

MINUTES OF THE POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE

Held on Wednesday 21st January 2026 at 7.00pm

PRESENT: Cllr Mary DeBoos (Chair)
Cllr Peter Kelleher (Deputy Chair)
Cllr Andy Briers
Cllr Luke Dadford
Cllr Philip Day
Cllr Gareth DeBoos
Cllr Rae Frederick
Cllr Janet Georgiou (*from 7:04pm*)
Cllr Glenys Turner
Cllr James Swyer

IN ATTENDANCE: Charmaine Bennett, Town Clerk
Michelle Gordon, Finance Manager
Nicola Vodden, Office Manager

ABSENT: Cllr Michael Thierry

The Chair welcomed Michelle Gordon, Finance Manager to her first Policy and Finance Committee meeting since her appointment.

F/6502

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no members of the public present.

F/6503

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr Thierry.

F/6504

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

F/6505

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS

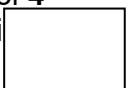
RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 10th December 2025 having been circulated, be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

F/6506

RESERVES

Members considered the Town Clerk's report and levels of reserves and proposed transfers for the Budget 2026/27 (*Annex A*). Each Committee had made recommendations on reserve levels, proposed transfers and future management of reserves and this is reflected in the draft budget, to be discussed later in the meeting.

It was proposed that there be no change to two reserves and gave reasons for proposed draw downs from the Gateway Building Provision fund and the Buildings Reserve, for reasons



outlined in the report. Concern was raised about the late notification of works to the Gateway building and the impact this has on the reserve.

At 7:04pm, Cllr Georgiou joined the meeting.

It was also noted that the Recreation, Leisure and Open Spaces Committee had agreed to a survey of Council owned properties, so there is a clearer understanding of their condition and to enable better planning of future maintenance.

RESOLVED: 1) That the Reserves Policy be noted; and
2) That the earmarked reserve levels and proposed transfers contained within the report be confirmed.

ACTION C Bennett / M Gordon

F/6507

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Members considered the financial reports presented as *Annex B*. The Town Clerk provided some additional detail on transactions made from the Imprest account in December.

In relation to the budget monitoring report, the Finance Manager indicated that she had been working on a revised budget to 31st March 2026. There had been some budget variations and the net effect shows a better position at the end of the financial year than was originally set. It is expected that the budget may break even or potentially have a slight underspend of around £5,000. This had been built into the draft budget for 2026/27.

There were no changes to the CIL report this month and the unallocated balance of £6,603.73 remains.

RESOLVED: 1) That the list of payments made from the Imprest Account for December be received and authorised;
2) That Cllr M DeBoos' verification and signing of bank reconciliations to end of December be noted;
3) That the updated Statement of Town Council Balances be received and Inter Account Transfers report be noted; and
4) That the Finance Manager's report on budget monitoring be received;
5) That the report and levels of CIL reserves be noted.

ACTION M Gordon

Before the next agenda item was discussed, the Chair requested the meeting go into private session, to consider a confidential matter which may have a bearing on the budget discussions to follow.

F/6508

EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That, in accordance with section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public were excluded because publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted (*Confidential minutes - Annex C*).

F/6509

CONFIDENTIAL MATTER

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RESOLVED: That the position be noted and the matter be considered further when legal advice has been obtained.

F/6510

COUNCIL BUDGET AND PRECEPT 2026/27

Members considered the Town Clerks' report on the draft Council budget for 2026/27 and precept (*Annex D*). She explained that a further review had been undertaken of the draft budget and each Committee had considered the reserve levels and proposed transfers and made recommendations to this Committee, which had been built into the revised draft.

The overall increase to the precept had reduced since the last meeting and the proposed increase was 8.57%. This includes increases to pay and inflation assumptions and an increase to the general reserve of £15,000, which takes the level up to 34% of the annual precept. It was proposed that the draft budget be accepted and this was agreed unanimously.

Officers were thanked for their work on budget preparation.

RESOLVED: 1) That the budget pressures, revised assumptions and reserve position set out in the Town Clerk's report be noted;
2) That the recommended earmarked reserve movements set out in Appendix B, be approved for inclusion within the draft budget.

RECOMMENDED:

- 1) That the draft budget for 2026/27 as set out in *Annex D* be approved; and
- 2) That a Council Tax precept of £740,842 for 2026/27 be approved and notified to New Forest District Council in accordance with statutory requirements.

ACTION C Bennett / M Gordon

F/6511

INTERNAL AUDIT

Members considered the Town Clerk's report (*Annex E*). She added that Southern Internal Partnership Audit Partnership had now confirmed their availability to conduct the internal audit.

RESOLVED: 1) That the position regarding the appointment of the Internal Auditor for 2025/26 be noted;
2) That Southern Internal Audit Partnership be engaged to conduct the internal audit, either with the existing named auditor or an alternative officer; and
3) That authority be delegated to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chair of Policy & Finance Committee, to make the necessary arrangements and report back to Members once confirmed.

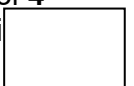
ACTION C Bennett

F/6512

PROJECTS (current and proposed)

The Town Clerk presented a new and improved version of the project update report, which provides details of projects which fall to the Committee. It was noted that the repairs to the Millennium Clock would be funded by Ringwood Carnival (not Ringwood Society).

Review of AGAR Assertion 10 had been added. This specifically relates to IT information governance and compliance will be included in the annual reporting requirements going forward.



The Annual Town Assembly will be refreshed and Cllrs Frederick, Turner and Day put themselves forward to join officers at future meetings, to discuss this.

RESOLVED: That the update in respect of projects (*Annex F*) be noted.

**F/6513
COMMUNICATIONS**

Nothing was raised under this item.

It was noted that there had been some recent social media communications to outline the Council's responsibilities and these were welcomed.

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 7.48pm.

Note: The text in the Action Boxes above does not form part of these minutes.

RECEIVED
28th January 2026

APPROVED
18th February 2026

TOWN MAYOR

COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

REPORT FOR POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE – 21 JANUARY 2026 RESERVES 2026/2027

1. Introduction and reason for report

- 1.1. This report provides the Policy & Finance Committee with the opportunity to review the earmarked reserves that fall within its areas of responsibility, including corporate, property and financial reserves, as part of the 2026/27 budget-setting process.
- 1.2. As part of budget development, service committees have reviewed the earmarked reserves relating to their services, assets and projects. This item provides the same opportunity for Policy & Finance Committee, in its capacity as a service committee, to consider the reserves within its remit and to inform the reserve assumptions incorporated into the draft Budget and Precept report considered later on this agenda.

2. Current context

- 2.1. The Council is currently finalising its budget for the forthcoming financial year. Officers have reviewed earmarked reserves considering committee feedback, known commitments and emerging pressures in order to produce a balanced draft budget.
- 2.2. Comments or observations arising from this discussion will inform the finalisation of the draft Budget and Precept report.

3. Matters for Consideration

Members are asked to consider:

- 3.1. Whether the earmarked reserves within the remit of the Policy & Finance Committee remain appropriate in purpose and level.
- 3.2. Whether there are any material risks or anticipated changes that should be taken into account in finalising the draft budget.

4. Recommendations:

That the Committee:

1. Notes the Reserves Policy; and
2. Considers the earmarked reserves within its remit and provides any comments or observations to inform the budget-setting process.

For further information, contact:

Charmaine Bennett, Town Clerk

Direct Dial: 01425 484720

Email: charmaine.bennett@ringwood.gov.uk

Schedule of reserves				
Title	Proposed annual contribution	Balance 1/4/25 (projected balance 1/4/26)	Purpose(s)/Function(s)	Management
Ear-marked provisions and reserves				
I.T. & Systems Provision	£2,700	£28,3000 (£12,058)	To meet the cost of completely replacing/updating the computers, telephones and related equipment when obsolete or at the end of life.	To support the planned replacement and renewal of IT and communications equipment, including councillor and remote-meeting capability. It is recommended that the existing annual contribution is maintained at this stage to rebuild the reserve while the scope and timing of future IT requirements are clarified. The appropriate target level for this reserve will be reviewed once this work is complete.

