



2026/27
Draft Budget

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 Surrey County Council continues to focus on delivering the Community Vision for Surrey 2030 to ensure the county is a uniquely special place where everyone has a great start to life, people live healthy and fulfilling lives, are enabled to achieve their full potential and contribute to their community, and where no one is left behind.
- 1.2 Our Organisation Strategy sets out our contribution to the 2030 Vision. Within it, the Council's four priority objectives and guiding mission that no one is left behind remain the central areas of focus as we deliver high-quality and sustainable services for all. These priorities remain our focus in 2026/27, alongside implementing Local Government Re-organisation (LGR) to ensure both the best start for the new unitary local authorities in Surrey and ending Surrey County Council well.

Developing the 2026/27 Draft Budget

- 1.3 The purpose of the budget is to set out how the Council will use its funding and resources to deliver its priority objectives and core services. In light of LGR, this report focuses on the progress made to date in setting a final budget of Surrey County Council for 2026/27. The budget planning principles utilised in setting this budget aim to protect the financial resilience of the new local authorities of the future, although the financial position of the new unitary authorities within Surrey, and the budgets from 2027/28 onwards, will be determined by decisions made by the new Shadow Authorities, due to be elected to in May 2026.
- 1.4 The 2026/27 financial year represents a challenging time for local authority finances. Public sector borrowing has been put under substantial pressure by events over recent years, alongside high interest rates and slow national economic growth. Public finances look to be extremely challenging over the medium-term and Local Government funding will remain constrained. Many local authorities are highlighting difficulties in meeting the statutory requirement to set a balanced budget, making it even more important that the Council continues to direct its resources using the most efficient means possible towards achieving its purpose and priorities, while ensuring that we deliver high quality to residents.
- 1.5 The Government published its consultation on Fair Funding Reform at the end of June 2025. As they stand, the proposals will result in significant decreases in Government funding in Surrey. This coupled with substantial increases in the cost of maintaining current service provision and increased demand for key services, results in pressures increasing at a significantly higher rate than forecast funding. The Council continues to see exponential increases in demand for services, particularly within Adults and Children's Social Care.
- 1.6 The Council will continue to maintain a strong focus on financial accountability in its final year of operation. Due to the financial context, the Council will need to reduce costs and take difficult decisions to ensure ongoing financial resilience, protect vital services and ensure No One Left Behind.
- 1.7 As in previous years, the production of the 2026/27 budget has been an integrated approach across Corporate Strategy & Policy, Design & Transformation and Finance. Basing proposals around 'Core Planning Assumptions,' which set out likely changes to the external context in which we deliver our services, ensures that revenue budgets, capital investment and transformation plans are aligned with each Directorate's service plans and the Corporate Priorities of the organisation.
- 1.8 Although good progress has been made over the last few months, at the point of publication, there remains a provisional budget gap for 2026/27 of £21.3m. Further actions will therefore be required to close the gap.
- 1.9 Whilst the Government have shown a commitment to multi-year-settlements for Local Government, the timing of the Government's Budget and indications of when the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement (LGFS) for 2026/27 will be released, means the first opportunity to understand in detail the direct impact of funding arrangements for the Council will be in late December 2025, with a final settlement in January 2026. While the Fair Funding Consultation provides strong indications of funding levels going forward, until the LGFS is available, uncertainty on funding remains.

- 1.10 Fair Funding Reforms mean the Council will become increasingly reliant on Council Tax as the primary source of income. Government formulas and calculations of the Council's available funding assume full Council Tax increases each year. However, the level of Council Tax raised, will be dependent upon progress in identifying further efficiencies, the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement in December, and confirmation of district and borough council tax bases in January.

Engagement

- 1.11 This year, the Council will be consulting residents and stakeholders on the draft budget after Cabinet approval in November. This exercise will run from late November through to the end of December. This approach will take into account the unique circumstances of LGR and the impact of Fair Funding Reforms.
- 1.12 This approach will ensure compliance with the Council's statutory duty to consult, while acknowledging the resource and capacity constraints associated with the transition to new unitary authorities.
- 1.13 The consultation will seek resident feedback on investment and efficiency proposals for 2026/27, potential changes to Council Tax levels, and considerations for the Council in the final year of service delivery. Consultation methods will include an open and accessible survey for residents and stakeholders, targeted outreach to under-represented groups, and analysis of existing consultation and engagement data. Further detail on the consultation methodology and results will be provided in the final budget report.
- 1.14 Potential impacts of the budget proposals are considered by services in a variety of ways, including service-led consultation and engagement exercises, as well as the use of Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs). EIAs play a critical role in informing budget decisions and in identifying and mitigating any potential negative effects on protected groups. All EIAs are subject to review and approval by the relevant Executive Director and Cabinet Member. Approved assessments will be published as part of the final budget report, alongside a summary of the cumulative equality impacts arising from the proposed changes.

2. THE SURREY WAY: A HIGH PERFORMING COUNCIL, ENSURING THAT NO ONE IS LEFT BEHIND

- 2.1 The Community Vision for Surrey 2030 was created with residents, communities and partners on behalf of the whole county. Together, we are all working to deliver a uniquely special place where everyone has a great start to life, people live healthy and fulfilling lives, are enabled to achieve their full potential and contribute to their community, and where *no one is left behind*. The Council plays a big part in the joint effort to realise this vision.
- 2.2 Our Organisation Strategy (2023-28) sets out four priority objectives which reflect where we can have the greatest impact on tackling inequality and improving outcomes for people living and working in the county.
- 2.3 The design principles that guide how our organisation operates, and our commitments about how our people will work are detailed in full in our [Strategic Framework – The Surrey Way](#).
- 2.4 Our main duty as a council is to deliver high-quality services, and these services are the building blocks for meeting our four priority objectives. Core services aim to support people to live independently and well in their communities, ensure children and families reach their full potential, protect Surrey's residents and businesses, and take care of Surrey's environment and highways.



3. INNOVATION, TRANSFORMATION & CHANGE

- 3.1 In recent years our transformation programmes have shifted focus to a more cross-cutting approach that is rooted in the outcomes we were seeking for Surrey's residents and businesses and to enable a financially sustainable footing over the medium-term, alongside an ongoing focus on driving service

improvement, with an emphasis on designing prevention-based services and supporting residents at the earliest possible stage of their customer journey.

