

ITEM 7 - GENERAL FUND BUDGET AND COUNCIL TAX 2026/27**COMMENTS ON THE GENERAL FUND BUDGET AND COUNCIL TAX 2026/27 REPORT MADE BY THE CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AT ITS MEETING ON 22 JANUARY 2026****Date considered by Cabinet: 3 February 2026**

	Comments/recommendations from scrutiny	Advice provided by officers at the meeting	Cabinet response
C1	Car parking remains a major topic of concern, particularly in Ashby where local businesses have highlighted ongoing issues. There was support expressed for freezing car parking charges, as well as a call to review the technology used for payments. Multiple members raised concerns about the fairness of the current system, specifically the provision of free parking in Coalville but not in Ashby, and the potential for the new technology to result in more fines for users. The committee expressed the view that a council-wide review of car parking arrangements and payment methods is needed to ensure equity and support local economic activity.	No comments from officers.	
C2	The Committee welcomed the Legacy Grant but questioned why funding is limited to £2m, noting that future increases are possible. Members preferred a Task and Finish Group to set assessment criteria for bids, emphasising transparency and equity. It was noted that 40% of the current capital	The grant amount can be increased if necessary. Assessment criteria will be developed and submitted to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet.	

	programme supports Coalville regeneration and opined that something drastic needs to be done in Ashby.		
C3	The Committee noted that there are no estimated costs for Moira Furnace restoration works.	Officers are preparing detailed cost estimates that will be presented to Cabinet for review.	
C4	Concern was expressed at the costs of Marlborough Centre which appear to have doubled.	Officers explained that there has been time to bring it through the planning stages and get it to a stage where the Council is able to bring a contractor on board. It has taken some time. The planning process took nearly two years due to a number of issues outside the control of this Council. There have been inflationary costs. It will cost £5.3m to complete the works. The additional funding being added to the capital programme ensures sufficient funding to meet the costs.	
C5	A member questioned the unavoidable expenditure particularly with regard to refuse and recycling.	The Head of HR has been working closely with the service to review agency costs and identify ways to reduce them. These costs are expected to decrease once the waste service review is implemented and improved bins are introduced. Additionally, we can provide analysis on sickness levels and the various types of sickness affecting staff.	
C6	Why does the Local Plan Examination cost £85k? Is this extra spending, and why has it increased so much?	Officers will provide additional detail.	
R1	Recommendation: That the costs of Moira Furnace are reflected in the capital programme development pool.		
R2	Recommendation: That the proposal for two-hour free parking in Coalville is postponed at least until there are full details of the outcome of the full car parking review for the district. There needs to an equitable review.		

R3	Recommendation That the legacy fund is increased to £1m for 2026/27 to ensure that there is £2m available. The award mechanism is seen to be fair and transparent and covers the whole of the district in an equitable way.	The funding of £2m is available in 2026/27, it is shown as £1m in each of the next two years for cashflow purposes only.	
R4	Recommendation Funding for Ashby Canal should be recognised in the development pool in the capital programme		