Schedule of reserves

Title	Proposed annual contribution	Balance 1/4/25 (projected balance 1/4/26)	Purpose(s)/Function(s)	Management
Gateway Building Provision	£0	£25,000 (£17,200)	To meet expected future demands for contributions towards the costs of major repairs or capital works to The Gateway council offices building. Original contribution to building costs was £300,000. Our contribution to major repairs or capital works is not expected to exceed £25,000	The Council has recently been notified of major works to replace the internal lighting at the Gateway. This will result in additional costs to the Council of £7,800 in the current financial year and £9,100 in 2026/27. Officers have recommended that these costs are met from this relevant earmarked reserve and that the reserve balance is restored to £25,000 over a five-year period. This approach has been reflected in the draft budget, as officers consider it preferable to the use of General Reserves, which would otherwise place additional pressure on the Council Tax precept.
Elections provision	£5,000	£5000 (£10,000)	To meet expected future demands for contributions towards the costs of elections to membership of the council (both predictable and non-predictable) (not currently expected to exceed £20,000)	Annual contributions of £5,000 from FY 2024-25 to achieve a target balance of £20,000 in an election year

Schedule of reserves				
Title	Proposed annual contribution	Balance 1/4/25 (projected balance 1/4/26)	Purpose(s)/Function(s)	Management
Buildings Reserve (Buildings Repair Provision)	£5,500	£51,533.97 (£38,503)	To act as a sinking fund to cover costs of major building repairs (for which the Council is liable) at Greenways, Carvers Clubhouse or 92 Southampton Road (not currently expected to exceed £75,000)	During the budget review process it was identified that a number of costs relating to works at 92 Southampton Road had been incurred and charged to the revenue account. Given the nature of these works and their relationship to the Council's property assets, officers have recommended that these costs are instead applied to the Buildings Repairs Provision, which more accurately reflects their purpose. In addition, Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces Committee has agreed that a priority for the current year is to commission a building condition survey. This will provide a clearer understanding of the condition of the Council's buildings and enable more effective forward planning of future maintenance and replacement costs. The outcomes of this work will inform future decisions on the appropriate level and long-term purpose of the Buildings Repairs Provision.

RINGWOOD TOWN COUNCIL

FINANCIAL REPORTS FOR

POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING

21st January 2026

Paid Expenditure Transactions

Start of year 01/04/25

paid between 01/12/25 and 31/12/25

B

Payment Reference	Paid date	Tn no	Order no	Gross	Vat	Net	Cttee	Details	Heading
DD	01/12/25	6193		£247.00	£0.00	£247.00	RLOS	New Forest District Council	NFDC Rates Cemetery December 2025 3200/1/5
DD	01/12/25	6194		£195.00	£0.00	£195.00	RLOS	New Forest District Council	NFDC Rates Carvers Clubhouse December 2025 3802/1/6
		6195/1		£8,351.74	£0.00	£8,351.74	P&F	Public Works Loan Board	Principle 2500/1/2
		6195/2		£2,046.25	£0.00	£2,046.25	P&F	Public Works Loan Board	Interest 2500/1/1
DD	01/12/25	6195		£10,397.99	£0.00	£10,397.99		Public Works Loan Board	PW499351 2500/1/2
2797	02/12/25	6084	RTC806638	£420.00	£70.00	£350.00	RLOS	S J Hire Ltd	extended Internet installation for fireworks event 3100/1
2790	02/12/25	6172	RTC806642	£100.81	£16.80	£84.01	RLOS	Letters & Logos Ltd	Fireworks 2 x correx a0 boards + viny qr stickers to advertise fireworks event 3100/1
		6174/1		£66.84	£0.00	£66.84	RLOS	Taste Vending Ltd	Inv 39043 coffee beans 3802/3/1
		6174/2		£45.60	£7.60	£38.00	RLOS	Taste Vending Ltd	coffee cups 3802/3/1
2791	02/12/25	6174	RTC806654	£112.44	£7.60	£104.84		Taste Vending Ltd	Coffee machine supplies for carvers clubhouse - Invoice 68122 order includes cups. 3802/3/1
									Only VAT on Cups - vat amount listed as £7.60
2793	02/12/25	6175	RTC806655	£66.84	£0.00	£66.84	RLOS	Taste Vending Ltd	Coffee machine sales at the clubhouse 3802/3/1
									invoice 66875
2794	02/12/25	6176	RTC806673	£259.20	£43.20	£216.00	RLOS	Paterson Landscapes	Event control barriers hired INV 4438 3100/1
		6177/1		£1,669.25	£278.21	£1,391.04	RLOS	Northover Energy	1200 ltrs white diesel and additive (cemetery) 3000/1/10
2795	02/12/25	6177	RTC806614	£1,669.25	£278.21	£1,391.04		Northover Energy	1200ltrs white diesel and additive - *** NOTE - with additive total price is £1391.04 (£1669.25 inc VAT)*** 3000/1/10
		6178/1		£253.20	£42.20	£211.00	P&F	SLCC Enterprises Ltd	Gold Package for 2 week period 2000/1/17
2796	02/12/25	6178	RTC806599	£253.20	£42.20	£211.00		SLCC Enterprises Ltd	Recruitment Advertising - Finance Manager / RFO 2000/1/17
2798	02/12/25	6179		£36.00	£6.00	£30.00	RLOS	Insight Security & Facilities Ltd	October 2025 3000/2/1
FPI	02/12/25	6196		-£57.75	£0.00	-£57.75	P&F	Winchester Science Centre	Refund 9999
2795	02/12/25	6197		£0.25	£0.00	£0.25	RLOS	Northover Energy	1168440 25p to be refunded 3000/1/10

Paid Expenditure Transactions

Start of year 01/04/25

paid between 01/12/25 and 31/12/25

B

Payment Reference	Paid date	Tn no	Order no	Gross	Vat	Net	Cttee	Details	Heading
DD	05/12/25	6199		£38.94	£6.49	£32.45	RLOS	Sky Business	05/12/25 - 04/01/26 3802/2/5
DD	08/12/25	6198		£259.61	£12.36	£247.25	RLOS	Yu Energy	November 2025 3802/1/3
2791	09/12/25	6173	RTC806653	£126.02	£0.00	£126.02	RLOS	Taste Vending Ltd	Coffee machine supplies - Invoice 69103 3802/3/1
DD	09/12/25	6200		£364.86	£60.81	£304.05	P&F	Siemens	07/12/25 - 06/03/26 2000/1/9
2999	09/12/25	6201	RTC806657	£3,456.00	£576.00	£2,880.00	RLOS	South Coast Hire Group	Stage, Lighting, sound system - rig set up £2450 3100/1
		6202/1		£1,470.00	£0.00	£1,470.00	P&F	Julie Flenley	Added extra cost of projector display £430 For locum finance manager services Nov 2025 2400/18
3000	09/12/25	6202	RTC806699	£1,470.00	£0.00	£1,470.00		Julie Flenley	For locum finance manager services Nov 2025 2400/18
		6203/1		£191.38	£0.00	£191.38	RLOS	Chris Wilkins	provision of consultancy services November 2400/18
3001	09/12/25	6203	RTC806689	£191.38	£0.00	£191.38		Chris Wilkins	provision of project consultancy services nov 2025 2400/18
3002	09/12/25	6204	RTC806702	£800.00	£0.00	£800.00	RLOS	Percussion Works	The Big Nite Out Band - Winter Wanderland event entertainment 3100/2
		6205/1		£574.12	£95.69	£478.43	RLOS	The Tree Management Company	felling of trees,hedge reduction,eco plug stumps 3000/2/11
3003	09/12/25	6205	RTC806584	£574.12	£95.69	£478.43		The Tree Management Company	felling of trees,hedge reduction,eco plug stumps (yewtree gardens) 3000/2/11
		6206/1		£7.20	£1.20	£6.00	RLOS	Letters & Logos Ltd	Road Closure sign - 30 NOVEMBER sticker 3100/2
		6206/2		£3.96	£0.66	£3.30	RLOS	Letters & Logos Ltd	Overnight Closure sign sticker - "29/11/25" 3100/2
		6206/3		£3.96	£0.66	£3.30	RLOS	Letters & Logos Ltd	Overnight closure sign sticker - "30/11/25" 3100/2
3004	09/12/25	6206	RTC806662	£15.12	£2.52	£12.60		Letters & Logos Ltd	Additional Road Closure Stickers for Winter Wanderland Event 3100/2
3005	09/12/25	6207	RTC806672	£120.00	£0.00	£120.00	RLOS	Mike Coakley	To investigate and fix the power outage at the sheds. After the heavy rain at fireworks one of the rings in the consumer unit was tripping. 3000/2/1
		6208/1		£4.67	£0.78	£3.89	P&F	Hampshire County Council	611500 AA batteries x 10 2000/1/8
		6208/2		£4.08	£0.68	£3.40	P&F	Hampshire County Council	610678 Batteries C 2000/1/8
		6208/3		£4.97	£0.83	£4.14	P&F	Hampshire County Council	817884 A4 white card x 250 2000/1/8
		6208/4		£41.83	£6.97	£34.86	RLOS	Hampshire County Council	710972 Bin bags x 200 3000/1/2