- 3.2 Moving into 2026/27, the Council's focus has shifted again, with a need to ensure change capacity and capability is directed at the delivery of LGR. As a result of this, the Transformation Programme has undergone a thorough review to ensure the prioritisation of LGR and the deliverability of ongoing non-LGR Transformation Programmes over the remaining term of the Council.
- 3.3 The Council's continued commitment to transforming how we operate is demonstrated by a proposed investment in transformation and service improvement activity of £7m for 2026/27. This level of investment is estimating a return of £43.8m in spend reductions, which is made up of £18.8m of permanent budget efficiencies and £25m of cost containment, as set out below:

Table 1 – Transformation Programme Investment & Efficiencies

	2026/27 Investment £m	Forecast Efficiencies		
		2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m
Adults, Wellbeing & Health Partnerships	1.9	(12.7)	(8.0)	(11.5)
Additional Needs & Disabilities Safety Valve	1.2			
Childrens Social Care	1.3	(6.1)	(0.7)	(0.8)
Data & Digital	2.1			
Childrens Community Health Transformation	0.5			
TOTAL TRANSFORMATION	7.0	(18.8)	(8.7)	(12.3)

- 3.4 In addition to the identified efficiencies, the transformation programme drives cost containment, most notably within the Additional Needs and Disabilities Programme, which drives the cost containment included in the Council's Safety Valve agreement:

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Total
Safety Valve Cost Containment	£19m	£25m	£25m	£25m	£20m	£114m

- 3.5 Alongside driving financial benefits, transformation activity delivers a large amount of non-financial benefits and improved outcomes for residents and the most vulnerable members of our communities.

4. SERVICE STRATEGIES FOR 2026/27

ADULTS, WELLBEING & HEALTH PARTNERSHIPS

Context

- 4.1 Adults, Wellbeing & Health Partnerships (AWHP)'s ambition is to **support residents to live their best lives** through connecting them to their communities, embracing supportive technology and accessing joined up support and care when needed. AWHP is made up of three main services:
- **Adult Social Care (ASC)** – provides advice and information, assessment, care and support services for people aged 18+ with Physical and Sensory Disabilities, Learning Disabilities and Autism, Mental Health needs and for frail Older People. Surrey's ASC service works with over 23,000 residents and funds care packages for almost 13,000 residents. ASC's opening 2025/26 budget was £484.9m.
 - **Public Health (PH)** – provides leadership to improve health outcomes, commissions preventative services targeted at reducing health inequalities including 0-19 services, sexual health services, substance misuse service, NHS health checks and healthy lifestyle services. PH also works in partnership to create healthier, more active places, protect residents from communicable diseases and environmental hazards, as well as providing public health intelligence to inform local health planning. PH's opening 2025/26 budget was £39.8m.
 - **Communities & Prevention services (C&P)** – provides a range of community functions to help join up services and prevent demand for SCC and partner services across towns and villages, supports and helps to coordinate Surrey's voluntary sector infrastructure, supports coordination of immigration services in Surrey, facilitates community engagement via Neighbourhood Area Committees and administers the Your Fund Surrey capital fund, Your Councillor Community Fund

revenue fund and SCC's Crisis Fund as part of Surrey's welfare offer. C&P's 2025/26 opening budget was £3.7m.

- 4.2 AWHP operates in an incredibly challenging environment with the current rate of rising demand for services and inflationary pressures exceeding available funding, significant legislative changes and uncertainty about future government policy, including NHS 10 year Health Plan, the future of ASC funding as part of the government's planned changes to the Better Care Fund, wider ASC market sustainability and the impact of a new ASC Fair Pay Agreement that the government is consulting on, all set in the context of planning for the future of high quality ASC services in Surrey's Local Government Reorganisation.
- 4.3 In the context of these challenges AWHP is continuing to implement an ambitious programme to bring down the care package spending trajectory, which represents over 90% of AWHP's budgeted pressures, by transforming and improving the customer journey, including through redesigning ASC's front door and introducing a new Connect to Community model across the ASC workforce, improving reablement services, expanding technology enabled care services, focussing on a preventative model and supporting more people to stay well at home. This requires effective market shaping and commissioning of services and enabling thriving communities across Surrey's towns and villages. This programme is supported by £8m of funding from reserves approved by Cabinet in June 2024, which will be fully spent by the end of 2026/27.

Current 2025/26 budget position

- 4.4 AWHP's current annual revenue budget is £530.5m. At the end of September 2025, an overspend of £0.4m was forecast for 2025/26. This variance is primarily due to:
- A forecast overspend of £1.6m for Adult Social Care due to forecast pressures of £6.3m on care packages, with key pressures related to the implementation of the Supported Independent Living Dynamic Purchasing System and lower success in accessing funding from the NHS for historic Section 117 Aftercare clients than was budgeted, partially mitigated by forecast underspends relating to wider support services (£2.8m), staffing budget underspends (£0.9m) and a £1m surplus of Better Care Fund income, including drawdown of prior year carried forward funds.
 - A forecast underspend of £1.2m for Public Health, non-recurrently to fund eligible services provided by other parts of the Council that meet public health outcomes.

Financial pressures & efficiencies for 2026/27

- 4.5 The 2026/27 draft revenue budget includes £42.1m of pressures for AWHP. Expenditure pressures of £46.4m are budgeted including £20.3m for care package demand prior to demand management efficiencies, £16m for budgeted care package and AWHP contract inflation prior to efficiencies, £6m for cost increases related to supported living packages beyond general inflation, £2.4m for pay inflation and other staffing cost pressures, and £0.7m of other expenditure pressures.
- 4.6 Expenditure pressures are budgeted to be partially mitigated by £2.1m of inflationary increases to billed ASC assessed fees & charges income, a £1.9m budgeted increase to Better Care Fund income for ASC pending confirmation by government of BCF plans for 2026/27 and £0.3m use of increased Public Health grant funding to meet part of the cost of PH contract pressures.
- 4.7 The 2026/27 draft revenue budget includes £17.8m of efficiencies for AWHP. The majority, £12.7m, are reliant in part or in full on the successful delivery of AWHP's transformation and improvement programme. This includes strengths-based practice and demand management efficiencies to bring the care package trajectory to a more affordable level, strengths-based reviews of existing care packages, market shaping & commissioning activities to implement a new technology enabled care strategy and deliver the Right Homes Right Support ASC accommodation programme, and the full year effect of the completion of AWHP's support functions review.
- 4.8 In addition, £5.1m of other efficiencies are budgeted, including £1.6m relating to planned mitigation of ASC price inflation, £2.3m for commissioning efficiencies to realign budgets for wider support services based on current service requirements and end funding for services where this is not an evidence base that they directly prevent or delay ASC eligible care package expenditure, £0.7m of increased income budgeted for the changes to the ASC charging policy being considered by Cabinet

in November and £0.5m related to completion of the reconfiguration of Communities & Prevention services.

