Leisure and Recreation

Report: Budget Recommendations 2027 to 2028
Date: Thursday 8 October 2026
Officer: Andrew Briggs, Head of Operations

1. Purpose and background

The Committee is asked to consider the following 2027/28 budget proposals and make recommendations for inclusion in the Council-wide budget-setting process.

Member attendance at the informal budget discussion on 6 October was limited. This report presents officer recommendations informed by that discussion, the current financial position and anticipated service requirements.

2. Budget basis

Cost Centre 200 has a 2026/27 expenditure budget of £128,800 and an income budget of £70,600, giving a net expenditure budget of £58,200. At Month 6, recorded expenditure was £88,938 and income was £14,046.

The proposals below compare the current 2026/27 budget with the proposed 2027/28 allocation.

RPI is recommended as the minimum starting point when reviewing existing funded expenditure headings, with specific allocations reflecting operational requirements. The latest published annual RPI rate is 3.4% for August 2026. This should be reviewed before the budget is finalised.

The proposed allocations include increases above RPI where additional provision is required. Sports line marking is proposed to remain unchanged at £5,000. The stated allocations include any inflation allowance; RPI is not added again. Income is subject to a separate review.

3. Cost Centre 200 proposed expenditure

Code	Budget heading	2026/27	Proposed 2027/28
5020	Parks and Green Flag[1]	£800	£15,000
5060	Sports and equipment	£1,000	£1,500
5500	Sports pitch maintenance	£30,000	£36,000
5510	Maintenance compliance	£30,000	£38,000
5515	General maintenance	£15,000	£16,000
5526	Sports line marking	£5,000	£5,000
5528	Compliance remedial works	£5,000	£6,000

5530	Additional grounds maintenance	£8,000	£10,000
5531	Reactive repairs	£12,000	£15,000
5533	Parkside Hub Cafe Ops[2]	£10,000	£10,500
5760	Tree work	£12,000	£18,000
Total	**Cost Centre 200**	**£128,800**	**£171,000**

[1] Proposed replacement for Green Flag Expenses. The £15,000 allocation is provisional and subject to Committee consideration.

[2] Subject to correction of youth expenditure and confirmation of the appropriate allocation.

4. Service priorities

Sports pitches

Increase code 5500 by 20%, from £30,000 to £36,000, to offset the reduction in Football Foundation support and maintain pitch standards. The final allocation should be checked against the confirmed funding shortfall and planned maintenance programme.

Building maintenance and compliance

The recent refurbishment programme has brought more buildings into active use, increasing the Council's ongoing servicing, inspection and maintenance responsibilities.

Additional provision is required for statutory compliance, planned servicing, remedial works and repairs across the operational estate. The proposed allocations are:

Budget heading	2026/27	Proposed 2027/28	Increase
Maintenance compliance	£30,000	£38,000	£8,000
General maintenance	£15,000	£16,000	£1,000
Compliance remedial works	£5,000	£6,000	£1,000
Reactive repairs	£12,000	£15,000	£3,000
Total	**£62,000**	**£75,000**	**£13,000**

The combined increase is 20.97%.

Tree works

Increase code 5760 by 50%, from £12,000 to £18,000, in anticipation of remedial works identified through the tree-mapping exercise.

The resulting programme should prioritise works by risk and urgency. The proposed allocation provides an initial increase in capacity; any further funding requirement should be reported once the identified works have been costed.

Play areas

Increase the play-area maintenance budget by 50%, from £12,000 to £18,000. Apply the current RPI rate to the separate £1,400 annual safety-inspection budget, taking it to £1,447.60.

This provides ongoing maintenance provision as the available PWLB capital funding is progressively used. Major replacements and upgrades will continue to require separate capital proposals.

Parks and Green Flag

Rename code 5020 Parks and Green Flag and increase its allocation from £800 to a provisional £15,000, comprising:

Proposed activity	Allocation
Annual bedding and watering	£6,500
Existing Green Flag activity	£1,000
Initial landscaping and development at Pembroke Gardens	£7,500
Total	**£15,000**

The Pembroke Gardens provision would support the ambition to improve the landscape and work towards Green Flag status. A phased scheme should be developed with the community, with larger works and external-funding opportunities reported separately. The proposed allowance remains subject to a costed programme.

Bedding and watering expenditure should be recorded against code 5020. The proposed £10,000 Additional Grounds Maintenance allocation would remain available for other grounds requirements. The final budget review should confirm that the allocations do not duplicate provision for the same work.

5. Corporate legal and vehicle provision

The following costs sit outside Cost Centre 200 and should be considered within the corporate budget-setting process.

Budget heading	2026/27	Proposed 2027/28	Increase
Professional and legal fees[3]	£3,000	£15,000	£12,000
Vehicle repairs and servicing	£2,500	£8,000	£5,500
Vehicle fuel	£3,250	£4,225	£975
Total corporate proposals	**£8,750**	**£27,225**	**£18,475**

[3] The current budget identifies £3,000 for Professional Fees rather than a dedicated legal allocation. The calculation assumes this can contribute towards the proposed £15,000 provision for Land Registry work and community centre lease reviews. Existing commitments must be checked before confirming the net additional requirement.