Paid Expenditure Transactions

Start of year 01/04/25

paid between 01/12/25 and 31/12/25

B

Payment Reference	Paid date	Tn no	Order no	Gross	Vat	Net	Cttee	Details	Heading
3006	09/12/25	6208	RTC806686	£55.55	£9.26	£46.29		Hampshire County Council	Batteries, card, bin bags 2000/1/8
		6209/1		£15.17	£2.53	£12.64	P&F	Hampshire County Council	604604 TORK toilet rolls 2000/3/4
		6209/2		£27.42	£4.57	£22.85	P&F	Hampshire County Council	816551 TORK paper towels 2000/3/4
		6209/3		£17.93	£2.99	£14.94	P&F	Hampshire County Council	598342 Dettol surface cleaner x 6 2000/3/4
		6209/4		£14.28	£2.38	£11.90	P&F	Hampshire County Council	960734 Wipes x 200 2000/3/4
		6209/5		£3.02	£0.50	£2.52	P&F	Hampshire County Council	710508 White bin liners x 100 2000/3/4
		6209/6		£1.32	£0.22	£1.10	P&F	Hampshire County Council	710807 Pedal bin liners x 100 2000/3/4
3007	09/12/25	6209	RTC806706	£79.14	£13.19	£65.95		Hampshire County Council	Cleaning supplies - Gateway 2000/3/4
		6211/1		£3,432.12	£572.02	£2,860.10	RLOS	Playdale Playgrounds Limited	remaining balance for MUGA 3802/2/4
3009	09/12/25	6211	RTC806685	£3,432.12	£572.02	£2,860.10		Playdale Playgrounds Limited	Remaining balance of invoice 61142 MUGA 3802/2/4
3010	09/12/25	6212	RTC806709	£2,948.70	£491.45	£2,457.25	RLOS	Insight Security & Facilities Ltd	Security, medics, paramedic and ambulance for Winter Wanderland event 3100/2
3010	09/12/25	6213	RTC806694	£180.00	£0.00	£180.00	RLOS	Your Eco Gardener	To trim back two dead branches by Lakeside, Hightown. 3000/2/11
3011	09/12/25	6214	RTC806708	£140.00	£0.00	£140.00	RLOS	Your Eco Gardener	Emergency call out to cut and log up large poplar tree that has fallen and broken a panel. To crown lift 4 branches of a birch tree damaged by the falling poplar. 3000/2/11
		6215/1		£215.84	£35.97	£179.87	RLOS	PPL PRS Ltd	PPL 3802/2/1
		6215/2		£247.48	£41.25	£206.23	RLOS	PPL PRS Ltd	PRS Licence 3802/2/1
3012	09/12/25	6215	RTC806696	£463.32	£77.22	£386.10		PPL PRS Ltd	Carvers Clubhouse PPL / PRS Licence SIN3209224 3802/2/1
3013	09/12/25	6216	RTC806713	£125.00	£0.00	£125.00	RLOS	D T Events & Entertainment	Radio Control at Fireworks event. 3100/1
3014	09/12/25	6217	RTC806714	£199.00	£0.00	£199.00	RLOS	Mr Pops Balloons	Balloon Modelling - Ringwood Winter Wanderland 3100/2
3016	09/12/25	6219	RTC806717	£1,990.72	£331.79	£1,658.93	RLOS	South Coast Hire Group	Stage sound and lighting for Christmas Winter Wanderland 3100/2
3017	09/12/25	6220	RTC806664	£59.94	£9.99	£49.95	RLOS	Pattco Ltd	PAT testing of Chirstmas kit 3100/2
3019	09/12/25	6221		£21.66	£3.61	£18.05	RLOS	Itec	Carvers Clubhouse 28/11/25 3802/2/2
3020	09/12/25	6222		£23.75	£3.96	£19.79	P&F	Itec	Gateway 24/11/25 2000/1/9
FPI	09/12/25	6223		-£55.18	-£9.20	-£45.98	P&F	Arco	Re order 806615 Refund 2000/3/2

Paid Expenditure Transactions

Start of year 01/04/25

paid between 01/12/25 and 31/12/25

B

Payment Reference	Paid date	Tn no	Order no	Gross	Vat	Net	Cttee	Details	Heading
3021	09/12/25	6224	RTC806693	£127.00	£21.17	£105.83	RLOS	Presto Plumbing and Heating Ltd	Leak at Carvers roofspace. Work to investigate and stop the leak
		6210/1		£586.82	£97.80	£489.02	P&F	Cloudy Group	premium MS licenses october and nov
		6210/2		£216.60	£36.10	£180.50	P&F	Cloudy Group	ms license basic 1/10-30/11
		6210/3		£161.95	£26.99	£134.96	P&F	Cloudy Group	cyber pro security 1/10-30/11
		6210/4		£624.79	£104.13	£520.66	P&F	Cloudy Group	cloudyIT end user support 1/10-30/11
		6210/5		£438.00	£73.00	£365.00	P&F	Cloudy Group	pre paid support for councillors 5 hours, expires after 24 months
		6210/6		£118.04	£19.67	£98.37	P&F	Cloudy Group	cloud secure advanced protection 01/10-30/11
		6210/7		£169.92	£28.32	£141.60	P&F	Cloudy Group	datasafe cloud backup of MS onedrive etc
		6210/8		£47.22	£7.87	£39.35	P&F	Cloudy Group	councillor admin fee 01/10-30/11
		6210/9		£41.33	£6.89	£34.44	P&F	Cloudy Group	cloudyIT hub - training platform 01-10-30/11
3008	15/12/25	6210	RTC806635	£2,404.67	£400.77	£2,003.90		Cloudy Group	Microsoft licenses, cyber security and back up and support (covers 2 months in most cases)
3015	15/12/25	6218	RTC806710	£250.00	£0.00	£250.00	RLOS	R M Smith Fencing Limited	Emergency fence repair at Poulner Junior School boundary. Tree damage caused by RTC tree
		6225/1		£999.55	£166.59	£832.96	P&F	Cloudy Group	December IT support, licenses etc
3023	15/12/25	6225	RTC806700	£999.55	£166.59	£832.96		Cloudy Group	December IT support
3025	15/12/25	6226	RTC806723	£66.36	£0.00	£66.36	RLOS	Taste Vending Ltd	Coffee for resale in café
3026	15/12/25	6227		£98.80	£16.47	£82.33	RLOS	Taste Vending Ltd	15/12/25 - 14/01/26
3027	15/12/25	6228	RTC806724	£120.00	£20.00	£100.00	RLOS	Letters & Logos Ltd	Patches to cover correx boards - fireworks event
		6229/1		£3,074.34	£512.39	£2,561.95	P&F	Edge IT Systems Ltd	management package - EDGE
3028	15/12/25	6229	RTC806730	£3,074.34	£512.39	£2,561.95		Edge IT Systems Ltd	ADVANTedge finance, allotment and cemetery management software. Year 2 of 5
3029	15/12/25	6230	RTC806725	£42.00	£7.00	£35.00	RLOS	Letters & Logos Ltd	Correx boards with patches and dyellow tape - Winter wonderland event boards
3030	15/12/25	6231	RTC806727	£223.20	£37.20	£186.00	RLOS	Alecta Technical Solutions	Oven door ball fixture repair and replace - kitchen oven repair
									Disputed invoice - hence late date input

