



Strategic Plan

This plan sets out the Town Council's plans and priorities starting in 2026 and looking forwards

Approved by Council 20 January 2025,
Reviewed and updated November 2025
(finance information updated February 2026)

Vision Statement / Overarching Council Aims

North Petherton Town Council – Towards a vibrant, resilient community with shared aspirations

Our aims:

- To be effective, efficient and provide value for money
- To provide and improve facilities, services and projects of agreed benefit to the community's wellbeing and to regularly review their impact
- To listen to and consult with local businesses and residents from all age groups and the different areas, take appropriate actions and communicate with the community about what has been achieved, in relation to the ongoing strategic plan
- To maintain and further develop strong partnerships with organisations across the town area
- To ensure that everything we do is sustainable and takes account of the relevant risks

Introduction

The area covered by North Petherton Town Council has a population of approximately 10,000 of whom approximately 8,000 are on the electoral roll (as 1 May 2025). At the time of preparing the first draft of this strategic plan (April 2024) North Petherton was the 11th largest local council in Somerset by population size.

The Town Council area is a very diverse mixture of industrial (the edge of the area bordering Bridgwater) and very rural where agriculture is predominant, there are also areas where large scale housing development has taken place during the last 10 years - Wilstock and Stockmoor - and there are some distinct, well-established communities such as North Newton, and Moorland.

The Town Council does not currently meet the criteria to have the general power of competence so it can only fund, enable or provide projects and services where there is a legislative provision for a local council (parish or town) to do so.

The Town Council's responsibilities include the cemetery, an allotment site with approx. 70 allotments, provision of a library in North Petherton by working in partnership with Somerset Council and the Friends of North Petherton Library, public conveniences, provision of some litter and dog bins, provision of youth services including a youth club, and open spaces such as the Memorial Park and Parker's Field (acting as the sole managing trustee of the North Petherton Playing Fields Charitable Trust).

The Town Council has a role to help shape the future of the area and the provision of services by other organisations; it does this by commenting on and responding to consultations on matters which may affect services and facilities or impact upon residents and businesses. The Town Council may also bring matters pertaining to the area to the attention of relevant bodies and organisations. This influencing role ranges from making observations on planning applications, through commenting on parking / traffic restrictions to responding to surveys etc on legislation changes and can be at a very local through to a national level.

The civic year runs from May and starts with the election of the Mayor, appointment of the Deputy Mayor and Council deciding which Councillors will sit on each committee.

There are 14 Town Councillors and elections to the Town Council are held every 4 years, the next election being due in May 2027.

Context of the Strategic Plan

This Strategic Plan (2026 – 2030) is the Council's second rolling strategic plan and has been drafted following a number of informal Councillor workshops where there have been discussions on broad topics such as communications, future projects, priorities, expenditure and funding.

The strategic plan will be reviewed and updated annually (usually at the Annual Town Council Meeting) so that ideas for projects, priorities and budgets can be amended and updated. Progress on achieving the projects and priorities identified in the plan will be reported to the full Council at least twice a year (in addition to the annual update review). The annual update will also be used to inform the budget for the following year and assist with determining work priorities.

The Town Council's resourcing levels (time and money) are finite and constrained by a number of factors, including some beyond the Town Council's control such as the impact of new legislation and the performance of partners.

The development of a 3 year rolling strategic plan and complementary medium term budget is intended to focus activity and decision making, help prioritise projects and resourcing, and provide a baseline against which progress can be measured. It is intended that the plan provides a clear indication of the Town Council's intended future activities, so that local residents are better able to understand how the Council intends to work for the benefit of the whole area and the likely timescale for projects to reach fruition.

Current Information

Staffing

The Town Council has 3 directly employed members of staff:

Town Clerk – full time 37 hours per week

Admin Assistant – Part time 21 hours per week

Cleaner - part time 4 hours per week (the cleaner cleans the Town Council office, the library and the toilets and kitchen in the library side of the building)

In addition, the Town Council re-imburses Somerset Council for the cost of a part-time Library Information Assistant

Office

The Town Council moved to its current office accommodation at Junction 24 in May 2025. The small office next to the library has been retained as it is suitable for 1 person to work in or for 1-2-1 meetings. The library office is open to the public for enquiries every Tuesday between 10:00hrs and 12noon.

