



# Executive Committee

Tue 8 Feb  
2022  
6.30 pm

Council Chamber,  
Redditch Town Hall

**REDDITCH** BOROUGH COUNCIL

*making  
difference*

[www.redditchbc.gov.uk](http://www.redditchbc.gov.uk)

**If you have any queries on this Agenda please contact  
Jess Bayley-Hill**

**Town Hall, Walter Stranz Square, Redditch, B98 8AH  
Tel: (01527) 64252 (Ext. 3072)  
e.mail: [jess.bayley-hill@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk](mailto:jess.bayley-hill@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk)**

## **GUIDANCE ON FACE-TO-FACE MEETINGS**

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**Due to the current Covid-19 pandemic Redditch Borough Council will be applying social distancing arrangements for holding face-to-face meetings.**

**Please note that this is a public meeting and is open to the public to attend**

**If you have any questions regarding the agenda or attached papers, please do not hesitate to contact the officer named above.**

### **GUIDANCE FOR ELECTED MEMBERS ATTENDING MEETINGS IN PERSON**

In advance of the Committee meeting, Members are strongly encouraged to take a lateral flow test on the day of the meeting, which can be obtained from the NHS website. Should the test be positive for Covid-19 then the Member must not attend the Committee meeting, should provide their apologies to the Democratic Services team and must self-isolate in accordance with national rules.

Members and officers must wear face masks during the meeting, unless exempt. Face masks should only be removed temporarily if the Councillor or officer is speaking or if s/he requires a sip of water and should be reapplied as soon as possible. As Councillors may remove their masks from time to time during the meeting, seating will be placed two metres apart, in line with social distancing measures to protect meeting participants.

Hand sanitiser will be provided for Members to use throughout the meeting.

The meeting venue will be fully ventilated and Members and officers may need to consider wearing appropriate clothing in order to remain comfortable during proceedings.

### **PUBLIC ATTENDANCE**

Members of the public are able to access the meeting in person if they wish to do so. However, due to social distancing requirements to ensure the safety of participants during the Covid-19 pandemic, there will be limited capacity and members of the public will be allowed access on a first come, first served basis. Members of the public in attendance are strongly encouraged to wear face masks, to use the hand sanitiser that will be provided and will be required to sit in a socially distance manner at the meetings. It should be noted that members of the public who choose to attend in person do so at their own risk.

In line with Government guidelines, any member of the public who has received a positive result in a Covid-19 test on the day of a meeting must not attend in person and must self-isolate in accordance with the national rules.

**Notes:**

**Although this is a public meeting, there are circumstances when Council might have to move into closed session to consider exempt or confidential information. For agenda items that are exempt, the public are excluded.**



# Executive

Tuesday, 8th February, 2022

6.30 pm

Council Chamber Town Hall

## Agenda

### Membership:

Cllrs:	Matthew Dormer (Chair)	Anthony Lovell
	Gemma Monaco (Vice-Chair)	Nyear Nazir
	Joanne Beecham	Mike Rouse
	Aled Evans	Craig Warhurst
	Peter Fleming	

### 1. Apologies

### 2. Declarations of Interest

To invite Councillors to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and / or Other Disclosable Interests they may have in items on the agenda, and to confirm the nature of those interests.

### 3. Leader's Announcements

### 4. Minutes (Pages 1 - 16)

### 5. Sustainable Warmth Funding (Pages 17 - 24)

This report is due to be pre-scrutinised at a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee scheduled to take place on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2022. Any recommendations from the Committee on this subject will be reported for the Executive Committee's consideration in a supplementary pack.

The background paper to this item has been published in a separate Background papers pack.

### 6. Draft 2022/23 Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan - Report and Update (Pages 25 - 60)

This report is due to be pre-scrutinised at a meeting of the Budget Scrutiny Working group scheduled to take place on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2022. Any recommendations arising from that meeting on this subject will be reported in a supplementary pack for the consideration of the Executive Committee.

## **7. Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Pages 61 - 68)**

## **8. Minutes / Referrals - Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Executive Panels etc.**

To receive and consider any outstanding minutes or referrals from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Executive Panels etc. since the last meeting of the Executive Committee, other than as detailed in the items above.

## **9. Advisory Panels - update report**

Members are invited to provide verbal updates, if any, in respect of the following bodies:

- a) Climate Change Cross-Party Working Group – Chair, Councillor Anthony Lovell;
- b) Constitutional Review Working Panel – Chair, Councillor Matthew Dormer;
- c) Corporate Parenting Board – Council Representative, Councillor Nyear Nazir;
- d) Member Support Steering Group – Chair, Councillor Matthew Dormer; and
- e) Planning Advisory Panel – Chair, Councillor Matthew Dormer.

## **10. To consider any urgent business, details of which have been notified to the Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services prior to the commencement of the meeting and which the Chair, by reason of special circumstances, considers to be of so urgent a nature that it cannot wait until the next meeting**

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## MINUTES

# Executive Committee

Tuesday, 11th January,  
2022

### Present:

Councillor Matthew Dormer (Chair), and Councillors Joanne Beecham, Aled Evans, Peter Fleming, Anthony Lovell, Mike Rouse and Craig Warhurst

### Officers:

Matthew Bough, Kevin Dicks, Claire Felton, Sue Hanley, James Howse, David Riley and Darren Whitney

### Principal Democratic Services Officer:

Jess Bayley-Hill

### 52. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Gemma Monaco and Nyear Nazir.

### 53. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

### 54. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader advised that at the latest meeting of the Budget Scrutiny Working Group held on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2022 Members had pre-scrutinised the Financial Outturn Report 2020/21, Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Rent Setting 2022/23, Fees and Charges 2022 and Council Tax Base 2022/23 reports, at Minute Item No.s 59 – 62 on the agenda for the consideration of the Executive Committee. However, as the group had made no recommendations on these items there were no referrals from the Budget Scrutiny Working Group for consideration at the meeting.

Members were advised that an updated copy of the appendix to the Fees and Charges 2022 report had been issued that day in the Additional Papers 1 pack. The Committee was urged to refer to this version of the appendix when debating that item.

### 55. MINUTES

**RESOLVED that**

Chair

# Executive Committee

Tuesday, 11th January, 2022

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**the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2021 be approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chair.**

**56. HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION GRANT 2022/23 (PREVIOUSLY FLEXIBLE HOMELESSNESS SUPPORT GRANT AND HOMELESSNESS REDUCTION GRANT)**

The Housing Development and Enabling Manager presented a report on the subject of the Homelessness Prevention Grant settlement 2022/23 for the Council. This grant replaced the previous Flexible Homelessness Support Grant and the Temporary Accommodation Management Fund, which had been amalgamated. The Council was anticipating receiving £314,926 in the Homelessness Prevention Grant, which was ring fenced for spending on homelessness and homelessness prevention. There had been a £66,008 underspend on equivalent homelessness grants in 2021/22. Therefore, the Council had total grant funding of £392,134 to spend on homelessness and homelessness prevention in the 2022/23 financial year.

In line with previous years, the Council was proposing to allocate this grant funding to various different Voluntary and Community (VCS) organisations that worked to support homeless people and people at risk of becoming homeless, including young people. This would represent expenditure of £382,000 of the grant funding available. Officers were proposing that the Head of Community and Housing Services should be provided with delegated authority, following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Procurement, to make adjustments as needed during the year, including with respect to expenditure of the remaining funds.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Procurement explained that the funding to the various VCS organisations had made a significant contribution to work to tackle homelessness in recent years and it was therefore important to ensure that this continued. A lot of work had been undertaken, in particular, to address issues with rough sleeping and to support young people who might otherwise struggle to access appropriate accommodation.

**RESOLVED that**

- 1) the following initiatives be approved to receive allocation of funding in 2022/23:**

<b>Initiatives</b>	<b>£ (up to)</b>
Redditch Nightstop - Outreach Worker to	55,600



# Executive Committee

Tuesday, 11th January, 2022

support 21 to 35 year olds and prevent homelessness or work towards planned moves into suitable and sustainable accommodation and the Safe Accommodation and Support scheme.	
Redditch Nightstop Core Funding	13,000
CCP Rough Sleeper Outreach Service - 2.8 FTE posts across Bromsgrove and Redditch	75,246
Fry Accord – 18 units of supported accommodation for Ex-Offenders or those likely to offend	15,457
St Basils – Provide 23 units of accommodation for young people aged 16- 23 years of age additional funding to provide 24 hour cover following a reduction in funding from County Council	14,200
Newstarts - Furniture Project to provide furniture for homeless households.	5,000
Homelessness Prevention - Spend to Save budget for use by Housing Options Officers	17,060
Temporary Accommodation Management – as 3.1 above	66,380
St Basils Smallwood Almshouses - Progression Coach to offer additional support that can operate outside of normal office hours to fit around a young persons education, training and employment.	26,500
Citizens Advice Debt Advice	23,000
Sanctuary Scheme for Victims of Domestic Abuse	20,000
Young Persons Pathway Worker	26,000
Crash Pad	14,033
County Partnership Manager	6,300
Hopes – Single and Childless Couples Homeless Prevention Service	4,996
<b>Total</b>	<b>£382,772</b>

- 2) **delegated authority be granted to the Head of Community and Housing Services following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Procurement to use any**

**unallocated Grant during the year or make further adjustments as necessary to ensure full utilisation of the Grants for 2022/23 in support of existing or new schemes.**

**57. COUNCIL TAX EMPTY HOME DISCOUNT AND PREMIUM**

The Financial Support Manager presented a report which outlined proposals in respect of discounts and premiums for Council Tax payments for empty homes in the Borough. The proposed changes would come into effect from April 2022.

The Council's current scheme distinguished between existing homes that became vacant and new homes that became vacant. Owners of existing homes had to pay 50 per cent of the Council Tax for the first three months once the property became vacant whilst owners of new vacant homes, generally housing developers, were exempt from paying Council Tax for the first three months. Under the proposed new scheme, this distinction would end. No Council Tax would need to be paid on a vacant property for the first 14 days but subsequently 100 per cent of Council Tax would need to be paid. There would be exemptions from this rule, including for social and Council housing.

Consideration had been given to exempting vacant homes on the market from payment of Council Tax under this scheme, but the Council had concluded that payments should apply, partly because it was not clear that the legislation would permit this exemption and partly because the local housing market was buoyant. The Council could also use discretion to assess requests for exemptions on a case by case basis.

The report also proposed the introduction of premium Council Tax payments for homes that had been vacant for a long time. Under this part of the scheme, property owners would pay 100 per cent of Council Tax for homes that had been vacant for up to five years, 200 per cent Council Tax for properties vacant for between five and ten years and 300 per cent of Council Tax for properties that had been vacant for at least ten years. This was designed to discourage property owners from keeping homes vacant in the long-term.

Members discussed the proposals and in doing so commented that housing was in demand and it was therefore important to ensure properties were available on the local market. It was also noted that, should an exemption be applied to properties for sale, this might be used as an opportunity by a minority of unscrupulous property owners to avoid making Council Tax payments.

# Executive Committee

Tuesday, 11th January, 2022

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During consideration of this item, questions were raised about the potential impact that a limit of 14 days, in terms of the period in which property owners would not need to pay Council Tax on vacant properties, might have on landlords' ability to update a home before letting to new tenants. Concerns were raised that this might result in some landlords rushing to complete works, to the detriment of the property and experience of future tenants. However, Officers explained that previously landlords had had to pay 50 per cent of Council Tax from the first day on which a property became vacant and therefore this exemption for 14 days placed landlords in a better financial position in the short-term.

## **RECOMMENDED that**

**The Executive Committee is asked to RECOMMEND that:**

- 1) from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 the level of Council Tax discount to be applied under Section 11A (4) and Section 11A (4A) for each class of dwellings as defined by The Council Tax (Prescribed Classes of Dwellings) (England) Regulations 2003 (as amended) will be:**

**Class A ["second homes with a planning restriction"] 0%:  
no discount**

**Class B ["second homes with a planning restriction"] 0%:  
no discount**

**Class C ["vacant dwellings"]**

- a. Where the dwelling has been unoccupied and unfurnished for a continuous period of not more than 14 days - 100% discount**
- b. Where the dwelling has been unoccupied and unfurnished for more than 14 days - 0%: no discount.**
- c. Where the dwelling is**
  - i. unoccupied and substantially unfurnished; and**
  - ii. the owner of the dwelling is a local housing authority; and**
  - iii. when next in use the dwelling will be occupied under the provisions of the Housing act 1985****100% discount.**

**Owner will be defined by reference to section 6(5) and 6(6) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.**

**For the purposes of Class C when considering whether a dwelling falls within the description any period of occupation, not exceeding 6 weeks, during which it was not unoccupied and substantially unfurnished shall be disregarded.**

**Class D [“dwellings requiring major repair works”] - 100% discount**

- 2) from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 the additional council tax premium applied under section 11B of the LGFA '92, for long-term empty dwellings will be**
  - i) for a dwelling that has been a long-term empty dwelling for less than 5 years – 100% premium**
  - ii) for a dwelling that has been a long-term empty dwelling for 5 years or more, but less than 10 years – 200% premium**
  - iii) for a dwelling that has been a long-term empty dwelling for at least 10 years – 300% premium**
- 3) the Head of Financial and Customer Services on a case-by-case basis may consider a reduction to the long-term empty premium.**

#### **58. INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL 2022/23**

The Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services presented the recommendations from the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) regarding Members' allowances in the 2022/23 financial year.

