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Tuesday, 19 January 2021

Dear Sir/Madam

STRATEGIC (OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY) COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Strategic (Overview and Scrutiny) Committee has been arranged to take place **WEDNESDAY, 27TH JANUARY, 2021 at 6.00 PM** to consider the following business.

In light of the current Covid-19 pandemic and government advice on social distancing, the meeting will be held online and streamed live on the Council's [YouTube channel](#)

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Christie Tims', is written over a light grey circular stamp.

Christie Tims
Head of Governance and Performance

To: Members of Strategic (Overview and Scrutiny) Committee

Councillors Spruce (Chairman), Gwilt (Vice-Chair), Norman (Vice-Chair), Ball, Checkland, Grange, Greatorex, A Little, Matthews, Warfield, Westwood and White



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AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Declarations of Interest
3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting 3 - 8
4. Work Programme 9 - 12
5. Medium Term Financial Strategy (Revenue and Capital) 2020-25 13 - 78
6. Review of Committee Meetings 79 - 86
7. Coronavirus (COVID-19): Recovery Plan Scrutiny 87 - 94



STRATEGIC (OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY) COMMITTEE

19 NOVEMBER 2020

PRESENT:

Councillors Spruce (Chairman), Norman (Vice-Chair), Ball, Checkland, Grange, Greatorex, A Little, Matthews, Warfield, Westwood and White.

(In accordance with Council Procedure Rule No.17 Councillors attended the meeting).

48 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Gwilt (Vice-Chairman)

49 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Grange declared a personal interest if GDPR matters were discussed as she was working with a digitec company.

50 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting were circulated and subject to the inclusion of the Cabinet members in attendance, were agreed as a correct record. It was noted that matters were preceding regarding a press release to minority communities which was welcomed by the Committee. It was asked if progress had been made in contacting local MPs regarding government funding to help leisure centres and it was reported that the two MPs had been written to and the Cabinet Member for Leisure was awaiting details on how to apply for the grant made available by government.

RESOLVED: That the subject to amendments, the minutes be signed as a correct record.

51 WORK PROGRAMME

The work programme was circulated and it was noted that when discussed at the Overview & Scrutiny Coordinating Group, it was agreed for the item on LEP's to remain with Economic Growth, Environment & Development (Overview & Scrutiny) Committee. It was also noted that the Coordinating Group had agreed to split Commercialisation and the Company into two separate items. It was requested that an item on equality and diversity be added and it was agreed to look at this further. It was also agreed to consider an item on maternity//paternity leave for Members.

RESOLVED: That the work programme be noted and amended were required.

52 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2020-2025

The Committee received a report on the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for 2020-2025 including the Revenue Budget, Capital Strategy and Capital Programme and General Reserves. It was reported that the version under consideration now reflected the approval by Council on 13 October 2020 to remove the budgets related to the ICT Cloud Project and the Property Investment Strategy. It was noted that the funding gap would be increased by the end of the Strategy and that the report presented proposals on how to reduce it. The impact of the pandemic was noted by the Committee including the reduction of income usually raised

through sales, fees and charges. The Committee also noted that the government settlement was still unknown at this point except that it would be another one year settlement for 2021/22. The Cabinet Member committed to inform all Councillors when these details were received. The Head of Finance and Procurement then gave a brief presentation on the current situation of the MTFS and any impacts. It was reported that the level of uncertainty was unprecedented this year in relation to the MTFS with the one year Spending Review and Covid-19.

The Committee then asked questions and gave comments and Members wished to give their thanks to Officers in the Finance service for their hard work in such an uncertain climate. Thanks was also given to all Officers who have been able to get support to so many residents and businesses during this pandemic.

It was asked whether there was merit in postponing the MTFS process until more information including the government settlement was known. It was reported that the current timeframe was not different to previous years and the MTFS would be considered again at O&S in January once that information was known and fed into the budget.

It was asked whether admin costs were covered by the Covid-19 related grants and it was reported that what would usually happen was a separate grant to cover these costs which were not always announced with the main grant nor released at the same time however they rarely covered the true picture of those admin costs.

Due to uncertainty for residents, it was asked if a referendum on Council Tax increases would be ruled out and it was noted that it would be wrong to fully rule out at this time without all the information but it was not the intended route to take.

It was noted that there was enough money granted to the Council for 66 applications from residents for the main category and 40 applications for the discretionary category as part of the Test and Trace Support Scheme and it was asked if this was deemed sufficient especially taking into account the size of the district. It was reported that as at 11 November 2020 there had been 40 applications on the main scheme and 15 on the discretionary scheme.

It was also asked why the sports and leisure service was being reviewed and no community benefit had been identified given there was an obesity crisis.

On the Capital programme, it was noted that there was no money from 2021 onwards under the Developing Prosperity and little under the Shaping Place heading except replacing vehicles. It was reported that nothing was built into the Capital Programme until the project was confirmed.

It was confirmed that income generated from the sale of land from Netherstowe and Leyfields was conditional of planning permission being granted.

When asked, it was reported that the uptake of Garden Waste subscription had increased due to lockdown and residents having time or wishing to garden more. It was confirmed that the charge for green waste disposal would be frozen.

- RESOLVED: (1) That the contents of the report be noted; and
- (2) That the intention to remain part of the Staffordshire and Stoke Business Rates Pool for 2021/22 subject to the outcome of the Local Government Finance Settlement for 2021/22 be noted.

53 PROCUREMENT STRATEGY (INCLUDING A LOCAL PROCUREMENT CODE)

The Committee received a report on the draft Procurement Strategy which intended to move the Council from where it currently was to where it wanted

to be in terms of procurement including more focus on local procurement. It was reported that the strategy took account of the new Strategic Plan, latest regulations and provided greater clarity regarding the role of the procurement process. It was noted that after a period of joint working with other authorities, the service had been brought back in-house and the new Procurement Manager was introduced to Members. It was reported that a new Procurement Specialist had also been recruited.

The Committee received a presentation from the Head of Finance and Procurement on the background of the procurement service, the LGA National Procurement Strategy 2018, where the Council is when assessed against that national strategy and where it was hoped to be in the future.

Environmental impact was discussed and it was asked how Officers would account for this and judge how environmental impact would be considered as part of the procurement process. It was reported that evaluating environmental impact could be done in a number of ways and the preferred approach would be a core set of basic evaluation criteria but then for the bigger, or higher risk procurement projects, there would be more tailored questions for example use of fuel and transportation or use of sustainable building products. Members were pleased to hear that this was a priority for the Procurement Manager. It was requested that the core criteria considered by Members.

It was noted that much of the procurement legislation was driven by the EU and with Brexit, these laws would be changing and it was asked how flexible the local element of the Strategy was to accommodate those national changes. It was reported that EU legislation was translated into UK legislation which was currently the Public Contract Regulations 2015 and a Statutory Instrument had just been announced to amend it and remove any reference to the EU organisations and replaced with UK ones but the majority if the regulations were not subject to change at this time but a review would be likely at some point. It was also reported that the Council's strategy was not focused on meeting the regulations specifically but set a strategic direction for procurement.

Local spend was discussed and it was noted that 10% was the average annual spend in the area (by post code) and there would be great gains in the local economy if that could be at least doubled. It was suggested that another bullet point in the strategy be added to state to increase the use of small and medium size suppliers particularly local enterprises as it would highlight the desire for local procurement. It was noted that local procurement was implied in the bullet point regarding social value however it was agreed that it could be clearer and more explicit and so wording would be reviewed.

The financial implications were considered and it was asked whether the reported savings were net after the cost of the procurement team or gross. It was confirmed that it was gross and it was then requested that a net figure be included as part of the performance indicators.

Targets and the percentage of suppliers paid within 30 days was then discussed and it was felt that it would be more important to pay within agreed contracts and not necessarily 30 days and so was requested a change in the target and split to say that 90% would have contractual terms of less than 30 days and 100% of payments would be made to those contractual arrangements. This was to take into account those very large suppliers may have terms of longer than 30 days and focus could be made to those small companies where cash flow is vital especially in a post covid climate.

It was finally noted that buying groups have more purchasing power and so the potential of entering into contracts with other local authorities or partners should be explored.

RESOLVED: That the views of the Committee be taken into account and the Draft Procurement Strategy be noted.

54 DIGITAL INNOVATION STRATEGY 2020-2024

The Committee received a report on the proposed Digital Innovation Strategy which focused on the needs of the Council's customers, and how engagement could be increased, and customer needs and expectation met, through the use of innovation, digital channels and technology. It was reported that the Strategy proposed activities under four work streams, E-Services and Engagement, Technology, Infrastructure, and Capability to deliver the Council's aims in this area.

Members requested that jargon used in the draft Strategy be reviewed as lay people may not understand and it was agreed to do this. A suggestion was made that a glossary might be helpful in this regard.

Accessibility was raised and a request made that thought be given to this especially printable forms that can be accessed and given to those who do not have access or ability to use a digital platform. It was also requested that contact numbers still be made available also.

Security was then referred to and it was suggested that the proposed Governance meetings also include this matter as well as privacy and compliance. There was a suggestion that security regarding access, processes and controls had not been defined enough and the bullet point on customer focus could include a commitment that residents data rights comes first. It was reported that the governance meetings would be to aid end to end processes and consider how technology can be used for whole tasks. It was also reported that all new technologies were investigated to ensure data security and there were separate policies to deal with that. When asked, it was confirmed that residents data would not be sold to marketing companies but used to aid access to, and improvement of, services and that GDPR was complied with. There was a suggestion that there was some guidance that would be advantageous if made available to ensure residents knew their rights.

Councillor Grange wished to have it recorded that she was not in favour of the draft Digital Innovation Strategy in its current form and required more explanation of the what the Council wish to do with residents data.

There were views that the draft Strategy was not innovative enough however it was noted that this was an overarching strategy and details of projects would lie beneath it.

RESOLVED: That subject to the comments made, Cabinet be recommended to adopt the Strategy.

55 REVIEW OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The Committee discussed the creation of a Member Task Group to review the Council's Committee structure and make recommendations for any changes. It was reported that since the review of the Constitution in 2018, which saw the current range of committees established, the Council had adopted a new more streamlined Strategic Plan. It was noted that as a result of recent adaptations due to the pandemic, the way committees operated including online meetings was fundamentally different and was more resource intensive and required additional officer support.

The Committee agreed with the approach and noted that a review would bring a more effective structure especially in Scrutiny. It was felt that performance by Members at Committees should be considered although also recognised that some Councillors strengths are as Ward Members and this should not be forgotten.

It was agreed that the Chairman would also chair the task group.

- RESOLVED: (1) That a member task group be created to suggest improvements, potential new models for scrutiny, and to identify committees which could be combined, reduced or deleted;
- (2) That all members be sent a questionnaire to establish their views on the effectiveness of all meetings and any training requirements; and
- (3) That the task group study best practice from other authorities and report back to the January meeting where recommendations will then be put to full Council for consideration.

(The Meeting closed at 8.05 pm)

CHAIRMAN

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STRATEGIC (OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY) COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2020-2021 v6

Item	23 Jun 2020	1 Sept 2020	19 Nov 2020	27 Jan 2021	Details/Reasons	Officer	Member Lead
Policy Development							
Terms of Reference	✓				To remind the Committee of the terms of reference and suggest any amendments	CLL	
Draft Medium Term Financial Strategy 2020-2025		✓	✓		Report to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MTFS timetable and budget principles. • Latest projections for the revenue budget, general reserves and capital programme. 	AT	RS
Medium Term Financial Strategy (Revenue and Capital) 2020-25				✓	Scrutinise the Council's resource plans in relation to the delivery of the Strategic Plan priorities	AT	RS
Strategic Plan Outturn 2016-2020		✓			Performance report detailing the final outturn of the projects detailed in the Strategic Plan 2016 to 2020	CT	AS

STRATEGIC (OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY) COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2020-2021 v6

Item	23 Jun 2020	1 Sept 2020	19 Nov 2020	27 Jan 2021	Details/Reasons	Officer	Member Lead
Delivery Plan and Corporate Indicators	✓				Details of the Delivery Plan and Corporate Indicators used to achieve the outcomes of the new Strategic Plan 2020 to 2024 - July 2020	CT	AS
Digital Strategy			✓			KR	AS
Communications and Engagement Strategy	✓					BW	AS
Procurement Strategy			✓		Including a Local Procurement Code	AT	RS
Review of Committee meetings			✓	✓	To create a cross council Member Task Group to review the Committee structure.	CT	AL

STRATEGIC (OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY) COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2020-2021 v6

Item	23 Jun 2020	1 Sept 2020	19 Nov 2020	27 Jan 2021	Details/Reasons	Officer	Member Lead
Covid-19 Recovery Plan				✓	To consider the Council's Covid-19 Recovery Plan and the areas relevant to the remit of the Committee	CT	DP
Commercialisation and Development Company					Agreed by O&S Coordinating Group to be slip into separate areas for consideration. Request for a report on a review of Commercialisation activity to be brought to Committee in the new Municipal year.	KR	
Briefing Papers							
Money Matters 2020/21: Review of Financial Performance against the Financial Strategy.	✓	✓	✓	✓	Scrutinise financial performance during the financial year.	AT	RS

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Medium Term Financial Strategy (Revenue and Capital) 2020-2025 (MTFS)



Report of the Cabinet Member for Finance, Procurement, Customer Services and Revenues & Benefits

Date: 27 January 2021
 Agenda Item: 5
 Contact Officer: Diane Tilley / Anthony Thomas
 Tel Number: 01543 308001 / 01543 308012
 Email: Diane.tilley@lichfielddc.gov.uk
Anthony.thomas@lichfielddc.gov.uk
 Key Decision? YES
 Local Ward Full Council
 Members

**Strategic
(Overview and
Scrutiny)
Committee**

1. Executive Summary

The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)

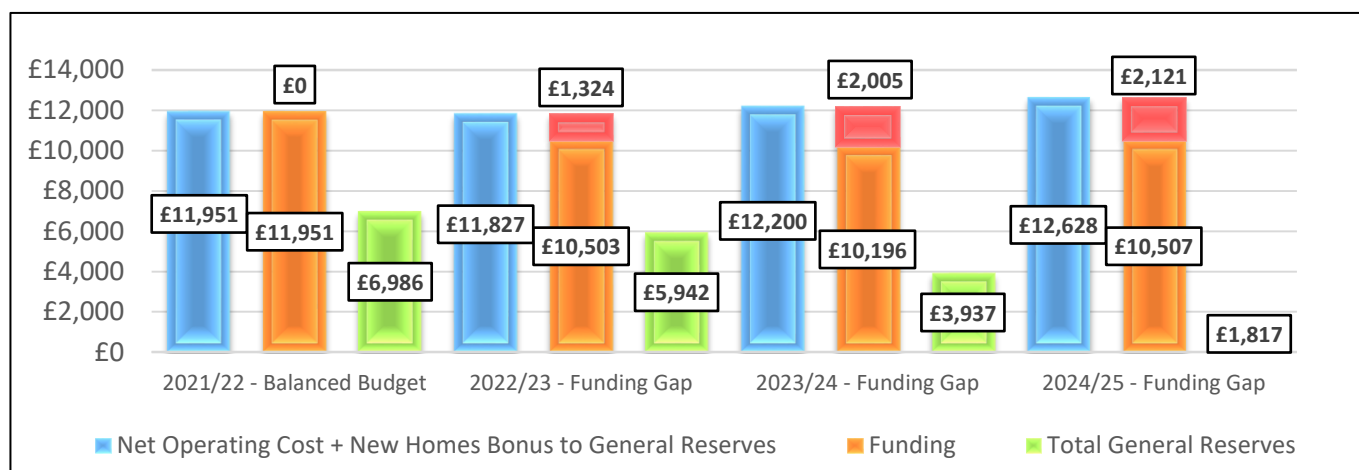
- 1.1 The ability to deliver the outcomes set out in the **Strategic Plan** is dependent on the resources available in the MTFS.
- 1.2 The MTFS is the overall budget framework and consists of the Revenue Budget, Capital Strategy and Capital Programme and General Reserves.
- 1.3 The timetable for consideration of the various elements of the MTFS is detailed in the table below:

Date	Meeting	Topics
Budget Consultation Takes Place	01/09/2020	Strategic (OS) Committee
	06/10/2020	Cabinet
	19/11/2020	Strategic (OS) Committee
	01/12/2020	Council Taxbase
	27/01/2021	Strategic (OS) Committee
03/02/2021	Audit and Member Standards Committee	To review the Treasury Management Strategy Statement
09/02/2021	Cabinet	To recommend the Medium Term Financial Strategy and Council Tax increase to Council
16/02/2021	Council	Approve the Medium Term Financial Strategy and set the Council Tax

- 1.4 **The inherently high level of uncertainty surrounding the Local Government Finance regime has been compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic and other potential Government policy changes such as devolution and the review of the Planning system.**
- 1.5 **This unprecedented level of uncertainty means that to ensure the financial sustainability of the Council, the approved budget principles must be rigorously applied in controlling any proposed budgetary growth.**
- 1.6 The Council has a statutory duty to set a balanced budget and to calculate the level of Council Tax for its area. The Chief Financial Officer (CFO) has a statutory duty to ensure the figures provided for estimating and financial planning are robust and will stand up to Audit scrutiny.
- 1.7 The Local Government Act 2003 places duties and requirements on the Authority on how it sets and monitors its budgets, including the CFO's report on the Robustness of the Budget and adequacy of Reserves and this report forms part of the MTFS.

The Revenue Budget

- 1.8 The Revenue Budget (in £000) with a balanced budget in 2021/22 and Funding Gaps (shown in red in the graph below) in later years is shown in detail at **APPENDIX A** and in summary below:



- 1.9 The Original Budget approved by Council on 18 February 2020 approved a transfer to General Reserves of **£1,633,000** for 2020/21 (a planned transfer of **£462,000** plus **£1,171,000** of New Homes Bonus in excess of the Revenue Budget 'cap').
- 1.10 A Briefing Note related to financial performance in 2020/21 has been circulated to Members of the Committee and this shows a projected contribution to General Reserves of **£183,180** compared to the Approved Budget with a **£86,890** contribution to General Reserves.
- 1.11 The significant projected reduction from the Original Budget is as a direct consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic. The level of additional expenditure and income reduction is projected to exceed the Government support provided and therefore will need to be funded through the use of General Reserves.
- 1.12 The MTFs from 2021/22 onwards has been prepared in the context of unprecedented volatility and uncertainty and whilst estimates have been made on the potential impact, there remains significant uncertainty in 2020/21 and subsequent years.
- 1.13 The Council is legally required to balance the budget in the first year of 2021/22 and to set out its proposals to balance the further financial years. In 2021/22 a 'balanced budget' where income equals expenditure is recommended with a risk or recovery contingency budget included of **£1,141,380**.
- 1.14 In later years, it is assumed that the Fair Funding Review, Business Rates Reform and a new housing incentive scheme will be implemented from 2022/23. It is projected that District Councils including Lichfield DC will be detrimentally impacted by these changes through lower funding and therefore at this stage Funding Gaps are projected.
- 1.15 At the end of 2021/22, the Council is projected to have **£6,986,000** of total general reserves available (£5,386,000 after taking account of the Minimum Level of Reserves of £1,600,000) to assist with balancing the budget in future years, if needed.
- 1.16 General Reserves based current projections, are sufficient to balance the budget until 2024/25. However this is not a sustainable approach and the Council will need to make savings or achieve additional income to close the Funding Gap by 2024/25.

The Capital Strategy and the Capital Programme

- 1.17 The Capital Strategy and the Capital Programme are outlined in **APPENDICES B & C**.

The CFO's Report on the Robustness of the Budget and the Adequacy of Reserves

- 1.18 In accordance with the Local Government Act 2003 (Sections 25-27) and to comply with CIPFA Guidance on Local Authority Reserves and Balances, the CFO is required to formally report to Members on the robustness of the Budget and the adequacy of Reserves (**APPENDIX D**).

Budget Consultation

- 1.19 The results of the Budget Consultation for 2021/22 are summarised in the consultation section and are shown in detail at **APPENDIX F**.

2. Recommendations

That the Committee scrutinise the MTFS and provide feedback to Cabinet in relation to:

- 2.1 The 2021/22 Revenue Budget, including the Amount to be met from Government Grants and Local Taxpayers of **£11,951,000** and a proposed level of Council Tax (the District Council element) for 2021/22 of **£185.07** (an increase of **£5.00** or **2.78%**) for a Band D equivalent property.
- 2.2 The MTFS 2020-25 Revenue Budgets set out in **APPENDIX A**.
- 2.3 The MTFS 2020-25 Capital Strategy including the 25 year capital investment model and the Capital Programme shown in **APPENDICES B & C**.
- 2.4 The requirements and duties that the Local Government Act 2003 places on the Authority on how it sets and monitors its Budgets, including the CFO's report on the robustness of the Budget and adequacy of Reserves shown in **APPENDIX D**.
- 2.5 The 25 year revenue financial planning model shown at **APPENDIX E**.
- 2.6 The results of the Budget Consultation shown at **APPENDIX F**.

3. Background

MTFS Budget Principles

- 3.1. To assist in preparing the Medium Term Financial Strategy, in common with a number of Councils, a set of principles were established to guide the preparation and management of the MTFS.
- 3.2. Council, on 15 October 2019, approved the budget principles identified below:
- Council will consider the medium term outlook when setting the level of Council Tax to ensure that a sustainable budget position is maintained;
 - Council will prioritise funding for statutory and regulatory responsibilities to ensure these are delivered in a way that meets our legal requirements and customer needs;
 - Council will continue to seek continuous improvement to enable further savings, efficiencies and income gains and provide budgets that are appropriate to service needs;
 - Council will ensure that all growth in the staffing establishment will be fully understood through robust business cases in order to ensure our resources match service and customer needs. Growth will usually be allowed where costs are offset by external funding, savings or additional income.
 - Council will not add to other ongoing revenue budgets unless these are unavoidable costs or corresponding savings are identified elsewhere.
 - Council will use robust business cases to prioritise capital funding so that we have a sustainable Capital Programme that meets statutory responsibilities, benefits the Council's overall revenue budget position, and ensures that existing assets are properly maintained.
 - Council will maintain an overall level of revenue reserves that are appropriate for the overall level of risks that the organisation faces, in order to overcome any foreseeable financial impact.

The Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement for 2021/22

- 3.3. The elements of the Provisional Finance Settlement for 2021/22 received on **17 December 2020**, relevant to this Council are:

Core Spending Power (CSP)

- This is the Government's preferred measure of Local Government resources including the income from Council Tax, retained Business Rates (based on Government baselines and therefore excluding any retained growth) and grants such as New Homes Bonus.
- For Lichfield District Council, Core Spending Power from 2020/21 to 2021/22 is assumed to increase by **0%** compared to the average for Shire Districts of **1.2%** and for England of **4.5%** (mainly due to additional resources for Upper Tier Authorities).
- The **0%** assumes Council Tax will increase by the maximum allowed and this increase would offset reductions in funding from other sources such as New Homes Bonus.
- In its CSP figures, MHCLG has assumed that the tax base will increase in 2021-22 for each authority in line with their average tax base increase since 2016-17 which in the current circumstances is an optimistic assumption.

Local Government Funding Reform

- No papers were published relating to the Fair Funding Review or the Business Rates Reset and the Minister would not confirm that the reforms will even take place next year.

Business Rates

- Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Business Rates Pool announced for 2021/22 subject to all authorities confirming participation following the provisional Settlement.
- No new discounts and reliefs have been announced in the settlement. Ministers have promised to consider "options for further COVID-19 related support ... [and] ... outline plans for 2021-22 reliefs in the New Year".
- Looking further into the future, the Government is undertaking a fundamental review of business rates. The Government will respond to the consultation in the spring, and this could result in changes in the operation of business rates and (potentially) to more radical reform.

Council Tax Principles

- District Councils will be able to increase their Band D by the higher of **1.99%** or **£5**. A **£5** increase for Lichfield District Council equates to an increase of **2.78%**.
- Parish councils will continue to not be subject to the referendum limits. As in previous years, the government has indicated it will keep this approach under review for future years

New Homes Bonus (NHB)

- A one year only allocation for 2021/22 which for Lichfield District Council is **£371,453** and the total payment including legacy payments for previous years is **£1,282,298**. This compares to the payment in 2020/21 of **£1,770,945**, and is a reduction of **£488,647 (28%)**.
- Once again, the government is making very clear that it wants to replace NHB, and replace it with something that is more "targeted". NHB will effectively end after 2022/23 (only one payment is due in 2022/23). Any replacement is unlikely to distribute as much funding as the NHB currently does, or to be distributed in the same way, but at least we should find out about the Government's intentions within a few months.
- Indications in the settlement were very vague "We will soon be inviting views on how we can reform the scheme from 2022/23 to ensure it is focussed where homes are needed most."

- There was also a suggestion from the Secretary of State that rewards would also be paid to those Councils with the most ambition. Forecasting the impact at authority level is almost impossible at this stage.

Negative Revenue Support Grant

- This has once again been abated for 2021/22.

Lower Tier Services Grant

- A new (one off) grant of £111m has been announced for 2021/22 and for Lichfield District Council this is **£151,399** and in part offsets reductions in New Homes Bonus.
- There are two elements to this grant with £90,146 allocated based on need and £61,253 allocated to ensure there is no reduction in Core Spending Power from 2020/21.

Tranche 5 of COVID-19 Support (not included in Core Spending Power)

- A further allocation of funding totalling £1.55bn was announced in the Spending Review for 2021/22 and Lichfield District Council's allocation is **£440,578**.

Local Council Tax Support Grant (not included in Core Spending Power)

- This is a new grant for 2021/22 of **£670m** and its purpose is to compensate authorities for the expected additional cost of Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) schemes in 2021/22.
- The Government is consulting on how to distribute the grant although the Council's indicative allocation announced on 18 December 2020 is **£126,451**.

Other Announcements (not included in Core Spending Power)

- **Sales, Fees and Charges (SFC) Scheme** - It was announced in SR20 that the SFC scheme would continue into the first quarter of 2021/22. The scheme will continue into 2021-22 unchanged. Many authorities had been wondering whether baseline would be reset, but the consultation document makes clear that 2020/21 budgeted income will remain the baseline against which income losses will be measured.
- **Council Tax and Business Rates Losses** – a scheme to fund 75% of irrecoverable losses in council tax and business rates was announced in SR20. This scheme will run in parallel to the requirement for billing authorities such as Lichfield District Council to spread the 2020/21 collection fund deficit over 3 years.

3.4. At present, no funding is assumed in 2020/21 from the National Leisure Recovery Fund due to this process being bid based or from the Council Tax and Business Rates losses scheme because guidance is still being developed. These two initiatives could provide significant additional resources that would reduce the impact on the Council's General Reserves in 2020/21 and in later years.

3.5. The Provisional Settlement is subject to the outcome of consultation and the Council responded to this on 12 January 2021.

3.6. The Settlement is in line with the assumptions used in the Draft MTFs presented to this Committee on 19 November 2020. Although it also included an additional New Homes Bonus payment for 2021/22 and some additional funding being provided to further mitigate the impact of COVID-19. This means that the level of uncertainty for 2021/22 remains as **High**.

3.7. However the financial benefits at this stage, only impact on 2021/22 with the majority of key income streams (Business Rates, Fair Funding and New Homes Bonus) currently being reviewed for implementation in 2022/23. Therefore the level of uncertainty or risk from **2022/23** remains as **High**.

The Revenue Budget

3.8. The inflationary impact compared to the approved Medium Term Financial Strategy is shown below:

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Inflation Changes – assumes an element of pay freeze in 2021/22 and then 2% per annum	(159)	(165)	(168)	(169)

3.9. The budget variations compared to the approved Medium Term Financial Strategy are shown below:

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Savings from delay to coach park opening, budget realignment based on trend analysis and other changes	(163)	(170)	(149)	(198)
Events	20	20	20	20
COVID-19 – Ongoing Impact	289	647	294	187
COVID-19 – Risk or Recovery Contingency Budget	1,141	0	0	0
<u>MTFS Savings and Bids</u>				
Total growth bids (Strategic OS Committee 19/11/2020)	98	62	63	65
Total Funding Gap bids (Strategic OS Committee 19/11/2020)	(467)	(518)	(548)	(579)
Additional growth bids agreed by Cabinet for ICT/Property	85	87	89	90
Total Budget Variations	1,003	128	(231)	(415)

3.10. The funding changes compared to the approved Medium Term Financial Strategy are shown below:

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Retained Business Rates – additional retained growth	(1,342)	(501)	(462)	(399)
Business Rates Cap – additional compensation grant	(110)	0	0	0
Council Tax – lower income	152	171	166	179
New Homes Bonus – allocation in 2021/22 and then no awards	(371)	0	300	200
Returned New Homes Bonus – grant returned in alternative ways	51	74	0	0
Lower Tier Services Grant – new grant	(151)	0	0	0
Local Council Tax Support Grant – new grant	(126)	0	0	0
Council Tax Collection Fund – projected deficit in 2020/21	73	100	100	35
Funding Changes	(1,824)	(157)	104	15

Modelled Changes and their Impact on the Revenue Budget and the Funding Gap

3.11 A summary of the modelled changes to the Revenue Budget compared to the approved Medium Term Financial Strategy and their impact on the Revenue Budget Funding Gap are shown below:

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Approved MTFS Revenue Budget Funding Gap	982	1,519	2,300	2,692
Inflation Changes	(159)	(165)	(168)	(169)
Budget Variations Inc. revenue implications of Capital and Treasury	1,003	128	(231)	(415)
Funding Changes	(1,824)	(157)	104	15
Sub Total Modelled Changes	(982)	(194)	(295)	(570)
Recommended Central Scenario MTFS Revenue Budget Funding Gap	0	1,324	2,005	2,121

3.12 The Recommended Revenue Budget using the Central Scenario is shown in detail at **APPENDIX A** and in summary below together with more optimistic and more pessimistic scenarios:

	2020/21		2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
	Original Budget £000	Approved Budget £000				
LEVEL OF UNCERTAINTY / RISK	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH
Enabling people	1,580	1,581	1,469	1,478	1,510	1,538
Shaping place	3,470	3,237	3,402	4,015	4,269	4,362
Developing prosperity	(1,184)	(772)	(621)	(557)	(442)	(371)
A good council	6,330	6,198	7,472	6,810	6,863	7,022
Corporate Expenditure	1,627	1,318	229	81	0	77
Revenue Expenditure (including transfers to or from general reserves)	11,822	11,563	11,951	11,827	12,200	12,628
Revenue Funding	(12,284)	(12,284)	(11,951)	(10,503)	(10,196)	(10,507)
Central Scenario Funding Gap / (transfer to General Reserves)	(462)	(721)	0	1,324	2,005	2,121

More Optimistic scenario	(462)	(721)	(396)	465	805	868
More Pessimistic scenario	(462)	(721)	1,211	2,116	2,817	2,938

	2020/21		2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
	Original Budget £000	Approved Budget £000				
LEVEL OF UNCERTAINTY / RISK	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH
Employees	13,435	13,518	13,916	14,260	14,710	15,136
Premises	1,135	1,144	1,124	1,163	1,202	1,245
Transport	1,647	1,645	1,653	1,663	1,668	1,683
Supplies and Services	6,115	5,815	5,278	5,964	6,231	6,337
Third Party Payments	555	655	664	679	689	705
Transfer Payments (benefits)	13,492	13,492	13,492	13,492	13,492	13,492
COVID-19 impacts	0	1,709	1,430	647	294	187
External Income (including benefit grants)	(26,184)	(26,024)	(25,654)	(25,952)	(26,069)	(26,204)
Corporate Expenditure	456	147	(363)	(369)	(17)	47
Revenue Expenditure	10,651	12,101	11,540	11,547	12,200	12,628
Revenue Funding	(12,284)	(12,284)	(11,951)	(10,503)	(10,196)	(10,507)
Transfer (from) general reserves COVID-19	0	(1,709)	0	0	0	0
New Homes Bonus to general reserves	1,171	1,171	411	280	0	0
Central Scenario Funding Gap (transfer to General Reserves)	(462)	(721)	0	1,324	2,005	2,121

Income Scenarios

3.13 The headline assumptions used in each of these three scenarios are detailed below:

Central Scenario

- **Council Tax** – lower annual property growth, a **30%** increase in working age Council Tax support in 2021/22 reducing to **10%** in 2024/25 and **£5** Band D Council Tax increases to 2023/24 followed by **1.99%** thereafter.
- **New Homes Bonus** – legacy payments paid until 2022/23 and no replacement scheme from 2023/24.
- **Business Rates** – negative Revenue Support Grant is abated in 2021/22 and then forms part of funding regime from 2022/23 with no transitional arrangements. Business Rate Growth is retained in full in 2021/22 and then an element is retained from 2022/23. The Council is part of the Business Rates Pool in 2021/22.
- **Sales, Fees and Charges** – a risk based (high **100%** impacted, medium **80%** impacted and low **60%** impacted) headline reduction of **7.5%** in 2021/22 reducing to **1%** in 2024/25.

