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Meeting	<b>EXTRAORDINARY CABINET</b>
Time/Day/Date	5.00 pm on Tuesday, 17 February 2026
Location	Abbey Room, Stenson House, London Road, Coalville, LE67 3FN
Officer to contact	Democratic Services (01530 454512)

## AGENDA

Item	Pages
<b>1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b>	
<b>2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS</b>	
Under the Code of Conduct members are reminded that in declaring interests you should make clear the nature of that interest and whether it is a disclosable pecuniary interest, registerable interest or other interest.	
<b>3. 2026/27 GENERAL FUND BUDGET AND COUNCIL TAX</b>	
Report of the Strategic Director of Resources Presented by the Finance and Corporate Portfolio Holder	<b>3 - 80</b>

### Circulation:

Councillor R Blunt (Chair)  
Councillor M B Wyatt (Deputy Chair)  
Councillor T Gillard  
Councillor K Merrie MBE  
Councillor N J Rushton  
Councillor A C Saffell  
Councillor A C Woodman

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## NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET – TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026



<b>Title of Report</b>	<b>GENERAL FUND BUDGET AND COUNCIL TAX 2026/27</b>	
<b>Presented by</b>	Cllr Keith Merrie MBE Finance and Corporate Portfolio Holder PH Briefed <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
<b>Background Papers</b>	<b>Council 20 February 2025:</b> <a href="#">General Fund Budget and Council Tax 2025/26</a>	<b>Public Report:</b> Yes
	<b>Corporate Scrutiny Committee 22 January 2025:</b> <a href="#">Draft Budget 2026/27</a>	<b>Key Decision:</b> Yes
<b>Financial Implications</b>	This report sets out the General Fund Revenue budget, Capital Programme and the Special Expenses budget for 2026/27 to 2028/29, which are needed for the Council to continue to deliver its services to residents and businesses. This is in line with the local government reorganisation.	
	It also provides details of the Government's announcement on 9 February 2026 in respect of the Final Local Government Finance Settlement 2026/27.	
	<b>Signed off by the Section 151 Officer:</b> Yes	
<b>Legal Implications</b>	There are no direct legal implications arising from this report, however, the Council must meet its statutory duties under the Local Government Finance Act 1992 when setting the Council Tax requirement and the Section 151 Officer is required under Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 to comment on the robustness of estimates and the adequacy of reserves. The budget has been prepared in accordance with the CIPFA Prudential Code and the CIPFA Financial Management Code	
	<b>Signed off by the Monitoring Officer:</b> Yes	
<b>Staffing and Corporate Implications</b>	The report and its appendices set out plans to create new posts and remove vacant posts from the establishment.	
	<b>Signed off by the Head of Paid Service:</b> Yes	
<b>Purpose of Report</b>	For Cabinet to review the General Fund and Council Tax 2026/27 report and recommend to Council for approval and to also approve the 2026/27 Fees and Charges.	
<b>Reason for Decision</b>	Under the Constitution Cabinet is responsible for drawing up budget proposals for consideration by Full Council. Cabinet is also responsible for setting fees, charges and concession policies.	

<p><b>Recommendations</b></p>	<p><b>THAT CABINET:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. ENDORSES THE PROPOSED GENERAL FUND BUDGET AS DETAILED IN THIS REPORT AND ATTACHED APPENDICES AND RECOMMENDS IT TO COUNCIL FOR APPROVAL AT ITS MEETING ON 19 FEBRUARY 2026.</b></li> <li><b>2. APPROVES THE CONTRIBUTION TO A CONTINGENCY BUDGET AS DETAILED IN APPENDIX 1 AND DELEGATES RESPONSIBILITY TO THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE IN CONSULTATION WITH THE STRATEGIC DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES (SECTION 151 OFFICER) AND THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER TO INCUR EXPENDITURE UNDER THAT BUDGET.</b></li> <li><b>3. APPROVES THE FEES AND CHARGES AS SET OUT IN APPENDIX 3.</b></li> <li><b>4. DELEGATES AUTHORITY TO THE SECTION 151 OFFICER, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE FINANCE AND CORPORATE PORTFOLIO HOLDER TO MAKE AMENDMENTS TO THE BUDGET PRIOR TO ITS CONSIDERATION AT COUNCIL ON 19 FEBRUARY 2026 IN RESPONSE TO ANY REQUESTS FROM PORTFOLIO HOLDERS IN RESPECT OF THEIR PORTFOLIO.</b></li> <li><b>5. APPROVES THE CREATION OF A £2M LEGACY FUND TO SUPPORT COMMUNITIES WITH CAPITAL AND REVENUE PROJECTS.</b></li> </ol>
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## **1.0 BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION**

- 1.0.1 The Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) sets out the financial strategic direction for the Council and is updated as it evolves and develops throughout the year, to form the framework for the Council's financial planning.
- 1.0.2 The purpose of the MTFP is to set out the key financial management principles, budget assumptions and service issues. It is then used as the framework for the detailed budget setting process to ensure that resources are effectively managed and are able to deliver the aspirations of the Council, as set out in the Council Delivery Plan, over the medium term.
- 1.0.3 At its meeting on 3 February 2026, the Cabinet reviewed the General Fund and Council Tax Budget for 2026/27 and made recommendations for the full Council's consideration on 19 February 2026. However, the Government released its Final Local Government Finance Settlement for 2026/27 on 9 February 2026, as outlined in section 2.5 below. This announcement included a major change to the funding formula for local authorities, which will have a considerable effect on the Council's funding beyond 2026/27. As a result, it was essential for the Cabinet to evaluate these changes and ensure the full Council receives detailed information in an addendum report before the meeting on 19 February 2026.

- 1.0.4 The timing and nature of the Government's Final Local Government Finance Settlement announcement for 2026/27 is unprecedented. Historically, such significant revisions to the funding formula have been subject to extensive consultation and phased implementation, allowing councils time to plan and adapt. However, the scale and immediacy of the changes introduced—as well as their release so close to the Council's own budget-setting deadlines—mark a departure from established practice.
- 1.0.5 In relation to the period from 2027/28 onwards, the Ministry of Housing and Local Government has indicated that it will continue to work closely with HM Treasury to review and refine the funding arrangements for local authorities.
- 1.0.6 This report is largely unchanged from the Cabinet Report considered on 3 February 2026, however, section 2.5 below describes the changes in the funding as announced by Government on 9 February 2026.
- 1.0.7 At its meeting on 3 February 2026, Cabinet also approved a sum of £250k in each of the next three years for improvements to play areas across the district. This is now included in the capital programme as set out in Appendix 4.

## **1.1 Context**

- 1.1.1 The Council is setting its budget at a time when it continues to face a range of significant and inter-related challenges. In broad terms these can be split into three categories: economic, local government, and local issues within North West Leicestershire. Each of these is explored below.

## **1.2 Economic**

- 1.2.1 The most recent Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) Economic and Fiscal Outlook indicates that the UK economy is expected to experience modest growth over the medium term, with real GDP growth forecast to remain around 1–1.5% per annum across the forecast period. Growth in 2026/27 is expected to remain below the UK's estimated long-term potential rate, reflecting weak productivity growth, subdued business investment and ongoing global economic uncertainty.
- 1.2.2 Inflation has continued to ease from the elevated levels seen in previous years, however the OBR forecasts that price pressures will remain volatile in the near term, with inflation expected to hover close to, but not consistently at, the Bank of England's 2% target during 2026/27. Fiscal measures announced in recent Budgets, alongside continued pressures on energy, housing and labour costs, are expected to limit the pace at which inflation fully stabilises.
- 1.2.3 The latest national data shows that the UK economy has experienced periods of very weak or flat growth, with output per head remaining broadly stagnant. This economic backdrop continues to present challenges for public finances, household incomes and demand for public services, all of which have direct and indirect implications for local government funding and financial resilience.

## **1.3 Local Government**

- 1.3.1 Local authorities in England continue to face severe and sustained financial pressures that significantly affect their ability to deliver statutory and discretionary services. Core funding for local government has reduced substantially in real terms since 2010/11, resulting in long-term structural pressures and reduced financial flexibility across the sector.

- 1.3.2 Demand for key local government services, particularly adult social care, children's services, housing and homelessness, continues to rise. Demographic change, cost inflation, labour market pressures and increasing complexity of need have combined to drive expenditure growth well above general inflation.
- 1.3.3 The Government undertook a wide-ranging consultation on its Fair Funding Review and the reset of business rates over the summer period. The consultation sought views from local authorities and stakeholders on proposals to update the formulae used to allocate funding, with a particular focus on ensuring that needs assessments and funding distribution better reflect current service pressures and local circumstances.
- 1.3.4 Key changes included the introduction of updated needs-based formulas, revised weightings for deprivation and population growth, and a move to simplify and integrate a number of historic grants into the main settlement. Significantly, the business rates reset marked a shift from the previous system, which allowed councils to retain a proportion of any growth in business rates income since the last reset, to a model where accumulated growth is redistributed nationally, effectively 'resetting' councils' baselines.
- 1.3.5 As with any major reform to funding distribution, these changes have produced clear winners and losers across the sector.
- 1.3.6 Some councils have seen their relative funding allocations increase as a result of higher assessed needs or favourable adjustments, while others have lost out due to revised formula factors or the redistribution of business rates growth.
- 1.3.7 For North West Leicestershire, the Council has benefitted from the business rates reset due to its strong historic growth in business rates since the last reset. This is because, under the new system, councils with above-average business rates growth have their higher baseline recognised and partially protected before national redistribution, resulting in a higher share of retained income compared to authorities with lower growth.
- 1.3.8 The Council's proactive approach in supporting local economic development and encouraging business expansion has translated into a tangible financial benefit under the reset arrangements, helping to sustain local services amid continuing funding pressures.
- 1.3.9 It should be noted that the transitional arrangements currently in place are scheduled to end after the 2028/29 financial year. As such, it is prudent for the Council to ensure that a balanced budget is maintained beyond this period. Investing heavily in ongoing or recurring expenditure at this stage would not be appropriate, as it risks creating an unbalanced budget once the transitional support is withdrawn, effectively deferring the financial challenge rather than addressing it.
- 1.3.10 Proposals regarding how the available funding is to be utilised are set out in further detail later in this report, ensuring that financial decisions are made with due consideration to long-term sustainability and the avoidance of future budgetary pressures.
- 1.3.11 Some local authorities continue to face financial stress within the sector has continued to be evidenced using Exceptional Financial Support (EFS) and other forms of short-term intervention by Government. A growing number of authorities, particularly those with social care responsibilities, have required additional flexibility within the financial framework to remain solvent. This has reinforced concerns that financial risk within local government is no longer isolated, but systemic in nature. In addition, the Government has once again offered exceptional financial support to local authorities for 2026/27. This support is intended to provide councils facing acute financial challenges with access to additional resources or bespoke assistance, helping to maintain essential services and

manage budgetary pressures during a period of heightened demand and ongoing economic uncertainty. The continuation of such exceptional measures reflects recognition from central government of the unprecedented pressures impacting the sector and the need for targeted interventions to safeguard critical local services.

1.3.12 The Autumn Budget 2025, announced in October 2025, contained several significant funding announcements for local government in 2026/27, including:

- A projected increase in Core Spending Power (CSP) for local authorities across England of approximately £3.9 billion (around 5.8%) in cash terms compared with 2025/26, assuming typical council tax increases, equivalent to an estimated 3.5% real-terms increase after accounting for inflation.
- As part of the multi-year Local Government Finance Settlement, total Core Spending Power for councils in 2026/27 is expected to rise to around £77.7 billion, an increase of more than £9.2 billion compared with 2024/25.
- Continued integration of grants into the core settlement and reform of the business rates retention and Fair Funding systems will take effect, intended to simplify funding streams and move to a fairer distribution of funding.
- The Autumn Budget reaffirmed flexibilities for council tax referendum rules, maintaining existing principles and supporting council tax income as a key element of Core Spending Power, with additional assumed council tax growth estimated to contribute around £2.4 billion of further revenue in 2026/27 if councils set tax at typical maximum levels.

1.3.13 While additional funding for homelessness and prevention activity is welcome, the continued failure to fully address temporary accommodation subsidy shortfalls and Local Housing Allowance constraints means that councils are likely to continue experiencing significant financial pressures in this area during 2026/27.

1.3.14 The Government's confirmation of a move towards multi-year funding settlements, with 2026/27 anticipated to form part of a longer-term arrangement for local government, is a welcome development. This approach provides greater certainty of funding over the medium term, which is invaluable in supporting the Council as it navigates the transition to local government reorganisation. By enabling improved financial planning and stability, multi-year settlements allow the Council to make more informed decisions regarding service delivery, investment, and resource allocation, thereby strengthening its capacity to manage change and maintain essential services throughout the reorganisation process.

#### 1.4 Local – North West Leicestershire

1.4.1 The Council continues to face significant local financial and operational pressures. Forecasts for 2025/26 indicate that the Council has continued to rely on agency staffing in a limited number of essential roles to ensure continuity of service delivery. This reflects ongoing national labour market challenges within local government, as highlighted by recent Local Government Association (LGA) analysis. The recruitment market is showing signs of improvement, but some pressures remain in planning and specialist finance roles, where competition for suitably qualified staff continues to be strong. Despite these challenges, the Council continues to maintain a robust level of reserves and remains in a more resilient financial position than a number of authorities that have required Exceptional Financial Support.

1.4.2 The move towards a multi-year funding settlement provides the Council with a valuable opportunity to invest in additional capacity where it is most needed, enabling a more strategic approach to resource planning and service delivery. This greater certainty over future funding allows the Council to target investment in key areas, supporting both

operational effectiveness and the delivery of essential services without the need for savings or cuts to services.

- 1.4.3 In addition, the Council has implemented improvements to its recruitment procedures, which are already yielding positive results. These enhancements have supported better recruitment and retention outcomes, strengthening the organisation’s ability to attract and retain skilled staff.
- 1.4.4 Forecasting income, particularly within planning and development services, continues to be challenging due to the inherent volatility in planning application volumes and wider economic conditions. The budget proposals for 2026/27 seek to reflect a more realistic assessment of income generation and cost pressures, including:
- Providing for pay award assumptions
  - Adjusting budgets where income targets have proved unachievable
  - Continuing targeted investment in corporate and support services to improve recruitment, retention and resilience.
- 1.4.5 The Council’s approach to budget setting for 2026/27 continues to emphasise long-term financial sustainability, reducing reliance on reserves for day-to-day services and strengthening the Medium Term Financial Plan. The Local Government Financial Settlement provides an opportunity for the Council to set a balanced budget in each of the next three years without the need for savings, whilst also maintaining reserves to fund the capital programme and to support economic investment in the district. The Council will retain a healthy and appropriate level of reserves, providing resilience against financial risk and supporting continued service delivery.
- 1.4.6 The Council’s external auditors have previously issued disclaimed opinions on historic financial statements, reflecting national issues within the local government audit system. Importantly, these opinions did not identify significant weaknesses in the Council’s arrangements for financial sustainability, and work continues to strengthen financial reporting and governance arrangements.
- 1.4.7 This work has included enhancements to the core financial system, a move to a new support and maintenance contract for the core financial system, regular reporting on the council’s in-year position to the corporate leadership team and members, and monthly meetings of the capital strategy group to oversee capital investment proposals. These initiatives have collectively strengthened the Council’s financial oversight and facilitated more informed, timely decision-making, further underpinning the Council’s commitment to transparency and effective resource management.

## 1.5 Principles Underpinning the Budget Strategy

- 1.5.1 The Council’s principles as a basis for financial management and budget planning as follows:

Guiding Principles	Key Strategies for Developing Budget 2026/27 and MTFP 2026-29
Financial Stability and Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan ahead for potential Government funding changes (including Business Rates Reset)</li> <li>• Do not become overly reliant on Business Rates funding for on-going service provision</li> <li>• Use future surpluses in Business Rates funding for future one off investment to reduce ongoing revenue costs or generate income</li> </ul>
Resources Focussed on Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Align resources to Council Delivery Plan objectives</li> </ul>

Maximising Our Sources of Income	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fees and Charges maximised in accordance with the Corporate Charging Policy (increased by inflation)</li> </ul>
Managing our Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acceptable level of risk tolerance</li> <li>• Review of reserves strategy and position</li> </ul>

## 1.6 Budget Assumptions

1.6.1 The following budget assumptions have been built into the forecast:

- Pay award - 2026/27 onwards to remain as 3%. This appears prudent given recent pay awards and fluctuations in inflation seen in recent years.
- Contracts price increases have been linked to the Consumer Price Index (CPI)/Retail Prices Index (RPI) as per individual agreements
- Inflation – fuel and utilities inflation are very volatile. After reviewing the current prices and future indications based on the best information available, and allowing for reviewing utility contracts, a minimal level of inflation has been included.

Cost	Increase in 2026/27 Budget
Fuel	5%
Gas	5%
Electricity	5%
Water	5%

- Fees and charges – increased by the CPI as at September 2025. Using the CPI, ensures the Council's fees and charges keeps pace with inflation, covering the costs of providing services. See section 2.4 for more detailed information on fees and charges.
- In broad terms, other expenditure has not had any inflationary factor applied with a few exceptions where material costs have had to be increased to keep up with rising prices (e.g. Grounds Maintenance).

