

# Public Document Pack



<b>MID SUFFOLK CABINET</b>	
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>MONDAY, 13 JANUARY 2020 2.30 PM</b>
<b>VENUE:</b>	<b>KING EDMUND CHAMBER - ENDEAVOUR HOUSE, 8 RUSSELL ROAD, IPSWICH</b>

<b>Councillors</b>
<u>Conservative and Independent Group</u> David Burn Julie Flatman Jessica Fleming Peter Gould Suzie Morley (Chair) John Whitehead Gerard Brewster (Vice-Chair)

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## **AGENDA**

### **PART 1**

#### **MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED WITH THE PRESS AND PUBLIC PRESENT**

Page(s)

- 1 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
- 2 **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS BY COUNCILLORS**
- 3 **MCa/19/36 TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING  
HELD ON 06 JANUARY 2020**  
  
To follow
- 4 **TO RECEIVE NOTIFICATION OF PETITIONS IN ACCORDANCE  
WITH THE COUNCIL'S PETITION SCHEME**
- 5 **QUESTIONS BY COUNCILLORS**
- 6 **MATTERS REFERRED BY THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY OR  
JOINT AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEES**

## 7 FORTHCOMING DECISIONS LIST

Please note the most up to date version can be found via the website:

<https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/the-council/forthcoming-decisions-list/>

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| 8  | <b>MCa/19/37 DRAFT GENERAL FUND BUDGET 2020/21</b> | 5 - 28  |
|    | Cabinet Member for Finance                         |         |
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|    | Cabinet Member for Planning                        |         |

### **Date and Time of next meeting**

Please note that the next meeting is scheduled for Monday, 10 February 2020 at 2.30 pm.

### **Webcasting/ Live Streaming**

The Webcast of the meeting will be available to view on the Councils Youtube page:  
[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCSWf\\_0D13zmegAf5Qv\\_aZSg](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCSWf_0D13zmegAf5Qv_aZSg)

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# Agenda Item 8

## MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

<b>COMMITTEE:</b> Cabinet	<b>REPORT NUMBER:</b> <b>MCa/19/37</b>
<b>FROM:</b> Councillor John Whitehead, Cabinet Member for Finance	<b>DATE OF MEETING:</b> 13 January 2020
<b>OFFICER:</b> Katherine Steel, Assistant Director, Corporate Resources Melissa Evans, Corporate Manager, Finance and Commissioning & Procurement	<b>KEY DECISION REF NO.</b> CAB132

### DRAFT GENERAL FUND BUDGET 2020/21 AND FOUR-YEAR OUTLOOK

#### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The report contains details of the draft revenue and capital budgets and the Council's strategic financial aim. The purpose of this report is to present the draft General Fund Budget for 2020/21 and four-year outlook.
- 1.2 To enable Cabinet Members to consider key aspects of the draft 2020/21 Budgets, including Council Tax and make any recommendations to feed into the final Budget report in February.

#### 2. OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 The General Fund Budget for 2020/21 and four-year outlook is an essential element in achieving a balanced budget and sustainable medium-term position. Setting a balanced budget for the coming year is a statutory requirement, therefore no other options are appropriate in respect of this.

#### 3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That the draft General Fund Budget proposals for 2020/21 and four-year outlook set out in the report be endorsed for recommendation to Council on 27 February 2020, subject to further consideration at the next Cabinet meeting on 10 February 2020.
- 3.2 That the draft General Fund Budget for 2020/21 is based on an increase to Council Tax of 1.66%, which equates to £2.76 per annum (5p per week) for a Band D property, to support the Council's overall financial position, which will be considered further at the February Cabinet meeting.
- 3.3 That from 1 April 2020 properties that are unoccupied and unfurnished (Class C discount) receive a 25% reduction for the first 28 days as set out in section 11.

## REASON FOR DECISION

**To bring together all the relevant information to enable Cabinet Members to review, consider and comment upon the Council's General Fund budget before the February Cabinet and recommendations to Council.**

### 4. KEY INFORMATION

#### Strategic Context

- 4.1 In recent years the government policy frameworks have been reducing core funding for local government as part of its deficit reduction strategy and increasingly incentivising funding to councils to deliver local economic and housing growth and to facilitate the development of strong, safe, healthy and self-sufficient communities. This is continuing, so encouraging and supporting both business and housing growth is essential to the financial future of the Council.
- 4.2 The Government's Fair Funding Review is still a work in progress, and it aims to set new baseline funding allocations for local authorities by delivering an up-to-date assessment of their relative needs and resources. The Government is developing an updated funding formula by looking at the factors that drive costs for local authorities. The outcome of these deliberations is still awaited and will be implemented from 2021/22.
- 4.3 The Council recognised the changing funding landscape, the challenges and opportunities this creates and has developed a financial strategy that responds to this challenge as set out in section 6 below.
- 4.4 On 16 December 2019, the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) published its restated March 2019 economic and fiscal outlook.
- 4.5 The economy ended 2018 growing a little less strongly than expected in October. Survey indicators of current activity have weakened materially, in part reflecting heightened uncertainty prior to the General Election related to Brexit. As a result, the OBR has revised their forecast for Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth this year down to 1.2% – more than reversing the upward revision they made in October in response to the Government's discretionary fiscal loosening in the Budget. They have not altered their assessment of the outlook for potential output, so the medium-term forecast is little changed: GDP growth still settles down to around 1.5% a year.
- 4.6 They now expect public sector net borrowing to come in at £22.8 billion (1.1% of GDP) this year, down £2.7 billion since October thanks primarily to higher income tax receipts and lower debt interest spending. By 2023/24 the improvement since that October estimate is £6.3 billion, again thanks primarily to higher income tax receipts and lower debt interest spending.
- 4.7 These downward pressures on borrowing are partially offset by the £2.1 billion net cost of 20 policy decisions announced since the Budget – notably the £1.7 billion of additional planned public services spending announced at the Spring Statement. This leaves the expected deficit in 2023/24 at £13.5 billion (0.5% of GDP).

- 4.8 Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation was above the 2% target throughout 2018, averaging 2.5%. In the fourth quarter of 2018 it had fallen back to 2.3%. CPI inflation fell further in January 2019 to 1.8%, largely reflecting lower gas, electricity and petrol price changes. This was the first time in two years that inflation was below the 2% target. The OBR has revised down their forecast for CPI inflation since October, dipping to 1.9% in 2020, returning to the 2% target thereafter. They have made a larger downward revision to RPI inflation due to the much weaker outlook for house prices in 2019 and 2020.
- 4.9 On 4 September 2019 the Chancellor delivered his 2019 Spending Round. The key points that are relevant to Local Government are as follows:
- a) Confirmation that the Fair Funding Review, Business Rates Review and business rates reset has been deferred by 12 months to 2021/22.
  - b) £2.9 billion increase in Core Spending power overall. Most of the additional funding is for adults' and children's services, but there is £54m for Homelessness.
  - c) Funding to remove negative RSG has been continued for 2020/21.
  - d) 75% business rates pilots will come to an end and there are no new pilots planned for 2020/21.
  - e) £40m additional funding for Discretionary Housing Payments.
  - f) £23m to fund a range of measures around Universal Credit – whilst this won't come to districts it will be a positive support for people in the area.
  - g) Continuation of the Discover England Fund to promote inbound tourism.
  - h) £241m in 2020/21 in the Towns Fund to regenerate high streets, town centres and local economies.
  - i) Additional £30m for the Business, Energy, & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) to accelerate the development of decarbonisation schemes.

### **Provisional Finance Settlement**

- 4.10 The Provisional Finance Settlement was announced on the 20 December 2019, whilst there is new money from Central Government this has been prioritised for adult and children's social care.
- 4.11 The settlement provides no update on the progress of either the move to further business rates retention or the Review of Relative Needs and Resources (commonly called the Fair Funding Review). However the settlement confirmed that the next business rates revaluation is planned for 2021 and from then on the Government intends to move to a three-yearly revaluation cycle.

4.12 The headlines are as follows;

- a) No change to the New Homes Bonus threshold of 0.4%. The 2020/21 element of NHB will be paid for one year only. The legacy payments of the bonus in respect of growth in 2019/20 and previous years will continue to be paid in 2020/21. The Government will consult on the future of the housing incentive in the Spring. The Written Ministerial Statement says this will include moving to a new, more targeted approach which is aligned with other measures around planning performance and confirmed that the payments will be phased out;
- b) The Rural Services Delivery Grant will remain unchanged at £81 million in 2020/21. The Government is minded to retain the current method of distributing the grant but will consult on this;
- c) Business rates baseline will rise in line with inflation;
- d) £400m compensation for under-indexing the business rates multiplier will be distributed to all councils, Mid Suffolk's share of this is £91k and;
- e) Continuation of the option for shire districts with the lowest council tax levels to increase council tax by the higher of 2% or £5. The Government will continue with its policy of not setting referendum limits for parish and town councils, which they will keep under review for future years.

4.13 The Provisional Finance Settlement provided Mid Suffolk with additional funding of £213k. The Baseline Business Rates increased by £36k, and an additional £91k for compensation for the under-indexing of the business rates multiplier. New Homes Bonus increased by £85k, mainly due to the empty properties coming back into use element of the allocation which was not originally budgeted for.

4.14 Table 1 below shows the Provisional Finance Settlement compared to the budget for 2020/21.

**Table 1: Provisional Finance Settlement**

	<u>2020/21 Assumed</u>	<u>2020/21 Provisional Settlement</u>	<u>(Increase)/ Decrease</u>
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Baseline Funding Level	2,238	2,274	(36)
Compensation for under-indexing the business rates multiplier	-	91	(91)
New Homes Bonus	1,527	1,612	(85)
Rural Services Delivery Grant	433	433	-
<b>Funding</b>	<b>4,198</b>	<b>4,411</b>	<b>(213)</b>

## 5. HOW IS THE COUNCIL'S REVENUE BUDGET BEING SPENT IN 2019/20?

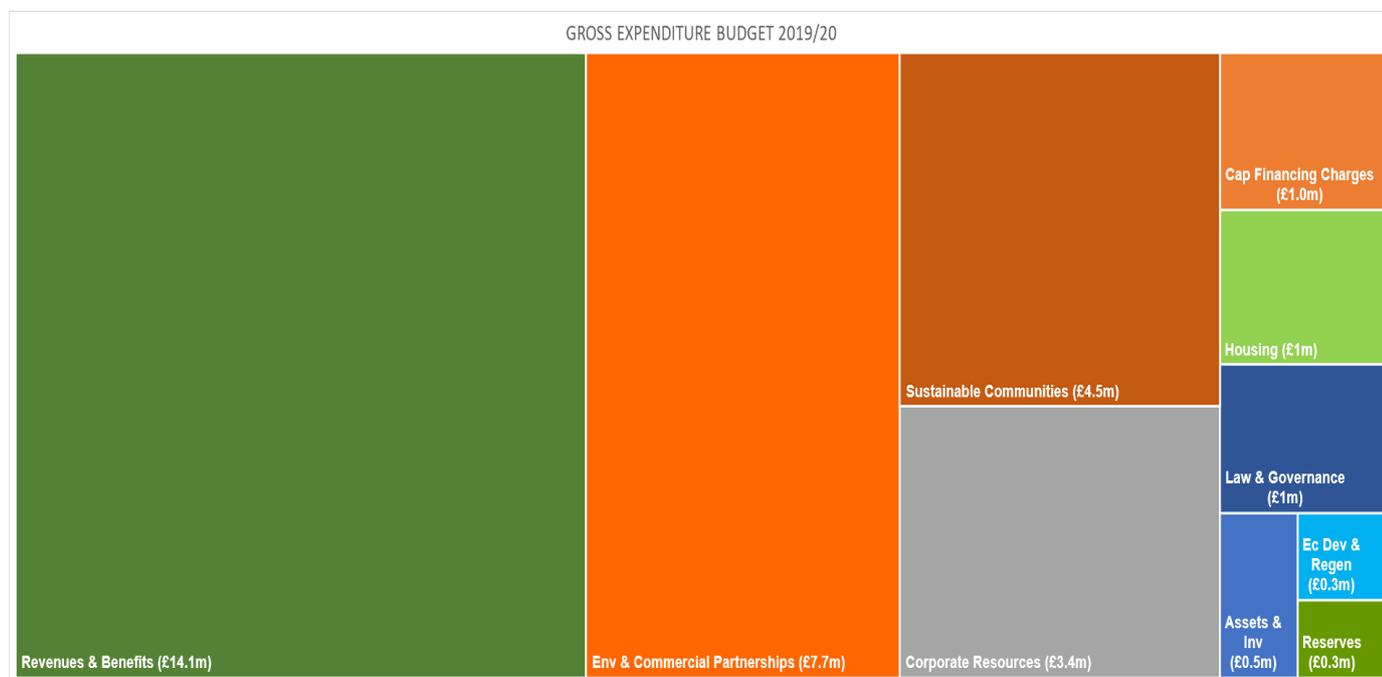
5.1 The Council's 2019/20 gross expenditure is £33.8m and income is £23.5m giving a net cost of service of £10.3m. Table 2 below shows how this is funded.

**Table 2: Revenue Budget 2019/20**

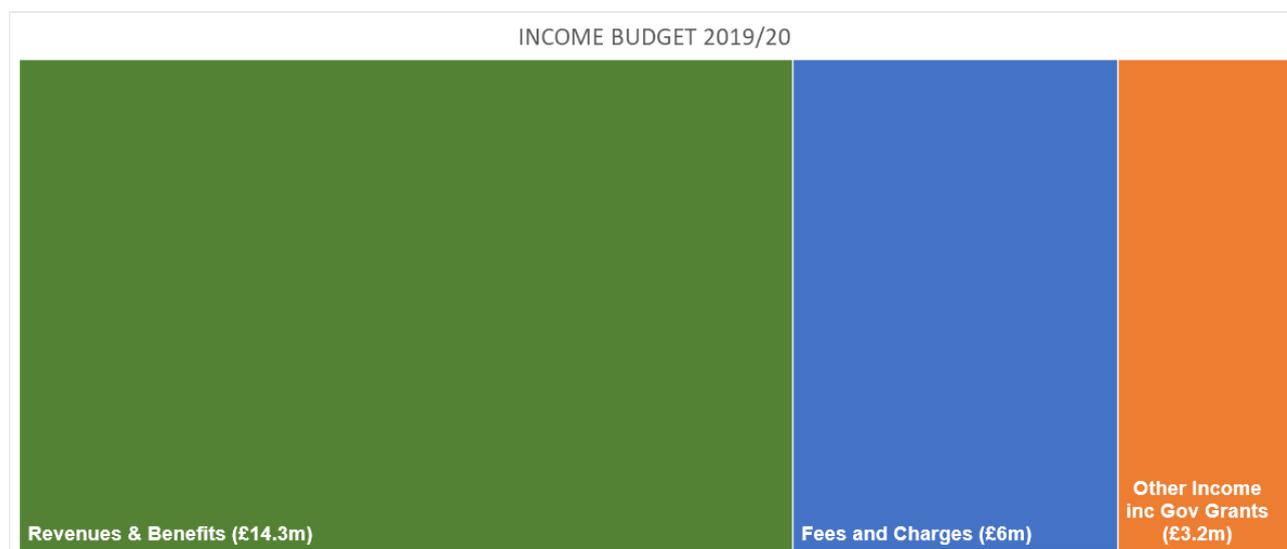
	<b>£,000</b>
<b>Gross Expenditure</b>	<b>33,809</b>
<b>Income</b>	<b>(23,557)</b>
<b>Net expenditure 2019/20</b>	<b>10,252</b>
<b>Funded by:</b>	
Earmarked Reserves	(1,446)
New Homes Bonus to balance the budget	-
S31 Grant	(783)
Business Rates	(2,043)
Collection Funds Deficit	570
Rural Services Delivery Grant	(433)
Council Tax	(6,117)
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>(10,252)</b>

5.2 Graph 1 below shows how the £33.8m gross expenditure is allocated across the services and Graph 2 shows the breakdown of the £23.5m income. The funding element is not shown in these graphs.