Optimistic Scenario

- **Council Tax** – lower annual property growth, a **30%** increase in working age Council Tax support in 2021/22 reducing to **0%** in 2024/25 and **£5** Band D Council Tax increases in all years.
- **New Homes Bonus** – legacy payments paid until 2022/23 and a replacement scheme from 2023/24 with an annually reducing income commencing at **(£300,000)**.
- **Business Rates** – negative Revenue Support Grant is abated in 2021/22 and then forms part of funding regime from 2022/23 with no transitional arrangements. Business Rate Growth is retained in full in 2021/22 and then a larger element is retained from 2022/23. The Council is part of the Business Rates Pool in 2021/22.
- **Sales, Fees and Charges** – a risk based (high **50%** impacted, medium **30%** impacted and low **10%** impacted) headline reduction of **1.5%** in 2021/22 reducing to **1%** in 2024/25.

Pessimistic Scenario

- **Council Tax** – lower annual property growth, a **100%** increase in working age Council Tax support in 2021/22 reducing to **10%** in 2024/25 and **1.99%** Band D Council Tax increases in all years.
- **New Homes Bonus** – legacy payments paid until 2022/23 and no replacement scheme from 2023/24.
- **Business Rates** – negative Revenue Support Grant is abated in 2021/22 and then forms part of funding regime from 2022/23 with no transitional arrangements. Minimal Business Rate Growth is retained from 2021/22. The Council is not part of the Business Rates Pool in 2021/22.
- **Sales, Fees and Charges** – a risk based (high **100%** impacted, medium **100%** impacted and low **60%** impacted) headline reduction of **10%** in 2021/22 reducing to **2.5%** in 2024/25.

The Capital Strategy

3.14 The Capital Strategy is shown at **APPENDIX B** and sets out the Council’s framework for managing the Capital Programme including:

- **Capital expenditure**, including the approval process, long-term financing strategy, asset management, maintenance requirements, planned disposals and funding restrictions.
- **Debt and borrowing and treasury management**, including projections for the level of borrowing, capital financing requirement and liability benchmark, provision for the repayment of debt, the authorised limit and operational boundary for the coming year and the authority’s approach to treasury management.
- **Commercial activities**, including due diligence processes, the authority’s risk appetite, proportionality in respect of overall resources, requirements for independent and expert advice and scrutiny arrangements.
- **Other long-term liabilities**, such as financial guarantees.
- **Knowledge and skills**, including a summary of that available to the authority and its link to the authority’s risk appetite.

3.15 The level of risk associated with the Capital Strategy has reduced following the removal of planned Investment in Property and its funding through borrowing. As the Council’s Chief Financial Officer, I have assessed the current overall risk as **Material (yellow)**.

The Capital Programme

3.16 In total capital investment included in the service and financial planning capital bids and planned funding is summarised below:

	Assessed Score	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000
Financial Information System	76		50			
Energy Insulation Programme	65					10
Disabled Facilities Grants	60		(308)	(44)	(44)	906
Home Repair Assistance Grants	57					15
Beacon Park Jogging Track	46	30				
Dam Street Public Conveniences Refurbishment	45	40				
Bin Replacement	43					150
Beacon Park Equipment Storage	42	100				
Total Spend		170	(258)	(44)	(44)	1,081

Usable Capital Receipts	(170)	308	44	44	
Existing Revenue Budgets					(150)
New Burdens – Financial Information System Grants		(50)			(931)
Total Funding	(170)	258	44	44	(1,081)
Shortfall in Funding & Borrowing Need	0	0	0	0	0

3.17 In addition to the bids above, the Council has been successful in an external funding bid for **£1,062,580** for Burntwood Leisure Centre. The investment must be delivered by 6 June 2021 and the expenditure and grant has also been included in the recommended Capital Programme.

3.18 The capital investment is based on an ‘invest to save’ approach that will result in energy savings at the leisure centre. These cost savings will be incorporated into the MTFS during 2021/22.

- 3.19 A number of projects contained in the Approved Capital Programme have revenue implications such as operating costs, the cost of debt repayment, revenue funding or savings.
- 3.20 Capital Bids submitted as part of the Service and Financial Planning process are also required to identify any ongoing revenue implications and where debt is to be utilised for funding, debt repayment costs are calculated.
- 3.21 The early repayment of capital investment at Burntwood Leisure Centre as an ‘invest to save’ project was identified in the Report to this Committee on 19 November 2020 although it was highlighted the funding to enable the option was still being finalised.
- 3.22 The funding of **£979,000** to enable this option to be implemented in 2020/21 has been identified. It is proposed and assumed in the MTFs that uncommitted capital receipts of **(£509,000)** and the uncommitted element of the Leisure VAT repayment earmarked reserve of **(£470,000)** are utilised to generate annual savings of **(£140,000)**.
- 3.23 In the event this funding is not available, then other alternative resources will be identified.
- 3.24 The Capital Programme revenue implications contained in the Approved Budget (at the 8 month’s stage of 2020/21) and the revenue implications of Capital Bids are shown below:

Revenue Implications	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000
Interest on Loan to the LA Company	0	(4)	(18)	(22)	(22)
Friary Grange - Refurbishment	50	135	135	135	135
Coach Park Operation Costs	0	0	0	50	50
IT Hardware	9	9	4	(38)	9
Replacement Leisure Centre Debt Costs	0	0	0	0	294
Revenue Budget - Bin Replacement	150	150	150	150	0
Revenue Budget - Other Projects	12	0	0	0	0
Revenue Budget - Corporate	182	0	0	213	0
Sub Total - Approved Budget	403	290	271	488	466
Burntwood LC early repayment of capital	979	(140)	(140)	(140)	(140)
Internal Funding (see below)	(979)	0	0	0	0
Financial Information System	0	(20)	(40)	(40)	(40)
Revenue Budget - Bin Replacement	0	0	0	0	150
Sub Total - Service and Financial Planning	0	(160)	(180)	(180)	(30)
Capital Programme Total	403	130	91	308	436

Leisure VAT repayment reserve	(470)
Uncommitted Capital Receipts	(509)
Total	(979)

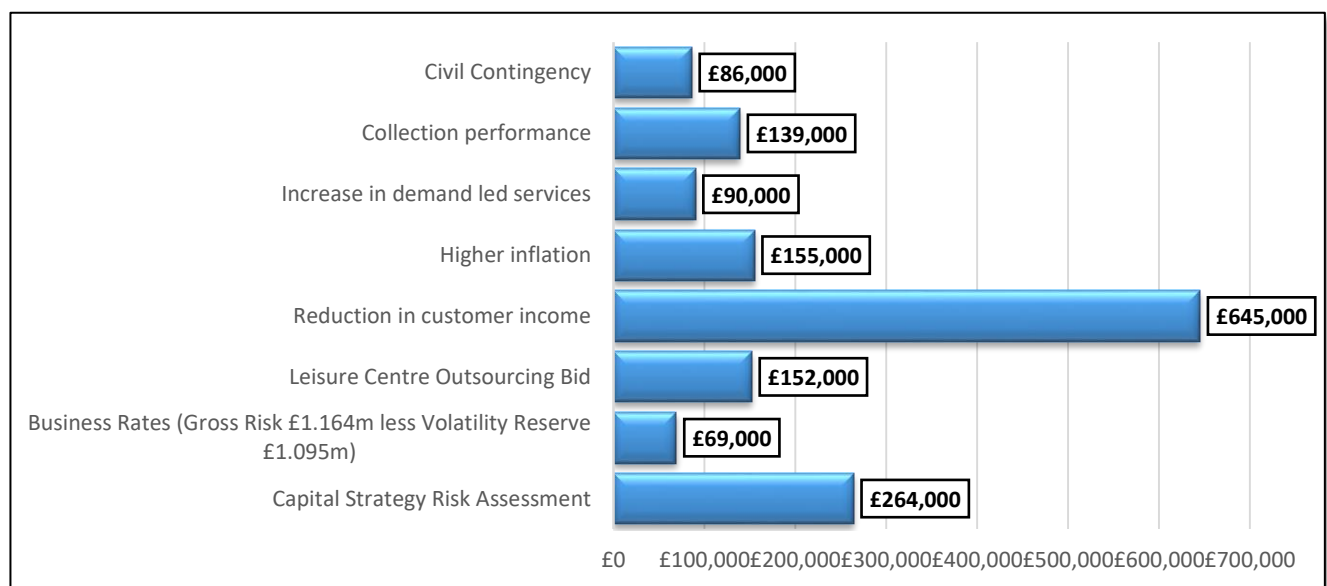
- 3.25 The Capital Programme is summarised below and is shown in detail at **APPENDIX C**:

	2020/21		2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000
	Original Budget £000	Revised Budget £000				
LEVEL OF UNCERTAINTY / RISK	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH
Enabling people	3,424	2,223	3,375	3,684	3,576	1,315
Shaping place	1,045	670	1,102	3,674	270	293
Developing prosperity	625	522	935	557	43	0
A good Council	12,657	564	1,118	515	389	0
Capital Expenditure	17,751	3,979	6,530	8,430	4,278	1,608
Capital Funding	6,087	3,873	6,252	6,081	2,018	1,608
Borrowing Need	11,664	106	278	2,349	2,260	0

Usable Capital Receipts	(1,394)	(1,652)	(888)	(294)	(86)	(95)
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Opinion of CFO on the Adequacy of Reserves and the Robustness of the Estimates

- 3.26 The Chartered Institute of Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) provided the first release of its Financial Resilience Index on 16 December 2019 (Lichfield DC's information compared to all District Councils and Nearest Neighbours is shown at **APPENDIX D**). The index showed this Council's position on a range of measures associated with financial risk.
- 3.27 The Resilience Index for 2020 has been delayed due to incomplete provisional data and is scheduled for release in early February 2021 subject to MHCLG data release timetables and CIPFA's own internal assurance.
- 3.28 However given the Resilience Index is currently based on backward looking measures rather than the future financial challenges identified in forward looking Medium Term Financial Strategies, it will not take into account the significant and ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic but will provide a baseline for future comparison.
- 3.29 The Resilience Index published in 2019 identified that in the majority of the measures selected, including those related to the level and change in reserves, this Council was at the lower end of the risk spectrum compared to all other District Councils and Nearest Neighbour Authorities. This has meant that the added financial resilience and sustainability concerns presented by COVID-19 whilst being challenging, has not been a significant risk at this stage for this Council.
- 3.30 It remains prudent for the Council to maintain an adequate 'working balance' or Minimum Level that is part of its general reserves. A risk assessment approach in line with Best Practice is used to determine the required Minimum Level and the level of general and earmarked reserves.
- 3.31 The main elements of the risk assessment are shown in detail at **APPENDIX D** and below:



- 3.32 The Chief Finance Officer (CFO) has been involved throughout the entire budget process, including revising the MTFs, input to the drafting of the budget, the ongoing financial monitoring and reporting process, evaluation of investments and savings, engagement with Members of the Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Committees, advising colleagues, the strategic choices activities, challenge and evaluation activities, and scrutiny of the budget.
- 3.33 I am of the opinion that for a Council of this size and with our recent record of prudent spending, effective Risk Management, robust budgeting and effective Budget monitoring and control, a General Minimum Reserve level of **£1,600,000** remains adequate.
- 3.34 It is important to note that whilst the level for 2021/22 is the same as 2020/21, there have been changes to specific risks. In addition, several risks such as Business Rates have specific earmarked reserves and specific budget risk based reductions related to income streams including sales, fees and charges have been incorporated within the MTFs.

Projected General Reserves

3.35 The total projected level of general reserves are shown below using the central scenario together with projections using more optimistic and pessimistic scenarios:

	2020/21		2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
	Original Budget £000	Revised Budget £000				
LEVEL OF UNCERTAINTY / RISK	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH
Available General Reserves Year Start	4,792	4,792	4,975	5,386	4,342	2,338
(Funding Gap) / transfer to General Reserves	462	721	0	(1,324)	(2,005)	(2,121)
COVID-19 Revenue Budget Impact		(1,709)				
New Homes Bonus in excess of the 'Cap'	1,171	1,171	411	280	0	0
Available General Reserves Year End	6,425	4,975	5,386	4,342	2,338	217
Minimum Level	1,600	1,600	1,600	1,600	1,600	1,600
Central Scenario Total General Reserves	8,025	6,575	6,986	5,942	3,938	1,817

More Optimistic scenario	8,025	6,575	7,382	7,197	6,392	5,524
More Pessimistic scenario	8,025	6,575	5,775	3,939	1,122	(1,816)

3.36 There is currently an unprecedented level of uncertainty in relation to Local Government Finance with a number of planned reforms. This unprecedented uncertainty has been amplified by the COVID-19 pandemic that will likely have an ongoing and long term impact on revenue budgets.

3.37 Financial planning in these circumstances with any degree of certainty is incredibly difficult especially when it is not clear when or if any of the planned reforms will be implemented.

3.38 However the scenarios in this report provide an indication of the impact on the MTFS from the use of different assumptions. The three scenarios utilised all currently project a funding gap in 2022/23 that continues to increase by 2024/25. The projected funding gaps are principally due to:

- The projected impact of the Fair Funding Review and the review of Business Rate Baselines where resources are likely to be redistributed from District Councils to Upper Tier authorities. These reviews reflect the need for additional funding to address the increasing demographic demands in adult social care and children's services.
- The additional costs related to delivering existing services such as inflation, pension costs, an increasing population and more properties.
- The desire to deliver new or enhanced often discretionary services such as a replacement leisure centre.

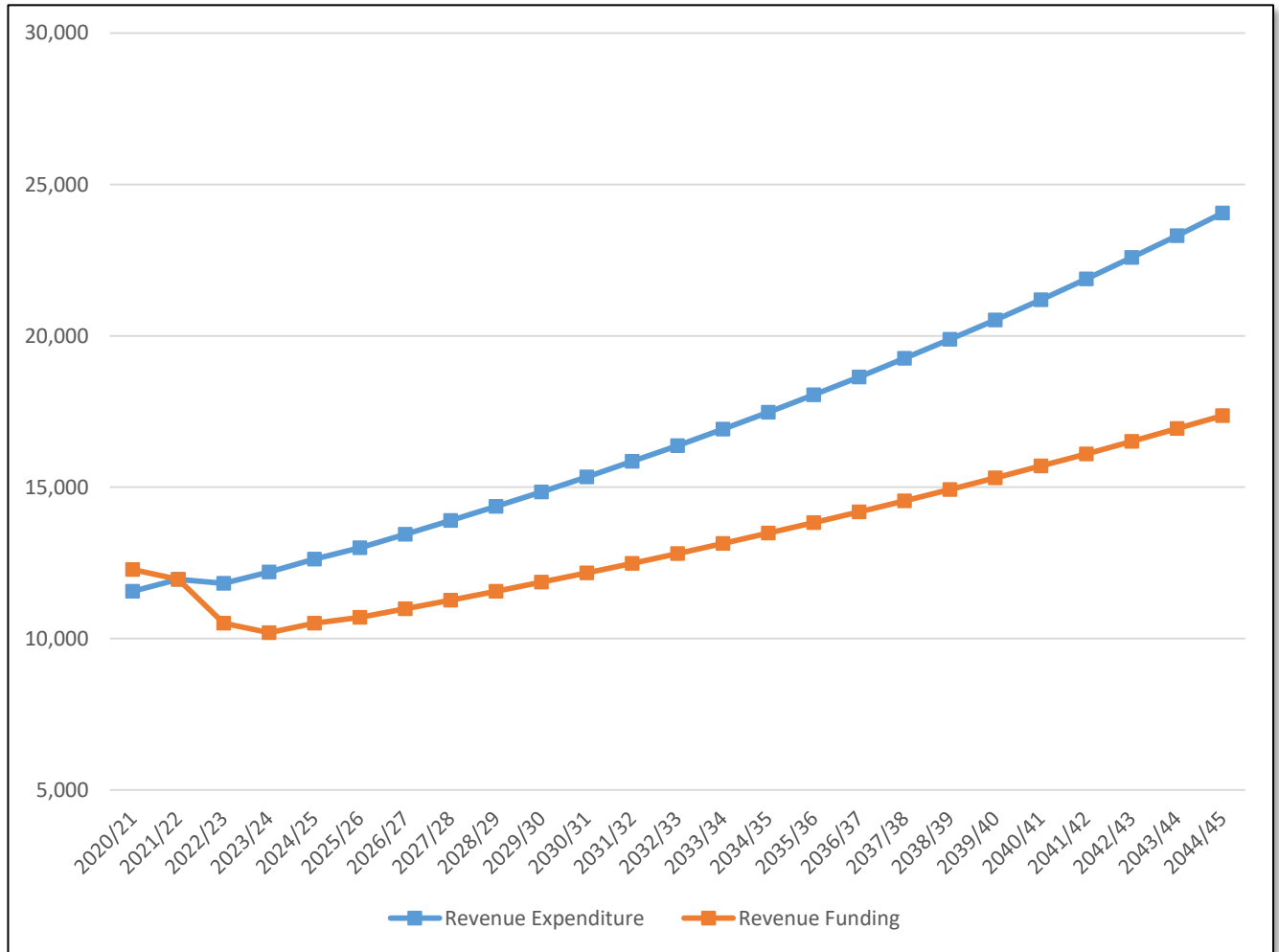
3.39 A replacement leisure centre of **£5,000,000** funded by borrowing has been included in the Approved MTFS. The estimated cost of borrowing of **£294,000** impacting from 2024/25 onwards for a budgeted period of 25 years has also been included in the Approved Revenue Budget.

3.40 This borrowing will be a long term financial commitment for the Council. Therefore given the range of financial projections at this time of unprecedented uncertainty, Council will need to be aware that to enter into long term commitments of this nature carry a very high risk that a balanced budget cannot be achieved or maintained.

3.41 It is very important therefore to highlight that to mitigate the risk of a statutory notice, focused on the inability to deliver a balanced budget, a robust and deliverable savings plan will need to be agreed together with a commitment to its delivery before any financial commitment can take place.

Longer Term Financial Planning

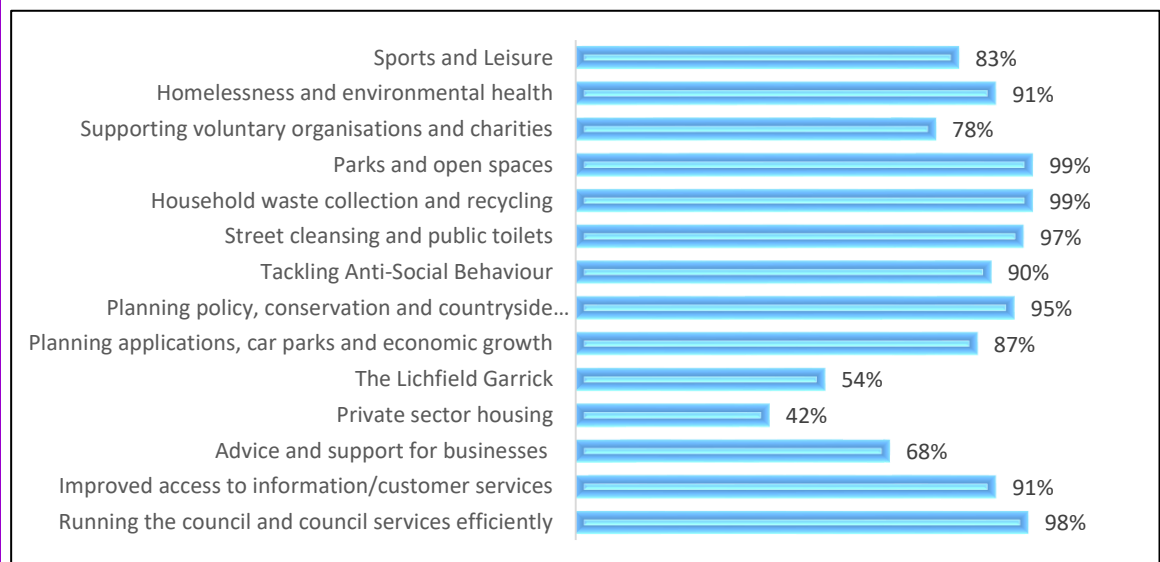
3.42 The updated longer term financial plan is shown in detail at **APPENDIX E** and in the chart below:



3.43 A direction of travel with different sustainable options for closing the projected funding gap needs to be identified and agreed. Once the outcome of the Spending Review 2021 and subsequent Local Government Settlement are known and the funding gap can be more accurately projected, the Council will then be able to quickly select the most appropriate options to address the financial position.

Alternative Options	In the main, the options are focused on the level of resource allocated to Strategic Priorities and the level of Council Tax increase.
Consultation	<p>The Council undertook a Budget Consultation exercise between 22 October 2020 and 31 December 2020.</p> <p>The questionnaire was accessible on-line through the Council’s website and promoted through the media and social media. The budget consultation was also promoted in the printed LDC news magazine distributed to 44,000 homes in November 2020 and through a newly launched e-news that was sent to 6,000 subscribers.</p> <p>The results of the Budget Consultation are included at APPENDIX F and the key areas are summarised in the paragraphs below.</p> <p>Service Areas and their level of Importance</p> <p>The budget consultation invited respondents to consider a wide range of service areas that fit under strategic priorities. The areas that were highlighted as most important were Parks and Open Spaces, Household Waste Collection and Recycling and Running the Council and its services efficiently.</p>

Also in the top five areas of importance were Street Cleansing and Planning Policy.



Spending Priorities and Council Tax

There was a general feeling from respondents to the survey that spending should be maintained rather than increased across the majority of service areas. Only in two areas were the majority of respondents in favour of reducing spending – the Lichfield Garrick and Private Sector Housing.

Fees and income

The largest proportion of respondents (**68%**) felt that either Lichfield District Council’s approach to fees was currently about right or that no additional fees should be introduced. Only **32%** felt that there was scope for increases and put forward alternative suggestions for sources of income generation which ranged from commercial sponsorship, increased for more regular fines, large-scale events or ideas for reductions in spending.

Council Tax

The majority of respondents (**86%**) indicated that an increase in Council Tax would be acceptable with **63%** of the total expressing that an increase of 2% or £5 would be acceptable to them.

Financial Implications	The financial implications are shown in the background section of the report and the Appendices.
Contribution to the Delivery of the Strategic Plan	The report directly links to overall performance and especially the delivery of the Strategic Plan.
Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Implications	These areas are addressed as part of the specific areas of activity prior to being included in the Strategic Plan.
Crime & Safety Issues	These areas are addressed as part of the specific areas of activity prior to being included in the Strategic Plan.
Environmental Impact	These areas are addressed as part of the specific areas of activity prior to being included in Lichfield District Council’s Strategic Plan.

	Risk Description	How We Manage It	Severity of Risk
Strategic Risk SR1 - Non achievement of the Council's key priorities contained in the Strategic Plan due to the availability of finance.			
A	Council Tax is not set by the Statutory Date of 11 March 2021 .	Full Council set with reference to when major preceptors and Parishes have approved their Council Tax Requirements.	Likelihood : Green Impact : Red Severity of Risk : Yellow
B	Implementation of the Check, Challenge and Appeal Business Rates Appeals and more frequent revaluations	To closely monitor the level of appeals. An allowance for appeals has been included in the Business Rate Estimates.	Likelihood : Yellow Impact : Yellow Severity of Risk : Yellow
C	The review of the New Homes Bonus regime	Not all of the projected New Homes Bonus is included as core funding in the Base Budget. In 2021/22 £500,000 is included and in 2022/23 £400,000 is included. At this stage, no income is assumed from 2023/24 onwards.	Likelihood : Red Impact : Yellow Severity of Risk : Yellow
D	The increased Localisation of Business Rates and the Fair Funding Review in 2022/2023	To assess the implications of proposed changes and respond to consultations to attempt to influence the policy direction in the Council's favour.	Likelihood : Red Impact : Red Severity of Risk : Red
E	The affordability and risk associated with the Capital Strategy	An estates management team has been recruited to provide professional expertise and advice in relation to property and to continue to take a prudent approach to budgeting.	Likelihood : Yellow Impact : Yellow Severity of Risk : Yellow
Strategic Risk SR3: Capacity and capability to deliver / adapt the new strategic plan to emerging landscape.			
F	The financial impact of COVID-19 is not fully reimbursed by Government and exceeds the reserves available resulting in a Section 114 notice	The use of general and earmarked reserves to fund any shortfall	Likelihood : Green Impact : Red Severity of Risk : Yellow
G	The Council cannot achieve its approved Delivery Plan for 2021/22	There will need to be consideration of additional resourcing and/or reprioritisation to reflect the ongoing impact of the pandemic.	Likelihood : Yellow Impact : Yellow Severity of Risk : Yellow
H	The resources available in the medium to longer term to deliver the Strategic Plan are diminished	The MTFs will be updated through the normal review and approval process	Likelihood : Yellow Impact : Yellow Severity of Risk : Yellow
I	Government and Regulatory Bodies introduce significant changes to the operating environment	To review all proposed policy changes and respond to all consultations to influence outcomes in the Council's favour	Likelihood : Yellow Impact : Yellow Severity of Risk : Yellow

Background documents

- CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management in the Public Services.
- The Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities.
- Money Matters: Medium Term Financial Strategy (Revenue and Capital) 2019-24 – Cabinet 11 February 2020.
- Money Matters: Medium Term Financial Strategy (Revenue and Capital) 2019-24 – Council 18 February 2020.
- Money Matters: 2019/20 Review of Financial Performance against the Financial Strategy – Cabinet 2 June 2020.
- The Medium Term Financial Strategy and the projected financial impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic – Cabinet 7 July 2020.
- Money Matters: 2020/21 Review of Financial Performance against the Financial Strategy – Cabinet 8 September 2020.
- Medium Term Financial Strategy 2020-25 – Cabinet 6 October 2020.
- Money Matters: 2020/21 Review of Financial Performance against the Financial Strategy – Cabinet 1 December 2020.
- Money Matters: Calculation of Business Rates in 2021/22, Council Tax Base for 2021/22 and the Projected Collection Fund Surplus / Deficit for 2020/21 - Cabinet 1 December 2020.
- Service and Financial Planning Submissions.

Relevant web links

Recommended Revenue Budget 2020/21 to 2024/25 (£000)

	2020/21 Original Budget £000	2020/21 Revised Budget £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000
LEVEL OF UNCERTAINTY / RISK	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH
Developing prosperity	(1,184)	(772)	(733)	(657)	(530)	(452)
A good council	6,330	6,198	6,335	6,433	6,674	6,946
Enabling people	1,580	1,581	1,469	1,478	1,510	1,538
Shaping place	3,470	3,237	3,402	4,015	4,269	4,362
COVID-19 – Response and Ongoing Impact	0	1,709	289	647	294	187
COVID-19 – Risk or Recovery Contingency Budget	0	0	1,141	0	0	0
Net Cost of Services	10,195	11,954	11,903	11,916	12,217	12,581
Corporate expenditure	456	147	(363)	(369)	(17)	47
Net Operating Cost	10,651	12,101	11,540	11,547	12,200	12,628
Retained Business Rates Baseline Funding	(2,117)	(2,117)	(2,117)	(1,710)	(1,710)	(1,710)
Retained Business Rates Growth Allowance	(903)	(903)	(1,005)	(627)	(623)	(573)
Business Rates Cap Grant	(85)	(85)	(110)	0	0	0
Lower Tier Services Grant	0	0	(151)	0	0	0
Local Council Tax Support Grant	0	0	(126)	0	0	0
New Homes Bonus – Risk / Recovery Budget	0	0	(371)	0	0	0
New Homes Bonus - Base Budget	(600)	(600)	(500)	(400)	0	0
New Homes Bonus - to General Reserve	(1,171)	(1,171)	(411)	(280)	0	0
Business Rates Levy Grant	(49)	(49)	0	0	0	0
Collection Fund (Surplus)/Deficit	(330)	(330)	38	65	65	0
Council Tax	(7,029)	(7,029)	(7,198)	(7,551)	(7,927)	(8,224)
Total Funding	(12,284)	(12,284)	(11,951)	(10,503)	(10,196)	(10,507)
Transfer (from) / to general reserves - COVID-19	0	(1,709)	0	0	0	0
New Homes Bonus to general reserves	1,171	1,171	411	280	0	0
Central Scenario Revenue Budget Funding Gap / (transfer to general reserves)	(462)	(721)	0	1,324	2,005	2,121
Council Tax Base	39,032	39,032	39,717	40,627	41,487	41,999
Band D Council Tax (modelled £5 until 23/24, then 1.99%)	£180.07	£180.07	£185.07	£190.07	£195.07	£198.95

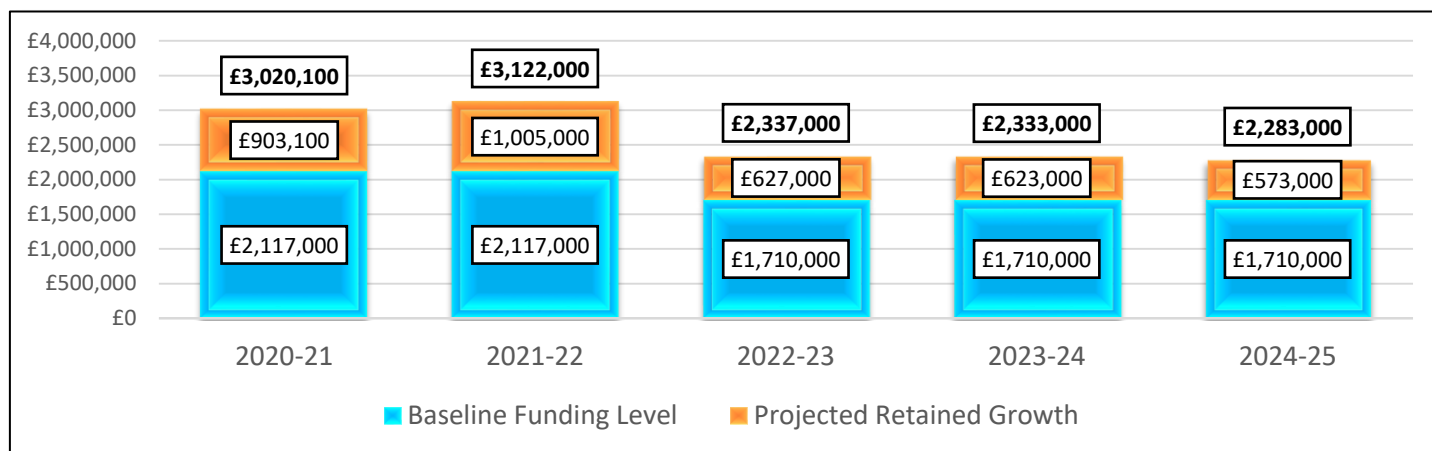
Reconciliation of Original Funding Gap to Recommended Revenue Budget Funding Gap

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
ORIGINAL FUNDING GAP	(£462)	£613	£959	£1,507	£1,437
<u>Budget Monitoring in 2020/21</u>					
3 Month's Money Matters - Non-COVID	(9)	19	19	19	19
6 Month's Money Matters - Non-COVID	(79)	0	0	0	0
8 Month's Money Matters - Non-COVID	(257)	0	0	0	0
Cabinet and Council Reports	85	350	541	774	1,236
Approved Budget	(721)	982	1,519	2,300	2,692
<u>Modelled Changes</u>					
Inflation		(160)	(165)	(168)	(169)
Budget Variations		(65)	(73)	(52)	(100)
MTFS Savings and Bids		(284)	(369)	(396)	(424)
Review of Base Budgets using Trend Analysis		(78)	(78)	(78)	(78)
COVID impacts		1,430	647	294	187
Retained Business Rates		(1,342)	(501)	(462)	(399)
Business Rates Cap		(110)	0	0	0
Council Tax		152	171	166	179
New Homes Bonus		(371)	0	300	200
Returned New Homes Bonus		51	74	0	0
Lower Tier Services Grant		(151)	0	0	0
Local Council Tax Support Grant		(126)	0	0	0
Council Tax Collection Fund		73	100	100	35
RECOMMENDED REVENUE BUDGET FUNDING GAP	(£721)	£0	£1,324	£2,005	£2,121

