

2026/27 Budget Prioritisation

Tuesday, 20 October 2026
City Finance and Governance
Committee

Strategic Alignment - Our Corporation

Program Contact:
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Public

Approving Officer:
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report addresses the Council decision of 9 June 2026 (Item 16.1), in relation to the results of community consultation on the Draft 2026/27 Business Plan and Budget (BP&B). Council resolved that Administration prepare a report for consideration through the 2026/27 BP&B Quarter 1 Review process, which:

- Reviews adopted 2026/27 funding allocations against the five most prominent themes arising from feedback on the Draft 2026/27 BP&B; and
- Makes recommendations for reprioritisation opportunities in 2026/27 that will achieve greater alignment with those themes.

The 2026/27 BP&B was developed through Council's established budget process, including extensive Council Member engagement and consideration of service requirements, strategic priorities, financial sustainability and organisational capacity.

A review of discretionary budget areas (operating activities, strategic projects and new and upgrade capital projects) found that approximately two-thirds of identified expenditure is already aligned to the top five consultation themes.

Projects that were considered but not funded as part of the 2026/27 BP&B were also assessed. Unfunded projects aligned with the top-five themes have been identified as opportunities to better align budgets with the themes. It is recommended that these projects be recognised as 'unfunded initiatives' rather than notionally funded commitments. Should budget capacity become available during 2026/27, unfunded initiatives could be prioritised based on a set of criteria and considered by Council as part of quarterly budget reviews.

This approach provides opportunities to strengthen alignment of the budget to community feedback while maintaining the ability to respond to emerging priorities and preserve budget and Long-Term Financial Plan targets.

RECOMMENDATION

The following recommendation will be presented to Council on 27 October 2026 for consideration

THAT THE CITY FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS TO COUNCIL
THAT COUNCIL

1. Notes the analysis of adopted 2026/27 funding allocations against the top-five themes identified in the Draft 2026/27 Business Plan and Budget consultation summary, in Attachment A of Item 7.3 on the Agenda for the meeting of the City Finance and Governance Committee held on 20 October 2026.
2. Notes the list of unfunded projects from the 2026/27 Business Plan and Budget process that are aligned to the top-five themes.
3. Approves the list of unfunded projects in this report to be considered as 'unfunded initiatives' for the 2026/27 financial year.
4. Approves the approach outlined in this report, that unfunded initiatives will be prioritised for funding during 2026/27 quarterly budget reviews, subject to funding availability and the specified criteria.

IMPLICATIONS AND FINANCIALS

City of Adelaide 2024-2028 Strategic Plan	Strategic Alignment – Our Corporation Focus on budget repair and ensure responsible financial management through the principle of intergenerational equity while delivering quality services.
Policy	Not as a result of this report
Consultation	Not as a result of this report
Resource	Not as a result of this report
Risk / Legal / Legislative	Not as a result of this report
Opportunities	Supports informed decision-making, effective resource allocation, and financial sustainability.
26/27 Budget Allocation	Not as a result of this report
Proposed 27/28 Budget Allocation	Not as a result of this report
Life of Project, Service, Initiative or (Expectancy of) Asset	Not as a result of this report
26/27 Budget Reconsideration (if applicable)	The report does not propose amendments to the adopted 2026/27 budget. Funding allocation opportunities would be subject to Council approval through quarterly reviews.
Ongoing Costs (eg maintenance cost)	Not as a result of this report
Other Funding Sources	Not as a result of this report

DISCUSSION

Background

1. The 2026/27 Business Plan and Budget (BP&B) was developed through Council's established budget process, including nine workshops and briefings.
2. Council Members were provided opportunities throughout the budget development process to propose projects and initiatives for consideration.
3. In developing the 2026/27 budget and decision-making about budget allocations, consideration was given to the entire budget and Long-Term Financial Plan (LTFP), alongside broader evidence, strategic priorities, financial sustainability, service requirements, capacity and constraints.
4. Development of the BP&B included discussion and prioritisation of service requirements and potential projects, which were prioritised to deliver a balanced budget.
5. During the final stages of budget adoption, Council approved additional initiatives, including the sustainability prize and small business program, resulting in a lower surplus position of \$4.976m, compared to the initial targeted surplus of \$5.283m.
6. Community consultation on the Draft 2026/27 BP&B attracted over 240 submissions and provided valuable insight into the interests and priorities of participating community members, many focusing on one or a few specific areas of the budget.
7. Consultation outcomes from the Draft 2026/27 BP&B were presented to Council at its meeting of 9 June 2026 (Item 16.1. – 2026/27 Business Plan & Budget - Receipt of Consultation Submissions).
8. An amendment to the recommendation of this report was carried. Point 3 of the amended resolution of Council stated:
 3. *Requests that the Administration prepare a report for consideration in the 2026/27 Business Plan and Budget Quarter 1 Review process that:*
 - a. *Reviews the adopted 2026/27 funding allocations against the five most prominent themes arising from feedback on the Draft 2026/27 Business Plan and Budget, as contained in Attachment A; and*
 - b. *Makes recommendations for reprioritisation opportunities in 2026/27 that will achieve greater alignment with those themes.*

