, which was developed through public consultation with the residents of Andover. This ensures that the Council's budget enables the delivery of the priorities and initiatives identified by the community, including filling the vacant position to appoint a staff member responsible for securing external grant funding. This will help reduce the Council's reliance on the precept as its sole source of income.

Local Government Reorganisation:

Members are reminded that with LGR approaching more could be asked of the Town Council in terms of assets and services. Members would be financially prudent to keep this in mind when considering the budget. It is not advised that money be allocated for this purpose at this time, but it is recommended that where finances are needed in order to prepare the Town Council for the upcoming LGR it would be prudent to consider allocating them.

All considerations taken during budget scrutiny have been outlined in [Appendix 1](#).

Recommendation:

That Full Council:

1. **approve** the budget, **Option 3**, (in compliance with statutory requirements and Financial Regulations) see [spreadsheet](#) as per recommendation from the Policy and Resources Committee.
The budget was considered and recommended to protect reserves and deliver a balanced budget while accommodating predicted spending.
2. **approves removal or population of** all zero-value budget lines.

Balance Sheet				Bank balance:	£873,484.94
Income 2025/2026		Expenditure 2025/2026		Planned Expenditure	
Precept	£591,494.00	IT Equipment	£82.50	Remaining budget for 2025/26	£332,823.35
Allotment Rent	£32,674.59	Corporate Management	£6,708.54	Earmarked - Elections	£80,000.00
Bank Interest	£2,545.55	Democratic Representation	£2,971.96	Earmarked - Allotments	£18,500.00
Sponsorship	£1,550.00	Election Costs	£0.00	Earmarked - Christmas Lights	20700
VAT Refund	£20,956.75	Staffing - Employment Costs	£116,399.36	Earmarked - Property Purchases	152000
		Staffing - Non Salaried	£5,625.22	Earmarked - Staffing	21000
		Administration - Office Costs	£26,768.68	CIL - Funds held separately from General	£58,399.92
		Planning/Highways	£2,279.20		
		Allotment Service	£20,168.04		
		Grants	£6,824.64		
		Events & Projects	£86,752.78		
		Staff Training	£1,279.60		
		Staff Travel	£10.13		
Total Income:	£649,220.89	Total Expenditure:	£275,870.65	Total Planned Expenditure:	£843,423.27
				General Reserves:	£30,061.67

Balance sheet as of 2nd October 2025

Options outlined:

From spreadsheet

	Option 1 no increase	Option 2 - 5% increase	Option 3 - 5% increase + agreed amendments (10% for allotments)
Percentage increase to budget	0%	6.71%	14.37%
Total budget needed to cover costs (exp - income)	£591,494.00	£620,638.71	£669,105.33
Precept 25/26	£591,494.00	£591,494.00	£591,494.00
Increase to budget to cover proposed costs. (increase needed to cover proposed budget - precept 25/26)	£0.00	£29,144.71	£77,611.33
Precept implications			
Precept needed	£591,494	£620,638.71	£669,105.33
Predicted precept increase	0%	4.93%	12.34%
Increase per Band D property based on 17,482 per annum (an increase of 121 properties from 25/26)	£0	£1.67	£4.20
per month	£0	£0.14	£0.35
Total precept per annum per band D property 2026/2027	£33.83 <small>(sum will go down because of additional 121 Band D properties)</small>	£35.74	£38.27

Important to note:

Budget 1 – No Increase

This option reflects the budget set last year, not the actual outturn. Maintaining this level will likely result in insufficient funds to cover payroll obligations, prevent the Council from initiating new projects or incentives, that have been identified by the Business Plan, and leave inadequate resources for the upkeep of allotments.

Budget 2 – 5% Increase

The increase appears as 5.15% due to rounding adjustments. However, even with this increase, the budget would still fall short of meeting payroll requirements, including filling the vacant position with a staff member dedicated to securing grant funding to reduce reliance on the precept, and providing adequate funding for allotment maintenance, and prevent the Council from initiating new projects or incentives, that have been identified by the Business Plan.