Revenue Budget Key Revenue Streams

Retained Business Rates

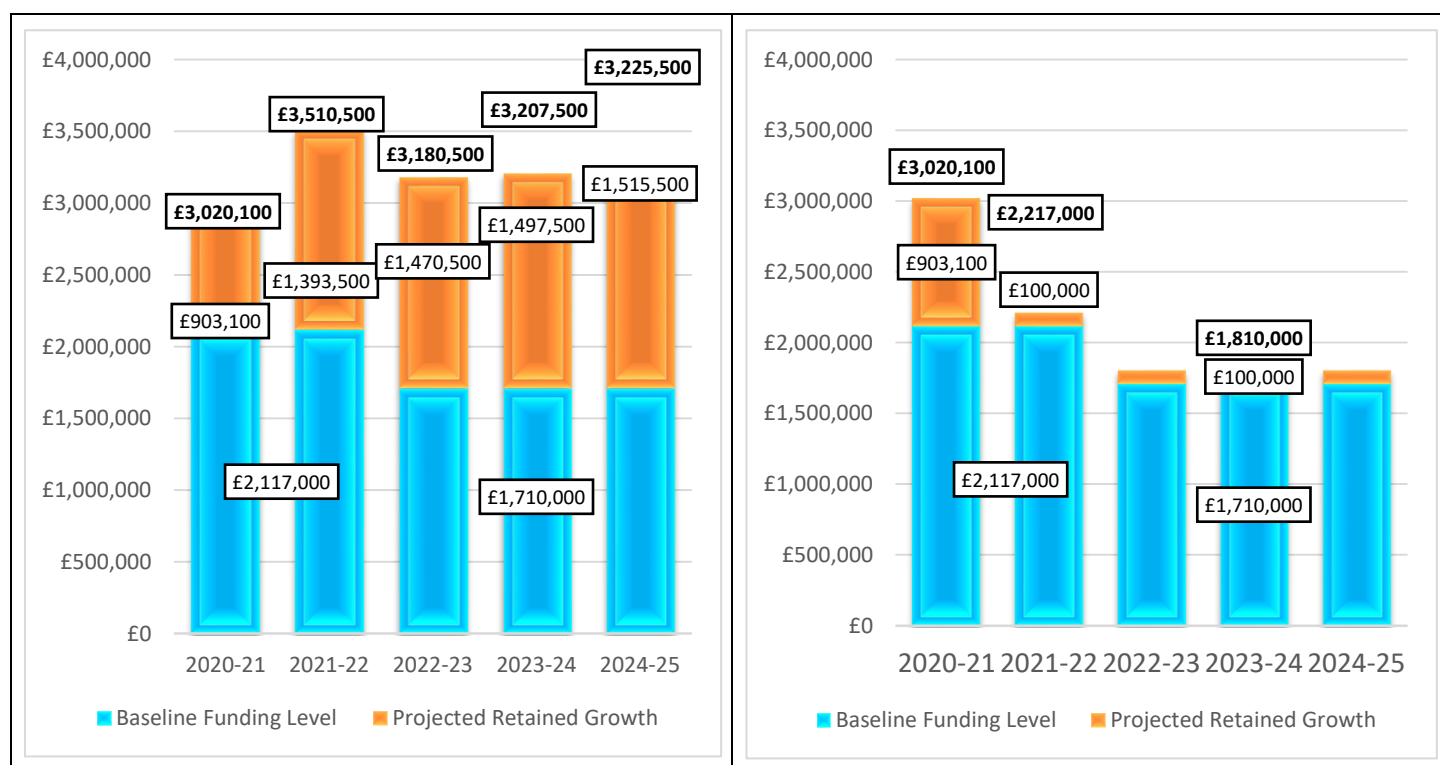
The Central Scenario budget for Retained Business Rates income, with Business Retention reform and the Fair Funding Review presenting significant risks to the assumptions made from 2022/23, are:



The change in retained Business Rates compared to the Approved Medium Term Financial Strategy is shown below:

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Approved MTFS (assumed Fair Funding and 75% Business Rates from 2021/22)	(£3,020,100)	(£1,779,600)	(£1,835,500)	(£1,872,000)	(£1,884,000)
Draft MTFS (assumes Fair Funding and 75% Business Rates from 2022/23)	(£3,020,100)	(£3,122,000)	(£2,337,000)	(£2,333,000)	(£2,283,000)
Change – Consultations indicate higher levels of growth are likely to be retained from 2022/23	-	(£1,342,400)	(£501,500)	(£461,000)	(£399,000)

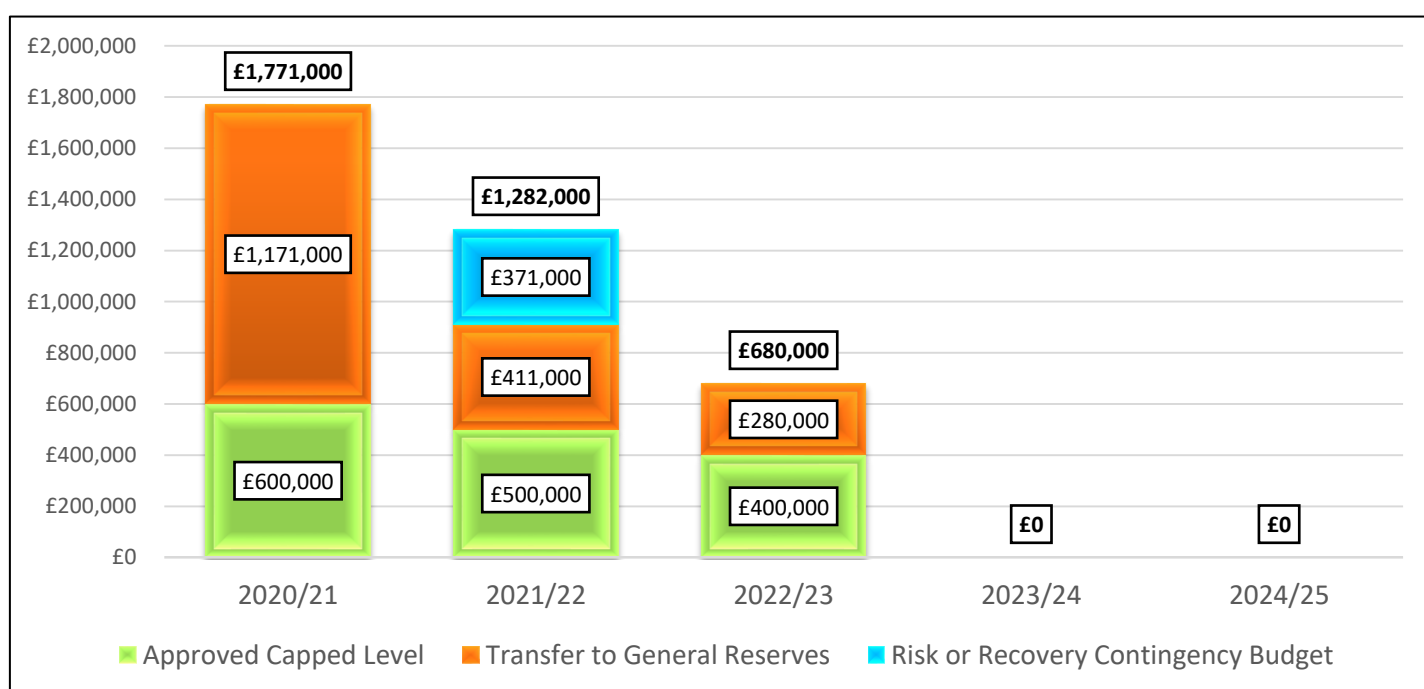
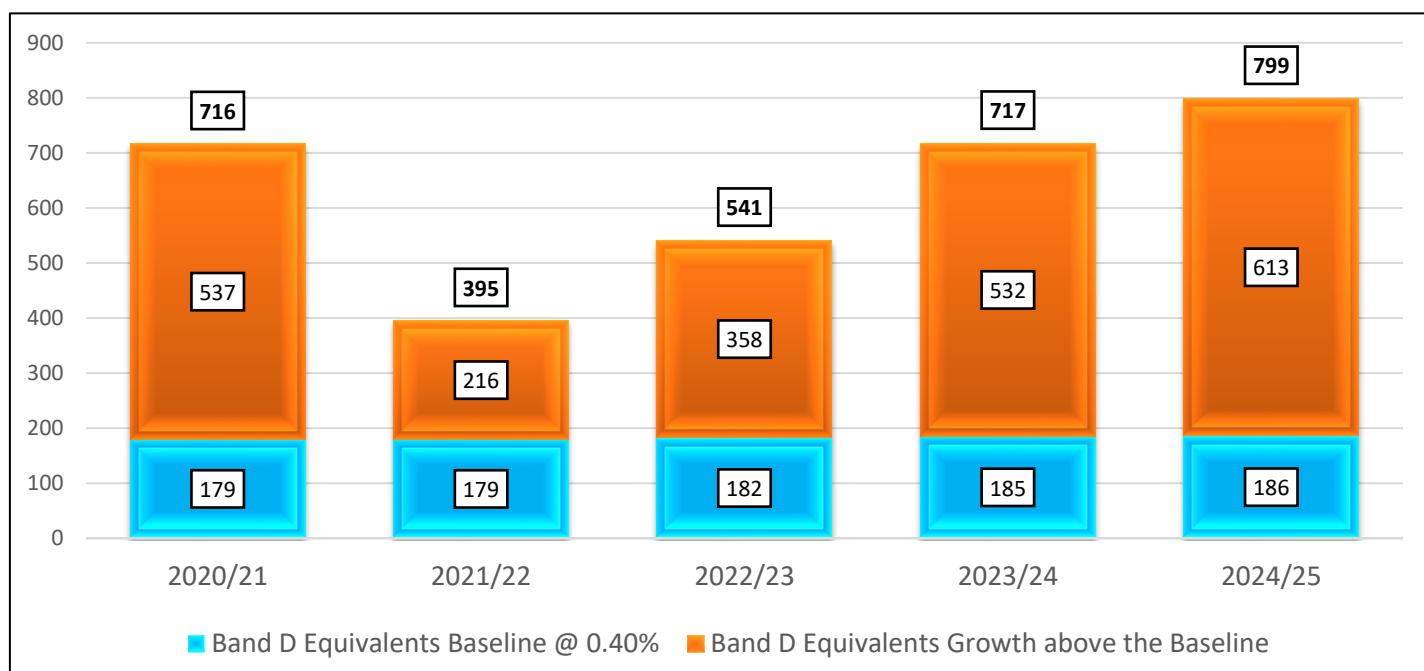
The budgets were they to be based on more optimistic (including from 2022/23 the majority of growth being retained) or more pessimistic (including the majority of growth from 2022/23 being redistributed) assumptions are also provided below:



At present, the Medium Term Financial Strategy does not include any allowances for managing the transition from the current Local Government Finance system to the new Local Government Finance System.

New Homes Bonus

The budgets for housing supply (based on the current New Homes Bonus reward system) and New Homes Bonus, with the planned review in 2021/22 providing uncertainty beyond 2022/23 are:



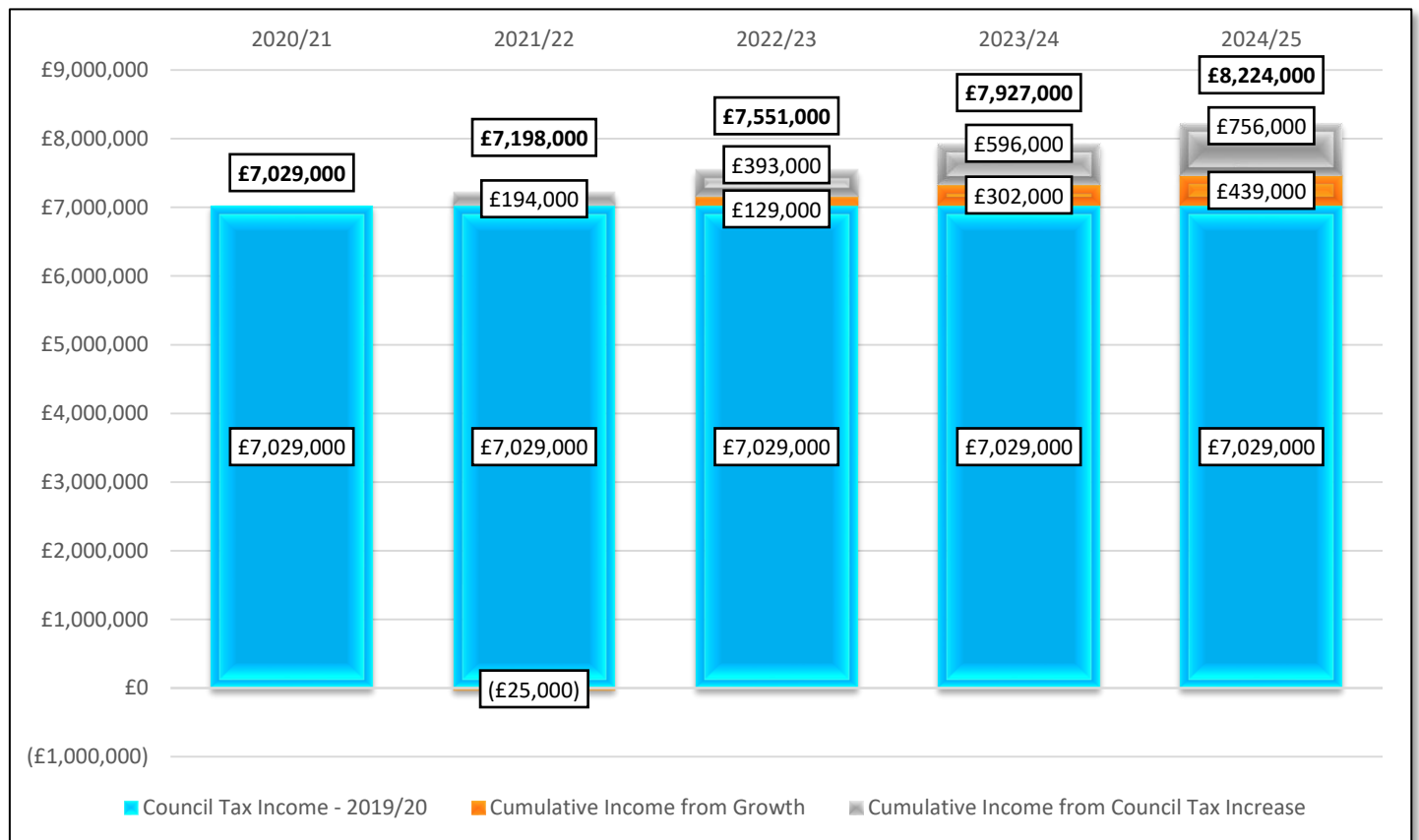
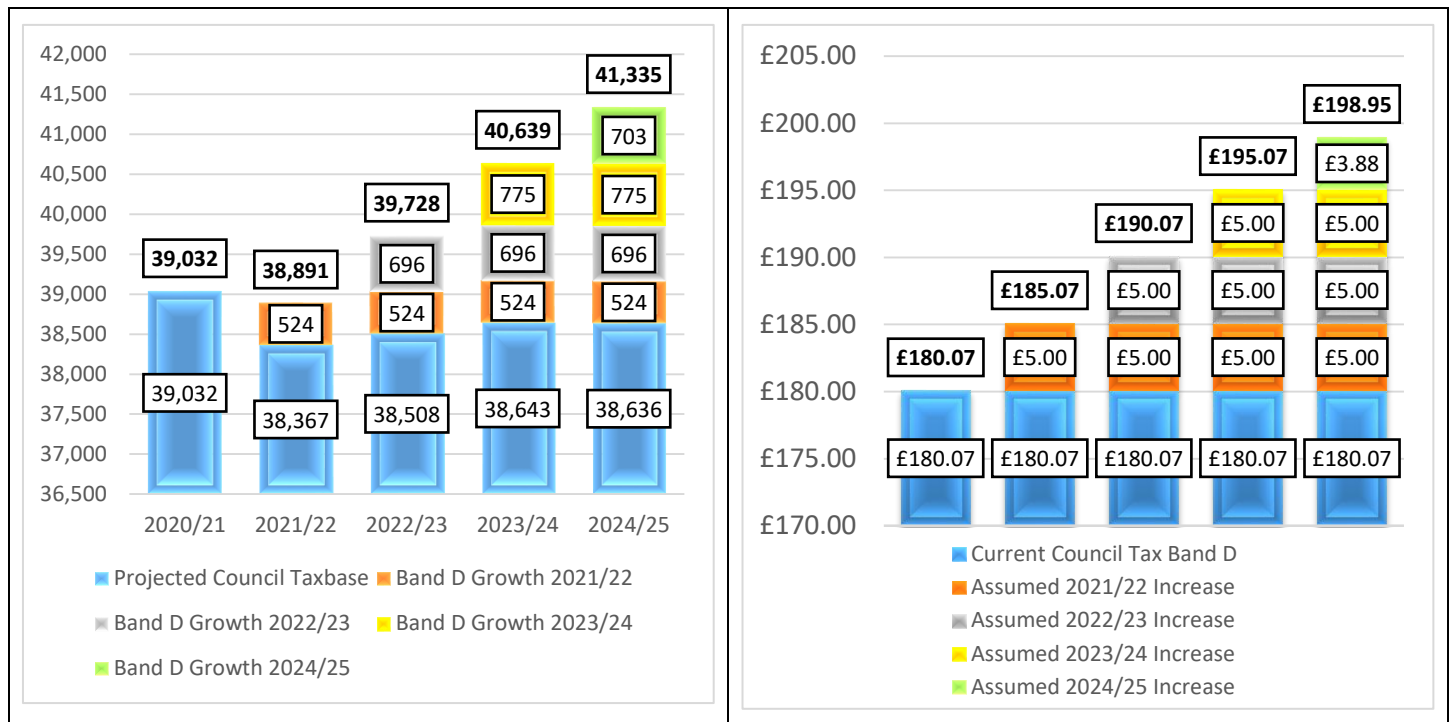
The change in New Homes Bonus income compared to the Approved Medium Term Financial Strategy is shown below:

Capped Level	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Approved MTFS	(£700,000)	(£600,000)	(£700,000)	(£300,000)	(£200,000)
Draft MTFS	(£700,000)	(£600,000)	(£700,000)	-	-
Change – No income until new scheme agreed	-	-	-	£300,000	£200,000

Total amount of New Homes Bonus	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Approved MTFS	(£1,771,000)	(£911,000)	(£680,000)	(£300,000)	(£200,000)
Draft MTFS	(£1,771,000)	(£1,282,000)	(£680,000)	-	-
Change – further one year award in 2021/22 and then no grant income is assumed from 2023/24	-	(£371,000)	-	£300,000	£200,000

Council Tax

The Approved Budgets for Council Tax base (with a modelled increases to Council Tax Band D) and income are:



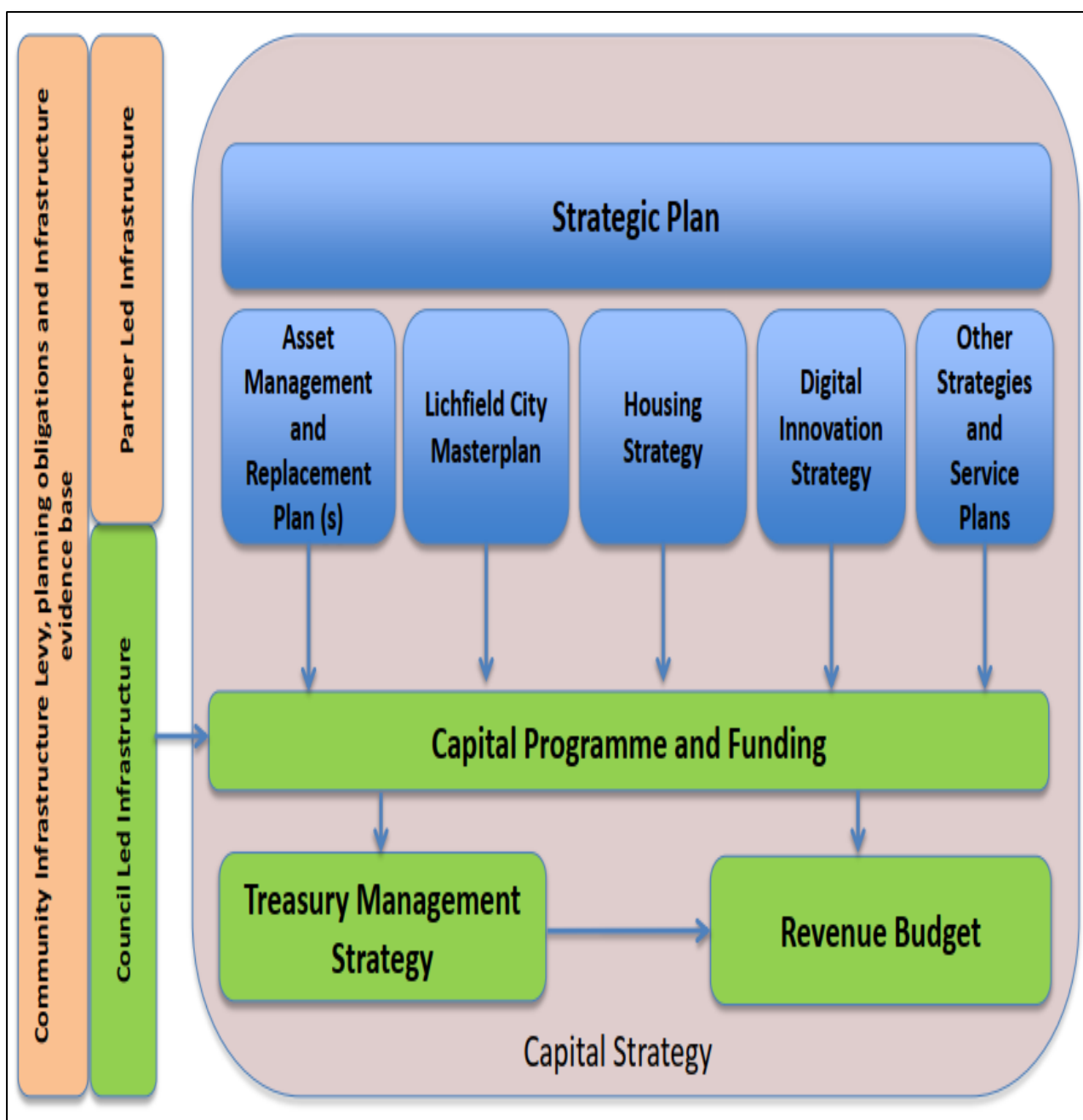
The change in Council Tax income compared to the Approved Medium Term Financial Strategy is shown below:

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Approved MTFS	(£7,029,000)	(£7,350,000)	(£7,722,000)	(£8,093,000)	(£8,356,000)
Draft MTFS	(£7,029,000)	(£7,198,000)	(£7,551,000)	(£7,927,000)	(£8,224,000)
Change – Lower projected Income	-	£152,000	£171,000	£166,000	£132,000

Recommended Capital Strategy

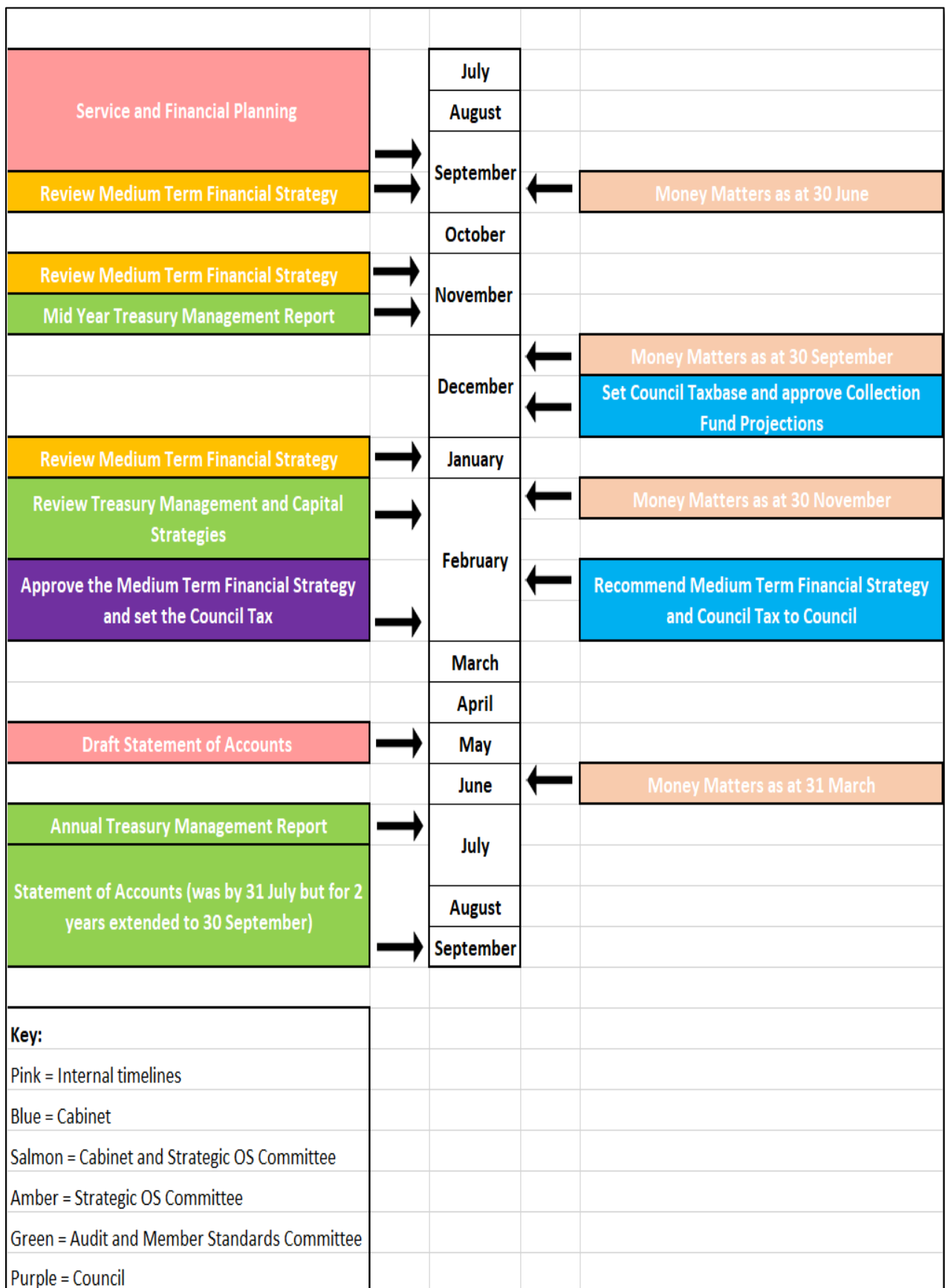
1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Prudential Code requires the completion of a Capital Strategy that is approved by Full Council.
- 1.2. The Capital Strategy provides a high level overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the provision of services along with an overview of how associated risk is managed and the implications for future financial sustainability.
- 1.3. It forms part of the Councils integrated revenue, capital and balance sheet planning. The Council already undertakes elements of the requirements although some areas, such as Asset Management Planning, are subject to ongoing development.
- 1.4. The Prudential Code now requires all of this information to be brought together in a single place as shown below:



2. The Capital Programme

2.1. The financial planning process and its Governance is shown below:



The Capital Programme Process

- 2.2. Given our current financial position, our priorities and responsibilities and as Asset Management Plans are developed, it is probable that capital needs will be identified that exceed resources available thus necessitating a more transparent and robust process to inform Members during the development of the MTFs.
- 2.3. The capital bid process has been incorporated into the service and financial planning process to provide a holistic approach. The capital bid element of the process has been designed to ensure consistency, objectivity, equity and transparency to the prioritisation and allocation of capital funding, while ensuring maximum value for money.
- 2.4. A summary of the process is identified below:
- Service identifies a budget requirement and consults with the Finance and Procurement Team.
 - Service requests funding by completing and submitting a funding bid form.
 - Service completes a funding bid financial profile form and submits this with their bid.
 - Service completes a funding bid assessment form and submits this with their bid.
 - The Finance and Procurement Team reviews all bids and assessments and requests clarification where required.
 - The Finance and Procurement Team reviews bids using the assessment criteria and ensure the bids are included in the relevant service and financial planning submission.
 - Leadership Team review all service and financial planning submissions and before recommending the allocation of funding either through a Cabinet Report or through the MTFs.
 - Finance and Procurement monitor funding allocations and spend, reporting to Leadership Team as part of Money Matters Reports.
 - Service completes work / project outlined within the bid and undertakes a review (i.e. post-project review) within 6 months of work being completed, providing this to Finance and Procurement to include in a report to Leadership Team.

Planning Obligations - Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

- 2.5. As part of the planning process, financial contributions from planning obligations, including the Community Infrastructure Levy, are received from new developments. The vast majority is spent directly on infrastructure works or will be spent in line with the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP).
- 2.6. In some cases there is an element of discretion on how they are allocated. These contributions towards social and community facilities are linked to the development proposed.
- 2.7. The Council's Capital Programme includes a number of projects that are to be funded by Section 106 and CIL; this is a significant source of funding and there is a significant level of interest from the community in relation to the allocation of sums to projects.

2.8. The Capital Programme and its funding by Strategic Priority is summarised below:

Strategic Priority	Capital Programme						Corporate £000
	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000	Total £000	
Enabling People	2,223	3,375	3,684	3,576	1,315	14,173	30
Shaping Place	670	1,102	3,674	270	293	6,009	193
Developing Prosperity	522	935	557	43	0	2,057	395
Good Council	564	1,118	515	389	0	2,586	2,423
Grand Total	3,979	6,530	8,430	4,278	1,608	24,825	3,041

Funding Source	Capital Programme						24,825
	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000	Total £000	
Capital Receipts	522	1,296	604	219	0	2,641	
Capital Receipts - Statue	0	5	0	0	0	5	
Revenue - Corporate	182	0	0	213	0	395	
Corporate Council Funding	704	1,301	604	432	0	3,041	
Grant	1,052	2,207	1,815	1,316	1,315	7,705	
Section 106	601	785	0	0	0	1,386	
CIL	101	79	0	0	0	180	
Reserves	1,030	1,730	252	120	143	3,275	
Revenue - Existing Budgets	162	150	150	150	150	762	
Sinking Fund	223	0	0	0	0	223	
Leases	0	0	3,260	0	0	3,260	
Internal Borrowing	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Total	3,873	6,252	6,081	2,018	1,608	19,832	
External Borrowing	106	278	2,349	2,260	0	4,993	
Grand Total	3,979	6,530	8,430	4,278	1,608	24,825	

2.9. The Revenue implications of the Capital Programme are shown below:

Revenue Implications	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000
Interest on Loan to the LA Company	0	(4)	(18)	(22)	(22)
Friary Grange - Refurbishment	50	135	135	135	135
Coach Park Operation Costs	0	0	0	50	50
IT Hardware	9	9	4	(38)	9
Replacement Leisure Centre Debt Costs	0	0	0	0	294
Revenue Budget - Bin Replacement	150	150	150	150	0
Revenue Budget - Other Projects	12	0	0	0	0
Revenue Budget - Corporate	182	0	0	213	0
Sub Total - Approved Budget	403	290	271	488	466
Burntwood LC early repayment of capital	979	(140)	(140)	(140)	(140)
Internal Funding (see below)	(979)	0	0	0	0
Financial Information System	0	(20)	(40)	(40)	(40)
Revenue Budget - Bin Replacement	0	0	0	0	150
Sub Total - Service and Financial Planning	0	(160)	(180)	(180)	(30)
Capital Programme Total	403	130	91	308	436

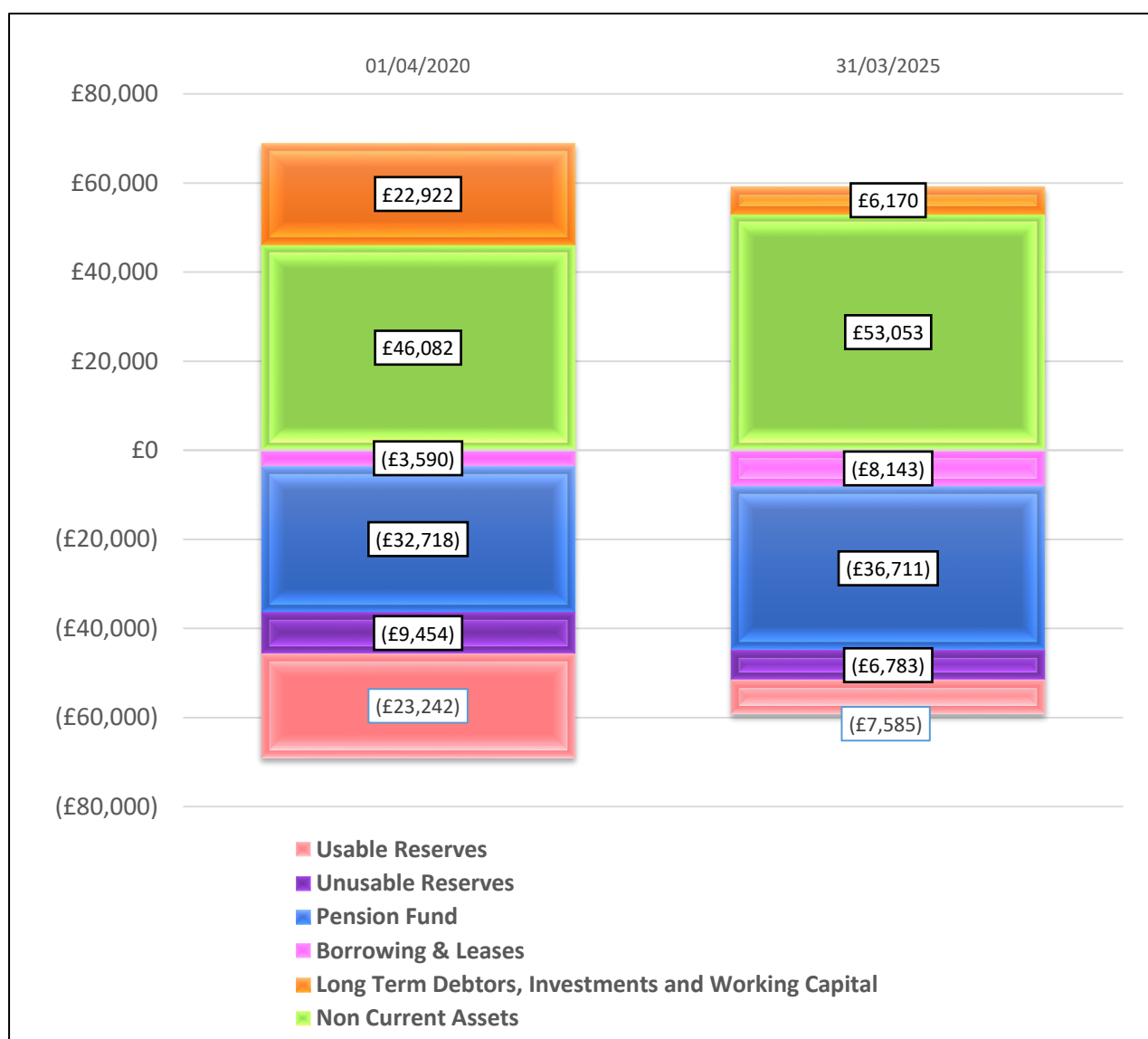
Leisure VAT repayment reserve	(470)
Uncommitted Capital Receipts	(509)
Total	(979)

2.10. Projected Capital Receipts are shown in the table below:

Capital Receipts	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000	Total £000
Opening Balance	(2,673)	(1,652)	(888)	(294)	(86)	(2,673)
BLC early repayment of capital	509					509
Sale of land at Netherstowe and Leyfields ¹		(527)				(527)
Other Receipts	(10)	(10)	(10)	(11)	(9)	(50)
Utilised in Year	522	1,301	604	219	0	2,646
Closing Balance	(1,652)	(888)	(294)	(86)	(95)	(95)
Housing Receipts						
Opening Balance	0	(197)	(197)	(197)	(197)	(197)
Right to Buy Receipts	(197)					
Closing Balance	(197)	(197)	(197)	(197)	(197)	(197)

3. The Balance Sheet (in £000s)

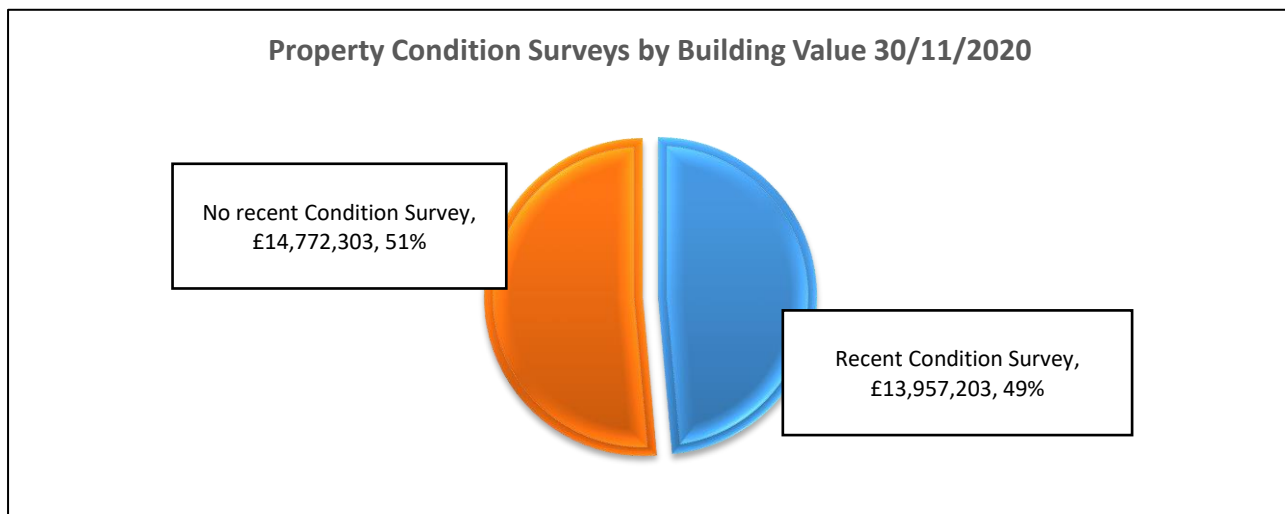
3.1. The Capital Programme and its funding will impact on the Council's Balance Sheet:



¹ Subject to planning approval.