**Graph 1 Gross Expenditure by service area in 2019/20**



## Graph 2 Income in 2019/2020



- 5.3 The Revenues and Benefits element (£14m) in both the expenditure and the income charts above includes housing benefit paid out to claimants and reimbursed from the Government.
- 5.4 The forecast position for 2019/20 at quarter 2 reported to Cabinet in January 2020 showed a projected underspend of £397k. However, there may be further variances that occur throughout the remainder of the year. An updated position will be reported to Cabinet in March 2020 and the final outturn position in May 2020.

## 6. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY (MTFS) 2020-2024

### Strategic Aims

- 6.1 In order to achieve the vision and ambition for the districts with significantly reduced government resources the Council needs to take a medium-term view of the budget through a financial strategy that is focused on meeting the corporate priorities.
- 6.2 The main strategic financial aim is to become self-financing i.e. not reliant on Government funding. There is a secondary aim to be in a position to generate more funds than are required for core services, to enable additional investment in the district.
- 6.3 There are 3 key elements that need to be carefully balanced to ensure success. These are:
1. Cost management;
  2. Income generation; and
  3. Service levels.

## Principles

- 6.4 The approach over the medium term is to transform the Council into an organisation that is thriving and not just surviving, by reviewing, remodelling and reinventing the way the Council operates.

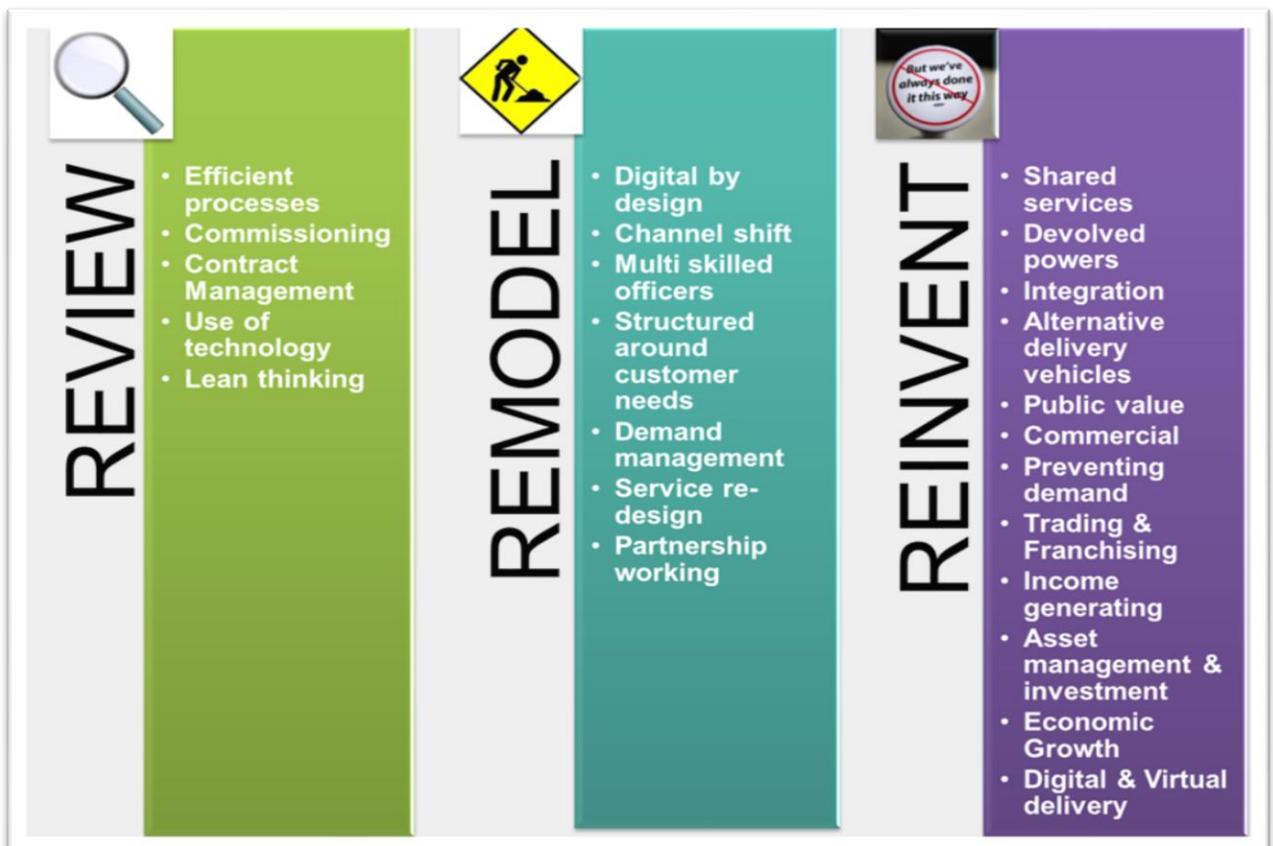
The Cabinet proposes that the following overarching principles should be considered when evaluating ideas and opportunities for change as set out below:

- Reduce our costs (both internally and across the wider system)
- Increase our income
- Provide better / “best” value
- Increased social value
- Provide a better service for our customers
- Reduction in administration costs, without compromising service

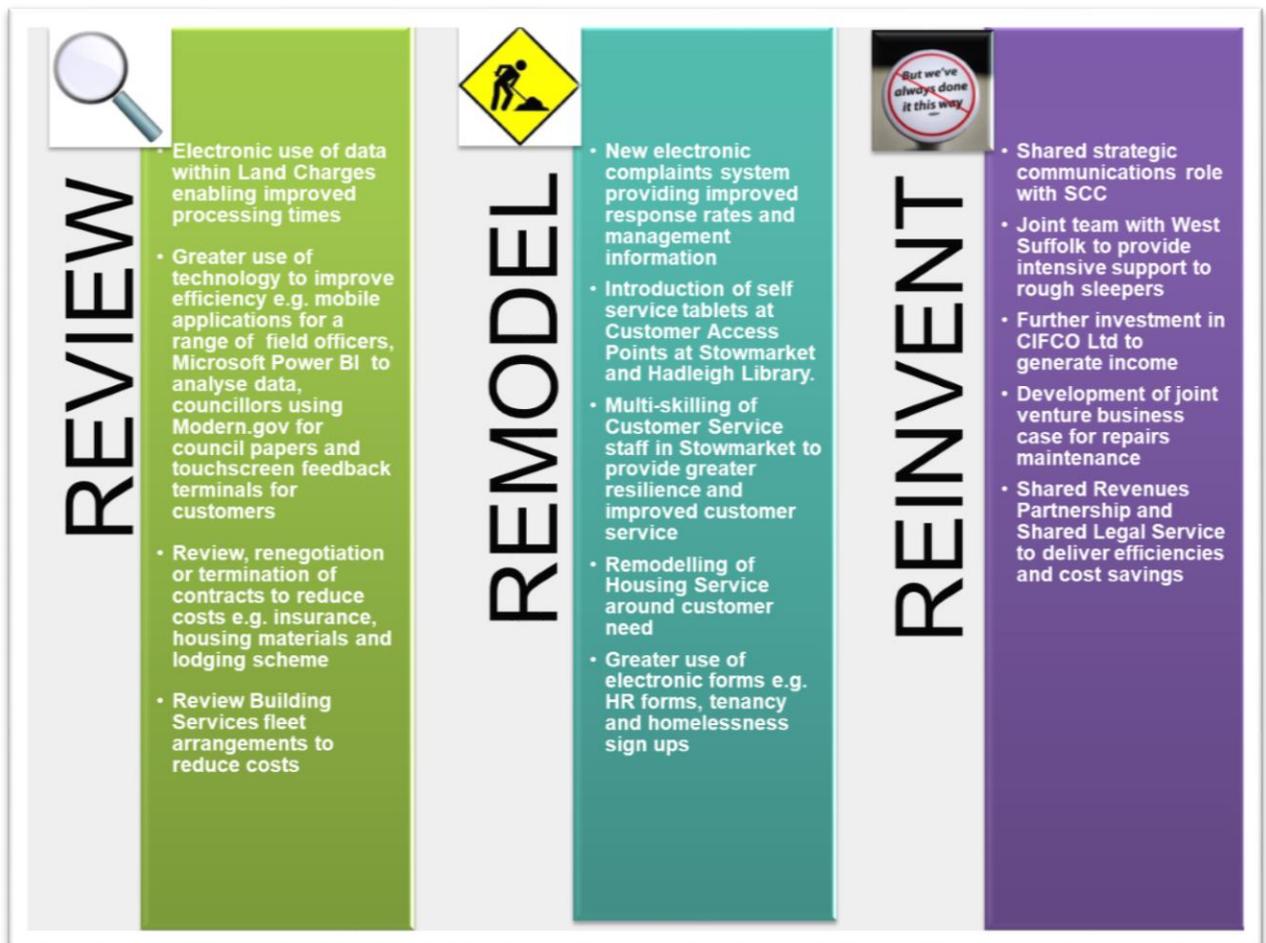
- 6.5 The focus will be on internal efficiencies and improvements within existing structures. Continuously looking to streamline work and reduce waste in processes. Greater cross-functional working and multi-skilling and improving ways of working to move away from ‘professional silos’ and toward integrated services for the public. Where customer demand is understood, analysed and met through new services and business models, and where the demand itself is re-shaped and managed while engaging service users to ascertain priorities.

- 6.6 The approach below shows in more detail for each element the methodology that will be adopted to achieve this.

## Approach



- 6.7 During 2019/20 a great deal of work has been undertaken following this approach as shown in the diagram below. Work will continue into 2020/21 and is likely to require a longer-term approach and may require additional resources and investment. The Council will continue this approach in order to transform the way it operates over the next three years.



## 7. RESERVES

- 7.1 When setting the budget for the forthcoming year the Council must have regard to the level of reserves needed to provide enough resources to finance estimated future expenditure plus any appropriate allowances that should be made for contingencies.
- 7.2 The Council has been making significant savings for a number of years as set out in 8.18 below, and with each year the challenge gets more difficult without negatively impacting on service standards. The approach outlined above will deliver savings or generate income to ensure the Council is in a self-financing position. However, some of these will not be realised until 2021/22 onwards and investment from reserves may be required to deliver them.
- 7.3 Reserves only provide one-off funding so the Council should avoid using reserves to meet regular recurring financial commitments.

7.4 In 2020/21 the Council is using £1m from earmarked reserves, as follows;

- £777k of earmarked reserves against specific service expenditure (£477k shown against new pressures in paragraph 8.16 Table 7);
- £250k on members locality budgets

7.5 There are a number of reserve transfers from the Growth and Efficiency Fund (GEF) identified in 2019/20 which have not yet been spent. They include the £3m potential contribution to the Strategic Investment Fund, £2.6m contribution towards the Regal Theatre and £200k towards battery storage at the Leisure Centre.

7.6 Table 3 below shows the earmarked reserves balance from 31 March 2019, forecast through to 31 March 2021. This shows that the level of reserves drops by 22% (excluding CIL) over the two years.

**Table 3: Forecast Earmarked Reserve Levels**

Transfers to / from Earmarked Reserves	Balance 31 March 2019	Transfers 2019/20		Balance 31 March 2020	Transfers 2020/21		Balance 31 March 2021	
		Transfers to	Transfers from		Transfers between	Transfers to		Transfers from
Carry Forwards	(85)		85	(0)			(0)	
Growth and Efficiency Fund	(9,006)	(3,090)	2,861	(9,235)	500	(3,017)	8,039	(3,713)
Commercial Development Risk Management	(500)	(1,000)		(1,500)		(1,000)		(2,500)
Climate Change	-			-	(500)			(500)
Welfare Benefits Reform	(211)			(211)				(211)
Business Rates Retention	(1,014)			(1,014)				(1,014)
Business Rates Equalisation	(2,962)			(2,962)				(2,962)
Government Grants	(214)		35	(179)			34	(145)
Commuted Maintenance Payments	(775)			(775)			39	(736)
Elections Fund	(84)	(20)	75	(29)		(20)		(49)
Planning Enforcement (Legal Costs)	(35)			(35)				(35)
Planning Enforcement	(45)			(45)				(45)
Revocation of personal search fees	(51)			(51)				(51)
Homelessness	(363)		33	(330)			68	(262)
Temporary Accommodation	(118)		42	(76)			10	(66)
Planning (Legal Costs)	(506)			(506)			333	(173)
Neighbourhood Planning Grants (NPGs)	(27)	(54)		(81)		(47)		(128)
Strategic Planning inc Community Housing Grant, Brownfield Sites etc	(313)		43	(270)				(270)
Strategic Planning - Joint Local Plan	(224)		33	(191)			118	(74)
Repairs and Renewals	(293)			(293)				(293)
Waste	(205)		127	(78)			15	(63)
<b>Sub-total exc CIL</b>	<b>(17,031)</b>	<b>(4,164)</b>	<b>3,334</b>	<b>(17,861)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(4,084)</b>	<b>8,655</b>	<b>(13,290)</b>
Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)	(8,532)			(8,532)				(8,532)
<b>Total earmarked reserves</b>	<b>(25,563)</b>	<b>(4,164)</b>	<b>3,334</b>	<b>(26,394)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(4,084)</b>	<b>8,655</b>	<b>(21,822)</b>

7.7 There is an agreed process for CIL bids, however nothing has been included in this table for CIL income and expenditure for 2020/21 as this is difficult to predict.