The IRP reviewed allowances paid to elected Members serving most of the district Councils in Worcestershire. The Panel comprised independent representatives of the local community. The Council was required to consider the IRP's proposals, although was not obliged to accept the Panel's recommendations.

In considering the recommendations, Members were asked to note that the IRP's proposals reflected their assessment of what they felt Members should be paid in terms of both the basic allowance and any Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) paid to certain Members for undertaking specific roles. The first recommendation, in respect of the proposed basic allowance for Members, was the level which had been proposed for other District Councillors in

Worcestershire. However, the percentage increase required to achieve that level of the basic allowance in Redditch would be higher than at some other Councils because Redditch Borough Council had opted not to increase Members' basic allowance for a number of years. This was not reflected in the IRP's report, which worked on the basis that Members would have agreed the Panel's proposals in previous years. The second recommendation from the Panel, in respect of SRAs, if approved, would result in changes to the SRAs paid to Members as the proposed calculations differed from the Council's current Scheme of Member Allowances. However, recommendations 3 – 6 in the report, concerning payment of travel claims, carers' allowances and payments to Parish Councillors, would not result in any changes.

During consideration of this item, Members were advised that there would need to be an amendment to the budget to reflect historic changes made to Members' allowances. This would be reported to Members in February 2022 in the Medium Term Financial Plan 2022/23 to 2024/25. However, this did not have implications for the IRP's report.

Following the presentation of the report, Members discussed the proposals and in doing so commented on the decisions made by Members in previous years not to increase the basic allowance. Concerns were raised that this resulted in basic allowance payments to Redditch Members lagging behind elected Councillors serving at the other District Councils in Worcestershire. A decision to increase the basic allowance to the level suggested by the IRP would help to bring the basic allowance into line with that in place at other authorities. Concerns were also raised that it would not be appropriate to decline to increase basic allowances at a time of rising inflation.

However, Members commented that they did not feel, at this time, it would be appropriate to change the arrangements for SRAs in Redditch, as the current arrangements in place reflected circumstances for Members in the Borough.

Reference was made to the potential for a benchmarking exercise to be undertaken by the IRP in respect of basic allowances paid to Councillors in Worcestershire. Members commented that the last time such an exercise had been undertaken had been in 2016 and the pressures and workloads of Members had changed significantly since this date, particularly during the Covid-19 pandemic.

**RECOMMENDED that**

- 1) the Basic Allowance for 2022-23 is £4,732, representing a 6.648% increase;**

- 2) **travel allowances for 2022-23 continue to be paid in accordance with the HMRC mileage allowance;**
- 3) **subsistence allowances for 2022-23 remain unchanged;**
- 4) **the Dependent Carer's Allowance remains unchanged**
- 5) **for Parish Councils in the Borough, if travel and subsistence is paid, the Panel recommends that it is paid in accordance with the rates paid by Borough Council and in accordance with the relevant Regulations.**

#### **59. FINANCIAL OUTTURN 2020/21 REPORT**

The Executive Director of Resources presented the Financial Outturn Report 2020/21. Members were asked to note that in total an underspend of £373,000 had been identified by the end of the financial year. The underspend would be reinvested in the general fund position for the 2021/22 financial year. This underspend had a number of causes which included the following:

- Borrowing costs had been £183,000 lower than anticipated. This was due to low interest rates as well as to the short-term benefits arising from Government business grant funding being placed in the Council's accounts, though this grant funding had subsequently been distributed amongst eligible local companies.
- In total £330,000 savings had been achieved in respect of management of Council assets and properties. During the Covid-19 pandemic, Redditch Town Hall and other Council buildings had been closed to the public, with most staff working from home, and this had resulted in savings on utilities, particularly heating.

Following the presentation of the report, the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling welcomed the underspend that had been achieved in the 2020/21 financial year. However, the Committee was advised that there remained significant financial pressures for the Council and difficult decisions would need to be taken to address these pressures.

The action that had been taken to achieve savings with respect to management of Council assets was praised, and the Corporate Management Team (CMT) were urged to consider further action that could be taken to achieve savings in future through management of Council assets. Officers confirmed that use of Redditch Town Hall was in the process of being reviewed. CMT were aiming to reduce footfall at the Town Hall and to enable an agile working model at the Council.

Reference was also made specifically to the savings that had been achieved in relation to heating the Town Hall and other Council buildings and the beneficial impact of new windows in the building on heating costs. The Committee was advised that further measures that could be adopted to address heating in Council buildings were being considered. However, Members were asked to note that any action might only be sufficient to offset anticipated increases to utilities costs, which were likely to increase by over 5 per cent in the 2022/23 financial year.

**RESOLVED that**

- 1) **the current financial position in relation to the revenue budgets for the year April 2020 – March 2021 as detailed in the report is noted; and**
- 2) **the additional £120k of general covid grant that will be paid to Rubicon Leisure Limited to balance the year end position, as agreed by the S 151 Officer under delegated authority, be noted.**

**60. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) RENT SETTING 2022/23**

The Executive Director of Resources presented the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Rent Setting report 2022/23. The Executive Committee was informed that there were strict Government guidelines in respect of rent setting by Councils and these had been followed when calculating the proposed rent to be paid by Council tenants in the 2022/23 financial year. In total, a 4.1 per cent increase to rents for Council properties was being recommended.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Procurement, in proposing the recommendations, commented that a 4.1 per cent increase to rents was below inflation. This, together with other Council pressures, would potentially have implications for the HRA moving forward.

**RECOMMENDED that**

- 1) **the actual average rent increase for 2022/23 be set as September 2021 CPI, 3.1%, plus 1% resulting in an increase of 4.1%; and**
- 2) **when void social rent properties are re-let. The rent will be set at the recalculated Target Rent (Formula Rent) for the new tenant.**

**61. FEES AND CHARGES 2022/23**

The Executive Director of Resources presented the Fees and Charges 2022/23 report for Members' consideration. Members were asked to note that the appendix to the report had been reissued in the Additional Papers 1 pack with slightly amended figures.

The principle underpinning the report was that, in the absence of better information, fees and charges would be set at a level to achieve full cost recovery. In general, this meant that it was proposed that the majority of fees and charges should increase by between 5 and 6 per cent, based on the best estimate by the Bank of England of the likely level of inflation by April 2022.

There were some exceptions, in terms of services where officers were not proposing to increase fees and charges. This included the charge for the Garden Waste Collection service, as Officers had concluded that an increase at this time would not be commercially viable. In addition, Officers were proposing no increases to the fees for the Dial a Ride, Lifeline and Shopmobility services, on the basis that these services were provided to some of the most vulnerable communities in the Borough. There were also some cases where the increase was slightly over or under 5 or 6 per cent, which had occurred where officers were rounding the charge up or down.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling welcomed the proposals detailed in the report. However, Members were asked to note that inflation levels were difficult to predict and it was possible that this would be higher than 6 per cent by April 2022, which would impact on the Council's financial position.

**RECOMMENDED that**

- 1) Council approve all of the fees and charges; and**
- 2) Council agree that all fees and charges are charged commencing 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022.**

**62. COUNCIL TAX BASE 2022/23**

The Executive Director of Resources presented the Council Tax Base 2022/23 report for the Executive Committee's consideration. Members were advised that this report, which was prepared annually, contained technical information based on sound data. Officers had identified that the Council Tax Base was 26,546, relating to the number of Band D equivalent properties in the



# Executive Committee

Tuesday, 11th January, 2022

Borough. This calculation was important as it enabled the authority to calculate Council Tax levels.

In proposing the recommendations, the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling explained that there was a need to increase the Council Tax Base in the Borough. More Council Band D properties needed to be built in Redditch, as this would help to achieve that higher Council Tax Base.

## **RECOMMENDED that**

- 1) **the calculation of the Council's Tax Base for the whole and parts of the area for 2022/23, be approved; and**
- 2) **in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) Regulations 1992, the figures calculated by the Redditch Borough Council as its tax base for the whole area for the year 2022/23 be 26,546.63 and for the parts of the area listed below be:**

<b>Parish of Feckenham</b>	<b>374.52</b>
<b>Rest of Redditch</b>	<b><u>26,172.11</u></b>
<b>Total for Borough</b>	<b><u>26,546.63</u></b>

## **63. WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES (WRS) BOARD - BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Executive Director of Resources presented the minutes of the meeting of the Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) Board meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2021 at which budget contributions from partner authorities had been discussed. The proposed contributions had been reviewed in detail previously by senior Finance Officers from all of the authorities.

There were a number of budget pressures which were reflected in the figures reported to Members. This included pressures arising from anticipated pay increases, pension contributions, increases to the rent for the premises used by WRS and increases to the financial settlement for ICT support. Some of the pressures were more relevant to certain partner authorities than for others, such as for the Technical Officer for Animal Activity, which was reflected in the figures. In total, Redditch Borough Council's contribution would represent 17.53 per cent of the total budget for WRS in the 2022/23 financial year.

Members subsequently discussed the proposed budget settlement and in doing so noted that the Executive Committee could only determine the financial contribution from Redditch Borough Council. The flexible approach to funding different posts to meet varying

# Executive Committee

Tuesday, 11th January, 2022

needs of partners in the county was welcomed as a fair funding model.

During consideration of this item, the Executive Committee praised WRS for the team's hard work during the Covid-19 pandemic. Members commented that WRS had had to address new work pressures during the pandemic, such as those relating to lockdown restrictions on businesses. The workload of the team had also been impacted in other ways, such as through the increase in noise nuisance complaints, which had arisen during the lockdowns when more people were based at home.

## RECOMMENDED that

partner authorities approve the following for 2022/2023:

- a) the 2022/23 gross expenditure budget of £3,891k;
- b) the 2022/23 income budget of 634k;
- c) the revenue budget and partner percentage allocations for 2022/2023 onwards:

Council	£'000	Revised %
Redditch Borough Council	572	17.53

- d) the additional partner liabilities for 2022/2023 in relation to unavoidable salary pressure:

Council	£'000
Redditch Borough Council	14

- e) the additional partner liabilities for 2022/2023 in relation to hosting costs:

Council	Increase in Rent £000	Increase in ICT Hosting £000	Increase in Support Hosting £000
Redditch Borough Council	1	3	2

- f) Approve the additional partner liabilities for 2022/23 in relation to three Technical Officers.

# Executive Committee

Tuesday, 11th January, 2022

Council	Tech Officer Income Generation £000	Tech Officer Animal Activity £000	Tech Officer Gull Control £000
Redditch Borough Council	6	2	

## 64. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Leader confirmed that there were no updates from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on this occasion.

## 65. MINUTES / REFERRALS - OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE, EXECUTIVE PANELS ETC.

The Committee was advised that there were no referrals from either the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or the Executive Advisory Panels on this occasion.

## 66. ADVISORY PANELS - UPDATE REPORT

The following verbal updates were provided in respect of the work of the Executive Advisory Panels and other bodies.

- a) Climate Change Cross Party Working Group – Chair, Councillor Anthony Lovell

Councillor Lovell advised that there was due to be a meeting of the Climate Change Cross Party Working Group in January 2022.

- b) Constitutional Review Working Party – Chair, Councillor Matthew Dormer

Councillor Dormer advised that a meeting of the Constitutional Review Working Party was scheduled to take place on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2022.

- c) Corporate Parenting Board – Council Representative, Councillor Nyear Nazir

In the absence of Councillor Nazir, the Leader advised that there had been no further meetings of the Board since the previous meeting of the Executive Committee.

- d) Member Support Steering Group – Chair, Councillor Matthew Dormer

The Committee was informed that a meeting of the Member Support Steering Group was scheduled to take place on 15<sup>th</sup> February 2022.

e) Planning Advisory Panel – Chair, Councillor Matthew Dormer

Councillor Dormer explained that a meeting of the Planning Advisory Panel was scheduled to take place on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2022. All Members were urged to attend this meeting.

**67. RELEASE OF COVENANTS AFFECTING LAND**

The Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services presented a report on the subject of the release of a covenant affecting land at Overdale in Astwood Bank that had previously been sold by the Council. The covenant stipulated that the land concerned could only be used as a garden. However, a request had been received from the owner of the land to remove the covenant.