The proposed £8,000 vehicle repairs and servicing allocation supports the operation of the two Hako sweepers, including servicing, repairs, replacement parts and consumables. This is an increase of £5,500 (220%) against the existing £2,500 budget.

The proposed fuel allocation increases by 30%, from £3,250 to £4,225, to support the additional vehicles.

6. Responsibility for property budgets

Codes 5510 Maintenance Compliance, 5515 General Maintenance, 5528 Compliance Remedial Works and 5531 Reactive Repairs currently account for £62,000 within Cost Centre 200. Their proposed combined allocation is £75,000.

These headings support the wider parish property portfolio, while associated income and other expenditure are recorded within separate site budgets.

The Committee should recommend a review of budget ownership, reporting and delegated responsibility. Members should consider whether Leisure & Recreation resumes substantive oversight of the property, maintenance and compliance work funded through these codes, or whether a separate Property and Asset Committee is established, given the size of the portfolio and the continuing project programme.

The review should identify the responsible committee, align expenditure and income reporting, and establish regular reporting on property condition, compliance and capital projects.

Any change to committee arrangements should be referred to Full Council. The proposed provision remains within Cost Centre 200 until a transfer is agreed. Reallocation between committees would not, in itself, change the Council’s overall expenditure.

7. Leisure income review

The £70,600 Cost Centre 200 income target should be reviewed against pitch utilisation, charges, grant arrangements, recharges and invoicing.

Code 1090 Other Income has a £19,200 budget but only £25 recorded at Month 6. Finance should identify precisely what this allocation represents, the source and timing of expected receipts, and whether a more specific description or separate income codes are required.

Community-centre income should also be considered alongside the related maintenance expenditure, recognising that it is recorded outside Cost Centre 200.

The review should account for refurbishment disruption and achievable income from a full operational year. No additional income is assumed in the calculations below; the £70,600 target is held unchanged pending review.

8. Financial implications

Measure	2026/27	Proposed 2027/28	Increase
Cost Centre 200 expenditure	£128,800	£171,000	£42,200
Cost Centre 200 income	£70,600	£70,600*	£0*
Cost Centre 200 net expenditure	£58,200	£100,400	£42,200
Separate play-area budgets[4]	£13,400	£19,447.60	£6,047.60
L&R and play areas expenditure	£142,200	£190,447.60	£48,247.60
Associated corporate proposals	£8,750	£27,225	£18,475
Total quantified increase	—	—	**£66,722.60**

[4] Includes play-area maintenance and annual safety inspections.

Cost Centre 200 expenditure increases by **£42,200 (32.76%)** against the 2026/27 allocation. Including the separate play-area budgets, combined expenditure increases by **£48,247.60 (33.93%)**.

With income held unchanged, Cost Centre 200 net expenditure increases from £58,200 to £100,400, an increase of **72.51%**.

Against an approximate **£2.45 million precept**:

- the Cost Centre 200 increase represents **1.72%**;
- the combined L&R and play-area increase represents **1.97%**; and
- including the associated corporate proposals, the total additional requirement of **£66,722.60** represents **2.72%**.

These figures show the equivalent impact if the additional requirement is funded entirely through precept. The final requirement remains subject to the income review, confirmation of

existing allocations and the wider Council budget-setting process. They do not represent a forecast change to an individual household's Council Tax charge.

9. Recommendations

The Committee is asked to recommend that:

1. RPI is used as the minimum starting point when reviewing existing funded expenditure codes for 2027/28, with the specific allocations in this report reflecting service requirements. Sports line marking remains at £5,000. Inflation is not added again to the stated proposals.
2. Sports pitch maintenance is increased by 20% to £36,000 and tree works by 50% to £18,000, subject to confirmation of the maintenance and tree-work programmes.
3. The combined allocation for maintenance compliance, general maintenance, compliance remedial works and reactive repairs is increased from £62,000 to £75,000, reflecting the additional responsibilities arising from more buildings being brought into active use.
4. The separate play-area maintenance budget is increased by 50% to £18,000, with the annual safety-inspection budget increased to £1,447.60 using the current RPI rate.
5. Code 5020 is renamed Parks and Green Flag, with a provisional £15,000 allocation for bedding, watering, existing Green Flag activity and initial Pembroke Gardens improvements towards Green Flag status.
6. Corporate provision is reviewed to accommodate £15,000 for professional and legal fees, including Land Registry work and community centre lease reviews; £8,000 for vehicle repairs and servicing; and £4,225 for vehicle fuel, taking account of existing allocations and commitments.
7. The ownership and oversight of property maintenance and compliance budgets are reviewed, with Full Council asked to consider renewed Leisure & Recreation oversight or the establishment of a separate Property and Asset Committee.
8. Leisure income targets are reviewed, including a specific explanation and appropriate description of code 1090 Other Income, and the Parkside/youth coding corrections are completed.
9. The proposed Cost Centre 200 expenditure budget of £171,000, an increase of £42,200 (32.76%), is forwarded into the Council-wide budget-setting process alongside the separate play-area and corporate recommendations.