1.6.2 This approach is sensible in light of recent pay settlements and the volatility in inflation in recent years. In addition, the Council has incorporated a contingency budget within its financial plans to address any unforeseen price rises, including pay awards that may exceed expectations.

## 2.0 GENERAL FUND BUDGET 2026/27

### 2.1 General Fund Budget Summary

2.1.1 Appendix 1 shows the general fund budget position for 2025/26 and the budget for approval for 2026/27, as well as indicative budgets for 2027/28 to 2028/29 based on known information such as indicative pay awards.

2.1.2 Table 1 below highlights that in 2026/27 the net revenue expenditure has increased by £684k compared to 2025/26 and the anticipated funding has increased by £15.2m. However there has been some technical changes for example, the Extended Producer Responsibility Payment was included in funding in 2025/26 and in 2026/27 has been netted off the expenditure within the service.

**Table 1: Changes to the General Fund budget from the previous year**

	<b>2025/26</b> <b>£'000</b>	<b>2026/27</b> <b>£'000</b>	<b>Movement</b> <b>£'000</b>
Total Funding	(19,074)	(34,342)	(15,268)
Net Revenue Expenditure	19,074	19,758	684
<b>Funding (surplus)/deficit</b>	0	(14,584)	<b>(14,584)</b>
Contributions to/(from) reserves	0	14,584	<b>14,584</b>

2.1.3 As outlined in section 1.3 above, the Council has experienced strong business rates growth in recent years, largely due to the business rates reset. This positive outcome has resulted in surplus funding for 2026/27. The surplus of £14m will be split. £2m is being transferred to a new legacy reserve and £12m to the Business Rates Reserve. More information about the legacy reserve can be found below in section 2.6.7. This reserve will support the Council's capital programme and further investment initiatives across the district. The use of these funds ensures the Council can continue to invest in key projects and maintain financial resilience, as well as deliver on its strategic priorities. In addition, the Council is currently in the process of identifying the cost implications of achieving net carbon zero. This cost is expected to be significant and is not yet included within the current capital programme. Any proposals arising from this work will be presented to Council in due course.

2.1.4 Within the Net Revenue Expenditure, there are multiple one-off expenditure proposals and are being met from the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) reserve and Business Rates Reserve (BRR). These can be identified in Appendix 2. The MTFP reserve was created to maintain financial resilience, allowing it to continue funding important projects while safeguarding its ability to deliver strategic priorities, even in the face of future financial challenges or changes in government funding.

2.1.5 A robust corporate and financial plan is in place to ensure the Council can balance its budget for 2026/27 and over the medium term. This plan should initially focus on being more efficient with the aim of having the same service outcomes at a lower cost. There is a Transformation Programme planned to support this which is detailed in section 2.3.1 below.

## **2.2 Budget Changes to the MTFP**

2.2.1 Appendix 2 sets out the most significant planned changes to the general fund budgets for 2026/27 to 2028/29 and a summary of the significant budget proposals for 2026/27 are detailed below:

- **Savings Agreed (£1,319k) including:**
  - Reduction in Employer Pension Contribution Rate (Actuarial Review) – (£834k)  
Following the latest actuarial review, the employer pension contribution rate has been reduced, generating significant savings without impacting employee benefits or long-term pension fund sustainability.
  - Agency Model for Leisure Contract VAT Treatment – (£50k)  
A revised agency model for VAT treatment within the leisure contract will result in efficiency savings, optimising tax arrangements while maintaining service delivery standards.
  - Everyone Active – Utility Benchmarking & NNDR – (£188k)

Benchmarking of utility costs and adjustments to National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR) within the leisure contract should deliver cost reductions, reflecting improved contract management and energy efficiency measures.

- Land Charges Search Fees – Increased Demand – (£129k)  
Higher demand for land charge searches has generated additional income, contributing to overall savings and supporting the Council's financial sustainability.
- **Additional Income £2.57m including:**
  - Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Grant – (£2.1m)  
The EPR Grant began in 2025/26 and was listed under the 'Funding' section of last year's budget summary, with an estimated value of £1.3 million. For the 2026/27 budget, the grant (£2.1) has been applied to reduce expenses within the Waste Services Budget.
  - Food Waste Roll-Out – DEFRA Funding – (£324k)  
As part of the national initiative to improve recycling and reduce landfill, the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) has provided grant funding to support the implementation of the food waste collection service. This funding contributes towards the costs of new infrastructure, equipment, and communications associated with the roll-out.
  - Summons Income – Revenues – (£90k)  
Increased income has been generated through the recovery of costs associated with the issue of summons for non-payment of Council Tax and Business Rates. This reflects both improved collection processes and a higher volume of enforcement activity, ensuring compliance and protecting the Council's revenue base.
- **Reduction in Income £244k including:**
  - Newmarket & Outdoor Market – Reduced Income – £83k  
Income from market operations has fallen due to reduced trader occupancy and footfall, influenced by broader retail trends and cost-of-living impacts on discretionary spending.
  - Trade Refuse – Reduced Income – £67k  
Commercial waste income has declined as businesses seek cost reductions or adjust service levels in response to economic uncertainty, resulting in fewer contracts and lower tonnage collected.
- **Unavoidable cost pressures £4.8m including:**
  - Food Waste Roll-Out – £600k  
The implementation of the new food waste collection service has resulted in an increase in staffing and operational costs to ensure compliance with the statutory requirement and will result in improved recycling performance.
  - Refuse and Recycling – Increased Agency Costs Due to Sickness – £170k  
Higher-than-anticipated sickness levels within the waste collection workforce have necessitated the use of agency staff to maintain service continuity. This has led to additional expenditure beyond the original budget provision.
  - Refuse and Recycling – Increased Overtime/Casual Cover Due to Sickness – £147k

In addition to agency costs, overtime and casual cover have been required to ensure scheduled collections are completed on time, particularly during peak periods and to avoid service disruption.

- **Refuse and Recycling – Hire of Vehicles Due to Ageing Fleet – £150k**  
The ageing refuse fleet has experienced increased downtime due to mechanical failures, requiring the short-term hire of vehicles to maintain operational capacity and meet statutory collection obligations.
- **Garage/Fleet Services – Increased Parts Costs Due to Ageing Fleet – £175k**  
The maintenance of older vehicles has led to higher parts and repair costs, reflecting the need to keep essential fleet assets operational until replacement programmes can be delivered.
- **Removal of Earmarked Reserve Funding for Environmental and Sustainability Programme Manager - £84k**  
The Environmental and Sustainability Programme Manager, previously funded from earmarked reserves, now requires ongoing revenue funding to ensure delivery of the Council's climate action commitments and sustainability objectives.
- **Local Plan Examination – £85k**  
Costs associated with the statutory examination of the Local Plan, including inspector fees and legal support, have exceeded initial estimates. This is a critical step in ensuring compliance with national planning requirements.
- **Insurance Premium Increase – £297k**  
Market conditions and sector-wide risk adjustments have resulted in a significant increase in insurance premiums across all policy areas, impacting the Council's core operating costs.
- **Transformation Officer (Previously Funded from MTFP) – £52k**  
The Transformation Officer post, essential for driving organisational change and efficiency programmes, now requires permanent funding following the expiry of Medium-Term Financial Plan allocations.
- **IT Licences and Maintenance Adjustments – £80k**  
Inflationary pressures and contractual renewals have led to increased costs for essential IT licences and system maintenance, ensuring continued compliance and service resilience.
- **Local Government Reorganisation – £2m**  
Preparatory work and transitional arrangements for local government reorganisation have generated significant costs, including programme management, legal advice, and stakeholder engagement, to ensure readiness for structural changes.
- **Temporary Accommodation Fund Contingency - £444k**  
A contingency fund has been created within the Strategic Housing - Homelessness budget, which equates to the government funding. This will be used during the year to offset additional expenses incurred.
- **Salaries Adjustments - £376k**  
Salary budgets have been increased to account for scheduled incremental raises and potential pay awards. Additionally, the vacancy factor has been eliminated in several frontline services because it is no longer feasible.

- **Avoidable cost pressures £616k including:**

- **Asset Protection Plans for Closed Churchyards, Parks, Play Areas – £65k**  
Development and implementation of asset protection plans to ensure the safety, maintenance, and long-term sustainability of closed churchyards, parks, and play areas. This proactive approach mitigates future liabilities and enhances community amenities.
- **Two-Year Term to Tackle Fly-Tipping and Litter – £99k**  
Establishment of a dedicated GRIT (Grime Reduction and Intervention Team) for a two-year period to address persistent issues of fly-tipping and littering. This initiative aims to improve environmental quality, reduce enforcement costs, and enhance public confidence in local services.
- **Community Focus Officer - £52k**  
Establishment of a two year fixed-term Community Focus Officer to assist with administering the Legacy fund.
- **Year-End Support for Accounts Production – £60k**  
Provision of additional resources to support year-end accounts production, ensuring timely and accurate financial reporting in compliance with statutory requirements and audit standards.
- **Mine Water Combined Heat and Power (CHP) Feasibility Study - £80k**  
Establishment of a fund to conduct a feasibility study regarding the potential utilisation of mine water within the district for Combined Heat and Power (CHP) applications.

## **2.3 The Year Ahead by Service Area**

### **2.3.1 Transformation**

2.3.1.1 The Council introduced its Transformation Delivery Plan in June 2024 to address significant financial challenges, including a projected funding gap caused by reductions in government funding, rising service demands, inflationary pressures, and the forthcoming reset of business rates in 2026/27. The plan is a strategic response aimed at ensuring long-term financial sustainability, improving service efficiency, and embedding a culture of continuous improvement across the organisation. It focuses on modernising processes, embracing digital innovation, and exploring new delivery models to maintain high-quality services for residents while achieving financial resilience.

2.3.1.2 Since its launch, the Transformation Delivery Plan has delivered substantial progress. Early measures, supported by an initial £0.5 million investment, have reduced the medium-term funding gap by approximately 50 percent. This achievement has lowered the projected shortfall for 2028/29 from over £4 million to around £2 million, providing a strong foundation for future savings and validating the Council's approach to transformation.

2.3.1.3 Work is continuing across a range of projects. Service process improvements are being implemented to streamline operations and deliver efficiencies. Digital transformation remains a priority, with initiatives such as expanding online services and digitising customer interactions to reduce manual processing and improve accessibility. In addition, a revised internet and intranet site is under development to enhance communication and user experience, and document management reviews are underway to improve information governance and operational efficiency. Governance enhancements, including compulsory training and strengthened oversight, are being embedded to support robust decision-making. The Council is also diversifying income

streams through initiatives like the NWL Community Lottery, which has already generated significant funds for local causes. Alongside these, new service delivery models and technology-driven solutions are being developed to ensure the Council remains agile and responsive to future challenges.

2.3.1.4 The revised internet and intranet sites will provide a more intuitive and accessible platform for both residents and staff, improving engagement and enabling faster access to information and services. Document management reviews will ensure that records are stored and retrieved efficiently, reducing duplication, improving compliance with data protection requirements, and supporting a more streamlined approach to service delivery. Together, these initiatives will strengthen internal communication, enhance transparency, and contribute to the Council's overall efficiency goals.

2.3.1.5 The Transformation Delivery Plan is structured over short, medium, and long-term horizons. Immediate priorities focus on quick wins and cost reductions, while medium-term objectives include rolling out digital solutions and reimagined service models. Longer-term ambitions aim to embed continuous improvement and secure financial resilience well beyond 2028/29. Progress is monitored through regular performance reviews, ensuring transparency and accountability as the Council works towards closing the funding gap and delivering value for the community.

## **2.3.2 ICT**

2.3.2.1 Hybrid/agile working operating model has meant that the service supports 550 officers, including councillors and remote offices, which is a pressure on ICT services to provide a first-class customer support service for the Council's staff and councillors. There have been staffing issues in 2025/26, resulting in the staffing resources being stretched. Staffing issues have now been resolved and the team starts 2026/27 with a fully resourced dynamic IT team to provide the necessary levels of service to the business.

2.3.2.2 There is a greater focus on IT security and IT audits which will continue over the medium to long-term, to ensure that the Council is compliant with ICT standards and practices. IT is a fundamental core pillar for the organisation. Cyber security is an ever-challenging task with new threats and vulnerabilities emerging daily. In 2025/26, ICT officers spent a lot of time in remediating security issues from previous IT health checks. In 2026/27, there will be investment in new endpoint security software to further protect the organisation and renew the Council's Cyber Security accreditation. AI security and threats is another area of focus for 2026/27. The Council will explore how the use of AI tools can support service improvements. For example, for a new Request for Information (RFI) document will be written to support the Customer Service centre telephony platform.

2.3.2.3 There are a large number of ICT systems which require upgrades as the software reaches end of life or end of contract. Work has already been undertaken in 2025/26 to get these systems updated. 2026/27 will be a further year to complete the remaining system upgrades and move to supported platforms and the cloud as part of the IT roadmap and strategy.

2.3.2.4 There are likely to be several projects emerging from the Transformation Programme which will require ICT support, for example artificial intelligence (AI). The idea of centralising IT budgets has been a topic of conversation for several years, with the aim of achieving greater commercial savings. In 2026/27, the Council intends to explore this further, recognising the significant potential to realise efficiencies by bringing together IT budgets from all services into a single, centralised IT function.

2.3.2.5 The service is in the process of reviewing the numerous ICT contracts in services across the Council with a view to moving them to cloud services, to reduce operating cost as well as ensuring that the systems deliver value for money. Work has already started in 2025/26, with a renewal of the data centre contract saving £480K over five years. Further contracts are due for renewal this year which should deliver savings.

### **2.3.3 Finance and Internal Audit**

2.3.3.1 The Finance Team has continued to face recruitment and retention challenges, however, this seems to be easing during 2025. Despite these issues, the team successfully completed the Statements of Accounts for 2023/24 and 2024/25 ahead of the Government's backstop date.

2.3.3.2 Significant enhancements have also been made to the Unit 4 financial system and other associated systems to improve processes. In the next financial year, the focus will back to business as usual with the completion of the Statements of Accounts for 2025/26 in line with statutory requirements, as the Council aims to rebuild assurance in its financial reporting. Additionally, there will be a continued focus on improving the exchequer and financial planning systems and processes.

2.3.3.3 An extra resource was incorporated into the Internal Audit team during 2025/26, resulting in a substantial increase in the annual number of audit days from 315 to 502.

### **2.3.4 Legal and Support Services**

2.3.4.1 Priorities for the Democratic Services Team in 2026/27 will be to conduct the Community Governance Review by December 2026 and to start preparations for the election to the new unitary authority in 2027.

2.3.4.2 The Legal Services Team will continue to undertake external work to bring in income for the Council, along with conducting the annual constitution review and supporting the Council's regeneration projects.

2.3.4.3 The Communications team will deliver its annual campaigns plan to support on corporate projects, including the Council's transformation programme and local government reorganisation.

### **2.3.5 Organisational Development/ Human Resources**

2.3.5.1 In the year ahead, the Human Resources team will focus on addressing recruitment and retention challenges in key parts of the workforce, ensuring the Council remains a place where people want to join and stay. The team will also continue work to reduce sickness absence, supporting a healthier and more productive workforce.

### **2.3.6 Strategic Housing**

2.3.6.1 National demand for Homelessness services continues to increase and this is replicated, to some extent, locally. Although this is likely to mean greater costs to the Council, the Council continues to explore ways to manage demand, through its preventative work; look to reduce unit costs of Temporary Accommodation, through the use of local partnerships; minimise the use of expensive, unsupported Bed and Breakfast accommodation and recoup some of the costs through a charging pilot, which will require customers to contribute towards the costs of their temporary accommodation. It is hoped that this will also be a useful mechanism in managing demand. Some increases in costs, around salaries, are anticipated and further discussion around new government funding formulae will necessitate review from 2026/27 onwards.

2.3.6.2 Historically, funding for temporary accommodation and homelessness was provided to local authorities as ring-fenced grants, ensuring that these resources were dedicated solely to supporting households in need of such services. However, under the revised funding arrangements for local government, these grants have now been incorporated into the broader Revenue Support Grant. Although nominal calculations have been undertaken to estimate the adequacy of the transferred funding, the Council has taken proactive steps to allocate sufficient budget to temporary accommodation, recognising and responding to the increased demand and financial pressures experienced in recent years.

### **2.3.7 Community Services**

2.3.7.1 Community Services includes waste collection, recycling and street cleansing, parks and open spaces, health and wellbeing, licencing, port health, environmental health, community safety, community focus, environmental protection and fleet management.

2.3.7.2 Plans are in train to roll out in late 2026 a new recycling container scheme in the district with twin bins and food waste caddies which will conform to the government's Simpler Recycling requirements.

2.3.7.3 Work continues with zero carbon measures across the Council and new schemes will be rolled out as business cases are developed for the Council's fleet and buildings particularly in order that the Council can meet its aspiration to be zero carbon by 2030 for its own operations.

### **2.3.8 Planning and Development**

2.3.8.1 The key service issue for the Planning Policy team is to continue to progress the new Local Plan. There are associated risks with this complex workstream, including any unanticipated requirement for additional evidential work over and above that currently budgeted for. Resources have also had to be found for external consultants to help manage and support the Local Plan process following the retirement of the Planning Policy and Land Charges Manager in December 2025.