A quote had been received some time ago concerning the level of the capital receipt that would be generated for the Council as a result of removing this covenant. Officers were proposing a slight amendment to the proposals detailed in the report, and this was that there should be an up to date valuation undertaken.

The Executive Committee discussed the report and questioned the frequency with which covenants were applied and the reasons why the Council had applied a covenant to the sale of this particular land in 2009. Officers explained that this was a fairly standard arrangement and covenants were put in place to help protect the Council's interests. At the time that the sale occurred it was likely that the purchaser had asked for additional garden land.

Reference was also made to the planning process that would need to be followed should the covenant be released. Officers confirmed that the proper planning process would need to be followed in these circumstances.

**RESOLVED that**

- 1) subject to receiving an updated valuation, authority be delegated to the Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services, following consultation with the Leader, to negotiate and finalise terms for the release of covenants attached to LR Title No WR121916 in return for the capital sum; and**

**Executive**  
Committee

Tuesday, 11th January, 2022

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**RECOMMENDED that**

- 2) **the Council's budget is augmented by the capital receipt.**

The Meeting commenced at 6.30 pm  
and closed at 7.32 pm

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**Executive Committee 8<sup>th</sup> February 2021****SUSTAINABLE WARMTH FUNDING**

<b>Relevant Portfolio Holder</b>	Councillors Craig Warhurst/ Anthony Lovell
<b>Portfolio Holder Consulted</b>	Yes
<b>Relevant Head of Service</b>	Judith Willis, Guy Revans
<b>Report Author</b>	<b>Name:</b> Kath Manning <b>Job Title:</b> Climate Change Officer <b>Contact email:</b> kath.manning@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk <b>Contact Tel:</b> Ext 3044
<b>Wards Affected</b>	No specific ward relevance.
<b>Ward Councillor(s) consulted</b>	n/a
<b>Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Finding somewhere to live</li> <li>- Living independent, active &amp; healthy lives</li> <li>- Aspirations, work &amp; financial independence</li> <li>- Communities which are safe, well maintained &amp; green</li> </ul>
Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

**1. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Executive Committee **RECOMMEND** that:

- 1) The Capital and Revenue Budgets (Housing and General Fund) are increased to receive Redditch Borough Council's Sustainable Warmth scheme allocation of £357,500.
- 2) Delegated authority is granted to the Head of Community & Housing Services and Head of Environmental and Housing Property Services in consultation with Portfolio Holders for Housing and Climate Change to administer the funding received in line with the grant conditions.

## Executive Committee 8<sup>th</sup> February 2021

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### 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. The Sustainable Warmth Competition originating from the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (“**BEIS**”) awarded funding to the Midlands Energy Hub (“**MEH**”) administered by Nottingham City Council, after MEH successfully submitted a proposal for West Midlands local housing authorities to deliver this funding.

The Sustainable Warmth funding will support energy efficiency measures and low carbon heating, with an aim of upgrading homes with poor energy efficiency (Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating D, E, F or G) to a target energy efficiency rating of EPC C, or EPC D where this is not possible.

Sustainable Warmth Funding has two components:

- Home Upgrade Grant (HUG) Phase 1 for properties not connected to mains gas
- Local Authority Delivery (LAD) Phase 3 for properties connected to mains gas

Redditch Borough Council has been allocated funding based on the proportion of housing in the borough likely to have a poor Energy Performance rating, the proportions of properties connected to mains gas and capacity to deliver.

The deadline to accept the allocation is 28<sup>th</sup> February 2021.

- 2.2. Key information regarding BEIS scheme criteria:

- Eligibility is based on fuel poverty risk – having a low income and living in a home with poor energy efficiency.
- Measures must be targeted at properties with the worst energy efficiency – Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) E, F and G. Up to 30% EPC D properties can also be included.
- Households must be either
  - private owners or renters with an income of less than £30k or with other factors which are a proxy for low income such as receipt of means tested benefits, food and fuel vouchers
  - social housing tenants.
- Sustainable Warmth funding focusses on owner occupier and private rental properties. Social housing stock is capped at 10% of the total number of HUG 1 homes and 10% of the total number of homes for LAD 3 to enabling mixed tenure area-based schemes.



**Executive Committee 8<sup>th</sup> February 2021**

- Maximum average grant per property is £10,000 for LAD3 and £15,000 for HUG. For privately rented or social housing properties, the grant can only be up to one third of the cost of measures and of the above amounts. Any owner occupier properties are required by BEIS to be fully funded using the grant monies.
  - Funding must be delivered to Publicly Available Specification (PAS) 2035 (PAS 2035:2019 Specification for the energy retrofit of domestic buildings) using Trustmark accredited contractors. This includes use of Retrofit Assessors, Coordinators and Designers to ensure that measures are appropriate to the whole property and the longer term and delivered to an agreed standard.
  - Any installations proposed should follow the recommendations of the Retrofit Co-ordinator. This means maximising the proportion of insulation and clean heat measures installed (measures including solid wall, cavity wall and loft insulation, and heat pumps) and limiting the proportion of other measures (measures such as Solar PV/thermal, windows and doors).
  - The period of this Grant is from the date of allocation until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 unless extended by MEH with permission from BEIS and HM Treasury as required.
- 2.3. The deadline for delivery of LAD 2 has been extended to July 31<sup>st</sup> 2022 and therefore will overlap with Sustainable Warmth funding.

**3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1. Redditch Borough Council's allocation is as follows (with the maximum amount for Social Housing shown in brackets)

	Capital	Administrative Allocation (Admin and Ancillary)
<b>Home Upgrade Grant (HUG) Phase 1</b>	£65,000 (£6,500)	£6,500 (£650)
<b>Local Authority Delivery (LAD)Phase 3</b>	£260,000 (£26,000)	£26,000 (£2600)

- 3.2. Where the Grant includes capital funding, accounting standards permit, in certain circumstances, the capitalisation of costs incurred when delivering the capital assets for the fund (for example, administrative

**Executive Committee 8<sup>th</sup> February 2021**

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and ancillary). The Council will keep such costs incurred in delivery to below 10% of the HUG 1 total Grant and 10% of the LAD 3 total Grant independently provided by the Secretary of State. In all other cases capital funding must not be spent on revenue.

- 3.3. The Administrative Allocation may be used for administration and ancillary work including, but not limited to:
- Project management, reporting and governance costs;
  - Pre-installation EPCs to target households, verify eligibility and evidence improvements to the property;
  - Building works to prepare for installation;
  - Retrofit co-ordinator training costs; and
  - Resident targeting, low-income verification and sign-up including lead generation and communication activities.
- 3.4. The Grant shall be paid in the following way:
- 10% of the total Grant Amount shall be paid to the Council within 30 days following the receipt by MEH of the signed copy of the grant letter. This is intended to be used to support any required survey works and can be used as capitalisation;
  - 10% shall be released within 30 days of approval by MEH of the Council's Development Plan and meeting of any pre-conditions;
  - Additional 20% quarterly payments will be released within 30 days of the 1st April, 1st July, 1st Oct and 1st Jan following receipt by MEH of ongoing timeline monthly reporting and maintaining 80% of their delivery profile provided in the Development Plan.
- 3.5. The amount of the Grant shall not be increased in the event of any overspend by the Council.
- 3.6. Any unspent Grant monies shall be returned to MEH within 25 calendar days of the end of the Grant Period unless otherwise agreed between the parties.
- 3.7. A full breakdown of funding need and allocation between Housing and General Fund will be ascertained as part of the Development Plan.
- 3.8. There is sufficient funding in the RBC Housing Capital Budget 2022-23 to provide match funding for RBC social housing properties.

**4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The general power of competence in s1 of the Localism Act 2011 empowers the council to undertake such a project.

## Executive Committee 8<sup>th</sup> February 2021

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- 4.2 The Grant is part of a capital funding scheme distribution by way of Section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003. The Grant must therefore be used in line with Section 11 of the Local Government Act 2003 and any regulations or subsidiary legislation made under that Section.
- 4.3 An existing OJEU compliant framework contract between Redditch Borough Council and Surefire Management Services will be used to procure delivery of the works.
- 4.4 A legal review of the Grant Conditions will be undertaken prior to acceptance.

### 5. STRATEGIC PURPOSES - IMPLICATIONS

#### Relevant Strategic Purposes

- 5.1 The funding aligns as follows:
- **Finding somewhere to live:** improving housing stock
  - **Living independent, active & healthy lives:** healthier home environments
  - **Aspirations, work & financial independence:** addressing fuel poverty
  - **Communities which are safe, well maintained & green:** reducing carbon emissions

#### Climate Change Implications

- 5.2 This funding is specifically to reduce energy consumption with an emphasis on decarbonisation, so is key for addressing Climate Change.

### 6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

#### Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.1. Allocation of the funding will be based on criteria set by BEIS and will not be based on personal characteristics other than related to income.
- 6.2. Equality and Diversity considerations particularly in relation to accessibility will be included in all aspects of the project, with the Policy Team consulted as necessary.

**Executive Committee 8<sup>th</sup> February 2021****Operational Implications**

- 6.4. The Council must submit a Development Plan for their project to MEH
- to MEH by 28<sup>th</sup> February 2022.
  - The Development Plan must be submitted in accordance with the Midlands Energy Hub's Guidance for Local Authorities and BEIS schemes guidance:  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/993972/sustainable-warmth-competition-guidance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/993972/sustainable-warmth-competition-guidance.pdf)
- 6.5 MEH have appointed local energy advice agency Act on Energy to deliver the 'customer journey' and all referrals will be directed to them.
- 6.6 As part of the Development Plan, the Council will be responsible for carrying out or arranging for the reasonable ongoing due diligence, controlling, monitoring, reporting, as well as managing any specific cases of suspected or identified fraud.
- 6.7 Capacity for this within the Council is extremely limited, so the intention is to use the administration funding to secure external support e.g. from Worcestershire County Council, otherwise the project would unlikely to be able to go ahead.
- 6.8 To ensure sufficient technical expertise, appropriately qualified and experienced Retrofit Assessors, Coordinators and Designers will be procured, either using the existing SMS framework contract or using the MEH Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS).

**7. RISK MANAGEMENT**

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Effect</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
No funding	Benefits not realised.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accept funding</li> </ul>
Timescales - deadlines not met	Funding not accessed or needs to be returned.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secure adequate capacity.</li> <li>• Regular monitoring of spend.</li> <li>• Close communication with Midlands Energy Hub regarding potential delays and any need for reallocation.</li> <li>• Finance and legal to review Grant Conditions regarding any risks related to returning funding.</li> </ul>

**Executive Committee 8<sup>th</sup> February 2021**

Covid19	Transmission and resultant harm, impact on timescales.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Covid-secure practices.</li> <li>• Health and Safety involvement in project planning.</li> </ul>
Insufficient experience of low carbon technologies	Measures underperform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Procure suitably qualified and experienced retrofit assessors, coordinators and designers</li> </ul>

**8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Background papers:

- MEH Green Homes Grants Sustainable Warmth – Grant Letter Redditch

**9. REPORT SIGN OFF**

<b>Department</b>	<b>Name and Job Title</b>	<b>Date</b>
Portfolio Holder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cllr Craig Warhurst Portfolio Holder for Housing and Procurement</li> <li>• Cllr Anthony Lovell Portfolio Holder for Climate Change</li> </ul>	25/1/2022
Lead Director / Head of Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Judith Willis Head of Community &amp; Housing Services</li> <li>• Guy Revans Head of Environmental and Housing Property Services</li> </ul>	20/1/2022
Financial Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• James Howse Executive Director of Resources</li> <li>• Chris Forrester Head of Finance and Customer Services</li> </ul>	25/1/2022

**Executive Committee 8<sup>th</sup> February 2021**

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Legal Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Clare Flanagan Principal Solicitor</li></ul>	20/1/2022
Policy Team	n/a	
Climate Change Officer	Kath Manning Climate Change Officer	Report author

**Executive Committee**25<sup>th</sup> January 2022**THE COUNCIL'S 2022/23 BUDGET AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN FOR 2022/23 TO 2024/25 - DRAFT**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Mike Rouse
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Chris Forrester
Report Author	Name: Chris Forrester Job Title: Head of Service email: chris.forrester@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk
Wards Affected	N/A
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	N/A
Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)	All
Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	
This report contains exempt information as defined in Paragraph(s) of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, as amended	

**1. RECOMMENDATIONS****1.1 The Executive Committee RECOMMEND that Full Council approve: -****1) the overall net general fund revenue budgets (as set out in Section 4.9) of:**

2022/23: £10.520m  
2023/24: £10.289m  
2024/25: £10.428m

**2) the unavoidable costs as attached at Appendix 1:**

2022/23: £0.427m  
2023/24: £0.140m  
2024/25: £0.134m

**3) the Revenue Bids as attached at Appendix 2:**

2022/23: £0.191m  
2023/24: £0.150m  
2024/25: £0.128m

**4) the Identified Savings as attached at Appendix 3:**

2022/23: £0.305m  
2023/24: £0.327m  
2024/25: £0.327m

**Executive Committee**25<sup>th</sup> January 2022

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- 5) an increase of the Council Tax per Band D equivalent of £5 for 2022/23.
- 6) the transfer from General Fund Balances of £0.282m for 2022/23.
- 7) the planned reallocation of £0.238m from Earmarked reserves to General Fund Balances as set out at Appendix 5.
- 8) the General Fund capital programme as at Appendix 4 of:

2022/23:	£4.257m
2023/24:	£2.407m
2024/25:	£1.930m
- 9) the Housing Revenue Account Budget at Appendix 6 of:

2022/23:	£25.390m
2023/24:	£25.074m
2024/25:	£25.545m
- 10) the Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme at Appendix 7 of:

2022/23:	£14.180m
2023/24:	£12.580m
2024/25:	£12.580m

**1.2 And that the Executive Committee ask the Council to note**

- 1) the 2020/21 Capital Outturn as reported at Appendix 9.
- 2) The Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Opinion on Estimates and Reserve Levels as reported in Appendix 8.