7.8 The level of risk has been assessed regarding the Council's in-district planned brownfield and greenfield commercial developments. These include Needham Market and Stowmarket middle schools, the Council's former offices in Needham Market and the major development planned for the Gateway 14 site in Stowmarket. Robust business cases have been produced for each of these projects but given the element of risk inherent in any development, a prudent decision has been made to transfer £1m to the Commercial Development Risk Management reserve in 2020/21. As these developments come to fruition the level of the reserves may be reduced.

7.9 As a result of conversation with the Opposition Groups about their budget proposals, £500k is being transferred from the GEF to a new Climate Change earmarked reserve to ensure funding is available for the recommendations that will come from the Climate Change Taskforce.

7.10 In addition to the earmarked reserves, the Council also holds a general fund reserve of £1.052m, which equates to approximately 10% of the net cost of service. This is a prudent level of reserve to hold to mitigate against unexpected financial risks that cannot be offset by savings during the year or with use of the earmarked reserves in Table 3.

## 8. FORECAST BUDGET GAP TO 2023/24

8.1 To establish the medium-term budget gap several assumptions have been made as to the expected level of funding and a number of cost pressures and savings have been identified over the period. These are set out later in this section.

### Funding

8.2 Funding arrangements for councils have changed significantly in recent years, the revenue support grant has been completely removed and the future funding of New Homes Bonus (NHB) continues to remain an uncertainty.

8.3 2019/20 is the last year of the four-year Comprehensive Spending Review where councils had some certainty about their funding levels, therefore the position from 2020/21 remained more difficult to forecast until the Government announced a one-year settlement for 2020/21.

8.4 The Fair Funding Review and changes to the distribution of business rates has been delayed as a result of Brexit discussions, therefore the position after 2020/21 remains more difficult to forecast.

8.5 Government has recognised that councils are now more reliant on council tax and business rates as the main sources of funding and has announced that from 2021 business rate retention will be 75% compared to 50% of the growth achieved in business rates income. A full review of business rates is likely to happen following the general election.

8.6 Since NHB was introduced in 2011/12 the Council has received £15.5m in total. As shown in Table 4 below the use of NHB to balance the budget increased from 4% in 2016/17 to 24% in 2018/19. In 2020/21 the Council is in the position of being able to balance the budget without any use of NHB and transfer the full £1.6m to earmarked reserves.

8.7 From 2011/12 to 2019/20 £6.8m NHB has been transferred to the Growth and Efficiency Fund. The Council is not reliant on NHB to balance the budget in any year up to 2023/24, but the projected transfer from the annual surplus decreases each year to just £91k in 2023/24 leaving less money available to invest into the district. If the Council wishes to continue to have resources for investment, actions will need to be taken over the next 3 years under the Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

**Table 4: New Homes Bonus used from 2016/17 to 2020/21**

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Amount of NHB received	2,641	2,028	1,463	1,380	1,612	9,124
NHB used to balance the budget	110	267	354	0	0	731
% NHB used to balance the budget	4%	13%	24%	0%	0%	8%

8.8 Table 5 and Graph 3 below shows the NHB over the last ten years plus the estimated allocations for 2021/22 to 2023/24. This assumes 1% growth over and above the 0.4% threshold, one more year's growth for 2020/21 only and the legacy payments being phased out from 2021/22 year on year with nothing being received in 2023/24.

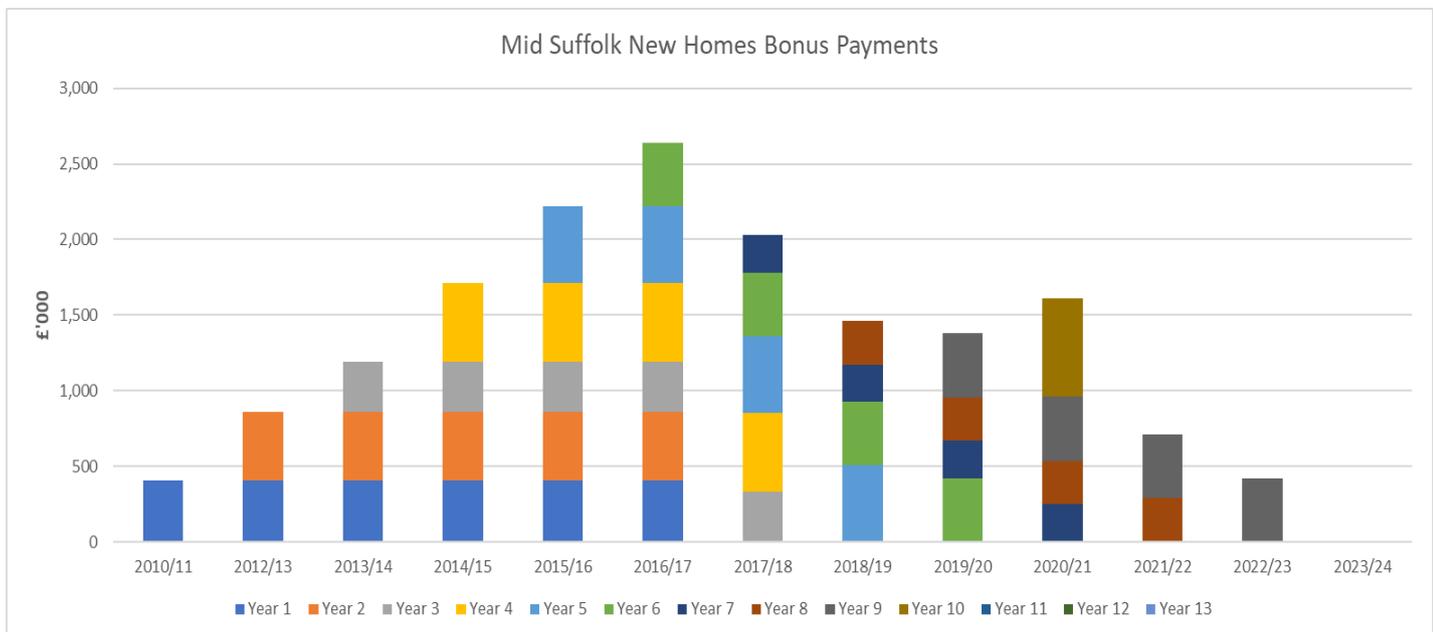
8.9 This clearly shows how the NHB has declined from a peak of £2.6m in 2016/17 to £1.6m in 2020/21, after the Government announced it would reduce the allocation from 6 years to 5 years in 2017/18 and to 4 years in 2018/19, as well as introducing a 0.4% growth baseline in 2017/18.

8.10 For 2020/21, the 0.4% growth for Mid Suffolk means that the first 174 new homes built will receive no payment.

**Table 5: New Homes Bonus sums per year**

Payments											Estimated		
	2010/11	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Year 1	409	409	409	409	409	409							
Year 2		452	452	452	452	452							
Year 3			334	334	334	334	334						
Year 4				521	521	521	521						
Year 5					506	506	506	506					
Year 6						420	420	420	420				
Year 7							247	247	247	247			
Year 8								290	290	290	290		
Year 9									422	422	422	422	
Year 10										653			
Year 11													
Year 12													
Year 13													
<b>Total</b>	<b>409</b>	<b>860</b>	<b>1,194</b>	<b>1,714</b>	<b>2,221</b>	<b>2,641</b>	<b>2,028</b>	<b>1,463</b>	<b>1,380</b>	<b>1,612</b>	<b>713</b>	<b>422</b>	

**Graph 3: New Homes Bonus Payments – Estimated for 2021/22 to 2023/24**



- 8.11 In calculating the expected level of funding across all sources, the following assumptions have been made:
- £1.9m use of reserves from 2020/21 to 2022/23.
  - NHB as per 8.8 and Table 5 above.
  - No growth in business rates income.
  - Nothing has been included for forecast Business Rates surplus or deficit beyond 2019/20 based on the assumption that the equalisation earmarked reserve will accommodate this.
  - Rural Services Delivery grant will continue beyond 2019/20.
  - Council Tax 1.66% increase each year from 2020/21 to 2023/24, generating on average an incremental additional £109k per annum.
  - Tax base growth of 1.25% for 2020/21 generating an additional £76k and 1.3% per annum from 2021/22, approximately £84k per annum.
- 8.12 Table 6 below shows the forecast funding from 2020/21 to 2023/24. Ignoring the use of reserves (£1,027k for 2020/21, £313k 2021/22, £286k for 2022/23 and £250k for 2023/24) funding decreases by 7% over the 4-year period. This is due to the assumed reduction of NHB as shown in Table 5 above.
- 8.13 By 2023/24 Government funding is virtually non-existent except for Rural Services Delivery Grant. The main sources of funding for the Council are Business Rates and Council Tax.
- 8.14 In 2020/21 the Council will be using £1m of S31 grant to transfer to the Commercial Development Risk Management reserve as explained in paragraph 7.9 above and will be transferring the entire £1.6m NHB to the Growth and Efficiency Fund reserve.
- 8.15 Over the next three years the Council will need to utilise 62% or £2.4m of the £3.9m S31 grant to balance the budget leaving £1.5m surplus funds as well as all of the £1.1m forecast NHB.

**Table 6: Forecast Funding 2020/21 – 2023/24**

Description	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
	Budget	Budget	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<b>Funding:</b>					
Other Earmarked Reserves	(1,196)	(777)	(63)	(36)	-
Growth and Efficiency Fund - Community Capacity Building	(250)	(250)	(250)	(250)	(250)
New Homes Bonus - provisional 2021/22 onwards	(1,380)	(1,613)	(713)	(422)	-
S31 Business Rates Grant	(1,313)	(1,404)	(1,313)	(1,313)	(1,313)
Government Support					
(a) Baseline business rates	(2,238)	(2,274)	(2,274)	(2,274)	(2,274)
(b) B/Rates – levy	488	522	522	522	522
(c) B/Rates – growth/pooling benefit	(293)	(293)	(293)	(293)	(293)
(d) B/Rates prior yr deficit	597	-	-	-	-
(e) Rural Services Delivery Grant	(433)	(433)	(433)	(433)	(433)
Council Tax Collection Fund surplus	(27)	(27)	(27)	(27)	(27)
Council Tax (1.66% increase to Band D)	(6,035)	(6,220)	(6,402)	(6,593)	(6,790)
Growth in taxbase	(82)	(76)	(82)	(84)	(87)
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>(12,162)</b>	<b>(12,845)</b>	<b>(11,328)</b>	<b>(11,204)</b>	<b>(10,945)</b>

## Pressures

- 8.16 In addition to the reduction in Government funding there are £3.3m of cost pressures that have been identified in 2020/21 and beyond. However, this includes £477k of other funding from reserves. Table 7 below shows the cost pressures the Council is expecting to face over the next four years.

**Table 7: Forecast Cost Pressures 2020/21- 2023/24**

MID SUFFOLK - MOVEMENT YEAR ON YEAR	19/20 to 20/21 £000	20/21 to 21/22 £000	21/22 to 22/23 £000	22/23 to 23/24 £000
<b>Net Service Cost previous year</b>	<b>10,252</b>	<b>10,017</b>	<b>9,742</b>	<b>10,245</b>
<b>Cost Pressures</b>				
<b><u>Inflation</u></b>				
Employees - includes pay award, increments	398	365	379	393
Contracts	62	87	89	91
Business Rates	10	10	10	11
<b>Sub total cost pressure</b>	<b>469</b>	<b>461</b>	<b>478</b>	<b>495</b>
<b><u>Assets and Investments</u></b>				
Gateway 14 Ltd	136	(726)	160	288
PV Panels - cost of servicing & repairs	65	(8)		
CIFCO - net interest receivable	24	(14)	(13)	(15)
<b><u>Customer Access</u></b>				
ICT - telephony, software licenses & contract costs	162			
<b><u>Environment</u></b>				
Waste - refuse contract	68			
Waste - recycling credits		130		
Waste - cost of disposal (Trade and Garden waste)	50			
Materials Recycling Facility (cost of disposal) (funded from reserves)	15			
<b><u>Housing</u></b>				
Homelessness Grant funding - no longer received	30			
<b><u>Sustainable Communities</u></b>				
Planning appeals (100% funded from reserves)	268			
Joint Local Plan - examination costs (Funded from reserves - £118k)	118			
Neighbourhood Planning (removal of contribution to reserve)	74			
Policy Strategy Health & Well-being (funded from reserves - £26k)	35			
Provision of Free Swims for children aged 16 years and under during school holidays	25			
Planning - consultants & professional fees	20			
<b><u>Other Cost Pressures</u></b>				
Employee Costs	181	61	-	(36)
Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP)	191	213	14	55
Other items (net) - funded from reserves £50k	73	(101)	(42)	(65)
<b>Total Pressures</b>	<b>2,003</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>597</b>	<b>722</b>
Pressures funded from earmarked reserves (as mentioned above)	477			

- 8.17 In calculating the pressures, the following assumptions have been made:
- It has been agreed that a pay award of 2% will be made, so pay budgets have been increased accordingly.
  - General Inflation
    - Business rates on the Council's own properties - 3.9%
    - Utilities – Nil increase
    - Major contracts – 2% to 2.5%
  - Pension fund assumptions
    - future rate contribution - 23%, no change from 2019/20
    - pension lump sum – no change from 2019/20

## Savings / Income

- 8.18 Over the years 2011/12 to 2019/20 the Council has achieved cumulative savings/income of £30.9m through shared services, efficiencies, better use of technology and maximising commercial opportunities.
- 8.19 Continuing in this vein and following the approach set out in section 6, savings/income of £2.7m have already been identified for 2020/21 and beyond. Table 8 below shows the savings/income the Council is expecting to achieve over the next four years.

