

Council – 5th March 2026

Amendment: Proposals of the SNP Group

Budget 2026/27

South Ayrshire Council is now facing a financially very challenging period and there are no easy options for councillors in attempting to set a balanced budget for the coming year, whilst striving to maintain the vital front-line services on which the people of South Ayrshire rely.

The SNP Group's budget plan for this year includes allocating an extra £2.25 million of additional funding, beyond any ringfenced or other funding we are due to receive, to the Health and Social Care Partnership, aimed at addressing the need to meet increasing demographic pressure in our care system in South Ayrshire and supporting the ongoing programme of transformation in Health & Social Care, focused on earlier intervention and prevention, which has already achieved significant savings while resulting in better outcomes for people.

Our plan also focuses on retaining village halls, community facilities and libraries which are vital to achieve thriving rural communities and support the wellbeing of our residents.

To limit service reductions which would impact on all of us but particularly our more vulnerable or isolated citizens, we will need to increase Council Tax by 7.5% in order to achieve a balanced budget.

This 7.5% Council Tax increase means an additional £117.71 per annum on a Band D property, which equates to an extra £2.26 per week for our residents.

It is never an easy decision to raise Council Tax. This budget recognises the additional funding this will provide to minimise service reductions and help maintain our most vital services to the public.

We recommend this balanced budget to the Council

Annex 1

<u>Specific 2026/27 revenue budget proposals</u>	£m
1) To note the remaining budget gap as identified of:	8.463
2) To provide additional funding to the Health and Social Care Partnership in 2026/27, beyond the £115.232m noted in the covering report, of £2.250m resulting in an overall uplift of £10.324m on last year's allocation:	2.250
3) To provide additional funding to Housing, Operation and Development of £0.020m for Christmas Lights maintenance in communities out with Ayr:	0.020
4) To agree to progress savings proposals as identified in Annex 2 to this amendment totalling:	(2.672)
5) To uplift all Council tax bandings by 7.5% resulting in a Band D equivalent of £1,687.12 which, after applying a bad debt provision of 3% (as noted in Annex 3 to this amendment), is expected to generate additional Council Tax income in 2026/27 of:	(5.587)
6) In addition to utilising the planned use of committed reserves of £2.000m, as described in the covering report, utilise uncommitted reserves of:	(2.474)
7) To note by applying items 1 to 6 above this results in a final balanced budget gap position of:	<u>0.000</u>
8) To note the above decisions results in an overall Council budget of £398.820m for 2026/27, shown at Directorate level in Annex 4.	
9) To agree the Common Good budget as identified in Appendix 4 of the covering report.	

Annex 2

Savings proposals

Ref	Proposal	Amount £	Yes/ No	2026/27 £	2027/28 £
Sports, Leisure and Golf					
C&T-01	Progress Closure/Transfer Muirhead Activity Centre	44,000	No	-	-
	Progress Closure/Transfer Mossblown Activity Centre	39,000	No	-	-
	Progress Closure/Transfer Coylton Activity Centre	35,000	No	-	-
	Progress Closure/Transfer Northfield Bowling	113,000	Yes	-	113,000
	Phase out diving and deep-water sessions at the Citadel to focus on higher-demand programmes	20,000	Yes	10,000	10,000
	Prioritise swimming lessons by adjusting public and club pool access	80,000	Yes	40,000	40,000
	Reduce opening hours/staffing at Riverside Sports Arena	150,000	No	-	-
	Discontinue the Senior Golf Concession Scheme to standardise pricing	20,000	Yes	20,000	-
	Remove protected tee times to improve equitable access for all golfers	30,000	Yes	30,000	-
	Remove council delivered golf events to refocus resources on core services	5,000	Yes	-	5,000
Thriving Communities					
C&T-02	50% reduction in Small Business Grants	25,000	No	-	-
	50% reduction in Start Up Grants	10,000	No	-	-
	50% reduction in Ambition to Grow Grants	25,000	No	-	-
	50% reduction Business Expert Help Grants	10,000	No	-	-
	Progress Closure/Transfer of Dundonald Community Centre	38,077	No	-	-
	Progress Closure/Transfer of Crosshill Community Centre	46,699	No	-	-
	Progress Closure/Transfer of Monkton Community Centre	35,022	No	-	-
	Progress Closure/Transfer of Colmonell Community Centre	31,793	No	-	-
	Progress Closure/Transfer of Ballantrae Community Centre	39,162	No	-	-
	Reduce administration budgets	4,200	Yes	4,200	-
	Remove SAFE Taxi Marshall funding	13,000	No	-	-
	Remove SAFE Police Scotland contribution	10,000	No	-	-
	Remove School as the Hub resources budget	10,000	Yes	10,000	-
	Reduction in Problem Solving and Communities budget	10,000	Yes	10,000	-

