



Saffron Walden Town Council
Budget Sub-Committee - Terms of Reference
Budget Period 2026/27 – Adopted July 2025

Membership:

Membership to be reviewed and appointed annually and to include at least one member of the Finance and Establishment (F & E) committee. It will be cross-representative of all committees to ensure full participation and representation across the Council, in accordance with Council's Financial Regulations, paragraph 4.5.

Membership Numbers and Quorum:

Membership of the sub-committee will be no less than 7 members (as per Standing Orders, paragraph 4dxv, unless otherwise stated). The membership is determined as Cllrs Ahmed, Freeman (as per Standing Orders 4dxvi) and Cllrs Asker, Coote, Curtis, de Vries, Eke, McLellan and Porch

The meeting quorum will be at least one-third of the whole number of members of the Committee, and in no case shall the quorum be less than three (as per Standing Orders, paragraph 3v).

Meeting Attendance:

In accordance with current legislation, meetings may only be attended in person. Current legislation does not allow for remote attendance for formal sub-committees, committees or Council meetings.

Chair:

To be elected at the first working group meeting alongside a Deputy. The first meeting will be scheduled for July 2025 at which a Chair and Deputy Chair will be appointed

Powers:

The Sub-Committee may make recommendations to Committee and Full Council. In complying with the Local Government Act 1972, s101 (6), the Sub-Committee cannot act with any delegated power or authority in determining or setting any future budget, but it may make recommendations to Committee/Council.

Meetings:

Ordinarily to take place in the Town Hall, at least monthly. The frequency, date/time of the Sub-Committee meetings will be determined by members of the sub-committee.

The sub-committee will present a first draft budget to the F&E Committee and to Council no later than November 2025. The final budget will be presented to F&E and Council not later than January 2026 for recommendation and adoption.

Overall aim:

Councillor Members to work with Town Council Officers in the preparation of a draft budget and precept for the forthcoming year, for subsequent presentation to the Finance & Establishment Committee and Full Council.

Reporting Process:

The Sub-Committee will report monthly to both the F&E Committee and Council.

At the Council meetings, Council will be requested to sanction proposed recommendations during the process, thus providing comfort that the day-to-day work of the sub-Committee aligns with Council's expectations. This sanctioning provides certainty and firm direction to the sub-committee, thereby reducing the risk of draft budgets misaligning with Council's expectations.

Key objectives:

To prepare a draft budget for Council's consideration, having due regard to:

- a) Any reasonable prescribed parameters as determined by Council; at the Full Council meeting on 7th July 2025, Council determined the following:
 - that the budget for 2026/27 should be to a maximum of 3.5% increase on the 2025/26 budget;
 - Should the budget sub-committee recommend an increase greater than 3.5%, this must be communicated to Council at the earliest opportunity. On making any such request, the sub-committee must provide clear evidenced rationale for any proposed changes.
 - that financial priority must be afforded to any proposed works (subject to a business plan) at the skate park
- b) Anticipated income.
- c) Planned capital expenditure.
- d) The long-term financial strategy of the council including a review of the earmarked reserves schedule of works alongside the established council priorities.
- e) The timescales to complete draft budget proposals, noting the budget process ordinarily includes first draft budget to F & E Committee in December, followed by consideration in January by Full Council.

Confidentiality

Budget sub-Committee members are reminded of the need for confidentiality, given the likely disclosure of financial information which would not ordinarily be in the public domain. This confidentiality includes the retention of confidential information to budget sub-committee members only.

Some papers relating to the budget (for example details of salaries) are not for public consumption and remain confidential. The Town Council will publish appropriate budget papers, in accordance with legislation and requirements of the Transparency Act, along with agendas and minutes.

In order to retain confidentiality, meetings may be held under a closed session under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 (as extended by s.100 of the Local Government Act 1972), whereby the public and accredited representatives of newspapers will be excluded from the meeting for items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. Closed sessions will also apply to Councillors who are not members of the budget sub-committee, unless they are acting as a substitute (as per standing orders, paragraph 4v).