Top-Five Themes

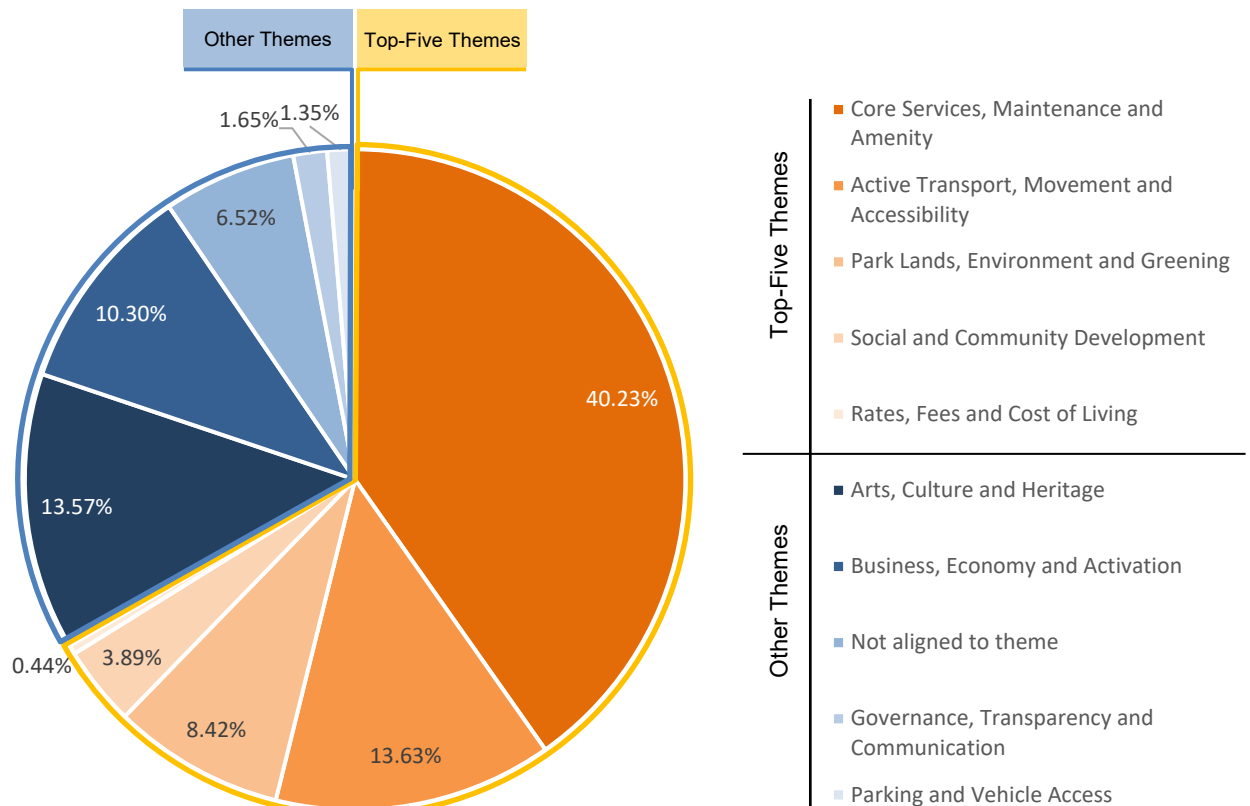
9. The Draft 2026/27 BP&B consultation summary report [\[Link 1\]](#) identified themes that were most prominent throughout submissions (ie. most frequently mentioned). The top-five themes by this measure were:

Theme	Description	Mentioned in submissions
Active Transport, Movement and Accessibility	Safer, more accessible and people-focused transport network, including improved cycling infrastructure, walkability, pedestrian safety and public transport connectivity, while maintaining balanced access for vehicle users.	Approx. 24% of feedback
Rates, Fees and Cost of Living	Affordability and the cumulative impact of rates, fees and charges, greater transparency, alignment with cost-of-living pressures, targeted support for small businesses, and clear links between increases and service improvements.	Approx. 21% of feedback
Park Lands, Environment and Greening	Protecting and enhancing the Park Lands through tree retention, increased greening, biodiversity and climate resilience initiatives, alongside concerns about tree removal and development impacts.	Approx. 19% of feedback
Social and Community Development	Homelessness, housing affordability, community wellbeing, inclusion and support for vulnerable populations.	Approx. 18% of feedback
Core Services, Maintenance and Amenity	Core services, asset maintenance, cleanliness, safety and public amenity, and prioritise foundational services to support community confidence and liveability.	Approx. 14% of feedback

10. Administration has reviewed discretionary elements of the budget, consisting of operating activities, strategic projects and new and upgrade capital projects, and allocated notional budgets to the relevant primary consultation theme, as a way of identifying opportunities to reprioritise budgeted activity during 2026/27.

