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Title	Budget 2027-28 - Draft 1 A Report
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OFFICERS RECOMMENDATION

- 1. To consider Draft 1 of the 2027/28 Committee budget;**
- 2. To advise whether the proposed budgets are sufficient and appropriate for the services that the Committee wishes to provide during 2027/28;**
- 3. To identify any additions, reductions or other amendments to be incorporated into Draft 2.**

1. Purpose

1. To present Draft 1 of the 2027/28 budget to Members for review and comment before the next draft is prepared.

2. Background

1. Work has started on preparing the Council's budget for 2027/28.
2. Draft 1 has been prepared following a review of the current year's budget, expenditure to Month 6, known contracts and commitments, staffing costs and expected income.
3. Budgets have also been reprofiled where we now have better information on actual costs. This is particularly the case for utilities, staffing, maintenance and some of the Council's income-generating services.
4. 2027/28 is also Year 3 of the Council's Strategic Plan. The Year 3 actions have been reviewed as part of preparing Draft 1 and, where they have a financial implication, provision has been included within the relevant budget. This is to make sure the budget provides not only for existing services but also for the work the Council has already agreed through the Strategic Plan.
5. This is very much a first draft. The purpose of bringing it to Committees at this stage is to allow Members to look at the services within their remit and consider whether the proposed budgets are realistic for what the Council wants to deliver during 2027/28.

6. Members should consider whether budgets are sufficient, whether anything is missing and whether there are areas where provision could reasonably be reduced.

3. Main Changes

1. There has been quite a lot of movement within individual budgets as part of preparing Draft 1. Some budgets have reduced following a review of actual expenditure, while increases have been included where costs or service requirements are expected to increase. The main changes are set out below.
2. Town Hall
 1. Utility budgets have been reprofiled using actual usage and current contract information. Electricity has been increased from £25,000 to £30,000, while gas has reduced from £30,000 to £22,000. Water has also been increased to £3,400. Repairs and Maintenance has been reduced slightly to £10,000.
 2. Income has also been reviewed. This includes the expected end of the telecommunications mast lease during the year, reduced Assembly Room income and a small increase in anticipated Corn Exchange income.
3. Town Hall Transformation
 1. The budget includes the part of the Town Hall Transformation Development Phase expected to fall within 2027/28.
 2. The Development Phase is expected to run for 12 months and nine months have therefore been included within this financial year. The budget includes the Project Manager, professional fees and other development costs together with the associated project income.
 3. The current budget shows £203,240 of project income against £220,808 expenditure, giving a net cost of £17,568 during 2027/28.
 4. **These figures are all provisional until any decision is made regarding our Heritage Lottery Fund application.**
4. Operations
 1. Staffing has been reviewed to better reflect the cost of operating the team.
 2. Members should consider whether the staffing and operational budgets are sufficient for the work expected of the team during the year.
5. Playparks
 1. Repairs and Maintenance has been reduced from £8,000 to £5,000. £10,000 remains included for play area fencing. The next site requiring fencing works has not yet been identified and Members may therefore wish to consider whether the full provision will be required during 2027/28.
6. Open Spaces
 1. Income has been updated to reflect expected recreation club rents. Repairs and Maintenance reduces from £7,000 to £5,000, equipment from £5,000 to £3,000 and End of Season Works from £23,000 to £10,000. A new £3,250 servicing budget has been included for machinery and equipment.
7. Waste Collection

