REPORT TO FINANCE COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE BUDGET 2026/27

Report Reference	F-26-05
Meeting Date	14th September 2026
Agenda Item	9
Prepared by	Town Clerk

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Each committee is required to set a draft budget for the financial year commencing 1st April 2027. All draft budgets will then be amalgamated and presented to a special meeting of the Finance Committee in December where the committee will agree a recommendation to Full Council for a budget and precept.

The draft budget is split into three sections covering the previous (2025/26) financial year, current financial year and the next financial year. The 2025 column shows actual spend against budget. The 2026 column shows the current budget (total), actual spend year to date, projected spend by year end and commitments. The 2027 column shows agreed (i.e. draft) budget; the ERM and carried forward columns are not used.

This report provides a summary of the changes within the cost centres.

2.0 COST CENTRE COMMENTARY

101 CENTRAL ADMIN

Interest is forecast to be substantially above budget due to the impending capital receipt from the sale of 60 King Street. It is possible the council will utilise the capital receipt (or a significant part of it) to fund works to the Council Offices; an assumption is made that this takes place in the second half of 2027/28 so the interest on higher funds is calculated for half the year, with the second half reverting to standard balances. In the event this is not the correct timeline (i.e. works are later in the year / not in year) the additional income will contribute to a positive year end position for 2027/28. This budget provision will be reviewed following the Assets and Operations Committee considering the Council Office Improvement Plan and more certainty to the timescales.

The council does not include a budget for CIL income as it is not guaranteed and, due to statutory restrictions, does not impact the precept calculation. Any CIL income in the account at year end is committee to an earmarked reserve.

Contrary to forecasts that the renewal of insurance would be significantly above previous years, the council's insurance budgets are underspent. Following the disposal of 60 King Street, insurance values may be adjusted as the total council insurance will significantly reduce – when the council acquired insurance responsibility for the building its wider premiums reduced due to the overall value, so there may be some increase. This will be confirmed once disposal takes place, and in any case be balanced by an overall reduction in insurance costs from no longer insuring the building.

In early 2026, RBS changed its fees for Bankline, significantly increasing costs of the banking system.

This led to an overspend in the last financial year and above budget expenditure in the current financial year.

102 CIVIC

No significant changes.

103 FUNDED SERVICES AND LARGE GRANTS

The deadline for large grant applications is 30th September, to date none have been received. Council has already approved funding for Toft Cricket Club for 2027 so this is included, other large grants are not included in the draft presented – direction is sought from the committee whether to include figures (subject to any application received) for the version which is consulted upon, noting it has a significant impact on the published precept calculation otherwise.

The Millennium Bursary has been increased by 3.3% for 2027; the higher expenditure in the current year includes the 2025 bursary, due to the date of payment.

104 MAYOR'S CIVIC COSTS

The Mayoral Allowance has been increased by 3.3%.

The Civic Regalia budget has been increased by £2,000 to fund the purchase of new Past Mayor's Medallions. Five medallions are purchased at a time, and the final medallion will be presented to the incumbent mayor at the end of the year. A quote has been obtained from the supplier to inform the budget.

The External Contractors budget has been increased to reflect costs in the current and previous civic years, where the 2056 (Knutsford) Sqd ATC band has not been available for the Civic Sunday parade, and a brass band has been book in their stead. The current year costs are slightly lower due to the arrangements for funding the traffic management for the event (the council has funded the training for Rotary Club members, spread across three codes where the club provides the service).

3.0 DECISION REQUIRED

The committee should agree a draft budget.