



<b>Meeting</b>	Winchester Town Forum
<b>Date and Time</b>	Monday, 10th November, 2025 at 6.30 pm.
<b>Venue</b>	Walton Suite, Winchester Guildhall and streamed live on YouTube at <a href="http://www.youtube.com/winchestercc">www.youtube.com/winchestercc</a>

**Note:** This meeting is being held in person at the location specified above.  
Members of the public should note that a live video feed of the meeting will be available from the council's YouTube channel ([www.youtube.com/winchestercc](http://www.youtube.com/winchestercc)) during the meeting.

A limited number of seats will be made available at the above-named location however attendance must be notified to the council at least 3 working days before the meeting. Please note that priority will be given to those wishing to attend and address the meeting over those wishing to attend and observe.

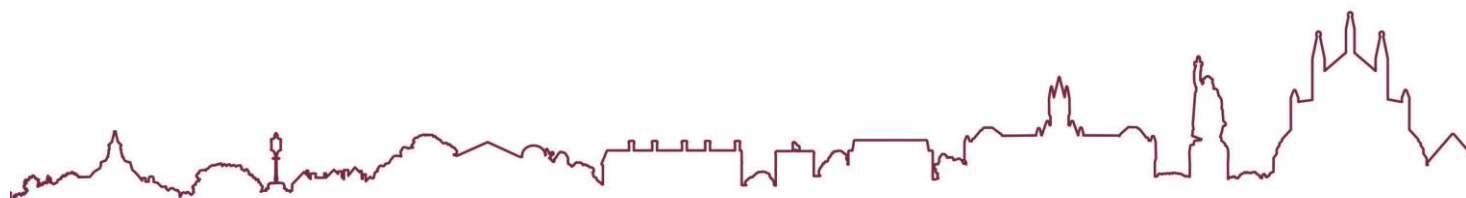
## AGENDA

1. **Apologies**  
To record the names of apologies given
2. **Disclosures of Interests**  
To receive any disclosure of interests from Councillors or Officers in matters to be discussed.

Note: Councillors are reminded of their obligations to declare disclosable pecuniary interests (DPIs), other registerable interests (ORIs) and non-registerable interests (NRIs) in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct.

If you require advice, please contact the appropriate Democratic Services Officer, prior to the meeting.

3. **Chairperson's Announcements**
4. **Minutes of the previous meeting held on 11 September 2025** (Pages 5 - 12)  
That the minutes of the meeting be signed as a correct record.



5. **Public Participation**

To receive and note the questions asked and statements made from members of the public on issues relating to the responsibility of this Forum.

Members of the public and visiting councillors may speak at the Forum, provided they have registered to speak three working days in advance. Please contact Democratic Services **by 5pm on Tuesday, 4 November 2025** via [democracy@winchester.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@winchester.gov.uk) or (01962) 848 264 to register to speak and for further details.

6. **Winchester Town Account Medium Term Financial Position (Draft budget options) (WTF341) (Pages 13 - 22)**

7. **Informal Group - Verbal Update**

Optional: The Chairs of any of the informal groups may briefly update the Forum on any recent developments from their group.

8. **Work Programme 2025/26 (Pages 23 - 24)**

To note the current Work Programme for 2025/26

**Laura Taylor**  
**Chief Executive**

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31 October 2025

Agenda Contact: Claire Buchanan, Senior Democratic Services Officer  
Tel: 01962 848 438 Email: [cbuchanan@winchester.gov.uk](mailto:cbuchanan@winchester.gov.uk)

*\*With the exception of exempt items, Agenda, reports and previous minutes are available on the Council's [Website](#)*

## **MEMBERSHIP**

**Chairperson:** Westwood (Liberal Democrats)

**Vice-Chairperson:** Eve (Liberal Democrats)

### **Liberal Democrats**

Aron  
Batho  
Becker  
Learney  
Morris  
Murphy  
Reach  
Scott  
Tippett-Cooper  
Thompson  
Tod  
Wise

### **Conservatives**

### **Green**

Quorum = 5 members

The two County Council Members representing the Winchester Town area are invited as observers.

## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

A public question and comment session is available at 6.30pm for a 15 minute period. There are a few limitations on the questions you can ask. These mainly relate to current applications (including grants), personal cases and confidential matters.

To reserve your place to speak, you are asked to register with Democratic Services three clear working days prior to the meeting –Please contact Democratic Services via [democracy@winchester.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@winchester.gov.uk) or (01962) 848 264 to register to speak and for further details.

## **VOTING**

- apart from the Chairperson, every Member has one vote when a matter before the meeting requires a decision.
- in the event of an equality of votes, the Chairperson may exercise a casting vote and that vote may be exercised in any way seen fit.
- a Member may abstain from voting, or vote differently from how they may have indicated during the debate, without further explanation.

The way each Member voted will not be recorded in the minutes, unless a motion to have a Recorded Vote has been passed.

### **Disabled Access**

Disabled access is normally available, but please phone Democratic Services on 01962 848 264 or email [democracy@winchester.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@winchester.gov.uk) three clear working days prior to the meeting to ensure that the necessary arrangements are in place.

### **FILMING AND BROADCAST NOTIFICATION**

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## **WINCHESTER TOWN FORUM**

**Thursday, 11 September 2025**

Attendance:

Councillors  
Westwood (Chairperson)

Eve  
Aron  
Batho  
Becker  
Learney  
Morris  
Murphy

Reach  
Scott  
Tippett-Cooper  
Thompson  
Tod  
Wise

[Full video recording](#)

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1. **APOLOGIES**

There were no apologies received at this meeting.

2. **DISCLOSURES OF INTERESTS**

Councillor Batho declared a disclosable pecuniary interest concerning agenda item 8 (Update from Stagecoach) as an employee of Stagecoach. He left the room during the consideration of this item taking no part in the discussion thereon.

Councillors Tod declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in respect of various items on the agenda due to his role as a Hampshire County Councillor. However, as there was no material conflict of interest, he remained in the room, spoke and voted under the dispensation granted on behalf of the Audit and Governance Committee to participate and vote in all matters which might have a County Council involvement.

3. **CHAIRPERSON'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no announcements made at this meeting.

4. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 12 JUNE 2025**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 12 June 2025 be approved and adopted.

5. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Ian Tait spoke during public participation and a summary of his comments are set out below.

In addition, Edna Boden spoke during item 6 (Winchester Bus Services) and a summary of her comments are set out under the relevant minute below.

**Ian Tait**

He queried the delays in cleaning and repairing the Buttercross as he had previously been advised this would take place during the summer months, subject to weather conditions and contractor availability. He also asked why there had also been delays to improvements at Hyde Gate and why there were no updates on the website regarding these delays. Finally, he expressed concern about the current condition of the former River Park Leisure Centre (RPLC) building.

Councillor Tippet-Cooper provided an update regarding the Buttercross and Hyde Gate and it was agreed that the council's website be updated to outline the current situation. An update was also provided on the current consultation regarding the future of the RPLC building.

6. **WINCHESTER BUS SERVICES (VERBAL UPDATE)**

Edna Boden spoke during public participation regarding this item and a summary of her comments are set out below.

Mrs Boden spoke in opposition to the withdrawal of the number 4 bus service which had provided a crucial link for Fulflood residents. She emphasised that the steep hills in the area made it very difficult for anyone with mobility issues to access the alternative bus services along the Romsey Road or Stockbridge Road. This had resulted in residents having to pay for taxis instead. She advised that a petition had been submitted to Danny Chambers, MP and requested that Stagecoach reinstate a regular service on the route (for example, twice per day) with a smaller bus.

Councillor Westwood thanked Mrs Boden for her comments and outlined the action the council was undertaking, included contacting Hampshire County Council (HCC) regarding the potential for the route to be classed as socially necessary and also the possible alternative use of community transport providers.