Capital programme

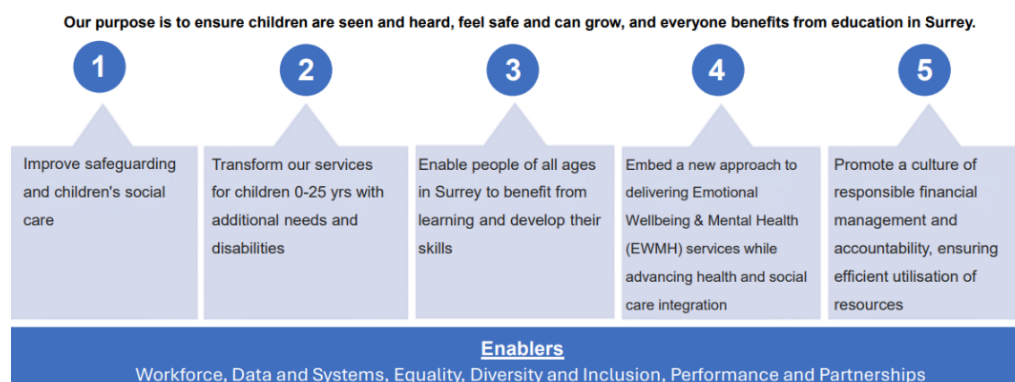
4.9 The main areas of future planned capital expenditure related to AWHP are:

- The Right Homes Right Support programme to develop affordable extra care housing for older people, supported independent living and short breaks services for people with learning disabilities & autism and mental health conditions, and specialist nursing and residential care service for older people. £8.3m is budgeted in the Capital Programme for 2026/27 across these workstreams, with £51.4m expected to have been spent by the end of 2025/26 including prior years and £12.2m forecast as required to complete all workstreams in 2027/28 and beyond. The delivery of this accommodation is essential to meeting future demand and efficiencies.
- The capitalisation of community equipment – £1.5m in 2026/27

CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND LIFELONG LEARNING

Context

4.10 The focus and key priorities of the Children, Families & Lifelong Learning Directorate (CFLD) are improving services and outcomes for children, young people, families, and learners through a set of aligned strategic initiatives. These are shaped by the national social care and SEND reforms and are designed to ensure our services are responsive, inclusive, and future-ready.



4.11 A strong emphasis is placed on prevention, enabling us to identify and respond to needs earlier, helping families before challenges escalate, in line with the ambitions of the social care reforms.

4.12 The Directorate has a child-first ethos which is at the heart of everything. The Directorate are committed to ensuring that children are seen, heard, and supported to thrive. As Corporate Parents, we take seriously the responsibility to provide care, stability, and opportunity for children and young people in our care and those with care experience, prioritising participation and co-production, ensuring that children, young people, and families are actively involved in shaping the services that affect them, especially in relation to developing and implementing changes aligned with national reforms.

4.13 CFLD is enhancing early help and support pathways, streamlining referral processes, and strengthening statutory services to ensure timely and effective interventions. The Directorate continue to prioritise children with additional needs, disabilities, and emotional wellbeing, with focused work on mental health, neurodiversity, and inclusive education, reducing exclusions and building belonging.

4.14 Delivery priorities also include increasing sufficiency for looked-after children, expanding residential and fostering provision, and ensuring robust support for care-experienced young people, while also investing in governance, evaluation, and financial accountability to drive improvement and efficiency across all services.

Current 2025/26 budget position

4.15 The current annual revenue budget for CFLD is £319.9m. At the end of September, an overspend of £4.6m was forecast for 2025/26. This variance is primarily due to the increased costs of specialist

external placements for looked after children whose needs cannot currently be met within in-house or contracted provision.

Financial pressures & efficiencies for 2026/27

- 4.16 The 2026/27 draft revenue budget includes £20.4m of pressures with investment in the mainstreaming of the additional resource related to SEN services and the increased numbers of EHCPs that have been funded through transformation over the previous three years. Other pressures include additional inflationary cost pressures seen nationally in the residential care placements market as well as general market inflation and salary pressures.
- 4.17 £14.7m of efficiencies have been identified including early intervention strategies to reduce the number of young people coming into care and efficient use and development of in-house placement provision. Efficiencies also include a number of staff cost savings.

Capital budgets

- 4.18 The main areas of planned capital expenditure include development of in-house provision for both SEN and care placements, ensuring best value support close to home for Surrey young people.

PLACE

Context

- 4.19 The Place Directorate is a future-focused Directorate which aims to shape places, improve the environment and reach sustainability and climate change targets. Place provides many “universal services” which many or all residents access - including transport, highways and waste management. Key service areas include:

- Maintenance and improvement of highways, footways, street lighting and other highway assets.
- Public transport.
- Waste management, including recycling or disposal of household waste and operation of community recycling centres.
- Transport infrastructure and place development.
- Planning & development.
- Supporting the county’s and Council’s response to climate change and carbon reduction.
- Supporting economic growth.

- 4.20 Place’s key priorities are to:

- Continue to strengthen financial sustainability to provide value for money to communities and businesses by leveraging available funding opportunities, identifying new commercial opportunities, opportunities for partnership working and innovating service delivery, and securing effective deployment of devolution deals such as Adult Skills Fund.
- Continue to improve bus services, including the half price travel scheme and digital demand responsive transport services.
- Continue to work with Ringway, the Highways contract provider, improving quality of works across the county, continuing to identify opportunities to innovate and work more effectively, and delivering against carbon reduction outcomes.
- Support delivery of the Council and county’s carbon emission reduction targets in line with our Climate Change Delivery Plan. With 41% of Surrey’s emissions resulting from Transport, a key part of delivering these targets will be supported by delivery of the Surrey Transport Plan, EV network rollout, improvements to local bus services and the introduction of Digital Demand Responsive Transport.
- Deliver the capital programme including highways maintenance and the Surrey Infrastructure Programme.
- Continue to maximise external funding toward revenue and capital activities, including grants like UKSPF or Made Smarter Adoptions South East, income and developer contributions, and multi-year devolved programmes like Connect to Work.