	Reduce Health and Wellbeing service budget	2,000	Yes	2,000	-
	Cancel memberships – Industrial Communities Alliance & Prosper	5,333	No	-	-
	Progress Closure/Transfer of Prestwick Community Centre	101,980	No	-	-
Destination South Ayrshire					
C&T-03	Increase SLA with Maclaurin Art Gallery to reflect SAC contribution.	15,000	Yes	15,000	-
	Delete existing L9 Heritage Post	50,000	No	-	-
	Progress closure of Ballantrae Library.	10,760	No	-	-
	Progress closure of John Rodie (Mossblown) Library	16,182	No	-	-
	Progress closure of Symington Library	21,696	No	-	-
	Progress closure of Ayr Heritage Hub.	34,522	Yes	34,522	-
	Delete external artist fees budget	6,300	Yes	6,300	-
	Reduction in library services (Subscriptions)	4,000	No	-	-
	Stop contribution to Biosphere.	25,000	Yes	-	25,000
	Sell/ rent vacant unit at Carrick St	14,000	Yes	14,000	-
	Reduce Tourism Development Third Party Payments	27,243	Yes	27,243	-
	Remove Signs and Notices Budget.	14,820	Yes	14,820	-
	Cancel Burns Humanitarian Awards.	10,000	No	-	-
	Reduce Events Budget by 15%	3,650	Yes	3,650	-
	Withdraw funding from Unified Bowls Event.	38,000	No	-	-
	Withdrawal from the ground floor Grain Exchange.	50,000	Yes	-	50,000
ICT Operations					
C&T-04	Service Redesign	267,000	Yes	66,750	200,250
Customer Services and Communications					
C&T-05	Service Redesign	31,430	Yes	31,430	-
Corporate Policy, Community Planning and Performance					
CE-01	Deletion of Energy Agency Budget	15,000	Yes	15,000	-
	Deletion of Equalities training budget	5,000	No	-	-
	Reduce FTE by deleting one L7 post	41,958	Yes	41,958	-
	Reduce FTE by deleting one L9 post	52,296	Yes	52,296	-

Housing Strategy and Policy					
CE-02	Reduction of Housing support contract budget	86,042	Yes	86,042	-
	Reduce core Housing support budget	18,958	Yes	18,958	-
	Homeless strategy budget reduction	11,042	Yes	11,042	-
	Scheme of Assistant budget reduction	12,000	Yes	12,000	-
Education					
ED-01	Instrumental Music Service - delete 0.5 vacant fte admin post supporting fees & charges (£14,815) and reduce music expansion budget (£50,000)	64,815	No	-	-
ED-02	Removal of Determine to Succeed (DTS) budget	36,000	Yes	36,000	-
ED-03	Reduce DSM Short Term Absence Cover budget	171,041	Yes	171,041	-
ED-04	Reduction in Core Curriculum Funding	61,000	Yes	61,000	-
ED-05	Removal of EY/ASN/GIRFEC Training Budget	36,000	Yes	36,000	-
ED-06	Reduce Registered Capacity of EY Centres	462,162	Yes	462,162	-
ED-07	Reduce Central, Long Term Absence Cover budget	196,760	Yes	196,760	-
ED-08	Reduction of 1fte Education Support Services and reduction of other centrally managed budgets	80,514	Yes	80,514	-
ED-09	Reduction in Central Education equipment and systems budget	60,000	Yes	60,000	-
ED-10	Reduction in Central Education Resource Budgets	76,260	Yes	76,260	-
Neighbourhood Services					
HOD-01	Reduce Tree & Woodland management	37,000	Yes	37,000	-
HOD-02	Reduction/ Altered Street Cleansing	60,340	No	-	-
HOD-03	Close Dukes Road depot and relocate services	46,526	Yes	46,526	-
HOD-04	Remove Forestry machinery lease arrangement budget - no longer required	12,678	Yes	12,678	-
HOD-05	Reduce/altered grass pitches maintenance - 3 options provided				
	Option 1 - reduce maintenance to all non-bookable pitches, except education pitches from Grade A to C but keep cutting regime the same	31,681	No	-	-
	Option 2 - maintain all non-bookable pitches to Grade C (except schools) and reduce cutting from weekly to fortnightly during the growing season except for education and bookable pitches	57,552	Yes	57,552	-
	Option 3 - maintain all pitches (bookable and non-bookable) to grade C and to reduce cutting from weekly to fortnightly during the growing season on all pitches	58,230	No	-	-
HOD-06	Reduce/remove bedding plants budget - 4 options provided				