Paid Expenditure Transactions

Start of year 01/04/25

paid between 01/12/25 and 31/12/25

B

Payment Reference	Paid date	Tn no	Order no	Gross	Vat	Net	Cttee	Details	Heading
3031	15/12/25	6232	RTC806726	£84.00	£14.00	£70.00	RLOS	Central Southern Security	alarm faulty - clubhouse call out 3802/1/1
3032	15/12/25	6233	RTC806733	£202.80	£33.80	£169.00	RLOS	Cleansing Service Group Ltd	Carvers drainage pump inspection 3802/1/1
3033	15/12/25	6234	RTC806734	£122.99	£20.50	£102.49	RLOS	Comax UK Ltd	Kitchen supplies - cups, lids etc 3802/3/1
BP	15/12/25	6235		£9,763.89	£0.00	£9,763.89	P&F	Inland Revenue	Novmeber 2025 2600/1/2
BP	16/12/25	6236		£9,530.00	£0.00	£9,530.00	P&F	Hampshire County Council	Pension November 2025 2600/1/3
DD	17/12/25	6248		£45.14	£7.52	£37.62	RLOS	3G	November 2025 3000/1/6
DD	17/12/25	6249		£119.13	£5.67	£113.46	RLOS	Edf	Cemetery November 2025 3200/1/1
FPI	17/12/25	6251		£204.60	£34.10	£170.50	P&F	Brightwater	Fees 15/12/25 - 14/01/26 2400/19
FPI	17/12/25	6252		£48.00	£8.00	£40.00	P&F	Brightwater	Maintenance 15/02/25 - 14/01/26 'Recharge' Outside Light 2100/3
3036	18/12/25	6237	RTC806675	£1,640.00	£0.00	£1,640.00	RLOS	Steamship Circus Ltd	Ringwood winter wanderland event 30th Nov 3100/2
		6238/1		£70,639.81	£11,773.30	£58,866.51	RLOS	Knights Brown Construction Limited	Contract performance agreed £1640 to be paid prior to the event 3350/10
3034	18/12/25	6238	RTC806729	£70,639.81	£11,773.30	£58,866.51		Knights Brown Construction Limited	Retention money for construction costs on Long Lane Development New Pavillion 3350/10
DD	19/12/25	6247		£348.44	£58.07	£290.37	P&F	Elite Business Systems UK Ltd (EBS Telecoms)/BT Openreach	December 2025 calls 2000/1/11
3036	22/12/25	6239	RTC806720	£113.74	£18.96	£94.78	RLOS	Letters & Logos Ltd	500 A4 posters for window competition 2025 3100/2
3037	22/12/25	6240	RTC806743	£174.00	£29.00	£145.00	RLOS	Your Eco Gardener	To fell and stack dangerous Prunus tree 3000/2/11
3038	22/12/25	6241	RTC806745	£300.00	£50.00	£250.00	RLOS	Ringwood & Fordingbridge Skip Hire	Skip for Fireworks Event at Carvers 3100/1
		6242/1		£36.00	£6.00	£30.00	P&F	Comax UK Ltd	grafitti remover 2100/4
3039	22/12/25	6242	RTC806735	£36.00	£6.00	£30.00		Comax UK Ltd	CLEANLINE HEAVY DUTY GRAFFITI REMOVER 2100/4
BP	24/12/25	6244		£31,168.97	£0.00	£31,168.97	P&F	Salaries	December 2025 2600/1/1
PAY	29/12/25	6245		£8.50	£0.00	£8.50	P&F	Lloyds Bank	Bank charges December 2025 2000/1/18
Lloyds CC Dec 25 1	29/12/25	6254	RTC806712	£258.25	£36.75	£221.50	RLOS	Booker	Café food sales - paid on CC 3802/3/1

Paid Expenditure Transactions

Start of year 01/04/25

paid between 01/12/25 and 31/12/25

B

Payment Reference	Paid date	Tn no	Order no	Gross	Vat	Net	Cttee	Details	Heading
Lloyds CC Dec 25 2	29/12/25	6255	RTC806711	£16.99	£0.00	£16.99	RLOS	Booker	Café food sales 3802/3/1
Lloyds CC Dec 25 3	29/12/25	6256	RTC806674	£112.69	£6.51	£106.18	RLOS	Booker	Clubhouse café food sales order number 91273399 3802/3/1
Lloyds CC Dec 25 4	29/12/25	6257	RTC806646	£163.44	£22.47	£140.97	RLOS	Booker	Café food order order number 91120993 3802/3/1
		6258/1		£28.00	£0.00	£28.00	P&F	Land Registry	land registry downloads 2400/17
Lloyds CC Dec 25 5	29/12/25	6258	RTC806661	£28.00	£0.00	£28.00		Land Registry	land registry download documents 2400/17
Lloyds CC Dec 25 6	29/12/25	6259	RTC806718	£388.08	£64.68	£323.40	RLOS	Cutprice Wholesaler	Santa's grotto - gifts wooden chimes x252 @1 bears x 42 @1.70 3100/2
Lloyds CC Dec 25 7	29/12/25	6260	RTC806645	£3.99	£0.67	£3.32	RLOS	Amazon	turn left to open safety signs for fire exit doors at carvers clubhouse 3000/1/4
		6261/1		£2.99	£0.50	£2.49	P&F	Amazon	Credit card purchased 7.11.25 Stickers 1 2400/5/2
		6261/2		£8.54	£1.42	£7.12	P&F	Amazon	Stickers x 40 pieces 2400/5/2
		6261/3		£3.70	£0.00	£3.70	P&F	Amazon	Stickers 1 2400/5/2
		6261/4		£4.37	£0.73	£3.64	P&F	Amazon	HDMI cable -male to femail 2000/1/15
Lloyds CC Dec 25 8	29/12/25	6261	RTC806627	£19.60	£2.65	£16.95		Amazon	Stickers and IT cable 2400/5/2
Lloyds CC Dec 25 9	29/12/25	6262	RTC806679	£89.98	£15.00	£74.98	RLOS	screwfix	New 100m tape for marking out football, rugby and athletics 3000/2/9
Lloyds CC Dec 25 10	29/12/25	6263		£247.20	£41.20	£206.00	P&F	Microsoft	18/10/25 - 17/11/25 2000/1/15
Lloyds CC Dec 25 11	29/12/25	6264		£175.56	£29.26	£146.30	P&F	Microsoft	18/10/25 - 17/11/25 2000/1/15
Lloyds CC Dec 25 12	29/12/25	6265		£19.49	£0.00	£19.49	RLOS	When I Work	December 2025 3802/1/1
Lloyds CC Dec 25 14	29/12/25	6266	RTC806719	£2.16	£0.00	£2.16	RLOS	Zimma Limited (Ticket Tailor)	2.16 TICKET TAILOR FEE - Grotto sales 3100/2
Lloyds CC Dec 25 15	29/12/25	6267	RTC806716	£257.40	£34.65	£222.75	RLOS	Lidl	Snowglobe purchase x 260 for Santa's grotto gifts 3100/2
		6268/1		£14.88	£2.48	£12.40	P&F	Amazon	Laptop holder - black 2000/1/5
		6268/2		£16.98	£2.83	£14.15	P&F	Amazon	Laptop holder -teal 2000/1/5
		6268/3		£4.19	£0.70	£3.49	P&F	Amazon	Picture hanging strips 2000/1/8

Paid Expenditure Transactions

Start of year 01/04/25

paid between 01/12/25 and 31/12/25

B

Payment Reference	Paid date	Tn no	Order no	Gross	Vat	Net	Cttee	Details	Heading
			6268/4	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	P&F	Amazon	Sign holder
			6268/5	£9.99	£0.00	£9.99	P&F	Amazon	Vax spot wash solution
			6268/6	-£0.71	-£0.12	-£0.59	P&F	Amazon	Shipping charges & promotions
			6268/7	-£1.59	£0.00	-£1.59	P&F	Amazon	Funded by Amazon
Lloyds CC Dec 25 16	29/12/25	6268	RTC806648	£43.74	£5.89	£37.85		Amazon	Sign holder, pictue hanging strips, laptops sleeves x 2, carpet cleaning solution
Lloyds CC Dec 25 17	29/12/25	6289	RTC806759	£7.99	£0.00	£7.99	RLOS	Amazon	Hi vis - Event Mangers vest for safety wear
Lloyds CC Dec 25 18	29/12/25	6290	RTC806760	£12.10	£2.02	£10.08	RLOS	Amazon	Paper and laminating pouches
Lloyds CC Dec 25 18	29/12/25	6291		£28.14	£0.00	£28.14	RLOS	Amazon	Payment made Dec 2025 - full refund in Jan 2026
			6250/1	£37.80	£6.30	£31.50	RLOS	Utility Warehouse	Phone & Broadband
			6250/2	£2.40	£0.40	£2.00	RLOS	Utility Warehouse	Club
DD	31/12/25	6250		£40.20	£6.70	£33.50		Utility Warehouse	Cemetery November 2025
FPI	31/12/25	6253		£4.39	£0.00	£4.39	P&F	New Forest District Council	NFDC Tfr9 Credit card fees December 2025
NFDC Tfr9	31/12/25	6270		£8.79	£0.67	£8.12	RLOS	New Forest District Council	NFDC Tfr9 17/11/25 Purchases for café sales
NFDC Tfr9	31/12/25	6271		£8.14	£0.00	£8.14	RLOS	New Forest District Council	NFDC Tfr9 24/11/25 Purchases for café sales
NFDC Tfr9	31/12/25	6272		£2.45	£0.00	£2.45	RLOS	New Forest District Council	NFDC Tfr9 01/12/25 Purchases for café sales
NFDC Tfr9	31/12/25	6273		£8.43	£0.00	£8.43	RLOS	New Forest District Council	NFDC Tfr9 08/12/25 Purchases for café sales
			6274/1	£15.20	£0.00	£15.20	Counc	Ringwood Town Council	Milk, coffee
			6274/2	£0.70	£0.00	£0.70	Counc	Ringwood Town Council	Washing up liquid
Petty Cash - Dec 25	31/12/25	6274		£15.90	£0.00	£15.90		Ringwood Town Council	Petty Cash - December 2025
Sum Up	31/12/25	6275		£25.90	£0.00	£25.90	RLOS	Sum Up	October 2025 Fees
Sum Up	31/12/25	6276		£34.75	£0.00	£34.75	RLOS	Sum Up	November 2025 Fees
Sum up	31/12/25	6277		£9.22	£0.00	£9.22	RLOS	Sum Up	December 2025 Fees
			6278/1	£41.19	£0.00	£41.19	RLOS	Stripe	September 2025