**Executive Committee**25<sup>th</sup> January 2022

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**2. BACKGROUND****Purpose**

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to set the Council's (General Fund) Revenue and Capital Budget for 2022/23, as well as the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for the period 2022/23 to 2024/25. Also, to set the Housing Revenue Account Budget (Capital and Revenue) for 2022/23.
- 2.2 The Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) provides the framework within which the revenue and capital spending decisions can be made.
- 2.3 The Strategic Purposes that drive the financial considerations are:
- Run and grow successful business
  - Finding somewhere to live
  - Aspiration, work & financial independence
  - Living independent, active & healthy lives
  - Communities which are safe, well maintained & green
- 2.4 This report includes recommendations to Council to enable a balanced budget to be set for 2022/23 and the proposed Council Tax for 2022/23. The recommendations will then be presented to Council on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2022 together with the resolutions once we have received all the precepting bodies Council Tax calculations.

**Financial Context**

- 2.5 The Council faces a challenging financial context having:
- i) previously received a statutory recommendation from its external auditors under section 24 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 in relation to its financial position (noting that due to the positive steps taken by the Council this recommendation has not been re-issued by the external auditor in the past year);
  - ii) identified (but still needs to deliver) significant savings over the medium term;
  - iii) reserve balances (General and HRA) only marginally above minimum levels; and
  - iv) high levels of planning uncertainty with regards to the levels of available funding in coming years

**Executive Committee**25<sup>th</sup> January 2022

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- 2.6 The Council therefore needs to continue to carefully consider how it prioritises resources and balances budgets in a sustainable and affordable way, as part of this (and future) budget round(s).
- 2.7 Members and officers have therefore reviewed the services provided by the Council over the last 6 months to consider the levels of funding available to the Council and identified where potential savings can be made or additional income generated.
- 2.8 The Budget Scrutiny working group as established by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has met on a regular basis to review budget related issues (including reports on underlying risks, pressures and uncertainties as well as income matters and fees and charges opportunities).

**Unprecedented Levels of Uncertainty**

- 2.9 It should be noted that the future of the system of local government finance remains uncertain. The government has committed to re-assess the baseline need for spend in each local authority (through its 'Fair Funding review'). This has been pushed back (again) to 2023/24 at the earliest - but is still expected to happen. This review will have a significant impact on the government's calculation of the Settlement Funding Assessment for (and therefore the amount of funding available to) this council - and remains therefore a significant risk.
- 2.10 It also remains uncertain as to what the Government's plans are with regards to the system of business rates - including the share of business rates retained locally.
- 2.11 A one-year provisional Local Government Finance Settlement was announced on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2021 and has been incorporated into this report. It remains unclear as to when Government will announce more funding certainty through a multi-year financial settlement for Local Government.
- 2.12 Furthermore, the short, medium and long term impact of the Covid- 19 pandemic and UK's exit from the European Union (on residents, the economy and the state of national and local government finance) remains uncertain.
- 2.13 Taken together therefore (the outcome of the fair funding review, the future of business rates and the local government financial settlement, COVID-19, Brexit and the state of the local and national economy) represents a challenging context within which to set the budget and MTFP - one characterised by an unprecedented level of uncertainty.

**Executive Committee**25<sup>th</sup> January 2022

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**3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

3.1 In order to clearly explain the basis of the Budget proposals this report (which sets out all financial implications) will be structured as follows:

**4) General Fund Revenue****i. The Prior Year MTFP 2021/22 – 2023/24**

*This section which will summarise the previous Council approved MTFP as a reminder of the previously approved starting point.*

**ii. Updated Forecast Outturn Position for 2021/22**

*This section will update the starting revenue position for 21/22 and therefore update the opening balances for 22/23.*

**iii. The 22/23 Budget and (updated) MTFP for the period 22/23 – 24/25**

*This section will set out the updated Budget and MTFP forecast for approval.*

**iv. The Updated MTFP and General Fund Forecasts**

*This section will summarise the impact of the updated 22/23 Budget and MTFP forecast on the Council's General Fund balance position over the medium term.*

**v. Reconciling the current updated MTFP to the Feb 2021 Approved MTFP**

*This section will analyse and explain the movements from the previous approved Budget and MTFP to the updated 22/23 Budget and MTFP.*

**vi. Council Tax increase****vii. Covid General Grant**

*This section summarises the position on general Covid grant funding received by the Council.*

**viii. Reallocation of Earmarked Reserves to General Fund**

**Executive Committee**25<sup>th</sup> January 2022

*This section sets out those reserves previously earmarked for specific purposes that can be release back to the General Fund Reserve.*

- 5) **Collection Fund and Precepts**
- 6) **Housing Revenue Account**
- 7) **Capital Programme**

**4. GENERAL FUND REVENUE****The Prior Year MTFP 2021/22 – 2023/24 (approved February 2021)**

- 4.1 The Council's MTFP is updated annually and was previously approved for the three year period 2021/22 to 2024/25 by full Council in February 2021.
- 4.2 The following table sets out what, at that point (Feb 2021) the MTFP forecast in terms of annual budget deficits and opening and closing general fund balances.

**Table 1: The Prior Year MTFP and General Fund Balance Forecasts**

<b>General Fund</b>	<b>21/22</b>	<b>22/23</b>	<b>23/24</b>
	<b>£000's</b>	<b>£000's</b>	<b>£000's</b>
Opening Balance	1,831	1,875	1,613
Annual (Deficit) / Surplus	44	-261	-761
<b>Closing Balance</b>	<b>1,875</b>	<b>1,613</b>	<b>852</b>

- 4.3 Table 1 shows that the previously (Feb 2021) approved MTFP predicted a surplus of £44k in 2021/22. The Council was expected to move to an in-year deficit position of £0.261 million in 2022/23 and £0.761 million in 2023/24.
- 4.4 Annual deficits require the Council to utilise its General Reserve balances. As at February 2021, the MTFP, based on the annual deficits forecast above, showed that the Council's General Fund Balances would reduce from £1.831 million a 1st April 2021 to £0.852 million at 31st March 2024.

**Executive Committee**25<sup>th</sup> January 2022

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Updated Forecast Outturn Position for 2021/22

- 4.5 Since the previous MTFP in February 2021, the final outturn position for 2020/21 allowed General Fund reserves of £2.2m to be carried forward as at 1 April 2021. This actual position represented a £0.374 million increase on the value assumed when the MTFP was approved in Feb 2021.
- 4.6 The outturn position for this current year (2021/22) is forecast to break even against budget (of a £0.044m surplus as approved by Council back in February 2021) after allocation of Covid Grant (but before any transfers from Earmarked Reserves).

**The 22/23 Budget and (updated) MTFP for the period 22/23 – 24/25**

- 4.7 The MTFP has been updated for the period 2022/23 to 2024/25 to model the impact of changes in assumptions, budgetary pressures, reductions in funding and savings.
- 4.8 The 22/23 Budget and updated MTFP is summarised (in terms of its annual revenue and general fund forecasts) for the period 2022/23 to 2024/25 in the table below:
- 4.9 The proposed budget is summarised in the table below

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**Executive Committee**25<sup>th</sup> January 2022

Table 2: The Updated MTFP and Annual Revenue Budgets

	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
	£000	£000	£000
<b>Departmental base budget</b>	10,064	10,051	10,132
Incremental Progression	144	275	361
Unavoidable Pressures	427	140	134
Revenue Bids/Revenue impact of capital bids	191	150	128
Savings and Additional income	-305	-327	-327
Changes in Specific Grant/Funding Movements	0	0	0
<b>Net Revenue Budget Requirement</b>	<b>10,520</b>	<b>10,289</b>	<b>10,428</b>
<b>FINANCING</b>			
Reserve release	-100	0	0
Lower Tier Services Grant	-100	0	0
Business Rates Net Position	-2,985	-2,985	-2,985
Council Tax	-6,747	-6,941	-7,031
Collection Fund Deficit (Council Tax)	-180	0	
New Homes Bonus	-330	0	
Investment Income	-673	-673	-673
MRP (Principal)	959	1,098	1,046
Interest payable	218	220	218
Discount on advanced pension payment	-301	-60	-170
<b>Funding Total</b>	<b>-10,238</b>	<b>-9,341</b>	<b>-9,595</b>
<b>General Balances</b>	<b>2022-23</b>	<b>2023-24</b>	<b>2024-25</b>
	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
Estimated opening balances 22/23 (projected)	2,292	2,010	1,061
Contribution (from) / to General Balances	-282	-949	-833
<b>Closing Balances</b>	<b>2,010</b>	<b>1,061</b>	<b>228</b>

*Explanatory Notes re Table 2*

- 1) All Service Teams / Departments have a base budget which includes staff budgets.
- 2) Staff budgets are subject to incremental progression as staff become more experienced within graded posts.
- 3) A number of budget pressures that have been deemed "unavoidable" and are further analysed in this report.
- 4) Budget setting includes a 'bidding process' for additional resources – set out below.
- 5) Budget setting includes the identification of savings and income – set out below.
- 6) Specific grant funding, where confirmed, is set against services as appropriate.
- 7) Financing includes an element of planned reserve usage.
- 8) The Council receives a 'Lower Tier' grant from Central Government.
- 9) The Council retains an element of its business rates receipts to fund services.
- 10) The Council retains its own element of council tax bills (it collects for all precepting authorities). The budget includes an increase of £5 (band D) - the maximum allowable without a referendum.
- 11) A element of Collection Fund surplus / deficit impacts on the Council General Fund.
- 12) New Homes Bonus has been confirmed by Central Government.
- 13) The Council earns interest on investment balances.
- 14) Minimum Revenue Provision costs reflect capital borrowing / repayment costs.
- 15) Borrowing costs based on forecast interest rates.

**Executive Committee**25<sup>th</sup> January 2022

16) *The Council has benefitted financially from paying some of its Pension commitments calculated at the last Actuarial Review in one lump sum (to Worcestershire Local Government Pension Fund).*

- 4.10 The above table sets out how the Council's expenditure profile will be met by a combination of external funding and use of reserves over the period.
- 4.11 The table also shows that the General Reserve Balance is forecast to remain above minimum levels (currently set at £1.5m) until partway through the 23/24 financial year.

**Analysis of key changes to the MTFP – Forecast General Fund Balances**

- 4.12 The following table sets out how the draft MTFP (as summarised in Section 4.9) compares to the previous MTFP in terms of forecast closing general fund balances:
- 4.13 Table 3: The Updated (versus Previous) MTFP and General Fund Forecasts

<b>General Fund Closing Balance</b>	<b>21/22 £000's</b>	<b>22/23 £000's</b>	<b>23/24 £000's</b>	<b>24/25 £000's</b>
<b>Previous</b>	1,875	1,613	852	N/A
<b>Updated</b>	2,292	2,010	1,061	228

*Note: It should be noted that the analysis in Table 3 excludes the £0.238 million or Earmarked Reserves provisionally identified for release back to the General Fund Reserve at the end of the current 21/22 year within Appendix 5.*

- 4.14 Table 3 above shows that the 2021/22 General Fund closing position is now forecast to be improved (£2.292 million as opposed to £1.875 million) than that forecast when the budget was approved in Feb 2021. This is due to a more favourable outturn for 2020/21 than anticipated at February 2021 (when the budget was set). Reasons for this include lower than anticipated borrowing costs and some Covid related savings particularly on premises costs.
- 4.15 The table demonstrates that the updated MTFP forecasts a General Fund Balance of £2.01 million at the end of 2022/23 which remains above minimum set levels of £1.5 million.
- 4.16 Table 3 also shows that the General Fund is now forecast to total £1.061 million at the end of 2023/24 (compared to £0.852 million in the previous MTFP) falling below minimum adequate levels (which have been set at £1.5 million) during that year. Savings, increased income levels,

**Executive Committee**25<sup>th</sup> January 2022

additional government resources or a favourable Fair Funding Review will therefore be necessary to ensure above minimum levels of reserves over the medium term. Further action is therefore needed as a matter of urgency.

