

## REPORT TO FULL COUNCIL



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| <b>Date</b>          | <b>16<sup>th</sup> December 2025</b>     |
| <b>Subject</b>       | <b>2026-29 Budget</b>                    |

### PURPOSE:

1. To present the draft 2026-29 budget, based on recommendations from the Finance, Employment & Services (FES) Committee.
2. To provide a rationale for each decision made.

### BACKGROUND:

3. The first draft of the 2026-29 budget was presented at the last FES Committee meeting that was held on Tuesday, 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2025.
4. The budget was based on the continuation of existing services, with a Full Event Schedule and represented an increase in precept of approximately 21%.
5. The following recommendations were made by the FES Committee:
  - That due to budget restrictions, the Halloween Event is taken out of the schedule of events going forward.
  - The PWLB Loan to be reduced to cover the Town Hall boilers only. Minimal works will be carried out at No.2 Albert Road to get the property leasable and to improve the appearance of the front of the building. The proposed project for the Two Bedroomed Flat conversion to be scrapped, due to the potential need for additional office space.
  - For the new figures for Benches, Bus Shelters and Play Areas to be entered into the budget, based on the winning tender submissions.
  - For the Town Clerk/RFO to aim to reduce the percentage increase to around 14% if possible.

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

6. The removal of the Halloween event produced a saving of approximately £7,500.
7. Although no costings have been placed into the budget for the transfer of assets/services from Pendle Borough Council, the Asset Transfer working group has made it clear that some Councillors are keen to take on a number of additional responsibilities. Should all the potential

transfers come to fruition, there will be a need for Colne Town Council to employ additional staff members. Additional space will be required for both storage of materials and office space.

8. The FES Committee Members agreed that this would not be the right time to commit to a costly renovation project, along with higher loan repayments and high interest rates.
9. Two additional quotations have been received by the company chosen for the renovation work. One quote was to do the bare minimum required to get No.2 Albert Road rent worthy, and the other was to do the same, but with the added refurbishment of the upstairs windows.
10. The preferred quotation which was including the upstairs windows was for around £31,000. It was decided that this is a much easier figure to find, and so the decision was made to reduce the loan amount to cover just the Town Hall heating, and to use the savings in energy costs and the rental income to cover the loan repayments.
11. The Alkincoates Park budget is showing quite a large increase, this is due to included estimates for the re-location of the MUGA and the creation of a carpark. There has also been an increased amount added for the park gardening.
12. The recently published grounds maintenance tender has resulted in a reduction on contract price for the benches and the bus shelters by around 15% (however this price is not including bench refurbishment). Unfortunately, the playground contract has seen an increase of 25%.
13. These prices have now been put into the presented budget, however in order to arrive at the 14% requested by the FES Committee, it has been necessary to reduce all discretionary budgets by 10%.
14. The presented budget has a contingency element included at a value of £35,000.

#### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

15. The budget presented in the appendices to this report, represents an overall precept increase of 14.2% from last year (however only a 7.8% increase on our current budget).
16. This budget would equate to an annual cost of £251.61 for a Band D Taxpayer. This represents an annual increase of £31.27 or 60p per week.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

17. That Members carefully consider the budget presented as recommended by the FES Committee.

#### **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION**

18. To allow the budget for 2026/27 to be agreed and the level of precept increase to be determined.

**SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS:**

19. The FES Committee have recommended a budget representing a 14.2% increase on last year's precept.
20. Members should consider the figures presented with a view to making a decision on the value of precept to be requested.

**POLICY IMPLICATIONS:**

21. None directly arising from this report.

**DETAILS OF CONSULTATION:**

22. Council Officers, Maintenance Staff, PWLB and the FES Committee.

**SUPPORTING PAPERS:**

- Appendix 1 – Detailed budget by codes
- Appendix 2 – Budget Summary (Future Budgets Vs Start of Year Budget)
- Appendix 3 – Budget Summary (Future Budgets Vs Current Budget)

FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT: Gina Langley