Paid Expenditure Transactions

Start of year 01/04/25

paid between 01/12/25 and 31/12/25

B

Payment Reference	Paid date	Tn no	Order no	Gross	Vat	Net	Cttee	Details		Heading
			6278/2	£529.38	£0.00	£529.38	RLOS	Stripe	October 2025	3802/2/1
			6278/3	£392.46	£0.00	£392.46	RLOS	Stripe	November 2025	3802/2/1
Stripe	31/12/25	6278		£963.03	£0.00	£963.03		Stripe	Fees	3802/2/1
Total				£165,731.93	£16,230.80	£149,501.13				

POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE 21st January 2026 (Mid Feb 26)

ACCOUNT BALANCES & TRANSFERS

<u>Account Name</u>	<u>Predicted 31-Dec-25</u>	<u>Actual at 31-Dec-25</u>	<u>Completed Transfer in January 2026</u>	<u>Movements in Jan 26</u>	<u>Further Transfers Required to 18.02.26</u>	<u>Predicted 31-Jan-26</u>
	£	£	£			£
Imprest (Current) Account	28,778	15,742	95,934	-100,000	50,000	61,677
Business Account	5,925	5,931	4,066			9,997
Investment Account (CCLA Ac)	395,000	335,000	-100,000		-50,000	185,000
Petty Cash - Imprest	157	141				141
Petty Cash - Carvers Clubhouse	50	50				50
VIC Change Float	0	0				0
Information Desk Float	75	75				75
TOTALS	429,986	356,940	0	-100,000	0	256,940

Note: Imprest and Business Accounts are with Lloyds Bank plc and the Investment Account is with CCLA

Notes:

- 1 **Imprest Account**

	£
Balance in Imprest A/c 31.12.25	15,742
Transfer from CCLA Ac done in January 26	95,934
Anticipated net expenditure to end January 26	-100,000
Anticipated add transfers into Imprest ac needed in Jan 26	50,000
Balance in Imprest A/c 31.01.26	61,677
- 2 **Investment Maturity**

No investments due to mature
- 3 The bank accounts were reconciled at 31st December 2025.

REPORT TO POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE QUARTER 3 – APRIL TO DECEMBER 2025

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with a budget monitoring report for the first three quarters of the financial year 2025-2026.

The approved Council budget for 2025/2026 was £691,193 including planned transfers to and from earmarked reserves. On reviewing this at the end of December 2025 an estimated budget for the full financial year has been calculated as £686,215. Therefore, the overall variance between the agreed budget and estimated is £4,978.

The main variances during April 25 – December 25 are: -

Policy & Finance Budget – Budgeted £271,711 Est £270,490

Small Variances totaling £1,221 across multiple codes.

Recreation & Leisure Budget 25-26 £244,411 Estimated £235,846

3000/2/16 Play Areas increased by £6,409 SMS Works, following inspection highlighting dangerous equipment that needed replacement.

Capital Expenditure has decreased by £50,000 due to not spending as much on the Football Development Project.

N. B. An additional spend of £20,168 for Carvers Ground Improvements, £6,995 MUGA Carvers, £11,130 for the skate ramp, and £1406 for Open Spaces; covered by grants and CIL.

3000/3/4 Machine Purchases increased by £20,190 due to bringing inline with vehicles and machinery replacement plan.

Events 25-26 Budget £5,000 Estimated £5,000

No variance to budget.

Cemeteries 25-26 Budget £42,385 Estimated £30,638

Income from burials and purchase of plots has increased beyond budget.

Allotments 25-26 Budget £13,478 Est £17,991(-£4650= £13,341)

3300/2/1 Allotment Maintenance, fencing at Upper Kingston, £4650 funded by CIL.

Carvers Clubhouse 25-26 Budget £73,329 Est £92,619

3802/1/3 Electricity – Saving due to installation of PV Panels of £4,000.

3801/1 & 3801/2 increased costs of £25,110 due to salaries of new staff Clubhouse and Events Assistant. Handover of Clubhouse role and staff sickness.

Planning, Town & Environment 25-26 Budget £39,715 Est £38,281

No significant variances.

Next steps:-

- Audit of budgets to be undertaken and review of reporting to be in place by next month

Recommendation:-

Members are asked to note the Finance Managers' report and the budget 2025/26 position.

For more information please contact:

Michelle Gordon, Finance Manager

01425 473883

Finance.manager@ringwood.gov.uk

Financial Budget Comparison

Comparison between 01/04/25 and 31/12/25 inclusive. Includes due and unpaid transactions.

Excludes transactions with an invoice date prior to 01/04/25

		2025/26	Actual Net	Balance
INCOME				
Policy & Finance				
280	Carvers Club House Income	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
999	Suspense	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Total Policy & Finance		£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces				
300	Revenue Income (RLOS)	£27,320.00	£19,790.34	-£7,529.66
310	Events	£38,000.00	£45,358.01	£7,358.01
320	Cemetery Income	£27,609.00	£30,310.82	£2,701.82
330	Allotment Income	£7,380.00	£7,198.80	-£181.20
350	Capital Income	£150,000.00	£500.00	-£149,500.00
380	Carvers Clubhouse	£26,500.00	£25,314.64	-£1,185.36
Total Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces		£276,809.00	£128,472.61	-£148,336.39
Planning, Town & Environment				
400	Income	£1,100.00	£1,100.00	£0.00
Total Planning, Town & Environment		£1,100.00	£1,100.00	£0.00
Council				
100	Precept	£683,620.00	£683,620.00	£0.00
102	Interest Business A/c	£0.00	£121.36	£121.36
110	Client Deposits	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
200	Revenue Income	£168,786.00	£145,411.49	-£23,374.51
Total Council		£852,406.00	£829,152.85	-£23,253.15
Total Income		£1,130,315.00	£958,725.46	-£171,589.54

Financial Budget Comparison

Comparison between 01/04/25 and 31/12/25 inclusive. Includes due and unpaid transactions.

Excludes transactions with an invoice date prior to 01/04/25

		2025/26	Actual Net	Balance
EXPENDITURE				
Policy & Finance				
2000	Establishment	£138,083.00	£126,242.63	£11,840.37
2100	Maintenance	£49,949.00	£21,166.76	£28,782.24
2200	Democratic Process (members Costs)	£13,890.00	£9,338.20	£4,551.80
2210	Grants	£2,000.00	£1,100.00	£900.00
2300	Employee Costs- Allocated Office Staff	£125,270.00	£90,967.58	£34,302.42
2310	Employee overhead Costs	£4,117.00	£10,091.41	-£5,974.41
2400	Other	£37,173.00	£42,562.89	-£5,389.89
2500	Capital Financing	£31,546.00	£46,512.11	-£14,966.11
2501	Capital	£29,932.00	£7,805.00	£22,127.00
2600	Wages Control Account	£0.00	-£20,441.12	£20,441.12
2801	Carvers Employee Costs	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
2802	Carvers Club House- Expenditure	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
9999	Suspense	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Total Policy & Finance		£431,960.00	£335,345.46	£96,614.54
Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces				
3000	Recreation & Leisure (Other)	£75,779.00	£78,273.08	-£2,494.08
3001	RL&OS -Employee Costs	£188,887.00	£136,779.67	£52,107.33
3002	Employee Costs	£2,000.00	£690.00	£1,310.00
3100	Events	£19,812.00	£22,157.41	-£2,345.41

Financial Budget Comparison

Comparison between 01/04/25 and 31/12/25 inclusive. Includes due and unpaid transactions.

Excludes transactions with an invoice date prior to 01/04/25

		2025/26	Actual Net	Balance
3101	Events - Employee Costs	£17,606.00	£16,385.69	£1,220.31
3200	Cemetery	£9,948.00	£5,671.36	£4,276.64
3201	Cemetery -Employee Costs	£60,275.00	£43,602.83	£16,672.17
3300	Allotments	£2,575.00	£7,426.84	-£4,851.84
3301	Allotments -Employee Costs	£18,284.00	£13,217.71	£5,066.29
3350	Capital Expenditure	£218,080.00	£186,011.28	£32,068.72
3801	Youth Services Employee costs	£59,890.00	£63,777.44	-£3,887.44
3802	Carvers Clubhouse	£38,440.00	£43,068.54	-£4,628.54
Total Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces		£711,576.00	£617,061.85	£94,514.15
Planning, Town & Environment				
4000	Planning, Town & Environment	£3,589.00	£2,550.56	£1,038.44
4001	Employee Costs	£38,226.00	£27,380.65	£10,845.35
4050	Capital Expenditure	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Total Planning, Town & Environment		£41,815.00	£29,931.21	£11,883.79
Council				
10000	Petty Cash - Office	£0.00	£0.14	-£0.14
10001	Petty Cash - Youth	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
10002	Petty Cash - Visitor Information Centre	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
10003	Petty Cash - Information Desk	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
10110	Deposit Refunds	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
10111	Bank Charges	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Total Council		£0.00	£0.14	-£0.14
Total Expenditure		£1,185,351.00	£982,338.66	£203,012.34

Financial Budget Comparison

Comparison between 01/04/25 and 31/12/25 inclusive. Includes due and unpaid transactions.

