

Conservative Alternative District Council Budget Proposals 4 March 2026

The Conservative Group proposes two amendments to the Executive Budget for 2026/27:

Amendment 1 - Proposer: Tom Deffley, Seconder: Bob Deering

In the capital budget, £170k has been allocated for works at the URC Hall. However, this would represent a poor use of taxpayers' resources. Instead, the funding should be used to reduce existing borrowing, thereby lowering the Minimum Revenue Provision. This approach would reduce the revenue budget by approximately £15k per year and help moderate future Council Tax increase.

That the Budget be amended as follows:

- a) Appendix A MTFP be deleted and replaced with an amended Appendix A as Annex 1 to this amendment.**
- b) Appendix E Capital Programme be deleted and replaced with an amended Appendix E as Annex 2 to this amendment.**

This would result in the 2026/27 showing a £15,000 surplus for the year, against the original proposed breakeven budget.

Amendment 2 - Proposer: Tom Deffley, Seconder: Bob Deering

£250k is proposed to be placed into an Earmarked Reserve in both 2026/27 and 2027/28. However, no specific purpose has been identified for this reserve. The Administration suggests that the Executive should subsequently determine how these funds will be used. This is unacceptable. Decisions on how taxpayers' money is allocated should be made by the full Council, not delegated to the Executive.

We therefore propose that either:

- The proposed reserve should not be created, and the funds should instead be used to help moderate future Council Tax increases; or
- Any Member should be able to put forward a scheme for consideration, with approval resting with the full Council rather than the Executive; or
- The proposed reserve should be divided equally among all Members, effectively creating a 'Locality Budget' for each Member to spend on local good causes as they see fit.

If Option 1 were agreed, the proposed £250k transfer would not be placed into an Earmarked Reserve. Instead, the £250k would remain as a surplus within the 2026/27 budget, and would then be transferred into General Fund Balances, making it available to support any future decision to moderate Council Tax increases.

That the Budget be amended as follows:

- a) Appendix A (MTFP) be deleted and replaced with an amended Appendix A as Annex 3 to this amendment.**

If Option 2 or Option 3 were agreed, no changes to the budget papers would be required. The £250k would still be transferred to an earmarked reserve as set out in the current budget; the only change would be to rename the reserve to reflect the Member-approved purpose (either a scheme open to all Members, or a locality-style allocation).

If both the first budget amendment and Option 1 of the second amendment were agreed, then the budget be amended as follows:

- a) Appendix A (MTFP) would be deleted and replaced with an amended Appendix A as Annex 4 to this amendment.**
- b) Appendix E Capital Programme be deleted and replaced with an amended Appendix E as Annex 2 to this amendment.**