2.3.8.2 The new Local Plan needs to be submitted for Examination by December 2026 and in these circumstances the Local Plan Examination can be expected to start in Quarter 1/Quarter 2 in 2027. If the Local Plan is found 'unsound' at Examination, or if it is not possible to submit by December 2026, the Council will need to decide whether to prepare a Local Plan under the Government's new plan-making system. The costs of this are uncertain but can be expected to be substantial.

2.3.8.3 The key service issue for the Planning and Development Team is to maintain the high level of performance achieved in meeting government targets for the determination of planning applications. Planning application fee income dropped significantly in the first two quarters of 2024/25, but increased in the second two quarters of 2024/25, in particular due to the number of major applications received, so that at the end of 2024/25 fee income received was over and above the projected budget. This additional income will be put in reserve to manage workload peaks and troughs and to balance the Planning and Development budget in future years. The latest projections show that the Planning application fee income 2025/26 is on target for the projected fee income budget to be achieved.

### **2.3.9 Property Services and Economic Regeneration**

2.3.9.1 The Council's portfolio of commercial properties offers an opportunity to generate significant income but the stock needs investment if potential is to be maximised. Consideration will also need to be given to investment in energy efficient measures to meet government regulations.

2.3.9.2 The continuing prioritisation of Regeneration Projects across the District creates a need for capital investment. Central Government grant support for this work would be welcomed and would unlock economic growth.

## **2.4 Fees and Charges**

2.4.1 The Council provides a large number of services to local residents and businesses that incur a fee. Appendix 3(a) to 3(c) sets out key changes to fees and charges for 2026/27. In the main, the fees and charges have been increased by 3.8% which was the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) as at September 2025. There are a few other charges that have increased more than the inflation amount such as, Electrical Vehicle Charging charges and car parking charges. A more details breakdown of these charges can be found in Appendix 3.

## **2.5 Funding**

2.5.1 The Government published the Final Local Government Finance Settlement for 2026/27 on 9 February 2026, confirming the first year of a new multi-year funding package and implementing updated needs assessments, grant simplification, and revised distribution formulas.

2.5.2 The Settlement introduces significant reforms, including consolidation of multiple grants and the continued rollout of Fair Funding Review methodology. A key change for districts relates to Business Rates pooling, where the Government has amended the methodology used within the Funding Floor baseline, resulting in a reduced level of anticipated pooling benefit compared with the provisional figures published in December 2025. This reflects a conscious policy decision to redistribute pooled gains and ensure that resources are more evenly shared across the system, rather than concentrated in a small number of areas that have historically benefited from pooling arrangements.

2.5.3 To offset some of the turbulence associated with these reforms, the settlement introduces a more generous-than-expected Adjustment Settlement Grant for 2026/27. This grant provides transitional support to councils facing significant reductions in core funding as a result of the new distribution formulas and pooling changes. The rationale is to give authorities time to adjust their budgets and service plans, thereby helping to maintain balanced budget positions and avoid disruptive service cuts in the short term.

2.5.4 The Adjustment Settlement Grant is particularly important for authorities that are net losers from the new arrangements, such as North West Leicestershire, as it offers a buffer against immediate financial shocks.

2.5.5 The table provides a comparison between the final settlement announced on 9 February 2026 and the Provisional Settlement disclosed in December 2025. Without the Adjustment Support Grant for 2026/27, the Council would have experienced a funding shortfall of £4.7m. Notably, the same loss of £4.7m is projected for each financial year 2027/28 and 2028/29, relative to the Provisional Settlement allocations from December 2025.

	Provisional Settlement			Final Settlement		
	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
Business Rates	3,674,652	3,758,942	3,834,773	3,674,652	3,758,942	3,834,773
Revenue Support Grant	18,819,374	11,601,137	4,204,755	15,450,668	9,898,766	4,204,755
Council Tax*	6,508,273	6,757,778	7,016,084	6,508,273	6,757,778	7,016,084
Homelessness	383,933	442,345	531,349	444,455	485,795	562,210
95% income protection floor	4,894,878	11,613,083	18,469,692	3,536,712	8,584,057	13,731,666
Recovery Grant	11,940	11,940	11,940	11,940	11,940	11,940
Adjustment Support Grant				4,726,872		
	<b>34,293,050</b>	<b>34,185,226</b>	<b>34,068,594</b>	<b>34,353,573</b>	<b>29,497,279</b>	<b>29,361,429</b>

\*Council Tax adjusted to reflect council tax base and proposed increase

- 2.5.6 Over the medium term, the Council remains well positioned to set a balanced budget, assuming the net annual budget can be maintained at approximately £20m. Nonetheless, Members are advised to anticipate additional financial pressures and inflationary effects in subsequent years. The current financial framework also permits contributions to the business rates reserve, supporting further investment within the district.
- 2.5.7 It is imperative that the Council sustains its discretionary expenditure at prudent levels, particularly given the anticipated reduction in funding after 2028/29 due to the cessation of Transitional Funding. Therefore, continued growth in business rates over the medium term is essential to support a balanced budget beyond 2028/29.
- 2.5.8 The key funding changes for 2026/27 are as follows:
- **New Homes Bonus:** The Council will no longer receive New Homes Bonus funding as a separate grant, as it has now been incorporated into the Revenue Support Grant allocation. Accordingly, no standalone income has been included within the budget or Medium-Term Financial Plan for 2026/27 onwards.
  - **Council Tax increased by £249k to £6.5m** – Council Tax income assumptions are based on the approved Council Tax Base and proposed Council Tax increase of 2.75% for 2026/27.
  - **Non Domestic Rates (Business Rates) decreased by £5m to £3.7m** – the 2026/27 financial year marks a significant Business Rates reset, primarily driven by a major nationwide revaluation of non-domestic properties, changing rateable values, alongside reforms to the 50% business rates retention system and adjustments to multipliers. In addition to this, the Council's new baseline and tariff funding strips out the growth accumulated from previous years.
  - **Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG)** - This grant has ceased and is no longer included within the funding settlement.
  - **Extended Producer Responsibility Grant** – Funding for Extended Producer Responsibility has now been transferred to Waste Services, and a total grant of £2.1 million has been confirmed for 26/27. This is likely to reduce each year in line with sustainability drives.
  - **Revenue Support Grant (RSG) increased by £15.3m to £15.4m** – The Council will receive RSG of £18.8m in 2026/27. This is now the only core government grant included within the settlement. The settlement confirms the cessation of a number of previous specific grants, with some funding rolled into RSG, increasing the overall allocation but reducing transparency and certainty around future funding levels.

- **National Insurance Grant** – The specific grant previously provided to partially fund National Insurance increases is no longer paid separately. Government information indicates that this funding has been rolled into the Revenue Support Grant allocation. No separate income line has therefore been included within the budget.
- **95% Income Protection Floor of £3.5m** – Under the Local Government Finance Settlement, the government is introducing transitional protections to limit how far a Council's funding can fall as the new Fair Funding reforms are phased in. The 95% Income Protection Floor is one of these protections, In simple terms, it guarantees that a qualifying local authority will not see its post-reform income fall below 95% of its 2025-26 income baseline.
- **Homelessness, Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse Grant - £444k** – In the settlement, the government has consolidated several previous funding streams into a single grant. The new consolidated grant brings together the prevention element of the Homelessness Prevention Grant, Rough Sleeping funding and Domestic Abuse funding.
- **Adjustment Support Grant - £4.7m** – new funding source introduced in the final settlement to offset the reduction in funding from the provisional settlement.

## 2.6 General Fund Reserves

- 2.6.1 The Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) reserve is to help manage deficits and funding volatility. The value of this reserve is forecast to be £5.4m as at 31 March 2027.
- 2.6.2 In addition to this reserve, the Council also has earmarked reserves estimated to be £22.7m as at 31 March 2027, increasing to £34.9m by 31 March 2029 and general balances of £1.5m. A Legacy reserve of £2m is being created in 2026/27 from part of the surplus budget with spend forecast to be £1m in 2026/27 and £1m in 2027/28. A summary of these reserves can be found in Table 2 below.
- 2.6.3 In addition, the Council will build up its reserves over the medium-term to support the funding of the capital programme. This prudent approach will ensure that sufficient resources are available to meet future investment needs whilst maintaining financial stability. However, it should be noted that the announcement of the changes to the funding formula by the Government has resulted in the reserves position at the end of March 2029 reducing by approximately £10m compared to the previous balance considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 3 February 2026. This is in light of the reduced allocations in 2027/28 and 2028/29.

**Table 2: Summary of estimated reserves 2026/27 – 2028/29**

<b>Reserve Name</b>	<b>Estimated Balance as at 1/4/26 £'000</b>	<b>Commitments &amp; Budget Proposals 26/27 £'000</b>	<b>Estimated balance as at 31/3/27 £'000</b>
Earmarked Reserves - General Fund	4,149	(580)	3,569
MTFP Reserve	7,558	(264)	7,294
Business Rates Reserve	11,333	(529)	10,804
Legacy Reserve	0	1,000	1,000
General Balance (minimum level of reserves)	1,544	0	1,544
<b>Total Reserves</b>	<b>24,585</b>	<b>(373)</b>	<b>24,212</b>

- 2.6.3 Earmarked reserves are those reserves that have been earmarked for a specific purpose. The estimated balances include items currently committed. A table showing details by service can be found in Appendix 5.
- 2.6.4 The MTFP reserve is expected to be £7.3m after taking into account the funding of one-off budgets for 2026/27. It will be used to mitigate unbudgeted pressures, pump-priming invest to save opportunities and the transformation programme, as well as funding capacity within services to ensure improved service delivery where appropriate.
- 2.6.5 The net reduction into the business rates reserve is expected to be £529k in 2026/27 and a contribution of £13.2m across the next three years. The spend is mainly to fund the capital programme and also some one-off revenue expenditure. The additional contributions into the reserve are from the surplus budget. This leaves an estimated balance of £24.5m at 31/3/29.
- 2.6.6 General balances are the minimum level of reserves that is prudent to hold.
- 2.6.7 As the Council prepares for Local Government Reorganisation, currently scheduled for 2028, there is a clear intent to make the most of the funds presently at our disposal to invest in important community projects across the district. The Council intends for this significant investment to be accessible, ensuring that every area benefits from the opportunities provided. This approach underlines the Council's commitment to supporting local priorities and delivering meaningful outcomes for residents throughout the district, both in the immediate term and as it transitions into the new governance arrangements.
- 2.6.8 Therefore, the Council's intention is to establish a £2m Legacy Grant Fund, designed to support projects that the Council may have delivered in the absence of Local Government Reorganisation. The fund will be available for the 2026/27 financial year, with grants ranging from £10k to £250k, and will be open to applications that align with existing Council strategies, such as regeneration, cycling and walking, and broader community enhancement objectives.
- 2.6.9 The scheme will offer both revenue and capital funding, providing flexibility to support a wide range of initiatives. Robust governance arrangements will be put in place, including the appointment of a Senior Responsible Officer and clear accountability throughout the grant lifecycle. The application process will be accessible and well-publicised, with a strong emphasis on monitoring, evaluation, and value for money in line with government guidance.
- 2.6.10 Applications will be invited from May 2026, with a potential second call in October 2026 if funds remain. Grants will be processed efficiently, with small grants managed by Community Services and larger grants by the Economic Development Team. Up to £100k will be allocated for administration to ensure effective delivery.
- 2.6.11 The fund will be financed from the Business Rates Reserve. Consideration will be given to including areas subject to special expenses, with appropriate legal and procedural safeguards to ensure compliance and transparency.
- 2.6.12 A further, more detailed report will be brought back to Cabinet in due course, setting out the full operational details of the scheme, including eligibility, assessment criteria, and governance arrangements.

### 3.0 CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2026/27 TO 2028/29

#### 3.1 General Fund and Special Expenses Capital Programme

##### 3.1.1 Capital Strategy

3.1.2 The Capital Strategy includes a few key changes and improvements for the 2026/27 and future years' programme.

3.1.3 A key change introduced in 2023/24, is the reduction in the use of external borrowing to fund programmes. This will minimise the Council's exposure to increases in interest rates. Schemes would be funded from internal sources such as reserves, (mainly the Business Rates Reserves), capital receipts, and revenue contributions. External grant applications would be made for schemes which qualify for such funding.

3.1.4 The capital programme is divided into two parts – active projects and schemes in a development pool. The active projects are schemes which have been approved by Council (in-year or in previous years) and currently being delivered. Some new schemes have been added to the active pool as part of the budget process.

3.1.5 Projects in the development pool are subject to a full business case being developed before moving to the active category. The business case is scrutinised by the Capital Strategy Group before going onto Cabinet or Council for full approval in line with the Constitution.

3.1.6 The Capital Strategy is available within the Capital Strategy, Treasury Strategy and Prudential Indicators report on the same agenda.

##### 3.2.1 2026/27-2028/29 Capital Programme

3.2.2 The proposed General Fund capital programme is outlined in Appendix 4. The three-year programme totals £19.3m and £9.9m for 2026/27. A summary of the higher value schemes for 2026/27 are:

###### Active Programme

- **Marlborough Centre purchase and renovation:** The Marlborough Centre project commenced in 2021 following the acquisition of the building for conversion and refurbishment. At the time of purchase, the Council relied on an early cost estimate based on the building's known condition and acquisition price. Since then, planning permission for the conversion and refurbishment has been secured, and a contractor has been engaged under a Pre-Construction Services Agreement. Through this process, significantly more detail is now available regarding the scope of works and the constraints that must be managed, including impacts on neighbouring properties, existing tenants, and the need to protect Marlborough Square. Using this updated information, the Council's Cost Consultants and the contractor have developed a revised cost estimate at RIBA Stage 4. This latest estimate indicates that the likely cost to complete the project will be approximately £1.84 million higher than originally anticipated.

The key reasons for this increase are:

- Additional works identified following detailed inspections and surveys undertaken post-purchase.
- Compensation payments required for tenants unable to trade during periods of conversion and refurbishment.
- Construction cost inflation between 2021 and 2026.

- **Capitalisation of Salaries:** The salaries and on costs of the Economic Development and Regeneration Team who are supporting the implementation of Coalville Regeneration Projects will be capitalised. This is estimated to be £500k per year.
- **HR/Payroll Project:** Capital investment is required in the Council's HR/Payroll system to move to more modern fit for purpose system, to replace the Council's existing iTrent platform, which reaches the end of its contract term in March 2026. The new system will provide improved automation, enhanced self-service capabilities for employees and managers, and reduced manual processing. It will also support the continuation of the Council's long-standing payroll services with Harborough District Council under a renewed delegation agreement. The total capital cost of the project is estimated around £95k, with implementation required ahead of the planned go-live date of July 2026. £30k of the capital costs will be recharged to Harborough District Council.
- **Laptop replacements:** To maintain operational efficiency and security, outdated laptops that no longer meet performance standards or software requirements will be replaced. This ensures staff have reliable, secure devices to deliver services effectively and reduces the risk of system failures.
- **Refuse bins:** Investment in new household waste bins is essential to support waste collection services. Many existing bins are damaged or at end-of-life, impacting service quality and compliance with health and safety standards. Replacements will improve durability and maintain cleanliness across the community.
- **Property portfolio backlog maintenance:** This project addresses essential maintenance across the Council's property portfolio, tackling overdue repairs and compliance issues. Proactive investment will prevent further deterioration, reduce long-term costs, and ensure buildings remain safe, functional, and fit for purpose.

Development Pool (require further Cabinet approval)

- **Coalville Regeneration Framework – Wolsey Road Regeneration – Phase 2:** to deliver projects set out in the Coalville regeneration framework document which is one of the strategic business objective of the Council.
- **Fleet Replacement Programme:** A programme to replace old vehicles with environmentally friendly fleet for services such as waste, parks and housing. The old vehicles would be sold and the receipts from sales re-invested in the programme.
- **Stenson Square:** This is a £2m investment across two years to create a new public realm. This scheme will invest in Council-owned land at Stenson Square and London Road car park to create improved facilities for the general public. The first year investment was included in the 2025/26 Capital Programme.
- **Enterprise Park:** This is a £3.7m project across two years from 2025/26 which is to create serviced employment land and the Council in turn will rent or sell to end users thereby generating capital receipts and/or ongoing income. The first year investment was included in the 2025/26 Capital Programme. This project is unlikely to commence until 2026/27.

Revenue Expenditure Funded from Capital Under Statue (REFCUS)

- **Play Area Grants:** This is a grant of £750k over three years. This will provide grants to replace/upgrade play equipment across the district.

### 3.3 Funding the Capital Programme

3.3.1 The capital programme is funded from a variety of sources, including revenue, reserves, grants and borrowing. Table 3 below summarises the current identified funding sources for each year of the general fund capital programme.

**Table 3: Sources of funding for the General Fund capital programme**

<b>Funding Sources</b>	<b>Total</b>
	<b>£ '000</b>
Grants / Contributions	4,763
Revenue Contributions	355
Business Rates Reserve	14,209
<b>Total</b>	<b>19,324</b>

### 4.0 SPECIAL EXPENSES 2026/27

- 4.1 The Council currently operates six special expense accounts where it provides additional services specific to some areas of the district. The Council's Special Expense Policy sets out the criteria and services that are classified as special expenses.
- 4.2 The special expenses budget includes a three-year Planned and Preventative Maintenance (PPM) programme which should provide sufficient budget to cover future planned maintenance along with a programme for play equipment replacement. The PPM programme has been reviewed and updated as part of the budget preparation.
- 4.3 It should be noted any increases in council tax for special expense areas are considered as part of the District Council's proportion of the council tax when calculating and considering the Referendum Principles for increases in council tax.
- 4.4 As part of the budget process the net expenditure requirements for each special expense area have been reviewed against the level of funding available through precepts, grants, S106 Funding and earmarked reserves. In line with statutory requirements for the Council it is important that each special expense area produces a balanced budget and is financially sustainable. A key element of good practice financial sustainability is to have a minimum level of balances for each special expense area, which is recommended at circa 10% of reoccurring expenditure.