Councillor Westwood welcomed James O'Neill, Commercial Director for Stagecoach South to the meeting who provided an update on the latest position regarding Winchester bus services. He advised that HCC had also been invited to attend but unfortunately no officer had been available. However, HCC had agreed to a joint meeting with the city council, Stagecoach and the Cabinet Member and the discussions of the Forum would be passed to this joint meeting.

James O'Neill provided an update which included details of the following:

- a) In the Winchester area, Stagecoach ran just under 50 vehicles, employed approximately 150 staff, and carried around two and a half million passengers annually. He noted that most of the buses operated on a commercial basis without subsidy.
- b) During COVID, the government had provided temporary funding to assist the network's recovery but most of those funding streams had now stopped.
- c) Winchester was experiencing the slowest recovery of commercial passengers of all Stagecoach South's regions. While student numbers remained relatively strong, other routes, particularly the Park and Ride, were carrying far fewer passengers than before.
- d) Specific government-funded schemes had been used to add journeys to service 66 to Romsey, service 64, and to create a new hourly service to Andover, which included a new Sunday service. The expectation was that this "kickstart funding" would help operators create commercially viable services within two to three years.
- e) He acknowledged the significant funding pressures faced by local transport authorities like HCC and as part of the HCC's 2025 savings programme, contracts for some services Stagecoach ran (specifically the 61 and 46 routes) ended in August and were not renewed.
- f) Regarding the number 4 service, he explained its revenue only covered approximately 75% of its running costs and despite efforts to attract passengers through fare caps and promotions, it remained significantly unprofitable.
- g) The number 7 service was altered to provide two journeys a day for Teg Down and four journeys a day for Sparsholt village. A separate, more frequent service to Sparsholt College on college days was continued.
- h) He outlined the process for making these commercial changes, stating that Stagecoach must give 10 weeks' notice to the local authority. For this service change, which started on 1 September, HCC was notified in June, giving them a four-week window to review the plan and decide whether to provide funding.

The committee proceeded to ask questions and comment on the following matters which were responded to by James O'Neill:

- a) Whether account had been taken of the time of the year and corresponding weather and temperature fluctuations influencing bus usage?
- b) The frequency of consultation between Stagecoach and HCC, and whether Stagecoach would suggest to the HCC that bus services be subsidised in response to customer pressure regarding routes that were no longer deemed commercially viable.
- c) The possibility of new bus routes, for example along Chilbolton Avenue where substantial development had occurred, but no bus service previously had existed, especially following the withdrawal of the number four service.
- d) Concern about the current consultation process for changes to bus services, specifically the number 4 route, with the view that placing notices on bus stops seemed inadequate and suggesting that earlier communication might have encouraged more usage. There was concern about the lack of direct communication with ward councillors regarding service cuts and the possibility of providing residents with more advanced notice and improved communication regarding future bus service changes.

- e) Whether there would be scope for installing a bus stop for the improved 69 service between Winchester and Fareham to serve the Winchester Sports and Leisure Park?
- f) The commercial reality of operating smaller buses compared to full-sized buses.
- g) Did Stagecoach have any specific proactive requests for the Council, particularly concerning support for new developments and accelerating service establishment.
- h) The extent of damage caused to bus services by disruption from roadworks and whether the council, potentially in collaboration with the HCC, could assist in mitigating the impact of roadworks, for instance, by raising awareness or supporting service recovery.
- i) Whether it would be feasible to introduce a less frequent service for the Fulflood area, similar in frequency to the Number 7 that serviced Teg Down, possibly by adapting an existing route.
- j) Whether Stagecoach had information regarding the known social impact of bus services, particularly concerning their importance in enabling independence, school access, and their potential link to long-term social care costs. Whether HCC requested information regarding the social value and impact of bus service cuts when making decisions.
- k) Further clarification was sought on the source of information used by HCC for impact assessments.
- l) The possibility of establishing a consistent schedule for the number 7 bus service throughout the day to avoid customer confusion and minimise duplication with the number 3 bus service, thereby enhancing commercial viability.
- m) Whether any other bus services were currently under review for commercial viability, so that customers could be informed.
- n) Whether any pricing structures would better encourage fare-paying passengers, particularly families, to use buses instead of cars?
- o) Whether there were any specific actions that could be taken by the council, despite not being the transport authority, to help improve the success of bus services in the city.