4. Asset Management Planning

4.1. The Estates Team is currently in the process of undertaking Property Condition Surveys for Property Assets owned by the Council. Progress to date is shown below:



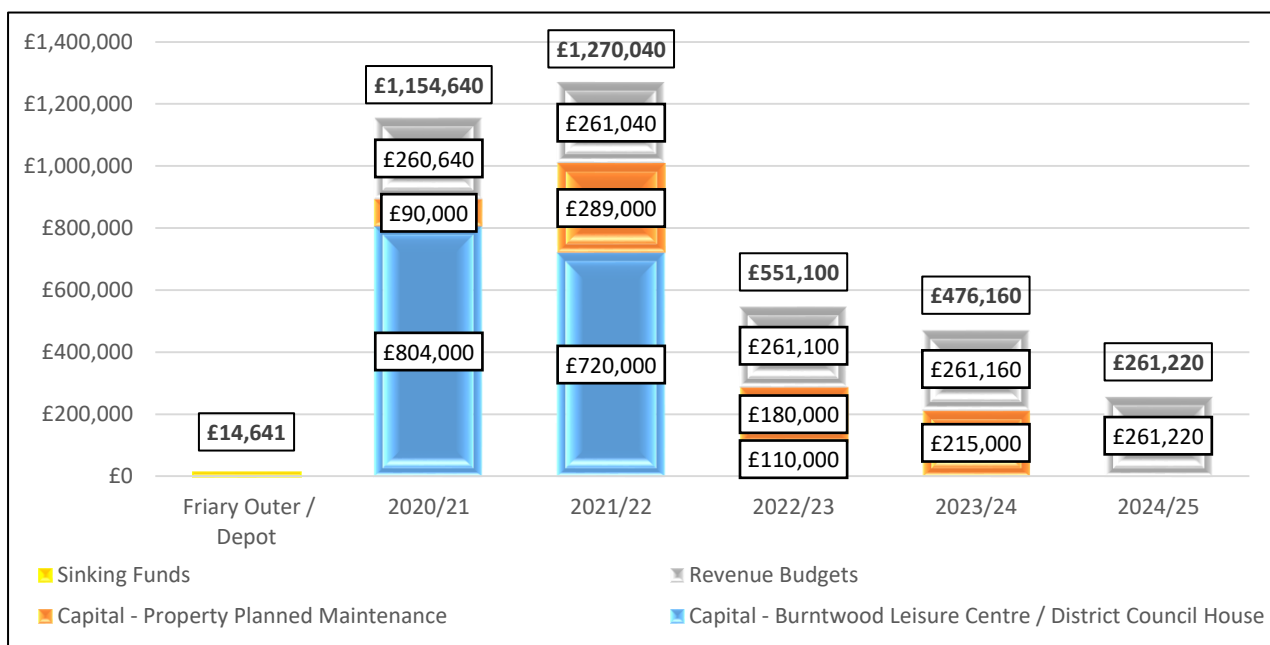
4.2. At this stage, Estates estimate that a Capital Programme annual budget of between **£100,000** and **£150,000** will be required to maintain and enhance property.

4.3. Therefore for financial planning purposes, an annual budget of **£140,000** (based on 0.3% of projected asset value) has been included in the Longer Term Capital Investment Plan.

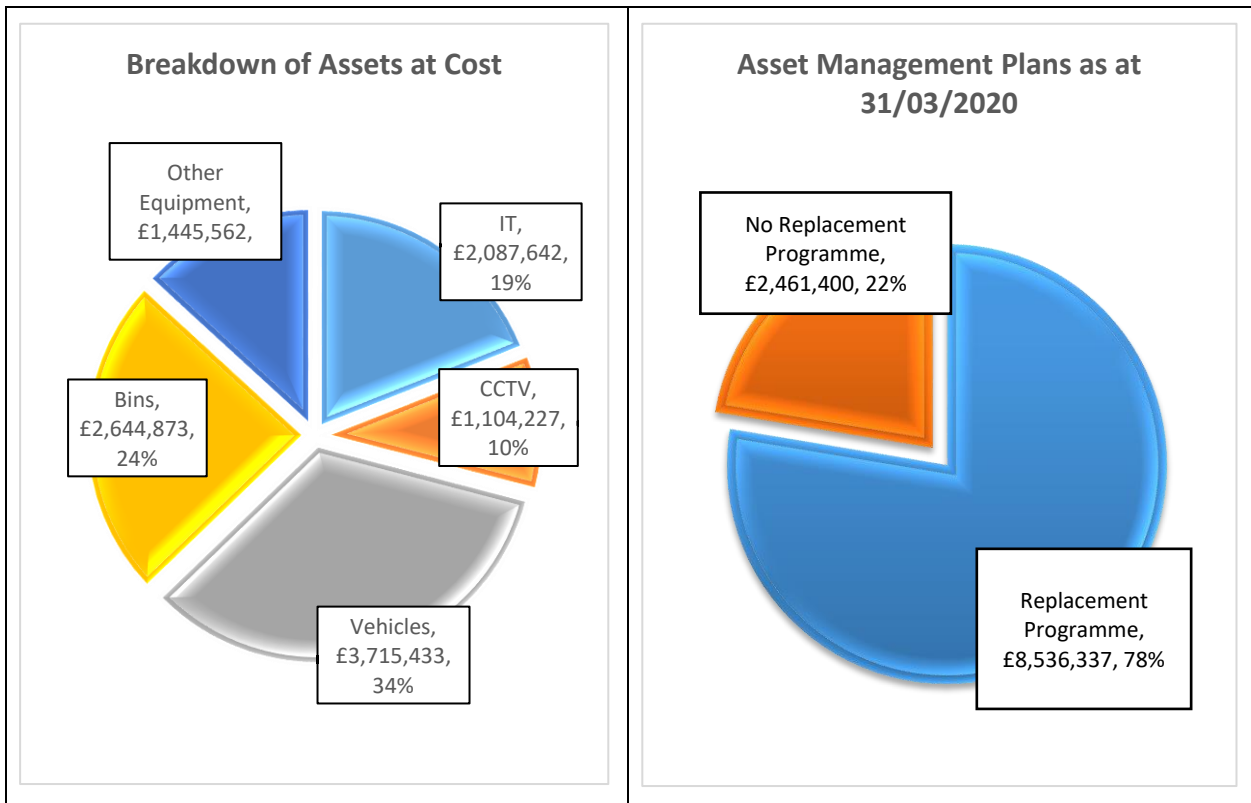
4.4. Cabinet on 6 October 2020 approved a deed of variation and deed of release in relation to the Three Spires Shopping Centre that included the release of the Birmingham Road Multi Storey Sinking Fund to deliver the outcomes contained in the Lichfield City Centre Masterplan.

4.5. This means this reserve is no longer specifically earmarked for the replacement of the Multi Storey Car Park. However a budget of **£300,000** is included in the Capital Programme for essential repairs.

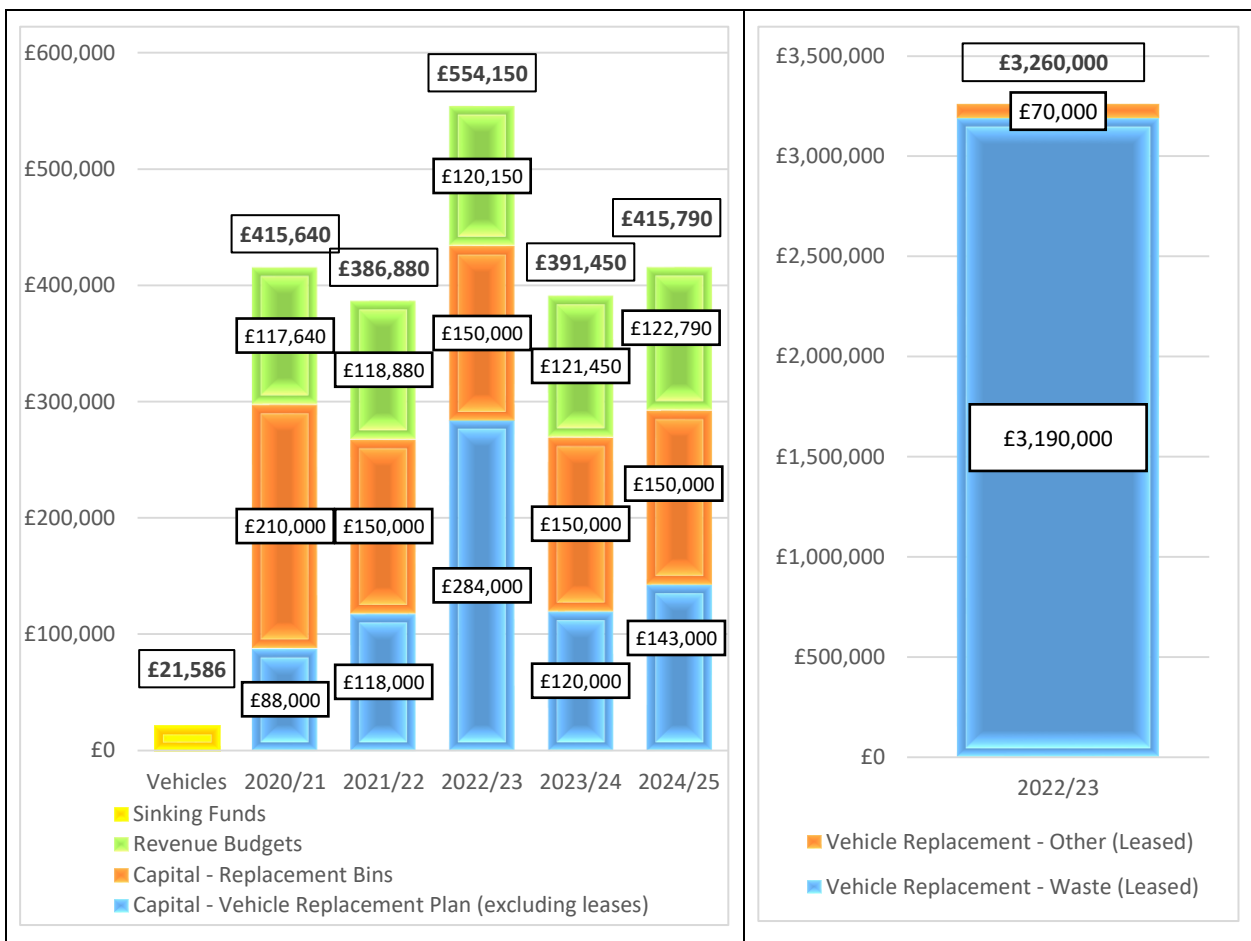
4.6. The resources identified for enhancement and maintenance of property assets are:



4.7. The Asset Management Plans in place for vehicles, plant and equipment assets are:



4.8. The resources identified for replacement and maintenance of vehicles, plant and equipment are:



5. Longer Term Capital Investment Planning

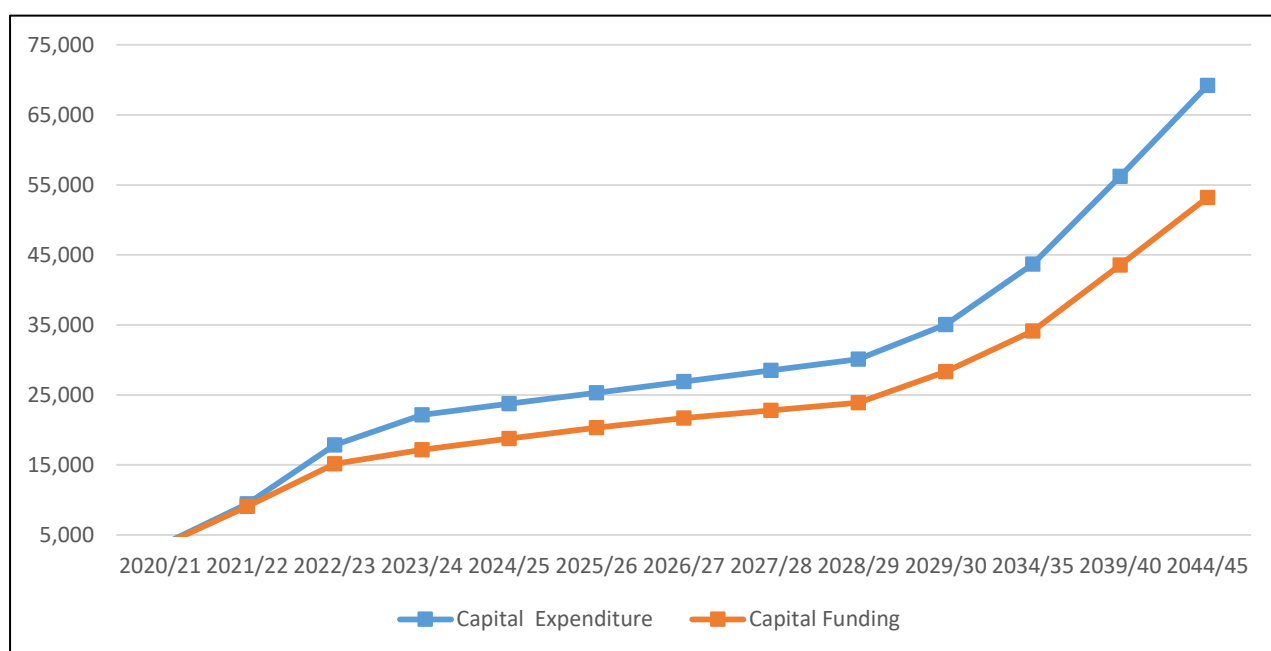
5.1. The Medium Term Financial Strategy covers a relatively short period of time (current financial year plus the next four years) and this short horizon is not reflective of the longer term investment needs associated with asset ownership.

5.2. Therefore it is prudent to also produce financial plans that cover a longer term financial planning horizon such as 25 years.

5.3. The following key assumptions have been utilised in producing the longer term financial plan:

- Annual core inflation of **2%**.
- Population in Lichfield District increases by an annual average of **0.33%**.
- The proportion of the population aged 65 and over increases from **24%** in 2020/21 to **28%** by 2044/45.
- The value of building assets increases from **£35m** in 2020/21 to **£46m** in 2024/25 with the building of a new Leisure Centre.
- An assessment of Property Planned Maintenance budgets at **0.3%** of building value or **£140,000** from 2025/26 has been utilised with annual inflationary increases.
- An assessment of ICT investment using the average level of investment in the last Capital Bid submitted of **£175,000** from 2025/26 has been utilised with annual inflationary increases.

5.4. The longer term capital investment plan is shown in detail at **ANNEX 1** and in the chart below:



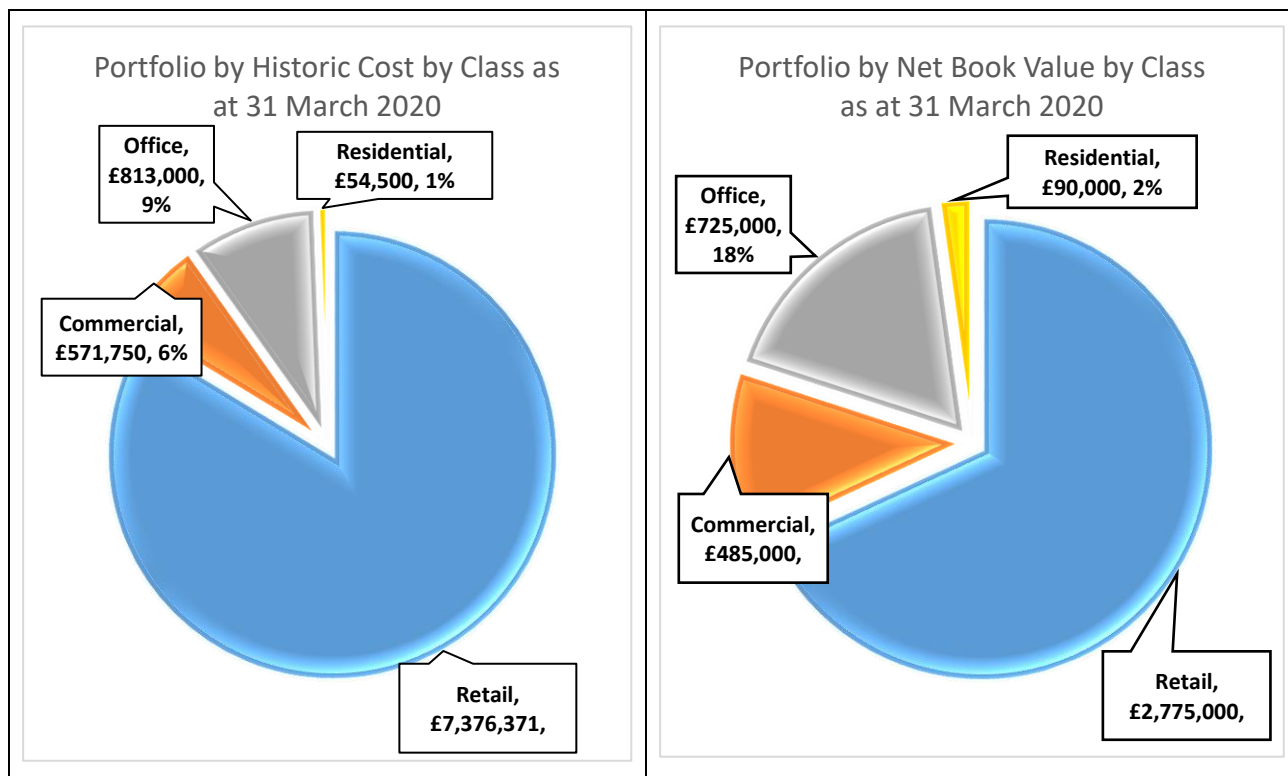
5.5. The difference between capital expenditure and funding would result in an increase in the cumulative level of borrowing need of **£16m** (including £5m approved for the new Leisure Centre).

5.6. This additional borrowing need would result in additional and increasing debt repayment costs in the revenue budget thereby further increasing the Funding Gap.

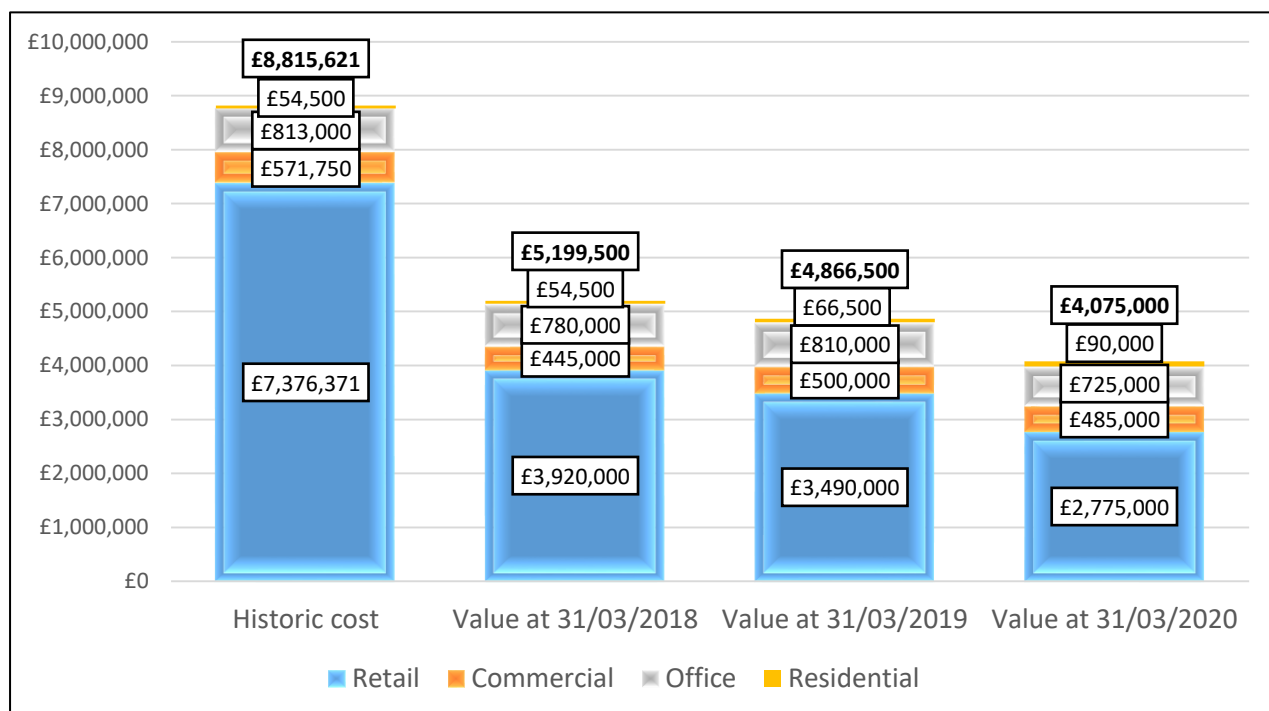
5.7. However the borrowing need can be reduced through actions such as the receipt of external funding or sale of assets.

6. Current Investment in Property

6.1. The Council also owns a number of properties that provide an income return and the composition of the portfolio at 31 March 2020 is shown below:



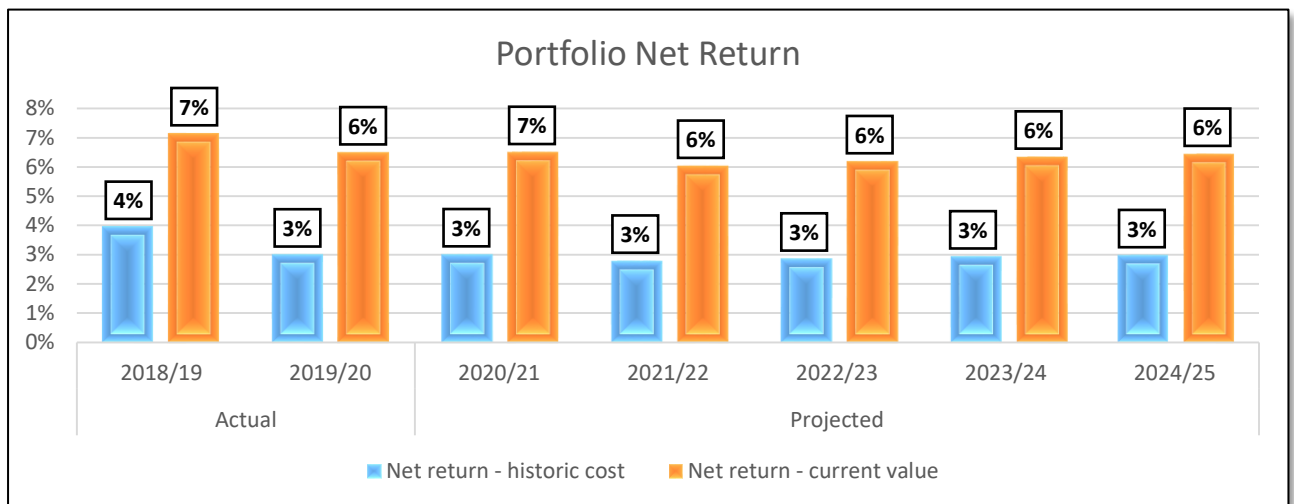
6.2. The value of these properties over the last three years is shown below:



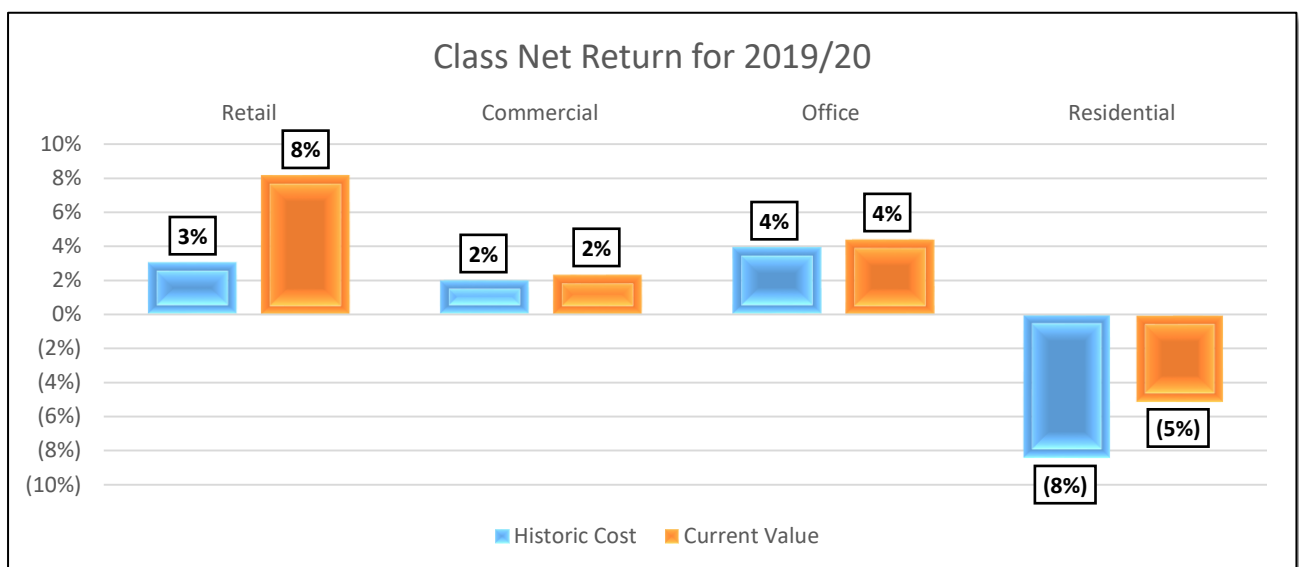
6.3. The value of these properties (mainly those classed as retail) have reduced because the value assessed by the external valuer is based on prevailing rental levels.

6.4. These properties were acquired without the need for borrowing and therefore the loan to value ratio for the portfolio is **0%**.