Finance

The precept for 2026/2027 is 513,500 The estimated income (other than the precept) is £55,000 and the estimated expenditure is £569,000

Use of contractors to provide services

For anything other than administration work the Town Council uses contractors. Some of the work is on a long-term contract e.g. regular tasks such as grass cutting at the cemetery, litter picking around the Town Council area, bus shelter cleaning, whilst for specific tasks individual prices may be sought.

Where there are no significant differences between the best value offered by contractors preference will be given to those who are based within or close to the North Petherton Town Council area.

Future Opportunities and Service Provision

As the number of houses and residents in the area grow so do the needs, wishes and expectations of the people who live, work and visit the area.

Following the merger of all the district councils and Somerset County Council in April 2023 and the resultant financial emergency, Somerset Council is open to discussion about devolving assets and service delivery to local councils; this may be an opportunity for the Town Council to enable services at a level it believes appropriate for the area.

Enabling more services, and possibly direct provision of some, may assist with transparency, accountability and improve response times, as the general public will know where to contact and local knowledge will assist in finding solutions and implementing them.

When deciding whether or not to enable a service or undertake a project the considerations are likely to include:

- Will it be possible, as a minimum, to maintain the current level of service?
- Will it be possible to improve the service e.g. standard of work, frequency, responsiveness?
- Can any economies of scale be realised- perhaps by working with other councils, or within the Local Community Network?
- Would it be possible to offer the service / deliver the project by working in partnership -perhaps with Community Interest Companies or local charities?
- Is the service better delivered in-house or by using contractors – remembering that employing staff carries significant legal responsibilities?

If it is agreed that a service or project will be delivered using contractors the Town Council's Financial Regulations will be followed and the steps to obtaining pricing information will include:

- Identifying the overall scope of the work / project
- Identifying the specific work for each element of the service delivery / project
- Specifying the price assessment criteria
- Assessing prices received and suitability of contractors
- Managing the contract / contractor

North Petherton Town Council SWOT Analysis

In 2024 Councillors were asked to identify what, in their opinion, the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats were for the Town Council,

In October / November 2025 Councillors re visited the SWOT analysis done for the first strategic plan and the results are in the table below

Strengths	Weaknesses
• Good cash flow • Community Infrastructure Income (CIL) • Local Knowledge • Diverse skill set • Wide range of experience • Wide range of workplace knowledge • Good community engagement • Strong representation on Somerset Council • No political ideology • Continued growth	• Perception • ICT • Communication • Greater Engagement • Consultation with Local Community • Funding • Lack of Training • Website Improvements • Social media • Support staffing for growing council • Effective communication with public • Lack of resources • Weak identity with community • Resilience plan for catastrophic events • Social media support • Overarching unitary authority disregard of views • Formal resilience & action plan with media support • Age of Councillors • Time restraints of Clerk • Lack of staff • 6000 houses along A38
Opportunities	Threats
• ICT – Communications – internal & Public • Collaboration • Raise to precept to take on devolved services and mitigate inflationary costs • Media channels to exhibit knowledge on community events and councillors • Resilience plan formalised with knowledgeable input to formulate • Increase staffing to support larger council & community & professional council • Differentiated training • Banking hub • Transport service • Capital infrastructure • Bus service • Councillor ??????? • Better communications • IT Improvements •	• Perception • Skillset constraints • Communication • Greater Engagement • Consultation with Local Community • Funding • Training • Website Improvements • Social media • Understanding of NPTC actions & times it takes to complete processes by public • Climate change & increased regular extreme weather events • Higher costs for contracting + inflationary costs • County S114 • End of CIL income • Precept increase • Alterations to planning laws • Staff illness • Threat of floods

In addition to the SWOT, Councillors were also asked to do a PESTLE analysis which looks at how factors outside of the Town Council may affect the Town Council's processes and service delivery. The results are in the table below