At the conclusion of debate, the forum thanked James O'Neill for attending the meeting to provide an informative update on the latest position.

RESOLVED:

That the update be received, and the comments raised by the committee, as summarised above, be noted.

7. **WINCHESTER TOWN ACCOUNT FINANCIAL PLANNING 2025/26**  
(WTF340)

Councillor Learney introduced the report in her capacity as Chair of the Town Accounts Informal Group. Councillor Learney advised that the report considered the medium-term forward-looking projections prior to the budget setting process assuming annual 3% increase in the town charge. She highlighted that the night bus budget was no longer required as the number 3 evening buses now have enough passengers to be fully commercial. The other area of cost-saving was in



bus shelter cleaning and maintenance which had been taken on by the county council, with the exception of those connected to the park and ride service. Consequently, the target level for reserve balances could now be met. However, she highlighted some significant future cost increases expected including increasing costs for public conveniences, the renewal of the grounds maintenance contract and other uncertainties relating to the impact of local government reorganisation (LGR) and the community governance review (CGR).

The forum proceeded to ask questions and comment on the following matters which were responded to by Councillor Learney.

- a) Whether opportunities should be taken to spend some of the substantial reserves in the town account?
- b) If there was an opportunity to use funds to unlock other sources of money such as from Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds, for example by commissioning work that could then be used in a bid for significant capital investment to address issues within the town area.
- c) Whether the town account would serve as a useful guide to the financial viability of a potential future town council (dependant on the results of the upcoming CGR).
- d) In relation to the income and expenditure for cemeteries (paragraph 12.18 of the report) had progress been made on reviewing charging for burial services and whether there was a way to reduce the deficit.

RESOLVED:

That the financial projections in Appendix 1 of the report be noted and the budget timetable for 2026/27 be agreed.

## 8. **INFORMAL GROUPS - VERBAL UPDATE**

The Forum received individual updates from the Chairpersons of various Town Informal Groups, where available. Each summarised the work that had been carried out by the respective groups over the previous two-month period.

### **Councillor Eve - Climate and Open Space Informal Group**

Progress updates from the group included:

- a) River Park - the bridge had opened connecting River Park, Devil's Island to the Winnall Moors.
- b) Funding was approved for an accessible perimeter path for Devil's Island.
- c) The new pavilion was progressing well and he thanked residents for their ideas and input over the years.
- d) Good progress was being made with Allegra's ambition at the Winchester Sports and Leisure Park.
- e) The play park programme was progressing with Chaundler Road play park and looking ahead to the next year and the rolling 5-year programme.

### **Councillor Tippet-Cooper - Culture Informal Group**

Councillor Becker gave a progress update from the group on behalf of Councillor Tippet-Cooper who had left the meeting earlier, including:

- a) Noting the update regarding the Buttercross and Hyde Gate provided under the public participation section of the meeting above.
- b) An archaeologists report had been commissioned on the wall at the rear of Hyde Gate which had collapsed a number of years ago. The report would feed into application to rebuild the wall which was a listed structure.
- c) Work had taken place to remove instances of graffiti on Wolvesey Castle.
- d) Longer term repairs to Kings Gate were also being considered.

### **Councillor Aron - Grants and Community Empowerment Informal Group**

Progress updates from the group included:

- a) Welcomed the predicted budget forecast and the consequential possible review of the level of community grants funds.
- b) The Group would be meeting on 29 September to consider policy and grant applications with the aim to increase the diversity of groups making applications.
- c) She asked that councillors remind organisations, particularly smaller groups, of the availability of these grants.

### **Councillor Batho - Community Governance Review (CGR) Informal Group**

Councillor Becker first gave an update from the CGR Task and Finish Group which had been appointed by the Licensing and Regulation Committee on 16 June 2025.