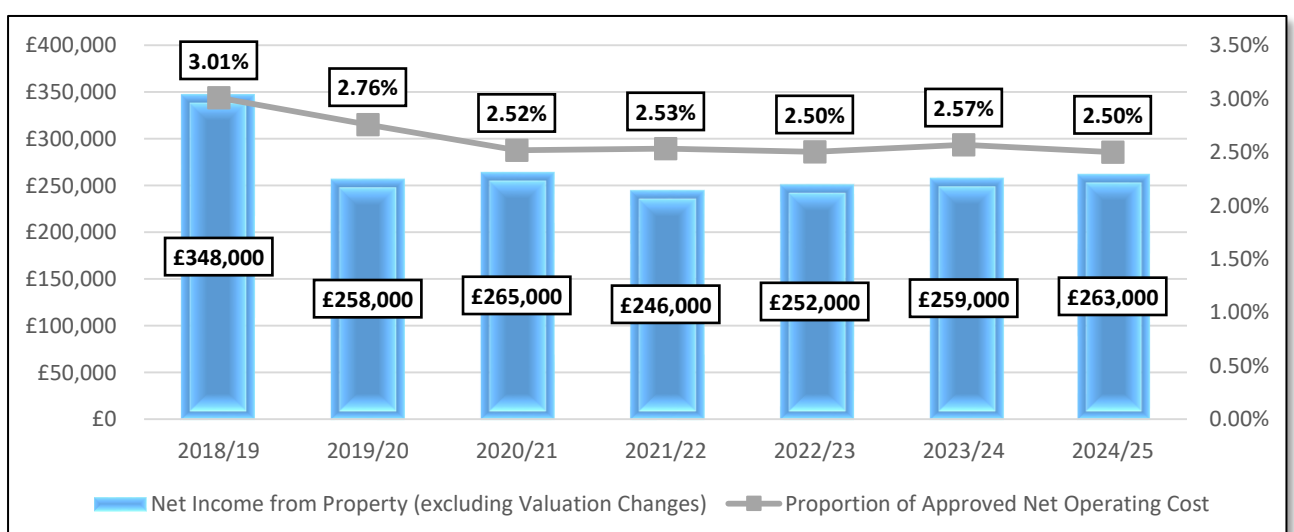
6.5. The portfolio net return based after taking account of management costs using historic asset cost and current value is shown in the chart below:



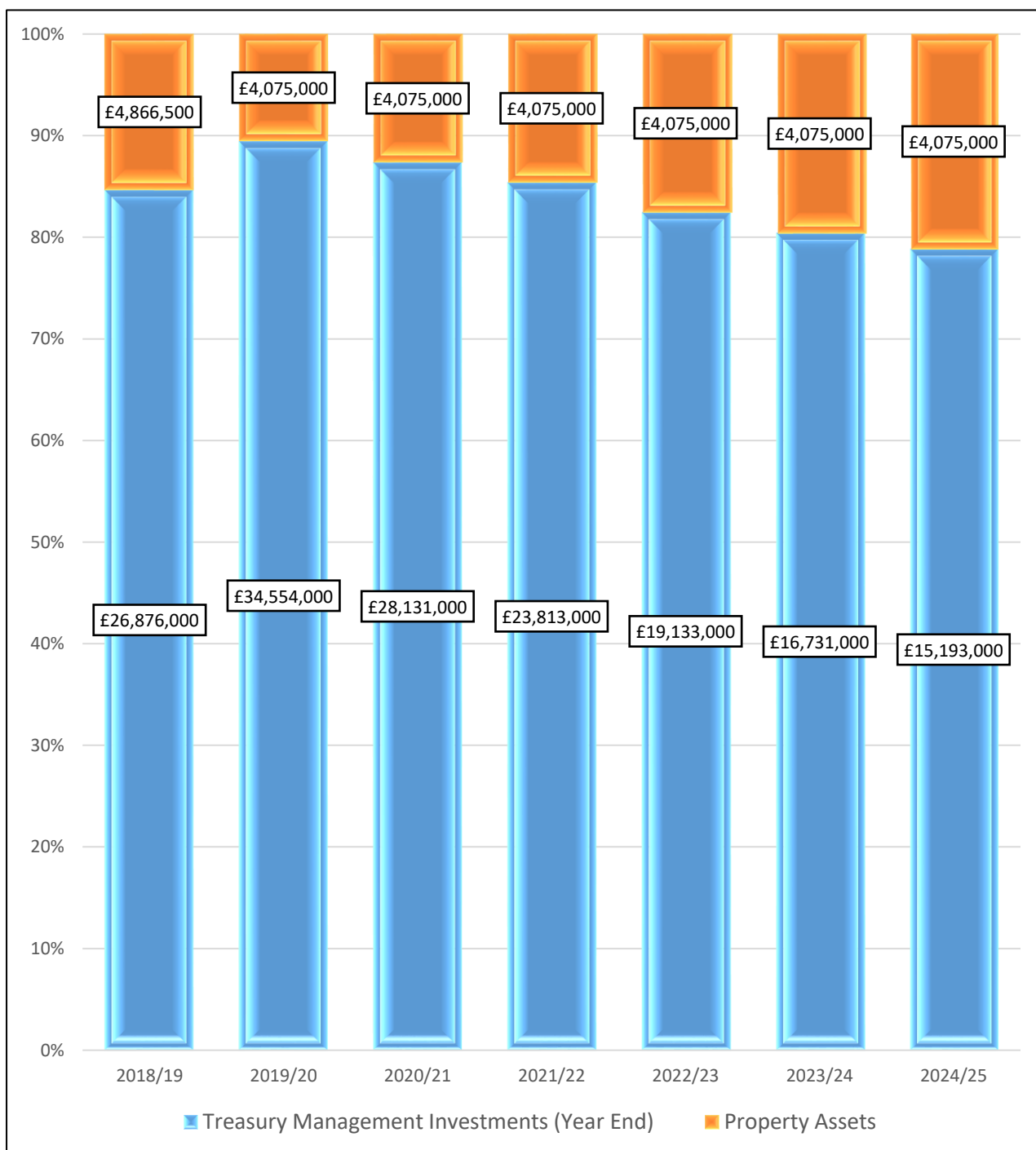
6.6. The net return is further analysed for 2019/20 by class of investment within the portfolio:



6.7. The proportion of the Revenue Budget supported by income from these properties is shown below:



6.8. The ratio of Treasury Management investments to property asset investments is shown below:



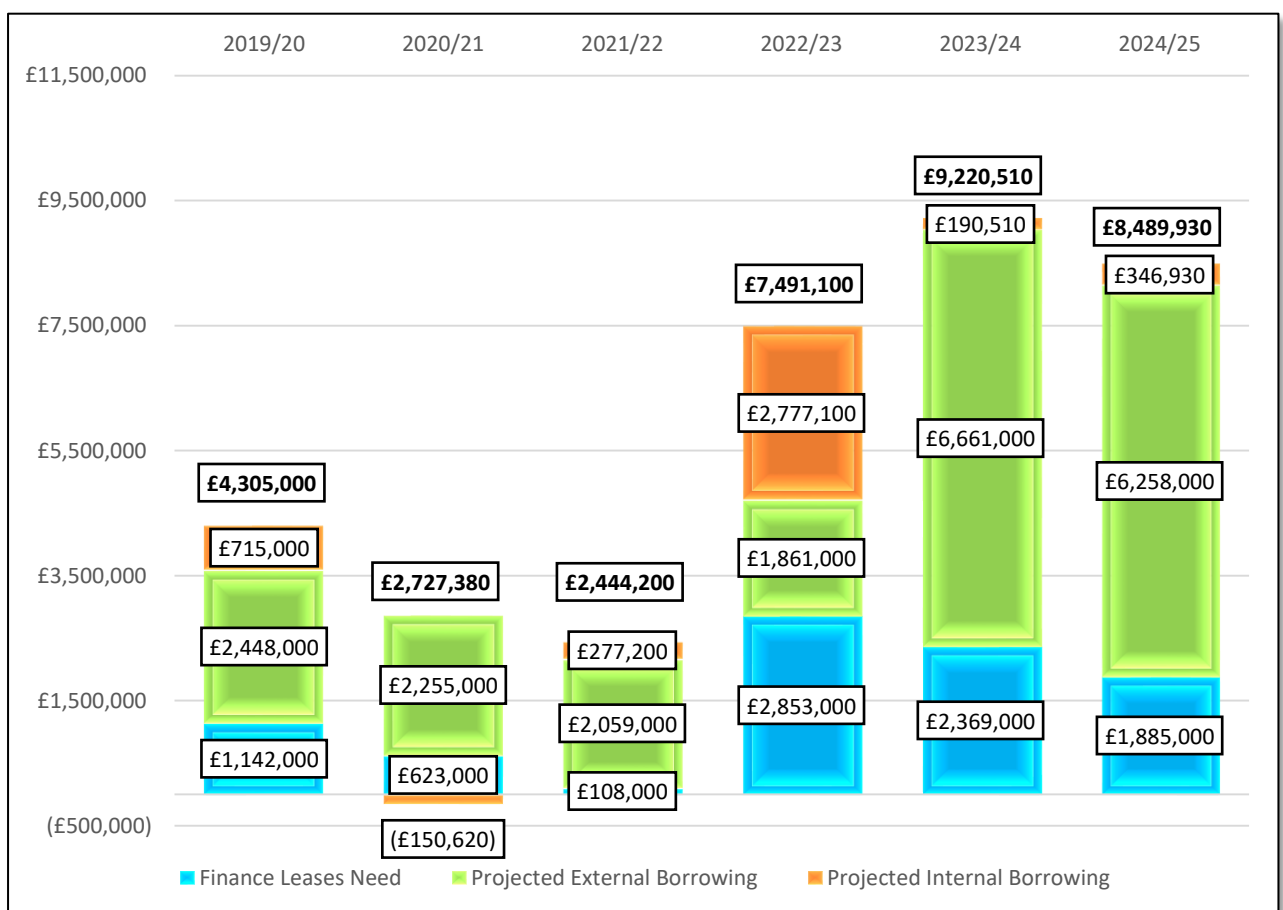
6.9. The Council has a Local Authority Trading Company Lichfield Housing Limited that was incorporated in September 2019 with an aim to deliver housing development.

6.10. The Council undertook an equity investment of **£225,000** in 2020/21 and plans to advance a loan of up to **£675,000** to Lichfield Housing Limited in 2021/22 for a period of up to **5 years** to facilitate housing development, subject to appropriate schemes being identified.

6.11. The loan to the Company will produce an income stream at **4%** from the company and the loan repayment will be treated as a capital receipt in 2025/26 in the Medium Term Financial Strategy. At present, no dividend income is assumed to be received from the Company.

7. Debt Management

- 7.1. The Capital Programme is funded from a variety of sources. A number of these sources such as capital receipts, the revenue budget, grants, contributions and reserves utilise resources that are immediately available or are receivable. However when capital expenditure is approved, and these resources are not available, then a **Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)** or borrowing need results.
- 7.2. The CFR is managed through the approval by Council of the Medium Term Financial Strategy including the Capital Programme and Prudential Indicators.
- 7.3. The CFR must be financed through borrowing or finance leases (external debt) or by temporarily utilising internal resources (internal borrowing).
- 7.4. At 31 March 2020 the Council had a relatively low level of external debt outstanding of **£3.590m**. The new leisure centre and the renewal of the waste fleet will mean external debt is projected to increase to **£8.143m** by 31 March 2025.
- 7.5. The projected CFR (the total for each column), **external debt** (finance leases and external borrowing) and **internal borrowing** (external borrowing is temporarily higher than the CFR by £150,620 at the end of 2020/21 following the proposed early repayment of the BLC capital funding) is shown below:



- 7.6. The CFR is related to:
- Historic capital expenditure for the Chasewater Dam, Friary Outer Car Park and vehicles funded by finance leases.
 - Planned capital expenditure for the new Leisure Centre and the renewal of the waste fleet funded by a lease type arrangement.

7.7. The Council manages its external debt through setting Prudential Indicators, related to the statutory maximum, known as the **Authorised Limit** and a lower warning level known as the **Operational Boundary**.

7.8. The external debt projections are based on the approved Capital Programme however to manage unforeseen events, an element of flexibility or ‘headroom’ is included in the Prudential Indicators:

- **Operational Boundary** – flexibility is included to enable internal borrowing to be converted to external debt or for example, to ensure accounting changes such as those proposed for all leases to be classed as finance leases to be incorporated without breaching the limit.
- **Authorised Limit** – this provides additional flexibility to manage unusual cash flows that necessitate temporary borrowing such as Government Grants not being paid.

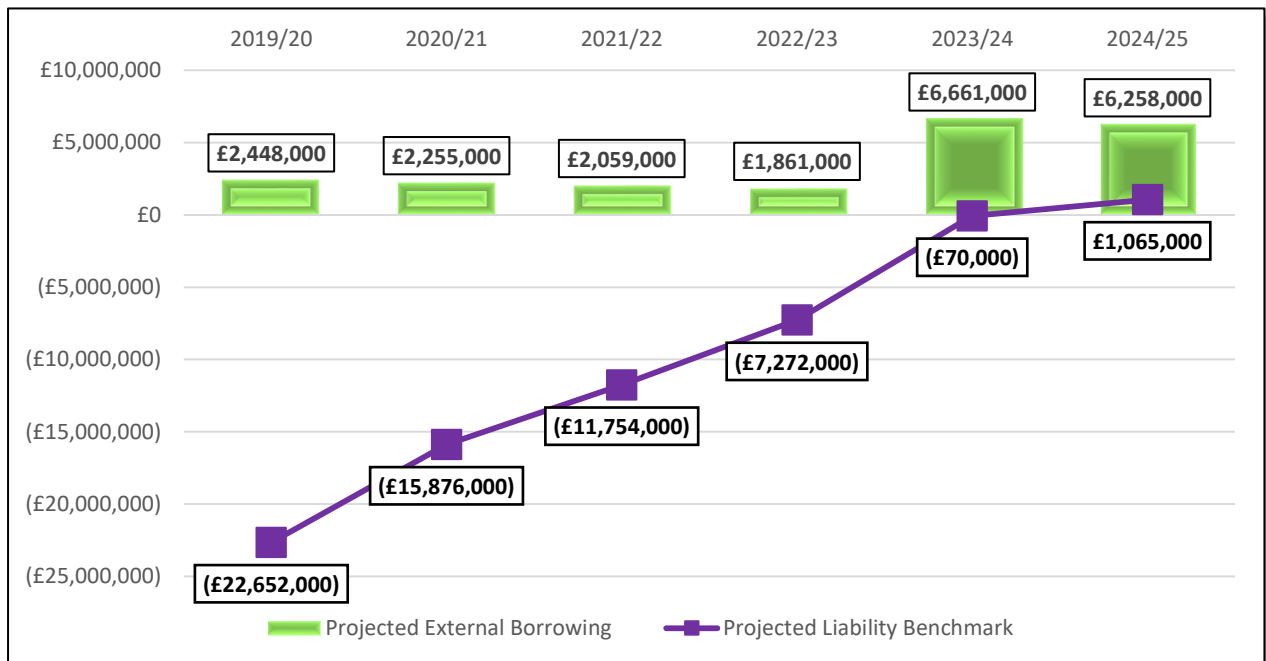
7.9. The external debt and Prudential Indicators projections based on the Capital Programme are:



	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Borrowing Leases		£10,956,000	£10,987,000	£11,439,000	£16,394,000	£15,710,000
		£4,448,000	£4,448,000	£4,448,000	£4,448,000	£4,448,000
Authorised limit	£4,315,000	£15,404,000	£15,435,000	£15,887,000	£20,842,000	£20,158,000
Borrowing Leases		£2,755,000	£2,559,000	£2,361,000	£7,161,000	£6,758,000
		£4,448,000	£4,448,000	£4,448,000	£4,448,000	£4,448,000
Operational boundary	£4,315,000	£7,203,000	£7,007,000	£6,809,000	£11,609,000	£11,206,000
Projected borrowing outstanding at year end	£2,448,000	£2,255,000	£2,059,000	£1,861,000	£6,661,000	£6,258,000
Projected leases outstanding at year end	£1,142,000	£623,000	£108,000	£2,853,000	£2,369,000	£1,885,000
Projected total external debt outstanding	£3,590,000	£2,878,000	£2,167,000	£4,714,000	£9,030,000	£8,143,000

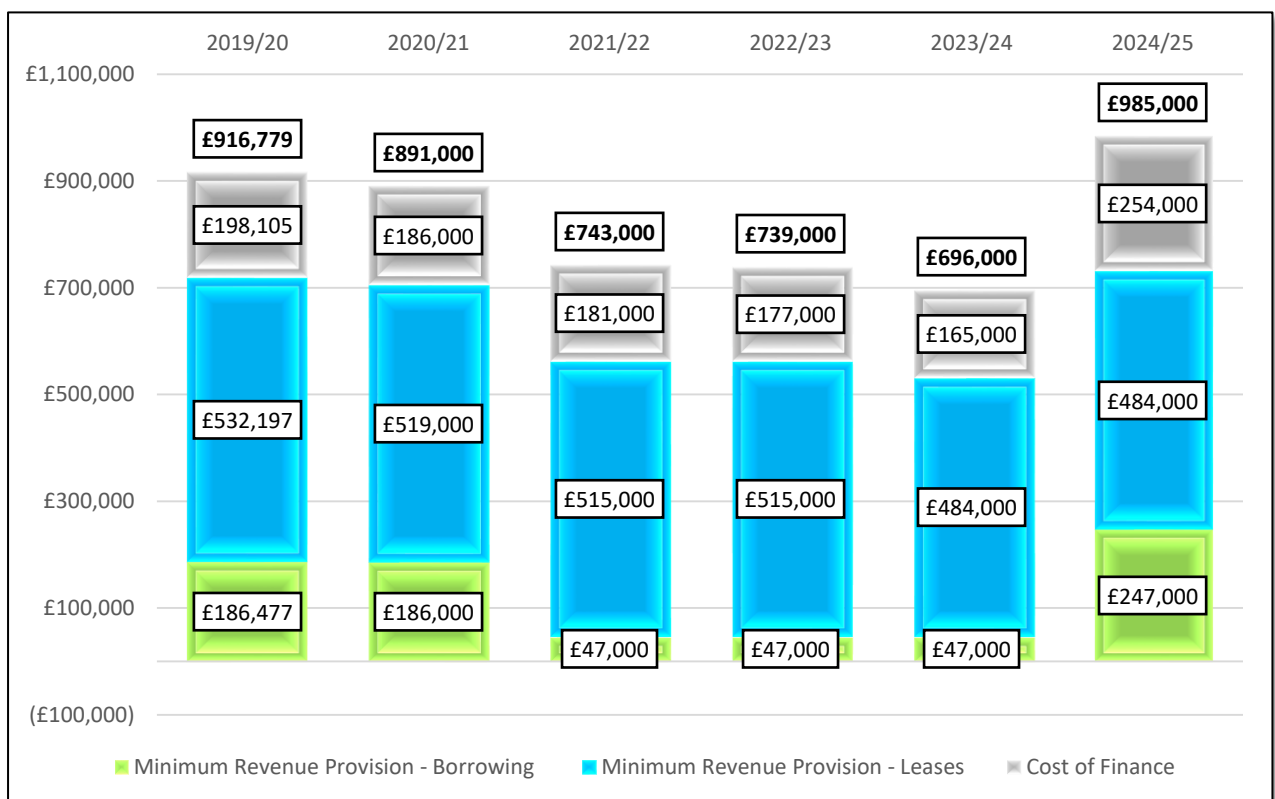
7.10. The **liability benchmark** is the lowest risk level of external borrowing by keeping cash and investments to a minimum of **£10m** at each year end to maintain liquidity but minimise credit risk.

7.11. The projected level of external borrowing, together with the projected liability benchmark is:

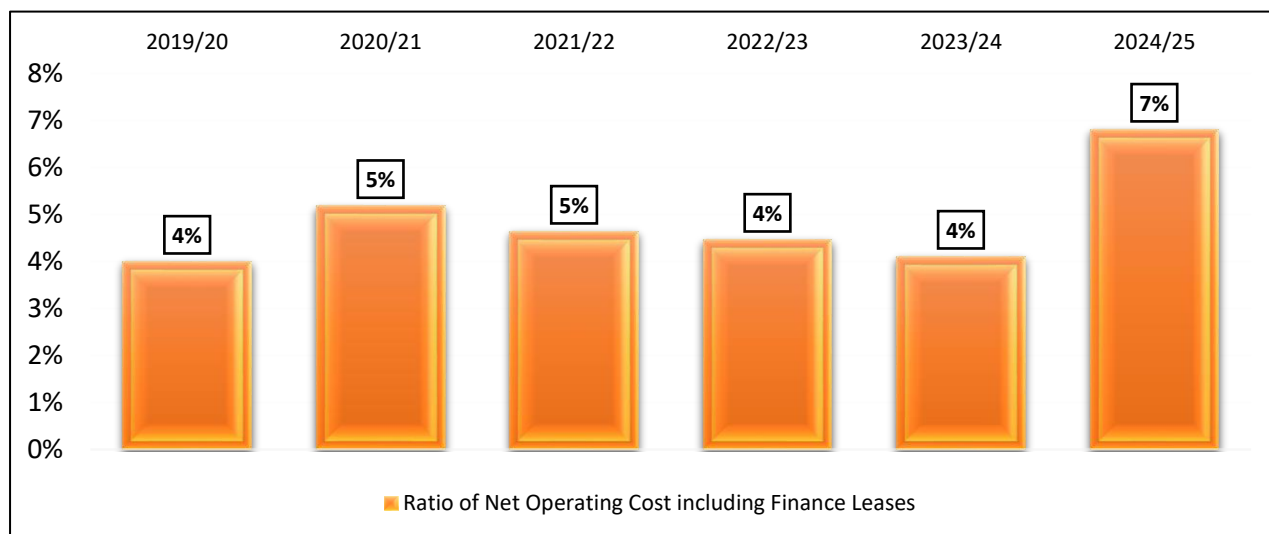


7.12. The chart above indicates that based on current Balance Sheet projections where usable reserves are reducing, the Council has sufficient resources to fund **£5m** of additional internal borrowing.

7.13. The cost of debt servicing includes the cost of finance and Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP). Debt is only a temporary source of finance since loans and leases must be repaid, and this is therefore replaced over time by other financing, usually from revenue which is known as MRP:



7.14. The proportion of the net budget allocated to financing costs (net of investment income) is shown below:



7.15. The Minimum Revenue Provision and therefore the financing costs ratio increases in 2024/25 because of the inclusion of the annual revenue debt costs commencing at **£294,000** for the new leisure centre.

8. Financial Guarantees

8.1. In addition to the debt projections shown above, in relation to external borrowing and finance leases, the Council also acts as a guarantor for an admitted body that delivers services on behalf of the Council.

8.2. In the event that it is probable that these guarantees will be required a financial provision is created to mitigate the risk. The guarantees identified in the Statement of Accounts under the Contingent Liabilities note are:

- **The Lichfield Garrick** – the guarantee relates to the pensions of transferred employees and at 31 March 2020 the risk of default was assessed as less than **1%** and therefore the financial risk to the Council is **£3,927**.
- **Freedom Leisure** - the guarantee relates to the pensions of transferred employees and at 31 March 2020 the risk of default was assessed as less than **1%** and therefore the financial risk to the Council is **£79,212**. Freedom Leisure have been admitted to the Pension Fund using a 'pass through' agreement where the Council bears all market related risks such as investment returns. The Pension Fund actuary assessed a market related bond to manage these risks to be **£677,000**. The Council agreed to the creation of an earmarked reserve, projected to total **£267,080** (£60,100 at 31 March 2020) at the end of the ten year contract period, from the leisure outsourcing savings with any additional sum to be provided by General Reserves.

8.3. These guarantees are assessed throughout the year, in terms of the financial viability of the organisations for which the guarantee is provided, to determine whether a financial provision will need to be created. The COVID-19 pandemic has increased the level of financial risk in relation to these two guarantees, however additional funding has been provided by the Council and other funders as mitigation. However the situation will need to be kept under constant review.

9. The Authority's Risk Appetite, Knowledge and Skills

- 9.1. The Council's risk appetite, along with the majority of Local Government, is increasing due to the need to offset funding reductions from Central Government with income from alternative sources.
- 9.2. The Council employs professionally qualified and experienced staff in senior positions with responsibility for making capital expenditure, borrowing and investment decisions. For example, the Head of Finance and Procurement is a qualified accountant with 30 years' experience, the Council has recruited a new Estates Team to optimise the management of existing property. The Council pays for junior staff to study towards relevant professional qualifications including CIPFA and the Association of Accounting Technicians.
- 9.3. Where Council staff do not have the knowledge and skills required, use is made of external advisers and consultants that are specialists in their field. The Council currently employs Arlingclose Limited as treasury management advisers and has access to property professionals through the Estates Team. This approach is more cost effective than employing such staff directly, and ensures that the Council has access to knowledge and skills commensurate with its risk appetite.
- 9.4. The Council does not plan to utilise the flexible use of capital receipts for transformation projects.

10. Prudential and Local Indicators

- 10.1. The Prudential and Local Indicators in relation to the Capital Strategy are shown below:

Prudential Indicators							
Indicators	2019/20 Actual	2020/21 Original	2020/21 Revised	2021/22 Original	2022/23 Original	2023/24 Original	2024/25 Original
Capital Investment							
Capital Expenditure (£m)	£2.297	£17.751	£3.979	£6.530	£8.430	£4.278	£1.608
Capital Financing Requirement (£m)	£4.305	£25.432	£2.727	£2.444	£7.491	£9.221	£8.490
Gross Debt and the Capital Financing Requirement							
Gross Debt	(£3.590)	(£19.091)	(£2.878)	(£2.167)	(£4.714)	(£9.030)	(£8.143)
Borrowing in Advance - Gross Debt in excess of the Capital Financing Requirement	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No
Total Debt							
Authorised Limit (£m)	£4.315	£31.906	£15.404	£15.435	£15.887	£20.842	£20.158
Operational Boundary (£m)	£4.315	£23.088	£7.203	£7.007	£6.809	£11.609	£11.206
Proportion of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream (%)	4%	10%	5%	5%	4%	4%	7%

Local Indicators							
Indicators	2019/20 Actual	2020/21 Original	2020/21 Revised	2021/22 Original	2022/23 Original	2023/24 Original	2024/25 Original
Replacement of Debt Finance or MRP (£m)	(£0.719)	(£1.041)	(£1.684)	(£0.561)	(£0.562)	(£0.531)	(£0.731)
Capital Receipts (£m)	(£1.005)	(£0.537)	(£0.010)	(£0.537)	(£0.010)	(£0.011)	(£0.009)
Liability Benchmark (£m)	£22.652	(£11.249)	£15.876	£11.754	£7.272	£0.070	(£1.065)
Treasury Management Investments (£m)	£34.554	£16.759	£28.131	£23.813	£19.133	£16.731	£15.193

11. Chief Finance Officer Assessment of the Capital Strategy

11.1. The removal of the Property Investment Strategy by Council means the level of risk associated with the Capital Strategy has significantly reduced from an assessed maximum level of **144** to **48**.

11.2. I have assessed the current overall risk as **24** out of **48** based on the following factors:

	Likelihood	Impact	2021/22	2020/21
Minimum			0	0
Capital Strategy				
Slippage Occurs in the Capital Spend	4	2	8	8
Planned Capital Receipts are not received	3	4	12	12
Actual Cash flows differ from planned Cash flows	2	2	4	4
Investment in Property				
Slippage Occurs in the Capital Spend	4	2	0	8
Change of Government policy including regulatory change	3	4	0	12
The form of exit from the EU adversely impacts on the UK economy including the Property Market and Borrowing Costs	3	4	0	12
There is a cyclical 'downturn' in the wider markets	3	3	0	9
Insufficient expertise to Invest in Property	1	4	0	4
Inability to acquire or dispose of assets due to good opportunities not being identified	3	4	0	12
Assessed Level of Risk			24	85
Maximum			48	144

Capital Programme – 25 Year Model (1 to 10 years, 15 years, 20 years and 25 years)

Key Assumptions	Medium Term Financial Strategy					Additional Projections							
	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2034/35	2039/40	2044/45
Year	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	15	20	25
Population Projections	104,858	105,293	105,709	106,073	106,432	106,749	107,070	107,398	107,724	108,040	109,651	111,546	113,588
% Increase in Population		0.41%	0.40%	0.34%	0.34%	0.30%	0.30%	0.31%	0.30%	0.29%	0.32%	0.37%	0.33%
% of population 65 and over	24.13%	24.33%	24.48%	24.70%	24.88%	25.03%	25.31%	25.57%	25.80%	26.09%	27.33%	27.92%	27.63%
Projected Council Tax Base							42,176	42,497	42,818	43,139	44,744	46,349	47,954
Asset Values (£000)													
Buildings	34,633	35,665	38,571	40,874	47,774	47,774	47,774	47,774	47,774	47,774	47,774	47,774	47,774
Leisure Centre Cost above £5m				6,900									
Land	9,016												
Vehicles, Plant and Equipment	2,285												
Other Assumptions													
Core Budget Inflation Allowance						2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%
Asset Management Condition Allowance						0.30%							

Key Assumptions	Medium Term Financial Strategy					Additional Projections							
	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2034/35	2039/40	2044/45
Year	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	15	20	25
New Assets													
Loan in Council Company		675											
Replacement Leisure Centre	106	278	2,349	2,260									
Housing Investment	255	429											
New Coach Park	250	325	557	43									
New Coach Park - Land		300											
Equity in Council Company	225												
Sub Total	836	2,007	2,906	2,303	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Existing Property													
Property Planned Maintenance	90	289	180	215		140	143	146	149	152	167	185	204
BRS - Short Term Redevelopment	222												
Burntwood Leisure Centre	754	532											
Depot Sinking Fund		11											
Equipment Storage in Beacon Park	100												
District Council House	50	188	110										
Dam Street Toilets	40												
Sub Total	1,256	1,020	290	215	0	140	143	146	149	152	167	185	204

<u>Vehicles, Plant and Equipment</u>													
Bin Purchases	210	150	150	150	150	150	151	152	153	155	160	166	172
Vehicles - Waste	22		3,243							3,308			
Vehicles - Other	66	118	301	120	143	150	153	156	159	162	179	197	218
ICT Investment	249	405	225	174		175	179	182	186	190	209	231	255
New Financial Information System	75	225											
Sub Total	622	898	3,919	444	293	475	482	490	498	3,814	549	595	645
<u>Other Capital Investment</u>													
Disabled Facilities Grants	511	1,272	1,272	1,272	1,272	914	927	940	951	964	1,025	1,066	1,074
Home Repair Assistance / Energy Insulation	10	44	43	43	43	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25
Other Projects	744	1,289											
Sub Total	1,265	2,605	1,315	1,316	1,315	939	952	965	976	989	1,050	1,091	1,099
Total Modelled Expenditure	3,979	6,530	8,430	4,278	1,608	1,554	1,578	1,601	1,623	4,955	1,766	1,870	1,948

Key Assumptions	Medium Term Financial Strategy					Additional Projections							
	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	2027/28 £000	2028/29 £000	2029/30 £000	2034/35 £000	2039/40 £000	2044/45 £000
<u>Corporate Funding</u>													
Capital Receipts	(522)	(1,296)	(604)	(219)		(490)	(291)						
Capital Receipts – Statue		(5)											
Revenue – Corporate	(182)			(213)									
<u>Other Funding</u>													
Disabled Facilities Grant – New	(1,110)	(1,096)	(906)	(906)	(906)	(914)	(927)	(940)	(951)	(964)	(1,025)	(1,066)	(1,074)
Disabled Facilities Grant – Existing	599	(176)	(366)	(366)	(366)								
Home Repair Assistance / Energy Insulation	(10)	(44)	(43)	(43)	(43)								
Other Grants	(531)	(891)	(500)										
Section 106	(601)	(785)											
CIL	(101)	(79)											
Reserves	(1,030)	(1,730)	(252)	(120)	(143)								
Revenue - Existing Budgets	(162)	(150)	(150)	(150)	(150)	(150)	(151)	(152)	(153)	(155)	(160)	(166)	(172)
Burntwood Leisure Centre Sinking Fund	(223)												
Finance Leases	0	0	(3,260)	0	0	0	0	0	0	(3,308)	0	0	0
Total Modelled Funding	(3,873)	(6,252)	(6,081)	(2,017)	(1,608)	(1,554)	(1,369)	(1,092)	(1,105)	(4,427)	(1,186)	(1,232)	(1,246)

Annual Borrowing Need	106	278	2,349	2,260	0	0	209	509	518	528	581	638	702
Cumulative Borrowing Need	106	384	2,733	4,993	4,993	4,994	5,202	5,711	6,229	6,757	9,553	12,627	16,008

Recommended Capital Programme

Project	Recommended Capital Programme (R=>500k, A=250k to 500k and G=<250k)						
	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000	Total £000	Corporate
Gym Equipment at Burntwood Parks	34	0	0	0	0	34	0
New Parish Office/Community Hub	0	92	0	0	0	92	0
Village Hall storage container	0	6	0	0	0	6	0
Armitage War Memorial	0	120	0	0	0	120	0
Canopy & artificial grass at Armitage	0	3	0	0	0	3	0
Burntwood LC CHP Unit	223	0	0	0	0	223	0
Burntwood LC	531	532	0	0	0	1,063	0
King Edwards VI School (CIL)	101	0	0	0	0	101	0
Friary Grange - Short Term Refurb	400	240	0	0	0	640	0
Replacement Leisure Centre	106	278	2,349	2,260	0	4,993	0
St. Stephen's School, Fradley (S106)	22	0	0	0	0	22	0
Beacon Park Pathway	30	0	0	0	0	30	30
Disabled Facilities Grants	511	1,272	1,272	1,272	1,272	5,599	0
Home Repair Assistance Grants	10	22	21	22	21	96	0
Decent Homes Standard	0	147	0	0	0	147	0
Energy Insulation Programme	0	22	22	22	22	88	0
DCLG Monies	0	212	0	0	0	212	0
Vehicle Replacement (Env Health)	0	0	20	0	0	20	0
S106 Affordable Housing Monies	255	429	0	0	0	684	0
Enabling People Total	2,223	3,375	3,684	3,576	1,315	14,173	30
Darnford Park (S106)	18	0	0	0	0	18	0
Canal Towpath Improvements	0	36	0	0	0	36	0
Loan to Council Dev Co.	0	675	0	0	0	675	116
Lichfield St Johns Community Link	0	35	0	0	0	35	0
Staffordshire Countryside Explorer	0	44	0	0	0	44	0
Equity in Council Dev Co.	225	0	0	0	0	225	0
Vehicle Replacement (Waste)	22	0	3,243	0	0	3,265	32
Vehicle Replacement (Other)	66	108	281	120	143	718	0
Bin Purchase	210	150	150	150	150	810	0
Dam Street Toilets	40	0	0	0	0	40	40
Env. Improvements: Upper St John St	0	7	0	0	0	7	0
Stowe Pool Improvements	57	0	0	0	0	57	5
Leomansley Area Improvement	0	3	0	0	0	3	0
Cannock Chase SAC	32	44	0	0	0	76	0
Shaping Place Total	670	1,102	3,674	270	293	6,009	193
Multi Storey Car Park Refurbishment	50	250	0	0	0	300	0
Coach Park	250	625	557	43	0	1,475	390
Birmingham Rd - Short Term Works	222	0	0	0	0	222	0
Car Parks Variable Message Signing	0	32	0	0	0	32	0
Vehicle Replacement (Car Parks)	0	10	0	0	0	10	0
Old Mining College: Access and signs	0	13	0	0	0	13	0
St. Chads Sculpture	0	5	0	0	0	5	5
Developing Prosperity Total	522	935	557	43	0	2,057	395
Property Investment Strategy	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Property Planned Maintenance	90	289	180	215	0	774	774
Depot Sinking Fund	0	11	0	0	0	11	11
Equipment Storage	100	0	0	0	0	100	100
New Financial Information System	75	225	0	0	0	300	250
IT Infrastructure	154	35	15	0	0	204	204
IT Innovation	95	205	50	0	0	350	275
ICT Hardware	0	165	160	174	0	499	499
District Council House Repairs	50	188	110	0	0	348	310
Good Council Total	564	1,118	515	389	0	2,586	2,423
Recommended Capital Programme	3,979	6,530	8,430	4,278	1,608	24,825	3,041

Funding Source	Recommended Capital Programme					
	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000	Total £000
Capital Receipts	522	1,296	604	219	0	2,641
Capital Receipts - Statue	0	5	0	0	0	5
Revenue - Corporate	182	0	0	213	0	395
Corporate Council Funding	704	1,301	604	432	0	3,041
Grant	1,052	2,207	1,815	1,316	1,315	7,705
Section 106	601	785	0	0	0	1,386
CIL	101	79	0	0	0	180
Reserves	1,030	1,730	252	120	143	3,275
Revenue - Existing Budgets	162	150	150	150	150	762
Sinking Fund	223	0	0	0	0	223
Leases	0	0	3,260	0	0	3,260
Internal Borrowing	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	3,873	6,252	6,081	2,018	1,608	19,832
External Borrowing	106	278	2,349	2,260	0	4,993
Grand Total	3,979	6,530	8,430	4,278	1,608	24,825

Reconciliation of Original Capital Programme to this Recommended Capital Programme

	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000	Total £000	Cabinet or Decision Date	
Original Budget Council 18/02/2020	17,751	13,636	18,821	4,051	0	54,259		
Approved Changes								
Outdoor Gyms at Burntwood parks	34					34	26/02/2020	
Slippage from 2019/20	13,454					13,454	02/06/2020	
Money Matters 3 Months	(23,203)	23,232				29	08/09/2020	
Medium Term Financial Strategy (Revenue and Capital) 2020-25	(91)	(33,500)	(11,500)			(45,091)	06/10/2020	
Money Matters 6 Months	11	(209)	212	(157)	143	0	01/12/2020	
Money Matters 8 Months	(4,653)	3,097	941	428	384	197	09/02/2021	
Burntwood Leisure Centre	531	532				1,063		
Service and Financial Planning Capital								
Bids								
Bin Replacement					150	150	Medium Term Financial Strategy	
Beacon Park Equipment Storage	100					100		
Beacon Park Jogging Track	30					30		
Dam Street Public Conveniences Refurbishment	40					40		
Financial Information System		50				50		
Disabled Facilities Grants		(308)	(44)	(44)	906	510		
Energy Insulation Programme					10	10		
Home Repair Assistance Grants					15	15		
Other Funding Changes								
Decent Homes Standard grant funding								
Energy Insulation and Home Repair Assistance Grants	(25)					(25)		
Recommended Capital Programme	3,979	6,530	8,430	4,278	1,608	24,825		

CFO Report on Robustness of the Budget and Adequacy of Reserves – Supporting Information

Context

In accordance with the Local Government Act 2003 (Sections 25-27) and to comply with CIPFA Guidance on Local Authority Reserves and Balances, the CFO is required to formally report to Members on the robustness of the Budget and the adequacy of Reserves. The CFO is appropriately qualified under the terms of Section 113 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988.