Excludes transactions with an invoice date prior to 01/04/25

	2025/26	Actual Net	Balance
Total Income	£1,130,315.00	£958,725.46	-£171,589.54
Total Expenditure	£1,185,351.00	£982,338.66	£203,012.34
Total Net Balance	-£55,036.00	-£23,613.20	

Monthly CIL Reserve report to Policy & Finance Committee

Balance held in reserves at 1 April 2025 £ 35,157.64

Plus receipts:

Consent No.: 20/10976	£1,402.06	
Consent No.: 23/10467	£1,353.37	
Total receipt April 2025		£2,755.43
Consent No.: 23/10874	£844.06	
Consent No.: 24/10339	£272.56	
Consent No.: 24/10527	£1,333.50	
Total receipt October 2025		£2,450.12

Less funds applied 2025/26:

Poulner Skate Ramp - F/6343 18 Sep 2024 (note expenditure in 2024/25 fully funded from alternative grants received) &

F/6454 23 July 2025	£3,013.64
Bus shelters - F/6423 21 May 2025	£1,095.82
Upper Kingston fence - F/6423 21 May 2025	£4,650.00
MUGA signage - F/6465 17 Sept 25	£549.00

Less agreed allocations:

Carvers MUGA - F/6465 17 Sept 25 (up to additional £10,000)	£9,451.00	
Poulner Lakes road upgrade - F/6423 21 May 2025	£15,000.00	
		-£33,759.46

Unallocated balance as at 15 January 2026 **£6,603.73**

Notes:

The unallocated balance takes no account of expenditure which has not been formally allocated for a particular purpose even if it known or highly likely that it will need to be met from the CIL reserve.

REPORT TO POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE – 21 JANUARY 2026

BUDGET AND PRECEPT 2026/2027

1. Introduction and reason for report

- 1.1. This report represents the culmination of the Council's annual budget-setting process. The Strategic Plan was reviewed and agreed in October, providing the framework for budget development. An initial draft budget was considered by service committees in November, followed by presentation of a full draft budget to Policy & Finance Committee in December. In January, earmarked reserves were reviewed by committees in relation to their service areas to ensure continued alignment with delivery plans and emerging pressures. The budget now presented reflects that iterative process, incorporating updated assumptions, committee feedback and officer-recommended reserve assumptions.
- 1.2. Local councils are required to set a balanced budget each year and to formally notify the billing authority of their Council Tax precept requirement by the statutory deadline. For Ringwood Town Council, this requires notification to New Forest District Council by 30 January 2026.
- 1.3. The role of the Policy & Finance Committee is to scrutinise the proposed budget, underlying assumptions and reserve positions, and to advise Full Council on the level of the Council Tax precept required for the year. Full Council is required to approve the final budget and precept for the statutory notification to be made within the required timescale.
- 1.4. This report therefore sets out the proposed budget for 2026/27, the financial assumptions and pressures informing that budget, and the resulting Council Tax and precept requirement for recommendation to Full Council.

2. Earmarked Reserves – Review and Recommended Changes

- 2.1. The reserve assumptions set out in this section reflect officer recommendations informed by reviews undertaken by service committees, together with the discussion held earlier on this agenda in relation to Policy & Finance Committee-related reserves. These assumptions have been incorporated into the draft budget to produce a coherent and balanced position. In accordance with the Council's governance arrangements, decisions relating to the approval of earmarked reserve movements rest with Policy & Finance Committee.
- 2.2. The full reserve movements are set out in Appendix B.
- 2.3. **Table: Summary of Reserve Recommendations from Committees**

Reserve	Previous assumption	Committee recommendation	Officer recommendation to P&F	Budget impact
Cemetery Provision	£1,000 annual contribution	Remove annual contribution for 2026/27	Remove £1,000 contribution for 2026/27	Reduces revenue contribution to reserves by £1,000

Reserve	Previous assumption	Committee recommendation	Officer recommendation to P&F	Budget impact
Buildings Reserve (Buildings Repairs Provision)	£5,500 annual contribution; revenue costs charged in-year	Questioned target level following works at 92 Southampton Road	Retain contribution level; <i>reclassify refurbishment costs at 92 Southampton Road to Buildings Repairs Provision</i>	Improves accuracy of revenue outturn; no change to net budget
Carvers Sheds Feasibility	No specific provision	Support creation of reserve to enable feasibility work	Create £10,000 provision for 2026/27	Funded from Capital Receipts; no revenue impact
Capital Receipts	Held for future asset use	Suggest use as contribution to Carvers Sheds Feasibility	Transfer £10,000 to Carvers Sheds Feasibility	Neutral (between reserves)
Infrastructure & Open Spaces	£3,000 annual contribution	Consider transfer of some or all market income into reserve to support future works required in Gateway Square	Retain a prudent £1.5k market income assumption within the base budget; transfer any income generated above this level into the reserve (c. £2.5k p.a. based on current performance)	Neutral to base budget; strengthens earmarked reserve
Gateway	£0 annual contribution (as met the target)		<i>Apply Gateway internal lighting costs to this reserve in the current and 2026/27 financial years. Rebuild the reserve to a target balance of £25,000 over a five-year period to provide resilience against future building-related service charge costs.</i>	<i>Reduces immediate pressure on the revenue budget</i>

The reserve movements set out above represent officer-recommended assumptions incorporated into the draft budget. Any amendments to these assumptions would require corresponding changes to the budget position.

3. Budget Pressures and Revised Assumptions

Inflation	%
- Pay	4.5%
- Utilities	2.5%
- Other Expenditure	2.1%
- Non contractual expenditure	0.0%
- Income	2.0%
- Fixed expenditure (i.e. no inflation)	0.0%

3.1. The table above summarises the assumptions made for the purposes of planning the budget.

- 3.2. Pay: in light of national pay discussions and early union positions for 2026/27, the assumed pay award has been revised to 4.5%.
- 3.3. Utilities and other expenditure: the OBR predicts inflation to average 2.5% for 2026. Note that we have increased the budget for water bills as we had a big spike this year across all sites and with drier summers water bills may increase over inflation.
- 3.4. Regarding other pressures, a new pressure identified since the December meeting relates to increased service charge costs arising from internal lighting replacement works at the Gateway. These costs are outside the Council's direct control and represent a structural increase rather than a one-off item, with an estimated impact of £7,800 in the current financial year and £9,100 in 2026/27. As set out in Section 2, it is proposed that these costs are met from the relevant earmarked reserve in the short term, reducing immediate pressure on the revenue budget while recognising the ongoing nature of the cost.
- 3.5. Interest base rates have begun to reduce but the more significant factor for this Council is the reduction in investable balances following expenditure on major capital projects, including the football club development. As a result, lower investment returns are anticipated in 2026/27.
- 3.6. A modest increase of £500 has been included in the staff training budget to provide appropriate flexibility for a relatively new team. This reflects the need to ensure staff are adequately supported in meeting statutory, financial and operational requirements, and to manage organisational risk as roles and responsibilities embed.
- 3.7. External auditor feedback has identified that, in the current financial year, the Council's General Reserve has fallen below the recommended minimum level of between three and twelve months' net expenditure. Earmarked reserves are held for defined purposes relating to specific assets, projects or known liabilities and are not available to support day-to-day expenditure. In that context, the recent review of earmarked reserves by committees was undertaken to ensure that reserve levels and purposes remain appropriate and proportionate. This position reinforces the need for careful budget management and limits the extent to which reserves, of any type, can be relied upon to support recurring costs.
- 3.8. The Council Tax base has reduced for the first time in several years. As a result, the same level of expenditure must be funded across fewer Band D equivalent properties, placing upward pressure on the precept before any cost increases are taken into account.

4. Resulting Draft Budget Position (2026/27)

- 4.1. Taking into account the revised assumptions and pressures set out above, together with the changes made during the budget-setting process, the proposed budget for 2026/27 has been prepared to ensure the Council has sufficient resources to deliver its Strategic Plan and meet its ongoing statutory and operational responsibilities.
- 4.2. The resulting budget requires a Council Tax precept of £740,842 representing an increase of 8.57% compared to 2025/26.
- 4.3. For information, the proposed precept would result in an increase from £124.13 to £134.81 or £10.68 per year in the Band D Town Council element of Council Tax. Individual household charges will vary by property band.