### 4.5 2026/27 Budget Setting

- 4.5.1 A budget requirement covering the period 2026/27 to 2028/29 has been produced for each special expense area and is available at Appendix 6. Also included in Appendix 6, is the movement from the 2025/26 to 2026/27 base budget and details of the Planned and Preventative Maintenance (PPM) included in the budget.
- 4.5.2 All of the special expense areas include a budget for PPM which should provide sufficient funding to cover future planned maintenance along with a programme for play equipment replacement (where applicable). The PPM programme has been updated as part of the budget preparation.

### 4.6 Special Expense Precepts 2026/27

- 4.6.1 The Council is required to set a balanced budget for each special expenses account. It is good practice to have a minimum level of balances, which is recommended at circa 10% of reoccurring expenditure. With the exception of Whitwick, all special expense accounts have sufficient balances forecast for 2026/27.

4.6.2 For Whitwick, the deficit has arisen due to a reduction in previous years burial fee income. The proposal is to increase the precept over the next two years along with a review of the Planned and Preventative Maintenance (PPM) to enable the recovery of the deficit.

4.6.3 Table 4 below shows the proposed Band D Council Tax for the special expense areas.

**Table 4 – Band D Annual Precept for each Special Expense Area**

Special Expense Area	Council Tax Band D 2025/26	Increase/ (Decrease)	Council Tax Band D 2025/26
Coalville	81.20	1.62	82.82
Coleorton	2.88	(0.58)	2.30
Hugglescote/Donington-le-Heath	9.93	1.99	11.92
Oakthorpe, Donisthorpe and Acresford	12.20	(1.22)	10.98
Ravenstone with Snibston	1.04	(0.21)	0.83
Whitwick	8.41	4.21	12.62

4.6.4 Special expense budgets, just like all Council budgets, are subject to the inflationary pressures of the current economic environment. To ensure a balanced budget is proposed and mitigate any funding gaps, action has been taken to minimise PPM expenditure. As well as seeking to increase income from Section 106 contributions and fees and charges.

4.6.5 There are potential risks in these mitigating actions. For example, minimising PPM expenditure in 2026/27 by deferring non-essential spend to future years, may lead to higher routine maintenance in the short term. This may take time to implement the impact of reductions in service levels which could lead to short-term cost pressure on the wider general fund.

## 5.0 KEY RISKS TO THE BUDGET

5.1 Table 5 below provides an assessment of the key risk areas to determine the robustness of the estimates and adequacy of reserves included in the General Fund budgets:

**Table 5: Key Risks to the Budget**

Area	Y/N	Comments
Is performance against the current year's budget on track and where variances are evident, ongoing and unavoidable, are they appropriately reflected in the plans?	Y	<p>The 2025/26 budget includes investments in areas that previously had overspending. Additionally, extra resources have been allocated to departments experiencing increased demand.</p> <p>The ongoing and unavoidable pressures, alongside potential reductions in reserve levels, have been factored into budget plans for 2026/27 and the medium term.</p> <p>The Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement provides a multi-year settlement which will ensure that the Council sets a balanced budget over the medium term and is in a position to build its reserves to ensure investment in the capital programme without the need to borrow.</p>

Area	Y/N	Comments
Are arrangements for monitoring and reporting performance against the savings plans robust?	Y	<p>Prior to the 2024/25 financial year, the Council had not been required to make significant savings to maintain its financial position.</p> <p>To support closing the anticipated funding gap over the medium-term, the Council has developed a Transformation Programme that will deliver savings to services, as well as improvements to service delivery.</p> <p>In addition, there are a range of budget options proposed for the General Fund Budget 2026/27. Delivery of savings/efficiencies will be monitored throughout the financial year and reported to the Corporate Leadership Team and Portfolio Holders alongside the financial monitoring reports on a quarterly basis, this being a key recommendation outlined in the external auditor's report for the 2022/23 Statement of Accounts.</p> <p>The Transformation Programme has monitoring and tracking arrangements to ensure that projects are delivering against intended outcomes. These are reported as part of the quarterly performance reports to Cabinet Members.</p>
The reasonableness of the underlying budget assumptions	Y	<p>All budget proposals have been justified by service managers, reviewed by the Finance team and subject to budget challenge sessions in the new process. There have also been several budget workshops with Cabinet Members.</p> <p>External review has also been undertaken by the treasury advisers, Arlingclose, on the Treasury Management Strategy.</p>
The alignment of resources with the Council's service and organisational priorities	Y	<p>Resources are aligned to the current priorities of the Council.</p> <p>The Council Delivery Plan (CDP) was approved by Council on 14 November 2023. The CDP is aligned to the resources available and risks faced by the Council.</p> <p>The Council's ambition to be carbon neutral by 2030 is likely to require additional investment, however, the Council will look to maximise grant funding made available to it to support this priority. The Council is aware of the investment required over this period.</p>

Area	Y/N	Comments
A review of the major risks associated with the budget	Y	The major risks within the budget have been assessed and are set out in the budget report, including mitigations and strategies about how these are being managed.
The availability of un-earmarked reserves to meet unforeseen cost pressures	Y	<p>The Council has a minimum level of reserves for both its General Fund (£1.5m) and HRA (£1m). In the Audit Commission's 'Striking a Balance' report published in 2012, the majority of Chief Finance Officers at the national level regarded an amount of between three and five per cent of council's net spending as a prudent level for risk-based reserves. Over the medium term the Council's forecast figure is 8%.</p> <p>The General Fund position has been risk assessed to take account of potential unforeseen pressures.</p> <p>The Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement provides an opportunity for the Council to build reserves to support the capital programme and one-off investment.</p>
Have realistic income targets been set and 'at risk' external funding been identified?	Y	<p>An assessment of income targets has been undertaken as part of the development of the draft budget. The income areas which have the greatest risk (including business rates, council tax, planning and leisure) have had greater focus.</p> <p>Where income targets have been deemed unrealistic, these have been addressed as part of the 2026/27 budget.</p> <p>Fees and charges have been increased, where it is appropriate to do so, in accordance with the Council's Corporate Charging Policy.</p>
Has a reasonable estimate of demand cost pressures been made?	Y	The enhanced budget process used in the development of the draft budget has improved the reasonableness of estimates.
Has a reasonable estimate of future income been made?	Y	<p>The budget proposals presented by services were reviewed by finance and subject to budget challenge sessions.</p> <p>The Government's provisional finance settlement enables the Council to set a balanced budget without requiring any additional savings. However, it should be noted that there is likely to be a significant financial challenge, or 'cliff edge', following the end of the current settlement period in 2028/29.</p>

Area	Y/N	Comments
Have one-off cost pressures been identified?	Y	All pressures have been reviewed to assess if they are one-off or ongoing in nature. One-off proposals are to be funded from reserves. Services will need to ensure exit plans exist for one-off expenditure.
Is there a reasonable contingency available to cover the financial risks faced by the Council?	Y	<p>The Council has incorporated estimates for pay awards, inflation and demand pressures into its budget. It has also made provisions for key income streams not materialising for business rates and council tax.</p> <p>It is prudent to create a contingency budget to meet unforeseen demand pressures and to support a balanced in-year budget position</p>
Is there a reasonable level of reserves, which could be used to mitigate any issues arising and are they reducing as the risks decrease?	Y	The Council has a range of earmarked, MTFP and minimum levels of reserves to ensure its financial stability.
The strength of the financial management function and reporting arrangements?	Y	<p>The Council implemented a new financial system in April 2023 to improve its reporting. Enhancements to the system have been made, however, the Finance Teams are still catching up on delays caused by the system implementation. A move to a new supplier for support and maintenance of Unit4 provides an opportunity to enhance the reporting arrangements.</p> <p>Training for all budget holders in the use of Unit4 is in progress.</p> <p>A review of the Financial Procedures Rules has been undertaken.</p>
Have the previous years Accounts been signed off by external audit to verify balances?	N	The Council's position in respect of its completion of the Statement of Accounts has been reported to the Audit and Governance Committee. The Statement of Accounts 2023/24 and 2024/25 were published in August 2025 and January 2026 respectively ensuring compliance with the backstop dates.
Has there been a degree and quality of engagement with colleagues and councillors in the process to develop and construct the budget?	Y	There has been a continuation of the improvements introduced to the budget setting process in previous years. This has included a series of budget challenge sessions between the Directors and Heads of Service, as well as engagement with Corporate Leadership Team, Portfolio Holders and Strategy Group, with all Member briefings scheduled.

## **6.0 CONSULTATION**

### **6.1 Consultation with Members**

- 6.1.1 The Corporate Scrutiny Committee reviewed the General Fund budget during its meeting on 22 January 2026. Members raised several questions about the proposals and made recommendations. Further details are available in the minutes, which can be found as a background paper.

### **6.2 Public Consultation**

- 6.2.1 The Council hosted an online survey from 14 January to 1 February 2026 to gather feedback from residents and businesses on budget changes. The survey was shared on social media, outlined key proposals, and asked participants for their level of support and any additional comments. Appendix 7 summarises the consultation responses, with a full analysis in Appendix 8. Responses were also received from Ashby Town Council (Appendix 9) and a Ratepayer (Appendix 10).

## **7.0 CONCLUSIONS**

- 7.1 Based on the assumptions made in the Budget 2026/27 and MTFP 2026-29 for income and expenditure, the Council can set a balanced proposed budget for 2026/27.

<b>Policies and other considerations, as appropriate</b>	
Council Priorities:	The budget provides funding for the Council to deliver against all its priorities.
Policy Considerations:	None
Safeguarding:	None
Equalities/Diversity:	Equality impact assessments have been conducted by services on relevant proposals during the budget setting period.
Customer Impact:	Customers are likely to be impacted by the changes to fees and charges and District and special expenses precepts set out in this report.
Economic and Social Impact:	The General Fund capital programme allocates £7.1m to investing in Coalville Regeneration Projects over three years.
Environment and Climate Change:	The Council is currently in the process of identifying the cost implications of achieving net carbon zero. This cost is expected to be significant and is not yet included within the current capital programme. Any proposals arising from this work will be presented to Council in due course.
Consultation/Community Engagement:	Corporate Scrutiny Committee – 22 January 2026 Public consultation ran from 14 January to 1 February 2026 Parish and town councils, trade unions and the Federation of Small Businesses - 14 January to 1 February 2026.
Risks:	The budgets will be monitored throughout the year to ensure the Council remains within its funding envelope and planned budget savings are delivered. Key risks to the budget are discussed in further detail in section 5 of the report.
Officer Contact	Anna Crouch Head of Finance <a href="mailto:anna.crouch@nwleicestershire.gov.uk">anna.crouch@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</a>

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Appendix 1  
NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL GENERAL FUND SUMMARY BUDGET 2026/27

2025/26 Budget £	Service	2026/27 Indicative	2027/28 Indicative	2028/29 Indicative
201,490	Chief Executive	228,200	234,530	241,050
756,780	Human Resources	778,040	796,960	813,710
1,866,830	Legal & Support Services	2,002,820	2,050,500	2,118,590
<b>2,825,100</b>	<b>Total Chief Executive</b>	<b>3,009,060</b>	<b>3,081,990</b>	<b>3,173,350</b>
137,970	Strategic Director of Place	150,210	154,520	158,950
1,264,315	Property & Economic Regeneration	1,918,460	1,962,355	2,021,675
1,099,730	Planning	1,024,710	1,097,256	1,163,906
(4,600)	Joint Strategic Planning	(3,130)	(2,800)	(2,450)
<b>2,497,415</b>	<b>Total Place</b>	<b>3,090,249</b>	<b>3,211,330</b>	<b>3,342,080</b>
110,990	Director of Communities	122,560	125,840	129,220
5,792,340	Community Services	5,333,300	6,640,340	7,015,710
540,188	Strategic Housing	1,043,925	1,103,310	1,198,310
<b>6,443,517</b>	<b>Total Community Services</b>	<b>6,499,785</b>	<b>7,869,490</b>	<b>8,343,239</b>
237,130	Strategic Director of Resources	319,690	327,480	335,510
130,030	Internal Audit	148,640	209,100	214,720
1,011,180	Customer Services	1,101,200	1,131,310	1,160,800
1,110,460	Finance	1,190,270	1,364,070	1,498,410
1,211,620	Revenues & Benefits	1,232,700	1,277,950	1,301,460
1,252,280	ICT	1,471,080	1,521,890	1,539,930
0	Business Change	55,260	56,890	58,570
<b>4,952,700</b>	<b>Total Resources</b>	<b>5,518,840</b>	<b>5,888,690</b>	<b>6,109,400</b>
116,120	Non Distributed - Revenue Expenditure on Surplus Assets	120,060	121,080	121,080
71,330	Non Distributed - Retirement Benefits	72,710	74,120	74,120
108,500	Corporate & Democratic Core	109,810	109,810	109,810
1,656,601	Pay Award, Employers NI and Utilities Contingency	102,350	157,100	214,410
478,573	Contingency	500,000	0	0
0	Local Government Reorganisation	2,000,000	0	0
<b>19,149,856</b>	<b>NET COST OF SERVICES</b>	<b>21,022,864</b>	<b>20,513,610</b>	<b>21,487,491</b>
(1,713,876)	Net Recharges from General Fund	(2,441,030)	(2,441,030)	(2,441,030)
<b>17,435,980</b>	<b>NET COST OF SERVICES AFTER RECHARGES</b>	<b>18,581,834</b>	<b>18,072,580</b>	<b>19,046,461</b>
	<b>CORPORATE ITEMS AND FINANCING</b>			
	<b>Corporate Income and Expenditure</b>			
1,788,070	Net Financing Costs	1,387,167	1,345,843	1,316,063
(150,360)	Investment Income	(210,867)	(210,867)	(210,867)
<b>19,073,690</b>	<b>NET REVENUE EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>19,758,134</b>	<b>19,207,556</b>	<b>20,151,657</b>
0	Contribution to/(from) Balances/Reserves	14,583,710	10,289,727	9,209,772
<b>19,073,690</b>	<b>MET FROM GOVT GRANT &amp; COUNCIL TAX (Budget Requirement)</b>	<b>34,341,843</b>	<b>29,497,283</b>	<b>29,361,429</b>
<b>(0)</b>	<b>ANTICIPATED BASELINE FUNDING GAP</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

2025/26 Budget £	Service	2026/27 Indicative £	2027/28 Indicative £	2028/29 Indicative £
	<b>Financed By</b>			
(679,330)	New Homes Bonus	0	0	0
0	Council Tax - Previous year's Surplus/(Deficit)	11,734	0	0
(6,268,350)	Council Tax	(6,508,273)	(6,757,778)	(7,016,084)
(8,673,560)	Non Domestic Rates	(3,674,652)	(3,758,942)	(3,834,773)
(1,577,320)	Minimum Funding Guarantee	0	0	0
(1,574,000)	Extended Producer Responsibility	0	0	0
(131,200)	Revenue Support Grant	(15,450,668)	(9,898,766)	(4,204,755)
(169,930)	National Insurance Grant	0	0	0
0	95% Income Protection Floor	(3,536,712)	(8,584,057)	(13,731,666)
0	Homelessness, Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse	(444,460)	(485,800)	(562,210)
0	Recovery Grant	(11,940)	(11,940)	(11,940)
0	Adjustment Support Grant	(4,726,872)	0	0
<b>(19,073,690)</b>	<b>TOTAL FUNDING AVAILABLE</b>	<b>(34,341,843)</b>	<b>(29,497,283)</b>	<b>(29,361,429)</b>