**Table 8: Forecast Savings/Income 2020/21- 2023/24**

MID SUFFOLK - MOVEMENT YEAR ON YEAR	19/20 to 20/21 £000	20/21 to 21/22 £000	21/22 to 22/23 £000	22/23 to 23/24 £000
<b>Savings</b>				
<b>Assets and Investments</b>				
CIFCO (further investment) - net interest receivable	(270)	(13)	38	(19)
Needham Market and Stowmarket Middle Schools	(68)			
BMS Invest recharge	(49)			
Aldi - business rates	(41)			
Rental income retail building, Needham Market		(40)	(40)	
Growth Companies Recharges - Prof & Consultancy Fees	(25)			
<b>Customer Access</b>				
Digital Transformation - end to end		(25)		
<b>Environment</b>				
Waste - income (garden / trade & recycling credits)	(197)			
Grass cutting of SCC verges	(50)			
Car Park income	(22)			
<b>Finance</b>				
Insurance Premiums	(51)			
SRP Contract saving	(41)			
<b>Housing</b>				
Community Housing Fund 2 yr fixed term post (funded from reserves 18/19 & 19/20)	(105)			
<b>Law and Governance</b>				
Elections (funded from reserves in 19/20)	(75)			
<b>Sustainable Communities</b>				
Planning fee income	(253)			
Funding for 2 Police Community Support Officers (funded from GEF in 18/19 & 19/20)		(75)		
<b>Other Savings</b>				
Increase vacancy management contingency 2.5% to 5%	(246)	(18)	(19)	(20)
Reduction in transfers to reserves	(207)	(47)	-	
Interest Payable (Pooled Funds)	(147)			
Interest Payable (Other)	(132)			
Interest Receivable (Pooled Funds)	(128)			
Charge to HRA and Capital	(82)	(23)	(23)	(24)
Contract management savings	(50)	(50)	(50)	(50)
<b>Total savings</b>	<b>(2,238)</b>	<b>(291)</b>	<b>(94)</b>	<b>(113)</b>
<b>Total Net Service Cost movement</b>	<b>(235)</b>	<b>(275)</b>	<b>503</b>	<b>609</b>
<b>New Net Service Cost</b>	<b>10,017</b>	<b>9,742</b>	<b>10,245</b>	<b>10,854</b>

## Budget Gap

- 8.20 Table 9 below shows the forecast surplus or deficit for 2021/22 - 2023/24 with and without New Homes Bonus.
- 8.21 The position for 2020/21 is a £1.8m surplus. This is achieved by using no New Homes Bonus, £189k S31 grant, £433k Rural Service Delivery Grant and £1m from reserves as well as transferring £1m from the S31 grant to the Commercial Development Risk Management reserve as explained in paragraph 7.9.

8.22 The three-year surplus from 2021/22 of £2.6m is achieved by using £7.2m in total of the following;

- £1.1m New Homes Bonus;
- £3.9m S31 grant;
- £1.3m Rural Services Delivery Grant; and
- £0.9m from reserves

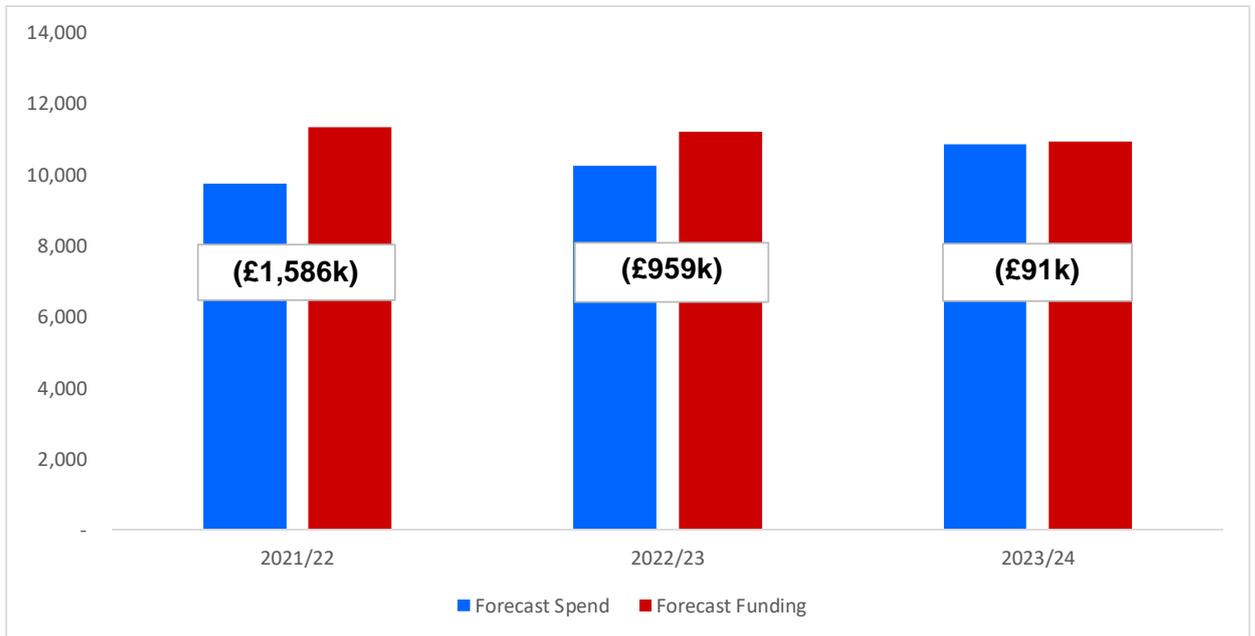
8.23 When NHB is phased out completely by 2023/24, the projected surplus for the Council is only £91k. With the key objective to become self-financing and to have more than enough funds to invest within the council itself and the across the district, the Council will need to deliver significant income or savings by reviewing, remodelling and reinventing the way the it operates as set out in section 6.

**Table 9: Forecast Budget Gap 2020/21 – 2023/24**

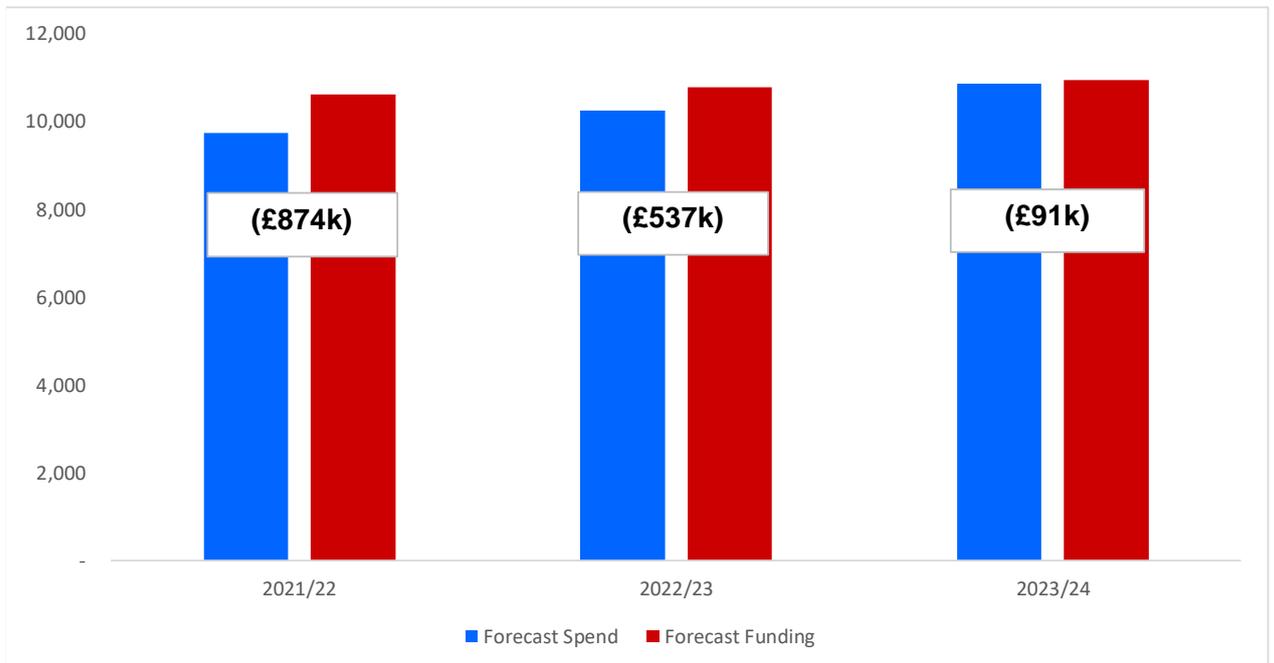
	Mid Suffolk		
	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
<b><u>Including NHB</u></b>			
Net Service Cost previous year	10,017	9,742	10,245
Pressures	16	597	722
Savings	(291)	(94)	(113)
<b>Net Service Cost current year</b>	<b>9,742</b>	<b>10,245</b>	<b>10,854</b>
Funding	(11,328)	(11,204)	(10,945)
<b>Annual Deficit /(Surplus)</b>	<b>(1,586)</b>	<b>(959)</b>	<b>(91)</b>
<b>Cummulative Deficit/(Surplus)</b>	<b>(1,586)</b>	<b>(2,545)</b>	<b>(2,636)</b>

	Mid Suffolk		
	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
<b><u>Excluding NHB</u></b>			
Net Service Cost previous year	10,017	9,742	10,245
Pressures	16	597	722
Savings	(291)	(94)	(113)
<b>Net Service Cost current year</b>	<b>9,742</b>	<b>10,245</b>	<b>10,854</b>
Funding	(10,616)	(10,782)	(10,945)
<b>Annual Deficit /(Surplus)</b>	<b>(874)</b>	<b>(537)</b>	<b>(91)</b>
<b>Cummulative Deficit/(Surplus)</b>	<b>(874)</b>	<b>(1,410)</b>	<b>(1,501)</b>

**Graph 4: Forecast Budget Gap (surplus)/deficit, including NHB (annual) 2021/22 - 2023/24**



**Graph 5: Forecast Budget Gap (surplus)/deficit, excluding NHB (annual) 2021/22 - 2023/24**



## 9. HOW IS THE COUNCIL'S REVENUE BUDGET BEING SPENT IN 2020/21?

9.1 The summary in Appendix A shows a breakdown of the Council's net cost of service for 2019/20 (£10.252m) and 2020/21 (£10.018m) a reduction of £234k (2%).

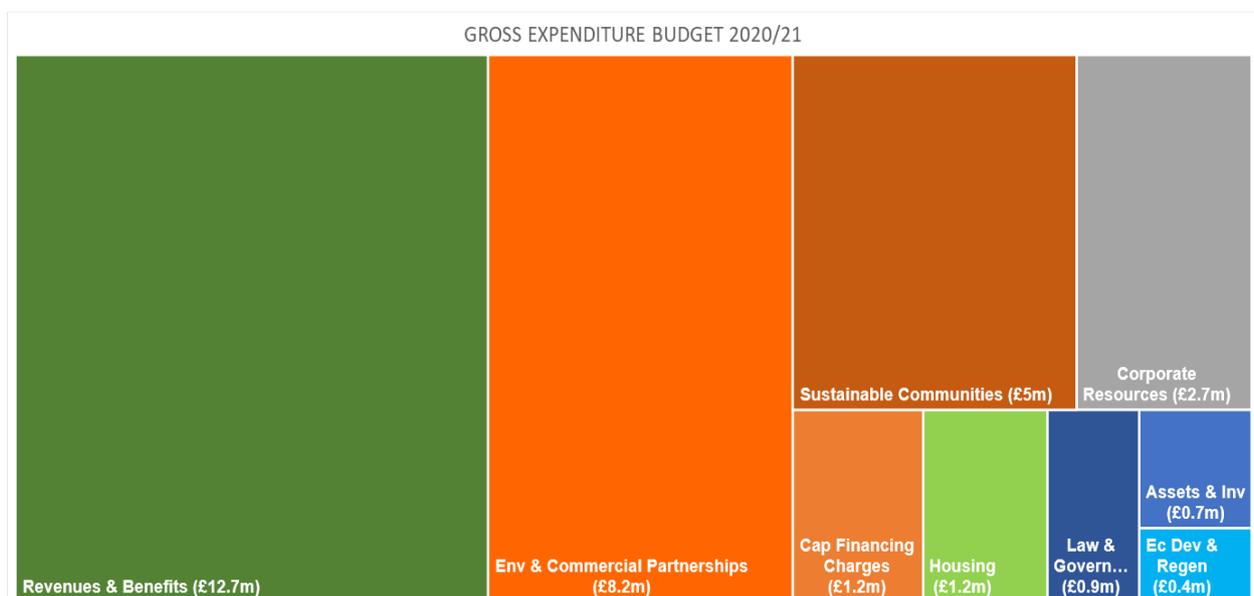
The Council's 2020/21 gross expenditure is £33.3m and Income is £23.3m giving a net cost of service of £10m. Table 10 below shows how this is funded.

**Table 10: Revenue Budget 2020/21**

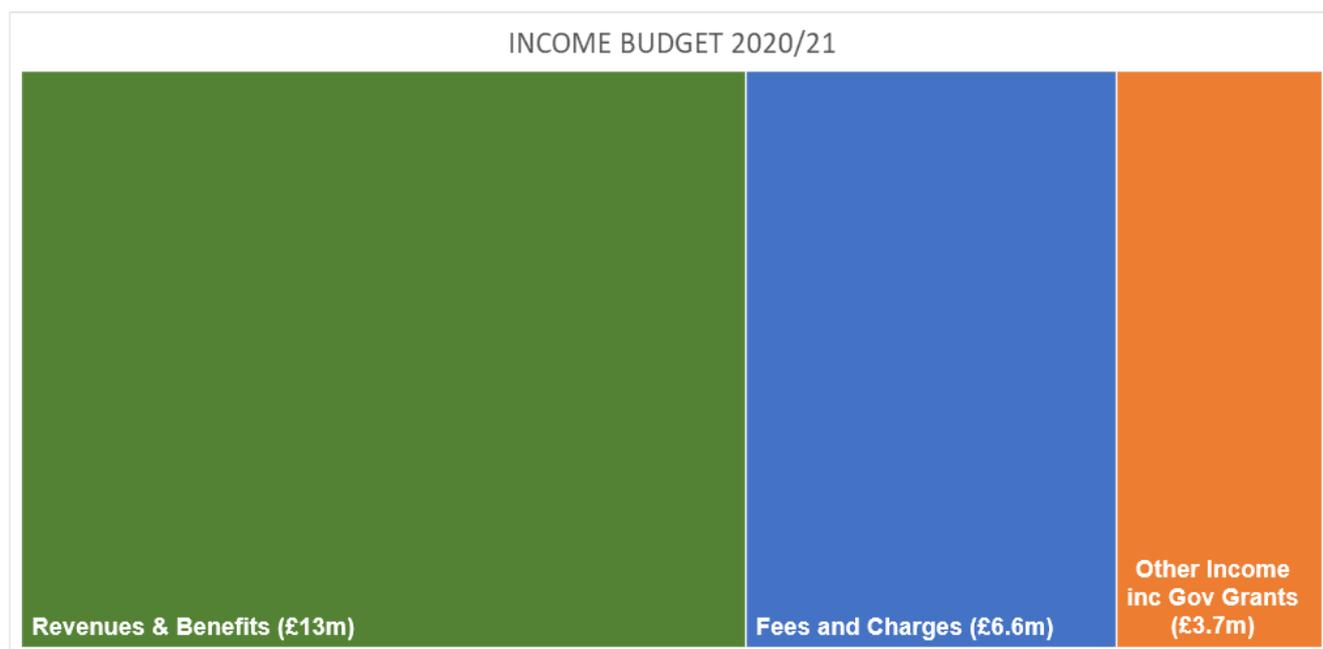
	<b>£,000</b>
<b>Gross Expenditure</b>	<b>33,336</b>
<b>Income</b>	<b>(23,318)</b>
<b>Net expenditure 2020/21</b>	<b>10,018</b>
<b>Transfer to Commercial Development Risk Management Reserve</b>	<b>1,000</b>
<b>Funded by:</b>	
Earmarked Reserves	(1,027)
New Homes Bonus received	(1,613)
S31 Grant	(1,404)
Business Rates	(2,045)
Collection Funds (Surplus)/Deficit	(27)
Rural Services Delivery Grant	(433)
Council Tax	(6,296)
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>(12,845)</b>
<b>Budget deficit/(Surplus)</b>	<b>(1,827)</b>

9.2 Graph 6 below shows how the £33.3m gross expenditure is allocated across the services and Graph 7 below shows the breakdown of the £23.3m income. The funding element is not shown in these graphs.