Adequacy of Reserves

The CFO assesses and determines the appropriate level of Reserves and Provisions using a variety of mechanisms, including:

- Being significantly involved in the Budget setting process, the annual financial cycle and engaged in the strategic leadership of the organisation as a member of the Leadership Team including wider corporate roles beyond that of finance;
- Leading and writing on the annual revision of the MTFs;
- Challenging the budget at various stages of preparation, including the reasonableness of the key budget assumptions and sensitivities such as estimates for inflation and corporate financial pressures, realism of income targets and the extent to which known trends and liabilities are provided for:
 - Meetings with specific colleagues to examine particular areas or issues;
 - An in-depth review of the financial risks assessment;
 - Review of the movements, trends (including a comparison to the level at other Councils) and availability of contingency, provisions and earmarked reserves to meet unforeseen cost pressures in the context of future pressures and issues;
 - The use of professional experience and best professional judgement;
 - The use of appropriate professional, technical guidance and local frameworks;
 - Knowledge of the colleagues involved in the process, particularly finance professionals, including their degree of experience and qualifications;
 - Review of the strength of financial management and reporting arrangements, including internal control and governance arrangements. This is undertaken in consultation with relevant colleagues and Members of the Cabinet.

It is prudent for Councils to maintain an adequate 'working balance', that is part of General Reserves. A Risk Assessment approach is used to determine the required level of General Reserves and Provisions.

The Council's aim is to have a prudent level of General Reserves available for unforeseen financial risks. The Council projects available general reserves of **£6,574,824** at 31 March 2021 and **£6,986,000** at 31 March 2022. This is **55%** and **58%** of the amount to be met from Government Grants and Local Taxpayers in 2021/22 of **£11,951,000**.

The minimum level of Reserves for 2021/22 onwards is **£1,600,000** and has been determined by Risk Assessment.

In recommending an adequate level of Reserves, the CFO considers and monitors the opportunity costs of maintaining particular levels of Reserves and Balances and compares these to the benefits accrued from having such Reserves. The opportunity cost of maintaining a specific level of Reserves is the 'lost'

opportunity for example, of investing elsewhere to generate additional investment income, or using the funds to invest in service improvements.

In assessing this, it is important to consider that Reserves can only be used once and are therefore potentially only "one off" sources of funding. Therefore, any use of General Reserves above the lower minimum threshold is only ever used on one-off items of expenditure.

Expenditure - the level of Reserves is also determined by use of a comprehensive risk assessment to ensure they represent an appropriately robust "safety net" that adequately protects the Council against potential unbudgeted costs.

Use of General Revenue Reserves

The above assessment demonstrates that General Revenue Reserves are at an appropriate level as determined in accordance with the MTFS and the CFO's professional advice. The MTFS allows any Reserves above the level required by the Strategy to be used to fund one-off items of expenditure. No General Revenue Reserves below the minimum threshold are being used to support the 2021/22 budget and beyond.

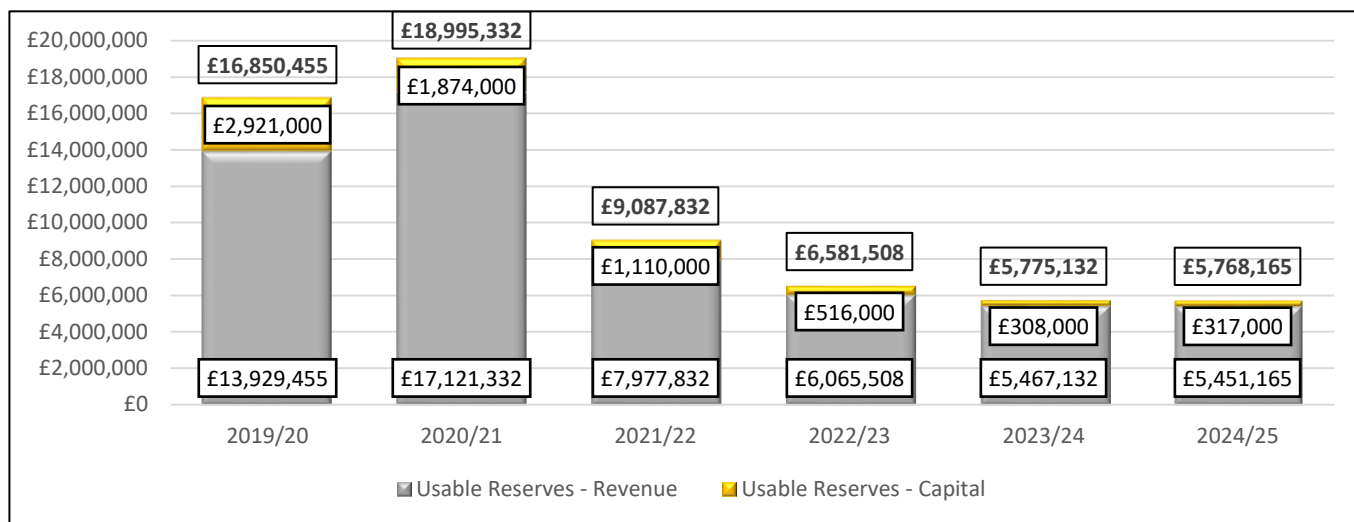
CIPFA provides guidance for determining the minimum level of Reserves. The Council uses the method based on risk assessment. The approach to the risk assessment of Reserves has taken into account CIPFA guidance (LAAP 99) (Guidance note on Local Authority Reserves and Balances).

The table below shows the financial risk assessment made for **2021/22** with increases in the level of risk shown as positive numbers (red) and reductions in the level of risk enclosed in brackets (green):

Activity Area	Severity of Risk	2021/22 Reserve Amounts £	2020/21 Reserve Amounts £	Change £
Capital Strategy	Material	£264,000	£149,000	£115,000
Business Rates	Severe	£69,000	£264,000	(£195,000)
Partnerships and Outsourcing	Tolerable	£152,000	£37,000	£115,000
High Risk Streams of Income including Fees and Charges	Severe	£645,000	£587,000	£58,000
Inflation Assumptions	Material	£155,000	£233,000	(£78,000)
Demand Led Services	Material	£90,000	£90,000	£0
Collection of Income Performance	Material	£139,000	£133,000	£6,000
Civil Contingency	Tolerable	£127,000	£127,000	£0
Other	Tolerable	(£41,000)	(£20,000)	(£21,000)
Total Minimum Reserves		£1,600,000	£1,600,000	£0

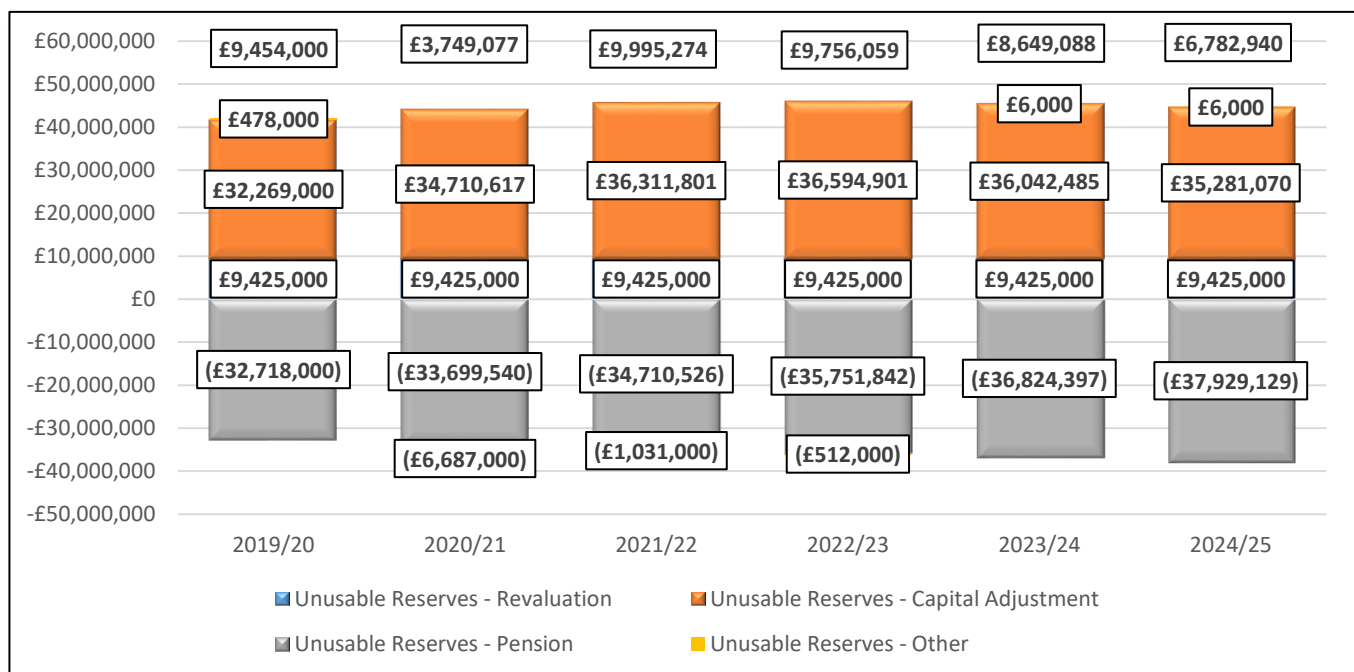
Other Reserves (in addition to General Reserves)

A review of the level of Earmarked Reserves has been undertaken as part of the annual Budget preparation. The projected levels are shown below:



Ongoing review of Earmarked Reserves takes place as part of the Money Matters Reports in line with the approved earmarked reserves policy to ensure we are only holding funds for known and essential purposes.

The Council also holds other Unusable Reserves that arise out of the interaction of legislation and proper accounting practice and the Balance Sheet projections are shown below:



The CFO has been involved throughout the entire budget process, including revising the MTFs, input to the drafting of the budget, the ongoing financial monitoring and reporting process, evaluation of investments and savings, engagement with Members of the Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Committees, advising colleagues, the strategic choices activities, challenge and evaluation activities, and scrutiny of the budget. The following sections of this statement outline particular activities and documents.

Process - a robust budget process has been used within the overall context of the MTFs.

Timetable - the process started in July 2020 and the draft budget was completed in November 2020 prior to the Provisional Financial Settlement for Local Government 2021/22. This enabled formal scrutiny of the budget making process in January 2021. The final budget is due to be set at Council on 16 February 2021, well within the statutory deadline.²

Member involvement and Scrutiny (including budget monitoring) - formal Member involvement has been extensive, particularly through the Cabinet in conjunction with Leadership Team, Strategic Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Audit and Member Standards Committee, which has fed upwards to Cabinet.

Consultation – from 22 October 2020 to 31 December 2020, we carried out a budget consultation to find out what people who live in the District think about the services we provide and their view on an acceptable level of Council Tax increase.

Challenge - there are various points of challenge at various stages of the Budget, meetings of Leadership Team, Cabinet and the Scrutiny process itself.

Localism Act - Right to approve or veto excessive Council Tax rises - The Secretary of State has determined a **2%** or **£5.00** (whichever is the higher) limit for Council Tax increases for 2021/22. If an Authority proposes to raise taxes above the limit they will have to hold a referendum to get approval for this from the local voters who will be asked to approve or veto the rises.

Ownership and accountability - the budget has progressed through the Service and Financial Planning process including review by management within services and Leadership Team. Budget holders were sent copies of budget estimate working papers for their respective areas of service responsibility.

Current financial position - the budget is a statement of financial intent, reflecting The Council's vision, plans and priorities. It also sets the financial spending parameters for each financial year and as such, the CFO assessment of the adequacy of Reserves, also includes the risk of services overspending and/or under-spending their budgets and the impact of this on the financial health of the Council and its level of Reserves. The current financial position has been reported throughout the year.

Key assumptions - The pay and prices used in the budget are derived from current intelligence, are considered appropriate and compare with those used by other Councils. Fees and charges have been reviewed and changes are reflected in the overall budget. The Capital Receipts to be used for the Capital Programme are based on estimates of both timing and value.

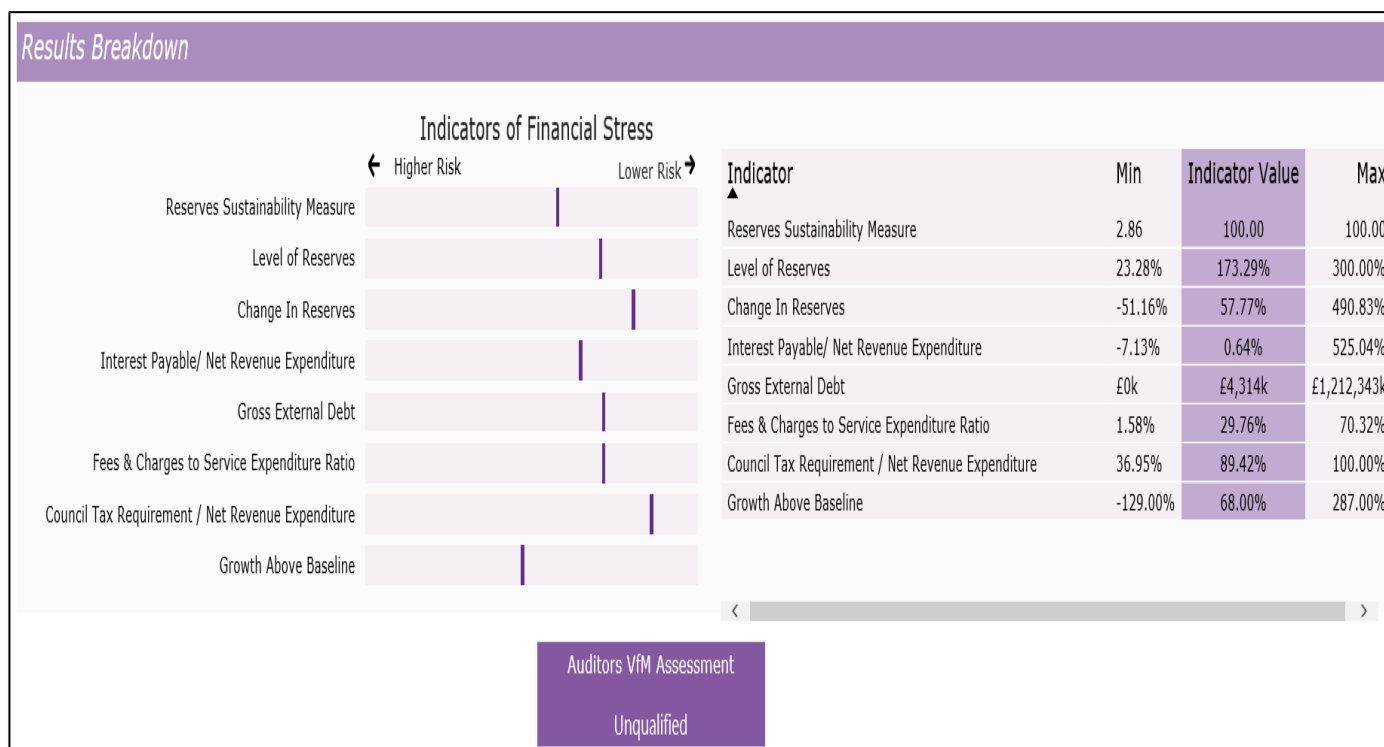
Financial risks – The Council continues to use an embedded good practice Risk Assessment approach both when setting the Budget and in validating estimated outturns. This continues for the 2020/21 outturn and 2021/22 plus Budget. The minimum level of General Reserves is considered to be adequate to cover all but the most unusual and serious combination of risks.

The CIPFA Resilience Index

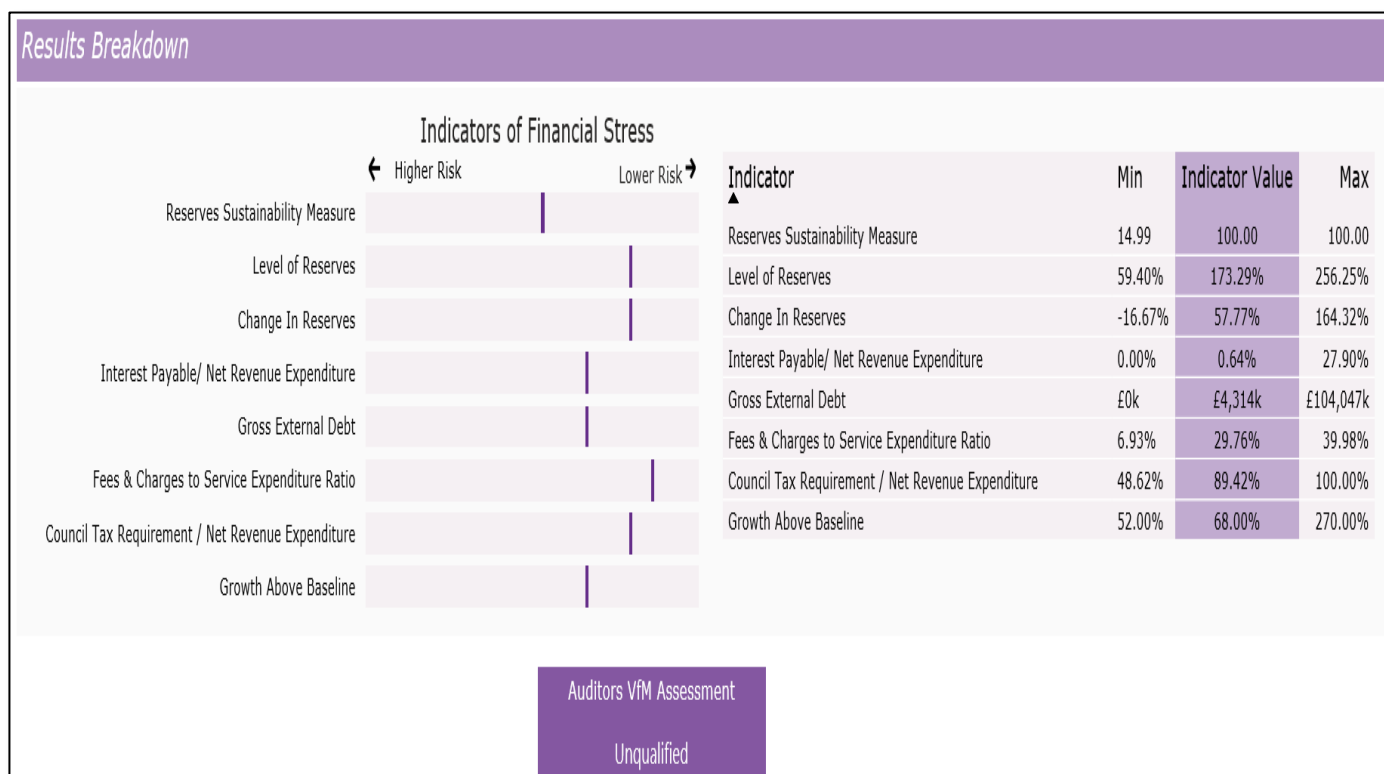
CIPFA published the first release of its Resilience Index in December 2019. The selection of indicators has been informed by the extensive financial resilience work undertaken by CIPFA over the past four years, public consultation and technical stakeholder engagement. The Resilience Index for 2020 has been delayed due to incomplete provisional data and is scheduled for release in early February 2021 subject to MHCLG data release timetables and CIPFA's own internal assurance. In the interim, the index for 2019 using a range of measures associated with financial risk is republished on the following page.

² Statutory deadline date for setting Council Tax is by 11 March 2021.

District Councils



Nearest Neighbours



Summary - Opinion of CFO on the Adequacy of Reserves and the Robustness of the Estimates

I am of the opinion that for a Council of this size and with our recent record of prudent spending, effective Risk Management, robust budgeting and effective Budget monitoring and control, a General Minimum Reserve level of **£1,600,000** remains adequate.

Revenue Budget – 25 Year Model (1 to 10 years, 15 years, 20 years and 25 years)

Key Assumptions													
Year	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2034/35	2039/40	2044/45
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	15	20	25
Council Tax Base	39,032	38,891	39,728	40,639	41,335	41,855	41,855	42,176	42,497	42,818	44,423	46,028	47,633
Projected Residential Growth - LHN							321	321	321	321	321	321	321
Projected Council Tax Base							42,176	42,497	42,818	43,139	44,744	46,349	47,954
Council Tax Band D	£180.07	£185.07	£190.07	£195.07	£198.95	£202.91	£207	£211	£215	£220	£242	£267	£295
Modelled Council Tax Increase	£5.00	£5.00	£5.00	£5.00	1.99%	1.99%	1.99%	1.99%	1.99%	1.99%	1.99%	1.99%	1.99%
LG Futures Property Based Unit Cost	£53	£54	£55	£56	£57	£58	£59	£60	£62	£63	£69	£77	£85
Core Budget Inflation Allowance						2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%
Funding and Pension Inflation Allowance						2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%

Year	Medium Term Financial Strategy					Additional Projections								
	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	2027/28 £000	2028/29 £000	2029/30 £000	2034/35 £000	2039/40 £000	2044/45 £000	
Year	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	15	20	25	
Modelled Total Expenditure	11,563	11,951	11,827	12,200	12,334	12,628	12,999	13,442	13,896	14,363	16,918	19,882	23,313	
<u>Inflation and Budget Variations</u>														
Provision for Pay and Other Inflation						316	326	334	345	357	420	494	579	
Budget Pressure - Residential Growth						30	19	19	20	20	22	25	27	
Budget Variations						0								
Housing options system						64								
Revenue Implications of Capital Bids						0								
Sub Total	11,563	11,951	11,827	12,200	12,334	13,038	13,344	13,795	14,260	14,739	17,361	20,400	23,920	
<u>Other Projections</u>														
Annual Increase in Past Service Pensions						100	102	104	106	108	120	132	146	
FGLC short term running costs end						(135)								
Replacement for FGLC Debt Costs					294	(4)	(4)	(4)	(4)	(4)	(4)	(4)	(4)	
Total Modelled Expenditure	11,563	11,951	11,827	12,200	12,628	12,999	13,442	13,896	14,363	14,844	17,477	20,528	24,061	

APPENDIX E

	Medium Term Financial Strategy					Additional Projections							
	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	2027/28 £000	2028/29 £000	2029/30 £000	2034/35 £000	2039/40 £000	2044/45 £000
Modelled Funding: <u>Retained Business Rates</u>													
Baseline Funding Level	(2,117)	(2,117)	(1,710)	(1,710)	(1,710)	(1,744)	(1,779)	(1,815)	(1,851)	(1,888)	(2,084)	(2,301)	(2,541)
Retained Growth - full & phased resets	(903)	(1,005)	(627)	(624)	(573)	(466)	(475)	(485)	(494)	(504)	(557)	(615)	(679)
<u>New Homes Bonus / Replacement</u>													
New Homes Bonus - total receipt	(1,771)	(1,282)	(680)	0									
New Homes Bonus - Replacement					0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<u>Council Tax and Other Funding</u>													
Collection Fund and one off funding	(464)	(349)	65	65	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Council Tax	(7,029)	(7,198)	(7,551)	(7,927)	(8,224)	(8,493)	(8,728)	(8,970)	(9,217)	(9,471)	(10,841)	(12,392)	(14,149)
Total Modelled Funding	(12,284)	(11,951)	(10,503)	(10,196)	(10,507)	(10,703)	(10,982)	(11,269)	(11,562)	(11,863)	(13,482)	(15,308)	(17,369)
Modelled Funding Gap/(General Reserves)	(721)	0	1,324	2,005	2,121	2,296	2,460	2,626	2,801	2,981	3,995	5,220	6,693

Memorandum Item	Legacy Payments					New Scheme			
New Homes Bonus - Base Budget	(600)	(500)	(400)	0	0	0	0	0	0

	Medium Term Financial Strategy					Additional Projections							
	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2034/35	2039/40	2044/45
General Reserves Year Start	4,792	4,975	5,386	4,342	2,337	217	217	217	217	217	217	217	217
Contributions from Revenue Account	721	0	(1,324)	(2,005)	(2,121)	(2,296)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
COVID-19 Revenue Budget Impact	(1,709)												
New Homes Bonus in excess of the 'Cap'	1,171	411	280	0	0								
Available General Reserves Year End	4,975	5,386	4,342	2,337	217	(2,080)	217	217	217	217	217	217	217
Minimum Level	1,600	1,600	1,600	1,600	1,600	1,600							
Total General Reserves	6,575	6,986	5,942	3,937	1,817	(480)							

Budget Consultation Report

January 2021

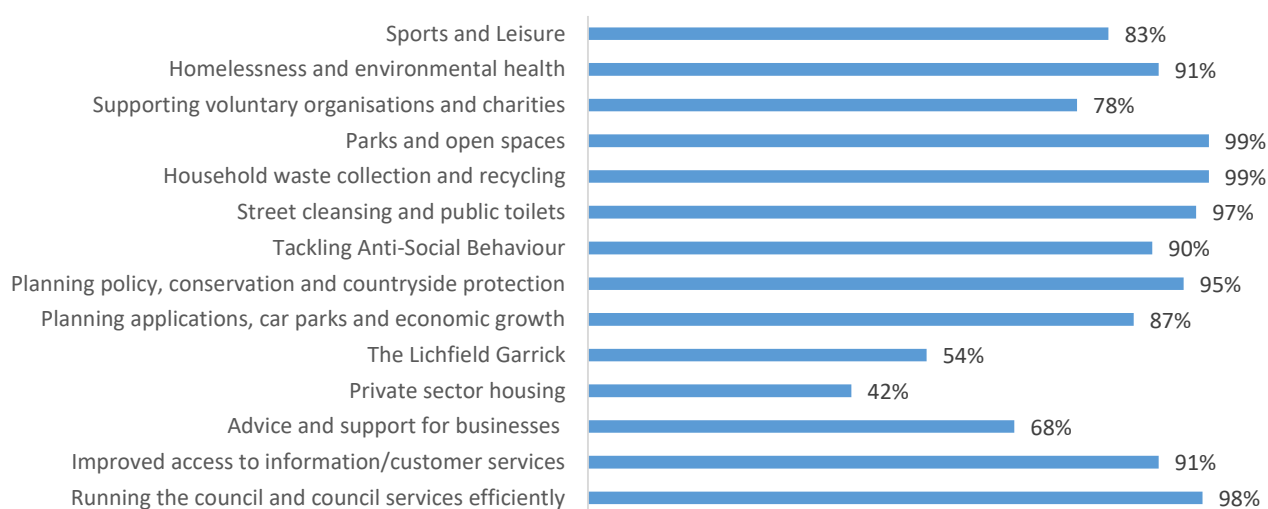
Contents

1	Executive Summary	3
2	Introduction	4
3	Methodology	4
4	Results	6
	4.1 - Opinions about Lichfield District Council	
	4.2 - Results – Services Provided	
	4.3 - Spending Priorities	
	4.4 - Fees, charges, income and other opportunities	
5	Setting Council Tax	13
6	Additional suggestions and ideas	14
	Appendix – Respondent Breakdown	19

1. Executive Summary

Lichfield District Council has four strategic priorities set out in its Strategic Plan for 2020 to 2024. These priorities are to Enable People, Shape Place, Develop Prosperity and Be a Good Council. Introductory questions in the consultation returned results that demonstrate a general level of trust and satisfaction with Lichfield District Council but less certainty on the extent to which residents feel informed the Council's activities and the extent to which it delivers value for money.

The budget consultation invited respondents to consider a wide range of service areas that fit under these strategic priorities. The areas that were highlighted as most important were Parks and Open Spaces, Household Waste Collection and Recycling and Running the Council and its services efficiently. Also in the top five areas of importance were Street Cleansing and Planning Policy.



Spending Priorities and Council Tax

There was a general feeling from respondents to the survey that spending should be maintained rather than increased across the majority of service areas. Only in two areas were the majority of respondents in favour of reducing spending – the Lichfield Garrick and Private Sector Housing.

Fees and income

The largest proportion of respondents (68%) felt that either Lichfield District Council's approach to fees was currently about right or that no additional fees should be introduced. Only 32% felt that there was scope for increases and put forward alternative suggestions for sources of income generation which ranged from commercial sponsorship, increased for more regular fines, large-scale events or ideas for reductions in spending.

Council Tax

The majority of respondents (86%) indicated that an increase in Council Tax would be acceptable with 63% of the total expressing that an increase of 2% or £5 would be acceptable to them.

2. Introduction

In the next financial year (2020/21) Lichfield District Council will spend around £11million (£10,991,000) on local services. Over £7million (£7,029,000) of this figure is generated through council tax. The balance (£3,962,000) will be funded through business rates, other grants, surpluses and New Homes Bonus.

The government has been reducing the amount of core government grant received by local authorities every year, and next year Lichfield District Council could be required to pay an amount to the Government (although this will be subject to the Spending Review). This means facing significant and ongoing challenges providing the same level of services, and either needing to make further savings or generate additional income to fund the services delivered.

Talking to residents and getting their views plays an important part in the process of shaping future decisions on budget priorities and setting council tax.

A total of 150 people responded to the survey. This represents 0.2% of the adult population of the district. A full breakdown of respondents can be found in Appendix 1.

3. Methodology

The questionnaire used for the budget consultation was based on the template used in the previous budget consultation exercise and updated to reflect strategic priorities from Lichfield District Council's Strategic Plan 2020 – 2024. The questionnaire also includes a range of questions derived from Staffordshire County Council's Feeling the Difference survey which gave residents an opportunity to give their views on their local area as a place to live, and local public services.

The budget consultation was launched on 22 October and was open until 31 December 2020.

The questionnaire was accessible on-line through the Lichfield District Council website and promoted through the media and social media. The budget consultation was also promoted in the printed LDC News magazine distributed to 44,000 homes in November 2020 and through a newly launched e-news that was sent to 6000 subscribers.

Plans to hold events and displays to promote the consultation and broaden the scope of information gathering and discussion around strategic and budget priorities were suspended due to coronavirus restrictions at local and national level.

4. Results

4.1 - Opinions about Lichfield District Council

Respondents were asked to express their overall opinions about Lichfield District Council. This section questions was taken from the question set used in the Staffordshire County Council’s ‘Feeling the Difference’ and previously used as part of Lichfield’s strategic indicator set.