Political	• Recognition housing not working • Government influence over housing development • Bring back social housing • Cancelling of CIL • Designate precept rises • Controlled rents • Changes in government policy • Invasion of Taiwan • Hostage release • Changes to funding as result of political change • Somerset Council – bankruptcy / funding • Policy frameworks (Planning)
Economic	• Inflation • Limited job growth • Job shortages • HPC • Interest Rates • Increases to costs of capital projects • Education • Proper uni research base • Economic downturn • Country could go into recession • Tarif • Battery centre • Hinkley provides capital grants • Increase revenue in these areas • Eastern European influence to fuels & conflicts
Social / Cultural	• Barriers • Demographics – age of population • Health & social care • Population growth • Childcare costs – accessibility • Hygiene poverty • Cultural inclusion of local facilities • Christmas competitions • Friends of Library • Cost of Adult & Child services • Pressure on health resources • Food poverty
Technological	• Mobile services • Cyber security • Internet poor • WFH • AI • Improved tech & Hinkley Point
Legal	• Employment law • BREXIT • Discrimination law • Public safety • Changes to framework / structure

	• Town Clerk advises on legalities • Somerset Council 114
Environmental	• Climate crises • Environmental policy • Clean water • Solar Farm funding • Ever encroaching threat of drought and flood • Public opportunities • Flooding ? / climate change • Sustainability

Work Undertaken in Current Year (2025/2026)

- Co-ordination of events to mark the 80th anniversary of VE Day
- Held 2 informal meetings with allotment holders
- Evicted allotment holders for non-payment of rent and where cultivation levels have not met the expected standards
- New litter and dog waste bin at Maunsel Lock car park
- Extended Christmas Light display
- Moved into new office accommodation
- Box hedges around the Gardens of Rest replaced with yew hedging
- Tablets and vases in the Gardens of Rest realigned
- Fallen tree in the Cemetery removed
- Arrangements made to fell large cedar tree in the cemetery
- 3 new waste bins provided along A38
- Loan of £400,000 obtained from the Public Works Loan Board
- Christmas competitions extended – including a new competition for a community festive lights and a children and young people’s competition to design a festive banner for the website or a festive greetings message for the Facebook page
- Councillor workshop on community resilience planning held
- New equipment purchased for the Youth Club
- WWII Memorial Stone moved within the boundary of the Memorial Park
- Remembrance Service held in the Memorial Park

Routine / Operational Work

The Town Council has a number of responsibilities and provides or enables services which could be described as routine or operational, these include:

- Dealing with general enquiries from the public
- Convening, providing reports and minuting formal meetings of the Town Council and its Committees
- Providing support and guidance to Councillors
- Cemetery administration, including interments and Exclusive Rights of Burial
- Allotment administration, including inspections, lettings
- Administration for North Petherton Playing Fields Charitable Trust
- Financial Administration, including checking invoices, bank reconciliations, VAT return
- Commenting on planning applications
- Grant administration
- Communications – media releases, facebook posts
- Maintenance administration and contractor liaison e.g litter picking, grass cutting, bus shelter cleaning

Priorities and Future Projects

Councillors were asked to undertake an exercise (a pairing exercise in which each potential project was prioritised against every other project) to prioritise projects that had already been identified, the results are given in the table below.

Some of the items listed may include enhancing facilities / services provided by other organisations including Somerset Council.

Project	Score
Provision of More Allotments	82
Wilstockhub	61
Cemetery Chapels	58
Resilience Planning	50
Road Safety (including 20mph & SIDS)	48
Parking at the Cemetery	47
Parker's Field Car Park (responsibility of North Petherton Playing Fields Charitable Trust) for which the Town Council is the sole managing corporate trustee	45
Maunsel Lock \Car Park – resurface car park & upgrade picnic benches	44
Health & Wellbeing	43
Leisure facilities at Wilstock & Stockmoor including play areas and country park	41
Encourage Tourism, e.g. solar walk, toilets, Maunsel aire, Macmillan Way	39
Welcome to North Petherton Goodbye / thank you signs	30

It is intended to do a short public consultation exercise to ask the public to rank the top 5 priorities.

In June 2025 the Town Council agreed an initial project list for section 106 monies / infrastructure contributions.