**Graph 6 Gross Expenditure by service area in 2020/21**



## Graph 7 Income by service area in 2020/21



- 9.3 The Revenues and Benefits element (£13m) in both the expenditure and the income charts above includes housing benefit paid out to claimants and reimbursed from the Government.

### **Fees and charges**

- 9.4 Fees and charges have been reviewed by budget holders as part of this budget setting process and a summary of fees and charges for 2019/20 and 2020/21 will be included in the report to Cabinet in February 2020.
- 9.5 A further benchmarking exercise will be undertaken during 2020/21 to review the Council's levels of fees and charges.

## **10. CAPITAL PROGRAMME**

- 10.1 The detailed Capital Programme is attached at Appendix B. The planned spend for 2020/21 is £12m. The main areas are the re-development of the former Council Offices, Needham Market £0.7m (funded from GEF), £8.7m investment in CIFCO and £0.7m for the development of the Leisure Centres (funded from borrowing).
- 10.2 The Capital and Investment Strategy will have further details of the Council's borrowing capacity and the impacts of the capital programme, this will be presented to Cabinet in February along with the final budget report, following review by Joint Audit and Standards Committee in January 2020.

## **11. EMPTY PROPERTY DISCOUNT**

- 11.1 The Local Government Finance Act 2012 introduced discretion for Councils to vary the Council Tax discounts for certain categories of empty properties, whilst maintaining a range of mandatory discounts and exemptions

- 11.2 The discretion allows the Council to vary the exemption and replace it with a local discount where:
- a property becomes unoccupied and is left substantially unfurnished (6-month exemption) (Class C discount); or
  - a property is vacant, and it requires or is undergoing major repair works to render it habitable; it is undergoing structural alteration; or less than 6 months have elapsed since the date on which such work was substantially completed (12-month exemption)(Class D discount).
- 11.3 The Council used this discretion from 2013 to introduce a discount of 100% for the first 4 weeks from the date the property became unoccupied and unfurnished and a 25% discount for 12 months for properties that are uninhabitable. The discount for properties that are unoccupied and unfurnished was amended further in 2014 to a 25% discount for a period of 3 months.
- 11.4 The discount was originally introduced in order to minimise the impact of the reduction in funding from the Government in respect of Council Tax Reduction i.e. generating an income from empty properties would mitigate the need for working age recipients in receipt of a Council Tax Reduction to pay a larger proportion of the Council Tax. It was also hoped that it would add a financial incentive to encourage empty homeowners to bring their properties back into use.
- 11.5 The 2014 change was made purely to address some unintended administrative issues with the 2013 discount, namely an increase in landlord and tenant disputes.
- 11.6 When the original discount was introduced the average void period was around 43 days. This has now reduced to 28 days for Mid Suffolk.
- 11.7 The Council is liable to pay Council Tax on unoccupied/unfurnished properties that they own. The cost of this falls on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

### **Proposal**

- 11.8 Reduce the discount period from 3 months to 28 days but keep the level of discount to 25% awarded to properties that are unoccupied and unfurnished (Class C discount). Full Council Tax would be payable after the 28-day discount has expired. The uninhabitable discount would remain unchanged at 25% discount for 12 months.
- 11.9 This would continue to incentivise occupation of the property and increase the level of Council Tax raised.
- 11.10 In considering whether a dwelling has been unoccupied and unfurnished for any one period, any periods not exceeding six weeks occupied and furnished shall be disregarded.
- 11.11 For 2018 £571,364 was raised from charging Council Tax on properties that have been unoccupied and unfurnished for more than 3 months. The Council's share is 10% of this amount, and 96.53% was collected in-year. If the discount had been restricted to 28 days, a further £47k would have been raised.

## 12. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE PLAN

12.1 Ensuring that the Council makes best use of its resources is what underpins the ability to achieve the priorities set out in the Corporate Plan. Specific links are to financially sustainable Councils, managing our corporate assets effectively, and property investment to generate income.

## 13. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

13.1 These are detailed in the report.

## 14. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

14.1 The provisions of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (LGFA 1992) requires the Council to set a balanced budget with regard to the advice of its Chief Finance Officer (Section 151).

## 15. RISK MANAGEMENT

15.1 This report is most closely linked with the Council's Significant Risk No. 13 – We may be unable to respond in a timely and effective way to financial demands and also Corporate Risk No. SE05 – if the Finance Strategy is not in place with a balanced position over the medium term the Councils will not be able to deliver the core objectives and service delivery may be at risk of not being delivered. Other key risks are set out below:

<b>Risk Description</b>	<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Mitigation Measures</b>
If the Council does not plan and identify options to meet the medium-term budget gap, then it will have a detrimental impact on the resources available to deliver services and the strategic priorities.	Unlikely - 2	Bad – 3	Clear priority outcomes and robust business cases for investment plus use of the Growth and Efficiency Fund to support the MTFs and an Investment Strategy. The S151 Officer will submit the Section 25 report on the robustness of estimates and adequacy of reserves in February 2019.

<b>Risk Description</b>	<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Mitigation Measures</b>
If economic conditions and other external factors are worse than budgeted for it could have an adverse effect on the Councils future medium-term financial position	Probable – 3	Noticeable - 2	Maintain the focus and momentum on reducing the budget gap throughout the financial year

## **16. CONSULTATIONS**

- 16.1 Consultations have taken place with Assistant Directors, Corporate Managers and other Budget Managers as appropriate.

## **17. EQUALITY ANALYSIS**

- 17.1 An equality impact assessment will be undertaken with each Assistant Director for any changes within the budget proposals.

## **18. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 18.1 Assistant Directors, Corporate Managers and other Budget Managers will consider the environmental impact of any savings proposals and throughout the year as they manage their budgets.

## **19. APPENDICES**

Title	Location
Appendix A – Draft General Fund Budget Summary 2020/21	Attached
Appendix B – Draft Capital Programme	Attached

## **20. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement

General Fund Financial Monitoring 2019/20 – April to September 2019 CAB/128

## DRAFT GENERAL FUND BUDGET SUMMARY 2020/21

<b>GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET SUMMARY</b>				
		<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>Movement</b>
		<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
1	Employee Costs	8,950	9,422	473
2	Premises	820	817	(2)
3	Supplies & Services	4,835	5,260	425
4	Transport	359	316	(44)
5	Contracts	3,418	3,610	192
6	Third Party Payments	13,817	12,461	(1,355)
7	Income	(20,504)	(19,827)	677
8	Charge to HRA	(1,058)	(1,139)	(82)
9	Charge to Capital	(4)	(4)	(0)
10	Transfers to Reserves	274	67	(207)
	<u>Capital Financing Charges</u>			
11	Interest Payable (Other)	229	97	(132)
12	Interest Payable (Pooled Funds)	177	30	(147)
13	Interest Payable (CIFCO)	562	510	(52)
14	Interest Payable (CIFCO - further investment)	89	106	17
15	Interest Payable (Other Commercial Investments)	282	421	139
16	MRP	1,038	1,229	191
	<u>Investment Income</u>			
17	Pooled Funds	(438)	(566)	(128)
18	Interest Receivable (Cash Surplus)	(19)	(4)	15
19	Interest Receivable (CIFCO)	(1,238)	(1,162)	76
20	Interest Receivable (CIFCO - further investment)	(307)	(594)	(287)
21	Interest Receivable (Other Commercial Investments)	(1,030)	(1,033)	(3)
<b>22</b>	<b>Net Service Cost</b>	<b>10,252</b>	<b>10,018</b>	<b>(234)</b>
23	Transfers from Reserves - earmarked	(1,196)	(777)	419
24	Growth and Efficiency Fund - Community Capacity Building	(250)	(250)	-
25	New Homes Bonus	(1,380)	(1,613)	(233)
26	S31 Business Rates Grant	(783)	(1,404)	(621)
29	Baseline business rates	(2,238)	(2,274)	(36)
30	Business rates levy	488	522	34
27	Business rates – collection fund deficit / (surplus)	597	-	(597)
31	Business rates – growth/pooling benefit	(293)	(293)	-
32	Rural Services Delivery Grant	(433)	(433)	-
33	Council Tax	(6,117)	(6,296)	(179)
28	Council Tax Surplus on Collection fund	(27)	(27)	-
<b>34</b>	<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>(11,632)</b>	<b>(12,845)</b>	<b>(1,213)</b>
35	Transfer to Growth and Efficiency Fund	1,380		(1,380)
36	Transfer to Commercial Development Risk Management reserve		1,000	1,000
<b>37</b>	<b>Shortfall / (Surplus) funding</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(1,827)</b>	<b>(1,827)</b>
	Council Tax Base	(36,841)	(37,302)	(461)
	Council Tax for Band D Property	£166.04	£168.79	£2.76
	<b>Council Tax £'000</b>	<b>£6,117</b>	<b>£6,296</b>	<b>£179</b>

## DRAFT CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2020/21 to 2023/24

MID SUFFOLK CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2019/20 - 2022/23		Anticipated c/f from 2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	TOTAL BUDGET (over 4 years)	Capital Receipts	Reserves	Revenue Contributions	Government Grants	S106	Borrowing	Total Financing
GENERAL FUND		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£000's	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Housing</b>														
Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant	418		579	376	376	376	1,707				1,707			1,707
Discretionary Housing Grants	0		100	100	100	100	400						400	400
Empty Homes Grant	0		100	100	100	100	400						400	400
<b>Total Housing</b>	<b>418</b>		<b>779</b>	<b>576</b>	<b>576</b>	<b>576</b>	<b>2,507</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,707</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>2,507</b>
<b>Environment and Projects</b>														
Replacement Refuse Freighters - Joint Scheme	0		188	0	1,922	188	2,298						2,298	2,298
Recycling Bins	0		100	100	100	100	400						400	400
<b>Total Environmental Services</b>	<b>0</b>		<b>288</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>2,022</b>	<b>288</b>	<b>2,698</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2,698</b>	<b>2,698</b>
<b>Communities and Public Access</b>														
Planned Maintenance / Enhancements - Car Parks	100		150	125	100	100	475						475	475
Streetcare - Vehicles and Plant Renewals	0		162	83	90	90	425						425	425
Play Equipment	0		50	50	50	50	200						200	200
Community Development Grants	150		189	189	189	189	756						756	756
<b>Total Communities and Public Access</b>	<b>250</b>		<b>551</b>	<b>447</b>	<b>429</b>	<b>429</b>	<b>1,856</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,856</b>	<b>1,856</b>
<b>Total Leisure Contracts</b>	<b>491</b>		<b>737</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>1,187</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,187</b>	<b>1,187</b>
<b>Investment and Commercial Delivery</b>														
Former Aldi Site	0		60	0	0	0	60						60	60
Former MSDC Offices (Needham Market)	0		664	0	0	0	664		664					664
Strategic Investment Fund	3,000		0	0	0	0	0							0
Gateway 14	1,847		0	0	0	0	0						0	0
CIFCO - further investment	1,334		8,666	3,834	0	0	12,500						12,500	12,500
Other Corporate Buildings	0		80	70	70	70	290						290	290
<b>Total Investment and Commercial Delivery</b>	<b>6,181</b>		<b>9,470</b>	<b>3,904</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>13,514</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>664</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>12,850</b>	<b>13,514</b>
<b>ICT &amp; Customer</b>														
ICT - Hardware / Software costs	0		200	200	200	200	800						800	800
<b>Total Corporate resources</b>	<b>0</b>		<b>200</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>800</b>
<b>Total General Fund Capital Spend</b>	<b>7,340</b>		<b>12,026</b>	<b>5,376</b>	<b>3,447</b>	<b>1,713</b>	<b>22,561</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>664</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,707</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>20,191</b>	<b>22,561</b>

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# Agenda Item 9

## MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

<b>COMMITTEE:</b> Cabinet	<b>REPORT NUMBER:</b> <b>MCa/19/38</b>
<b>FROM:</b> Councillor John Whitehead, Cabinet Member for Finance	<b>DATE OF MEETING:</b> 13 January 2020
<b>OFFICER:</b> Katherine Steel, Assistant Director, Corporate Resources Gavin Fisk, Assistant Director, Housing Melissa Evans, Corporate Manager, Finance and Commissioning & Procurement	<b>KEY DECISION REF NO.</b> CAB134

### DRAFT HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) BUDGET AND FOUR-YEAR OUTLOOK

#### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The report contains details of the draft revenue and capital budgets and the Council's strategic financial aim. The purpose of this report is to present the draft HRA Budget for 2020/21 and four-year outlook.
- 1.2 To enable Members to consider key aspects of the 2020/21 HRA Budget, including Council House rent levels.

#### 2. OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 The Housing Revenue Account Budget for 2020/21 and four-year outlook is an essential element in achieving a balanced budget and sustainable medium-term position, therefore no other options are appropriate in respect of this.

#### 3 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That the draft HRA Budget proposals for 2020/21 and four-year outlook set out in the report be endorsed for recommendation to Council on 27 February 2020, subject to further consideration at the next Cabinet meeting on 10 February 2020.
- 3.2 That the CPI + 1% increase of 2.7% in Council House rents, equivalent to an average rent increase of £2.19 a week be implemented.
- 3.3 That garage rents are kept at the same level as 2019/20.
- 3.4 That Sheltered Housing Service charges be increased by £2 per week to ensure recovery of the actual cost of service.
- 3.5 That Sheltered Housing utility charges be increased by 5% (average £0.62 increase per week).
- 3.6 That the budgeted deficit of £612k be transferred from the HRA Reserves in 2020/21.