- 4.4. The draft budget includes a planned contribution of £15,000 to the General Reserve. With this contribution, the forecast General Reserve balance at the end of the year would be £252,022, equivalent to approximately 34% of the annual precept. This remains at the lower end of recommended levels and reinforces the need for continued careful financial management, particularly in the context of uncertainty arising from local government reorganisation.
- 4.5. The draft budget focuses on maintaining existing services and delivering the Strategic Plan, with lower-priority items removed or deferred where necessary. Remaining pressures are largely external in nature, reinforcing the need for prudence and resilience.

5. Recommendations

- 5.1. It is recommended that the Policy & Finance Committee:
- 5.1.1. Considers and notes the budget pressures, revised assumptions and reserve position set out in this report.
 - 5.1.2. Approves the recommended earmarked reserve movements set out in Appendix B, for inclusion within the draft budget.
 - 5.1.3. Recommends to Full Council that the draft budget for 2026/27, as set out in this report, be approved.
 - 5.1.4. Recommends to Full Council that a Council Tax precept of £740,842 for 2026/27 be approved and notified to New Forest District Council in accordance with statutory requirements.

For further information, contact:

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RINGWOOD TOWN COUNCIL
BUDGET 2026/27

1	2	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
	Committee	Actual 22/23 £	Actual 23/24 £	Actual 24/25 £	Budget 25/26 £	Estimated 25/26 £	Inflation £	Known Changes* £	Budget 26/27 £
	Policy & Finance								
	Expenditure	382,040	421,425	438,427	430,796	490,383	12,019	19,321	462,640
	Income	-133,528	-215,977	-182,209	-168,785	-180,061	-2,132	-15,500	-186,418
	Net Expenditure	248,512	205,448	256,218	262,011	310,322	9,886	3,821	276,223
	Transfers to Reserves	14,000	45,595	0	12,700	12,700	0	0	17,200
	Transfers from Reserves	-37,841	-15,042	0	-3,000	-52,532	0	0	-13,983
	Growth bids and adjustments (net of transfers from reserves and income)								0
	Committee net expenditure	224,671	236,001	256,218	271,711	270,490	9,886	3,821	279,440
	Recreation & Leisure								
	Expenditure	1,069,677	2,280,039	55,563	484,745	493,083	9,263	-8,054	269,060
	Income	-517,390	-1,962,442	0	-177,318	-127,538	-206	1,718	-25,841
	Net Expenditure	552,287	317,597	55,563	307,427	365,545	9,057	-6,336	243,218
	Transfers to Reserves	17,900	17,900	0	26,400	26,900	0	0	37,000
	Transfers from Reserves	-365,598	-85,180	0	-89,416	-156,598	0	0	-20,484
	Growth bids and adjustments (net of transfers from reserves and income)								0
	Committee net expenditure	204,589	250,317	55,563	244,411	235,846	9,057	-6,336	259,734
	Events								
	Expenditure	51,702	41,356	28,449	37,418	46,805	792	23,000	69,567
	Income	-35,311	-49,857	-42,125	-38,000	-45,525	0	-8,000	-51,500
	Net Expenditure	16,391	-8,501	-13,677	-582	1,280	792	15,000	18,067
	Transfers to Reserves	0	12,361	0	5,582	3,720			0
	Transfers from Reserves	-10,823	0	0	0	0			-13,067
	Growth bids and adjustments (net of transfers from reserves and income)								0
	Committee net expenditure	5,568	3,860	-13,677	5,000	5,000	792	15,000	5,000
	Cemeteries								
	Expenditure	63,343	66,427	10,739	70,224	67,189	2,876	-3,315	70,749
	Income	-41,041	-37,989	-33,296	-27,609	-36,320	-525	-6,500	-34,642
	Net Expenditure	22,302	28,438	-22,557	42,615	30,868	2,351	-9,815	36,107
	Transfers to Reserves	2,500	2,500	2,500	0	0	0	0	0
	Transfers from Reserves	-230	-250	0	-230	-230	0	0	-40
	Growth bids and adjustments (net of transfers from reserves and income)								0
	Committee net expenditure	24,572	30,688	-20,057	42,385	30,638	2,351	-9,815	36,067
	Allotments								
	Expenditure	19,577	23,718	1,880	20,858	25,371	866	-314	21,637
	Income	-5,954	-7,791	-7,623	-7,380	-7,380	-148	400	-7,128
	Net Expenditure	13,623	15,927	-5,743	13,478	17,991	719	86	14,510
	Transfers to Reserves	0	0	0	0	0			0
	Transfers from Reserves	0	0	0	0	-4,650			0
	Growth bids and adjustments (net of transfers from reserves and income)								0
	Committee net expenditure	13,623	15,927	-5,743	13,478	13,341	719	86	14,510
	Carvers Clubhouse								
	Expenditure	100,991	98,786	105,807	98,329	119,019	0	0	119,731
	Income	-26,274	-29,128	-27,084	-26,500	-27,900	0	0	-30,000
	Net Expenditure	74,717	69,658	78,723	71,829	91,119	0	0	89,731
	Transfers to Reserves	2,500	2,500	0	2,500	2,500	0	0	2,500
	Transfers from Reserves	-2,841	-165	0	-1,000	-1,000	0	0	-1,000
	Growth bids and adjustments (net of transfers from reserves and income)								0
	Committee net expenditure	74,376	71,993	78,723	73,329	92,619	0	0	91,231
	Planning, Town & Environment								
	Expenditure	37,474	30,610	40,583	41,815	41,322	1,777	0	41,960
	Income	-5,850	-1,100	-11,100	-1,100	-1,100	0	0	-1,100
	Net Expenditure	31,624	29,510	29,483	40,715	40,222	1,777	0	40,860
	Transfers to Reserves	0	3,650	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Transfers from Reserves	-6,016	-2,784	-960	-1,000	-1,941	0	0	-1,000
	Growth bids and adjustments (net of transfers from reserves and income)			1					0
	Committee net expenditure	25,608	30,376	28,523	39,715	38,281	1,777	0	39,860

RINGWOOD TOWN COUNCIL
BUDGET AND REVISED BUDGET 2024/25 AND
DRAFT BUDGET 2025/26

Appendix A

D

	Total Base Expenditure	1,724,804	2,962,361	681,449	1,184,184	1,283,171		1,055,345
	Total Income	-765,348	-2,304,284	-303,437	-446,692	-425,825		-336,629
	Total transfer to reserves	36,900	84,506	2,500	47,182	45,820		56,700
	Total Transfer from reserves	-423,349	-103,421	-960	-94,646	-216,951		-49,574
	Total New Bids				1,164			0
	Less funded from earmarked reserves							0
	Total Budget Requirement	573,007	639,162	379,552	691,193	686,215		725,842
	Precept	531,856	553,949	610,429	683,620	683,620		740,842
	Covid Relief grant		4,071		0	0		
	Transfer to/-from General Reserve	-41,151	-81,142	230,877	-7,573	-2,595		15,000

RESERVES AND PROVISIONS - MOVEMENT & ESTIMATED BALANCES

1st April 2025 to 31st March 2027

	Actual Balance 01/04/25 £	Transfers 2025/26 :				Balance 01/04/26 £	Planned and Proposed Movements 2026/27:					Estimated Balance 31/03/27 £
		from Revenue £	to Revenue £	Cash Receipts £	between provisions £		from Revenue £	to revenue		Capital & Other Receipts £	between provisions £	
								base budget £	Growth £			
<u>EARMARKED PROVISIONS</u>												
I.T. & Equipment	28,300	1,700	-17,942			12,058.00	2,700		0			14,758
Gateway	25,000	0	-7,800			17,200.00	3,380	-9,100	0			11,480
Cemetery	27,033	1,000	0			28,032.72	0		0			28,033
Buildings Reserve	51,534	4,500	-17,530			38,503.97	5,500	0	0			44,004
Election	5,000	5,000	0			10,000.00	5,000		0			15,000
Vehicle & Machinery	51,546	20,000	-39,950			31,596.10	27,000		-5,750			52,846
Play Equipment	22,516	6,900	-7,164			22,252.18	10,000		0			32,252
Memorials	0		0			0.00	0		0			0
Christmas Lights	10,283		-6,000			4,282.50	0		-4,283			0
Carvers Clubhouse equipment reserve	3,988	1,000	-1,000			3,988.49	1,000	-1,000	0			3,988
Ringwood Events	18,152	3,720	-500			21,372.00	0	-22,767	0			-1,395
Memorial Lantern	0		0	0		0.00	0		0			0
Carvers Grounds	175		0			175.20	0		0			175
Carvers Sheds feasibility	0		0			0.00			0		10,000	10,000
Infrastructure & Open Spaces	15,371	3,000	0			18,370.77	5,500		0			23,871
Open Space Security Measures	1,406	0	-1,406			0.04	0		0			0
Neighbourhood Plan	3,383	0	0			3,383.07	0		0			3,383
Football development Project	0	0	0			0.00	0		0			0
Budget Underspends retained for use in 2024/25*	3,000	0	0			3,000.00	0	0	0			3,000
Total Provisions	266,687	46,820	-99,292	0	0	214,215.04	60,080	-32,867	-10,033	0	10,000	241,395
<u>RESERVES</u>												
Earmarked Reserves:												
Dev Contribs	13,805		-845			12,960.46		-1,000	0			11,960
Cem Maint	270		-230			40.00		-40	0	0		0
Dev Cons(CIL)	35,158		-18,759	5,206		21,603.73						21,604
Capital Receipts	18,942					18,942.34			0	0	-10,000	8,942
Grants Unapplied	72,339		-96,248	28,859		4,949.95			-13,158	19,508		11,300
Loans Unapplied	0					0.00			0	0		0
Maintenance contract fees in advance (Ellingham PC)	3,152		-1,576			1,576.00		-1,576				0
Total Earmarked Reserves and Provisions	410,354	46,820	-216,950	34,065	0	274,287.52	60,080	-35,483	-23,191	19,508	0	295,202
General Reserve	236,927		-2,595		2,690	237,022	15,000	0			0	252,022
Key & Rent Deposits	19,613					19,613						19,613
Total Reserves & Customer Deposits	666,893	46,820	-219,545	34,065	2,690	530,922	75,080	-35,483	-23,191	19,508	0	566,837