**Reconciling the current updated MTFP to the Feb 2021 Approved MTFP**

4.17 Changes need to be made to the Council's budget and MTFP to keep them up to date and robust. In order to make these changes as transparent as possible these changes have been summarised in Table 4 below.

4.18 Table 4: Reconciliation of Previous and Updated MTFP - Adjustments made to the Annual Budget Forecasts

	<b>22/23</b>	<b>23/24</b>
	<b>£000s</b>	<b>£000s</b>
<b>Previous Forecast Deficit</b>	<b>261</b>	<b>761</b>
+ Corrections and Assumption changes	135	225
+ Pressures	427	140
+ Funding impact	-436	0
+ Resource Planning and Prioritisation (RPP)	-105	-177
<b>= Updated Forecast Surplus / Deficit</b>	<b>282</b>	<b>949</b>

4.19 The above summary shows that the annual budget deficits (before appropriation of General Fund Balances or General Covid Grant) are now forecast at £282k for 2022/23 (previously £0.261m), and £949k for 23/24 (previously £0.761m).

4.20 In order to better explain what is driving these changes in budget forecasts, this summary is further explained and analysed below:

Corrections and Assumption changes (£135k in 22/23)

4.21 All budgets include estimates and assumptions. Eg. Inflation and interest rates, Government grants, council tax base and collection rates. These are updated annually.

4.22 One of the outcomes of budgetary control, closedown and setting procedures is also the identification of inaccuracies. There are a large number of such amendments which are individually usually small. The larger factors to the overall changes here include:



**Executive Committee**25<sup>th</sup> January 2022

- Inflation. One of the pressures to the budget is general inflation on utility costs along with additional costs in relation to pay. The costs relating to pay inflation are above that initially anticipated. The original budget included a 1% pay award however the best estimate is now 2% which adds an additional pressure of circa £80k pa. Other pressures have been contained within budgets where possible.
- MRP, interest costs and investment income budgets lines have all been reviewed and reduced compared to prior year forecasts. These changes are due to a review of the capital programme to reflect more accurately planned spend. This reduces significantly MRP and borrowing costs – but also investment income (which has also been revised to take account of the short-term focus on delivering the Towns Fund rather than alternative strategic investments). The overall net impact is therefore minimal.

**Pressures**

4.23 Expenditure (and income) budgets required to deliver previously approved strategies and plans are subject to a multitude of market forces, sector issues, demographics and other matters.

- **Unavoidable Costs (£427k in 22/23).** When proposing the budget officers have also identified a number of budget pressures that have been deemed “unavoidable”. These unavoidable pressures include the ongoing effects of pressures identified during 2021/22 together with any issues that have been raised as fundamental to maintaining service provision as part of the budget process. In addition, income shortfalls that cannot be managed by improved marketing or price increases have been addressed during the budget planning.
- Unavoidable pressures include a £319k pressure specifically relating to Rubicon Leisure. This is the best and latest estimate (based on meetings with senior Rubicon management) of the impact of Covid-19 on footfall and therefore the financial position of Rubicon (and therefore our management fee). While this is considerably lower than annual additional cost estimated this time last year (of up to circa £1.2m additional), it remains a pressure that will only be covered by remaining Covid General Fund grant funding in the short term.

**Resource Planning and Prioritisation (RPP):**

4.24 RPP is the outcome of the steps taken to identify options to do things differently and more efficiently, to identify savings but also required areas of investment. It is the culmination of a ‘check and challenge’ process with regards to the Council’s budgets, led by the Corporate Management

**Executive Committee**25<sup>th</sup> January 2022

Team and presented to Cabinet (and ultimately full Council). It is a critical element of the Council operating within available resources.

- **Bids (£190k in 22/23).** In addition to the unavoidable pressure's revenue bids have been identified and included at Appendix 2. Bids relate to new funding requests made by officers to improve service delivery or to realise future efficiencies. Revenue 'bids' included in these budget proposals include developments relating to ICT (re maintaining core digital and cyber security related infrastructure) and supporting greater agile work. Work is also planned in relation to lower carbon emissions which requires investment. Additional capacity is also required for Business Improvement activity.
- **Identified Savings/additional income (£304k in 22/23).** A number of savings have been identified which are set out in Appendix 3. These relate to a variety of areas and relate to delivering efficiencies (eg cutting paper and print costs and reduced insurance costs), additional income (eg bulky waste and lifeline), and investigating and implementing alternative arrangements (eg cash payments alternatives).

**Funding Impact (£436k in 22/23)**

4.25 The main factors to the changes related to funding include:

- **Lower Tier Services Grant (£0.1m).** The finance settlement in December announced we are due to receive a Lower Tier Services Grant for £0.1million in 2022/23 not previously budgeted for. This grant is intended to compensate those local authorities whose core spending power did not increase in the finance settlement.
- **New Homes Bonus (NHB) (£0.121m).** The amount of NHB for 2022/23 has been confirmed as £0.3 million which is £121k more than anticipated in the MTFP. This is due to the Government funding an additional year of New Homes Bonus.
- The Councils share of the **Collection Fund surplus is £182k** which was not budgeted for previously.

**Council Tax Increase**

4.26 As part of the Financial Settlement the Council can increase Council Tax by up to 2% or £5 whichever is higher without the need for a referendum. These budget proposals include £5 increase for 2022/23 (Band D). The Council Tax relating to the Councils services will rise for Band D from

**Executive Committee**25<sup>th</sup> January 2022

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£249.15 to £254.15. This is unchanged from the previous approved MTFP.

**Covid General Grant**

- 4.29 In recognition of this negative impact on the Council's resources (and particularly for councils reduced income levels achievable for car parks and Leisure), the Council was awarded £1.952 million of General Covid-19 Grant across a number of tranches received in 2020/21 and the early part of 2021/22.
- 4.30 After allocating this funds against Covid related pressures in 20/21 some £1.077m of this grant was carried forward to the current financial year (ie 21/22). It is forecast that £292k of this General Covid Grant will be carried forward at 31/3/2022 (after funding the negative impact on 21/22 Budgets). This will be available (alongside General Fund balances) to mitigate pressures on budgets – at least in the short term.
- 4.31 It must however be emphasised that this funding is not expected to be a recurring income stream to the Council. Further work must therefore be done to reduce the gap between spend and income on a sustainable and ongoing basis.

**Reallocation of Earmarked Reserves to General Fund**

- 4.32 A review has been undertaken of reserves previously earmarked for specific purposes. This has identified £0.238 million that can provisionally be released back to the General Fund Reserve. See Appendix 5.

**5. COLLECTION FUND AND PRECEPTS**

- 5.1 The anticipated collection fund surplus of £1.455m (prior year £478k), will be distributed amongst the major preceptors using the prescribed formulae. The Councils share of the surplus as a one-off sum is £182k (prior year £63k).
- 5.2 The precepts from Worcestershire County Council, Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority and the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner are due to set their precepts in the week commencing 8<sup>th</sup> February. This will enable the Council to set the Council Tax on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2022. The precepting bodies Council Tax requirements will be included in the formal resolutions which will be presented to Executive and Council on 21<sup>st</sup> February.

**Executive Committee**25<sup>th</sup> January 2022

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**6. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT**

- 6.1 The Housing Revenue Account is a ring-fenced account holding transactions relating to Council dwellings. It is a separate account within the General Fund but receives income from Council rents.
- 6.2 For the four financial years up to and including 2019/20 there has been a national requirement to reduce rents by 1% per annum and this has put severe pressure on the housing revenue account. From 2020/21 rents were able to increase by the consumer price index plus 1%. The rent increase for 2021/22 was approved by the Executive on 11<sup>th</sup> January 2022.
- 6.3 Appendix 6 provides a summary of the Housing Revenue Account including the latest forecast for 2021/22. It is estimated we will be in a surplus position for the next three years and therefore returning to earmarked reserves which will enable the HRA to fulfil its forecasted acquisitions and developments.
- 6.4 Appendix 7 provides the HRA Capital Programme.

**7 CAPITAL PROGRAMME**

- 7.1 The (Non HRA) Capital Programme has also been updated including proposed new bids required to deliver services to the community. These are included in the proposed Capital Programme at Appendix 4. The borrowing costs have been factored into the revenue budget for the financial plan. It should be noted that a housekeeping review of the Capital Programme has been recently undertaken in order to challenge the deliverability (and timing) of some schemes which has resulted in some rationalisation.

**8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 As part of the budget and the Council Tax approval process, the Council is required by the Local Government Finance Act 1992 to make specific calculations and decisions in approving a balanced budget for the following financial year and setting the Council Tax Level. These will be included in the resolutions and presented to Executive and Council on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2022.
- 8.2 The Council has a legal obligation to set a balanced budget (s32 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992). The amount of the budget requirement must be sufficient to meet the Council's budget commitments and ensure a balanced budget. The 2022/23 budget requirement must leave the Council with adequate financial reserves.

**Executive Committee**25<sup>th</sup> January 2022

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8.3 A lawful Council Tax is required to be made on or before 11 March 2022.

8.4 Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 requires the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) to report to the Council the robustness of estimates included in the budget and the adequacy of the reserves when it is making the statutory calculations required to determine its Council Tax or precept.

**9. STRATEGIC PURPOSES - IMPLICATIONS****Relevant Strategic Purpose**

9.1 The Strategic purposes are included in the Council's corporate plan and guides the Council's approach to budget making ensuring we focus on the issues and what are most important for the borough and our communities. Delivering against all our Strategic Purposes is therefore integrated within our MTFP.

**Climate Change Implications**

9.2 No direct implications identified.

**10. OTHER IMPLICATIONS****Equalities and Diversity Implications**

10.1 No direct implications identified.

**Operational Implications**

10.2 The MTFP will enable services to be maintained.

**11. RISK MANAGEMENT**

11.1 The risks posed by the challenging financial context and the unprecedented levels of uncertainty (re the outcome of the fair funding review, the future of business rates and the local government financial settlement, COVID-19, Brexit and the state of the local and national economy) with regard to the budget have been set out within Section 2 as background to this report.

11.2 Risks prevalent in this area also include:

- Reductions in government funding leading to a reduction in the level of services delivered to the public

**Executive Committee**25<sup>th</sup> January 2022

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- Reductions in business rates income as a result of appeals or reduction in the rateable value leading to a lower level of income for the Council.
  - Identification of sufficient and ongoing revenue savings to deliver a balanced budget.
  - Allocation of sufficient resources to meet the needs of service delivery and the Councils priorities.
  - Maintain adequate revenue and capital balances as identified in the MTFP to ensure financial stability.
- 11.3 This budget (and the processes underpinning it including the check and challenge of the Resource Planning and Prioritisation and 'bidding' processes, revisiting all budget assumptions and the identification of income and savings) provides a framework for managing and mitigating this risk.
- 11.4 In addition, Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 requires the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) to report to the Council the robustness of estimates included in the budget and the adequacy of the reserves when it is making the statutory calculations required to determine its Council Tax or precept. This is set out in full within Appendix 8.