- a) The cross-party working group had met twice and was close to agreeing the draft CWR terms of reference (TOR) and the consultation plan for that review. The TOR would be considered by Licensing and Regulation Committee on 29 September and it was anticipated that the first stage of consultation would launch in October.
- b) The consultation was likely to include letter drops, a social media campaign and drop in events at various locations both within the town and those areas adjacent to the town that could also be affected by CGR review. She requested suggestions from councillors for potential venues for these drop-in events.

Councillor Batho also gave an update from the Town Forum appointed CGR Informal Group, including the following:

- a) The group would be investigating other local councils or town councils that had already undertaken the CGR process.
- b) Investigations would include ensuring that the mayoralty was protected through the process.
- c) Town accounts were being examined with the aim of achieving a financially viable town council from day one, should that be the results of the CGR.

#### **RESOLVED:**

That the update received from the Town Informal Groups, be noted.

9. **WORK PROGRAMME 2025/26**

RESOLVED:

That the work programme for the remainder of 2025/26 be noted.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and concluded at 8.15 pm

Chairperson

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REPORT TITLE: WINCHESTER TOWN ACCOUNT MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL POSITION (DRAFT BUDGET OPTIONS)

10 NOVEMBER 2025

REPORT OF CABINET MEMBER: Cllr Kelsie Learney, Cabinet Member for Climate and Nature Emergency

Contact Officer: Darren Kennedy Tel No: 01962 848464 Email [dkennedy@winchester.gov.uk](mailto:dkennedy@winchester.gov.uk)

WARD(S): TOWN WARDS

PURPOSE

To provide an update on the current budget setting options and considerations for the four-year medium-term period from 2026/27 to 2029/30. This planning will enable the Town Forum to recommend a budget and precept for 2026/27 to Cabinet in January 2026.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Identify any budget issues to consider further in advance of recommending a Town Account Budget to Cabinet in January.
2. Consider any feedback to Cabinet in relation to the wider budget consultation.
3. Approve additional revenue expenditure of £0.06m for emergency tree works in 2025/26, funded by the town reserve.
4. Approve the allocation of Town Community Infrastructure Levy contributions of £0.050m towards the extension of Chesil Theatre, subject to the meeting of conditions and release of grant by 31/03/2027.

## IMPLICATIONS:

### 1 COUNCIL PLAN OUTCOME

- 1.1 This report sets out the current financial position including the latest medium term financial projections. Budget options will be considered in line with the Council Plan.

### 2 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 2.1 Identifying and analysing the financial risks and pressures helps to ensure the effective prioritisation of resources in order to deliver the Council Plan and maintain a balanced budget.

### 3 LEGAL AND PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 None identified

### 4 WORKFORCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 None

### 5 PROPERTY AND ASSET IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This paper reflects the budgets and funding associated with town assets such as play areas and sports facilities.

### 6 CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

- 6.1 This report has been discussed with the town account informal group, relevant staff and advisors.

### 7 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1 Environmental considerations will be part of the business case supporting any budget proposals.

### 8 PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

- 8.1 None

### 9 DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 9.1 None

### 10 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 10.1 The main source of funding for baseline recurring expenditure is the town precept. As a stable source of funding overall financial risk is therefore relatively low but consideration must be taken of the requirement for the town

to keep within government referendum limits (a restriction not currently applicable to parish councils).

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>
<i>Failure to set a balanced budget over the medium term.</i>	<i>Financial projections are shown up until 2029/30 and the scenario planning highlights the potential sensitivities. Planning over a longer period will help to ensure understanding of the scale of the financial challenges and early planning enables enough lead in time for the implementation of the budget options.</i>	<i>Long term strategic planning.  Innovative funding streams.  Transformational efficiency savings.</i>
<i>Council's service priorities are not reflected in the budget.</i>	<i>The budget planning process, including the process of outcome based budgeting and the informal account group meetings which review the detailed budgets and strategy.</i>	<i>Ensure the prioritisation of resources to best meet the outcomes of the authority.</i>
<i>High levels of contractual inflation and the continuation of current precept referendum limits.</i>	<i>Medium term financial planning and sensitivity analysis highlighting the challenges posed by high inflation.</i>	<i>Transformational efficiency savings.</i>
<i>The re-tender of the grounds maintenance contract which expires in 2027.</i>	<i>Medium term financial projections include annual inflationary uplifts. There will be soft market testing and opportunity to review service levels.</i>	<i>Transformational efficiency savings. Ensuring best value is achieved from the contract.</i>