A section 106 (S106) agreement is a legally binding agreement (may also be referred to as “planning obligation” or “developer contribution”) made between a local planning authority, and a developer / property owner. The purpose of a S106 agreement is to mitigate the impact of the development on the local community and infrastructure

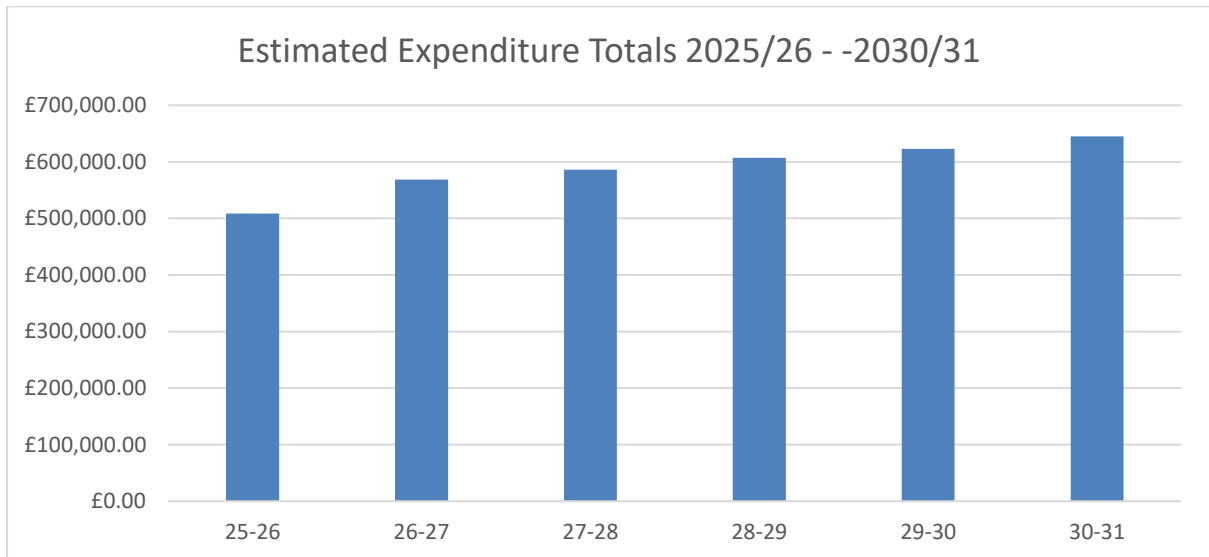
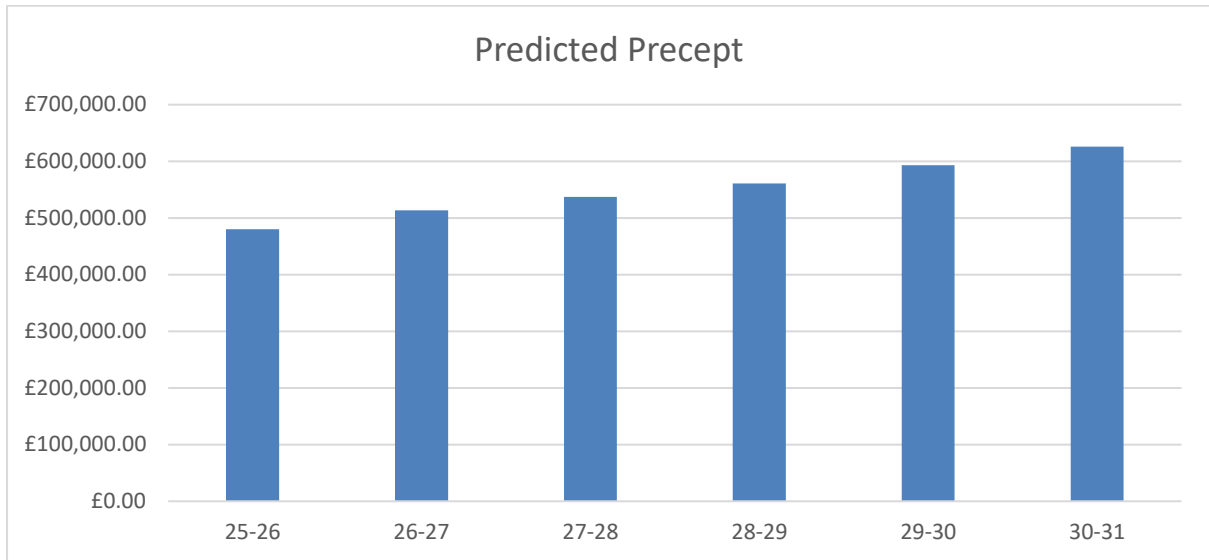
The agreement will set out the terms binding on the owners or developer to provide, facilitate or fund the provision of infrastructure, services or other measures that may be needed for the development to be acceptable in planning terms.