Current 2025/26 budget position

- 4.21 Place's current annual revenue budget is £169m. Key areas of spend include managing the recycling and disposal of the county's domestic waste collected at the kerbside and deposited at community recycling centres, managing the county's 3,000 miles of highways including repairing and maintaining the county's roads, streetlights, bridges and other assets, and passenger transport including contracting bus services and operating the concessionary travel scheme for elderly and the disabled.
- 4.22 A significant proportion of the Directorate's budget is linked to contracts, and Place therefore recognises the need to work in close partnership with providers and markets to explore opportunities for efficiencies.
- 4.23 At the end of September, the Place forecast is a broadly balanced position, with significant pressures which are currently forecast to be offset by underspends and one-off balances. Inflation has increased since the budget was agreed, leading to a pressure of £1.1m on waste contracts. Highways forecast pressures of £1.8m, including an expected pressure on the Highway parking contract linked to national living wage and income levels, and also due to staffing and recharges. Environment & Planning anticipates additional costs linked to the expected requirement to produce a Spatial Development Strategy (£0.3m). These pressures are expected to be managed by reprioritising expenditure and grants (including bus service and waste grants), savings delivered from favourable retender of local bus contracts, prior year parking balances, and a review and release of prior year Planning fees.

Financial pressures & efficiencies 2026/27

- 4.24 The 2026/27 draft revenue budget includes £6.9m of pressures including:
- Inflation: significant spend within Place is delivered through medium and long term contracts including bus services, highway maintenance, and waste management. Most contracts include provision for an annual inflationary uplift, e.g. to recognise that materials and labour costs are increasing. The draft budget assumes non-staffing inflation at 2.7% (£3.2m). Pay inflation is also included at 2% (£0.8m).
 - The current budget includes significant investment in bus services including demand responsive transport which is partially funded by Government grants. As those grants are utilised, funding will need to be identified within the wider Place budget (£1.7m in 2026/27 after taking account of revised costs and timing).
 - Other Highways & Transport pressures include parking enforcement (£0.7m) and various smaller pressures relating to income and staffing which are met from one-off sources in 2025/26 (£1m).
 - Use of the Extended Producer Responsibility grant has been reprioritised this year to include funding for recycling initiatives (£4.2m) and contract re-procurement costs (£0.4m).
- 4.25 £6.2m of efficiencies have been identified including:
- Removal of recycling support to Boroughs & Districts, who are now in receipt of Government funding (£1.2m).
 - One-off use of prior year Planning fees (£1m) and an anticipated highway contractor volume discount (£1m).
 - Place redesign efficiencies (£0.6m).
 - The conclusion of Climate Change projects (£0.5m).
 - Various smaller efficiencies across Place services.

Capital budgets

- 4.26 The main areas of planned capital expenditure in 2026/27 include:
- Structural maintenance of roads, bridges and other highway assets.
 - Highways and transport improvement schemes and programmes such as the A320 improvements, Farnham infrastructure programme, supporting the introduction of low emission buses, active travel and the Surrey Infrastructure Plan.
 - The Surrey flood alleviation programme.

- Maintenance of waste infrastructure including community recycling centres.
- Greener Futures, the Council's carbon reduction plan.

COMMUNITY PROTECTION AND EMERGENCIES

Context

- 4.27 The Community Protection and Emergencies Directorate (CPE) is a statutory service which aims to make Surrey a safer place to live, work, travel and do business. The Directorate is comprised of the Surrey Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS), Trading Standards, Safer Communities and Emergency Management and Resilience.
- 4.28 In recent years, in response to His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS), SFRS has implemented improvement programmes and has delivered a new Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) and supporting strategies. The CRMP focuses on enhancing prevention, protection and response activities to help communities remain safe, thriving, and resilient. This is reflected across CPE and set out in the Directorate Business Plan 2026/27.
- 4.29 Partnership working is key to our success, starting within Surrey County Council with Adults Social Care and Integrated Commissioning, Children, Families and Lifelong Learning and Public Health services, to help prioritise support to our most vulnerable residents. We aim to work collaboratively with other emergency services, District and Borough Councils and closer working with businesses to support the Surrey economy.

Current 2025/26 budget position

- 4.30 The current CPE revenue budget is £46m. At the end of September, an over/underspend of £0.6m is forecast for 2025/26. This variance primarily relates to SFRS which forecasts an overspend of £0.9m. Pressures, which also reflect increased operational activity, include staffing (£0.8m including overtime) and the new contingency crewing contract and other supplies (£0.2m). These are partly offset by efficiencies generated through shared support costs of Joint Fire Control (-£0.1m). The rest of the directorate is broadly balanced except for Trading Standards which forecasts an underspend in respect of recovery of staff costs and vacancies (-£0.3m).

Financial Pressures & Efficiencies

- 4.31 The 2026/27 draft revenue budget includes £2.4m of pressures relating to:
- Expected growth through inflation, primarily pay inflation including nationally agreed firefighter's pay awards, totalling £1.2m next year.
 - Current year staffing pressures, £0.5m.
 - Other smaller pressures including the new contingency crewing contract (£0.25m), a shortfall in pension grant funding (£0.2m), pressures across logistics and supplies budgets (£0.1m) and cessation of the pensions administration grant (£0.1m).
- 4.32 Offsetting this £1.4m of efficiencies have been identified including:
- Targeted reductions to discretionary activities across the Directorate including project management, digital services and specific support roles, community resilience, and the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (totalling £0.5m).
 - Use of the Fire pensions provision where a balance is expected after funding relevant costs, £0.7m, and to offset the removal of the pensions administration grant (£0.1m).
 - Removal of the contingency assumed in the Joint Fire Control budget (£0.1m).

Capital budgets

- 4.33 The main areas of planned capital expenditure include:
- Purchase of new fire appliances, vehicles and equipment (£3.6m).
 - Joint Fire Control Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system replacement (£2.1m, funded by the three partner authorities.)
 - Community resilience equipment (£0.3m).

RESOURCES

Context

- 4.34 The Resources Directorate sits at the heart of the Council, predominantly responsible for enabling services across the Council, but also for some front-line services, including Customer and Cultural Services. The aim of the Resources Directorate is to support and enable the delivery of front-line services and the Council's priorities, working in close partnership with other Council directorates and external partners to ensure successful service delivery of its work plans and programmes.
- 4.35 The Directorate has a key role in managing the overall financial resources of the Council, managing risk and ensuring a correct path to decision making through procurement rules and regulations, governance and audit and ensuring a strategic integrated planning process is followed.
- 4.36 The directorate's focus is:
- Delivering highly effective and value for money services
 - Delivering high impact collaborative support, to enable the organisation to deliver high quality services and good outcomes for residents.
 - Empowering our people to reach their full potential across the organisation, ensuring no one is left behind.
 - To deliver excellent financial management by ensuring a balanced and sustainable budget, providing insight and solutions, supporting robust commercial activity and investing in the services that matter to our residents.
 - Supporting the organisation to become agile and dynamic in our ways of working.
 - Providing efficient systems and governance to enable the organisation to deliver high quality services and good outcomes for residents.
 - Delivery of high quality services for customer and cultural services.
 - Continually challenging ourselves and others to improve and innovate for the benefit of our residents.