## 11 SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

### **Background**

- 11.1 WTF340 Winchester Town Account Financial Planning 2026/27 introduced the budget setting process, the key principles, and updated medium term financial projections to 2029/30.
- 11.2 The Winchester Town Forum (Informal Account) Group met in October 2025 in order to establish the key focus of the budget process and any priority resource considerations to bring back to the Town Forum.

## Winchester Town Precept

- 11.3 The town precept for 2025/26 was set at £90.08 (per band D property). The decision on the level of council tax for 2026/27 will be taken at Council in February.
- 11.4 The town will need to consider its proposed strategy for the Town Precept but will need to bear in mind that any decisions will be subject to 'referendum limits' and may be impacted by decisions taken on the level of district Council tax.
- 11.5 It is currently anticipated that the overall referendum limit for the Council in 2026/27 will remain at up to 3% (as £5 is now below 3%). The maximum increase for the town or district are interrelated with each other, for example if the district increased by a lower percentage then the town could increase by a higher percentage and still remain within the overall referendum limit.
- 11.6 The potential additional annual income generated by increasing the Town Precept is shown in the table below. The financial projections in Appendix 1 currently assume a 3% increase.

### Effect of increasing the Town Precept 2025/26

% Precept Increase	Additional Precept £	Precept	Additional Precept Forecast £
0%	0.00	£90.08	£0
1%	0.90	£90.98	£13,886
2%	1.80	£91.88	£27,772
3%	2.70	£92.78	£41,658
4%	3.60	£93.68	£55,544
5%	4.50	£94.58	£69,430
6%	5.40	£95.48	£83,316

- 11.7 The forecasts are currently calculated using an average increase in properties of 1.8% per annum. The final budget will be updated when the forecast Council Tax Base is approved in December. The effect of increases to the base on income are illustrated below:

	0.6%	1.2%	1.8%	2.4%	3.0%
Increase in Properties	91	182	273	363	454
Increase in Council Tax (£000)	9	17	26	35	43



## Budget Review 2026/27

- 11.8 A corporate governance review has commenced in order to determine whether to set up a Town Council from April 2027. The budget projections shown in Appendix 1 are based on the current town account which will remain in place for 2026/27 budget setting.
- 11.9 The town account was facing severe pressures on its finances when setting its budget for 2023/24. This was mainly due to expenditure pressures such as those caused by high inflation. Budget reviews that have taken place in recent years have achieved significant savings which have addressed the projected future shortfalls and enabled the target reserve balance to be increased to 15% of net expenditure.
- 11.10 In light of the improved financial position the following budget proposals have been considered by the informal town accounts group:
- a) **Grants and Vision Delivery** – to remove the stepped budget reduction from 2025/26 to 2026/27. This leaves the budget at £60k per annum, as it is for 2025/26, rather than previously proposed reduction to £50k per annum from 2026/27.
  - b) **Public Conveniences** – the existing £50k per annum budget was set more than 10 years ago and is intended to cover 50% of the running costs for town managed public conveniences. It is expected that these public conveniences will transition to 100% town funded, in line with consultations with Parishes. Increasing the budget to £100k per annum is considered to be a more accurate estimate of future costs.
  - c) **Tree Works** – the existing tree works budget of £47k has been reviewed based on works to the end of September and planned works to the end of the current financial year. It is estimated that a further £60k of budget is required in 2025/26 and that additional baseline budget of £30k per annum should be included in the medium-term forecast subject to further detailed work on forecast demand.
- 11.11 The annual review of fees and charges is currently underway and covers cemeteries and open spaces within the Winchester town account.
- 11.12 **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)** – the Neighbourhood CIL (Town) receivable balance stood at £0.827m as at April 2025. Commitments include £0.495m towards North Walls Pavilion; £0.008m towards the KGV Park Plan; and £0.050m towards Abbots Barton and Hyde Scouts Facility. This paper recommends a further £0.050m is allocated towards the extension of Chesil Theatre, subject to it meeting grant conditions and be awarded before 31/03/2027.