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## BUDGET PROPOSALS

Appendix 2

		2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	Funding Source (if Reserves)
<b>Revised Budget</b>		<b>18,724,013</b>	<b>19,553,532</b>	<b>20,056,106</b>	
<b>Savings</b>					
Reduction in the Employers Contribution Pension Rate following the actuarial review	All	- 834,499	- 834,499	- 834,499	
Agency model potential for leisure contract re HMRC VAT treatment	Community Services	- 50,000	- 100,000	- 100,000	
Housing keeping savings from vacant post within Community Services	Community Services	- 28,680	- 28,680	- 28,680	
Staff Savings from Waste Service Review.	Community Services	-	- 115,990	- 238,410	
Equipment & Service contracts no longer required	Community Services	-	-	- 9,000	
Recycling bags (no longer required)	Community Services	- 3,000	- 24,000	- 30,000	
Air Quality Monitoring Equipment	Community Services	- 5,000	- 15,000	- 15,000	
Inflation on car park fees (10% on 25/26 budget)	Community Services	- 18,000	- 18,000	- 18,000	
Everyone Active - utility benchmarking and business rates	Community Services	- 188,000	- 185,000	- 182,000	
Vehicle & Fleet Maintenance - reduced gas/swap to bio LPG	Community Services	- 11,000	- 11,000	- 11,000	
Trade refuse - reduced disposal costs	Community Services	- 32,000	- 32,000	- 32,000	
Removal of the Professional Fees budget in Planning and Policy Teams	Place	- 20,000	- 20,000	- 20,000	
Land Charges Search Fees - increase in demand for service with more houses expected to be build	Place	- 129,000	- 129,000	- 129,000	
Previous budget request for Microsoft licences in 27/28 no longer required	Resources	-	- 10,000	- 10,000	
<b>Total Savings</b>		<b>- 1,319,179</b>	<b>- 1,523,169</b>	<b>- 1,657,589</b>	
<b>Additional Income</b>					
Extended Producer Responsibility	Community Services	- 2,094,900	- 1,675,920	- 1,256,940	
Charnwood Burial contract increase in income due to full cost recovery.	Community Services	- 24,150	- 24,150	- 24,150	
On-street enforcement (increase in income - fully reimbursed by LCC)	Community Services	- 20,880	- 20,880	- 20,880	
Food Waste Roll Out - DEFRA Funding	Community Services	- 324,490	-	-	
Summons Income - Revenues	Resources	- 90,000	- 90,000	- 90,000	
Internal Audit - additional income from Charnwood and Blaby	Resources	- 7,010	- 9,650	- 16,620	
Joint Strategic Planning - additional income from partners	Place	- 7,360	- 8,290	- 9,280	
<b>Total Additional Income</b>		<b>- 2,568,790</b>	<b>- 1,828,890</b>	<b>- 1,417,870</b>	
<b>Reduction in Income</b>					
Everyone Active - contract income	Community Services	49,240	59,520	74,010	
Coalville Car Parks -2hrs free in Coalville	Community Services	21,000	21,000	21,000	
Newmarket & Outdoor market - reduced income budget	Community Services	83,000	83,030	83,030	
Trade refuse -reduced income	Community Services	67,000	67,000	67,000	
Reduced income - Loss of contract for sweeping at Bardon	Community Services	17,000	17,000	17,000	
Reduced Housing Benefit Admin Grant	Resources	6,410	6,410	6,410	
<b>Total Reduction in Income</b>		<b>243,650</b>	<b>253,960</b>	<b>268,450</b>	
<b>Unavoidable Cost Pressures</b>					
Moving the Council's democratic services system (ModGov) from maintaining on premise to the cloud	Chief Executives	5,550			
Food waste roll out - implementing the Government's food waste initiative. This is the revenue costs, but there are also associated capital costs	Community Services	599,880	840,650	840,650	
Tacho technology for O license compliance and driver fobs	Community Services	20,000	20,000	20,000	
Blaby District Council - Revenue contribution for administering Disabled Facilities Grant's	Community Services	27,440	27,440	27,440	
Refuse & Recycling - increased agency due to sickness	Community Services	170,000	170,000	85,000	

		2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	Funding Source (if Reserves)
Refuse & Recycling - increased overtime/casual cover due to sickness	Community Services	147,000	147,000	73,000	
Refuse & Recycling - hire of vehicles. Increase due to ageing fleet and purchase of new vehicles delayed	Community Services	150,000	50,000	50,000	
Garage/Fleet services - purchase of parts, increase due to ageing fleet and increased repairs and maintenance	Community Services	175,000	88,000	-	Business Rates Reserve
Removal of Earmarked Reserve which currently funds Environmental and Sustainability Programme Manager post and working budget. This ensures ongoing funding for the post in future years	Community Services	83,980	83,980	83,980	
Increase in electricity budget to cover costs of Electrical Vehicle Charging in car parking	Community Services	35,000	35,000	35,000	
CCTV contract due for retender during 26/27, expected increase in cost	Community Services	8,000	8,000	8,000	
Net adjustment from deletion of old budgets for Port Health exp & income and increased income from full cost recovery	Community Services	28,910	28,910	28,910	
Increase in pest control contract charges	Community Services	9,000	9,000	9,000	
Refuse & Recycling - Increase in repairs & maintenance of equipment due to age	Community Services	11,000	11,000	-	
Local Plan Examination	Place	85,000	-	-	Business Rates Reserve
Electricity - Electric Vehicle Charge Point Feeder Pillar Whitwick Business Centre	Place	17,000	17,000	17,000	
Cash Receipting System - increase in licence fees	Resources	-	-	-	
Insurance - increase in premium	Resources	297,240	441,340	606,840	
Transformation Officer (previously funded from MTFP)	Resources	52,030	52,030	52,030	
Internal Audit Staffing - 2 year funded post made permanent	Resources	-	53,190	53,190	
Access PaySuite Licence Fees - inflationary increases	Resources	11,500	12,500	13,500	
IT Licences - to bring budget in line with forecasted costs	Resources	33,940	33,940	33,940	
IT Maintenance - to bring budget in line with forecasted costs	Resources	28,290	28,290	28,290	
Iken licences for Legal - already purchased in 25/26	Resources	6,120	6,120	6,120	
Local Government Reorganisation	Corporate	2,000,000	-	-	
Contingency for increased cost of temporary accommodation (Funded by Grant Income)	Community Services	444,460	485,800	562,210	
Removal of vacancy factor against some services	All	196,120	196,120	196,120	
Salaries - Pay Award, increments	All	179,596	373,997	587,437	
<b>Total Unavoidable Cost Pressure</b>		<b>4,822,056</b>	<b>3,219,307</b>	<b>3,417,657</b>	
<b>Avoidable Cost Pressure</b>					
Flex Collect; trial continuation funded by Extended Producer Responsibility Fund	Community Services	40,180	-	-	
Asset protection plans for closed churchyards, CV park depot, sports pavilions, play areas	Community Services	65,230	87,640	40,950	
Public Conveniences - redecoration at CV & Ashby and new flooring at CV	Community Services	7,000	-	-	
Love Your Neighbourhood	Community Services	10,000	10,000	-	Business Rates Reserve
Two staff and a caged vehicle for a two year term to tackle litter fly tips and sweeping	Community Services	99,250	98,250	-	Business Rates Reserve
Age Uk Grant	Community Services	23,000	23,000	23,000	
Community Focus Officer (2 year contract 26/27 & 27/28)	Community Services	52,280	53,870	-	Business Rates Reserve
Ashby Museum grant - increase the current budget from £485 to £1500	Place	1,015	-	-	Business Rates Reserve
HRA Procurement Officer - reduction in recharge - original figure net of est recharges	Resources	27,440	27,440	27,440	
Replacement of Touchpoint contact centre	Resources	-	18,000	18,000	
Sophos XDR is an Extended Detection and Response	Resources	37,000	37,000	37,000	
Microsoft CoPilot Licences - roll out	Resources	22,950	38,250	38,250	
Phase 3 Development of Unit 4	Resources	50,000	50,000		Medium term Financial Plan
Year-end support for the production of the 25/26 and 26/27 accounts.	Resources	60,000	60,000		
ICT Service Desk Analyst - fixed term post to permanent	Resources	40,740	40,740	40,740	
Mine Water Combined Heat Power (CHP) Feasibility Study	Resources	80,000	-	-	Business Rates Reserve
<b>Total Avoidable Pressure</b>		<b>616,085</b>	<b>544,190</b>	<b>225,380</b>	
<b>Other</b>					
Contingency		500,000	-	-	

	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	Funding Source (if Reserves)
Below £5k changes	59,926	59,922	59,913	
Housekeeping	- 270	- 270	- 270	
Recharges increase (within Net Cost of Services, e.g. Grounds Maintenance, Insurance, printing etc)	- 158,130	- 158,130	- 158,130	
Recharges increase (Service Management)	- 195,844	- 195,844	- 195,844	
Financing Costs	- 352,331	- 356,424	- 385,638	
Investment Income	- 60,507	- 60,507	- 60,507	
<b>Total Other</b>	<b>- 207,156</b>	<b>- 711,253</b>	<b>- 740,476</b>	
<b>Proposals Funded from Reserves</b>				
Medium Term Financial Plan	- 50,000	- 50,000	-	
Business Rates Reserve	- 502,545	- 250,120	-	
<b>Total Proposals Funded from Reserves</b>	<b>- 552,545</b>	<b>- 300,120</b>	<b>-</b>	
<b>Transfer to Reserves</b>				
Capacity Reserve	500,000	500,000	500,000	
Legacy Reserve	2,000,000	-	-	
Business Rates Reserve	12,083,709	9,789,726	8,709,771	
<b>Total Transfer to Reserve</b>	<b>14,583,709</b>	<b>10,289,726</b>	<b>9,209,771</b>	
<b>BUDGET REQUIREMENT</b>	<b>34,341,843</b>	<b>29,497,283</b>	<b>29,361,429</b>	
<b>FUNDING</b>				
<b>Total Funding as per Council 20/02/25</b>	<b>18,175,000</b>	<b>17,410,300</b>	<b>16,690,820</b>	
Council Tax	- 11,147	- 22,762	- 36,036	
Non Domestic Rates	- 6,617,668	- 5,804,128	- 4,986,707	
Extended Producer Responsibility	- 1,259,000	- 1,007,000	- 806,000	
Revenue Support Grant	15,346,408	9,839,076	4,193,535	
Homelessness, Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse	444,460	485,800	562,210	
95% income protection floor	3,536,712	8,584,057	13,731,666	
Recovery Grant	11,940	11,940	11,940	
Adjustment Support Grant	4,726,872			
Collection Fund Deficit	- 11,734			
<b>TOTAL FUNDING</b>	<b>34,341,843</b>	<b>29,497,283</b>	<b>29,361,429</b>	

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**North West Leicestershire District Council**  
**Proposed Fees & Charges 2026/27 - Place Directorate**

Service	Fee/Charge	Charging Policy	2025/26 Fees	2026/27 Proposed Fees	Percentage Change in	
					Fees	Basis for Change
Property Services	Rent of Commercial Property	Rent agreement	No change	No change	n/a	Where new lease negotiated.
Property Services	Maintenance Charge for Commercial Property	% of rent	Various	Various	n/a	Where new lease negotiated.
Property Services	Service Charges for Commercial Property	Actual cost	No change	No change	n/a	Based on actual costs
Property Services	Electrical Vehicle	Profit Generating	70p kwh	80p kwh	14.0%	Free parking in EV spaces but increase by 10p per kwh
Property Services	New Market	Subsidised	Fees vary from £17.50 to £60	Fees vary from £17.50 to £60	0.0%	No increase
Property Services	Car Parking	Full Cost Recovery	Fees vary from £0.65 to £38	Fees vary from £0.70 to £41.80	10.0%	proposal to increase parking fees by 10% and first 2 hrs free parking in Coalville
Property Services	Public Conveniences - Ashby & Coalville	Subsidised	flat rate of £0.30p	flat rate of £0.30p	0.0%	No increase
Property Services (Leisure Services - Special Expenses)	Burial fees	Full Cost Recovery	Fees vary from £80 to £2,279	Fees vary from £83 to £1,778	17.0%	Removal of triple fees and increase other fees as part of benchmarking exercise
Property Services (Leisure Services - Special Expenses)	Monument and other Cemetery Charges	Full Cost Recovery	Fees vary from £25 to £2,110	Fees vary from £26 to £2,190	3.8%	September CPI
Planning	Copy Planning/ Planning App Documents		No change	No change	0.0%	
Planning	Search fees CON29		No change	No change	0.0%	
Planning	Planning Application Fees	Set Nationally	Various	Various	n/a	Set Nationally
Planning	Planning Conditions Discharge	Set Nationally	Various	Various	n/a	Set Nationally
Planning	Pre-application fees	Individually determined	Individually determined	Individually determined	n/a	Individually determined

**North West Leicestershire District Council**  
**Proposed Fees & Charges 2026/27 - Communities Directorate**

Service	Fee/Charge	Charging Policy	2025/26 Fees	2026/27 Proposed Fees	Percentage Change in Fees	Basis for Change
Waste Services	Bulky Collections	Full Cost Recovery	£25 For 1-3 items, £6.20 for each additional item	£26 For 1-3 items, £6.40 for each additional item	3.8%	September CPI
Waste Services	POP's Collections	Full Cost Recovery	£38.00 For 1-3 items, £7.90 for each additional item up to a maximum of 6 items	£39.50 For 1-3 items, £8.20 for each additional item up to a maximum of 6 items	3.8%	September CPI
Waste Services	Trade Refuse	Full Cost Recovery	between £10.20 to £21.60 for 240l, 360l, 1100l bins (per bin per collection)	between £10.60 to £22.40 for 240l, 360l, 1100l bins (per bin per collection)	3.8%	September CPI
Waste Services	Trade Sacks	Full Cost Recovery	£3.50 per sack (min 50 sacks)	£3.60 per sack (min 50 sacks)	3.8%	September CPI
Waste Services	Trade Recycling	Full Cost Recovery	between £4.40 to £7.40 for 240l, 360l, 1100l bins (per bin per collection)	between £4.60 to £7.70 for 240l, 360l, 1100l bins (per bin per collection)	3.8%	September CPI
Waste Services	Additional Garden Waste bin collection	Subsidised/Full Cost Recovery	£58.00	£60.00	3.8%	September CPI
Waste Services	Emptying of litter bins	Full Cost Recovery	between £3.90 to £6.90 (per bin per wk)	between £4.00 to £7.10 (per bin per wk)	3.8%	September CPI
Waste Services	MOT's - Staff vehicles	Subsidised	£41.00	£43.00	3.8%	September CPI
Waste Services	Air Con Service - Staff vehicles	Full Cost Recovery	£44.00	£46.00	3.8%	September CPI
Leisure Services	Football pitch fees	Subsidised	Per match: Junior £36, Adult £61. Per season: Junior £340, Adult £612	Per match: Junior £37, Adult £63. Per season: Junior £353, Adult £635	3.8%	September CPI
Leisure Services	3G Pitch fees (Hermitage Rec Grd)	Subsidised/Full Cost Recovery	Between £35 to £86 depending on pitch size and Adult/Junior	Between £36 to £107.80 depending on pitch size and Adult/Junior	various	amendments to inherited charging policy with fees to increase over 5 years based on benchmarking
Environmental Protection	Private Sector Housing	Full Cost Recovery	From £115 to £517	From £119 to £537	3.8%	September CPI
Environmental Protection	Environmental Regulation of Industrial Plant	Full Cost Recovery	From £47 to £3,363	From £47 to £3,363	0.0%	Statutory fees
Environmental Protection	Scrap Metal Dealers - Licenses	Full Cost Recovery	Fees vary from £42 to £602	Fees vary from £44 to £625	3.8%	September CPI
Environmental Protection	High Hedges	Full Cost Recovery	£602.00	£625.00	3.8%	September CPI
Environmental Protection	Noise surveys	Full Cost Recovery	£491.00	£510.00	3.8%	September CPI
Environmental Protection	Caravans/Mobile Homes	Full Cost Recovery	Fees vary from £86 to £448	Fees vary from £89 to £465	3.8%	September CPI
Environmental Health	Licensing	Subsidised/Full Cost Recovery	Fees vary between £3.30 and £64,000	Fees vary between £3.40 and £64,000	3.8%	September CPI , excluding statutory fees which remain unchanged
Environmental Health	Health and Food Safety	Full Cost Recovery	Fees vary between £5.40 and £175	Fees vary between £5.60 and £200	3.8% & 14%	Majority increased by September CPI, minority increased by 14% to ensure full cost recovery
Environmental Health	Border Inspection Post	Full Cost Recovery	Fees vary between £10 and £122	Fees vary between £10 and £127	3.8%	September CPI
Environmental Health	Pest Control	Subsidised/Full Cost Recovery	Fees vary between £20.10 and £224	Fees vary between £20.90 and £233	3.8%	September CPI
GF Housing	Caravan Site Rental	Rental Agreement	£44.13 from April 2025 on anniversary of individual rental agreement	£45.81 from April 2026 on anniversary of individual rental agreement	3.8%	September CPI
GF Housing	Lifelines for Private Customers - Basic	Contract	£5.19 pw	£5.19 pw	0.0%	No Increase

Service	Fee/Charge	Charging Policy	2025/26 Fees	2026/27 Proposed Fees	Percentage	
					Change in Fees	Basis for Change
GF Housing	Lifelines Private Customers - Enhanced	Contract	£7.81 pw	£7.81 pw	0.0%	No Increase
GF Housing	Lifelines for Registered Providers - Basic	Contract	£2.37 to £4.14 pw	£2.37 to £4.14 pw	0.0%	No Increase

**North West Leicestershire District Council**  
**Proposed Fees & Charges 2026/27 - Resources & Chief Executive Directorates**