Budget 3 – 5% Increase with Amendments

This option incorporates a 5% increase alongside targeted adjustments. It provides sufficient provision for payroll, including filling the vacant position with a staff member dedicated to securing grant funding to reduce reliance on the precept. It also includes an appropriate uplift to the allotment budget to address rising labour and material costs and ensures capacity for future projects currently under discussion as identified by the Business Plan.

Recommendation:

That Full Council:

1. **Reviews** and **approves** the 2026/2027 budget as recommended by the Policy and Resources Committee.
2. **Remove** or **populate** all zero-value budget lines and do not add new ones without an allocated amount, or allocate funds to the new budget lines.
3. **Approves** the budget in compliance with statutory requirements and Financial Regulations.

Appendix 1

Items that have been considered during budget scrutiny:

The C&E Committee have recommended the following (which is reflected in the budget paperwork. Minute numbers indicated below):

1. CE 149/11/25/ CE 148/11/25 Community Engagement budget line be £1,000.00 and that the Annual Electors meeting funds be taken from this budget line.
2. CE 150/11/25 The Miscellaneous Events budget line be zeroed.
3. CE 151/11/25 Andover Pride budget line be increased by 5% to £7875.00.
4. CE 152/11/25 The Youth Services budget line remain unchanged at £50,000.00
5. CE 153/11/25 The Pensioners Service (Plus 55's) budget line remain unchanged at £20,000.00.
6. CE 154/11/25 The Grants budget line be decreased to £35,000.00.
7. CE 155/11/25 The Poppy Trail budget line be reduced to £1,300.00.
8. CE 156/11/25 The Defibrillator Provision budget line be decreased to £1,000.00.
9. CE 117/10/25 The existing budget line for the King's Coronation be zeroed and a new line added for the Storage of Coronation Lights – £200.
10. CE114/10/25 that the Christmas Lights budget be increased to £55,000 to accommodate the new extension and lights.
11. CE 116/10/25 that the addition of the following new budget lines be approved:
 - Macmillan Morning – £200
 - Christmas Carol Event – £1,000
 - World War II – £0 (line zeroed)
 - Andover War Memorial Hospital Centenary Community Event – £4,000 (CE 157/11/25)
 - Town Charter Celebrations – £1,000
12. CE 118/10/25 That the following new budget lines be added with a zero figure for the time being:
 - Annual Electors' Meeting (as above it was subsequently agreed that this will come from the Community Engagement budget line CE 149/11/25)
 - Graffiti Wall
 - Community Opportunities (Item 11 – Annual Electors Meeting (AEM) - it was agreed to change this budget line to use for AEM) –(no longer required as per above CE 149/11/25/ CE 148/11/25)
13. CE 115/10/25 The administration and management of the Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs) be moved from the Community and Events Committee to the Planning Committee.

The Allotments Committee have recommended the following (which is reflected in the budget paperwork. Minute numbers indicated below):

1. AC038/10/25 Allotment budget increase of 10% to accommodate rising material and labour costs
2. AC039/10/25 that grounds maintenance for the Ox Drove allotment site be increased to £2500 to accommodate grass cutting

The Planning Committee have recommended the following (which is reflected in the budget paperwork. Minute numbers indicated below):

1. PC 136/11/25 That SID's admin and management budget line increase to £4,500 to support increased management fees.

The Policy and Resources Committee have recommended the following (which is reflected in the budget paperwork. Minute numbers indicated below):

- PR 053/11/25 that the removal of budget lines with zero amounts and any duplicate lines be removed to improve clarity.

