

Agenda Item 9 – Budget 2026-27 Update

Following on from the October meeting some additional preparation work has been undertaken on the budget for 2026-27.

A draft spreadsheet accompanies this paper giving some indicative figures.

Key Points

1. There is a predicted underspend as set out in the spreadsheet although the figure will not be more accurately known until closer to the end of the financial year. Any underspend can be used either to offset an increase in the 2026-27 Precept, to top up reserves where required, or to set up new reserves to account for additional cost pressures such as Local Government Re-Organisation, elections etc....
2. It is proposed that the Neighbourhood Plan Reserve is renamed Neighbourhood Plan Projects Reserve and that some funds are transferred to this reserve to allow for projects coming forward through the Neighbourhood Plan Advisory Committee. There is £19,000 in the General Opportunity/Community Projects Reserve and £17,000 in the Local Community Projects Reserve (earmarked for grants) and a portion of either or both could be transferred across, or some of the potential underspend utilised depending on other pressures.
3. It is suggested that given the funds already in reserves for local projects the Capital budget for this is removed from 2026-27 and instead £5,000 allocated towards the potential costs of Local Government Re-Organisation.
4. Following the Council decision on Litter Picker recruitment the Staff budget has been adjusted to account for the agreed 8 hours per week plus cover as required and a contingency in case additional hours are needed.
5. Whilst an allowance has been made for Litter Picker cover in the staff budget as above, the current person providing the cover is retiring and it may prove difficult to find someone who is willing to be paid via PAYE on an ad hoc basis (0 hour contract). It should be noted that under the Employment Rights Bill workers on 0 hour contracts are likely to get the right to guaranteed working hours from 2027 and so this arrangement will not suit the Parish Council longer term in any case. There is also an allowance within the Office Admin budget to use a contractor to partially cover if required. This cannot be included in staff costs as it is not a salary payment. Currently the Handyman

contractor will litter pick Jubilee Field and Orchard Way if needed, other areas can be arranged. In recognition of the potential need to use a contractor more frequently the budget has been increased by 50% to £900.

6. Quotes for several contracts are being considered at this Council meeting, and the draft budget will be adjusted according to the decisions made.
7. Weed Spraying is being considered at this Council meeting, and the draft budget will be adjusted according to the decision made and quotes then obtained if required.
8. As previously mentioned, Council will need to decide whether to fully insure all its physical assets for loss or damage and increase the budget to an appropriate level to accommodate this.

The budget will be finalised for full consideration and agreement at the special budget meeting to be held on the 18th December, with the Precept being set at the 8th January meeting.

Debbie Bird
Willand Parish Clerk
November 2025