**12. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- Appendix 1 - Unavoidable costs
- Appendix 2 - Revenue Bids
- Appendix 3 - Identified savings
- Appendix 4 - Proposed Capital programme
- Appendix 5 - Earmarked Reserves
- Appendix 6 - Housing Revenue Account Budget 2021/22 and MTFP to 2023/24
- Appendix 7 - Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme 2021/22 to 2023/24
- Appendix 8 - Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Opinion on the Estimate Process and Reserve Levels.
- Appendix 9 – Capital Outturn Position

**Executive Committee**25<sup>th</sup> January 2022**13. REPORT SIGN OFF**

<b>Department</b>	<b>Name and Job Title</b>	<b>Date</b>
Portfolio Holder	Councillor Mike Rouse	
Lead Director / Head of Service	James Howse, Exec Director of Resources (S151 Officer)	
Financial Services	Chris Forrester, Head of Finance and Customer Services	
Legal Services		
Policy Team (if equalities implications apply)		
Climate Change Officer (if climate change implications apply)		

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**UNAVOIDABLE PRESSURES - RBC**

Department	Strategic Purpose	Description of Pressure	2022-23 £'000	2023-24 £'000	2024-25 £'000	2025-26 £'000	Comments
Business Improvement	Enabling the Authority	Addition of one Business Improvement Advisor funded by HRA	40	40	40	40	24/25 and 25/26 to be funded from savings made from Advisors & service outcomes
Building Control	Communities which are safe well maintained and green	New dangerous structures budget line	1	1	1	1	Subsequent years TBC subject to annual %age share calculation
Development Control	Communities which are safe well maintained and green	Overspend on advertising and publicity	1	0	0	0	
ICT	Enabling the Authority	Idox Uniform Application (Extension of contract)	4	4	4	4	Required to extend the existing contract for another 5 years.
ICT	Enabling the Authority	Orb Intranet Upgrade and migrate to Hybrid Cloud	5	0	0	0	Required to update our Intranet Site (The Orb) onto a supported version and enable cyber security of the software.
ICT	Enabling the Authority	Power Bi	3	0	0	0	This is to provide additional licenses required for the Corporate Dashboard
Reg Client	Communities which are safe, well maintained and green	Additional WRS Hosting Charges	6	6	6	6	Additional WRS Hosting Charges - Agreed at WRS Board Nov 21 Y:\2022-23 Financial Year\TB Workings\Reg Client\Published WRS Board Minutes 18th Nov 2021.pdf
Democratic Services	Enabling the Authority	Member Remuneration - recommendation from Independent Remuneration Panel	27	27	27	27	1. The increase is twofold: Firstly to correct a budgetary error. The budget was increased in 2021/22 to cover allowances in that year but not subsequent years. This represents £14,099 of the pressure. Secondly this is, as stated, a recommendation from the IRP (plus secondary SRAs that the Council uses) which Council must pay regard to. 2. Council may decide on a different amount, if this is the case it will be fed into the budget in due course.
Bereavement Services	Communities which are safe, well maintained and green	Cremator Reline on both machines	0	50	50	0	Each cremator needs a full reline every five years at a cost of circa 50k
Environmental Services	Communities which are Safe, Well Maintained and Green	Agency budget - covid & Other Sickness affecting front line staff	5	0	0	0	
Leisure - Events	Living independent, active & healthy lives	Additional funding required for Morton Stanley Music festival	15	10	5	0	
Housing - home support private sector	Finding somewhere to live	Income no longer to be received due to service no longer offered	2	2	2	2	old service now obsolete and not offered.
Rubicon Client Services	Living independent, active & healthy lives	Support for Rubicon Leisure Company	319	0	0	0	
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>427</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>80</b>	

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**NEW REVENUE BIDS - RBC**

Appendix 2

Department	Strategic Purpose	Description of revenue bid	2022-23 £'000	2023-24 £'000	2024-25 £'000	2025-26 £'000
ICT	Enabling the Authority	Internet & Customer Portal	59	29	29	29
ICT	Enabling the Authority	Members 2nd ICT Support Person	21	21	0	0
ICT	Enabling the Authority	Cyber Security Post	21	21	21	21
Property Services	Building Maintenance	Rubicon leisure , RBC funding responsibility	78	78	78	78
Environmental Services	Communities which are safe, well maintained and green	We are currently looking to procure the services of a consultant who could offer us the detailed advice needed to gradually change our fleet to Low Carbon emmision vehicles.	12	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>190</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>128</b>

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## SAVINGS & ADDITIONAL INCOME - RBC

Appendix 3

Department	Strategic Purpose	Description of saving	2022-23 £'000	2023-24 £'000	2024-25 £'000	2025-26 £'000
Business Transformation	Enabling of the Authority	Addition of one Business Improvement Advisor funded by HRA	-40	-40	-40	-40
Corporate Administration / Central Post Opening	Enabling of the Authority	Non recruitment to vacancy post	-30	-30	-31	-31
Corporate Administration / Central Post Opening	Enabling of the Authority	Non recruitment to vacancy post	-3	-3	-3	-3
Corporate Administration / Central Post Opening	Enabling of the Authority	Non recruitment to vacancy post	-6	-6	-6	-6
Corporate Administration / Central Post Opening	Enabling of the Authority	Non recruitment to vacancy post	19	19	20	20
Grants	Enabling the Authority	Salary saving on Grants Officer post by reducing hours in RBC.	-4	-4	-4	-4
Environmental Services	Communities which are Safe, Well Maintained and Green	Savings on Agency salary	-15	-15	-15	-15
Bereavement Services	Communities which are Safe, Well Maintained and Green	Additional Income from creamtions	-18	0	0	0
Environmental Services	Communities which are Safe, Well Maintained and Green	Savings from vacant post	-27	-27	-27	-27
Environmental Services	Communities which are Safe, Well Maintained and Green	Bulky waste income	-10	-10	-10	-10
Democratic Services	Enabling the Authority	Services restructure	-5	-5	-5	-5
Democratic Services	Enabling the Authority	Services restructure - shared services recharge	3	3	3	3
Lifeline	Living independent, active & healthy lives	Future income generation options	-20	-20	-20	-20
Customer Services	Enabling the Authority	Alternative cash payments	0	-40	-40	-40
Financial services	Enabling of the Authority	Life insurance scheme saving	-35	-35	-35	-35
Corporate Administration / Central Post Opening	Enabling of the Authority	Reduction in consumables eg paper and reduction of MFDs in print contract	-14	-14	-14	-14

Page 47

Agenda Item 6

Department	Strategic Purpose	Description of saving	2022-23 £'000	2023-24 £'000	2024-25 £'000	2025-26 £'000
Business Development - Business	Run and grow successful business	Service redelivery	-100	-100	-100	-100
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>-304</b>	<b>-326</b>	<b>-326</b>	<b>-327</b>

Description	Department	Strategic purpose	2022/23 Total £	2023/24 Total £	2024/25 Total £
Cisco Network Update	Business Transformation and Organisational Development	Enabling the Authority	53,561	5,463	0
Server Replacement Est(Exact known Q2 2022)	Business Transformation and Organisational Development	Enabling the Authority	83,250	2,000	177,500
Laptop Refresh	Business Transformation and Organisational Development	Enabling the Authority	5,000	25,000	150,000
Home Repairs Assistance	Community & Housing GF Services	Living independent, active & healthy lives	40,000	40,000	40,000
Disabled Facilities Grant	Community & Housing GF Services	Living independent, active & healthy lives	839,000	839,000	839,000
HMO Grants	Community & Housing GF Services	Living independent, active & healthy lives	25,000	25,000	25,000
Energy & Efficiency Installs.	Community & Housing GF Services	Living independent, active & healthy lives	110,000	0	0
New Digital Service	Community & Housing GF Services	Living independent, active & healthy lives	50,502	50,502	0
Improved Parking Scheme ( includes locality funding)	Environmental Services	Living independent, active & healthy lives	400,000	0	0
Vehicle replacement	Environmental Services	Communities which are safe, well maintained and green	1,504,000	1,195,000	698,000
purchase a new ride on Scag Tiger Cat mower to support The Strategic Routes and Core Team	Environmental Services	Communities which are safe, well maintained and green	16,000	0	0
Wheellie Bin purchase	Environmental Services	Communities which are safe, well maintained and green	85,000	0	0
Car Park Maintenance	Environmental Services	Communities which are safe, well maintained & green	25,000	0	0
Ipsley Church Lane Cemetery	Environmental Services	Communities which are safe, well maintained and green	195,000	125,000	0
Provide the Crossgate Depot site with a new and Compliant Deisel Fuel installation	Environmental Services	Communities which are safe, well maintained and green	56,000	0	0
Public Building	Finance & Customer Services	Run & Grow a successful business	250,000	0	0
GF Asbestos	Finance & Customer Services	Run and grow a successful business	40,000	0	0
Fire compartmentation works in Corporate buildings	Legal, Democratic and Property Services	Enabling the Authority	120,000	100,000	0
Widen access road to Arrow Valley Country park	Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	Communities which are safe, well maintained and green	25,000	0	0
Forge Mill and Bordelsey Open Space Improvements	Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	Communities which are safe , well maintained and green	18,684	0	0
Arrow Valley Entrance Improvements 18/10149 Aldi/Lidle	Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	Communities which are safe , well maintained and green	10,000	0	0
MUGA at Greenlands Sports Pitches. 2018/169/FUL Land off Green Lane	Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	Living Independent, active and Healthy Lives and Communities which are safe , well maintained and green	137,649	0	0
Play Area I(£26,777.32) and POS (£6055.22) mprovements at Birchfield Road,/Headleass Cross Rec Ground. 2014/311/FUL	Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	Living Independent, active and Healthy Lives and Communities which are safe , well maintained and green	32,833	0	0
Play Area (£26,079.84) and POS (£5,191.82) improvements at Batchley and Brockhill Park. 2014/210/FUL	Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	Living Independent, active and Healthy Lives and Communities which are safe , well maintained and green	32,379	0	0
Play Area improvements at Birchfield Road,/Headless Cross Rec Ground. 17/00737/FUL	Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	Living Independent, active and Healthy Lives and Communities which are safe , well maintained and green	7,575	0	0
Play area (£34,583.39), Open space (£12,001.36) and Sport (£8,516) improvements at Mayfields Park. 11/019/FUL	Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	Living Independent, active and Healthy Lives and Communities which are safe , well maintained and green	55,101	0	0
Play Area and POS improvements at Winyates. 2016/290/FUL	Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	Living Independent, active and Healthy Lives and Communities which are safe , well maintained and green	40,449	0	0
<b>Total current Capital programme</b>			<b>4,256,982</b>	<b>2,406,965</b>	<b>1,929,500</b>

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Description	Balance b/fwd 1/4/2020	C/fwd 31/3/2021	Planned use for 2021/22 Budget	Estimated closing balance 2021/22	Proposed release of reserves from RPP exercise	Planned use for 2022/23 Budget	Comment
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	
<b>GF Earmarked Reserves</b>							
Community Development	(66)	(74)	2	(72)	18	0	To support the costs associated with community projects
Community Safety	(302)	(232)	0	(232)	0	0	External grant funding to be released over a number of years on Community Safety Projects ongoing
Corporate Services	(150)	(159)	0	(159)	0	0	Funding to support potential costs of future service reviews.
Customer Services	0	(93)	0	(93)	0	0	Funding to support potential costs of future service reviews.
Economic Growth Development	(330)	(330)	200	(130)	0	0	To fund the Economic Development opportunities across the Borough
Electoral Services	(44)	(49)	0	(49)	25	0	To support the delivery of individual electoral registration and to set aside a reserve for potential refunds to government
Environmental Services	0	(29)	0	(29)	0	0	To support the costs of the Environmental Services Vehicles
Equipment Replacement	(48)	(26)	0	(26)	26	0	ICT equipment reserve
Financial Services	(132)	(1,285)	150	(1,135)	0	100	Brexit reserve along with a transformational growth reserve and also funds to support the new enterprise system. The balance of the general Covid reserve received in 20-21 also within this figure.
Corporate Financing	(1,997)	(2,833)	350	(2,483)	0	0	The reserve has been created to offset the loss on Business rates collection and appeals in 2019/20.
Housing Benefits Implementation	(269)	(269)	0	(269)	140	0	Specific welfare reform grant received
Housing Support	(746)	(978)	0	(978)	0	0	Government Specific Grant - annual funding
Land charges	(9)	(9)	0	(9)	9	0	To fund potential litigation in relation to Land Charges
Land Drainage	(129)	(129)	0	(129)	0	0	To support costs associated with health and safety issues within the environment
Parks and Open spaces	(8)	(58)	0	(58)	8	0	To fund a review of the local allotments.
Planning	(669)	(520)	0	(520)	0	0	Custom build grant to provide support to the council towards expenditure lawfully incurred in relation to the provision and maintenance of a self-build register. Along with grants for One Public estates, Business Improvement district grant and Town deals grant.
Property	0	(221)	0	(221)	0	0	To fund the costs of repairs and maintenance costs for future years due to closure of sites due to the pandemic
Sports Development	(68)	(51)	0	(51)	0	0	Ringfenced grants for a number of sports development activities to improve Health and Wellbeing in the Borough
Town Centre	(2)	(7)	0	(7)	0	0	To support improvements in the Town Centre High Street
Warmer Homes	(12)	(16)	0	(16)	12	0	To support the costs associated with community projects (repair)
<b>Totals</b>	<b>(4,981)</b>	<b>(7,368)</b>	<b>702</b>	<b>(6,666)</b>	<b>238</b>	<b>100</b>	
<b>HRA Capital Reserve</b>							
Capital Reserve-HRA	(15,259)	(15,259)	0	0	0		Reserve to enable the debt repayment on HRA, and future repairs and maintenance along with support for the Housing Growth Programme.
<b>Totals</b>	<b>(15,259)</b>	<b>(15,259)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	

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## Housing Revenue Account (HRA) 2021/22 to 2025/26