Summary:

Committee	Minute number	Amount	Note
Community and Events	CE 149/11/25 / CE 148/11/25	£1,000	Community Engagement budget line and that the Annual Electors meeting funds be taken from this budget line.
Community and Events	CE 150/11/25	£0	The Miscellaneous Events budget line.
Community and Events	CE 151/11/25	£7,875	Andover Pride budget line

Community and Events	CE 152/11/25	£50,000	The Youth Services budget line
Community and Events	CE 153/11/25	£20,000	The Pensioners Service (Plus 55's) budget line
Community and Events	CE 154/11/25	£35,000	The Grants budget line.
Community and Events	CE 155/11/25	£1,300	The Poppy Trail budget line.
Community and Events	CE 156/11/25	£1,000	The Defibrillator Provision budget line
Community and Events	CE 117/10/25	£200	King's Coronation budget line zeroed; new line added for Storage of Coronation Lights.
Community and Events	CE 114/10/25	£55,000	Christmas Lights budget line
Community and Events	CE 116/10/25	£200	Macmillan Coffee Morning budget line
Community and Events	CE 116/10/25	£1,000	Christmas Carol Event budget line
Community and Events	CE 116/10/25	£0	World War II budget line
Community and Events	CE 116/10/25	£4,000	Andover War Memorial Hospital Centenary Community Event (CE 157/11/25).
Community and Events	CE 116/10/25	£1,000	Town Charter Celebrations budget line.
Community and Events	CE 118/10/25	£0	Annual Electors' Meeting (subsequently agreed to come from CE 149/11/25 / CE 148/11/25).
Community and Events	CE 118/10/25	£0	Graffiti Wall budget line.
Community and Events	CE 118/10/25	£0	Community Opportunities (Item 11 - AEM; line no longer required as per CE 149/11/25 / CE 148/11/25).
Community and Events	CE 115/10/25		Administration and management of SIDs moved from Community & Events to Planning Committee.
Allotments	AC 038/10/25		Allotment budget increase of 10% to accommodate rising material and labour costs.
Allotments	AC 039/10/25	£2,500	Ox Drove grounds maintenance increased to £2,500 for grass cutting.
Planning	PC 136/11/25	£4,500	SID admin & management budget line increase to £4,500 to support increased management fees.
Policy and Resource	PR 053/11/25		Removal of zero-amount and duplicate budget lines to improve clarity.
Policy and Resource	PR 050/11/25	£300,000	Payroll budget line accommodate vacant role and potential LGPS payments

Source: 20250107 – Jan – P&R – Budget considerations

Notes:

Zero value budget lines.

P&R (Minute PR 053/11/25) recommended removing all zero-value and duplicate budget lines to improve clarity. CE (Minute CE 118/10/25) proposed adding new budget lines with a zero figure for now.

The position is that budget lines should only be included if funds are allocated. Zero-value lines imply no budget provision and any expenditure would need to come from operational reserves. Each line represents a financial commitment; if an item is introduced mid-year without a budget, it again draws on reserves.

Allotment budget increase

For information only.

Please note that in 2022 it was resolved to accept the recommendation from the Allotment Committee to increase the allotment rental increase of 10% per year over the next 4 years and to change the billing period to 1st October to 30th September as listed in Appendix E (C165/02/22)

Overall figures for increase to current date:

	2022	2025 (to date)
Price per sq metre	£0.40	£0.53
Total income from allotments	£26,250	£33,041.98

Measures taken to reduces costs on allotments were:

- Removal of toilets
- Wardens carry more responsibility for grass cutting and vacant plot maintenance
- Reclaiming of costs from previous tenants upon vacating plots

The increase was applied from 2023 so the final year of this increase will be 2027. If members are minded to increase the allotment rental, following a thorough and robust review as to reasonableness, to mitigate budgetary increase requirements then a decision will need to be made, by the Allotment Committee and recommended for approval to Full Council, and tenants notified before 6 April 2027 to comply with legislation.

Requirement	Description	Legislative Reference
Reasonableness	Rent must be justified and comparable to local rates—excessive profit indicates unreasonableness.	Allotments Act 1950, s.10(1)
Notice Period	A full 12 months' advance notice is mandatory, unless tenancy agreement allows shorter fair revision.	Allotments Act 1922, s.1 (as amended)
Timing of Notification	Notices must be issued outside the growing season (April 6–Sept 29).	Allotments Act 1922, s.1