The Directorate also provides a diverse range of high quality, high profile and wide reaching/impact services for our residents.

Current 2025/26 budget position

- 4.37 The current annual revenue budget is £110m. At the end of September, an overspend of £1.3m was forecast for 2025/26. This variance is primarily due to a forecast overspend of £3m in Land & Property due to several factors including delayed or unachieved prior year efficiency targets and reduced rental income. The service has set challenging targets to reduce facilities management spend and is looking for further opportunities to rationalise assets. This overspend has been partially offset by a number of smaller forecast underspends in other services within the Directorate.

Financial Pressures & Efficiencies

- 4.38 The 2026/27 draft revenue budget includes £6.7m of pressures. The largest of these relate to inflation pressures across both staffing and non-staffing budgets of £2.5m. There are also a number of pressures within Land and Property, pressures relating to ongoing in-year pressures for facilities management of our buildings, increased business rates and reduced income. In addition, there are a number of smaller pressures across other services.
- 4.39 The majority of the £8.9m efficiencies identified to offset these pressures, relate to staffing arrangements. These are a combination of reducing management structures, reducing non-statutory activities and re-focusing resources within certain areas towards Local Government Re-organisation activities. Other identified efficiencies include uplifts in charges for services, efficiencies from the rationalisation of buildings, increasing income opportunities and reduced IT&D licencing costs.

Capital budgets

- 4.40 The Directorate has significant capital investment and delivery plans relating to the Council's Land & Property (£110m) and IT&D services (£3m) in 2026/27. Much of the capital programme overseen by the Directorate drive investment in services across CFLL, Fire and AWHP. The Capital

Programme 2026/27 also includes £22m of capital maintenance to improve the quality and condition of the corporate and school estate.

5. FINANCIAL STRATEGY AND 2026/27 DRAFT BUDGET

Budget Principles

- 5.1 For successive years, the budget has been built on a number of high-level principles which are used as a framework for budget setting. These have proven to be successful and have been reaffirmed for the 2026/27 budget. The principles are:
- Developing and continuing to strengthen the integrated approach; linking Organisation Strategy, Service and Transformation plans to the budget;
 - A balanced revenue budget with only targeted use of reserves and balances; (i.e. using them for their intended purpose or to cover one-off or time-limited costs);
 - Regular review of reserves to ensure appropriate coverage for emerging risk;
 - Budget envelopes set for each Directorate to deliver services within available resources and to ensure ownership and accountability;
 - Assurance that all efficiencies, pressures and growth are owned by Executive Directors and efficiencies are cascaded to all management layers to ensure delivery, including the development of detailed delivery plans for all identified efficiencies.
 - Ensuring a culture of budget responsibility where managers are accountable for their budgets – capital and revenue budgets are agreed and acknowledged annually by Accountable Budget Officers through Budget Accountability Statements;
 - A corporate transformation fund is held centrally; and
 - There is a budgeted contribution to reserves to provide and improve overall financial resilience.

Revenue Budget Headlines

- 5.2 As an organisation we are constantly affected by our external environment, which has implications for both what we want to achieve and how we will deliver for our residents and communities. The draft revenue budget has been developed during a period of significant uncertainty; with Fair Funding Reform, Local Government Reorganisation, policy changes, economic uncertainty and forecast increased demand for services in 2026/27. Understanding this context is integral in helping inform and shape how we plan and respond as an organisation to possible future scenarios.
- 5.3 The Council develops a set of Core Planning Assumptions to help manage this uncertainty, setting out assumptions about the Council's most likely operating context. The assumptions are developed from emerging policy trends and predictions drawn from government messaging, strategies, policy think tanks and other influential institutions to build an expectation of future conditions. They are not intended to define a specific future, but list important factors that may affect the Council's resources and services to inform strategic and financial planning in the short to medium term.
- 5.4 Directorate growth pressures have been subject to a number of iterations and changing assumptions, culminating in indicative pressures for the Draft Budget of £84m.
- 5.5 To date, efficiencies of £73.5m have been identified. Together with a forecast decrease in funding (as set out in para 5.16), there remains a residual gap to be closed for 2026/27 of £21.3m, as shown in table 2 below.
- 5.6 Further information on pressures and efficiencies for each Directorate is set out in Appendix A.

Table 2: Summary Budget Position for 2026/27

Directorate	Base Budget £m	Pay & Contract Inflation £m	Demand & Other Pressures £m	Identified Efficiencies & Funding £m	Total Budget Requirement £m
Adults, Wellbeing & Health Partnerships	528.5	23.2	18.8	(17.8)	552.8
Children, Families and Lifelong Learning	313.8	7.6	12.8	(14.7)	319.5
Place	171.8	4.8	2.2	(6.2)	172.5
Community Protection & Engagement	45.6	1.4	1.0	(1.4)	46.6
Resources	106.5	3.7	3.0	(8.9)	104.4
Central Income and Expenditure	108.4	0.1	5.3	(24.5)	89.3
Directorate Total	1,274.6	40.8	43.2	(73.5)	1,285.0
Central Funding	(1,274.6)			10.9	(1,263.7)
Council Total	0.0	40.8	43.2	(62.6)	21.3

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- 5.7 Given the substantial demand pressures and the impact of Fair Funding Reform on the Council's funding position, a gap of £21.3m (1.7% of likely net revenue funding) represents acceptable progress in balancing the budget at this stage.
- 5.8 Given the budget gap, there are three main options to close this and reach a balanced position: increase efficiencies, raise the Council Tax increase further, use of reserves for time limited or specific purposes.
- 5.9 The achievement of considerable efficiencies over recent years and the need to implement LGR alongside service and efficiency delivery in 2026/27, it is going to be extremely challenging for the council to identify further additional efficiencies to close the residual gap. However, we will continue to review all areas of spend and look to mitigate pressures wherever possible, in order to deliver a balanced Final Budget.
- 5.10 We will be more certain of our final funding position for 2026/27 once the provisional settlement is issued in December, which will provide further details of the Council's specific grant allocations. Further decisions on the level of council tax required will not be made until we have more clarity on the funding position. Decisions to increase Council Tax are not made lightly and balance the need to provide sustainable services for the most vulnerable with a recognition of the pressures on household finances. It is possible that the Council will need to raise council tax further than the 2.99% assumed in this Draft Budget.
- 5.11 In addition, a review of the levels of reserves of the Council will be undertaken, with regard to the current high risk operating environment and given the need to identify additional funding to support the considerable estimated implementation costs of LGR.