	2021/22	2021/22	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
	Budget	Revised budget	Forecast Outturn	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>INCOME</b>							
Dwelling Rents	23,494	23,494	23,219	24,025	24,420	24,836	25,258
Non-Dwelling Rents	545	545	545	556	567	578	590
Tenants' Charges for Services & Facilities	677	677	678	692	705	719	734
Contributions towards Expenditure	45	45	82	46	47	48	49
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>24,760</b>	<b>24,760</b>	<b>24,524</b>	<b>25,318</b>	<b>25,740</b>	<b>26,181</b>	<b>26,631</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>							
Repairs & Maintenance	6,044	6,044	5,791	6,545	6,097	6,153	6,197
Supervision & Management	8,232	8,232	7,869	8,219	8,260	8,479	8,521
Rent, Rates, Taxes & Other Charges	208	208	85	264	273	282	291
Provision for Bad Debts	186	186	186	190	193	196	200
Depreciation & Impairment of Fixed Assets	5,845	5,845	5,983	5,993	6,072	6,256	6,339
Interest Payable & Debt Management Costs	4,179	4,179	4,179	4,179	4,179	4,179	4,179
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>24,694</b>	<b>24,694</b>	<b>24,093</b>	<b>25,390</b>	<b>25,074</b>	<b>25,545</b>	<b>25,726</b>
<b>Net Operating Expenditure</b>	<b>-66</b>	<b>-66</b>	<b>-431</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>-666</b>	<b>-636</b>	<b>-904</b>
Interest Receivable	-30	-30	-4	-3	-3	-3	-2
Transfer to/(from) general reserves	0	0		0	0	0	0
Transfer to/(from) Earmarked Reserves	96	96	435	0	669	639	907
<b>(Surplus)/Deficit on Services</b>	<b>-0</b>	<b>-0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BALANCE</b>							
Forecast Balance as at beginning of year	2,465	2,465	2,465	2,465	2,396	2,396	2,396
Surplus/(deficit) for year	-0	-0	0	-69	-0	-0	-0
Forecast Balance as at end of year	<b>2,465</b>	<b>2,465</b>	<b>2,465</b>	<b>2,396</b>	<b>2,396</b>	<b>2,396</b>	<b>2,396</b>

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## HRA Capital Programme and Financing 2021/22 to 2025/26

	Outturn 2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
	£	£	£	£
<b>Major Repairs Reserve</b>				
Capital - Internal Refurbishment	675,000	2,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000
Capital - Fire Precautions	650,000	2,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000
Capital - Boiler Replacements	850,000	850,000	850,000	850,000
Capital - Smoke detection upgrades		590,000	590,000	590,000
Capital Major Void Works	600,000	600,000	600,000	600,000
Capital - Electrical Rewires	600,000	300,000	300,000	300,000
Capital - Asbestos Management	550,000	290,000	290,000	290,000
Capital - Energy Efficiency		500,000	500,000	500,000
Capital - Door Entry Upgrades	72,000	500,000	500,000	500,000
Capital - Fire Alarm Upgrades		300,000	300,000	300,000
Capital - High Trees Project		500,000	500,000	500,000
Capital - Window replacement	20,000	100,000	100,000	100,000
Capital - Roofing replacement	50,000	150,000	150,000	150,000
Capital - Disrepair Cases		75,000	75,000	75,000
Capital -Structural Repairs	180,000	25,000	25,000	25,000
Capital - Balcony Replacements		50,000	50,000	50,000
Capital - Salaries	440,000	350,000	350,000	350,000
	<b>4,687,000</b>	<b>9,180,000</b>	<b>7,180,000</b>	<b>7,180,000</b>
<b>Capital Receipts</b>				
Capital - Stock Condition Survey	0	0	0	0
Capital - New Housing System	320,000	200,000	0	0
Capital - Excellent Estates	605,000	550,000	550,000	550,000
Capital - Bin Stores	750,000	150,000	150,000	150,000
Capital - disabled adaptations	100,000	500,000	500,000	500,000
	<b>1,775,000</b>	<b>1,400,000</b>	<b>1,200,000</b>	<b>1,200,000</b>
<b>Acquisitions/Development</b>	886,000	3,600,000	4,200,000	4,200,000
	<b>7,348,000</b>	<b>14,180,000</b>	<b>12,580,000</b>	<b>12,580,000</b>
<b>Financed by</b>				
Major Repairs Reserve	4,687,000	9,180,000	7,180,000	7,180,000
Capital Receipts	1,775,000	1,400,000	1,200,000	1,200,000
Capital Receipts earmarked for acquisition	265,800	1,440,000	1,680,000	1,680,000
HRA Capital Reserve	620,200	2,160,000	2,520,000	2,520,000
	<b>7,348,000</b>	<b>14,180,000</b>	<b>12,580,000</b>	<b>12,580,000</b>

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**Executive Committee**20<sup>th</sup> January2022

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**Appendix 8: Section 25: Report of the CFO - Robustness of the Estimates**

In line with Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003, this report of the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) sets out the robustness of estimates included in the budget and the adequacy of the Council's reserves.

**The Chief Financial Officer's opinion is that the estimates are robust.**

Relevant budget holders are responsible for individual budgets and their preparation. All estimates are then scrutinised by Financial Services staff and the Corporate Management Team prior to submission to Members.

All budget assumptions have been reviewed and reconsidered – including those related to inflation, business rate growth and interest rates.

The Council's revenue and capital budgets are 'joined up', both for next year's budget and for the longer term. This means that the full cost of the proposed Capital Programme is reflected in the revenue estimates. Both revenue and capital budgets include the funding needs of the Council.

There are however a number of risks and uncertainties as set out below.

The main risks in the 2021/22 budget relate to:

- General levels of uncertainty regarding the outcome of the fair funding review, the future of business rates and the local government financial settlement, COVID-19, Brexit and the state of the local and national economy. This has been mitigated by prudent business rate growth assumptions and by close monitoring of the Covid Grant account.
- The delivery of income and managing the impact of savings proposed. Mitigating actions are in place within departmental to ensure managers are aware of budgeted savings.
- Business Rate Income – whilst this is essentially part of Central Government funding, the actual income received will vary depending on actual Business Rates growth. It is difficult to precisely predict this growth. It is also difficult to predict the level of appeals by ratepayers against their rating assessments. That said, prudent assumptions in this area have been applied.
- Central Government Funding – the MTFP shows income from NHB continuing in 2022/23, however the longer term future of this income stream remains unclear.

**Executive Committee**20<sup>th</sup> January2022

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- Costs associated with the delivery of the Council's Towns Fund programme. The Council holds some risk on this programme – including the cost of overruns. As the Accountable Body close monitoring will take place to manage effective delivery (to time and to budgeted cost).
- General inflationary pressures – particularly in relation to pay costs and utility bills. This budget therefore includes significant additional pressures for these matters.
- The impact of Covid and Leisure Services. The Council's management fee in relation to Rubicon Leisure will be impacted by Covid-19 and its ongoing impact on that area of business. This will continue to be mitigated through working closely with Rubicon Leisure to oversee its progress, operations and cost.
- The impact of Covid on the capacity of management to deliver change, efficiencies and associated savings. This continued to be a watching brief. Budget proposals include an investment in Business Improvement capacity and an 'Invest to Save' Earmarked Reserve.

**Adequacy of Reserves**

Budget and MFTP proposals forecast the level of General Fund balances to remain above minimum set levels of £1.5m for xx years and Housing Revenue Account balances to remain over minimum set levels of £0.6m over the next 2 years.

The reserves position, alongside the General Covid Grant account, will allow the Council to be robust and make coordinated plans to address the deficit position.

Taking account of the above, and the level of risk within the budget, the Chief Finance Officer judges that reserves are at an appropriate level throughout the period of the MTFP. This will be subject to ongoing review.

That said, further work must be undertaken to ensure that expenditure levels are sustainable and matched by income over the medium to long term. Plans are therefore in place to continue to review budgets and identify further savings opportunities.

**The Chief Financial Officer's opinion is that the estimates are robust.**

Report by: James Howse, Executive Director of Resources (Chief Financial Officer / Section 151 Officer)



**RBC Capital Programme 2020-21 March**

**Appendix 9**

Description	Department	NEW Strategic Purpose	Revised Budget April - March 21 £	Actual spend 2020-21 £	Variance 2020- 21 £	Previously approved slippage to 2021	Revised & additional slippage into 21- 22 £
Home Repairs Assistance	Community & Housing GF Services	Living independent, active & healthy lives	87,662	0	-87,662	0	87,662
Small Area Improvements	Community & Housing GF Services	Communities which are safe, well maintained & green	40,000	0	-40,000	0	40,000
Upgrade hardwired lifeline schemes	Community & Housing GF Services	Living independent, active & healthy lives	13,417	16,431	3,014	0	0
Disabled Facilities Grant	Community & Housing GF Services	Living independent, active & healthy lives	400,000	463,980	63,980	1,156,847	1,092,867
HMO Grants	Community & Housing GF Services	Living independent, active & healthy lives	0	5,900	5,900	29,515	23,615
Energy & Efficiency Installs	Community & Housing GF Services	Living independent, active & healthy lives	40,000	36,329	-3,671	50,065	53,736
Camera Replacement Programme	Community & Housing GF Services	Living independent, active & healthy lives	65,424	75,774	10,350	0	0
New Digital Service	Community & Housing GF Services	Communities which are safe, well maintained & green	60,000	34,380	-25,620	26,450	52,070
Improvement Holly trees childrens centre	Community & Housing GF Services	Living independent, active & healthy lives	15,000	0	-15,000	0	15,000
Greener Homes	community & Housing GF Services	Living independent, active & healthy lives	150,000	0	-150,000	0	150,000
Improved Parking Scheme	Environmental Services	Communities which are safe, well maintained & green	61,048	35,566	-25,482	20,000	45,482
Green Lane Studley	Environmental Services	Communities which are safe, well maintained & green	0	2,445	2,445	200,000	155,809
Vehicle replacment	Environmental Services	Communities which are safe, well maintained & green	866,081	530,276	-335,805	0	335,805
Locality Capital Projects	Environmental Services	Communities which are safe, well maintained & green	93,660	135,406	41,746	0	0
Wheelie Bin purchase	Environmental Services	Communities which are safe, well maintained & green	123,749	95,586	-28,163	0	28,163
Replacing 3 fuel pumps and upgrading tank monitoring equipment	Environmental Services	Communities which are safe, well maintained & green	0	0	0	25,000	25,000
Vehicle Lift Within Workshop	Environmental Services	Communities which are safe, well maintained & green	25,000	0	-25,000	0	25,000
Car Park Maintenance	Environmental Services	Communities which are safe, well maintained & green	30,475	29,192	-1,283	0	30,475
Fleet Management Computer System	Environmental Services	Enabling the Authority	0	0	0	16,600	16,600
Environmental Services Computer System	Environmental Services	Enabling the Authority	0	0	0	157,200	157,200
Locality project - Garage condition surv	Environmental Services	Communities which are safe, well maintained & green	100,000	0	-100,000	0	100,000
Locality project - landscape improvement	Environmental Services	Communities which are safe, well maintained & green	23,175	15,666	-7,509	1,825	9,334
Gf Asbestos	Financial & Customer Services	Communities which are safe, well maintained & green	30,000	22,846	-7,154	10,000	17,154
New finance system	Financial & Customer Services	Enabling the Authority	218,108	373,103	154,995	0	0
Regeneration Fund	Financial & Customer Services	Communities which are safe, well maintained & green	2,870,606	3,870,606	1,000,000	2,354,670	1,354,670
Public Building	Financial & Customer Services	Run and grow a successful business	426,308	214,264	-212,044	0	212,044
Salix Project	Legal & Democratic	Enabling the Authority	250,000	0	-250,000	0	250,000
Arrow Valley Country Park - Play, Open Space and Sports Improvements.	Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	Communities which are safe, well maintained & green	350,000	341,731	-8,269	6,000	14,269
S106 Regrading Pitches Terry'S Field	Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	Communities which are safe, well maintained & green	29,000	0	-29,000	9,000	38,000

S106 Health and Fitness Facilities	Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	Communities which are safe, well maintained & green	29,000	0	-29,000	0	29,000
Play / Sports Feckenham Cricket Ground	Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	Communities which are safe, well maintained & green	2,736	0	-2,736	0	2,736
Improvements at Business Centres	Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	Run and grow a successful business	0	-6,386	-6,386	73,614	73,614
Improvement to Morton Stanley -Play Area for toddler and junior play	Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	Communities which are safe, well maintained & green	0	43,863	43,863	79,686	35,823
Improvement to Morton Stanley Open Space	Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	Communities which are safe, well maintained & green	0	0	0	25,633	25,633
Improvement to Sports Pitches infrastructure in Morton Stanley Park	Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	Communities which are safe, well maintained & green	0	900	900	98,535	97,635
Improvement to original Pump Track at AVCP	Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	Communities which are safe, well maintained & green	0	0	0	60,606	60,606
Improvement of 'Green Parking' at Arrow Valley South	Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	Communities which are safe, well maintained & green	17,271	0	-17,271	0	17,271
Hedgerow Mitigation measures by restoration and hedge laying with associated fencing and gates at AVP SHM and AVP North	Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	Communities which are safe, well maintained & green	0	0	0	21,500	21,500
Grassland Mitigation measures- recreating and monitoring grassland habitats in MS and AVCP	Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	Communities which are safe, well maintained & green	0	0	0	146,590	146,590
Pitch or sports facilities improvements at the Abbey Stadium	Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	Communities which are safe, well maintained & green	17,419	0	-17,419	0	17,419
POS/Play Improvements to Forge Mill (24,528 POS and 26,700 Play) and Bordesley Abbey Visitor Centre. PI	Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	Communities which are safe, well maintained & green	51,248	0	-51,248	0	51,248
Removal of 5 weirs through Arrow Valley Park	Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	Communities which are safe, well maintained & green	0	0	0	437,000	437,000
Morton Stanley Play, Sport and Open Space Improvements (General)	Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	Communities which are safe, well maintained & green	35,000	0	-35,000	298,403	333,403
Open space improvements - North Moons moat	Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	Communities which are safe, well maintained & green	0	0	0	3,000	3,000
Café and Infrastructure Morton Stanley Park	Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	Communities which are safe, well maintained & green	10,000	0	-10,000	100,000	110,000
Redditch Town Centre public realm improvements - phase 2	Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	Communities which are safe, well maintained & green	32,000	0	-32,000	0	32,000
Digital Screens	Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	Communities which are safe, well maintained & green	15,000	0	-15,000	0	15,000
Passing bay at main access AVCP	Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	Communities which are safe, well maintained & green	6,000	0	-6,000	0	6,000
Resurfacing of pathway at AVCP	Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	Communities which are safe, well maintained & green	19,500	0	-19,500	0	19,500
			<b>6,603,887</b>	<b>6,337,859</b>	<b>-266,028</b>	<b>5,407,739</b>	<b>5,864,933</b>

**Notes:**

\* The new enterprise system had an increase in budget over that presented above funded from the flexible use of capital receipts. This was approved as part of the treasury strategy and so the difference is funded from this approval.