3.7	That in principle, Right to Buy (RTB) receipts should be retained to enable continued development and acquisition of new council dwellings.
3.8	That the revised HRA Business Plan in Appendix B be noted.
<b>REASON FOR DECISION</b>	
<b>To bring together all the relevant information to enable Cabinet Members to review, consider and comment upon the Councils Housing Revenue Account budget before the February Cabinet and recommendations to Council.</b>	

#### 4 KEY INFORMATION

##### HRA Overall Financial and Budget Strategy (short and medium term)

- 4.1 The Councils HRA Business Plan presents a positive financial picture over the longer term (a thirty-year period as required under the self-financing regime)
- The Welfare Reform and Work Act allows rents to be increased by CPI (currently 1.7%) +1% for five years from 2020/21.
  - The removal of the HRA Debt Cap from 29 October 2018 means that local authorities can borrow to fund new homes without worrying about breaching this cap. Any borrowing will be subject to the Council adhering to the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Prudential Code.

#### 5 HRA Financial Position

- 5.1 The 30-year HRA Business Plan is predicated on an annual rent increase of 2,7% for 2020/21 followed by 4 years annual rent increase of CPI + 1%. The remaining 25 years are based on an annual rent increase of CPI only. The Business Plan is attached at Appendix B and shows additional detail for years 1-10.
- 5.2 The self-financing regime replaced the old HRA subsidy system on 1 April 2012. Mid Suffolk's settlement payment was calculated at £57m based on projected income, expenditure and existing stock values. This took HRA long-term borrowing to £82m.
- 5.3 The new build and acquisitions funding within the Capital Programme 2020 – 2025 totals £44.2m.
- 5.4 The table below shows the capital expenditure and financing for 2020/21 to 2023/24

<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>£m</b>
Housing Maintenance Programme	16.2
New Build & Acquisitions	44.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>60.4</b>
<b>Financing</b>	
Capital Receipts (disposals and RTB receipts) and HCA grant	17.7
Major Repairs Reserve	14.8
Revenue Contributions	11.4
Borrowing	16.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>60.4</b>

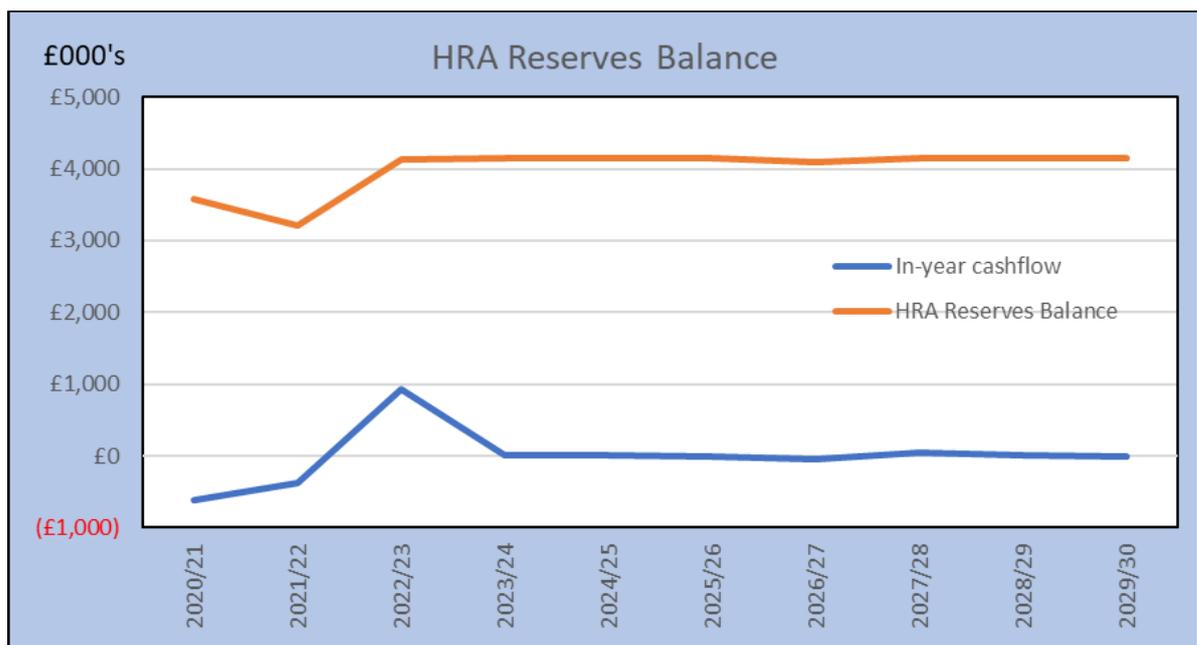
- 5.5 The Corporate Plan sets out clearly the Council’s aligned corporate outcomes. The key housing projects supporting delivery of the priorities are outlined in the HRA Business Plan.
- 5.6 New homes have delivered New Homes Bonus for the Council, additional rent and Council Tax and local businesses will also benefit. All these factors will bring growth to our local economy. Recent analysis by the Local Government Association and Capital Economics has found;
- Every £1 invested in a new social home generates £2.84 in the wider economy.
  - Every new social home would generate a saving of £780 per year in Housing Benefit.
  - Every new social home would generate a fiscal surplus through rental income.

## 6 HRA POTENTIAL RESOURCES AVAILABLE FOR INVESTMENT

- 6.1 A key aspect of the business plan is the reserve balance predicted over the coming years. Another important feature is the ability to repay debt and the amount available for building new homes. These are illustrated in the following graphs:

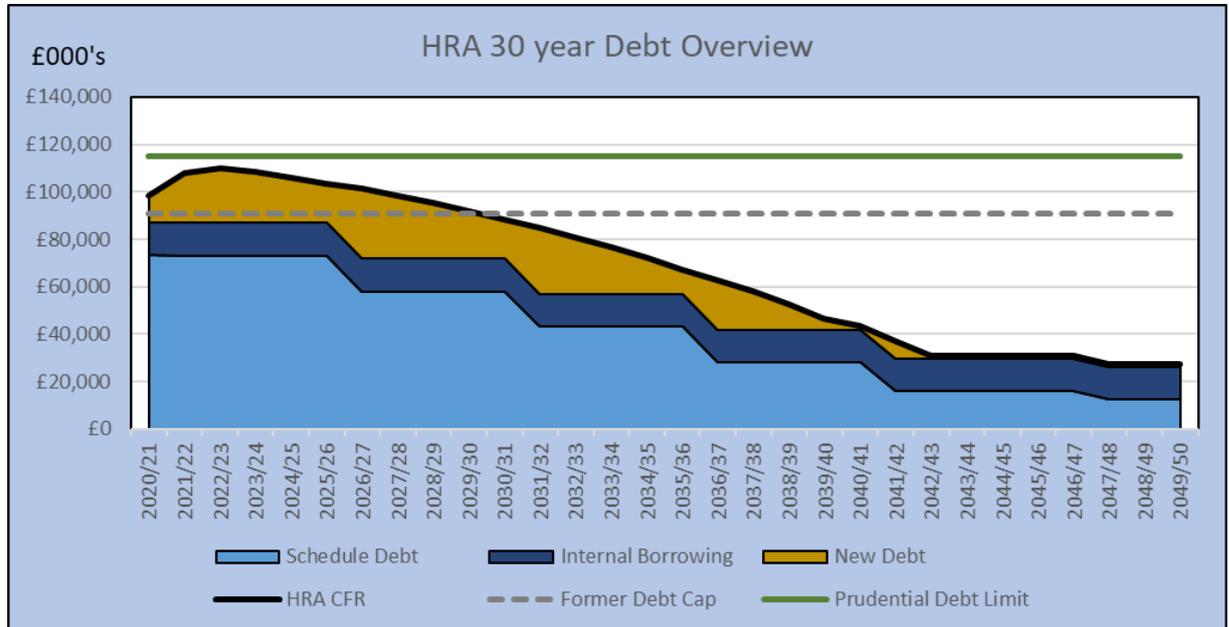
Graph A - Reserve balances from 2020/21 for 10 years

- 6.2 This graph shows reserve balances within the HRA increasing to £4.15m by Year 10 (2029/30). The New HRA Business Model allocates the revenue contribution to capital (RCCO) to increasing reserve balances, when it is not required to fund the capital programme. This change has been implemented from 2024/25 onwards and is to demonstrate that we can afford to repay any new debt as required by the CIPFA Prudential Code.



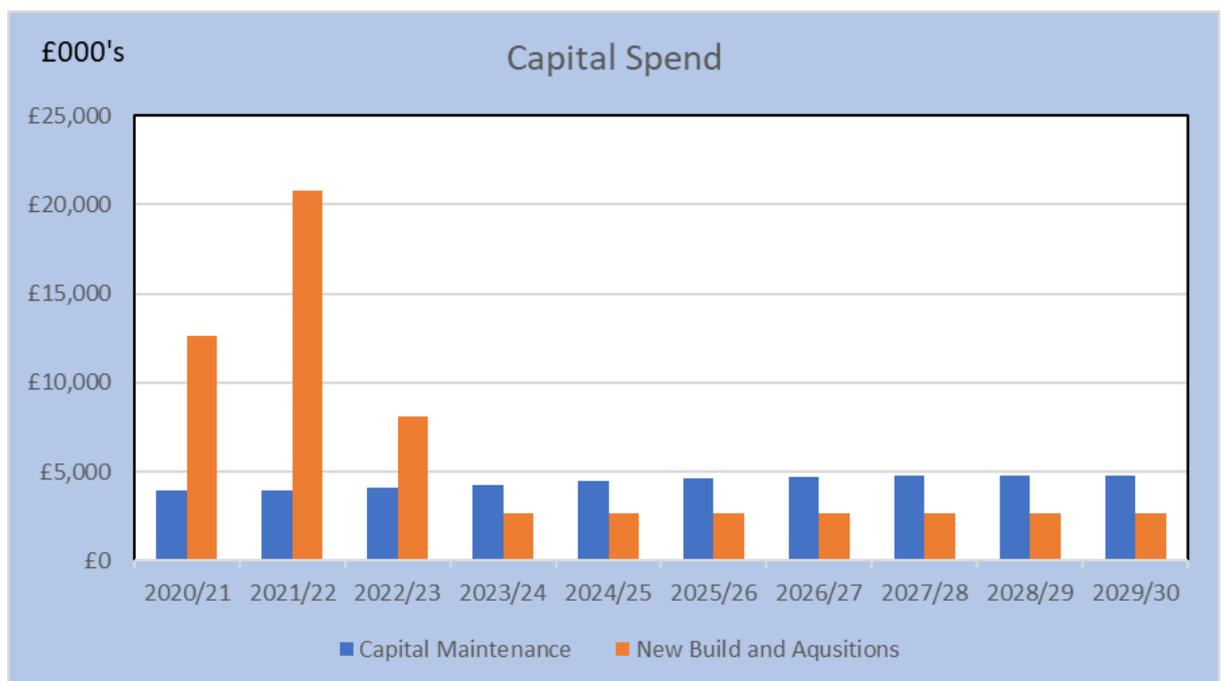
Graph B – HRA Debt Overview from 2020/21 for 30 years

6.3 This shows the different types of debt held by the HRA over the next 30 years. Most of the new debt is forecast to be repaid within 23 years and total debt to reduce significantly by 2048/49. Although the debt cap has been removed it also provides an indication of when the debt cap would have been breached had it remained.



Graph C - Capital Programme from 2020/21 for 10 years

6.4 This graph shows proposed capital programme expenditure within the HRA Business Plan up to Year 10 (2020/21 to 2029/30). The spend is split between capital maintenance on council dwellings and new build and acquisitions.



## **7 HRA KEY ACHIEVEMENTS**

7.1 A fundamental review of the housing service has been undertaken during 2019/20 to identify savings, efficiencies and income generation opportunities that will achieve a sustainable business plan into the future. The review has examined:

- New build programme and retention of Right to Buy receipts. The appointment of Icenii to look into development opportunities has enabled us to provide a 3-year development programme of new build and acquisitions.
- Introduction of locality-based working within the Building Service to reduce travel times, save fuel costs and improve service delivery.
- A review of the Travis Perkins materials contract which has delivered savings and efficiencies as well as improvement in customer service.
- Introduction of the Homes and Housing Strategy (2019-2024) and Homelessness Reduction and Rough Sleeping Strategies (2019-2024)
- Introduction of policies including a Mobility Scooter, Income Management and Regulatory Reform Order.
- Void performance being maintained at an average of 16 days.
- Introduction of pre-court and pre-eviction panels to reduce levels of debt and evictions due to the non-payment of rent.
- Tenant Board conducted their first Scrutiny review of the repairs service.
- Housing Conference held for all Housing staff

## **8 HRA INCOME AND SAVINGS OPPORTUNITIES**

8.1 The Councils Homes and Housing Strategy specifically identifies the need for the HRA to be as efficient and effective as possible with an ambition to save 1% of our budget across the 3 years 2019 – 2022.

8.2 During the past year the Housing Revenue Account has identified and made savings to its Revenue budgets including;

- Increasing leaseholder service/management charges by £9k
- Reduction in ICT project costs of £18k
- Removal of decorating vouchers for new tenants saving £3k
- Reducing reserves by £20k previously carried forward to support financial inclusion
- Removal of decorating grants for tenants that have had their home rewired saving £5k

8.3 Next year will see a focus on all contracts (more than £50k) to review the terms of each of these and to identify savings opportunities, as well as a decision on the long-term future of Building Services via a joint venture with Flagship Housing. A review of the HRA Business Plan will also be undertaken.

8.4 Sheltered housing – to ensure recovery of the actual cost, the 2020/21 service charges are to be increased by £2 per week. Following an increase in prices we are

also proposing a 5% increase in utility charges, which is an average increase of 62p per week.

- 8.5 Garage rents – A project to reduce the number of void garages began during 2019/20. Further work will continue in 2020/21 to identify alternative use of long term/unviable garage sites. It is proposed that garage rents are kept at the same level as the current year.
- 8.6 A project was undertaken by Corporate Managers in 2018/19 to identify where income could be increased, or savings made, for the next four years. Income increases or savings continue to be reflected in the budget and will be monitored during the year.