The initial project list for developer contributions towards future infrastructure, schemes and projects within the North Petherton Town Council area is as follows (in alphabetical order):

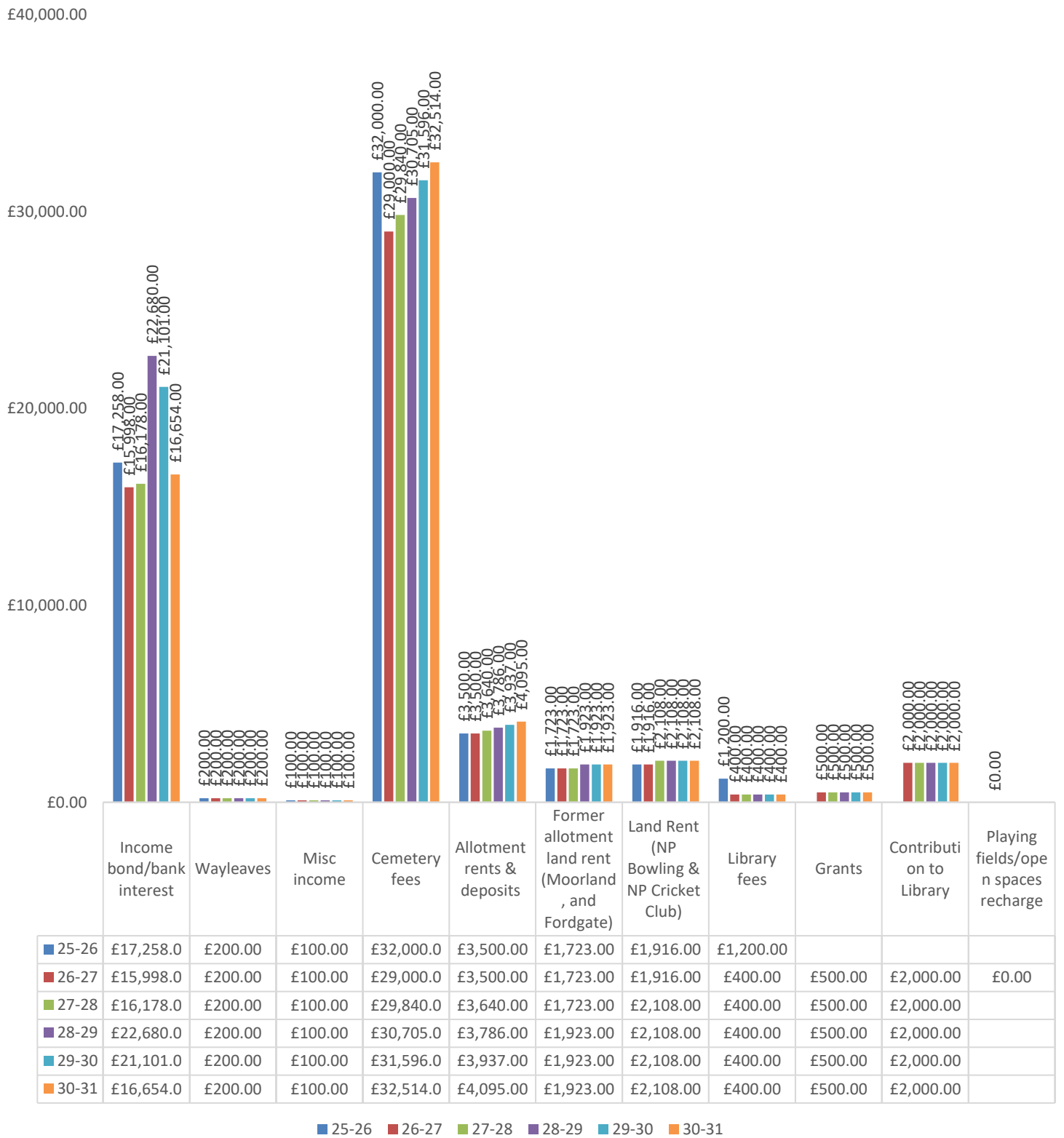
- Allotments – provision within new residential sites
- Coach stop (with short (drop off / pick up) and long term parking) and toilets
- Public Car Park