11. The review showed the following allocation of budget across all themes identified in the consultation summary report:

Existing Budgets Per Consultation Theme



Themes identified in the consultation summary	Per Cent of Budget	Net total (\$'000)
Top-five		
Core Services, Maintenance and Amenity	40.23%	27,886
Active Transport, Movement and Accessibility	13.63%	9,451
Park Lands, Environment and Greening	8.42%	5,834
Social and Community Development	3.89%	2,694
Rates, Fees and Cost of Living	0.44%	307
Other		
Arts, Culture and Heritage	13.57%	9,406
Business, Economy and Activation	10.30%	7,139
Not aligned to theme	6.52%	4,519
Governance, Transparency and Communication	1.65%	1,145
Parking and Vehicle Access	1.35%	938
TOTAL	100.00%	69,319

Note: Budget for Capital N/U projects is not inclusive of renewal

12. The list of budgets for the operating activities and projects allocated to the top-five themes is listed in **Attachment A**.
13. While there is broad alignment between a number of community priorities expressed in feedback and existing budget allocations, opportunities to provide additional budget in some of the top-five themes are available, should funding become available during the financial year.

Opportunities

14. Potential budget bids for consideration were discussed in detail at the BP&B sessions on Saturday 7 February 2026 (Strategic Projects) and Saturday 21 February 2026 (Capital New and Upgrade Projects).
15. Administration reviewed budget bids that were not funded during the development of the 2026/27 BP&B process for their alignment with the top-five consultation themes.
16. Unfunded Strategic Projects aligned with the top-five themes:

Title	(\$'000)	Portfolio	Program	2026/27 Budget				
				FTE	Inc.	Emp.	Ext.	Tot.
Park Lands, Environment and Greening								
Bonython Park / Tulya Wardli (Park 27) Master Plan		City Shaping	PLP&S	-	-	-	(100)	(100)
Tree Martin 2026/27 Roosting Season – On-ground response and Business Support Package *		City Shaping	PLP&S	-	-	-	(390)	(390)

**budget revised (amount or timing) from budget presented in February 2026 to reflect updated estimate*

17. Unfunded Capital Projects align with the top-five themes:

Title	(\$'000)	Portfolio	Program	26/27	27/28	28/29	Tot.
Active Transport, Movement and Accessibility							
Adelaide Park Lands Trail – Rest Stops and Accessibility Improvements *		City Shaping	PLP&S	315	500	-	815
Frome cycleway - Carrington St and Regent St Intersection Improvements		City Infrastructure	Infrastructure	25	400	-	425
Integrated Transport Strategy Implementation - Cycle Parking and Street Furniture *		City Infrastructure	Infrastructure	140	-	-	140
Integrated Transport Strategy Implementation - East-West Bikeway - Grote/Wakefield concept design *		City Infrastructure	Infrastructure	250	2,500	2,500	5,250
North Terrace - New Pedestrian Crossing - Adelaide Convention Centre to Trinity Church (88 North Terrace)		City Infrastructure	Infrastructure	30	120	1,000	1,150
Park Lands, Environment and Greening							
City Public Realm Greening Program Year 3 - Integrated Climate Strategy *		City Infrastructure	Infrastructure	2,000	4,000	-	6,000
Core Services, Maintenance and Amenity							
Road Reconstruction and Stormwater Upgrade - Unknown Name Lane - Toms Court to End of Road		City Infrastructure	Infrastructure	135	-	-	135

**budget revised (amount or timing) from budget presented in February 2026 to reflect funding decisions since (2025/26 quarterly budget review or final 2026/27 budget)*

Budget Allocation and Prioritisation

18. Identified projects are recommended to be recognised as 'unfunded initiatives', rather than notionally funded commitments.
19. Should budget capacity arise during 2026/27 through savings, reprioritisation or additional revenue (such as grants), funding for unfunded initiatives could be prioritised and considered by Council through quarterly budget review processes.
20. Recognising these initiatives as future funding opportunities provides a mechanism to further align expenditure with community feedback, while maintaining Council's commitment to responsible financial management and LTFP targets.

21. Re-prioritisation of unfunded initiatives amongst the top-five themes would be based on the percentage of submissions which mentioned the theme (i.e. mentions of a theme in more submissions receive higher priority than one with fewer). Using that method, themes would be prioritised in the following order:
 - 21.1. Active Transport, Movement and Accessibility (24% of feedback)
 - 21.2. Rates, Fees and Cost of Living (21% of feedback)
 - 21.3. Park Lands, Environment and Greening (19% of feedback)
 - 21.4. Social and Community Development (including wellbeing and inclusion) (18% of feedback)
 - 21.5. Core Services, Maintenance and Amenity (14% of feedback)
22. In assessing potential funding allocations, Administration would also consider:
 - 22.1. Project readiness and deliverability (e.g. capital works contingent on design works completion, ability to deliver or substantially progress a strategic project within the financial year, resourcing)
 - 22.2. Funding type (operating or capital)
 - 22.3. Impacts on Long-Term Financial Plan (capital financial cushion)
 - 22.4. Funding requirements for projects in progress of delivery
 - 22.5. Criticality of other emerging priorities (e.g. arising Council decisions)
 - 22.6. Availability of external funding opportunities

DATA AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Link 1 [2026/27 Business Plan & Budget - Receipt of Consultation Submissions – Attachment A - Consultation Summary Report](#)

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – Budgets for activity against top-five themes

- END OF REPORT -