	Option 1 - stop spring bulbs, spring bedding, and retain summer hanging baskets, summer bedding and planters	11,337	No	-	-
	Option 2 - stop spring bulbs, spring bedding and summer hanging baskets and retain summer bedding and planters	28,662	No	-	-
	Option 3 - stop spring bulbs, spring bedding, summer hanging baskets and all summer bedding retain only planters	71,030	No	-	-
	Option 4 - stop all floral bedding displays	79,901	No	-	-
HOD-07	Stop facilitating Events e.g. Gala days, Presfest etc. - supply and delivery of stalls, tables, chairs, bins etc	20,000	No	-	-
HOD-08	Structure redesign	171,000	Yes	171,000	-
Facilities Management					
HOD-09	Reduction in School Crossing Patrol Service	105,103	No	-	-
	Reduction in current cleaning provision across all council premises - resulting in a significantly reduced output specification and the introduction of mobile operative cleaning model	320,914	No	-	-
Ayrshire Roads Alliance					
HOD-10	Reduce Grass Cutting of roadside verges out with 30mph limits	38,000	Yes	38,000	-
HOD-11	Remove non statutory post	41,541	No	-	-
HOD-12	Review Winter Gritting route priorities	80,000	Yes	-	80,000
HOD-13	Cease ISO accreditation audit	4,000	Yes	-	4,000
HOD-14	Removal of Karbontech software contract	10,500	Yes	10,500	-
HOD-15	Reduce routine maintenance budget by not attending P4 road defect s (potholes) on unclassified carriageways, footways & footpaths	78,295	No	-	-
HOD-16	Introduce part night switching of lighting in rural areas - 4 switch regimes provided				
	Switch regime 1 - Off Midnight to 5:00am	26,687	No	-	-
	Switch regime 2 - Off Midnight to 5:30am	28,701	No	-	-
	Switch regime 3 - Off Midnight to 6:00am	30,491	No	-	-
	Switch regime 4 - Off 10:00pm to 6:00am	41,201	No	-	-
Housing Services					
HOD-17	Transfer of Costs from General Services to HRA. Savings to General Services to reflect the level of activity attributed to HRA functions	108,250	Yes	108,250	-
	Transfer of Costs from General Services to HRA - Reduced Sheltered Housing support to reflect the level of activity attributed to HRA functions	19,900	No	-	-
	Elimination of Anti-social behaviour mediation service	10,000	No	-	-

	Reduction to Scheme of Assistance Grant in mixed tenure stock	10,000	Yes	10,000	-
HR and Employee Services					
HR-02	Service Redesign	343,095	Yes	314,476	28,619
Trading Standards & Environmental Health					
L&R-01	Review of Consumer and Business Advice	85,000	Yes	85,000	-
	Reductions in general budget Lines	17,988	Yes	17,988	-
	Delete 0.1 FTE of a Trading Standards Officer Post vacated through flexible working	5,721	Yes	5,721	-
Total Savings to be applied				2,671,639	555,869

Council Tax bandings

Band	2025-26	2026-27
A	£1,046.27	£1,124.74
B	£1,220.66	£1,312.21
C	£1,395.04	£1,499.67
D	£1,569.41	£1,687.12
E	£2,062.03	£2,216.68
F	£2,550.30	£2,741.57
G	£3,073.43	£3,303.94
H	£3,845.06	£4,133.44

Note that based on an uplift of 7.5% across all banding that additional council tax income of £5.587m will be generated providing £80.420m of total Council Tax income available to fund service expenditure in 2026-27 net of:

- a 3 per cent bad debt provisions for the non-collection of Council Tax; and
- the estimated implications of applying reductions per the Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

Annex 4

Council Budget 2026/27

	Revised budget 2026/27 £m	Amendment			Final budget 2026/27 £m
		Additional investment £m	Savings £m	CT uplift/ use of reserves £m	
Directorate expenditure					
Chief Executive's	24.305	-	(0.660)	-	23.645
Communities & Transformation	25.617	-	(0.340)	-	25.277
Education	167.148	-	(1.180)	-	165.968
Housing, Operation & Development	51.525	0.020	(0.492)	-	51.053
HSCP	115.232	2.250	-	-	117.482
Miscellaneous Services	15.395	-	-	-	15.395
Total Expenditure	399.222	2.270	(2,672)	-	398.820
Funded by					
Scottish.Government. funding					
Grant Aided expenditure	(252.896)	-	-	-	(252.896)
Non-Domestic Rates	(56.618)	-	-	-	(56.618)
Specific Grants	(4.412)	-	-	-	(4.412)
Planned.use.of.reserves	(2.000)	-	-	(2.474)	(4.474)
Council.Tax	(74.833)	-	-	(5.587)	(80.420)
Total Funding	(390.759)	-	-	(8.061)	(398.820)
Remaining Budget Gap	8.463	2.270	(2.672)	(8.061)	-