- Pedestrian crossings (including pelican crossings, pedestrian islands traffic light controlled) on the A38 (Broadlands Avenue, A38 south of Newton Road, Parker's Field / Carrots Farm)
- Sports Facilities (including a football pitch)
- Public Toilets – additional equipment to meet modern standards in the existing disabled toilet and new public toilets

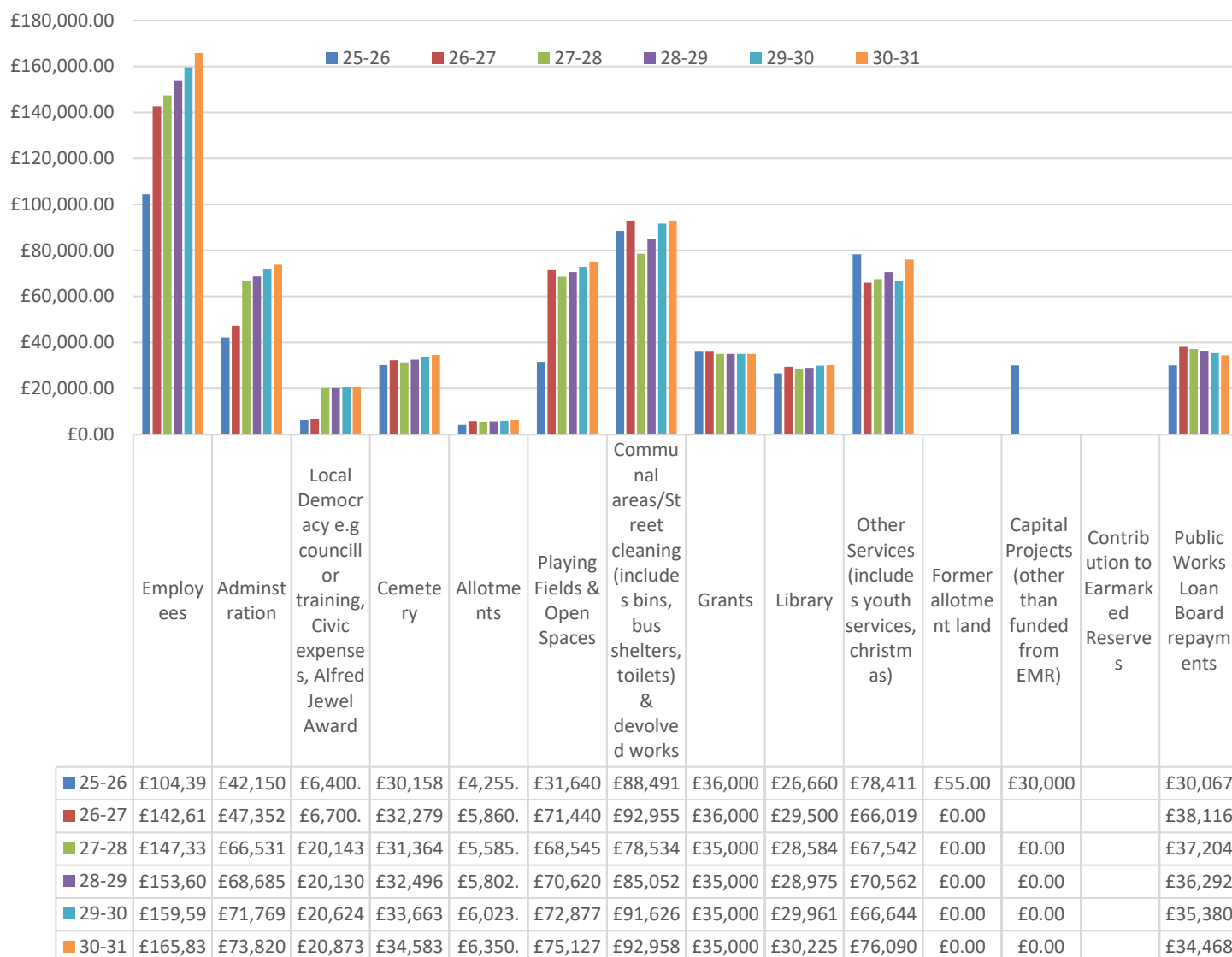
Financial Information



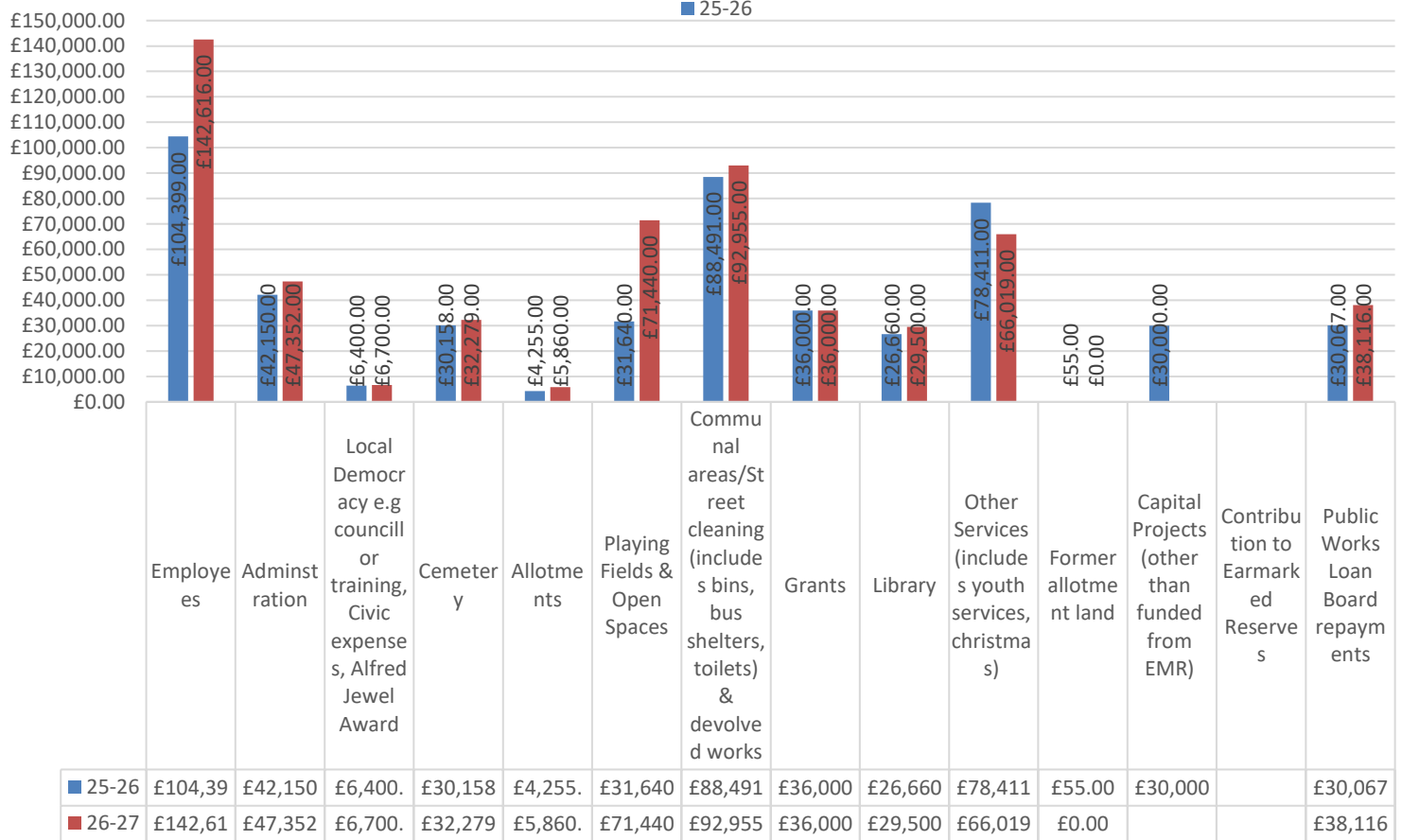
Predicted Income Excluding Precept



Estimated Budget Expenditure 2025/2026 - 2030/2031



Estimated Expenditure 2025/26 - 2026/27



Proposed Expenditure Budget 26-27