National Funding Context

Background

- 5.12 In the Spending Review in June 2025, the Government announced that local government funding is set to increase by £3.3 billion in real terms by 2028–29, with a 3.1% average annual real-terms rise in Core Spending Power (CSP). Initial analysis from the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS), County Councils Network (CCN) and others, suggested that the majority of this announced increase is based on the assumption that Councils will increase council tax by the maximum allowable, without a referendum, up to 5% for County Councils.
- 5.13 Since 2019, the most significant anticipated influence on the Council's funding has been the long-awaited implementation of fundamental Government funding reform (known as Fair Funding Reform (FFR)). The current Government reiterated its commitment to deliver Fair Funding Reform in the Local Government Finance Settlement for 2025/26 and again in the Spending Review in June 2025, followed by a consultation on proposals, which was launched at the end of June 2025. As they stand, the proposals will result in significant decreases in Government funding in Surrey, as set out in paras 5.16 – 5.22.

- 5.14 FFR proposals include transitional arrangements, to smooth the impact of significant losses anticipated by some Council's. However, it is important to note that the Government's funding formulae are based on Council's raising the full amount of Council Tax allowable within referendum thresholds. Therefore, if Council Tax is not increased to the maximum amount allowable, then transitional arrangement will not protect the Council from overall funding reductions.
- 5.15 Despite strong indications set out in the FFR consultation, there remains uncertainty over funding for 2026/27. The Autumn Budget Statement is due to take place on 26 November and while this might provide some insight, actual funding figures for 2026/27 will not be available until the publication of the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement, now not expected until mid/late-December. A Policy Statement is also anticipated in November, which is intended to enable authorities to calculate indicative figures for planning purposes. Despite this, the first opportunity to truly understand in detail the direct impact of funding reform for the Council will be with the Provisional Settlement itself, with a final settlement in February 2026. Until this is available, significant uncertainty on funding remains.

Funding Assumptions for 2026/27

- 5.16 As they stand, Fair Funding Reform proposals are anticipated to result in significant decreases in Government funding in Surrey over the medium-term. In line with the sector intelligence, the current assumptions include an element of transitional arrangements to smooth the impact of significant funding reductions. Despite this, the Draft Budget, currently anticipated an overall reduction in funding, inclusive of transitional arrangements, which do not mitigate the impact of not maximising the allowable council tax increase, based on current assumptions.

Table 3: Funding assumptions:

	2025/26	2026/27
	£m	£m
Council Tax	977.7	1,011.4
Business Rates	148.2	128.6
Grants	148.7	123.7
Total Funding	1,274.6	1,263.7

Council Tax Funding

- 5.17 The referendum limits will remain unchanged for 2025/26 and the budget has been modelled assuming a **Band D rate increase of 2.99% on the core council tax for 2025/26**, with no assumption on increasing the Social Care precept at this stage (this overall increase is therefore 2% below the current total referendum limits).

Business Rates funding

- 5.18 The Government have also pledged to replace the current business rates system and the coming financial year will include a business rates revaluation, the introduction of multiple new business rate multipliers and a full business rates reset.
- 5.19 Based on the current proposals, the level of Business Rates retained also has a direct relationship with funding reform. The full extent of all of these changes remain uncertain, however, current assumptions are that when the wider changes in business rates are taken alongside funding reform (which will remove the multiplier compensation funding, redistribute 'growth' since the last reset and introduce new baseline funding levels) the overall level of rates retained will reduce.

Grant funding

- 5.20 Fair Funding Reform proposes the 'rolling in' of a number of previously separate grants, for example social care grant, into a consolidated funding position. The draft budget assumptions align to what has been set out in the FFR proposals and forecast an overall decrease in grant funding, even with the expectation of transitional support in 2026/27.
- 5.21 The current FFR proposals create more interdependencies on the above 3 categories of spend than previously, with grant reductions and transitional funding linked to the levels of council tax and business rates councils are able to raise. Therefore, once FFR proposals are finalised and more

detailed funding figures for the authority are released, it is likely that there are movements between the forecast business rate and grant income figures set out in the Draft Budget. However, it is not anticipated that the overall net impact will be materially different, as transitional arrangements will be flexed to reduce if the business rates baseline is higher than anticipated and increased if the baseline is lower.

- 5.22 What is clear from the FFR proposals is that transitional arrangements will only compensate a local authority for losses up to a threshold that assumes a full council tax increase. If council tax is not increased to the full amount allowable, transitional arrangements will not protect the council from overall year on year funding decreases.

6. DRAFT CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2026/27 & INDICATIVE FUTURE INVESTMENT TO 2029/30

Overview & Approach

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- 6.1 Over recent years the Council's capital ambition and delivery has grown significantly, in recognition of historic under-investment in our assets and in order to improve the condition of the infrastructure in the County. The capital programme is aligned to the Council's corporate priorities and invests in the areas of most importance to our residents.
- 6.2 In light of Local Government Reform (LGR), this Draft Budget proposes Capital investment for the 2026/27 financial year only. Indicative future investment figures are provided in Appendix B for ongoing capital programmes and where revenue efficiencies are anticipated from ongoing investment, however, these are indicative only and final capital investment decisions from 2027/28 will be for the new unitary authorities to consider and approve.
- 6.3 The Capital Programme for 2026/27 proposes ongoing investment in priority areas such as highways infrastructure, improving the condition of our property estate, creating additional school places including for children with special educational needs and disabilities, the green agenda, transforming our libraries and investing in Adult Social Care accommodation with care and support.
- 6.4 In light of LGR and in order to reduce the ongoing impact of capital investment on the revenue budget and sustain our financial resilience, we have undertaken prioritisation of the capital programme, re-setting our capital expenditure approach and significantly reducing the borrowing requirement, to ensure the affordability, sustainability and proportionality of our capital programme in the medium term.
- 6.5 The Council continues to operate a capital pipeline, in addition to the capital programme. Pipeline schemes act as a placeholder for schemes in early stages of development which are moved into the approved budget only when their benefits and deliverability are adequately demonstrated. The nature of the pipeline is to be a flexible portfolio of schemes that contribute to the Council's strategic objectives.
- 6.6 Pipeline schemes have also been reviewed as part of the work recently carried out and a number of schemes have been re-scoped and re-prioritised, seeing an overall decrease in the borrowing requirement from pipeline schemes. The focus on the review has been on the deliverability of investment in key priorities ahead of March 2027.
- 6.7 An officer-led, Capital Programme Panel (CPP), ensures that the framework for setting the Capital Programme continues to focus on outcomes for residents, deliverability and affordability and contributes to the Community Vision for Surrey 2030 and aligning with the organisation's priorities. The impact of the Capital Programme on financial resources is assessed with each new iteration to ensure it is sustainable, with particular focus on overall borrowing levels and borrowing costs in the medium to long term.
- 6.8 Governance of the Capital Programme is led by CPP and the three Strategic Capital Groups (SCGs) for Property, Infrastructure and IT, with support from Finance and Members. The SCGs are tasked with developing the Capital Programme based on an asset planning approach to ensure that affordable, value for money capital solutions are identified to meet the needs of residents.

