

Amendment (1) to Item 12: Budget 2026/27 and Medium Term Financial Plan
2026/27 to 2030/31
Full Council, 24 February 2026

Amended Recommendation (red text denotes additional wording):

To be proposed by Councillor Asker

1. That the Council approves:
 - i. the key assumptions as set out at paragraphs 31 - 38 of the full report;
 - ii. the Medium Term Financial Plan 2026/27 to 2030/31 on page 11 of the full report;
 - iii. the council tax increase of 2.99% council tax for 2026/27. The Band D equivalent (for Uttlesford's share of the bill) would be £187.46, which would be an increase of £5.44 as set out on pages 17 and 18 of the full report;
 - iv. the provisional council taxbase of 41,402.4 and the continued assumption of a maximum increase in the council tax of 2.99% over the lifetime of the Medium Term Financial Plan to 2030/31 as set out on pages 17 of the full report;
 - v. the Council Tax requirement for 2026/27 of £7.761m as set out in paragraph 3 of Appendix B;
 - vi. the General Fund budget as detailed on page 21 of the full report;
 - vii. to increase the HRA rent by the maximum allowed of 1% above CPI, which is an increase of 4.8% for 2026/27. The average increase in HRA weekly rents would be £6.22, leading to an average weekly rent payable by council tenants of £135.83 as set out on page 29 of the full report;
 - viii. the housing service charge increases (General Fund and HRA) in line with inflation plus 1% as per rents;
 - ix. the Housing Revenue Account 5 year budget as set out on page 32 of the full report;
 - x. to delegate to the Section 151 Officer to increase the Capital budget to match the 30 Year HRA Programme once it is approved to enable the delivery of new homes in the HRA;
 - xi. the Capital Strategy 2026/27 to 2030/31 as set out on pages 33-43 of the full report;
 - xii. to approve the General Fund Capital Programme 2026/27 to 2030/31 detailed on pages 44-47 of the full report;
 - xiii. to approve the HRA Capital Programme 2026/27 to 2030/31 detailed on pages 48 of the full report;
 - xiv. the section 25 report set out on pages 49 - 55 when considering the budget for 2026/27;

- xv. the further proposal to increase Garden Waste subscriptions by £5 in 2027/28 as part of the Blueprint Uttlesford 2.0 programme to support the MTFP on page 20;
- xvi. the Fees and Charges schedule as set out in Appendix C;
- xvii. the Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2026/27 as set out in Appendix D;
- xviii. the Minimum Revenue Provision Statement 2026/27 as set out in Appendix E;
- xix. the Commercial Strategy 2026/27 to 2030/31 as set out in in Appendix F;
- xx. the Ethical Investment Policy as set out in Appendix G;
- xxi. the revenue growth bids as detailed at Appendix H;
- xxii. the savings proposals as detailed at Appendix I; and
- xxiii. notes the Equality & Health Impact Assessment at Appendix J.

xxiv. This Council notes Government has already hit small businesses with national insurance tax hikes and increasing minimum wages. The latter is not a bad thing but has a detrimental effect on small to medium business. For example, a small business told me they cannot afford to recruit staff, normally apprentices for training, as to recruit someone for just a few pounds more with qualifications and not having to afford higher salaries for the benefit.

Parking is an unnecessary evil placed on all of us living in a rural area.

Local businesses are being forced to pay £560, up from £300, increased to £450 over the last 2 years for an annual fee.

Many locally employed people are not necessarily in a position to afford a chunk of their monthly income to buy monthly or season tickets, indeed there are local businesses who will pay for their employees parking to retain their loyalty.

xxv. This Council believes that to keep our high streets and town centres vibrant, interesting and exciting, we should be doing all we can to support those who work hard to do just these things.

A recent addition to the car park portfolio on Saffron Walden, previously full and free, is now empty and chargeable, merely displacing the lower paid elsewhere in an already congested area.

At the Cabinet meeting last week, Cllr Hargreaves detailed the pricing, highlighting that the daily cost to park equated to £2.40, which does seem quite reasonable.

However, following several years of no increases to then hitting hard from £300 to £450 for an annual ticket post covid when businesses were and still are recovering, to increase to £560, just seems greedy.

xxvi. Therefore, this Council is RESOLVED that the annual season ticket to all businesses in the District remain at £450 and to reinstate the 'free after 3' in the build up to Christmas, thus offering a sweetener to the public also.

The cost of this proposal to be funded from the MTFs Reserve in 2026/27 and built into the base budget thereafter.

