

Monitoring Report to Period 31/12/25/ Out turn, Budget Setting for 2026/27 & Medium Term Strategy

Current Council Tax Base 2026/27 £3,109.53 at Band D (compared with £3,086.45 for current year)

The attached table identifies Original Budget for 2025/26, Actual Spend to 31st. December, Anticipated Out – turn for 2025/26, a proposed budget for 2026/2027 & two subsequent years.

Monitoring Report/Out turn for 2025/26

The Anticipated Out- turn of £147,836 is an over spend of £33,136 on the original budget, whilst an Anticipated income of £103,207 is £8,617 more than budgeted which results in a likely requirement of £44,629 to be taken from balances rather than the originally estimated £20,110 (£24,519 overspend).

The over spend on Expenditure is due in the main to £12,000 on Grants to Local Organisations reflecting the agreed Payment to Blackwood RFC for Flood Defence Works (CIL), £10,560 Office Shutters/ Internal Safety measures (CIL) & £8,145 Works on Remembrance Garden / Poppy/ Flagpole, with other minor overspends (including Mayors Charity £1,522) being offset by savings of £2,050 on Beach Party & £2,000 on Bi Elections.

The Increased Income was due in the main to £500 Interest, £4,072 CIL, £2,100 CCBC Xmas Market Reimbursement & £1,522 Mayors Charity

Budget requirements 2026/27

The proposed budget for next year, 2026/27 is based on current spending patterns, plus inflationary increases on some expenditure heads. It also reflects the Council's long standing decisions to continue the provision of hanging baskets, the GAVO Volunteer Awards Evening and ongoing Summer Event / Carol Concert together with Grants to Voluntary Organisations, including Turn the Town Pink in support of the Breast Cancer Unit at Ysbyty Ystrad Fawr (£250), whilst also including a budget of £2,300 to provide assistance at the Remembrance Day Service & maintenance of Garden, which has improved so much over the past three years and now surely better reflects and honours the memory of our town's people that gave the ultimate sacrifice.

It also includes budgetary provision for the continuation of the Civic Awards Evening in the sum of £2,000, and also £1,300 for the continued provision of Christmas Selection Boxes to Blackwood & Libanus Schools (in recognition of their continued support of Remembrance Services & Carol Concert) A budget of £1,000 is also included for potential replacement/ upkeep of defibrillators in town.

The budget also reflects the decisions taken regarding staffing (including pension contributions) and a presence of Town Council Offices within the High Street.

Christmas Lighting has been a major point of contention of late, with the request to remove festoon lighting from lamp posts across the High Street. This coupled with the fact that our current decorations are now in need of replacement has prompted the need to include budgetary provision of £27,500 to renew existing lamp post decorations and look to find a solution regarding the festoon lighting (thankfully Town Council has been prudent over the years and accrued £22,457 in Reserves for this particular purpose and can now be allocated to same)

Provision is again included for 2026/27, and future years in respect of the potential Contributions to Members Expenses, and assumes some 100% of members will claim all entitlements (£156 plus additional £52). £3,500 is also included for next year in support of the Members /Staff Training Programme, Conference Attendance etc.

Furthermore, it will be for the Council to determine each year whether or not Special Allowances will be paid in respect of Chairs of Committees, Level of Payments to Mayor/ Deputy Mayor and whether Attendance Allowances are introduced. No such provision is included at this point.

With Town Council elections due in May 2027, and every likelihood of many, if not all wards being contested, it is thought prudent to build up a Reserve to cover likely costs and £5,000 has been earmarked for this eventuality.

At the last Policy & Finance Committee Meeting and subsequent Council Meeting, members agreed to support the Christmas Market & Spring Events in town, after Caerphilly Borough Council in their wisdom had decided they were to discontinue, due to budget pressures. As a result, budgets of £18,000 have been included for each next year. Members also supported the view that Town Council should look to better promote itself, and provision has, therefore, been included for the provision of a Newsletter to each household and the purchase of promotional materials/ website etc. to achieve same.

Furthermore, reflecting members desire to ascertain what our residents would like from Town Council via a survey, it is considered prudent to include a budget to support this initiative,(not wanting to raise expectations and not be able to deliver) and £20,000 is therefore earmarked for Projects to Aid Wellbeing of Residents.

Precept Requirements 2026/27

Members have had numerous papers and discussions regarding the need for an increase in Precept levels, and the decision to an increase of £35 to £65 per annum as Band D properties has been reflected in the attached report.

With Expenditure, reflecting the decisions taken & points raised above, estimated to be £232,770, the Precept is anticipated to raise £202,120, and even with other projected income from Interest & Lettings of £2,500, a sum of £28,150 is still required from Balances/ Reserves to deliver a Balanced Budget (£22,457 from Special Projects & £5,693 from Other Reserves)