Draft Capital Programme 2026/27

- 6.9 The Draft Capital Programme 2026/27 of £301.8m is set out in more detail in **Appendix B**. This consists of £284.6m in the capital programme and a further £17.2m in the capital pipeline.
- 6.10 The schemes proposed in the Capital Programme for 2026/27 will be monitored during the year for cost control, deliverability and to ensure budget estimates remain realistic. Table 4 below shows a breakdown of budget schemes by the three SCGs and Commercial for 2026/27:

Table 4: Draft Capital Budget by Strategic Capital Group (excluding pipeline):

Strategic Capital Group	2026/27 Budget (£m)
Infrastructure	166.6
Property	114.8
IT	3.0
Commercial	0.2
Total Budget	284.6

- 6.11 These schemes deliver priorities across the county, including investment in schools and provision of places for young people with additional needs and disability, the transport network, flood alleviation, making the most efficient use of the corporate estate and providing support to vulnerable residents. The top 10 schemes in the Capital Programme (excluding pipeline) make up 65% of the total estimated budget:
- £69m - Highway Maintenance – improvements to roads and footways across the County
 - £29m - SEND Strategy – increasing sufficiency of provision for special education needs and disability in schools across Surrey
 - £21m - Schools Basic Need – increasing school places and building schools across the County
 - £11m - Recurring Capital Maintenance: Schools – County wide schools maintenance programme
 - £11m - Recurring Capital Maintenance: Corporate (non-schools) estate – County wide maintenance of service buildings, community facilities and offices
 - £19m – A320 North of Woking and Junction 11 of M25 – Homes England grant funded road and junction improvements
 - £8m - Bridge/Structures Maintenance – improvements and safety maintenance of specialist infrastructure
 - £8m – Surrey Fire and Rescue Service, fire house
 - £7m – Farnham Infrastructure Programme Town Centre
 - £6m – Warm Homes Local Grant
- 6.12 To finalise the Capital Programme, CPP and SCGs will continue to test the justification, affordability and prudence of plans. The outcome of this work will be presented in detail to Cabinet in January as part of the Final Budget Report, alongside the Treasury Management Strategy and associated prudential indicators.
- 6.13 Uncertainty remains over the economic backdrop. Recent high construction inflation has driven up the cost of scheme delivery. While it is widely anticipated that interest rate rises have peaked, there remains uncertainty on the path of interest rates. These risks and uncertainties will be monitored through CPP and mitigating actions taken where required.

Pipeline Schemes

- 6.14 **Pipeline schemes** include proposals developed to a stage where they can be earmarked against a flexible funding allocation built into the wider Capital Programme. The pipeline allows projects to be approved during the year, subject to business case approval. The SCGs have come forward with a

set of proposals to support key strategic priorities. The table below shows a breakdown of pipeline schemes by the SCGs for 2026/27:

Table 5: 2026/27 Capital Pipeline by Strategic Capital Group:

Strategic Capital Group	2026/27 Pipeline (£m)
Infrastructure	14.6
Property	2.6
IT	-
Total Pipeline	17.2

- 6.15 The nature of the pipeline is to be a flexible portfolio of schemes that contribute to the Council's strategic objectives. As a result, SCGs may update the pipeline accordingly to adapt to changing circumstances, emerging priorities and financial constraints. All pipeline proposals are subject to ongoing development, scrutiny and challenge to ensure feasibility and deliverability before being approved to budget and confirmed into the Capital Programme.

Environmental Sustainability

- 6.16 The capital programme contains £70m for schemes that contribute to reducing carbon emissions, tackle climate change and enable a greener future for residents. A further £20m is included in the capital pipeline, bringing the total to c£90m.

7. FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE 2025/26

- 7.1 The Month 6 Financial report is presented to the same Cabinet on 25th November 2025. Headline performance is set out below.
- 7.2 **Revenue:** As at September 2025 (Month 6), Directorates are projecting a full year overspend of £5.2m. The Directorate positions continue to be challenging, recognising the impact significant demand pressures and price increases have on the cost of delivering vital services, particularly in relation to adult social care and children's placements.
- 7.3 The Council remains committed to budget accountability and therefore Directorates are expected to put in place mitigating actions in the remainder of this financial year to offset the forecast overspend position.
- 7.4 It is imperative that the forecast level of overspend reduces before the financial year end, otherwise there could be a material negative impact on the level of the council's reserves at a time when the level of external financial risk is extremely high and reserves are required to support LGR implementation costs.
- 7.5 **Capital:** The 2025/26 Capital Budget was approved by Council on 6th February 2025 at £404.9m. The Capital Programme Panel, working alongside Strategic Capital Groups, undertook a detailed review of the programme to validate and ensure deliverability. The re-phased capital programme stands at £349.3m at the end of September.
- 7.6 The forecast at M6 is for full year spend of £332.8m, representing a £16.5m variance against the re-set capital budget, which is the net effect of acceleration in some areas and slippage against other schemes.
- 7.7 More information on the revenue and capital position can be found in the 2025/26 Month 6 (September) Financial Report to Cabinet on 25th November 2025.
- 7.8 Many of the factors impacting the 2025/26 expected outturn position for both revenue and capital will continue into 2026/27 and the medium term. Budget estimates for 2026/27 provide for the ongoing impact of Directorate variances from the current financial year, where they are expected to continue. Demand pressure trajectories have been modelled into 2026/27 in relation to those services experiencing pressures over and above the budget assumptions in 2025/26, specifically within land and property, adult social care and children's services. This provides confidence that the underlying budget, overall, should be realistic and deliverable.

