ANDOVER TOWN COUNCIL
Extra-ordinary Full Council Meeting
The Lights, Andover
25 November 2026 6:00PM

To all members of Andover Town Council.

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting when it is proposed to transact the business on the agenda.

Please note that there are members of the Council who are neurodiverse and those with physical disabilities (e.g. hearing loss), reasonable adjustments will be made to accommodate this. Please be mindful of this and adjust your behaviour if necessary.

AGENDA

ITEM		DETAIL	Item Lead	Enc.
1.	**Public session**	To **receive** questions from members of the public and to respond if appropriate or to direct officers to respond in writing after the meeting.	**Mayor**	
2.	**Apologies**	To **note** apologies for absence.	**Mayor**	
3.	**Interests**	To **receive** pecuniary or non-pecuniary declarations of interests for agenda items or dispensation requests.	**Mayor**	
4.	**By-election Poll Cards and Elections Earmarked Reserve**	To **receive** the report of the Town Clerk and RFO and: a) to **decide** whether to request that the TVBC Returning Officer issues official poll cards for the [Ward name] Ward by-election on Tuesday 12 January 2027; b) if so, to **approve** expenditure of up to £6,000 from budget line 4180/1 (Elections), to be incurred only if the election is contested; c) to **note** the financial position of budget line 4180/1 and the Elections Earmarked Reserve ahead of the May 2027 elections; d) to **agree** that replenishment of the Elections Earmarked Reserve is considered as part of the 2027/28 budget and precept; and e) to **authorise** the Town Clerk to notify TVBC Electoral Services of the Council's decision immediately following the meeting.	**Mayor**	✔
5.	**Next meeting**	To **note** the date of the next Full Council meeting is **Wednesday 9 December 2026 to** be held at **The Upper Guildhall, Andover, at 6.30pm.**	**Mayor**	

Signed: Town Clerk. 19 November 2026.

Andover Town Council under the Localism Act 2011, Chapter 1, ss.1–8, the General Power of Competence.

	Andover Town Council **Official Poll Cards for the By-election on 12 January 2027 and the Elections Earmarked Reserve**	Item No. **4**

Committee	Full Council (Extraordinary Meeting)
Date of meeting	25 November 2026
Agenda item	4
Report author	Tor Warburton, Town Clerk and RFO
Purpose	For decision

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 To decide whether to request official poll cards for the [Ward name] Ward by-election on **Tuesday 12 January 2027**, and to note the impact of election costs on budget line 4180/1 (Elections) and the Elections Earmarked Reserve (EMR) ahead of the May 2027 Town Council elections.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That Full Council:

a) **DECIDES** whether to request that the TVBC Returning Officer issues official poll cards for the by-election;

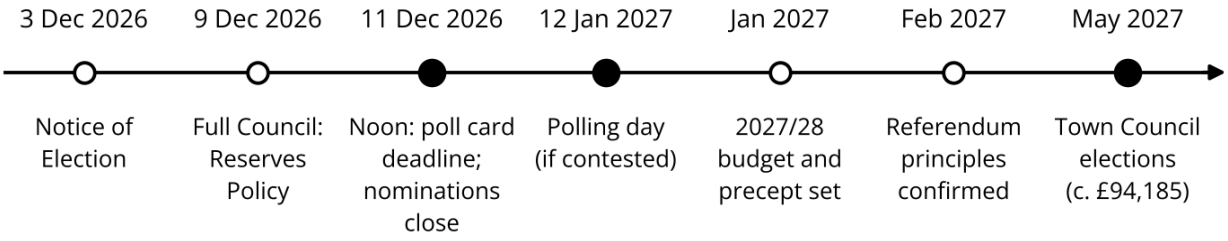
b) if so, **APPROVES** expenditure of up to £6,000 from budget line 4180/1 (Elections), incurred only if the election is contested;

c) **NOTES** the financial position of budget line 4180/1 and the Elections EMR set out in Section 5;

d) **AGREES** that replenishment of the Elections EMR is considered in the 2027/28 budget and precept; and

e) **AUTHORISES** the Town Clerk to notify TVBC Electoral Services of the decision immediately after this meeting.