## 9 RETENTION OF RIGHT TO BUY RECEIPTS

- 9.1 Right to Buy (RTB) sales for Mid Suffolk were lower than those projected in the business plan. In 2018/19 Mid Suffolk sold 12 against an original projection of 35 sales.
- 9.2 The money received from RTB sales can only be used as a 30% contribution towards the cost of a replacement home. The remaining 70% of the replacement cost must be found from other HRA resources. As sales increase, it means that the level of match funding required (70%) increases. If the receipts are not spent within the 3-year period allowed, they must be repaid to Government with 4% above the base rate interest added. There has been a recent consultation on Right to Buys, which both Babergh and Mid Suffolk contributed to and we are currently awaiting the results of this.

## 10 HRA BUDGET 2020/21

- 10.1 The table below sets out the HRA budget for 2020/21, based on a 2.7% rent increase and highlights the movement from 2019/20.

	Budget 2019/20	Budget 2020/21	Movement Adverse/ (Favourable)	Comments
	£'000	£'000	£'000	
Dwelling Rents	(14,154)	(14,258)	(104)	Although rents have increased by 2.7% for 2020/21 generating £375k, a cost pressure of £267k has resulted due to 2019/20 being 53 rent weeks, compared to 52 weeks in 2020/21. Also delays in anticipated new build developments budgeted for in 2019/20 have impacted the anticipated income by £4k.
Service Charges	(671)	(689)	(18)	Reflects £2 increase per week
Non-Dwelling Income	(389)	(355)	34	Assumed increase in rental of void garages did not materialise This will be reviewed in 2020/21.
Other Income	(8)	(23)	(15)	Commercial rent income previously categorised as dwelling rent income.
Interest Received	(8)	(9)	(1)	
<b>Income</b>	<b>(15,230)</b>	<b>(15,334)</b>	<b>(104)</b>	

	Budget 2019/20	Budget 2020/21	Movement Adverse/ (Favourable)	Comments
	£'000	£'000	£'000	
General Management	2,162	2,485	323	£165k due to staffing cost changes which includes pay award/increments of £23k. IT maintenance costs of £40k due to the budget moving from the central ICT budget within the General Fund to the HRA. Overheads have increased by £40k due to additional customer services costs (% increased), £55k holiday accrual cost pressure not included in the budget last year, utilities cost pressure of £13k due to de-sheltered properties and other minor variances totalling a cost pressure of £10k.
Special Management	833	826	(7)	Reduction in community alarms due to de-sheltering of schemes £14k, partly offset by increment and pay award on staffing costs £7k.
Repairs and Maintenance	1,836	2,010	174	Salary savings of £111k as a result of the restructure (net of pay award/increments of £37k) £73k increase in recharge income, offset by increase in repairs, £24k saving on vehicle fuel based on 3-year average costs, £18k net saving on external contractors and tools and equipment. Increase in voids repairs £200k, and an increase of £200k for general repairs based on 3-year trend.
Property Services	1,284	1,255	(30)	Planned heating maintenance saving £100k due to closer scrutiny of the contract, planned maintenance painting increase of £95k due to backlog of work, asbestos survey £25k saving due to the Trades team now monitoring the arrangements.
Depreciation	3,709	3,709	0	
Interest payable	2,912	2,968	56	Increase due to higher borrowing costs
Revenue Contribution to Capital	2,827	2,604	(223)	Revised capital programme therefore funding required in year is reduced
Bad Debt Provision	86	89	3	Minor increase per the business model
<b>Deficit for Year</b>	<b>419</b>	<b>612</b>	<b>193</b>	

10.2 The revised and updated HRA Business Plan is attached at Appendix B, based on an annual rent increase of 2.7% in 2020/21 then increasing by CPI +1% from 2021/22 for four years. It also reflects;

- HCA and other scheme development costs;
- Funding to support spend of RTB receipts and capital programme expenditure.

10.3 HRA Business Plans are currently viable over the 30-year business plan with treasury debt forecast to reduce to £27.1m by year 30.

## **11 HRA CAPITAL INVESTMENT PROGRAMME**

11.1 The Capital Programme Summary is attached at Appendix A.

11.2 The engagement of Icenl to work with us to look into development sites for new homes has led to a proposed Capital Programme for 2019-2023 of 185 affordable homes and 85 shared ownership homes.

11.3 The major areas being developed over the next three years include the site at Elmwell, Needham Market and Stowmarket Middle School, and the former Council offices in Needham Market.

## **12 LINKS TO THE CORPORATE PLAN**

12.1 Ensuring that the Council makes best use of its resources is what underpins the ability to achieve the priorities set out in the Corporate Plan. Specific links are to financially sustainable Councils, managing our corporate assets effectively, and property investment to generate income.

## **13 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

13.1 These are detailed in the report.

## **14 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

14.1 There are none that apply.

## **15 RISK MANAGEMENT**

15.1 This report is most closely linked with the Council's Significant Risk No. 13 – We may be unable to respond in a timely and effective way to financial demands and also Corporate Risk No. SE05 – if the Finance Strategy is not in place with a balanced position over the medium term the Councils will not be able to deliver the core

objectives and service delivery may be at risk of not being delivered. Other key risks are set out below:

<b>Risk Description</b>	<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Mitigation Measures</b>
If we do not consider the ongoing impacts of the Welfare and Funding Reforms, then it could lead to unpreparedness for further changes.	Unlikely - 2	Bad – 3	Ensure adequate bad debt provision and that the Income Management Strategy seeks to mitigate the impact of the changes on residents, the Council's income streams and budgets.
If there are increases in inflation and other variables, then Council Housing self-financing could result in a greater risk to investment and service delivery plans.	Unlikely - 2	Noticeable – 2	Inflation and interest rate assumptions have been modelled in the HRA business plan. Capital receipts and capital programme funding reviewed.
If we fail to spend retained RTB receipts within 3-year period, then it will lead to requirement to repay to Government with an additional 4% interest.	Unlikely - 2	Bad - 3	Provision has been made in the updated HRA Investment Strategy to enable match funding and spend of RTB receipts.
If we borrow too much to fund new homes, we will not be able to pay the loan interest.	Unlikely - 2	Bad - 3	Follow the CIPFA Prudential Code which states Capital investment plans must be affordable, prudent and sustainable.
If Brexit has a negative impact on the Economy, then interest rates/inflation/house prices and demand/jobs could be impacted.	Probable - 3	Bad - 3	Understanding and acting on intelligence from Local Government Association (LGA) and CIPFA.
If capital data is inaccurate it could lead to problems with treasury management debt and cashflows.	Unlikely - 2	Bad - 3	Work closely with treasury management when setting capital budgets and how this will be financed. Monitor the capital spend quarterly and raise any changes with treasury management.

## **16 CONSULTATIONS**

16.1 Consultations have taken place with Assistant Directors, Corporate Managers and other Budget Managers as appropriate.

## **17 EQUALITY ANALYSIS**

17.1 An equality impact assessment will be undertaken with each Assistant Director for any changes within the budget proposals.

## **18 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

18.1 Assistant Directors, Corporate Managers and other Budget Managers will consider the environmental impact of any savings proposals and throughout the year as they manage their budgets.

## **19 APPENDICES**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Location</b>
Appendix A – Capital Programmes	Attached
Appendix B – Updated HRA Business Plan	Attached

## **20 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Housing Revenue Account Financial Monitoring 2019/20

**CAPITAL PROGRAMME FOR 2020/21 to 2023/24**

MID SUFFOLK	Expenditure					Financing					
CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2020/21 - 2023/24 HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	TOTAL BUDGET (Over 4 years) £000	External Grants & Contributions £000	Capital Receipts £000	Borrowing £000	Major Repairs Reserve £000	Revenue Contributions £000	Total Financing (Over 4 years) £000
<b>Housing Maintenance</b>											
Planned maintenance	3,505	3,515	3,633	3,815	14,468	-	-	-	14,362	106	14,468
ICT Projects	200	200	200	200	800	-	-	-	433	367	800
Environmental Improvements	40	40	40	40	160	-	-	-	4	156	160
Disabled Facilities Work	200	200	200	200	800	-	-	-	-	800	800
New build incl acquisitions	12,604	20,816	8,111	2,667	44,198	5,554	12,119	16,529	-	9,996	44,198
<b>Total HRA Capital</b>	<b>16,549</b>	<b>24,771</b>	<b>12,184</b>	<b>6,922</b>	<b>60,426</b>	<b>5,554</b>	<b>12,119</b>	<b>16,529</b>	<b>14,799</b>	<b>11,425</b>	<b>60,426</b>

**Note:** Financing is based on no Strategic Priority reserves being used to fund new build.

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**HRA Business Plan updated 2020/21 – 2029/30**

**Appendix B**

Year	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
£'000	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<b>INCOME:</b>										
Rental Income	(14,258)	(15,152)	(16,042)	(16,647)	(17,495)	(17,527)	(17,896)	(18,273)	(18,658)	(19,052)
Service Charges	(689)	(723)	(746)	(776)	(808)	(840)	(875)	(910)	(947)	(966)
Non-Dwelling Income	(355)	(389)	(389)	(397)	(405)	(413)	(421)	(429)	(438)	(447)
Grants & Other Income	(23)	(23)	(23)	(23)	(24)	(24)	(25)	(25)	(26)	(26)
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>(15,325)</b>	<b>(16,287)</b>	<b>(17,200)</b>	<b>(17,844)</b>	<b>(18,732)</b>	<b>(18,804)</b>	<b>(19,217)</b>	<b>(19,638)</b>	<b>(20,070)</b>	<b>(20,491)</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE:</b>										
General Management	2,485	2,158	2,224	2,329	2,447	2,505	2,572	2,626	2,680	2,736
Sheltered Housing Management	826	1,136	1,172	1,243	1,281	1,319	1,358	1,399	1,441	1,484
Other Management	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bad Debt Provision	89	94	100	103	108	108	111	113	115	118
Responsive & Cyclical Repairs	3,265	2,614	2,697	3,026	3,320	3,468	3,642	3,765	3,890	4,019
<b>Total Revenue Expenditure</b>	<b>6,664</b>	<b>6,002</b>	<b>6,193</b>	<b>6,701</b>	<b>7,156</b>	<b>7,400</b>	<b>7,682</b>	<b>7,903</b>	<b>8,126</b>	<b>8,357</b>
Interest Paid	2,968	3,146	3,147	3,116	2,875	2,858	2,891	2,484	2,457	2,435
Interest Received	(8)	(8)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(15)	(16)	(18)	(19)
Depreciation	3,709	3,709	3,709	3,820	4,203	4,283	4,364	4,447	4,532	4,618
<b>Net Operating Income</b>	<b>(1,992)</b>	<b>(3,438)</b>	<b>(4,161)</b>	<b>(4,218)</b>	<b>(4,510)</b>	<b>(4,277)</b>	<b>(4,293)</b>	<b>(4,820)</b>	<b>(4,972)</b>	<b>(5,101)</b>
<b>APPROPRIATIONS:</b>										
Revenue Provision (HRACFR)	0	0	653	1,787	4,505	4,278	4,358	4,761	4,966	5,095
Revenue Contribution to Capital	2,604	3,822	2,586	2,413	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Appropriations</b>	<b>2,604</b>	<b>3,822</b>	<b>3,239</b>	<b>4,200</b>	<b>4,505</b>	<b>4,278</b>	<b>4,358</b>	<b>4,761</b>	<b>4,966</b>	<b>5,095</b>
<b>ANNUAL CASHFLOW</b>	<b>612</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>(922)</b>	<b>(18)</b>	<b>(5)</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>(59)</b>	<b>(5)</b>	<b>(6)</b>
Reserves Opening Balance	(2,431)	(1,819)	(1,435)	(2,357)	(2,375)	(2,380)	(2,379)	(2,314)	(2,373)	(2,378)
<b>Reserves Closing Balance</b>	<b>(1,819)</b>	<b>(1,435)</b>	<b>(2,357)</b>	<b>(2,375)</b>	<b>(2,380)</b>	<b>(2,379)</b>	<b>(2,314)</b>	<b>(2,373)</b>	<b>(2,378)</b>	<b>(2,384)</b>

Note: The Revenue Provision is the payment of RCCO to reduce debt from 2022/2023

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# Agenda Item 10

## MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

<b>TO:</b> Cabinet	<b>REPORT NUMBER:</b> <b>MCa/19/39</b>
<b>FROM:</b> Cabinet Member for Planning	<b>DATE OF MEETING:</b> 13 January 2020
<b>OFFICER:</b> Robert Hobbs (Corporate Manager - Strategic Planning)	<b>KEY DECISION REF NO.</b> CAB177

### EYE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

#### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To present the findings of the Independent Examiner's Report on the content of the Eye Neighbourhood Plan Submission Draft document.
- 1.2 Subject to the implementation of the detailed recommendations contained within the Examiner's Report, it is proposed that Cabinet agree that the Eye Neighbourhood Plan proceed to a local referendum.

#### 2. OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 A local planning authority may propose to make a decision on a recommendation that differs from that set out by the Examiner in their report. If so, it must give its reason why and undertake further consultation before issuing a final decision. As appropriate, this may require the matter to be re-examined. For the reasons set out in section 4 below, this option has been discarded.
- 2.2 The recommended option set out below is that Mid Suffolk District Council agree that this Neighbourhood Plan proceed to a local referendum.

#### 3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That Eye Town Council be requested to make the necessary modifications to their Neighbourhood Plan in accordance with the Examiner's recommendations.
- 3.2 That, subject to the satisfactory completion of the above (to be agreed by the Corporate Manager for Strategic Planning), this Neighbourhood Plan be advanced to a local referendum covering the parish of Eye.

#### REASON FOR DECISION

- 3.3 To enable the Council to meet its statutory obligations under Section 17A of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) and to allow the Eye Neighbourhood Plan to proceed to a local referendum

## 4. KEY INFORMATION

- 4.1 The Localism Act 2011 introduced the concept of neighbourhood plans. These are plans developed by local communities covering the area in which they live and work, and provide them with an opportunity to prepare planning policies and allocate land to shape the future of their area. Consequently, each plan has its own character.
- 4.2 The Eye Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended). The key stages prior to independent examination are set out below:
- Area Designation: 18 October 2017
  - Regulation 14 Pre-submission Consultation: 9 Nov – 21 Dec 2018 (carried out by the Town Council).
  - Regulation 16 Submission Draft Consultation: 22 May – 5 July 2019 (carried out by the District Council). During this period, twenty-three written representations were received, one of which was subsequently withdrawn.

The Consultation Statement submitted by the Town Council sets out in more detail how they went about preparing this Plan. Officers at the District Council have also assisted the Town Council during its preparation.