8. LOCAL GOVERNMENT RE-ORGANISATION & THE MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL OUTLOOK

- 8.1 In December 2024, the Government released the English Devolution White Paper, setting out ambitions for deepening and widening devolution across England. The paper also signalled the start of a programme of LGR to simplify and streamline local government.
- 8.2 Between February and May 2025, councils across Surrey worked to respond to an accelerated timetable, set by government, to prepare LGR proposals to help unlock further devolution for the county. Interim Plans were submitted in March 2025 and Final Plans in May 2025. The government made a final decision in October 2025, following consultation with stakeholders across Surrey to gather their views on the proposals. This decision to progress with a two unitary model represents a historic change for local authorities in Surrey and as a result of this, 2026/27 will be the last year of operation of Surrey County Council.
- 8.3 This Draft Budget Report therefore focuses on progress to set a balanced budget for 2026/27 and does not include a Medium Term Financial Strategy. Decisions on the allocation of resources from 2027/28 will be for the new unitary authorities to decide.
- 8.4 LGR implementation is expected to incur significant costs and the Final Budget will set out more details on the estimated level of costs and proposed funding sources.

Funding Context for the Medium-Term

- 8.5 The new unitaries will become operational in an ongoing challenging financial context for local government, not least due to the impacts of Fair Funding Reform, coupled with continuing forecast increases to demand and prices for vital services.
- 8.6 The overall district and borough Core Spending Power is around £170m, 15% of overall County's position. Therefore, the anticipated medium-term losses for in Government funding for Surrey County Council will have a significant impact on the future financial position of the new unitary councils, particularly as the proposed transitional arrangements are phased out over the next three years to 2028/29.
- 8.7 The new authorities will need to plan for material losses in core funding, coupled with ongoing cost pressures. Surrey councils will become increasingly reliant on council tax as the primary source of income and council tax rises will be required in order to maintain year on year funding levels resulting in a need for difficult decisions on future spending priorities.
- 8.8 The upcoming settlement will be the first multi-year settlement in almost a decade meaning funding allocations will be published for the 3-year period to 2028/29. This is likely to be the case even where areas are divided into more through LGR, where Government has shared the view that areas should determine allocations locally (although the final decision on the division of funding allocations between successor authorities sits with the Secretary of State).

9 EQUALITY ANALYSIS

Equality impacts

- 9.1 Given the nature of the services we provide as a local authority, we already ensure that services are delivered in a way that appreciates resources are finite and are targeted to areas where they are needed most. This means it is challenging to avoid all scenarios where some vulnerable groups are affected. Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) are one of many measures we use to guide budget decisions and manage the risks of any potential negative equality impacts. EIAs approved by the relevant Executive Director and Cabinet Member will be included in the Final Budget with an overview of the cumulative impacts.
- 9.2 The Council assesses impacts on the nine characteristics protected under the Equality Act 2010 and other vulnerable groups, such as those facing socio-economic disadvantage, carers, and the those experiencing homelessness. Early equality analysis will be reviewed by Select Committees,

with a full analysis presented with the final budget in early 2026. This analysis is ongoing and subject to change as budget details are refined.

- 9.3 Some budget proposals may not have enough detail or activity planned out to enable a comprehensive and thorough equality analysis at this time. Where this is the case, some provisional information that is more narrative based will be developed.
- 9.4 Initial analysis on the insight emerging at this stage shows the main characteristics likely to be disproportionately impacted are: Older adults and their carers, and adults of all ages with physical, mental and learning disabilities and their carers; children and young people, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and families; and Staff and residents facing socio-economic disadvantage.
- 9.5 Most of the impacts are positive, given the way we approach service delivery often focuses on those who are most in need. For example, there are a number of proposals aimed at helping vulnerable children, including those that prioritise placing looked after children within the county and closer to friends and supportive communities. We have also proposed changes to the way adult social care is delivered to help ensure more support for people at home.
- 9.6 The groups identified as likely to experience disproportionate impacts are mainly impacted through efficiencies related to changes to: 'Front-door' services that may have additional accessibility considerations, changes to services where the makeup of service users/ residents or staff have over-representations of particular characteristics (in particular services related to vulnerable adults or children), and changes to our funding arrangements with partners who deliver services to certain vulnerable groups.
- 9.7 We are committed to using co-design, consultation and engagement methods to produce services that are responsive and focus on supporting people that need them most. We are also committed to investing in preventative activity and early-intervention measures to help enable better outcomes earlier and avoid having to resource high-cost intensive activity that leads to greater pressures on our budget. We are committed to work closely with strategic partners to mitigate impacts where relevant.

10 NEXT STEPS

- 10.1 The Final 2026/27 Budget Report will be presented to Cabinet in January 2026 and Full Council in February 2026.
- 10.2 Select Committees received confidential briefings on the progress of the budget planning activity in October and November and will undertake further public scrutiny of the Draft Budget in early-December, with any agreed outcomes from that scrutiny, and the conclusions from resident engagement reflected in the final budget.
- 10.3 The provisional settlement is expected in late December and will be confirmed in January, the outcomes of which will feed into the Final Budget report to Cabinet.
- 10.1 At this point we are expecting a balanced budget for 2026/27 to Cabinet and Full Council for approval. The focus for the intervening period is to resolve the budget gap of £21.3m. This is likely to be achieved through a balance of the following factors:
- Review funding assumptions - specifically following the Local Government Finance Settlement;
 - Review the Council's level of reserves, recognising the need to balance ongoing financial resilience with ensuring funds are put to best use.
 - Ensure that contributions to reserves in the 2026/27 budget are set at the appropriate levels, reflecting the current high-risk environment and providing resilience to deal with continuing uncertainty, specifically around the economy and Local Government Re-organisation;
 - Consider further Council Tax rises, balancing the need to provide sustainable services for the most vulnerable with a recognition of the pressures on household finances; and
 - Review Directorate budget envelopes for further efficiencies.

10.2 The Final Budget Report will include a number of additional sections including the statutory requirement for the s151 officer to comment on the robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the budget calculations and the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves (known as a Section 25 report). In addition, the Final Budget will include the formal approval of the Council Tax Requirement for 2026/27 and the Capital, Investment & Treasury Management Strategy.

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