- The principles for spending the Winchester Town Forum's share of CIL were approved in November 2016 (see WTF245), in order to provide for the community led improvement of the environment and infrastructure in the Winchester Town.
- Based on historic receipts around £150k to £200k of town CIL is expected per annum. There are risks around relying on this funding as reductions in development in the town area or changes to the CIL scheme could significantly impact on future receipts. As such this future forecast is used for planning purposes but is not to be committed to schemes as certain funding.

11.13 The following central case assumptions have been used in the financial forecast shown in Appendix 1:

	2026/2027 Forecast	2027/2028 Forecast	2028/2029 Forecast	2029/2030 Forecast
<b>Assumptions:</b>				
Contract inflation	4%	3%	3%	3%
Percentage increase in tax	3%	3%	3%	3%
Tax Base	1.8%	1.8%	1.8%	1.8%

11.14 The sensitivity of the above assumptions is as follows:

- Contract Inflation is around £10k per 1%.
- A 1% precept increase generates additional funding of just under £14k per annum.
- A 1.8% tax base increase generates additional funding of c£26k per annum. Whilst 1.8% is a reasonable long-term forecast increase per annum; there can be significant year-on-year deviations to this average.

## Capital Expenditure

11.15 Capital expenditure is either funded directly from the Town Account Earmarked Reserve, external funding such as CIL, or through the General Fund and repaid over the life of the asset (along with interest).

11.16 In January 2017 (WTF250) the Town Forum approved a strategy to fund the long-term requirements of the play area refurbishment from the Town Account Earmarked Reserve. Play area refurbishments in the town make up the largest proportion of town capital expenditure as shown below.

11.17 There is currently a total budget of £0.350m in the capital programme for play area refurbishments to the end of 2029/30.

## Reserves

- 11.18 The Winchester Town Account earmarked reserve is available to support planned one-off expenditure over the medium term as well as a contingency balance of 15% of the total annual net expenditure which is set aside to deal with any urgent / unexpected requirements.
- 11.19 The medium-term forecasts shown in Appendix 1 currently show the reserve balance dipping below 15% until the end of 2027/28. This reflects the ongoing financial pressures and will need to be considered when recommending the final budget and precept in January.
- 11.20 Currently the capital budget forecasts listed above, particularly the significant programme of play area refurbishments are planned to be funded from the Town reserve. It is therefore important that long term planning ensures funding is in place to support these projects.
- 11.21 It should be noted that the forecast reserve balance shown in Appendix 1 does fluctuate on a year-by-year basis and individual end of year balances are impacted by 'lumpy' one-off expenditure such as the play area refurbishments.

## 12 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- 12.1 None, this paper sets out the current financial position

### BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:-

#### Previous Committee Reports:-

Winchester Town Account Financial Planning and Assumptions for 2025/26 to 2029/30 – WTF340 – September 2025

Town Account Budget for 2025/26 – WTF336 – January 2025

#### Other Background Documents:-

None

### APPENDICES:

Appendix 1: Medium Term Financial Projections

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**WINCHESTER TOWN ACCOUNT - Medium Term Forecasts**