Overall satisfaction

The majority of respondents (60%) stated that they were either fairly or very satisfied with the performance of Lichfield District Council.



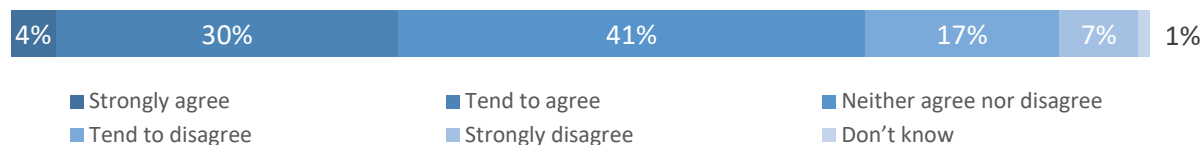
Keeping residents informed

The majority of respondents (54%) indicated that they felt fairly or very well information about Lichfield District Council Services against 44% that believed they were not well informed.



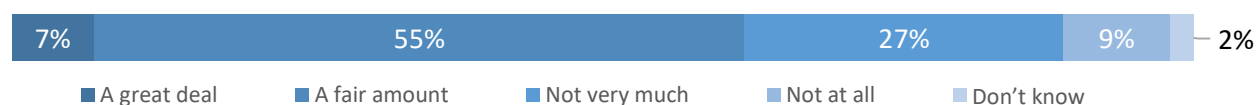
Providing value for money

A total of 34% of respondents felt that Lichfield District Council provides value for money with 24% expressing the view that the authority did not. The largest proportion of respondents (41%) answered that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement.



Trust in Lichfield District Council

The majority of respondents (62%) expressed that they had trust in Lichfield District Council with 34% saying that they did not.



4.2 - Services Provided

Respondents were provided with a list of service areas delivered or supported by Lichfield District Council and asked to rate the importance each service area. The service areas were themed under each of the strategic priorities;

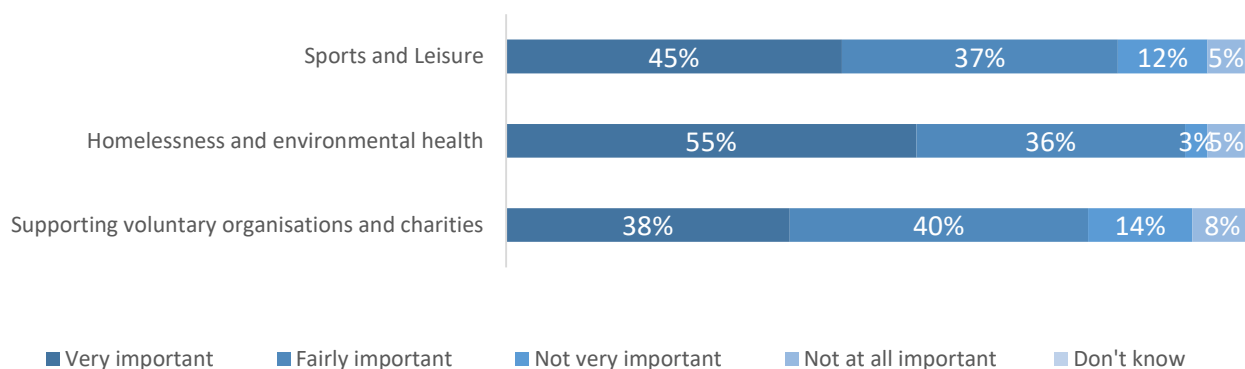
- Enabling people
- Shaping place
- Developing prosperity
- Being a good council

The rating scale approach is the same as the scale used in the previous budget consultation survey to enable comparison between results. The Fairly and Very important scores have been combined to provide an overall importance rating. Where the 'level of support' is quoted this is defined as;

- High 75% – 100% agree the service is important
- Moderate 50% – 74% agree the service is important
- Some 25% - 49% agree the service is important
- Low 0% - 24% agree the service is importance

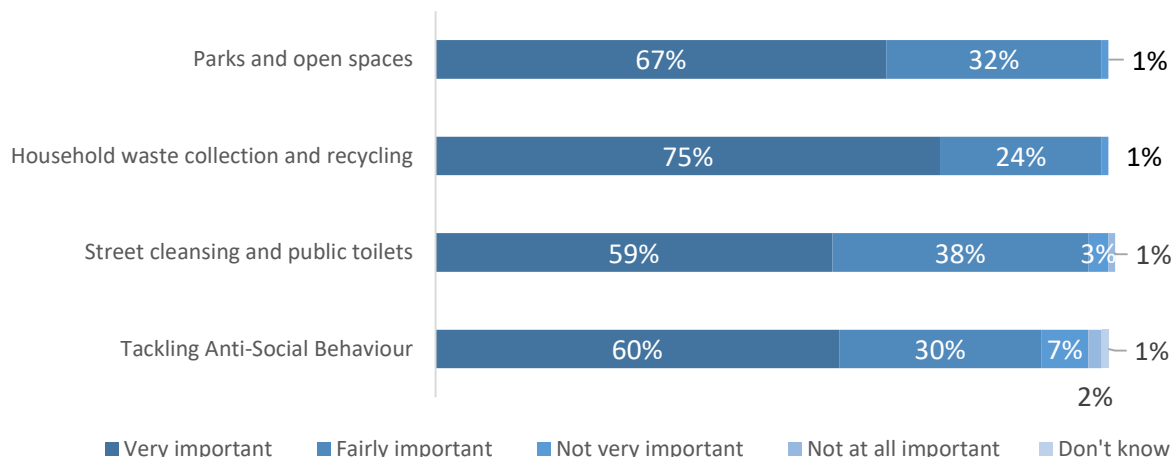
Enabling People

A high proportion of respondents (82%) felt Sports and Leisure were important. This ranked these services 10th in the overall list of priorities. There was also a high level of support attached to Homelessness and environmental health (91%) which placed 6th in the list of priorities. Supporting voluntary organisations was rated as high importance by 78% of respondents and ranked 11th out of the 14 service areas.



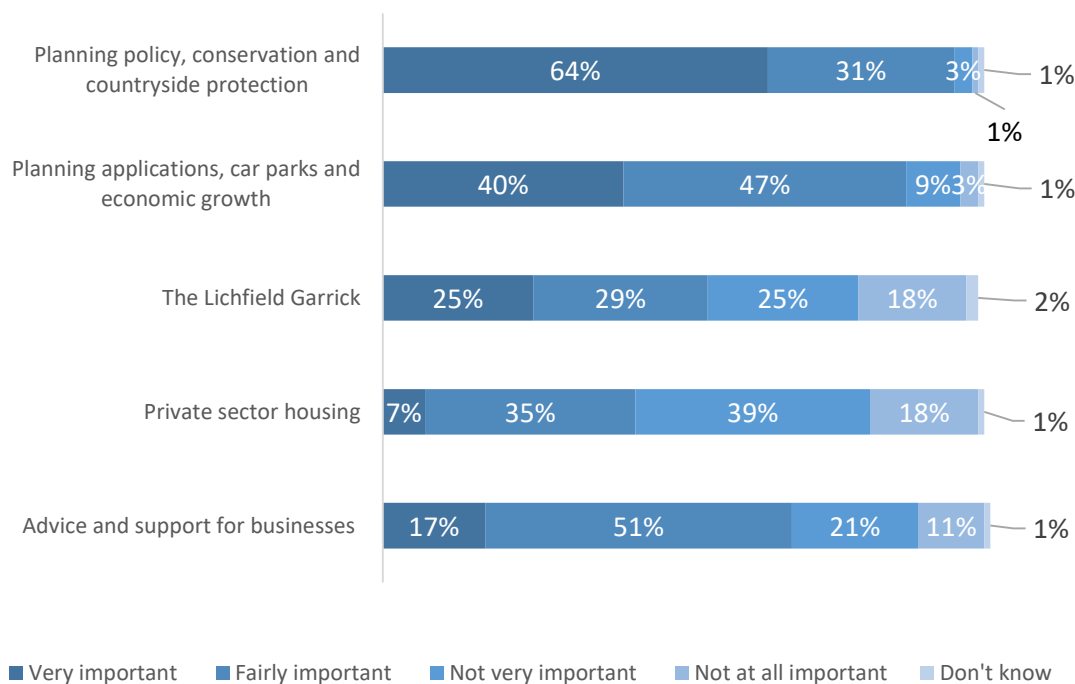
Shaping Place

Both Parks and open spaces and household waste and recycling received the highest importance score of all 14 service priorities with 99% of respondents rating them as high importance. This is consistent with the previous budget consultation survey where waste collection from homes was ranked as the highest priority with a score of 91%. Street cleansing and public toilets was also rated as high importance (97%) and was the 4th rated priority.



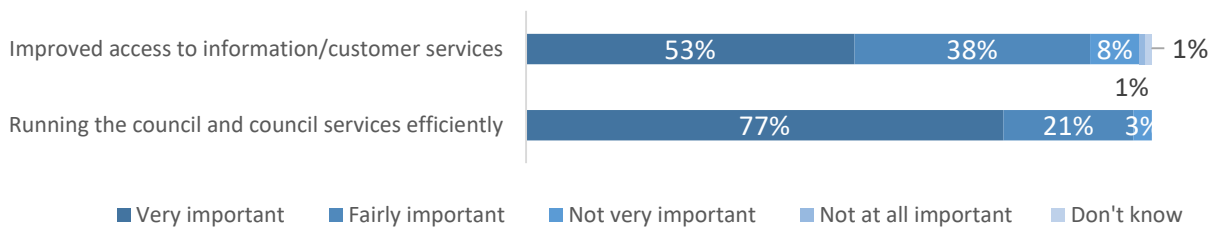
Developing Prosperity

Private Sector housing was rated as a priority by some respondents (42%) making it the lowest ranked of all priorities. Support for the Garrick Theatre was rated as a moderate priority by respondents (54%) making it 13th out of 14 priority areas. This is slightly higher than the previous survey where the Garrick was only a priority for some residents (26%) when listed as a joint priority with the arts.



Being a good council

Improving access to information and customer services was rated as high importance by respondents (91%) whilst the importance of running the council and its services in an efficient manner was rated as the 3rd highest priority on the list with 98% of respondents rating this as fairly or very important.



4.3 - Spending Priorities

Using the same list of priority areas, respondents were asked to state whether spending in each service area should be;

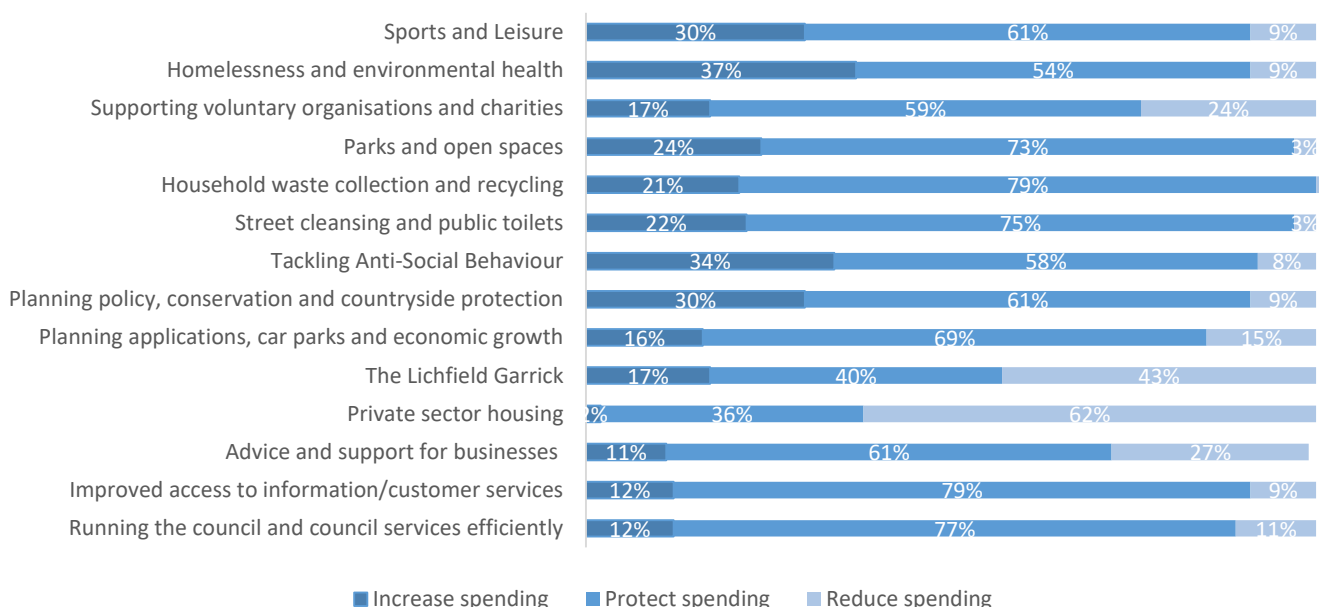
- a) Increased,
- b) Protected, or
- c) Reduced.

For all but two of the priority areas (The Lichfield Garrick at 40%, and private sector housing at 36%) the majority of respondents stated that spending should be protected. The top priority areas where residents selected to increase spending were;

- o Homelessness and environmental health – 37%
- o Tackling Anti-social behaviour – 34%
- o Sports and leisure – 30%
- o Planning policy, conservation and countryside protection – 30%

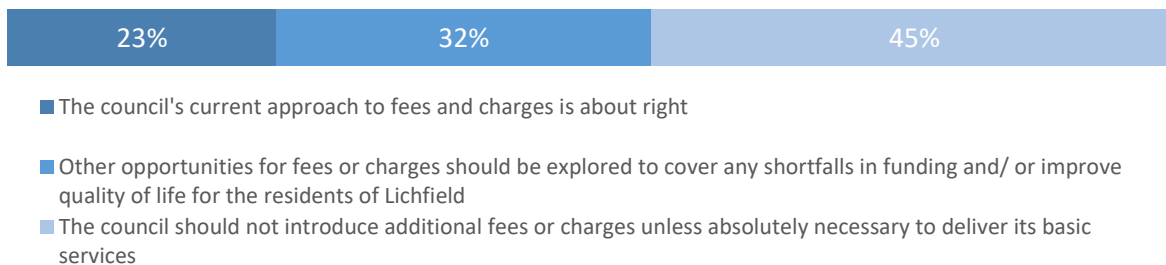
The areas with the highest number of respondents indicating that spending should be reduced were;

- o Private sector housing – 62%
- o Lichfield Garrick – 43%
- o Advice and Support for businesses – 27%
- o Supporting voluntary organisation and charities – 24%



4.4 - Fees, charges, income and other opportunities

Respondents were asked for their views on Lichfield District Council's approach to setting fees and charges. The largest number of respondents (45%) expressed a view that fees and charges should not be increased whilst 32% felt that other opportunities should be explored.



Respondents were also asked to put forward their own ideas on opportunities for alternative sources of income;

Business Support

Too many shops are closing and need help. Reducing building rent and encouraging new businesses to the dying shopping Centre would bring in more income to the city.

Help local businesses. Help keep your green spaces and park well. Stop anti-social behaviour.

Reduce business rates to get empty shops filled. Too many closed and empty shops because rates are too high.

Amenities and Events

Would it be possible for the council to open short term charging car parks during large events in the city such as parking on the field by Stowe pool during the food festivals?

Next year there will be such an appetite for events that a ticketed public event ran for profit would be welcomed I expect. Joint ventures with property developers to develop unused council owned property including office space in residential would be easily realised though this is a bit 'short-term-its'.

Organise and charge for large events that would make a profit (in the future after Covid restrictions have been relaxed).

A lottery, Rock Festival in the parks with big names. More large one-off markets

When covid free, Cinema, Dance Hall/Event Centre, Decent swimming pool/sports centre. I've been on French campsites that have better facilities than Lichfield. If you can't arrange for investors to provide these facilities in Lichfield giving you an increased tax revenue then people will continue to spend their money in Tamworth.

More things to do in Lichfield for the young. It will keep them busy and meaning hanging round parks won't be their only option for recreation. The income generated from a cinema and could go back to the local authority.

Housing and construction

There should be substantial contributions from all the new building that is taking place now and in the future around our city. This is an opportunity that should not be missed. The builders concerned should have to contribute more to improve the road infrastructure required to cope with the increased traffic from the increase in the population. Builders should also contribute to the leisure facilities required for all their new residents such as building stretches of the Lichfield Canal as this would be a tremendous boost to tourism and a great leisure facility for local residents. It is so sad to see how slowly this development is moving. Water is what people look for to relax and book holidays beside.

Planning is a key earning service and ways to provide paid for consulting for private development could be explored in addition levies for planning gain should be increased where possible. Hire of council owned venues can be marketed to local businesses.

Provision of council housing

Spending Reduction

Do we have a need for the Tourist Information Centre with so much information available online? May be a way of saving money?

Increase income by saving on council officers' salaries and employing competent staff. Job share with adjoining council(s) the post of Chief Executive. Officers at LDC are not up to scratch. Close the public toilets at the entrance of Beacon Park and replace with one or two units that can be rented out.

Reduce council spending. Sell council offices and make staff work from home

Fines, Fees and Charges

Parking on the pavement and enforcement of parking on Yellow lines. I believe that councils in London are able to do this.

Residents should be fined if they do not obey the rules

More fines for littering

Higher fines for people parking on double yellow or single yellow lines, over staying in car park by up to 15 minutes should only incur modest say £20 fine, as should an over stay say of 15 minutes on limited waiting on a road markings, not the full fine for limited time infringements.

Parking on pavements verges and other inappropriate areas. Not just city centre. Enforcement officers to issue fines

1. Other councils levy fines on motorists who selfishly and illegally park on pavements and they make sure that the fines are paid. 2. Sponsorship - local major businesses should be invited to sponsor a building or project - e.g. HS2 could sponsor the new Friary Sports Centre, Police Mutual (now Royal London) could sponsor the Lichfield Garrick 3. In addition to Section 106 monies (which are never clearly identified and acknowledged, and happen after the event) all developers of new housing of more than 50 units on an estate should provide as part of their application 10% of the running costs of the Friary and Burntwood Sports Centres

Rather than job off new build residents having to pay management fees for the upkeep of public open space the council should take on this service by applying a small increase to ALL council tax and delivering a cost effective service that not only provides value for money but provides employment for

local people.

Sponsorship and income generation

Sponsorship of developments like the area waiting for development opposite Lichfield City Station...

Voluntary contributions & partnerships to improve council-owned spaces/facilities

Commercial Sponsorship - some major employers HS2, DMS Whittington, Police Mutual, Tippers Builders Merchants, Chase town Civil Engineering - could sponsor buildings and essential services

*The council issued citizens investment via shares some years ago. Did this work
Investment in land for development, design the layout of the site, install the infrastructure of roads and utilities and sell the plots to any UK resident person or company with a time limit on completion of the planning authorisation*

Carry out services for other Councils on a fee earning basis. Look at the possibility of sharing services with other Councils or the private sector where suitable.

Community energy initiative or solar panels on your buildings that brings income for you. Also look into the income streams from recycling rather than your contractor taking the profits.

Tourism Opportunities

Development and integration of segregated cycle routes (that people feel safe using well lit, not like Abnalls Lane) and public transport ensuring that the public transport is easily accessible so people are inclined to use it. The development of some additional public footpaths maybe tied in with the canal redevelopment leading out in the countryside would also be a draw for Lichfield, maybe ones connecting other parts of the LDC area, more of a reason to visit Lichfield and I'm sure wouldn't cost a lot. Lichfield is a tourist destination and a lot of people nearby come here so anyway to get them in the City heightens the chance of them spending in a shop or cafe etc.

Other comments

Ask Michael Fabricant to pay his own Council Tax.

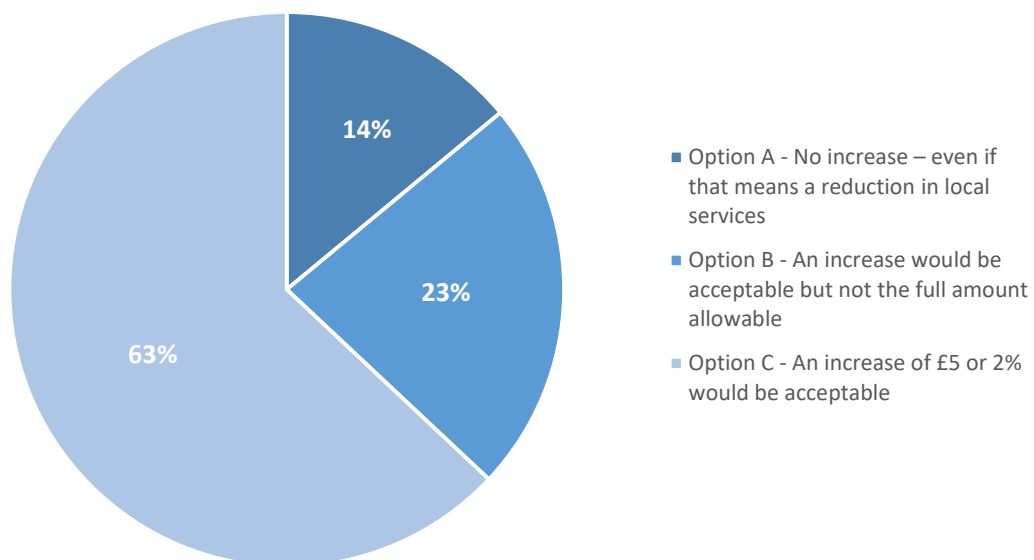
Services for the disabled

Tighten up the issue of Blue Badges as they seem to be distributed like confetti at present. I am 74 and do not have a Blue Badge, however, from my observations in Lichfield town centre, most of the badge holders appear to be far fitter than me which causes quite a bit of resentment. I am aware that some disabilities are not obvious but most of those that I have seen get out of their vehicles and go striding off to do their shopping!!!

Public transport reopen the train line to Walsall. New housing in Lichfield has mushroomed but we NEVER see additional facilities? WHY? What is this additional money spent on? Break away from Burntwood. Lichfield people do not want to use or travel to Burntwood to go swimming. The Friary is not fit for purpose! A city without a proper Leisure Centre! We need a 25 metre pool and a separate learner pool.

5. Setting Council Tax

Respondents were asked to give their views on what would be an acceptable level of Council Tax increase for the 2021 – 2022 financial year. The majority of respondents (63%) indicated that an increase of £5 or 2% would be acceptable. Almost one-quarter of respondents (23%) indicated that an increase would be acceptable but not to the full amount allowed by government guidelines. Only 14% of respondents indicated that their preference would be for no increase in council tax.



6. Additional suggestions and ideas

At the end of the questionnaire, respondents were given the opportunity to provide additional comments and ideas on council priorities and budgets;

Enabling people

Keen that activities to occupy teenagers are encouraged. Making it easier and safer to walk with particular reference to major intersections. E.g. traffic lights next to St John's Hospital. Especially for children to encourage walking.

Invest in community spaces - parks & leisure facilities, not necessarily in retail.

Make an annual donation to the We Love Lichfield Fund of half the amount that the District currently pays out in grants now. Then leave the allocation of grants to be decided by We Love Lichfield Trustees - the council saves money and employee time, and the charities and voluntary organisations have a one-stop application

I would live more projects that bring the community together and link them with appropriate services

start giving rural areas more back in their council tax, too much spent on city areas like parking, leisure, theatre, roads, the list goes on and on

A new leisure centre is a must, a city like Lichfield really should have a modern fully equipped leisure centre. Also well linked transport, car, cycle and walking routes that are mapped out in a clear manner (TFL have some great examples). I've lived in a lot of bit towns and cities in the UK and it just makes like so much more enjoyable if you can cycle away from cars or know that you can get a parking space to catch a train or catch a bus and know what time it's going to arrive. I see Lichfield as a tourist city, it's all about the atmosphere which needs improving and food and drink, the high street is a broken model everyone buys online so no point being romantic. Sections on the centre will need redevelopment soon to another use as there are too many shops to sustain. Maybe a flexible space that can move with the times, young people are tending to move away from going out and getting drunk to more activity related nights out, desert shops are doing well, they're going more online, it's all good stuff and can be catered for just needs the right vision.

Shaping place

Litter is terrible and dependency on volunteers to clean up is unsustainable (and wrong). Need to police it more and issue on the spot fines to the litter louts! Also, cannabis use, particularly in Beacon Park, needs policing too. Communication - we live in an apartment and residents get no communication from the council, ever. Example: the recent changes to recycling have caused chaos with the communal recycling not being emptied several times causing angst and inconvenience to us all. No one from the council alerted us to the changes directly. Pride in the job - the number of times we see council operatives sitting on their phones in a van tucked up a quiet side street is frustrating. Is anyone checking on them? Planning notices (and the tie-wraps used) on lampposts - if they're good enough to put up, they're good enough to take down when work's completed! The city is littered with years old notices or tie-wraps from old posters and notices.

Given there's now no police presence in the city, I believe the council should try to join together with policing teams to ensure the sense that we're not 'on our own' now. Can't recall the last time I saw a Bobby on the beat. Beacon Park in particular needs support in dealing with ASB and drugs, especially in

the evenings. The tunnel through Festival Gardens to Walsall is also abused - nearly every day and there's fresh broken beer bottle glass and little empty plastic 'weed' packets in there.

LDC does a good job, particularly waste collection. I would welcome LDC to be more involved with Staffs CC in road planning and supporting the reopening of the passenger rail link from Lichfield TV to Burton

Please prioritise improved / increased waste collection and environmental health services

Change street lighting to LEDs and turn them off (or every other one/ one side of road during hours of darkness to save money). Why bother with recycling when there is so much that should be recycled that the current contract doesn't cover Focus on protecting green belt and country side with development on brownfields, reduction in the planning department spend would not affect the current policy given the disappointing approach by the current team.

Start the implementation of measures to reduce the Council's own carbon emissions from buildings and vehicles. Press for the opening of a passenger services on the line from Lichfield to Burton with an extension to Derby, using existing diesel-electric MTUs retrofitted with hydrogen fuel cells to replace the diesel engines, such as Hydroflex and Breeze that have had passenger trials. The hydrogen supply from a container size electrolyser could be installed in the northern LTV car park to draw on the ample electric supplies for the nearby West Coast Main line power. Surplus hydrogen could be used to power LDC vehicles.

A Climate Emergency has been declared (Nov 2019) but no strategy put in place. This needs to be done as a priority and then spending allocated accordingly to bring about meaningful carbon reduction in Lichfield District - reduce car use, increase cycle ways, net zero house building only, support for residents making lifestyle changes etc.

Please clear drains and roads in rural areas like Colton Blocked drains cause flooding. Also damaged pavements are risky for elderly people. Some kind of public transport to town and back at least once a week for those without cars. Restore mobile libraries as soon as allowed.

Developing prosperity

You wasted money with the chicanes in St. John street, pointless.

Try to get the empty areas in the city built on and the long term abandoned buildings used. The old pub on Bore street and the old paper shop on Beacon street are both long term eyesores that should be developed

Assess possible income from empty buildings, commercial and private. GKN is very welcome as an example of what is possible

Stop spending money on trying to expand the shopping precinct. Retail shops are dead on their feet.

Invest in the shopping centre we already have to encourage empty units to be filled rather than a new centre where the rents are bound to get higher.

Protect industry sectors and individuals hardest hit by ten years of austerity and covid fallout. Prioritise basic facilities a town of our size should have e.g. leisure centre/cinema etc.

Revise the City Centre to reflect the modern era. Those shops will never reopen so do we need an indoor market where independent traders could afford a stall. Ice rink. cinema. bowling alley. The beggars who are claiming to be homeless do not reside in Lichfield. Liaise more with the police on begging as it is ridiculous that they know they are professional beggars and live on a canal boat at Hopwas and travel by

bus to a different town every day and make a good living. I questioned a few years ago the big issue woman with my friend in Lichfield police who stood outside Boots BIG ISSUUUEEE when I saw her regularly parking in Tesco carpark in a brand new sports car. She got out of her car and changed her clothes. My friend checked her ID and it was all false!!!!!! She had been there for YEARS! She did get done for fraud and it turned out she lived in a mansion in Little Aston. I'm pleased my observations were investigated but if I hadn't of been on maternity leave would she still of been there now??? Apparently the police can't move on beggars. The drug addict with the one leg who lost it through drug addiction lives in a house on that large council estate in Burntwood gets a fortune sitting outside McDonalds and boasts to his neighbours how much money he makes in addition to all the benefits he gets! He is known to the police why is he allowed to almost trip people over begging for money telling people he lost his leg in the army in combat. My mum and dad when they go into town can be stopped by 6 to 8 people in the week begging. My dad has Dementia and wants to give to all of them! People do not want beggar tourism in Lichfield especially when they are not of the city. It puts off people coming to our city!

Main concern is the amount of new housing developments and loss of green belt-Lichfield is getting too big but infrastructure not keeping up e.g. traffic congestion at busy times, entertainment facilities especially fir younger teenagers, health centres, parking. Also more support for pest control as rat infestations becoming a problem in domestic properties since lockdown

Better reflect residents' views on housing development. We have had enough! Protect the Green Belt. Make developers provide open spaces and infrastructure as part of any contract.

If private sector housing means what it appears to say why does LDC have to fund it or some of it? Greater attention to keeping cyclists and pedestrians safe by proactive management of pavements and cycle ways to ensure that overgrowth of hedges and verges does not restrict their use by forcing users on to adjacent roadways A new health centre is needed in South Lichfield - ideally where St Modwens want to build, speculatively, warehouse sheds which are inappropriate for the southern gateway to Lichfield Passenger rail services should be re-opened between Wolverhampton and Lichfield and between Lichfield and Derby - to generate economic benefit inwards and to provide the increasing number of residents with an integrated public transport system, Much valued by residents of Alrewas and Fradley, and much needed by residents of Burntwood. Strategic Plan refers to Lichfield as a transport interchange so let's see it.

To make sure that builders in residential areas respect the rules laid down by the council.

There could be a view that without adopting the public open space being created within new build housing estates legislation should prohibit the council's access to section 106 and other monies being paid by developers to facilitate building. Presenting any question on council tax increases, this should only be implemented if it provides a better service and not simply pay to keep an outdated, not for purpose, service running

When I look at the vast areas of new residential housing in the south of Lichfield there has been no provision for these residents to access the Train Stations. Car parking at the stations cannot cope with the residents who normally use the stations. Has any thought been given to building an additional station on the stretch of track near the Taylor Wimpey Development before Wall Island? This would reduce the amount of traffic on our roads and encourage people to use the train. They can then connect to Trent Valley for London trains and not clog the city centre or travel direct to Birmingham from their local station. It would be great benefit to the whole area.

Push for the opening of the rail system to passenger traffic from Lichfield to Burton. Not having a passenger halt at the Arboretum is ridiculous.

Enthusiastic support for restoration of rail passenger services between Lichfield and Burton/Derby and between Lichfield and Walsall. This would reduce road congestion and improve the city's connectivity to the rest of the region.

Improve cycle lanes. Make city more user-friendly for pedestrians and bikes (e.g. make Sundays car-free in the city centre). Improve rail connectivity to Burton and Derby

More ought to be focussed on public transport. Reopening of railway lines to Burton and Walsall plus reintroducing Sunday bus services (Cannock and Stafford).

Improvement in cycle paths, especially from Boley Park towards KES and Lichfield centre. Greater enforcement of traffic speeds. Reduction in traffic along Ryknild Street. Improvement in the pedestrianisation of the centre of Lichfield (currently very rarely enforced). Widen pavement access in Lichfield centre (see above). Enforce a no parking on pavement policy to enable wider pavement use and disabled/buggy access.

Yes Burntwood needs it's roads repaired, better parking at Swan Island Burntwood go to doctors and you struggle to park and be on time at doctors for appointments.

I reside in Hill Ridware, Rugeley, Staffs, WS15 We have not had a bus service now for several years and I and many of my neighbours feel that we should have a safe connecting pedestrian path between us and the Handsacre village. To catch a bus we need to navigate the B5014 from the bottom of Uttoxeter Road up to the junction with the A513. It is approximately 700 metres of road with no path on either side. I like many of my neighbours feel it is well past the time now when action should be taken to rectify this and give us a safe route to the bus stop at The Green. I believe this is not a great expenditure for the Council to consider and it would bring a great link to our neighbouring village. I do hope this can be given some serious consideration in this Budget period.

Tackle empty shops allow conversion of shops for housing Reduce homeless and get beggars off streets

Being a good Council

The priority is a balanced budget which may be impossible to achieve by 2024.

More effective decision making, everything is too slow and cumbersome in the council. Innovation and progression is a big challenge

The Council's priority should be to get Council officers and Councillors back into Frog Lane offices, so decisions can be made face to face. If Councillors choose to continue holding meetings by Zoom, reduce their allowances.

Look at areas that are constantly cut against those that constantly get increased. This style of questionnaire does not take into account how services have been affected over time. People are always going to say certain services are more important than others -possibly depending upon what services they use. Don't keep increasing the same areas and cutting the same areas. More information is needed to make an informed decision.

More promotion at election time. We need to diversify voters to ensure the right person is elected. Not enough is done to engage the young voice.