\*It should be noted that due to timing issues, some additional capital spend within the approved medium term capital programme has fallen within 20/21 as opposed to 21/22.

\*£1m of Regeneration Fund Capital spend was brought forward to 2020/21 in order to meet the conditions of a grant regarding £1m of accelerated grant funding



# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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Thursday, 6th January,  
2022

## MINUTES

### Present:

Councillor Jennifer Wheeler (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Salman Akbar, Karen Ashley, Michael Chalk, Julian Grubb, Lucy Harrison, Luke Court and Emma Marshall

### Officers:

Kevin Dicks, Jo Gresham (via Microsoft Teams) and Sarah Sellers

### 55. APOLOGIES AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Apologies were received from Councillors Chance, Clayton and Fogg with Councillors Marshall and Court as named substitutes for Councillors Clayton and Fogg respectively.

### 56. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND OF PARTY WHIP

An 'Other Disclosable Interest' was received from Councillors Wheeler and Marshall in respect of minute item 58 due to their involvement in the Woodrow Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) Steering Group. In addition to this, Councillor Marshall declared an additional 'Other Disclosable Interest' in respect of minute item 58 due to her involvement in Sports Redditch. It was agreed that all Members present would be able to take part in the discussions.

There were no declarations of any Party Whip.

### 57. PUBLIC SPEAKING

There were no public speakers registered on this occasion.

Chair

# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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Thursday, 6th January, 2022

## 58. REDDITCH PARTNERSHIP UPDATE

The Chief Executive delivered the annual update in respect of the Redditch Partnership. Members were informed that Helen Broughton, the Redditch Partnership Manager, would be leaving the Council that she would be greatly missed by Officers. It was acknowledged that her work over the years had been invaluable, particularly during the past two years throughout the Covid-19 pandemic and associated lockdown.

The following was also highlighted for Members' consideration:

- The Redditch Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) was produced by the Redditch Partnership and updated every three years. A mini refresh of the strategy was undertaken in 2015 and the four priorities of the SCS were reviewed each year by the Partnership. The current Priorities of the SCS were as follows:
  - Priority One – Health Inequalities
  - Priority Two – Education attainment, school readiness and raising aspirations of young people.
  - Priority Three – The economy of Redditch with a focus on providing a larger and more diverse job offer.
  - Priority Four – Lead on transformational change of services for citizens in Redditch.
- The work of the Redditch Partnership had been particularly important, and its benefits well received during the pandemic as it facilitated the coordination of communities in Redditch.
- The Redditch Business Leaders Group was chaired by Simon Hyde, CEO of Faun Zoeller, who was passionate about increasing skills within the Borough, particularly for young people. Members were informed that through this group an initiative called 'Power Up' had been rolled out. It was explained that this was a mentor scheme that worked with young people and schools within the Borough. During the pandemic the work of the Redditch Business Leaders Group had been crucial as it had worked closely with local

# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

---

Thursday, 6th January, 2022

businesses whose challenges included economic issues and staff shortages.

- Over the past two years, the work of the Redditch Community Wellbeing Trust (RCWT) had included working with those who had been impacted by Covid-19.
- The Redditch District Collaborative (RDC) was leading the partnership initiative in respect of the national agenda of Integrated Care Systems. It was reported that the RDC worked closely with Primary Care Networks. The Committee was informed that the RDC had three priorities: mental health and well-being, frailty and obesity. Although the demographic of Redditch did not necessarily experience the priority of frailty, it was noted that the Bromsgrove wards of Wythall and Hollywood were within the Primary Care Networks boundaries and that frailty was a priority in these wards due to their older demographic. Members were also informed that the RDC worked closely with Worcestershire County Council (WCC) to align with their Here2Help directory.
- The work of the Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) team was involved in the strengthening of assets within the local community. It was noted that an ABCD Steering Group had been established in Woodrow and this group had met regularly over the past year. Members were advised that funding had been awarded by WCC to establish Community Builders roles to work across Woodrow. These roles would be responsible to make connections between local people and services.
- The Wellbeing in Partnership newsletter had been initiated during the Covid-19 pandemic and had proved to be an extremely useful tool for communities and had provided information on a range of local services all in one place. This was also true of the Knowledge Bank which provided details of local services and could be found on the Council's website.

The Chair thanked the Chief Executive for his update and requested it be noted specifically that her thanks be extended to Helen Broughton for her work over the years as Redditch Partnership Manager. It was noted that Helen was a lively, dynamic

# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

---

Thursday, 6th January, 2022

and hardworking officer who would be greatly missed. Members were in agreement and wished Helen well in her new career.

Members questioned who would be responsible for looking after the Asset Based Community Development work going forward. It was reported that the Head of Housing and Community Services would be looking after the work for the immediate future with a view to recruiting a new Community Services Manager post, which, it was explained, was currently vacant.

During further detailed discussion Members were interested in the following:

- The skills available in the local area and whether the delivery of skills met the needs of local businesses. Members were informed that it was not Redditch Borough Council's role to deliver the skills to the people of the Borough however it was important that the Council worked alongside relevant partners to better understand the needs of local businesses in order to upskill residents which could result in them securing better jobs. It was noted in particular that there was a need for digital manufacturing skills in the Borough. It was clarified, however, that not many courses were available that offered upskilling in this particular skills area. It was stated that manufacturing apprenticeships would be particularly useful for Redditch and the local businesses.
- The inclusion of young people in the plans that specifically affected them and their future. Members' attention was drawn back to the report which had included information regarding the Youth Forum and the projects that were being explored by this group. In addition, it was reported that an application was in the process of being made to the Connected Futures Fund which was a partnership bid particularly concerned with what young people wanted from employment support. Members were advised that it was hoped that should the funding be awarded it would assist with better understanding of the aspirations of young people within the Borough. In addition to this it would provide information on the effect on young people's mental health, particularly in respect of the Covid-19 pandemic and associated lockdowns experienced over the previous two

# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

---

Thursday, 6th January, 2022

years. Members were interested in how young people joined the Youth Forum, whether this was through a nomination or election scheme and what was the age range of the participants. The Chief Executive undertook to request the information from the relevant officers and circulate the information to the Committee.

- Engagement with schools across the Borough, particularly in the Early Years setting. Members were advised that as noted, it was difficult to engage with schools and sometimes increased engagement was not as successful as hoped. It was suggested by Members that Councillors who sat on governing bodies within schools could potentially be a way to better engage with schools.
- How to make Redditch a more attractive place to teach. It was reported to the Committee that it was not the Council's role to attract people to the Borough to teach, however, it was hoped that this would be an outcome of some of the projects currently being undertaken. It was highlighted that there were limited options within the Town regarding upskilling in various vocational jobs, and that there were limits to the training, which meant that at some point during the training students had to go further afield to access more in-depth and detailed training. Members pointed out that there was a local establishment offering excellent apprenticeships and training courses Midland Group Training Services (MGTS) but its operating levels were generally at capacity, leaving places limited.
- Whether it would be possible to link the four priorities of the SCS with other areas of the Council's work for example in order to limit the levels of obesity within the Borough e.g. could there be a mechanism within the Planning process that would limit the number fast food establishments granted planning permission. Members were informed that the SCS priorities did permeate through most of the Council's responsibilities, much like Climate Change. The planning process was legislative and prescriptive meaning that levels of obesity within the Borough would not be a material consideration when assessing a planning application.

**RESOLVED that**

# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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Thursday, 6th January, 2022

**The Redditch Partnership Update be noted.**

## **59. RECOMMENDATION TRACKER**

The Recommendation Tracker was presented for Members' consideration. Members were asked to note that all of the recommendations were currently at Amber status, largely due to the pandemic, and would need to remain on the Tracker until the recommendations had been completed. It was discussed whether this would necessarily be the case for all of the recommendations included in the Tracker, as some of the recommendations were now likely to become embedded in Council processes going forward and would therefore never be 'completed' due to their ongoing nature.

Although this was the case for some of the recommendations it was agreed that those with Amber status would remain on the Tracker for the time being and would be reviewed again when the document was brought back for consideration by the Committee.

**RESOLVED that**

**The contents of the Recommendation Tracker be noted.**

## **60. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES AND SCRUTINY OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE'S WORK PROGRAMME - SELECTING ITEMS FOR SCRUTINY**

The Committee was presented with two sets of Executive Committee minutes and the latest version of the Executive Work Programme, as published on 4<sup>th</sup> January 2022. During consideration of this item, it was requested that an update item in respect of the New Cemetery Provision be placed on the Committee's Work Programme with a particular focus on any public consultations that were to be undertaken. It was confirmed that this would not be regarding any part of the planning process as this was entirely separate to the scrutiny process.

The Democratic Services Officer present undertook to add the item to the Committee's Work Programme.

**RESOLVED that**



# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

---

Thursday, 6th January, 2022

**The Executive Committee Minutes and Work Programme be noted.**

**61. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME**

Members considered the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme.

**RESOLVED that**

**The Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme be noted.**

**62. TASK GROUPS, SHORT SHARP REVIEWS AND WORKING GROUPS - UPDATE REPORTS**

**a) Budget Scrutiny Working Group – Chair, Councillor Jenny Wheeler**

During consideration of this item the Chair requested nominations to fill the Budget Scrutiny vacant seat. Councillor Luke Court received a nomination and on being put to the vote this nomination was carried.

Councillor Wheeler welcomed Councillor Court to the group and explained the importance of the scrutiny work that the group undertook during the municipal year. Members were informed that some difficulties had been experienced this year in receiving reports due to the decreased capacity within the Finance team. It was explained that there had been a significant recruitment exercise for the Finance Team and that going forward that this would hopefully resolve any issues.

Members were advised that the Executive Director for Resources had presented a sobering Medium Term Financial Plan at the last meeting and that some difficult decisions would need to be made by the Council going forward.

**b) Performance Scrutiny Working Group – Chair, Councillor Jenny Wheeler**

# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

---

Thursday, 6th January, 2022

Councillor Wheeler informed the Committee that no meeting of the Performance Scrutiny Working Group had taken place since the previous update. However, it was confirmed that a meeting was scheduled for 15<sup>th</sup> January 2022, and she would provide an update at the next meeting of the Committee.

**RESOLVED that**

**The Task Groups, Short Sharp Reviews and Working Groups Update Reports be noted.**

## **63. EXTERNAL SCRUTINY BODIES - UPDATE REPORTS**

Councillor Chalk updated the Committee in respect of the External Scrutiny Bodies and in doing so informed Members that the written updates that were provided gave an outline of the meetings rather than an in-depth update. He advised that should Members wish to look at the meetings in more detail the minutes were available online and most of the meetings had been live streamed.

It was explained to the Committee that the next meeting of the West Midlands Combined Authority Scrutiny Committee was due to take place on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2022 and that an update would be provided at the next meeting of the Committee.

**RESOLVED that**

**The External Scrutiny Bodies Update Reports be noted.**

The Meeting commenced at 6.30 pm  
and closed at 7.31 pm