3. Key Dates



3.1 The Council must ask for poll cards by noon on Friday 11 December 2026 (the nineteenth working day before polling day, to be confirmed with TVBC). This is the same day nominations close, so the decision has to be made before the Council knows whether the election is contested. If the seat is uncontested, there is no poll and no poll cards are printed or posted.

4. Poll Cards: Options

Option	Cost	For	Against
A. Request poll cards	£5,500 to £6,000 (only if contested)	• Tells every elector the date, hours and their polling station • Reminds electors to bring photo ID • Helps turnout in a post-Christmas poll • Reaches residents who are not online	• Not a legal requirement • Reduces the Elections budget when the EMR is about to be heavily drawn on
B. Do not request poll cards	Nil	• Saves up to £6,000 • Statutory notices are published by TVBC regardless • ATC can promote the poll through its website, social media, noticeboards and press	• Risk of lower turnout • Electors less clear on where to vote and the ID requirement

5. Financial Position

5.1 Running a contested poll will cost an estimated £5,000 to £6,000 (hall hire and staffing) whether or not poll cards are requested, based on the Downlands Ward by-election, which cost £10,753.88 in total. Budget line 4180/1 (Elections) now stands at £16,808.62.

Budget line 4180/1 (Elections)	**Estimated cost**	**Balance remaining**
Contested, without poll cards	£5,000 to £6,000	£10,808.62 to £11,808.62
Contested, with poll cards	£10,500 to £12,000	£4,808.62 to £6,308.62

Elections Earmarked Reserve	**Amount**
Current balance	£108,000.00
Less: May 2027 elections (minimum £2.50 per elector, excluding some admin costs)	(£94,185.00)
Estimated balance after May 2027	**£13,815.00**
Contribution needed to restore c. £94,000 by May 2031	**c. £20,100 a year**

5.2 The Council normally carries this reserve over each four-year cycle so that every ordinary election, and any by-election in between, is funded. The May 2027 elections will almost entirely deplete it. The annual contribution shown is at today's prices and excludes cost increases, electorate growth and further by-elections, so the real requirement is likely to be higher. ATC is therefore looking at increasing the EMR, potentially through the precept, as election costs are a mandatory expense. Any unspent balance on 4180/1 at year end could also be transferred to the EMR, subject to Council approval.

6. Legal Framework

Legislation / guidance	**What it means for ATC**
Local Elections (Parishes and Communities) (England and Wales) Rules 2006	Poll cards are only issued at a stand-alone town council election if the Council requests them, by noon on the nineteenth working day before the poll.
Representation of the People Act 1983, s.36(5)	TVBC may recharge the Returning Officer's election costs to the Council. These costs are mandatory; only poll cards are optional.
Local Government Act 1972, ss.16 and 89	Ordinary elections must be held every four years. A casual vacancy must be filled by election if ten electors request one.
Local Government Finance Act 1992, ss.41 and 49A(2)(c)	The precept may lawfully include sums the Council considers appropriate to raise as reserves for estimated future expenditure, such as elections.
Local Government Act 1972, s.151; JPAG Practitioners' Guide	The RFO must ensure proper financial administration, and proper practice expects earmarked reserves for known future liabilities.
Local Government Finance Act 1992, Chapter 4ZA (referendum principles)	A council exceeding a set council tax limit must win a local referendum. The limit does not apply to town councils in 2026/27 and the Government intends this to continue to 2028/29, but 2027/28 is only confirmed in law when Parliament approves the annual report, usually in February.

7. Risks

Risk	Consequence	Mitigation
No poll card decision by 11 December	Poll cards cannot be issued	Decide at this meeting and notify TVBC immediately
Poll cards declined	Lower turnout; electors unclear on polling station or photo ID	ATC website, social media, noticeboards and press release
Elections EMR not replenished	By-elections in 2027 to 2031 and the May 2031 elections unfunded; possible comment from internal or external auditor	Build an EMR contribution into the 2027/28 budget and precept
Government applies referendum principles to town councils for 2027/28	A precept increase large enough to rebuild the EMR could need a referendum and could be overturned by a public vote, leaving future elections unfunded	Low risk given the Government's stated position. Officers will check the provisional settlement (December 2026) before the precept is set

7.1 This position should also inform the review of the Financial Reserves Policy (2019) at Policy and Resources Committee on 2 December 2026 and Full Council on 9 December 2026.