	<b>2025/2026 Forecast</b>	<b>2026/2027 Forecast</b>	<b>2027/28 Forecast</b>	<b>2028/29 Forecast</b>	<b>2029/30 Forecast</b>
<b>Assumptions:</b>					
Contract inflation	4%	3%	3%	3%	3%
Utilities	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%
Percentage increase in tax	5.5%	3%	3%	3%	3%
Tax Base	15,143	15,415	15,693	15,975	16,263
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
<b>Cost of Services</b>					
<b>Recurring Budgets:</b>					
Allotments	(4,000)	(4,000)	(4,000)	(4,000)	(4,000)
Bus Shelter Cleaning / Maintenance / New Provision	20,000				
Cemeteries	91,199	95,886	100,719	105,704	110,845
Christmas Lights	7,500	7,500	7,500	7,500	7,500
Neighbourhood Service Officers (Contribution)	45,000	45,000	45,000	45,000	45,000
Footway Lighting	32,607	33,536	34,513	35,538	36,614
Grants and Vision Delivery	60,000	<b>60,000</b>	<b>60,000</b>	<b>60,000</b>	<b>60,000</b>
Support Costs for Grant Scheme	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000
Maintenance Work to Council Owned Bridges	5,500	5,500	5,500	5,500	5,500
Night Bus Contribution	3,500				
Public Conveniences (Contribution)	50,000	<b>100,000</b>	<b>100,000</b>	<b>100,000</b>	<b>100,000</b>
Recreation Grounds & Open Spaces	929,651	966,086	993,032	1,020,508	1,048,528
<b>BUDGET GROWTH - Tree Works</b>	<b>60,000</b>	<b>30,000</b>	<b>30,000</b>	<b>30,000</b>	<b>30,000</b>
Town Forum Support	17,500	18,025	18,566	19,123	19,696
<b>One-off Budgets:</b>					
Additional grant 2025/26	2,500				
<b>Total Recurring Budgets</b>	<b>1,322,957</b>	<b>1,359,533</b>	<b>1,392,830</b>	<b>1,426,872</b>	<b>1,461,684</b>
<b>Total Cost of Services</b>	<b>1,322,957</b>	<b>1,359,533</b>	<b>1,392,830</b>	<b>1,426,872</b>	<b>1,461,684</b>
<b>Taxation and Non-specific grant income</b>					
Council Tax Income	(1,364,045)	(1,430,065)	(1,499,275)	(1,571,951)	(1,648,058)
Interest on Balances	(8,951)	(6,553)	(4,836)	(7,288)	(9,782)
<b>Total Taxation and Non-specific grant income</b>	<b>(1,372,996)</b>	<b>(1,436,618)</b>	<b>(1,504,111)</b>	<b>(1,579,238)</b>	<b>(1,657,840)</b>
<b>Transfers to/(from) Earmarked reserves</b>					
Reserves	(50,040)	(77,085)	(111,281)	(152,366)	(196,157)
Capital Expenditure funded by Town Reserve	110,000	120,000	50,000	90,000	90,000
Reserve					
<b>Opening Reserve Balance (at 1st April)</b>	<b>(223,785)</b>	<b>(163,825)</b>	<b>(120,910)</b>	<b>(182,191)</b>	<b>(244,557)</b>
<b>Closing Reserve Balance (carried forward)</b>	<b>(163,825)</b>	<b>(120,910)</b>	<b>(182,191)</b>	<b>(244,557)</b>	<b>(350,714)</b>
Closing Reserves forecast as % of net expenditure	<b>12%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>24%</b>

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## WINCHESTER TOWN FORUM – SCHEDULED ITEMS OF BUSINESS ETC

<b>10 NOVEMBER 2025</b>					
	<b>BUSINESS</b>	<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	<b>COMMITTEE DATE</b>		<b>STATUS/COMMENT</b>
	Winchester Town Account Medium Term Financial Position (Draft budget options)	Darren Kennedy	10 November 2025		WTF341
<b>22 JANUARY 2026</b>					
	<b>BUSINESS</b>	<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	<b>COMMITTEE DATE</b>		<b>STATUS/COMMENT</b>
	Winchester Town Account Budget for 2026/27 (to be recommended to Cabinet)	Darren Kennedy	22 January 2026		
<b>9 MARCH 2026</b>					
	<b>BUSINESS</b>	<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	<b>COMMITTEE DATE</b>		<b>STATUS/COMMENT</b>
	No items at present				

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