Service	Fee/Charge	Charging Policy	2025/26 Fees	2026/27 Proposed Fees	Percentage	
					Change in Fees	Basis for Change
Legal	Legal fees various		Various	Various	0%	No Change
Democratic Services	Electoral Registration sale of register	Statutory	Data - per 1000 electors or part thereof £1.50 + handling fee £20 Printed copy per 1000 electors or part thereof £5 + handling fee £10	Data - per 1000 electors or part thereof £1.50 + handling fee £20 Printed copy per 1000 electors or part thereof £5 + handling fee £10	0.0%	Statutory - no change
Democratic Services	Address Management		Renaming existing Property £47.00. Naming/numbering existing property £47.00. Naming/numbering a development of up to 5 plots £47.00 per plot. Naming/numbering a development of more than 5 plots £236.00 + £25.00 for each plot from 6 onwards. Naming a street £177. Change to development after notification: Admin £62.00 plus £32.00 per plot Street re-naming at residents request £310 plus all compensation met by applicant Confirmation of postal address details £32.00 Number a new flat complex £32.00 per flat.	Renaming existing Property £49.00. Naming/numbering existing property £49.00. Naming/numbering a development of up to 5 plots £49.00 per plot. Naming/numbering a development of more than 5 plots £245.00 + £26.00 for each plot from 6 onwards. Naming a street £184. Change to development after notification: Admin £64.00 plus £33.00 per plot Street re-naming at residents request £322 plus all compensation met by applicant Confirmation of postal address details £33.00 Number a new flat complex £33.00 per flat.	3.8%	September CPI
ICT	Print Room Sales	Cost plus 25%	Mono 7p + paper and finishing Colour 8p + paper and finishing +25% for external customers	Mono 7.3p + paper and finishing Colour 8.3p + paper and finishing +25% for external customers	3.8%	September CPI
Finance - Insurance	External charges (Insurance)	Cost	Cost	Cost	Various	As per cost
Revs & Bens	Council Tax Summons/Liability Orders	Cost	£70.50	£70.50	0.0%	No Change
Revs & Bens	NNDR Summons/Liability Orders	Cost	£90.00	£90.00	0.0%	No Change

Project	2026/27 For Approval	2027/28 Indicative Budget	2028/29 Indicative Budget	Total	Funding					
					Grant	Capital Receipt	Revenue	Business Rates Reserve	EMR	Total
<b>ACTIVE PROGRAMME</b>										
<b>Coalville Regeneration Projects</b>										
Marlborough Centre Purchase and Renovation	2,400,000	2,400,000	-	4,800,000				4,800,000		4,800,000
Capitalisation of Salaries	500,000	500,000	500,000	1,500,000				1,500,000		1,500,000
<b>Total Coalville Regeneration Projects</b>	<b>2,900,000</b>	<b>2,900,000</b>	<b>500,000</b>	<b>6,300,000</b>	-	-	-	<b>6,300,000</b>	-	<b>6,300,000</b>
<b>Systems/ICT Systems</b>										
Laptop Replacement	55,000	89,000	40,000	184,000				184,000		184,000
HR/ Payroll System	95,000	-	-	95,000			30,000	65,000		95,000
<b>Total Systems/ICT Systems</b>	<b>150,000</b>	<b>89,000</b>	<b>40,000</b>	<b>279,000</b>	-	-	<b>30,000</b>	<b>249,000</b>	-	<b>279,000</b>
<b>Vehicles, Plant and Equipment</b>										
Refuse Bins and Recycling Containers (Annual Programme)	200,000	202,000	228,720	630,720				630,720		630,720
Tacho technology and driver fobs	29,000			29,000				29,000		29,000
<b>Total Vehicles, Plant and Equipment</b>	<b>229,000</b>	<b>202,000</b>	<b>228,720</b>	<b>659,720</b>	-	-	-	<b>659,720</b>	-	<b>659,720</b>
<b>New Construction or Renovation</b>										
Portfolio Backlog Maintenance	600,000	600,000		1,200,000				1,200,000		1,200,000
<b>Total New Construction or Renovation</b>	<b>600,000</b>	<b>600,000</b>	-	<b>1,200,000</b>	-	-	-	<b>1,200,000</b>	-	<b>1,200,000</b>
<b>TOTAL ACTIVE PROGRAMME</b>	<b>3,879,000</b>	<b>3,791,000</b>	<b>768,720</b>	<b>8,438,720</b>	-	-	<b>30,000</b>	<b>8,408,720</b>	-	<b>8,438,720</b>
<b>DEVELOPMENT POOL</b>										
<b>Coalville Regeneration Projects</b>										
Coalville Regeneration Framework - Wolsey Road Regeneration Phase 2	800,000			800,000				800,000		800,000
<b>Total Coalville Regeneration Projects</b>	<b>800,000</b>	-	-	<b>800,000</b>	-	-	-	<b>800,000</b>	-	<b>800,000</b>
<b>Systems/ICT Systems</b>										
CCTV - Upgrade to Server & new cameras	20,000			20,000				20,000		20,000
Windows Software Replacement		50,000		50,000				50,000		50,000
Touchpoint Contact Centre		30,000		30,000				30,000		30,000
<b>Total Systems/ICT Systems</b>	<b>20,000</b>	<b>80,000</b>	-	<b>100,000</b>	-	-	-	<b>100,000</b>	-	<b>100,000</b>
<b>Vehicle, Plant and Equipment</b>										
Fleet Replacement Programme (replacement programme)	99,000	637,000		736,000				736,000		736,000
Noise Monitoring Equipment	20,000			20,000				20,000		20,000

Project	2026/27 For Approval	2027/28 Indicative Budget	2028/29 Indicative Budget	Total	Funding					
					Grant	Capital Receipt	Revenue	Business Rates Reserve	EMR	Total
Mobile Vehicle message sign (matrix trailer)	20,000			20,000				20,000		20,000
Car Parking - replace Pay & Display machines	40,000			40,000				40,000		40,000
Play Areas (General Fund)- new equipment	49,000	30,000	46,000	125,000				125,000		125,000
Parks - Electric Gates	15,000			15,000				15,000		15,000
<b>Total Vehicle, Plant and Equipment</b>	<b>243,000</b>	<b>667,000</b>	<b>46,000</b>	<b>956,000</b>	-	-	-	<b>956,000</b>	-	<b>956,000</b>
<b>New Construction or Renovation</b>										
Hermitage Recreational Ground 3G Pitch	150,000			150,000				150,000		150,000
Stenson Square Public Realm	1,000,000			1,000,000				1,000,000		1,000,000
Enterprise Park	1,850,000			1,850,000				1,850,000		1,850,000
<b>Total New Construction or Renovation</b>	<b>3,000,000</b>	-	-	<b>3,000,000</b>	-	-	-	<b>3,000,000</b>	-	<b>3,000,000</b>
<b>TOTAL DEVELOPMENT POOL</b>	<b>4,063,000</b>	<b>747,000</b>	<b>46,000</b>	<b>4,856,000</b>	-	-	-	<b>4,856,000</b>	-	<b>4,856,000</b>
<b>REFCUS</b>										
Closed Cemetery / Churchyard	62,000	64,000	66,000	192,000				192,000		192,000
Play Area Grants	250,000	250,000	250,000	750,000				750,000		750,000
Disabled Facilities Grants (Adapted Property Improvement Grants)	817,540	817,540	817,540	2,452,620	2,452,620					2,452,620
Local Nutrient Mitigation Fund	770,000	770,000	770,000	2,310,000	2,310,000					2,310,000
<b>Total REFCUS</b>	<b>1,899,540</b>	<b>1,901,540</b>	<b>1,903,540</b>	<b>5,704,620</b>	<b>4,762,620</b>	-	-	<b>942,000</b>	-	<b>5,704,620</b>
<b>SPECIAL EXPENSES</b>										
Special Expenses Play Areas	55,710	83,370	185,630	324,710			324,710			324,710
<b>TOTAL SPECIAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>55,710</b>	<b>83,370</b>	<b>185,630</b>	<b>324,710</b>	-	-	<b>324,710</b>	-	-	<b>324,710</b>
<b>TOTAL CAPITAL PROGRAMME</b>	<b>9,897,250</b>	<b>6,522,910</b>	<b>2,903,890</b>	<b>19,324,050</b>	<b>4,762,620</b>	-	<b>354,710</b>	<b>14,206,720</b>	-	<b>19,324,050</b>

Project	2026/27 For Approval	2027/28 Indicative Budget	2028/29 Indicative Budget	Total	Funding					
					Grant	Capital Receipt	Revenue	Business Rates Reserve	EMR	Total
<b>Capital Programme Reconciliation</b>										
<b>Capital Programme Approved by Council 04/11/25</b>	<b>7,688,310</b>	<b>2,881,233</b>	<b>2,000,310</b>	<b>12,569,853</b>	4,320,930	-	-	8,248,923	-	<b>12,569,853</b>
<b>Capital Proposals:</b>										
Marlborough Centre Purchase and Renovation		2,347,077		<b>2,347,077</b>				2,347,077		<b>2,347,077</b>
Laptop Replacement	6,000	40,000	- 20,000	<b>26,000</b>				26,000		<b>26,000</b>
Refuse Bins and Recycling Containers (Annual Programme)			228,720	<b>228,720</b>				228,720		<b>228,720</b>
Tacho technology driver fobs	29,000			<b>29,000</b>				29,000		<b>29,000</b>
Portfolio Backlog Maintenance	600,000	600,000		<b>1,200,000</b>				1,200,000		<b>1,200,000</b>
Coalville Regeneration Framework - Wolsey Road Regeneration Phase 2	800,000			<b>800,000</b>				800,000		<b>800,000</b>
CCTV - Upgrade to Server & new cameras	20,000			<b>20,000</b>				20,000		<b>20,000</b>
Windows Software Replacement		50,000		<b>50,000</b>				50,000		<b>50,000</b>
Touchpoint Contact Centre		30,000		<b>30,000</b>				30,000		<b>30,000</b>
Noise Monitoring Equipment	20,000			<b>20,000</b>				20,000		<b>20,000</b>
Mobile Vehicle message sign (matrix trailer)	20,000			<b>20,000</b>				20,000		<b>20,000</b>
Car Parking - replace Pay & Display machines	40,000			<b>40,000</b>				40,000		<b>40,000</b>
GF - Play Areas new equipment	49,000	30,000	46,000	<b>125,000</b>				125,000		<b>125,000</b>
Parks - Electric Gates	15,000			<b>15,000</b>				15,000		<b>15,000</b>
Cliffed Cemetery / Churchyard (Concurrent Grant Scheme)	62,000	64,000	66,000	<b>192,000</b>				192,000		<b>192,000</b>
Play Area Grants	250,000	250,000	250,000	<b>750,000</b>				750,000		<b>750,000</b>
HR/ Payroll System	95,000	-	-	<b>95,000</b>			30,000	65,000		<b>95,000</b>
Disabled Facilities Grants (Adapted Property Improvement Grants)	147,230	147,230	147,230	<b>441,690</b>	441,690					<b>441,690</b>
Special Expenses Play Areas	55,710	83,370	185,630	<b>324,710</b>			324,710			<b>324,710</b>
<b>Total Proposals</b>	<b>2,208,940</b>	<b>3,641,677</b>	<b>903,580</b>	<b>6,754,197</b>	<b>441,690</b>	-	<b>354,710</b>	<b>5,957,797</b>	-	<b>6,754,197</b>
								-		
<b>Capital Programme for approval 20/02/26</b>	<b>9,897,250</b>	<b>6,522,910</b>	<b>2,903,890</b>	<b>19,324,050</b>	<b>4,762,620</b>	-	<b>354,710</b>	<b>14,206,720</b>	-	<b>19,324,050</b>

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## North West Leicestershire District Council Estimated Reserves 2026/27 to 2028/29

TEAM	Estimated Balance as at 1/4/26	Commitments & Budget Proposals 26/27	Estimated balance as at 31/3/27	Future commitment incl budget proposals 27/28 to 28/29	Estimated Balance as at 31/3/29
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Earmarked Reserves:</b>					
Chief Executive	28	(14)	14	(14)	0
Human Resources	17	0	17	0	17
Legal & Support Services	116	45	161	(110)	51
Community Services	683	(455)	228	(170)	58
Strategic Housing	394	0	394	0	394
Planning & Infrastructure	1,462	(12)	1,450	(4)	1,446
Property and Economic Regeneration	487	(43)	444	(43)	402
Joint Strategic Planning	147	0	147	0	147
Director of Resources	79	0	79	0	79
Customer Services	4	(3)	1	(1)	0
Business Change	431	(74)	356	0	356
ICT	23	(23)	0	0	0
Internal Audit	0	0	0	0	0
Finance	279	0	279	(75)	204
MTFP Reserve	7,558	(264)	7,294	(107)	7,187
Business Rates Reserve	11,333	(529)	10,804	13,726	24,530
Legacy Reserve	0	1,000	1,000	(1,000)	0
<b>Total earmarked reserves - General Fund</b>	<b>23,040</b>	<b>(373)</b>	<b>22,668</b>	<b>12,202</b>	<b>34,870</b>
<b>Other reserves General Fund:</b>					
General Balance (minimum level of reserves)	1,544	0	1,544	0	1,544
<b>Total other Reserves - General Fund</b>	<b>1,544</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,544</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,544</b>
<b>TOTAL ALL RESERVES - GENERAL FUND</b>	<b>24,585</b>	<b>(373)</b>	<b>24,212</b>	<b>12,202</b>	<b>36,414</b>
<b>Total earmarked reserves - Special Expenses</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>(8)</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>(7)</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>Other reserves Special Expenses:</b>					
General Balance	57	2	59	0	59
<b>Total other Reserves - Special Expenses</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>TOTAL ALL RESERVES - SPECIAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>(6)</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>(7)</b>	<b>108</b>

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## SPECIAL EXPENSES BUDGET SUMMARY 2025/26-2028/29

<b>COALVILLE</b>	<b>2025/26 Budget</b>	<b>2026/27 Budget</b>	<b>2027/28 Budget</b>	<b>2028/29 Budget</b>
Cemetery	(8,120)	(3,260)	(2,840)	(1,710)
Planned Preventative Maintenance (Cemetery)	29,450	7,670	7,900	13,130
Other Expenses	5,000	6,000	6,000	6,000
Parks, Recreation Grounds & Open Spaces	312,220	316,980	311,590	319,530
Planned Preventative Maintenance (Parks/Recreation Grounds)	14,450	76,710	96,870	195,690
Events	98,340	99,400	100,160	100,910
<b>Net Cost of Services</b>	<b>451,340</b>	<b>503,500</b>	<b>519,680</b>	<b>633,550</b>
Service & Committee Management	92,710	91,120	93,860	96,680
<b>Net Cost of Services after Recharges</b>	<b>544,050</b>	<b>594,620</b>	<b>613,540</b>	<b>730,230</b>
<b>Funded By:</b>				
Contribution To/ (From) Reserves	31,008	(16,288)	(17,449)	(115,838)
Precept (Council Tax)	(575,058)	(578,332)	(596,091)	(614,392)
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>(544,050)</b>	<b>(594,620)</b>	<b>(613,540)</b>	<b>(730,230)</b>

<b>WHITWICK</b>	<b>2025/26 Budget</b>	<b>2026/27 Budget</b>	<b>2027/28 Budget</b>	<b>2028/29 Budget</b>
Cemetery	8,960	9,650	9,930	10,920
Open Space and Car Park	4,330	4,470	4,600	4,740
Planned Preventative Maintenance	9,100	3,200	15,100	3,400
<b>Net Cost of Services</b>	<b>22,390</b>	<b>17,320</b>	<b>29,630</b>	<b>19,060</b>
Service Management	14,550	14,010	14,430	14,860
<b>Net Cost of Services after Recharges</b>	<b>36,940</b>	<b>31,330</b>	<b>44,060</b>	<b>33,920</b>
<b>Funded By:</b>				
Contribution To/ (From) Reserves	(13,770)	3,287	7,922	44,152
Precept (Council Tax)	(23,170)	(34,617)	(51,982)	(78,072)
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>(36,940)</b>	<b>(31,330)</b>	<b>(44,060)</b>	<b>(33,920)</b>

<b>HUGGLESCOTE &amp; DONINGTON-LE-HEATH</b>	<b>2025/26 Budget</b>	<b>2026/27 Budget</b>	<b>2027/28 Budget</b>	<b>2028/29 Budget</b>
Cemetery	5,540	8,220	9,190	10,210
Planned Preventative Maintenance	38,080	2,660	35,740	2,820
<b>Net Cost of Services</b>	<b>43,620</b>	<b>10,880</b>	<b>44,930</b>	<b>13,030</b>
Service Management	15,220	14,470	14,910	15,360
<b>Net Cost of Services after Recharges</b>	<b>58,840</b>	<b>25,350</b>	<b>59,840</b>	<b>28,390</b>
<b>Funded By:</b>				
Contribution To/ (From) Reserves	(32,605)	9,301	(17,526)	23,296
Precept (Council Tax)	(26,235)	(34,651)	(42,314)	(51,686)
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>(58,840)</b>	<b>(25,350)</b>	<b>(59,840)</b>	<b>(28,390)</b>

<b>COLEORTON</b>	<b>2025/26 Budget</b>	<b>2026/27 Budget</b>	<b>2027/28 Budget</b>	<b>2028/29 Budget</b>
Open Space	1,100	1,150	1,190	1,230
Planned Preventative Maintenance	0	0	0	0
<b>Net Cost of Services</b>	<b>1,100</b>	<b>1,150</b>	<b>1,190</b>	<b>1,230</b>
Service Management	0	0	0	0
<b>Net Cost of Services after Recharges</b>	<b>1,100</b>	<b>1,150</b>	<b>1,190</b>	<b>1,230</b>
<b>Funded By:</b>				
Contribution To/ (From) Reserves	593	207	(97)	(351)
Precept (Council Tax)	(1,693)	(1,357)	(1,093)	(879)
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>(1,100)</b>	<b>(1,150)</b>	<b>(1,190)</b>	<b>(1,230)</b>