- 4.3 The Plan has been independently examined by Rosemary Kidd, Dip TP MRTPI, a suitably qualified and experienced person who was independent of the plan making process. The examination was conducted via the written representation and through matters of clarification from the Examiner to which both the Parish and District Council responded. In the interests of openness and transparency, details of the latter were published and updated on the Councils website during the examination process
- 4.4 On 7 November 2019, the District Council received and published the Examiner's Final Report. It concludes that, subject to the modifications put forward the Plan meets the basic conditions and can proceed to a local referendum. The modifications of note are summarised in paragraph 4.5 below. A link to the Examiner's Full Report is provided at Appendix 1. The Examiner did not consider it necessary to extend the local referendum area.
- 4.5 In the, main the modifications involve improving the wording of policies and supporting text so they are clear and unambiguous and can be used in a consistent manner by decision makers. Those of note include:
- confirmation, [the Examiner having no comments to make on these], that the following policies all meet the basic conditions and require no modification: Eye 10 (Public Car Parking at the Rettery), Eye 11 (Cycle Parking), Eye 12 (Crematorium, Land W of Eye Cemetery), Eye 14 (Sports Hall & Related uses at Hartismere High School), Eye 24 (Shop Front Design), policies Eye 27 to Eye 29 (Public Rights of Way ...), and policies Eye 30 and Eye 31 (Electric Vehicle Charging)
  - ensuring that the clarity of the Policies Map is improved so that the boundaries of areas referred to in policies can be determined;

- the modification of two site allocation policies in particular: Eye 4 (Land at Eye Health Centre ...) and Eye 8 (Reserve Site South of Eye Airfield, Phase 2), which see the overall number of new dwellings being provided for in this Plan rise from c.580 to c.715 during the plan period. This increase comes about primarily through uncertainties over the availability of the Health Centre site which resulted in the deletion of Policy Eye 4 and, a modification to Policy Eye 8 which sees it no longer being referred to as reserve site, and which now include the conditions for when this site should be released. It is proposed that the latter site has the potential to deliver 174 new dwellings comprising a mix of affordable, open-market and sheltered accommodation;
- revised wording, agreed by both Town and District Council, relating to Policy Eye 5 - Paddock House;
- the deletion of two policies relating to landscape matters - Policy Eye 17 (Special Landscape Area), as it does not accord with national guidance and, Policy Eye 19 (Visually Important Open Space) as it was found to be unclear and imprecise and would not be capable of being applied consistently by decision makers;
- the deletion of Policy Eye 21 (Biodiversity Networks), as it does not provide sufficient detail on how high level of connectivity for biodiversity will be provided but a recommendation to Retain the justification and include more information of the sites in the plan area, including a map within the plan text;
- the deletion a number of proposed Local Green Spaces in Policy Eye 20 as they fail to meet the relevant criteria set out in national planning policy;
- the merging of policies Eye 22 (District Shopping Centre) and Eye 23 (Uses Appropriate to the District Shopping Centre) to address overlapping and repetition; *and*
- the re-classification of policies Eye 26 (Management of Car Parking Spaces) and Eye 32 (Traffic Management) as 'Community Aspirations' as these relate to non-planning policy matters.

4.6 The District Council must now consider all of the recommendations made, the reasons for them, and decide what action to take. It must also come to a formal view about whether the Plan meets the 'Basic Conditions'.

4.7 The 'Basic Conditions' are set out in Paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1990 (as amended). In order to satisfy them, the Plan must:

- *have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State,*
- *contribute to the achievement of sustainable development,*
- *be in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area,*
- *not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, European Union obligations, and*
- *meet the prescribed conditions in relation to the neighbourhood plan and the prescribed matters have been complied with in connection with the proposal for the neighbourhood plan.*

- 4.7 Officers have assessed the content of the Examiner's Report and each recommendation and concur with its findings. It is therefore recommended to Cabinet that all the modifications proposed be made by the Town Council. If Cabinet agrees, the District Council will need to publicise its decision (a 'Decision Statement') and advance the Plan to a local referendum.
- 4.9 The Housing and Planning Act 2016 has made it clear that the only modifications that the District Council can make at this stage are those required to ensure that:
- the plan is compatible with EU obligations,
  - the plan does not breach Convention Rights, or
  - those required for the purpose of correcting minor errors.

The District Council is therefore only able to exercise limited discretion at this point.

- 4.10 The task of modifying the Plan falls to the Town Council. While there are no prescribed periods for this process, a copy of the modified Plan will need to be ready before the date of the local referendum can be confirmed.
- 4.11 Eye Town Council have been working proactively with the District Council to prepare a final version of the Plan which incorporates all of the Examiner's recommendations. The Plan is therefore nearing the local referendum stage.
- 4.12 The referendum process is governed by the Neighbourhood Planning (Referendum) Regulations, 2012 (as amended). They set out that not less than 28 working days' notice must be provided of the date of the local referendum. Officers will work with colleagues in Electoral Services and the Town Council to agree an appropriate date on which the local referendum can take place.
- 4.13 The Town Council will be expected to promote the referendum but it should be noted that there are restrictions on the publication of promotional material, advertisements and expenses. The format of the Referendum question will be:

*'Do you want Mid Suffolk District Council to use the neighbourhood plan for Eye to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?'*

- 4.14 If more than 50% of those who vote in the referendum do so in favour of the Neighbourhood Development Plan, then it must be brought into legal force and be 'made' (adopted) by the District Council. A further paper would be presented to Full Council to ratify the eventual outcome.

## **5. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE PLAN**

- 5.1 The successful making (adoption) of the neighbourhood plan will enable the District Council to fulfil its corporate priorities in terms of housing delivery, business growth and community capacity building.

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The District Council receives £20,000 from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government for each neighbourhood plan once a referendum date has been set following a successful examination. This sum is paid to meet the District Council's costs in helping to deliver this Plan and will be sufficient in this case.

- 6.2 If the Eye Neighbourhood Plan is successfully ‘made’ (adopted) the Town Council will be eligible to receive 25% of any Community Infrastructure Levy receipts from qualifying development in its area.

## 7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared in accordance with the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1990, the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, 2004 and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations, 2012 (as amended). It has also had regard to the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations, 2004 and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations, 2017.
- 7.2 If ‘made’ (adopted), the Eye Neighbourhood Plan will become part of the Development Plan and be used, where relevant, to help determine planning applications in the neighbourhood area.

## 8. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 8.1 This report is most closely linked with Significant Business Risk No. 9 - Enabling communities to become more sustainable. The key risks are set out below:

<b>Risk Description</b>	<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Mitigation Measures</b>
The Neighbourhood Plan fails to receive support at the referendum stage.	Unlikely - 2	Bad - 3	The Town Council is responsible for promoting the referendum.
Legal challenge to the content of the Neighbourhood Plan and/or judicial review of the District Council’s decisions.	Unlikely - 2	Bad - 3	Ensuring that the relevant Regulations are followed and that the decision making processes are clear and transparent.

## 9. CONSULTATIONS

- 9.1 As noted in paragraph 4.2, the District Council undertook formal consultation on the content of the submission draft Eye Neighbourhood Plan between 21 May and 5 July 2019. The written representations can be accessed via the link at Appendix 2.
- 9.2 Guidance issued in early 2018 by the Independent Examiner Referral Service (NPIERS) afforded the Town Council / Neighbourhood Plan Working Group the opportunity to consider and respond to the submitted representations before the examination commenced. A link to the Town Council response is also provided at Appendix 2.

## 10. EQUALITY ANALYSIS

- 10.1 There are no equality or diversity implications arising directly from this report. An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is not required.

## 11. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 The consideration of environmental implications are an integral part of the Neighbourhood Plan preparation process. The Eye Neighbourhood Plan has been subject to the appropriate Strategic Environmental and Habitats Regulations screening assessments.

## 12. APPENDICES

Title	Location
(1) Examiners Final Report'	<a href="https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Neighbourhood-Planning/Eye-NP-Exam-Report.pdf">https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Neighbourhood-Planning/Eye-NP-Exam-Report.pdf</a>
(2) Submission Draft Representations <i>and</i> Eye PC response to the above	<a href="https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Neighbourhood-Planning/Eye-NP-R16-Reps-Updated.pdf">https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Neighbourhood-Planning/Eye-NP-R16-Reps-Updated.pdf</a> <a href="https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Neighbourhood-Planning/Eye-NP-R16-Reps-Response-ReservedMatters.pdf">https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Neighbourhood-Planning/Eye-NP-R16-Reps-Response-ReservedMatters.pdf</a>

## 13. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

The submission draft Eye Neighbourhood Plan can be found at:

<https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Neighbourhood-Planning/Eye-NP-R16-Plan-May19.pdf>

# Agenda Item 11

## MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

<b>TO:</b> Cabinet	<b>REPORT NUMBER:</b> <b>MCa/19/40</b>
<b>FROM:</b> David Burn, Cabinet Member for Planning	<b>DATE OF MEETING:</b> 13 January 2020
<b>OFFICER:</b> Robert Hobbs (Corporate Manager - Strategic Planning)	<b>KEY DECISION REF NO.</b> CAB178

### FRESSINGFIELD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

#### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To present the findings of the Independent Examiner's Report on the content of the Fressingfield Neighbourhood Plan Submission Draft document.
- 1.2 Subject to the implementation of the detailed recommendations contained within the Examiner's Report, it is proposed that Cabinet agree that the Fressingfield Neighbourhood Plan proceed to a local referendum.

#### 2. OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 A local planning authority may propose to make a decision on a recommendation that differs from that set out by the Examiner in their report. If so, it must give its reason why and undertake further consultation before issuing a final decision. As appropriate, this may require the matter to be re-examined. For the reasons set out in section 4 below, this option has been discarded.
- 2.2 The recommended option set out below is that this Mid Suffolk District Council agree that this Neighbourhood Plan proceed to a local referendum.

#### 3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That Fressingfield Parish Council be requested to make the necessary modifications to their Neighbourhood Plan in accordance with the Examiner's recommendations.
- 3.2 That, subject to the satisfactory completion of the above (to be agreed by the Corporate Manager for Strategic Planning), this Neighbourhood Plan be advanced to a local referendum covering the parish of Fressingfield.

#### REASON FOR DECISION

- 3.3 To enable the Council to meet its statutory obligations under Section 17A of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) and to allow the Fressingfield Neighbourhood Plan to proceed to a local referendum

## 4. KEY INFORMATION

- 4.1 The Localism Act 2011 introduced the concept of neighbourhood plans. These are plans developed by local communities covering the area in which they live and work, and provide them with an opportunity to prepare planning policies and allocate land to shape the future of their area. Consequently, each plan has its own character.
- 4.2 The Fressingfield Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended). The key stages prior to independent examination are set out below:
- Area Designation: 5 Feb 2018
  - Regulation 14 Pre-submission Consultation: 29 Mar – 17 May 2019 (carried out by the Parish Council).
  - Regulation 16 Submission Consultation: 5 Aug – 27 Sept 2019 (carried out by the District Council). During this period, thirteen written representations were received.

A Consultation Statement submitted by the Parish Council / Neighbourhood Plan Working Group sets out in more detail how they went about preparing this Plan. Officers at the District Council have also assisted the working group during its preparation.

- 4.3 The Plan has been independently examined by Janet Cheesley BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI, a suitably qualified and experienced person who was independent of the plan making process. The examination was conducted via the written representation, and through matters of clarification from the Examiner to which the Parish and District Council responded.
- 4.4 On 28 October 2019, the Examiner issued her Final Report. It concludes that the plan *“is a well-written document, which is easy to read”* and that *“subject to my recommendations, the Plan meets the basic conditions.”* The modifications of note are summarised in paragraph 4.5 below. A link to the Examiner’s Full Report is provided at Appendix 1. The Examiner did not consider it necessary to extend the local referendum area.
- 4.5 In the main the modifications involve improving the wording of policies so they are clear and unambiguous and can be used in a consistent manner by decision makers. These modifications include:
- a small revision to wording in policy FRES 2 (Housing Size, Type & Tenure) to ensure existing / future development takes account of the latest evidence of need;
  - a small revision to wording in policy FRES 3 (Infrastructure) to clarify that developer contributions may not always be in the form of funding, i.e., developers should provide or support the infrastructure necessary;
  - in policy FRES 4 (Community Facilities), a modification to remove a potential internal conflict within the Plan by making a clear distinction between what constitutes a community facility (i.e. the Sports & Social Club) and what is subsequently designated as a local green space (i.e. the school playing field);

- in policy FRES 7 (Local Green Spaces), and in addition to the modification already referred to previously, a number of other tweaks which clarify which parts of the allocated local green spaces accord with the NPPF definition and, that appropriate scale OS based maps be produced to precisely identify these boundaries.
- in policy FRES 8 (Non Designated Heritage Assets), deletion of the last paragraph which set out criteria relating to demolition, etc. as it was concluded that this elevated the status of heritage assets beyond the balanced judgement outlined in national planning policy;
- the re-wording of policy FRES 11 (Localised Flooding & Pollution) which is based on wording provided by, and which addresses a number of concerns raised by Suffolk County Council. [Note also the Parish Council gave their support to the proposed wording in their Consultation Responses statement.], *and*
- in policy FRES 15 (Transport & Highway Safety), and also address a representation made by County [and subsequently supported by the Parish Council] revised wording to the first paragraph to ensures the requirement to provide pedestrian / cycling linkages is appropriate to the scale and location of the proposed development and, deletion of the second paragraph in this policy which did not allow new development to increase traffic flows

4.6 The District Council must now consider all of the recommendations made, the reasons for them, and decide what action to take. It must also come to a formal view about whether the Plan meets the 'Basic Conditions'.

4.7 The 'Basic Conditions' are set out in Paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1990 (as amended). In order to satisfy them, the Plan must:

- *have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State,*
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4.8 Officers have assessed the content of the Examiner's Report and each recommendation and concur with its findings. It is therefore recommended to Cabinet that all the modifications proposed be made by the Parish Council. If Cabinet agrees the District Council will need to publicise its decision (a 'Decision Statement') and advance the Plan to a local referendum.

4.9 The Housing and Planning Act 2016 has made it clear that the only modifications that the District Council can make at this stage are those required to ensure that:

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- 'Do you want Mid Suffolk District Council to use the neighbourhood plan for Fressingfield to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?'*
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(2) Submission Draft Representations <i>and</i> Fressingfield PC response to the above	<a href="https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Neighbourhood-Planning/Fressingfield-NP-R16-Reps.pdf">https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Neighbourhood-Planning/Fressingfield-NP-R16-Reps.pdf</a> <a href="https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Neighbourhood-Planning/Fressingfield-NP-Reg16-Reps-Response.pdf">https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Neighbourhood-Planning/Fressingfield-NP-Reg16-Reps-Response.pdf</a>
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