1. Waste Collection is largely demand driven and the budget has been updated based on current expenditure and expected costs. The general waste collection provision increases from £2,750 to £4,250. The budget also includes the Year 3 Strategic Plan work relating to dog-friendly businesses alongside the existing dog waste and dog-friendly campaign budgets.
8. Biodiversity & Planting
 1. The budget increases from £3,000 to £4,500, including £2,500 for Flowers & Gardens and £2,000 for delivery of the Biodiversity Action Plan. The increased planting provision also recognises the additional planters being provided through the Town Centre Improvement Project and the ongoing responsibility for maintaining these once installed.
9. Bus Shelters and Street Furniture
 1. Repairs and Maintenance has been increased from £250 to £2,000. This recognises the additional street furniture and other assets being provided through the Town Centre Improvement Project which the Council will subsequently be responsible for maintaining.
10. Public Toilets
 1. The budget has been reviewed following the changes to the hours attached to the cleaning posts. Salary costs reduce from £21,120 to £18,000, with associated reductions in employer costs. Electricity reduces to £750 and water to £4,200, while the hygiene contract increases to £4,750 and cleaning materials to £2,000.
11. Administration
 1. Councillor training has been increased from £1,250 to £2,000, Special Projects reduced to £8,000, insurance increased from £33,000 to £36,000 and the elections provision reduced from £5,000 to £4,000. The Health & Safety budget has also been reduced to £5,447 based on the newly agreed contract.
12. Office
 1. Electricity remains at £6,000 and a new £1,500 Repairs and Maintenance budget has been included.
13. Members Allowances
 1. No change has been included at this stage. This will need to be reviewed once the allowances applicable for 2027/28 are known.
14. IT Costs
 1. Licence costs have increased to £500 to reflect current requirements, while the equipment budget has been reduced from £2,500 to £1,000. Telephone and broadband increases from £6,855 to £8,000 and IT support increases slightly to £3,300.
 2. The accountancy software budget will need further review as the current Rialtas arrangements come to an end.
15. Events
 1. There are relatively few changes to the general Events cost centre.
16. Carnival

1. Draft 1 currently provides for a larger Carnival in 2027. The budget includes £9,600 for the event itself together with staffing and equipment. After anticipated income, the current net provision is £10,000.
2. Members should consider whether this is the appropriate level of event for 2027.

17. Winter Festival

1. The Winter Festival budget has also been increased. £5,000 is currently provided for the event itself together with staffing, equipment, Santa gifts and road closure costs. The net budget is £6,920.
2. Members should consider whether this is the appropriate level of event for 2027.

18. Flicks in the Sticks

1. The event budget has increased to £1,500, with £1,100 income currently assumed. The income figure will need to be reviewed alongside any decision on future ticket prices.

19. Christmas Lights

1. Installation has been increased from £10,000 to £11,000, with £3,500 provided for Christmas Lights due to contract changes and £600 for electrical testing.

4. Other Items

1. There are a number of items within Draft 1 where the level of service or activity still needs to be considered by Members. These can be ignored until a decision is made.
2. Tour de France – £10,000 is currently included for the Council's own Tour de France activity. This is separate from the Croeso i Feicwyr project, which has its own grant income and expenditure budget.
3. Free Saturday Parking – £16,000 has been included as a maximum provision for continuing the arrangement across all Saturdays. **Events & Planning will consider a paper on the Free Parking scheme in November.**
4. Town Centre Ranger – £13,770 has been included for salary and employer costs. **Operations & Development and Finance & Governance will consider a paper on the Town Centre Ranger in October.**

5. Links to Strategic Objectives and Interim Strategic Plan

1. As part of preparing Draft 1, the Year 3 actions in the Council's Strategic Plan have been reviewed against the budget.
2. Committees are asked to use the Draft 1 review to check that the actions falling within their remit are still appropriate for 2027/28 and that sufficient provision has been made to deliver them.

6. Committee Review

1. At this stage the purpose is not to set the final Council budget. Draft 1 is intended to establish what each service realistically needs during 2027/28.
2. Each committee is asked to consider for its own budget areas the following:
 1. whether the proposed budgets are sufficient to deliver the service properly;
 2. whether any budgets are higher than they need to be;

3. whether anything the Committee expects to deliver is missing;
4. whether the income assumptions are realistic; and
5. whether there are any new projects or activities which should be included.

3. Any changes requested by Committees will be incorporated into Draft 2.

7. Recommendation

1. To consider Draft 1 of the 2027/28 Committee budget;
2. To advise whether the proposed budgets are sufficient and appropriate for the services that the Committee wishes to provide during 2027/28;
3. To identify any additions, reductions or other amendments to be incorporated into Draft 2.

8. Decision

1. To resolve to adopt the recommendations as above.