<b>OAKTHORPE, DONISTHORPE &amp; ACRESFORD</b>	<b>2025/26 Budget</b>	<b>2026/27 Budget</b>	<b>2027/28 Budget</b>	<b>2028/29 Budget</b>
Play Areas	4,370	4,540	4,670	4,800
Planned Preventative Maintenance	0	0	0	2,200
<b>Net Cost of Services</b>	<b>4,370</b>	<b>4,540</b>	<b>4,670</b>	<b>7,000</b>
Service Management	0	0	0	0
<b>Net Cost of Services after Recharges</b>	<b>4,370</b>	<b>4,540</b>	<b>4,670</b>	<b>7,000</b>
<b>Funded By:</b>				
Contribution To/ (From) Reserves	7,305	5,913	4,864	1,694
Precept (Council Tax)	(11,675)	(10,453)	(9,534)	(8,694)
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>(4,370)</b>	<b>(4,540)</b>	<b>(4,670)</b>	<b>(7,000)</b>

<b>RAVENSTONE</b>	<b>2025/26 Budget</b>	<b>2026/27 Budget</b>	<b>2027/28 Budget</b>	<b>2028/29 Budget</b>
Open Space	490	510	530	550
Planned Preventative Maintenance	660	680	700	720
<b>Net Cost of Services</b>	<b>1,150</b>	<b>1,190</b>	<b>1,230</b>	<b>1,270</b>
Service Management	0	0	0	0
<b>Net Cost of Services after Recharges</b>	<b>1,150</b>	<b>1,190</b>	<b>1,230</b>	<b>1,270</b>
<b>Funded By:</b>				
Contribution To/ (From) Reserves	(39)	(291)	(508)	(684)
Precept (Council Tax)	(1,111)	(899)	(722)	(586)
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>(1,150)</b>	<b>(1,190)</b>	<b>(1,230)</b>	<b>(1,270)</b>

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Responses Overview Closed

Responses

**621** 

Average Time

**16:36** 

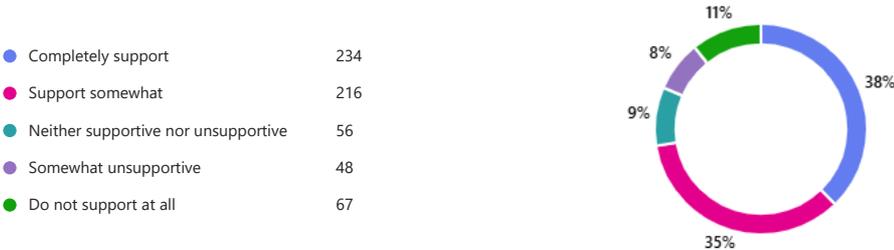
Duration

**22** Days 

1. How confident are you that you understand where the council's money comes from?



2. Do you support the idea of a Legacy Fund for community projects?



3. Please provide any comments regarding your support for the Legacy Fund.

**253**  
Responses

Latest Responses  
 "Focus on creating green spaces, improving walking paths etc for community well ..."  
 ...

4. Do you agree that community groups should provide match funding for Legacy Fund projects?



5. Please provide any comments regarding match funding for Legacy Fund projects.

250  
Responses

Latest Responses

"I do not think the community should have to contribute, we pay enough tax as it ... "  
 "Some communities may not be able to afford to match fund, these need more su... "  
 ...

6. What types of projects would you like to see funded through the Legacy Fund?

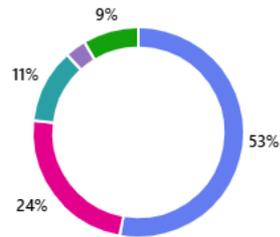
381  
Responses

Latest Responses

"Sporting facilities or public transport"  
 "Restoration of community buildings and areas."  
 "Projects for our water ways and canals, green spaces, wildlife preservation. Litter ... "  
 ...

7. Do you agree that it is important to invest in long-term community projects and council services before the district council merges into a unitary authority?

● Completely agree	328
● Agree somewhat	149
● Neither agree nor disagree	71
● Somewhat disagree	20
● Do not agree at all	53



8. Please provide any comments regarding investing in Long-term community projects and council services before the district council merges

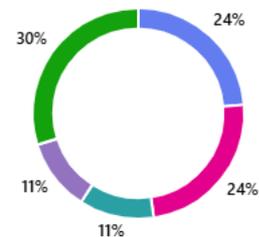
236  
Responses

Latest Responses

...

9. Do you agree with the proposed Council Tax increase of 2.75%?

● Completely agree	147
● Agree somewhat	149
● Neither agree nor disagree	71
● Somewhat disagree	69
● Do not agree at all	185



10. Please provide any comments regarding the council tax increase of 2.75%

351  
Responses

Latest Responses

"No just no! We pay enough as it!!!!!!"  
 ...

11. If you disagree, what alternative would you suggest to increase our ongoing income to maintain essential services?

213  
Responses

Latest Responses

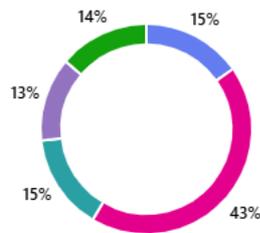
"Cut costs on unnecessary spending such as replacing silly cardboard sacks and ri... "  
 "Smaller increase bearing in mind rises expected from other services. Cost of living..."  
 ...

12. Which of these areas should be our top priority for investment? (Please rank in order of priority)



13. Do you agree with our proposals to invest one-off capital money in existing services as listed above?

● Completely agree	95
● Agree somewhat	268
● Neither agree nor disagree	92
● Somewhat disagree	80
● Do not agree at all	86



14. Please provide any comments regarding our proposal to invest in one-off capital money in existing services

221  
Responses

Latest Responses

...

15. Are there any proposed capital investments listed above that you do not agree with? Please state which.

234  
Responses

Latest Responses

"Signage funding"  
 "Mobile sign for environmental campaign, seriously?! That money should be spent..."  
 "Mobile Sign"  
 ...

16. Why do you not agree with this investment?

211  
Responses

Latest Responses

"Seems entirely unnecessary compared to other proposals"  
 "£20,000 on a mobile sign is stupid. That money could go into improving services ... "  
 "I doubt a mobile sign saying 'don't throw litter' doing the job! Enforcement and e..."  
 ...

17. Which of these areas should be our top priority for investment? (Please rank in order of priority)



18. If you believe other areas should be our top priority for investment (please specify)

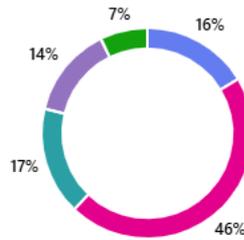
618  
Responses

Latest Responses

- "No"
- "A"
- "Na"
- ...

19. Do you agree with our proposals to invest revenue money in existing services as listed above?

Completely agree	102
Agree somewhat	284
Neither agree nor disagree	103
Somewhat disagree	87
Do not agree at all	45



20. Please provide any comments regarding our proposals to invest revenue money in existing services

179  
Responses

Latest Responses

- ...

21. Are there any proposed revenue investments listed above that you do not agree with? Please state which.

178  
Responses

Latest Responses

- "Free parking"
- "£7000 on public toilets"
- ...

22. Why do you not agree with this investment?

155  
Responses

Latest Responses

- "Why should parking charges be given for free in one town but increased in the ot..."
- "No one is using public toilets for anything other than drug taking. Absolutely poi..."
- ...

23. Do you have any final comments on the proposals in the draft budget?

156  
Responses

Latest Responses  
...

24. Please insert your Postcode in this format - LE67 3EP

567  
Responses

Latest Responses  
"Le65 2rb"  
"LE67 1FX"  
"DE74 2HS"  
...

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# Budget Consultation 2026/27 – Summary of Responses

## Introduction

The consultation on budget proposals for 2026/27 ran from 15 January to 1 February.

- 621 people chose to respond to the survey

The survey was publicised widely:

- Dedicated web page established, with an alert on all pages of the NWLDC website. 3,206 people visited the web page
- 1 x news release resulting in four pieces of media coverage (BBC Leicester, Leicestershire Live, Ashby Nub News, Coalville Times)
- 3 x customer emails to those subscribed to receive surveys and consultations (total distribution:
  - Email 1: Opened by 28,662 people, 1,372 people clicked on the link
  - Email 2: Opened by 27,785 people, 1,171 people clicked on the link
  - Email 3: Opened by 23,981 people, 1,066 people clicked on the link
- 2 x Facebook posts
  - Post 1: Reached 2,984 people
  - Post 2: Reached 1,923 people
- Screen in the Customer Centre viewed by all visitors to the centre.

# Summary of quantitative responses

## Confidence in council income

- Most respondents (93%) said they are very confident or somewhat confident that they understand where the council's money comes from

## Legacy Fund

- 73% of respondents either completely support or support somewhat the idea of a Legacy Fund for projects, with a further 9% saying they were neither supportive nor unsupportive
- 19% of respondents were either somewhat unsupportive or do not support the idea at all
- In relation to match funding, 54% of people stated that they either completely agree or agree somewhat that groups should match fund
- 29% stated that they did not agree at all or somewhat disagreed that groups should match fund, with a further 18% remaining neutral on the issue
- When asked whether the council should invest in long-term projects ahead of local government reorganisation, 77% of respondents either completely agreed or agreed somewhat
- 12% somewhat disagreed or did not agree at all with the idea of investing in long-term projects before a new unitary is created
- 11% of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the idea

## Council tax

- 48% of respondents said they completely agree or agree somewhat with the proposed council tax increase
- 41% said they somewhat disagreed or did not agree at all with the proposed increase
- 11% said they neither agreed nor disagreed

## Capital investment

- 58% of respondents completely agreed or agreed somewhat with the proposed capital investment
- 27% of respondents said they somewhat disagreed or did not agree at all with the capital proposals
- A further 15% were neutral on the matter

## Revenue investment

- 58% of respondents completely agreed or agreed somewhat with the proposed revenue investment
- 21% said they somewhat disagreed or did not agree at all with the revenue proposals
- A further 17% were neutral on the matter

# Summary of qualitative responses

## Overview

The qualitative responses from the budget survey highlight concerns about fairness, priorities, and value for money.

Many respondents wrote that the council should focus on essential services, such as street cleaning, litter, safety, and support for vulnerable people, before funding new initiatives.

Some comments mentioned clearer transparency and equitable investment across the district.

The most consistent concerns relate to car parking charges, particularly the combination of free parking in Coalville and higher charges elsewhere, which people view as unfair and harmful to local high streets.

Waste and recycling proposals also attract some criticism, with respondents questioning costs, practicality and reduced income under the new system.

Support for the council tax increase was slightly higher than opposition to it, with supporters accepting the increase is needed to protect services.

Of those who oppose the increase and chose to comment, they cite household financial pressures and the council's growing reserves as the reason for their objection.

## Legacy Fund

### General comments about the principle of a Legacy Fund

Of the 621 respondents who answered the question 'Do you support the idea of a Legacy Fund for community projects?', 253 chose to comment when asked 'Please provide any comments regarding your support for the Legacy Fund'.

Several themes emerged from these comments:

- 1. Essential services should be prioritised**

A major theme is that the council should prioritise core services, such as street cleaning, litter, weed removal and basic maintenance, as well as services for vulnerable people, like supported housing.

## **2. Scepticism towards council spending**

Some comments expressed opinions of 'wasted' money on past projects e.g. Coalville regeneration and in Measham. There was some concern that the Legacy Fund could become hidden, misused or diverted during local government reorganisation, and comments were submitted suggesting that spending must be transparent, tightly monitored and audited.

## **3. Fairness and geographic distribution**

Those respondents who live outside of Coalville expressed a desire that the legacy fund should seek to address rural villages like Castle Donington, Diseworth, Worthington and areas north of Coalville.

## **4. Support for community projects**

There was support in the comments for community projects, so long as they really are long-lasting. There was particular support for projects that improve quality of life, support active travel, improve youth facilities, or focus on green spaces and heritage.

Specific suggested areas include:

- Cycling / walking routes (with safety improvements)
- Green and biodiversity projects
- Upgraded community buildings
- Facilities for older people
- Youth sports, recreation, and social spaces
- Heritage preservation
- Arts and cultural facilities (e.g., Century Theatre).

## **5. Transparency**

Some respondents used comment to ask for:

- A simpler application process
- Clear assessment criteria

- Public involvement in decision-making
- Robust monitoring and safeguards against “consultant waste”, fraud or poor value for money
- Transparent long-term planning.

## Comments regarding match funding of Legacy Fund

Of the 621 people who responded to the question ‘Do you agree that community groups should provide match funding for Legacy Fund projects?’, 250 people chose to provide a comment when asked ‘Please provide any comments regarding match funding for Legacy Fund projects.’

### Supportive of match funding (but with comments)

Most comments show that respondents believe match funding is positive but only if the community group can afford it and the threshold is realistic.

- Some respondents wrote that match funding shows commitment and proves a group is serious about its project
- They believe it encourages community ownership of the project
- They believe it helps to stretch the Legacy Fund further, allowing more projects to benefit
- Some say a lower contribution than 50% (e.g., 25%) would be realistic
- Some think certain projects (e.g., private sports clubs) should contribute.

### Not supportive or concerned about match funding

A smaller number of respondents are not supportive of match funding, with respondents believing that it could exclude those who need the fund most and may be unworkable in many communities.

- Smaller or less affluent groups will be excluded
- 50% match funding is seen as too high
- Cost-of-living pressures affecting group fundraising efforts
- Equity concerns that match funding could penalise poorer areas and may prevent projects that need most support from going ahead

- Burden on volunteers, who would have to give time and money (and time to raise money)
- Community groups already pay council tax
- Administrative difficulty with fundraising in terms of grant applications and capacity in smaller groups and

### Neutral comments / suggestions

Some comments don't take a side but suggest there isn't a 'one size fits all' solution and that the Legacy Fund should consider:

- Flexibility depending on the project
- Means testing
- Consideration of deprivation levels
- Assessment of project impact
- Allowing exceptions where groups cannot realistically contribute
- Recognising volunteer time as an in-kind contribution.

### Ideas for Legacy Fund

When asked 'What types of projects would you like to see funded through the Legacy Fund?' 381 people chose to comment.

The top ten ideas for Legacy Fund projects are as follows (some of which are not directly in the district council's remit):

1. Improve walking and cycling routes (safe, offroad, joined-up)  
Safe crossings, off road trails, better maintained paths
2. More youth clubs and spaces for teenagers  
Especially in Coalville, Ashby, Castle Donington and rural villages
3. Community buildings / halls / hubs  
New or upgraded buildings for meetings, social groups, warm spaces, classes, heritage groups etc.
4. Repair and upgrade parks and playgrounds  
Better equipment, safer play areas, more green spaces, all-weather

surfacing. Maintenance of existing facilities

5. Enhanced leisure facilities  
e.g. indoor bowls, leisure facility in the north of the district, better timetables and accessibility at existing leisure centres
6. Environment and nature projects  
Tree planting, green corridors, biodiversity recovery, habitat restoration
7. Safe walking routes  
Particularly where footpaths have been cut by roads
8. Children's activities  
SEN, after-school clubs, toddler groups, safe indoor and outdoor spaces
9. Mental health and wellbeing support  
For adults, men, carers, young people, to table loneliness
10. Improve community cleanliness  
Bins, litter, village / town clean-up programmes

**Other ideas included:**

- Regenerating derelict or disused buildings for community use
- Support for local sports clubs
- Better roads, safety improvements, pothole repairs
- Improved public transport links
- Community events and festivals
- Projects supporting elderly residents
- Improved local retail areas and town centre appearance
- Creating larger strategic green spaces
- Heritage preservation and cultural projects
- Support for small local businesses.

## Comments about creation of a Legacy Fund in relation to local government reorganisation

### Support for spending money allocated to the Legacy Fund now

Most respondents to this question support investing or committing the Legacy Fund now, before the 2028 move to a unitary council, driven by a fear that North West Leicestershire will lose funding, influence and local focus after reorganisation.

These respondents want to guarantee the investment stays local and make sure that long-term projects are underway before structural change happens.

There is concern amongst some respondents that funds will ‘disappear’ into a bigger pot, that local needs will be diluted by regional priorities and that North West Leicestershire will be deprioritised in favour of larger or wealthier areas such as Loughborough, Melton or Rutland.

### Concern about spending money allocated to the Legacy Fund now

A smaller minority of respondents believe this money should only be spent once the council has clarity on the future structure post-reorganisation, believing that spending before reorganisation could lead to waste or unsustainable projects.

These people believe that uncertainty about local authority structures makes long-term commitments risky and that projects may later be stopped when the new authorities take over.

### Common themes across all comments

Almost all comments emphasised the need for projects to be robust, long-term and sustainable, with broad benefits for the community.

There is general concern around local government reorganisation in terms of losing local control, identity and representation, and a worry that decisions will favour more politically influential areas.

A large number of comments seek assurance that money allocated to North West Leicestershire is spent within the district and that any projects should have accountability beyond 2028.

## Council tax increase

### General comments about the proposed council tax increase

The majority (48%) of respondents to this question are in support of the proposed council tax rise.

These respondents believe the rise is small, reasonable or in line with inflation, and understand that councils face rising costs like everyone else.

There was a smaller, but clear, group of respondents who oppose the increase, primarily due to household financial pressures, concerns about the cost of living and the large reserves the council has.

### Alternative income suggestions

When asked 'If you disagree [with the proposed council tax increase], what alternative would you suggest to increase our ongoing income to maintain essential services?', 213 respondents chose to comment.

Most respondents to this question believe the council should find alternative income by improving efficiency, cutting waste and using existing resources, rather than increasing council tax.