Spend less on running the council. Too much back office spend and not enough priority on services.

Stop pouring funds into employing consultants (again and again) to determine future developments of the town centre.

Stop wasting money on consultants. Actually spend some money on planning. Lichfield is being destroyed.

Reduce councillors expenses, understand residents priorities a lot more [Friary Grange fiasco] - sort out Friarsgate once & for benefit of all, bring in a cinema, reduce car parking charges especially for under 2 hours to compete with elsewhere [Tamworth] Reduce the politics & old boys network to increase your relevance or else you will be a larger authority before you know it

No increase in Councils salaries or allowances for next 5 years and then only same percentage rates as given to Civil Servants and Council Employees for their wage rises.

Reduce spending on outside consultants

Less councillors More environmental officers

Catering for meetings should be cut to zero

Stop funding the Garrick and employ less councillors and less remuneration

start giving rural areas more back in their council tax, too much spent on city areas like parking, leisure, theatre, roads, the list goes on and on

Free school meals. Helping kids who are in need. Keeping people out of the streets. Also since Covid the anti-social behaviour has increased a lot. Need to tackle that.

More support for elderly care at home and in care homes

Appendix - Respondent Profile

Are you male or female?

	Number	Percentage	2016 MYE
Male	77	54%	49%
Female	63	44%	51%

What is your age?

	Number	Percentage	2016 MYE
16-24	0	0	9%
25-34	18	13%	13%
35-44	21	15%	15%
45-54	32	22%	19%
55-64	20	14%	16%
65-74	41	29%	17%
75+	12	9%	12.5

What do you consider your race/national identity to be?

	Number	Percentage
White British	132	99%
White Irish	1	1%
Eastern European	0	0%
Asian/Asian British - Indian	0	0%
Asian/Asian British - Pakistani	0	0%
Asian/Asian British - Bangladeshi	1	1%
Asian/Asian British - Chinese	0	0%
Black / Black British - African	0	0%
Black / Black British - Caribbean	0	0%
Multiple - white & black Caribbean	0	0%
Multiple - white & black African	0	0%
Multiple - white & Asian	0	0%

Do you have a longstanding illness, disability or infirmity that has troubled you for some time/likely to affect you in future?

	Number	Percentage
Yes	24	18%
No	113	82%

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REVIEW OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Chairman of Member Task Group, Councillor Chris Spruce

Date: 27 January 2021

Contact Officer: Christine Lewis/ Christie Tims

Tel Number: 01543 308002

Email: christine.lewis@lichfielddc.gov.uk/christie.tims@lichfielddc.gov.uk

Key Decision? **NO**

Lichfield
district council
www.lichfielddc.gov.uk

**Strategic
Overview &
Scrutiny
Committee**

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 At its meeting on the 19th November 2020, the Strategic (Overview & Scrutiny) Committee agreed to create a Member Task Group to consider the Committee structure at Lichfield District Council and investigate whether any changes should be recommended to this Committee, considered by Cabinet and then onto Council for approval.
- 1.2 The Task Group consisted of Councillors Spruce (Chairman), Norman, B. Yeates and Lax. They were supported by Head of Governance and Performance and the Overview & Scrutiny Officer and met regularly throughout December and January.
- 1.3 The Task Group discussed the identified need to review Committees and agreed the key issues were the high impact on resources and especially with Overview & Scrutiny outcomes that were not effectively demonstrating an impact on outcomes to support effective decision making processes. The full scope for the Task Group can be found at Appendix A.
- 1.4 The Task Group considered information and evidence including the cost of conducting Committees, how other authorities operate their Committee Structures and the results of a questionnaire sent to all Members to gather their views.
- 1.5 The Task Group have compiled a number of recommendations for this Committee to consider.

2. Actions and Recommendations

The Member Task Group would like the Strategic Overview & Scrutiny Committee to consider the following:

- 2.1 That Parish Forum is removed as a constituted committee and become informal meetings to aid information flow and training.
- 2.2 The District Board is removed as a constituted committee. Any statutory function carried out by this meeting is delegated to officers and relevant, plans and decisions notified to Cabinet members and committees where appropriate.
- 2.3 That the structure for Overview & Scrutiny be changed to a single Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 2.4 That the Overview & Scrutiny Committee consider items earlier on to aid policy development and review whether stated outcomes from decisions, strategies and policies have been achieved via effective use of member task groups.
- 2.5 That clear role descriptors and mandatory training is developed for scrutiny chair, vice chair and task group chair roles and used to ensure effective recruitment and performance.
- 2.6 That an Independent Review Panel (IRP) is commissioned to assess the Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) payable to any roles affected by this review.

- 2.7 That a final report is sent to Cabinet for consideration before being presented to Full Council for approval.

3. Task Group Findings

- 3.1 The Task Group considered the following were required for effective committee meetings:
- Welcoming and accessible meetings – less formality but clear processes
 - Clear terms of reference – reducing overlap and duplication
 - Good planning and an effective workload
 - Excellent reports and associated presentations
 - Excellent and positive relationships between committee members and officers
 - Well trained and adequately prepared committee members who are confident in their role
 - Good informed debate
 - The discussion adds value early in the council’s processes – helps develop good policy
 - Effective decisions and timely recommendations which can demonstrate progress toward our strategic outcomes
 - Where the investment in officer and member time involved can be demonstrated as value for money
 - Good engagement with stakeholders and the public at the meetings where appropriate
- 3.2 They noted that there was a strong desire to make more effective use of Overview and Scrutiny to develop policy and engage a wider group of members in decisions at an early stage and so the Task Group focused their review work largely around O&S.
- 3.3 The Task Group looked at the time taken at Overview & Scrutiny meetings compared to outcomes and recognised that many reports were noted and did not aid the Cabinet or officers develop ideas or contribute to the aims of the Strategic Plan.
- 3.4 The outcome of meetings was compared to the cost of Scrutiny which included all Officer time from drafting reports, Leadership Team reviews, preparations and holding the Committee meetings. It also showed that since holding virtual meetings, more Officer input was required with two clerks in attendance.
- 3.5 As agreed at this Committee in November, the Task Group created and sent all Members a questionnaire asking for views on the effectiveness of Committees and again this was focused towards O&S as it was agreed that this is where changes were required.
- 3.6 18 responses were received and the following points gathered
- Strong Chairmanship was essential
 - Earlier input of O&S in the process. Development and collaboration, not just considering final product.
 - Earlier preparation of items and for meetings.
 - Use of task groups would be more effective.
 - There should be more training to support the use of virtual platform if this was to continue.
 - There should be fewer O&S Committees better timed to allow planning.
 - There should be more scoping of items going on the work programme to keep focus and ensure outcomes are optimised for the investment.
 - The Strategic Plan and Delivery Plan should be the basis of work programmes with the ability to add in further issues if required to facilitate overview.

- 3.7 The Task Group also drew from their own experiences and agreed that there should be a solid return on the investment made by Members at Committee meetings and so there should be fewer reports for noting and it would be more effective and useful to use the skills of Members earlier to feed into the development of reports. It was discussed that task groups could be used further to do this with invites to join to interested Members (even if not Committee Members) being a more effective platform for collaboration. It was felt that this more informal setting would help get more involvement from a wider range of members with different skills and not just those confident in the formal Committee setting. It was also agreed that invites to relevant external bodies should be utilised more as the views given by these groups are often invaluable in understanding issues. These task groups could continue in a virtual setting which would aid accessibility from all, allow external people to participate from their workplace if required and reduce cost (and carbon emissions) in not requiring travel to meeting rooms as well as only needing one officer to host.
- 3.8 Election of Chairs (and vice chairs) to O&S Committees was considered and it was discussed whether the nomination should be made by the Leader of the Council as currently or by the Committee themselves. It was believed that the Leader should continue to choose the nomination for Chair and consider the appointment against a clear role criteria, with a requirement for mandated training or compensatory experience for the person nominated. It was clear from the survey that this was felt to be a critical issue to ensure the chairs (and vice chairs) can plan the meetings effectively as well as have suitable skills to keep control of the meeting and deliver key outcomes. We also considered the use of two vice chairman for scrutiny and recommend that the requirement for a second vice chairman is removed and it is accepted that the vice chairman role will be nominated by the leader of the leading opposition party.
- 3.9 Based on the comments made and their own experiences at meetings, the task group considered different structures for O&S and also looked at other authorities to consider what structures they used. This included other councils regarded as operating best practice models. The Task Group were also able to watch many meetings online via YouTube to understand the operation of such meetings.
- 3.10 The Task Group carried out an options appraisal of a range of scrutiny models used by other authorities. Options for three or four standing scrutiny committees will not help to achieve our aims and remain too costly to resource effectively. Two standing committees were felt to be viable given our resources, however a clear split of these options was difficult and will still require some element of external co-ordination to rebalance activity. By far the best solution, considering all of the factors and issues raised by the review, is to develop a single overview and scrutiny committee that will mirror monthly Cabinet meetings to maintain pace, provide a consistency in planning and use member task groups effectively to explore topics in more detail without excessive formality within the resources available. Although there will need to be a number of task groups, it would be easier to timetable and plan the work as it would not be rigid to committee cycles and statutory publishing requirements. The Overview & Scrutiny Committee could set these task groups up to assist in developing policy and plans, review outcomes and effectiveness, as well as dealing with overview matters, call-Ins and regular scrutiny of upcoming executive decisions as set out in the forward plan.
- 3.11 This model was felt to be critical to encourage wider participation from members and stakeholders who are often daunted by formal committees. As part of this proposal it is expected the role of Chairman for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will become more demanding and potentially attract a higher responsibility allowance. Similarly, the role of chair for member task groups will also need to be assessed to determine if this should now attract a responsibility allowance. This would need to be undertaken by an independent remuneration panel (IRP) once the proposals are formally recommended to ensure these are affordable within the existing member responsibility budget.
- 3.12 It was noted that regulatory Committees such as Planning Committee were governed by other legislation and are subject to regular review. It was felt that Parish Forum was invaluable, especially in allowing the Monitoring Officer to communicate information regarding Standards, but could operate

just as effectively as informal meetings and not a constituted Committee requiring district member attendance and could therefore continue via virtual means.

- 3.13 District Board was felt to be a vital communication tool to support liaison with key stakeholders and as a forum to discuss the Community Safety Plan and other broader areas of partnership working. However it was not felt that constituting such meetings and appointing district councillors to membership added value. Information from this committee will continue to be shared, and where necessary, key plans and strategies will be notified to the relevant officer or member.

Alternative Options	Members can choose not to review the number or format of committees, frequency of meetings or their effectiveness and the status quo would remain. Current O&S are not aligned to the strategic plan and currently operating in silos which can only be managed via regular co-ordination meetings. This will limit officer capacity to support other key legal and governance functions, put additional pressure on the team that will impede performance and wellbeing or create additional budget pressures.
Consultation	Member Questionnaire
Financial Implications	An independent remuneration panel (IRP) will need undertake an assessment of any recommendations to roles attracting special responsibility as a result of the proposed structural changes. Given the proposed reduction in standing O&S committees and roles from 4 to 1, this will be contained within the existing revenue budget and may result in some nominal savings.
Contribution to the Delivery of the Strategic Plan	The review will ensure that LDC will be considered a good Council through ensuring effective use of its resources and decision making processes and supporting our strategic ambitions.
Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Implications	None from undertaking the review, however members should consider the implications of any recommendations.
Crime & Safety Issues	None from undertaking the review, however members should consider the implications of any recommendations.
Environmental Impact	There could be a number of positive impacts from changing the way that Committees are structured and conducted. Continuing with remote meetings in any capacity would reduce carbon admissions from vehicles traveling to the Council House. There would also be less emissions from heating and running electrical appliances for meetings e.g. lighting. However this may be lessened with the number of electrical IT devices being used.
GDPR/Privacy Impact Assessment	None from undertaking the review, however members should consider the implications of any recommendations.

	Risk Description	How We Manage It	Severity of Risk (RYG)
A	Outcomes of the review are not achievable within existing resources	The review has been led by ensuring all solutions are deliverable within existing resources	Yellow Impact med, likelihood med
B	Virtual meetings are not legally permitted beyond May 2021	Consider alternative solutions based on either outcome	Yellow Impact high, likelihood low
C	Member recommendations do not ensure effective meetings	Options have been explored and best practice considered.	Yellow Impact high, likelihood low

		Recommendations will be subject to review before full adoption	
D	Member recommendations undermine the purpose of meetings and our statutory obligations	Wide range of evidence to be explored and recommended options to be evidence based with expert support	Yellow Impact high, likelihood low

Background documents

The Constitution <https://democracy.lichfielddc.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=190&MId=304&Ver=4&info=1>

Relevant web links

<https://local.gov.uk/pas/pas-support/planning-committee-support/planning-committee-review>

[https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/11%2064 Scrutiny%20for%20councillors 03 1.pdf](https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/11%2064%20Scrutiny%20for%20councillors%2003%201.pdf)

<https://www.cfgs.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020-06-10-const-review-flyer2.pdf>

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Overview & Scrutiny Task Group

Subject scoping document

Review topic	Task Group membership	
Review of Committees	Chair	Christopher Spruce
	Members	Angela Lax, Steve Norman, Brian Yeates

Objectives	Desired outcomes
<p>To Review the current committee structure to suggest improvements, potential new models for scrutiny, and to identify committees which could be combined, reduced or deleted.</p> <p>Develop and issue a questionnaire to establish member views on the effectiveness of all meetings and any training requirements.</p> <p>To study best practice from other authorities and provide recommendations for consideration.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To reduce the number of meetings To increase the effectiveness of meetings To ensure scrutiny is aligned to the new Strategic Plan To deploy Council resources where they can have the most impact Update the Constitution Effective selection and appointments of committee chairs Allow time for effective scrutiny Reduce number of papers for noting So that all members feel they are involved and can contribute to an effective council overall

Terms of Reference
<p>After the initial scoping meeting, the Group will meet to consider a member survey, gather evidence in support of best practice, review responses and develop a set of recommendations to go forward to Strategic Overview and Scrutiny for recommendation to Cabinet and Full Council for the 2021 municipal year.</p> <p>Analysis of agenda items and outcomes from scrutiny committees to demonstrate ROI.</p> <p>It is envisaged that the group will meet weekly until the survey is developed and live. The group will provide a report to committee in January 2021.</p>

Key issues	Risks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective use of resources Outcomes are value for money and measure Development of member skills Streamlining decision making Effective topic selection process O&S adds value to the work of the Council Identify members who are committed to developing best practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time Costs Ability to demonstrate ROI Need for challenge Political bias

Timescale	
Start December 2020	Finish January 2021

Information requirements and sources	
Documents/evidence (what/why)	O&S Report – Review of Committee Meetings, 19 Nov 2020 Current
Witnesses (who, why?)	Members LGA advisors?
Consultation/research (what, why, who?)	Survey of members LGA/ Centre for Public Scrutiny Other Councils
Site visits (where, why, when?)	All virtual

Officer support	
Lead Officers	Christie Tims, Christine Lewis

Target body for findings/recommendations (e.g. Cabinet, Council etc)
O&S, Cabinet and Full Council – constitutional update

All Task Group reports are to be submitted initially to the parent Overview and Scrutiny Committee(s)

Coronavirus (COVID-19): Recovery Plan Scrutiny

Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Emergency Response

Date: January 2021

Contact Officer: Christie Tims

Email: Christie.tims@lichfielddc.gov.uk

Key Decision? **NO**

Local Ward Members All Wards



Overview and Scrutiny COMMITTEE

Combined report with key areas of
focus

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Coronavirus has had a significant impact on all council services throughout 2020 affecting how we deliver existing services to the district as well as the rapid introduction of new services to support residents and businesses.
- 1.2 This report seeks to update members on the activity and ongoing issues around recovery and provide a narrative regarding the progress and achievements against the [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): Recovery Plan](#) developed and issued in May 2020. Whilst this has been a significant body of work, the longer term impacts of the pandemic on both the authority and the district as a whole have yet to be fully quantified.
- 1.3 The recovery plan was split into four areas of focus; maintaining key services; helping those in need; supporting our businesses and keeping you informed. It outlined the things we needed the plan to achieve and how we planned to do so and who we would work with.
- 1.4 To support scrutiny of the plan, and due to its broad and overlapping nature, a series of key questions and areas of focus for this committee are detailed in section 6 so that the relevant scrutiny committee deals with relevant topics and prevents duplication.

2. Maintaining key services

- 2.1 Mobile and flexible working has now become business as usual for many of our staff. This transition was achieved relatively early on during the first lockdown where all staff who could work from home were equipped to do so within the first few weeks.
- 2.2 Many staff have continued to work from home and this in turn has helped us to become more resilient, as homeworking has allowed for better work life balance and flexibility to support childcare and any isolation or further lockdown periods. It has also enabled office based staff to continue to deliver services, with minimal impact on customers.
- 2.3 Where staff have not been able to work from home service delivery to the public has not been adversely affected with staff absence rates remaining very low. A recent flash audit on staff health and wellbeing showed substantial assurance regarding the support we have given to staff and that they have coped well with the rapid change in working practices since March. Good practice was noted in adapting policies to cope with absences and caring responsibilities, availability of support, regular communications, surveys and wellbeing activities.
- 2.4 Maintaining front line services has been a focus for Operational Services. The Joint Waste Service was able to continue to deliver a complete service across both Lichfield and Tamworth, throughout 2020. JWS was one of fewer than 10% of collection authorities able to continue the collection of refuse, recycling, garden waste and bulky waste, along with the delivery of new bins.

- 2.5 Similarly both the Streetscene and Grounds Maintenance teams were able to continue to deliver business as usual, maintaining the district to its usual high standards. A number of residents commented on a visible difference in the standard of presentation when travelling into Lichfield from neighbouring authorities. The teams also worked effectively with County Council colleagues in addressing the doubling of fly-tipping experienced in 2020.
- 2.6 The district's parks have continued to provide essential green open space for residents to the benefit of their physical and mental wellbeing during the Coronavirus period. Necessary changes have been made promptly to support Covid-safe park usage and to respond to evolving government guidance.
- 2.7 The Coronavirus restrictions necessitated either the complete closure of leisure centres or their restricted operation for most of 2020 and into 2021. Officers and members have worked with Freedom Leisure, the Council's leisure operating partner, to stabilise their operation and provide necessary support to ensure continued leisure provision for Lichfield residents. Alongside the management of the Freedom relationship through 2020, officers have continued the strategic development of the district's leisure estate, commencing the essential works to Friary Grange Leisure Centre and agreeing the site of the new Lichfield Leisure Centre subject to planning.
- 2.8 For our customers we have worked hard to ensure they feel comfortable in using the new ways of accessing our services and website. Dedicated webpages have been developed and continue to be updated with relevant information to support residents and businesses throughout the pandemic.
- 2.9 To keep staff and residents safe, our reception area has not been reopened to the general public yet. All key services have remained available through a variety of other channels. Where essential, home visits and business inspections are still carried out under Covid 19 Secure protocols.
- 2.10 We have rapidly introduced several new services including five (and counting) grant schemes in response to government announcements.
- 2.11 We have built upon our strong working relationships with the voluntary and community sector (VCS) to provide support to our most vulnerable residents.
- 2.12 We are working hard to plan for Covid 19 secure elections, carefully following government and Electoral Commission advice and encouraging the take up of postal votes as an alternative for polling in the elections currently scheduled for May 2021. It will be a challenging election year with multiple ballots; Police and Crime Commissioner (postponed from 2020); Staffordshire County Council Elections; a number of district and parish by elections and a neighbourhood referendum.
- 2.13 Covid 19 regulatory advice to businesses has been dealt with by Environmental Health, with pressure being brought to bear on traditional work streams. Some traditional work has been dropped or delayed but as this has restarted it has been a tough balance to maintain. Covid 19 enforcement work has also been undertaken, protecting the public and ensuring a more level playing field for all businesses affected by the pandemic.
- 2.14 The pace of change and constant updates to the advice and guidance brings new challenges for us around enforcement and community leadership. Provision of testing and vaccine facilities remains a priority as we continue to deliver our key services.

3. Helping those in need

- 3.1 Over the last nine months our housing team have worked exceptionally hard to ensure people are supported to prevent them from being made homeless. During the initial lockdown, we accommodated all rough sleepers and those in danger of rough sleeping who were willing to engage and also provided alternative accommodation for all the occupants of a women's refuge after it was forced to close due to staffing shortages as a result of coronavirus. The team worked closely with accommodation providers in both the social and private housing sectors, to ensure that we had sufficient capacity to accommodate anyone who needed assistance with accommodation. Between 22

April and 7 October 2020 we delivered 141 County supplied food parcels to temporary housed homeless people to support them.

- 3.2 Since the start of the first lockdown in March 2020 we have worked closely with the Voluntary and Community Sector to identify community support needs and how these can be met. As a result we pioneered a shopping service in partnership with the Co-Op. Between 30 March and 3 July 2020 we made 891 essential shopping deliveries to 220 vulnerable households. In July it was then staffed by volunteers from MHA Communities (Live at Home) and they have since made 178 shopping deliveries for 23 users. As other shopping options have developed there are now only 11 customers regularly using this service regularly but some of these are also benefitting from other MHA communities activities. They do have capacity to support more people should the need arise in the current lockdowns.
- 3.3 The LDC Coronavirus 'Just Giving' fund raised £25,000 and has to date distributed just over £15k to 19 different voluntary organisations so far to help them adapt their support offer, provide extra help and purchase PPE to ensure a Covid 19 secure environment.
- 3.4 We have also worked with the VCS to ensure that we share good practice and learning and participated in a Digital Engagement - Celebrating Successes and Learning event where organisations shared what they have been doing to adapt their service offer and make good use of digital options. This included top tips for use of social media, what organisations need to consider when working online with young people and vulnerable adults and how digital technology has been used to engage with older people.
- 3.5 We have paid 102 people the £500 grant payment because they have had to isolate under the test and trace rules and this has impacted on their income. We are limited as to the number of discretionary grants we can pay under this scheme but the statutory payments will continue to be paid to eligible applicants and the government will meet the full cost of these.
- 3.6 To date we issued 3,385 people with council tax hardship funding amounting to £475,001 and put a hold on Council Tax recovery during the lockdown and into summer 2020.
- 3.7 Number of new benefit claims received (Housing Benefit plus Council Tax Relief) increased from 155 in March 2020 to 521 in April 2020 and then 498 in May 2020 making Q1 of 2020/21 one of the highest in volume since Q1 of 2007/08.

4. Supporting our businesses

- 4.1 In June 2020 we were allocated £92,501 funding from Central Government to support the safe reopening of high streets and other commercial areas addressing the health and safety concerns of the public and businesses. The monies could not be used for capital spend or supporting salaries of existing staff so a plan was developed to employ an Information Officer for the district, initially on a six month temporary contract. This officer successfully liaised with local businesses and was a physical presence on the high street to reassure and advise the public. It proved so successful the role has been extended until March 2021. The information officer works directly with licensing and environmental health officers to ensure any queries were shared and responded to effectively.
- 4.2 Twelve pavement licenses were approved for hospitality businesses to accommodate seating outside and the fee waived. As we moved into the gradual loosening of lockdown we became focussed on supporting the businesses on our high streets and shopping areas to be safe for people to visit and slowly encouraging footfall across the district. We did this by providing floor stickers to enable safe queuing in shops and liaising with the county council, city council and three spires shopping centre to ensure the safety of shoppers was a priority. Ongoing support and signposting has been given to licensed premises and regular mailshots sent to the taxi trade. We also ran a successful communications campaign, digital and print to ensure government messages were being circulated

- 4.3 Over the last 6 months unemployment has dropped in Lichfield by 5%, against a Staffordshire wide decrease of 2% and 2% increase nationally. The number of people unemployed for England has increased from 2,188,335 to 2,248,430 Staffordshire has moved from 25,055 to 25,270 and Lichfield from 2,750 to 2,795 in the last month (December 2020).
- 4.4 To assist recovery, the online directory marketing campaigns aimed at a national and regional audience, undertaken by the Lichfield Place Board will help raise the profile of Lichfield District as a great place to visit and encourage visitors from a wider area to visit the district. Promotional videos of the city and district will also be used in the marketing activities.
- 4.5 The Visitor economy team are working with Lichfield Cathedral and Peter Walker to update the Lichfield Sculpture trail to include the new 3m high, bronze statue of St Chad, the sculpture trail will be promoted as an outdoor visitor attraction to attract new visitors to the district. New guided tours are being developed for visitors to enjoy in line with updated restrictions advice.
- 4.6 Free and reduced car parking was provided in Lichfield City Centre for key workers and to encourage a return to support local businesses. The Lichfield Group Travel Partnership will increase marketing activity to encourage groups and coaches to include Lichfield as a destination to visit as part of their tours programme. Monthly e-newsletters are being sent to consumers promoting Lichfield as a great place to visit once restrictions are eased, this e-newsletter provides businesses with an opportunity to be featured in it.
- 4.7 During the first national lockdown we issued £11,455,000 to 1193 businesses for the Small Business Grant Scheme (£10,000 per claim), £7,120,000 to 385 businesses in Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Scheme (£25,000 maximum) & £951,000 to 105 local businesses for the Discretionary Grant Scheme (£9,096.15) and again recovery was held off during the first 6 months to allow businesses more time to pay.
- 4.8 As of 18th January we've had 213 applications for the Additional Restrictions Grant scheme. 114 applications are being/have been assessed with 64 successful applicants so far, providing £480,000. Further funding was announced earlier this month by the chancellor towards the Additional Restrictions Grant scheme, the economic development service are currently reviewing where this monies can be utilised, such as extending the eligible business types for the direct grant funding criteria. An update shall be provided soon on this.
- 4.9 To date 14 pubs have been identified as eligible for the Christmas Support Payment for wet- led pubs and we are now proactively mailing other businesses we have identified as potentially eligible to ensure they get the support they are entitled to.
- 4.10 The Visitor economy team developed an online gift guide on the popular Visit Lichfield website which provided businesses a platform to promote their online shops and sales in the run up to Christmas. In addition they provided a further opportunity for food and drink businesses, with a platform to promote take away/delivery options whilst Staffordshire was in tier 3.
- 4.11 We have also launched the Visit Lichfield Card, a new initiative designed to encourage both local people and visitors to use the shops, restaurants, accommodation and attractions In Lichfield District. The card is available free of charge, and qualifies card holders for unique discounts and offers at participating tourism businesses, shops and restaurants in Lichfield District. All offers are posted on the Visit Lichfield website – making it easy for cardholders to see what offers are available. Most importantly, it is also a chance for participating businesses to benefit from additional promotion.
- 4.12 We continue to support tourism businesses by providing weekly e-newsletters that include information on grants, funding, business support, training opportunities and numerous options to help businesses

market and promote their business, through the Visit Lichfield website, social media platforms and various publications.

- 4.13 The Building Control team had 2235 applications in 2019/20 and an estimated 2308 for 20/21 (3.3% increase). The team have remained busy throughout the pandemic and it is likely to show an increase despite the impacts felt elsewhere in our economy. Planning have also seen an increase in applications of 2.5% for the same period (1522 against 1482 for 2019/20), though valid applications have decreased by 9% (1343).
- 4.14 Information on inspections and advice to business will be reported when available.

5. Keeping you informed

5.1 People are regularly updated and informed. Since March the Communications Team has delivered;

- 203 outgoing Twitter dedicated posts covid-19 resulting in 360,598 impressions
- 174 Facebook posts resulting in a reach of 324,690.
- 65 Covid 19 related press releases, covering service updates, housing, benefit claimants, emergency shopping, business support and grants and more.
- Website text and updates for the dedicated LDC website section

5.2 Social media output/impact has increased significantly since the start of lockdown (March 2020), highlighting both the increase in output from LDC and the demand from the local community for on-going information about local and national developments. This can be highlighted with reference to increased activity and engagement measure on Twitter.

	Pre- March 2020	Since March 2020
Average monthly tweets sent	52	97
Average impressions	54,000	130,000
Average profile visits	960	1580
Average mentions	235	359

5.3 In order to maintain a visible presence for Covid related information in and around open spaces and to provide direct information to residents the team has provided creative design for:

- Six different parks posters related Covid-secure rules at the park during the first lockdown
- Nine designs when park facilities opened up again.
- Building information signs for the District Council House
- Bin tags with resident support information
- Social media artwork for the #HereForYou campaign
- Floor plans and direction signs for the District Council House and depot.

5.4 Alongside the general Covid 19 communication activity, the Communications Team has also supported the development, launch and updates to the #LoveLocal and #LoveLocal this Christmas campaign including;

- Covid-secure checklist leaflet for all businesses
- Floor stickers, window vinyl and poster for shops
- Roadside and park banners
- Information leaflet to all residents
- Dedicated website section including a resource library and directory of Lichfield and Burntwood shops still operating during the second lockdown.

- Birmingham Road billboard advert
- Bus station post series
- 59 Facebook posts resulting in a reach of 69,104
- Eight boosted Facebook posts resulting in a reach of 66,800
- 43 tweets resulting in 68,407 impressions.
- Eight #LoveLocal press releases

5.5 Since May 2020 all of our council meetings have all been broadcast live and then available on our YouTube Channel. These have received over 5,039 views reaching far more people than ever before. Overall, attendance at meetings is higher via zoom supporting members to balance their role with other responsibilities.

5.6 Since March 2020 over 50 messages have been issued by the Chief Executive and leadership team, sometimes on a daily basis, to ensure all staff and members have the most up to date information to pass on to residents and stakeholders. The messages have covered the current infection rates, latest guidance to keep people informed and hold teams together during this busy period. It has been used to share good news stories and thanks received from customers for the key services and support we have given. Over the pandemic period, Managers Briefings – our internal staff cascade has continued via zoom with more than 40 managers in attendance to each session.

6. Areas of focus for this committee

6.1 The committee is asked to consider items in Section 5, along with paragraphs 2.1 – 2.3, 2.8, 2.9 and 2.12 and to note the remainder of the report, which will be covered by the relevant scrutiny committee(s).

Alternative Options	The Council could have presented the recovery plan in a variety of ways, this narrative style is in keeping with the original plan format and puts in context some of the metrics which otherwise would be very difficult to interpret.
Consultation	Wherever feasible, aspects of the plan have been consulted with local ward members, task groups, overview and scrutiny committees, the community, service users and key stakeholders.
Financial Implications	<p>The full financial impact of Covid 19 is very difficult to quantify – however the quantified financial impact (prior to the third national lockdown) is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2019/20 – an impact on the Council of £50,000 (reduced income and additional expenditure of £62,550 with Government Grant of (£12,550) used to offset the financial impact. • In 2020/21 – a projected impact on the Council of £2,639,800 (reduced income and additional expenditure is projected to total £4,615,960 with Government Grant of (£1,301,160) and the compensation from the sales, fees and charges loss scheme of (£675,000) are being used to offset the impact. • The Government will allow Council Tax and Business Rate Collection Fund deficits to be spread over three years rather than a single year. • The Government will also provide 75% support for Council Tax and Business Rate uncollectible losses in 2020/21 (projected reduced income for this Council included in the projection of £4,615,960 in 2020/21 is £930,900). However the guidance is currently being developed and it is therefore difficult

	<p>at this stage, to quantify the level of compensation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Government will provide additional further support in 2021/22 related to grant of (£440,578), Local Council Tax Support Grant of (£126,451) and an extension of the sales, fees and charges loss scheme for the first three months of 2021/22 estimated to be (£124,000).
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Contribution to the Delivery of the Strategic Plan	Covid 19 response and recovery actions are now reflected in the councils Delivery plan to support the District Council's Strategic Plan.
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Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Implications	Contributions to the Council's equalities objectives have been captured and will be reported in our annual objective statement published at the end of January 2021. Where an impact on people with protected characteristics has been identified, this has been assessed and wherever possible, mitigated.
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Crime & Safety Issues	Our duty to prevent crime and disorder within the District (Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act, 1988) has been taken into account
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Environmental Impact	The move to online meetings and home working has greatly helped reduce carbon emissions of members and officers of the council.
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GDPR/Privacy Impact Assessment	All data used to support Covid 19 response has been provided or covered under relevant data agreements with Staffordshire County Council, NHS and other partners.
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	Risk Description	How We Manage It	Severity of Risk (RYG)
A	That members are not aware of the full impacts of Covid-19 on the operation of the council	Keep members aware through regular briefings and ongoing overview of progress and reports to relevant committees	Green (tolerable) Likelihood (low) Impact Assessment (Med)
B	That the impacts of Covid-19 undermine the financial stability of the council	That regular assessments are undertaken of the financial impact and reflected in our MTFS. Lobby of relevant ministers for funding to offset.	Yellow (material) Likelihood (Med) Impact Assessment (Med)
C	That the impact of Covid -19 fundamentally undermines our ability to achieve our strategic objectives	That we monitor impact on our residents and the local economy, lobby and deploy any funding provided as quickly and effectively as possible.	Yellow (material) Likelihood (Med) Impact Assessment (Med)
D			
E			

Background documents

<p>Relevant web links</p> <p>https://www.lichfielddc.gov.uk/downloads/file/1582/ldc-coronavirus-recovery-plan</p>
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