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The Sub-Committee, Budget Setting

Summary

The purpose of this report is to establish a timeline of works to mutually understand the expectations for each Sub-Committee meeting. Whilst subject to change it is important to set parameters of works, whilst allowing the sub-committee and officers to act flexibly when required. For reference, attached are the adopted Terms of Reference.

Parameters (per Terms of Reference)

- a. The Sub-Committee will meet at least monthly (timings tbd)
- b. With monthly reporting to the Finance and Establishment Committee and Full Council.

The firstly monthly report will be presented to the September Finance and Establishment Committee meeting (21 September) and the subsequent October Full Council meeting (12 October).

The budget will act as a standing item on both Committee and Full Council agendas until adoption.

Meeting Schedule

Overleaf is the proposed meeting schedule of works, recommended for adoption by the sub-committee.

This schedule has been prepared with reference to the 2026/27 Budget Consultation Findings and Recommendations (as presented to Council in April 2026) and the meeting schedule aligns that of the 2026/27 budget setting process.

Month	Meeting Focus
Meeting 1 Mon 27 July PM	1. Agree Chair and Deputy Chair of sub-committee 2. Establish schedule of works (this report) 3. Broad overview of budget process 4. Affirm meeting availability / preferences in days and times
Wed 29 July 11.00am	Training session on the budget process – available for all councillors 1. Myth busters / income/expenditure /EMR/ Precept/Council Tax/ Band D / Capping / EMR / General Reserves 2. SWTC Budget trends/maintenance
Meeting 2 w/c 7 Sept	Receive core costs, overview 1. Assumptions list / summary, forming the standstill budget 2. Indicative costings for core projects / priorities
Sept F&E 21/09	Present schedule of works for information (meeting 1 findings)
Meeting 3 w/c 21 Sept	Core cores 1. Detailed analysis, ear marked reserves 2. Review of assumptions list from last meeting (i.e., awarding grants)
Meeting 4 w/c 5 Oct	Income and expenditure analysis, including review of external charges (including hirings, i.e., proportion of commercial and charity hirers and occupancy rate) Devolution costings and report (as considered by Sept FC).
Oct Full Council 12/10	Present schedule of works for information (meeting 1 findings)
Oct F&E 19/10	Present Core Costs, Assumptions List and Income & Expenditure Analysis for ratification and recommendation to Nov Full Council (meetings 2 and 3 findings)
Meeting 5 w/c 26 Oct	Review any F&E recommendations, before FC presentation
Nov Full Council 09/11	Present F&E recommendations on: - Core Costs, Assumptions List and Income & Expenditure Analysis for ratification

Month	Meeting Focus
Meeting 6 Wed 11, Thurs 12 Nov <i>(Requires publication of the sub-c agenda prior to the Full Council meeting) + (allowing time to issue papers for F&E)</i>	Review any FC recommendations, before presentation of first draft budget to Nov F&E
Nov F&E 16/11	First draft budget presented for recommendation to Council
Meeting 7 w/c 23 Nov	Review any F&E Recommendations of first draft budget before December Full Council
Dec Full Council 07/12	Present budget for adoption
Meeting 8 w/c 14 Dec	Review any FC recommendations ready for January Full Council
Jan Full Council 11/01	Present budget for adoption (with actual housing numbers (if not already received))

Note: at each respective F&E and/or Council meeting, Members of the Committee/Council will be requested to consider the work of the budget sub-committee to date and to

- (a) Endorse the work as reported and/or to
- (b) Reject the work as reported, providing specific advice and guidance should changes be required.



Saffron Walden Town Council
Budget Sub-Committee - Terms of Reference
Budget Period 2027/28
Adopted 12/05/2026 – parameters agreed 08/06/2026

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).

Membership Cllrs Abercrombie, Asker, Coote, Curtis (Mayor), de Vries, Eke, Freeman (Leader), 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 2026 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 2026. The final budget will be presented to F&E and Council not later than January 2027 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 8 June 2026, Council determined the following:
 - b) that the budget for 2027/28 should be to a increase no greater than inflation.
 - c) Council noted the challenge of achieving this in recognition of additional monies required to meet full election costs in May 2027 (FC 109-26)
 - Should the budget sub-committee recommend an increase greater, 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
- d) Anticipated income.
- e) Planned capital expenditure.
- f) The long-term financial strategy of the council including a review of the earmarked reserves schedule of works alongside the established council priorities.
- g) 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).