The most common alternative suggestions were:

- Cut waste, inefficiency and unnecessary projects
- Use reserves, higher Government grant and the Legacy Fund
- Generate income from council assets and commercial activity
- Grow the local economy to increase business rates
- Use targeted fees and enforcement instead of blanket tax rises.

There is a recurring theme in the comments, with respondents believing residents already pay enough.

A majority of respondents believe that a small increase is reasonable, as inflation makes rises unavoidable, but services must be maintained

However, a number of comments add that the council must prove value for money, that improvements must be visible and spending should be better targeted, with protection crucial for vulnerable households.

## **Capital investment**

### **General comments on proposed capital investment**

Of the 621 overall survey respondents, 221 chose to provide comments ‘regarding our proposals to invest in one-off capital money in existing services’.

From these comments, a series of themed emerged.

Of all the proposals, CCTV has the most support and the mobile sign has the least. Pay-and-display replacement is seen as unjustified by some who chose to comment.

Respondents to this question believe the following things should be prioritised:

- Roads and potholes (not a district council service, but this comment appears a lot in our survey)
- Town centres supported
- Parking made fair and accessible
- Litter and fly-tipping properly enforced, not monitored
- Clear evidence that any capital investment has real community benefit

### **Objections to proposed capital investment**

234 people responded to the question ‘Are there any proposed capital investments listed above that you do not agree with? Please state which.’

Respondents disagreed with the following (ranked most frequently mentioned to least frequently mentioned).

1. Pay and display machine replacement
2. Mobile environmental sign
3. Noise monitoring equipment
4. CCTV upgrades
5. Legacy Fund spending
6. Reserves / business rates reserve use.

## Reasons for objections to proposed capital investment

211 respondents chose to provide detail on the reasons they objected to the proposed capital spending.

Many respondents describe the proposals - especially the mobile environmental sign, noise monitoring equipment, and pay and display machine replacement - as a 'waste of money'.

This question also generated comments about spending that should benefit the whole district, with many respondents expressing frustration that spending is concentrated in Coalville and a lack of comparable investment in Ashby, Castle Donington, Kegworth and rural areas.

The most frequently cited objection across all categories was opposition to pay-and-display machine replacement, with respondents stating:

- Existing machines are fine
- £40,000 cost seen as excessive
- Fears about app-only, card-only or smart phone-dependent machines (exclusion of older people, digital exclusion)
- Parking charges seen as harming local high streets
- Calls for free parking instead
- Frustration that Coalville has free parking while Ashby does not

When describing opposition to investment in the mobile environmental signs, reasons include:

- Seen as ineffective i.e. litterers won't change their behaviour
- Signs are unattractive
- Many people have not seen the existing signs
- Cheaper alternatives exist (social media, static signage, education)

A lot of comments in this section related to services residents believe should be prioritised that are outside the remit of the district council, namely:

- Road repairs and potholes
- Flooding and drainage
- Public services like healthcare, schools, social care
- Youth facilities
- Policing and enforcement.

## Priorities for capital investment

We asked survey respondents 'If you believe other areas should be our top priority for investment (please specify)'. 618 people chose to provide a comment in response to this question.

Ranked in order, according to frequency of mentions, respondent's top alternative priorities for investment were:

1. Waste, recycling system improvements and better collections
2. Street cleaning, litter removal and fly-tipping prevention
3. Parking (free parking, fair charges, more spaces, enforcement)
4. Community safety, crime reduction and CCTV
5. Parks, open spaces, green areas and environmental protection
6. Town centre regeneration (especially Coalville and Ashby)
7. Social housing, homelessness support and quality of council housing
8. More enforcement officers (parking, ASB, environmental offences)
9. Leisure facilities, sports pitches and community recreation spaces, parks and children's play equipment.

A number of things received a high level of support for investment, but lie outside of the district council's remit:

- Roads, potholes and general highway maintenance
- Youth services, youth clubs and activities for young people
- Public transport improvements (buses, rail links, school transport)
- Social care and health-related investment
- Traffic calming, speed cameras and safer roads
- Better street lighting for safety and visibility
- Flooding and drainage improvements
- Investment in local shops, high streets and support for small businesses

## **Revenue investment**

### **General comments on proposed revenue investment**

Of the 621 overall survey respondents, 179 chose to provide comments 'regarding our proposals to invest in revenue money in existing services'.

From these comments, a series of themed emerged.

#### **Car parking charges**

The strongest objections were to car parking charge increases, with respondents overwhelmingly opposed to any increases. There are strong calls for free or low-cost parking, or at minimum harmonised charges across the district.

Key concerns include:

- Damage to high street footfall
- Coalville receiving free two hours- parking while Ashby and other towns face increases is seen as unfair and unequal
- Many say people will simply go to Swadlincote or Fosse Park, where parking is free
- Respondents believe increased charges will lead to more on-street parking, causing congestion and safety issues

#### **Inconsistency of investment**

Another theme coming through in this question is widespread frustration about perceived unfairness towards Ashby and other towns, with many respondents believing that NWLDC favours Coalville, especially regarding free parking, facilities and investment.

#### **Waste and recycling**

Investment in waste and recycling proposals cause mixed reactions

Some respondents question or oppose the waste-related investment proposals, with key objections being:

- Investment in existing refuse lorries ahead of them being replaced next year
- Moving to mixed recycling when it reduces income / recycling quality
- Concerns about recycling boxes blowing away and littering streets.

## **Objections to proposed revenue investment**

We asked survey respondents whether there were any proposed revenue investments listed above that they did not agree with. 178 respondents chose to provide an answer to this question.

Respondents disagreed with the following (ranked most frequently mentioned to least frequently mentioned).

1. Parking charge increases district-wide
2. Coalville free parking (due to unequal treatment across the district)
3. Waste and recycling (investment in bin lorries and containers)
4. Public toilet redecoration
5. Burial fee increases.

## **Reasons for objections to proposed revenue investment**

155 respondents chose to provide detail on the reasons they objected to the proposed revenue spending.

### **Car parking charges**

In relation to car parking charges, which was the main investment people objected to, the following reasons were given:

- Reduce footfall in Ashby and other towns and not being equitable with Coalville
- Drive shoppers to free-parking alternatives (Fosse Park, supermarkets, Swadlincote)
- Damage local businesses and the high street
- Encourage dangerous or inconsiderate parking in residential streets
- Penalise workers on low incomes who must drive.

### **Waste and recycling**

When considering investment in waste and recycling, respondents didn't think that £175,000 spent on repairing bin lorries that will be replaced soon was justified, and had financial concerns about losing recycling income under a mixed recycling system.

### **Public toilets**

Some respondents queried the investment in public toilets, not believing that this should be a priority and thinking that the same could be achieved for less money.

## Final comments

We gave respondents the chance to provide any additional comments in a free text box at the end of the survey.

The topics most mentioned by the 156 respondents to this question are as follows:

1. Car parking policy (charges, fairness, free parking in Coalville)
2. Fairness across towns (Ashby, Castle Donington, villages vs Coalville)
3. Waste and recycling services (new bins, purple bags, costs, income loss)
4. Council tax increases (opposition, reliance on reserves, value for money)
5. Community safety (CCTV, ASB, police presence, lighting)

The two strongest themes coming through in this question, and in the rest of the survey are

1. Frustration about car parking charges  
A major theme is objection to free parking in Coalville and higher charges elsewhere, which is seen as unfair, harmful to Ashby, and damaging to local businesses. Some support Coalville's free parking, but most call for consistency.
2. Calls for greater fairness across the district  
Calls for investment outside of Coalville.

## Ashby Town Council Response to NWLDC Budget Consultation

### 1. Legacy Fund

Ashby Town Council supports the proposed establishment of a Legacy Fund.

However, we believe that it should be substantially larger than currently envisaged, considering the large levels of reserves forecast over the next three years. A fund of £4m and a maximum award of £500k, with potential to top up in next year's budget, would be much more likely to facilitate delivery of the type of Project needed.

Also, it is essential to ensure that the funds are distributed fairly around the District taking into account the considerable funding for Coalville regeneration projects proposed elsewhere in the capital programme (£7.1m over three years, 40% of General Fund capital budget).

The awarding mechanism must be fair and transparent with published scores against pre-agreed criteria which have cross-party support.

We do not support a requirement for match funding. The availability and degree of match funding could be considered in the scoring of projects but should not be a prerequisite as this would rule out a significant number of potential bidding groups and projects. Of course, for projects with costs above the maximum grant level proof of sufficient additional funding to ensure completion, including an adequate contingency, would be essential.

Projects should be sufficiently ambitious to ensure a lasting legacy for NWLDC. They should predominantly involve building, improving or acquiring physical infrastructure, though funding for feasibility studies and design stages for such projects should be included with the chance of following up with a larger award for construction if feasibility proves positive.

### 2. Investment in Community Projects and Services

The government's Fair Funding Review has provided NWLDC with a wonderful opportunity to leave a significant legacy both in terms of long-term community projects and improved services. It is important speedily to establish a higher than the current standard for the Council's services with a view to ensuring that is taken as the benchmark for service delivery by the new Unitary council going forward. This should apply across the board to council housing, planning, enforcement, community support, leisure provision and refuse, waste and recycling services. The council also needs to up its investment towards achieving Net Zero for its daily activities, across its property portfolio and its council housing.

We welcome the announcements of additional capital expenditure in existing services made since publication of the original budget, particularly the Concurrent Grant scheme for closed churchyards, the additional Community Focus Officer, and the reinstatement of the Age UK and Ashby Museum grants and the funding of the next stage of the feasibility studies into Mine Water Heating. However all but the

latter scheme should be added to the base revenue stream to ensure that they are maintained following LGR.

### **3. Council tax**

It is advisable for councils in general to seek to increase their council tax by around the annual level of inflation. This ensures that services can be adequately maintained and improved where needed though efficiency savings should always be pursued. We understand that 2.75% is close to the maximum allowed by the current rules given that increases in special expenses must be taken into account and it is well below current inflation.

NWLDC put itself into extreme financial jeopardy by pursuing a council tax freeze for a significant period, as it allowed its revenue funding stream to become increasingly reliant on central funding and business rate income. This situation has only been alleviated by a change in central government and the generous 3-year award received this year. This situation must not be allowed to reoccur.

### **4. General Fund Capital Programme**

The establishment of an enhanced legacy fund (see above) should be a top priority for the capital programme, but this should not be to the detriment of the other capital investments included in the budget.

We understand that the council has announced a parking review and possible introduction of a pay on exit system. There should be no investment in new payment machines until that review is completed and consulted upon though inclusion of an appropriate sum in the budget is prudent. All replacement machines should include a cash payment option for those without credit cards or smart phones and revenue investment is required for the staff to service this facility.

The parking review should also seriously consider capital investment in new or extended car parking locations including multi-storey or underground, particularly in Ashby which may be losing the Co-op carpark.

The forecast level of reserves appears more than adequate to include further important capital infrastructure investments across the District as was envisaged in the district wide regeneration framework, published in December 2024. These should balance the current heavy bias towards schemes around Coalville town centre. Funding for implementation of the highest priority parts of the LCWIP would be particularly welcome, especially the much-needed off road connection between Ashby and Hicks Lodge, as well as investment in the Ashby Canal and Moira Furnace.

We hope that any unspent funds allocated to Moira Furnace in last year's capital budget are carried forward.

It is essential that adequate funding from reserves is made available for achieving Net Zero in Council owned property. This includes property directly occupied by the council and that rented or leased to third parties. Speedy development and implementation of appropriate schemes for solar generation, improved insulation,

non-fossil fuel heating and cost reduction through use of battery storage are required.

It is particularly important to reduce the use of fossil fuels at the Council's leisure centres. We welcome the recently announced addition to the budget of funding for the next feasibility phase of the mine water CHP scheme. The potential to use mine water as an energy source needs to be fast tracked as it has significant implications for the Coalville and Whitwick Leisure centre in the first instance and much wider potential benefits across the District, much of which is located above flooded mine workings.

The council also needs to speed up its migration to electric vehicles for its own use wherever possible.

We are shocked to see an additional £2.4m is needed to complete Coalville's Marlborough Centre refurbishment. This indicates a past failure in due diligence by NWLDC. A similar large overrun also occurred on the Marlborough Square project. These funds could have been invested elsewhere in the District where they could have made a big difference. We trust that such failures will not be allowed to happen again.

## **5. General Fund Revenue Budget**

All four of the areas for revenue investment mentioned for prioritisation in the consultation are equally deserving but, whilst investment in car parking is certainly required, we strongly oppose the current parking proposals.

No changes to parking arrangements should be made until the parking review, recently announced by Cllr Wyatt, is completed and consulted open, and this review should cover the whole District and include both revenue and capital investment. It should ensure that all areas of the District are treated equitably

Both a 10% increase in parking charges and introduction of two hours free parking in more Coalville car parks are completely unacceptable in their obvious bias against Ashby. They would result in those visiting Ashby having to pay even more for their first two hours, effectively subsidising the free parking in Coalville.

Coalville already has one-hour free parking in several council car parks and two hours free parking at the Market Hall and the private Belvoir shopping centre, which have plenty of spare capacity. Ashby's parking arrangements need urgent reconsideration with a positive incentive for long stay at Money Hill by reducing the charge and reassignment of current town centre long stay spaces.

We strongly welcome the closed churchyard scheme which has recently been added to the budget, as it will address the current inequitable double taxation which has been imposed upon Ashby, Castle Donington and Kegworth. It is essential that the mechanism for drawing down from the fund is designed and agreed swiftly but with proper consultation with the affected Town and Parish councils and ward members. We note that it is currently listed as a capital project and point out that it should cover revenue costs of maintenance as well as capital items. We also question the short-term funding of the scheme from reserves. It

needs to be incorporated into the base revenue funding stream to ensure its continuation beyond LGR.

We also welcome that the Community Focus team is to be restored to 3 officers plus a team leader and assistant through funding from reserves. The Community Focus team provide an excellent service and are a valuable conduit to Town and Parish councils but has been eroded by recent cuts. This team, at full strength, needs to be funded for the long term rather than on a temporary basis as currently proposed.

Similarly, the Age UK befriending service and Ashby Museum grants are welcomed but should both be incorporated into the base revenue stream to ensure their continuation after LGR.

We also welcome the inclusion of the Net Zero officer post into the ongoing revenue expenditure on salaries

## **6. HRA**

The consultation document does not seek input on the Council's housing budget. This omission is unfortunate.

We note that NWLDC continues to suffer a net loss of properties through Right to Buy despite its New Supply programme. This trend needs to be reversed particularly as 100% RTB proceeds can now be used for stock replenishment and RTB discounts have been significantly reduced by the new government. We welcome the increased New Supply budget this year but believe it should be larger and at least adequate to maintain the overall level of council housing stock.

We welcome the increase in investment in housing repairs, stock improvements and Net Zero work in this budget.

## **Ratepayer Response to the Draft Budget 2026/27**

As a local ratepayer, I welcome the opportunity to comment on the Council's Draft Budget for 2026/27 and the associated Cabinet reports. My comments focus on transparency, value for money, service impact, and the long-term financial sustainability of the Council.

### **1. Transparency and Accessibility**

The cover report provides a clear outline of the four budget documents being considered. However, as a resident and council taxpayer, I find it difficult to understand the overall financial position without a concise summary of:

- The main pressures facing the Council
- The key assumptions behind the budget
- The headline changes in spending and income

A short, plain-English overview would make the process more accessible to the public and improve confidence in the Council's financial management.

### **2. Value for Money and Efficiency**

As a ratepayer, I expect the Council to demonstrate that it is:

- Reducing avoidable costs
- Improving efficiency
- Protecting frontline services
- Avoiding unnecessary borrowing

I would welcome clearer evidence of:

- What efficiency savings have already been achieved
- What further savings are planned
- How the Council ensures that service reductions are a last resort

Residents need assurance that every pound collected in Council Tax is being used responsibly.

### **3. Council Tax and Affordability**

Any proposed increase in Council Tax must be justified with:

- A clear explanation of why it is necessary

- Evidence that alternative options have been explored
- An assessment of the impact on households already facing cost-of-living pressures

Ratepayers deserve transparency about how much additional revenue the increase will generate and how it will be used.

#### **4. Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and Rent Setting**

For tenants, rent increases must be:

- Fair
- Justified
- Clearly linked to improvements in housing quality

Residents want reassurance that:

- Repairs and maintenance will improve
- Investment in housing stock is being prioritised
- The HRA remains financially sustainable without placing undue burden on tenants

#### **5. Capital Strategy and Borrowing**

The Capital Strategy should clearly explain:

- How much the Council plans to borrow
- The risks associated with borrowing
- How the Council will ensure affordability in future years

Ratepayers need confidence that borrowing is being used for essential, value-adding projects rather than discretionary spending.

#### **6. Risks and Financial Resilience**

The Council should provide a clear, public-facing explanation of:

- The main financial risks
- How these risks are being managed
- The adequacy of reserves

Residents want assurance that the Council is prepared for unexpected pressures and is not relying on one-off funding to balance the budget.

## **Conclusion**

As a ratepayer, I appreciate the complexity of setting a balanced budget in challenging financial circumstances. However, I believe the Council must strengthen:

- Transparency
- Public communication
- Evidence of value for money
- Long-term financial planning

*Resident within North West Leicestershire District Council*

*Name and address redacted*

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