BUDGET ASSUMPTIONS 2025/26

ASSUMPTIONS:

1 Inflation

	%	Type
- Pay	4.5%	1
- Utilities	2.5%	2
- Other Expenditure	2.5%	3
- Non contractual expenditure	0.0%	4
- Income	2.0%	5
- Fixed expenditure (i.e. no inflation)	0.0%	6

2 Council Tax Base increase

Note, the Council Tax base for 2025/26 is

-0.18%
5,507.3

An increase of -0.18% (assumption 2) will increase the Council Tax base to:

5,497.4

3 Use of General Reserve

£
-15,000

The General Reserve is expected to be £237,022 at April 1st 2026. This transfer will increase it to £252,022 by March 2027

Net Budget Requirement and consequent Band D equivalent Council Tax

Based on the above assumptions together with any proposed new bids and adjustments:

	£
Base Budget 2026/2027	718,716
Net transfers to/from earmarked reserves	7,126
Growth Bids & Adjustments	0
- Less funded from earmarked reserves (inc. borrowing)	0
- Less additional income generated	0
Net Budget requirement	725,842
Less funded from general reserve	15,000
Sum to be funded from Council Tax Payers (Precept)	740,842

Band D equivalent Council Tax 2026/27

134.76

The Council Tax for 2025/26 is £124.13 per Band D Equivalent

The budget requirement and resulting precept, as modelled, represents an increase of 8.57 % in the Council Tax

The Band D equivalent Council Tax for 2025/26 is:

124.13

A target Council Tax increase of :
would increase the Council Tax to:

124.13

And require an additional transfer from reserves of:

£58,449

which would reduce the general reserve to £ 193,572 by March 2027
(given the assumptions in 1 - 3 on the left) or 26.1% of the annual precept

Summary movement on reserves:

Opening reserves 1/4/2026:	£
General Reserve	237,022
Earmarked Reserves & Provisions	274,288
Total Reserves 1/4/2026	511,309
Planned transfers in	60,080
Planned transfers out	-58,674
Plus Capital Receipts 26/27	19,508
Less Funding for growth	0
Less use of general reserve	15,000

Predicted reserves 31/3/2027 :

General Reserve	252,022
Earmarked Reserves	295,202
Predicted Reserves 31/3/2027	547,224
(nb excludes rent & key deposits)	

An increase of one percent on the Council Tax will generate an increased precept of : £6,824
For each increase of £1,000 in the precept requirement, a further £0.182 will be added to the Band D Council Tax

REPORT TO POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE – 21 JANUARY 2026

INTERNAL AUDIT – APPOINTMENT FOR 2025/26

Internal Audit – Update and Next Steps for 2025/26

1. Purpose of the report

- 1.1. To update Members on the position regarding the appointment of the Council's Internal Auditor for the 2025/26 financial year, and to seek direction on next steps, including the option of retaining the same audit provider with a different named auditor if required.

2. Background

- 2.1. Local councils are required to appoint an Internal Auditor to undertake an independent review of the Council's systems of internal control, governance, and financial management. The Internal Audit forms a mandatory part of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) process and must be completed before the Council approves its Annual Governance Statement and Accounting Statements.
- 2.2. The appointment of the Internal Auditor must be made by resolution of the Council and recorded in the minutes for audit purposes.

3. Current position

- 3.1. The Council has, for several years, received its Internal Audit through the Southern Internal Audit Partnership, delivered by a named officer. As part of forward planning for the 2025/26 year-end, officers are required to confirm the audit arrangements in good time to ensure compliance with statutory timescales
- 3.2. It has previously been indicated that capacity of the named auditor may be a consideration for the forthcoming audit period. Separately, it has also been suggested that, as a matter of good practice, the Council could consider a change of auditor in future years to provide a fresh perspective.
- 3.3. Given that both the Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer are new in post, officers consider that continuity of approach and organisational knowledge would be beneficial during this transitional period. This could be achieved either by retaining the existing named auditor or by continuing to use the same audit provider with a different appointed officer, should this be necessary.
- 3.4. Any appointed Internal Auditor must be independent of the Council's financial management and decision-making processes, and a change of named auditor within the same organisation would meet this requirement.
- 3.5. The Town Clerk has made formal contact with the audit provider to confirm whether the existing auditor has capacity to undertake the 2025/26 Internal Audit; and if not, whether an alternative auditor within the same organisation could be assigned.
- 3.6. At the time of writing, a response is awaited.

6. Recommendation

That the Policy & Finance Committee:

1. Notes the current position regarding the appointment of the Internal Auditor for 2025/26;

2. Supports the continuation of the Internal Audit provider, either with the existing named auditor or an alternative officer, subject to availability; and
3. Delegates authority to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chair of Policy & Finance Committee, to make the necessary arrangements and report back to Members once confirmed.

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Policy and Finance Committee Project Oversight Report

1. Introduction and reason for report

This report provides the Committee with an overview of live projects within its remit, enabling members to monitor progress, risks, and financial implications, and to identify where further information or a separate report is required for decision-making.

2. Background

The project planner is updated weekly by officers and forms part of the Council's wider arrangements for project oversight and governance. Projects are reported by exception, with operational delivery managed by officers under existing delegations.

3. Scope of report

This report includes projects within the remit of this Committee only. Projects governed through other Committees are reported separately and are not included here.

Project title	Purpose/ intended outcome	Status	Progress update	Key risks/ issues	Next milestone/ decision point	Committee interaction required	Lead Officer	Financial poistion
Poulner Lakes Lease (Anglers' Association Land)	To secure a lease arrangement for the area of Poulner Lakes not currently owned by the Council, clarifying access, responsibilities, and long-term management arrangements.	On hold (depend ent on third-party negotiati on)	Initial discussions have taken place regarding a potential lease from Ringwood & District Anglers' Association for land not owned by the Council. Progress is currently paused pending further engagement and clarification of terms.	Legal: Lease terms and liabilities require careful consideration . Dependency: Progress is dependent on agreement with a third-party landowner.	Resumption of negotiations when terms can be progressed, including consideration of legal advice.	Note – monitoring only.	Town Clerk	Some provision for legal advice or assistance may be required if negotiations progress.

Millennium Clock Refurbishment	To refurbish the Millennium Clock located at NFDC's Furlong Short Stay Car Park, ensuring it remains in good working order.	In progress	Ringwood Society has offered to fund the full cost of the required repairs as a donation to the Town Council. Officers have commissioned the works, which are scheduled to take place on 24 February 2026 .	None identified.	Completion of refurbishment works.	Note – update only.	Town Clerk	No financial implications for the Town Council; works fully funded by external donation.
Annual Town Assembly – Format Refresh (One-Year Project)	To design and deliver a refreshed Annual Town Assembly that meets statutory requirements while improving accessibility, clarity of information, and meaningful engagement between the Town Council and local electors.	In progress	Date for the Annual Town Assembly has been confirmed. Initial planning is underway. Members will be invited to attend an informal planning discussion to provide input into the refreshed format.	No material risks identified at this stage. Primary considerations relate to public engagement and ensuring the format supports constructive dialogue.	Issue invitation to members to attend an informal planning meeting to inform the refreshed Assembly format.	Note inclusion of the project and confirm support for officer-led delivery with informal member input, reporting progress via the projects report.	Town Clerk (initially)	A modest provision is included within the 2026/27 budget to cover associated costs.

4. Recommendation

Members are asked to note the contents of this report.

For further information, please contact:

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