

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING

Date: Wednesday 20 November 2019
Time: 6.30 pm
Venue: Town Hall, High Street, Maidstone

Membership:

Councillors Mrs Blackmore, M Burton, Chappell-Tay, Clark, Cox (Chairman), English, Mrs Gooch, Harvey, McKay, Mortimer, Newton, Perry (Vice-Chairman), Purle, Round and Springett

The Chairman will assume that all Members will read the reports before attending the meeting. Officers are asked to assume the same when introducing reports.

<u>AGENDA</u>	<u>Page No.</u>
1. Apologies for Absence	
2. Notification of Substitute Members	
3. Urgent Items	
4. Notification of Visiting Members	
5. Disclosures by Members and Officers	
6. Disclosures of Lobbying	
7. To consider whether any items should be taken in private because of the possible disclosure of exempt information.	
8. Minutes of the Meeting Held on 23 October 2019	1 - 6
9. Minutes of the Meeting Held on 11 November 2019	7 - 8
10. Presentation of Petitions (if any)	
11. Questions and answer session for members of the public (if any)	
12. Committee Work Programme	9 - 10
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14. Medium Term Financial Strategy 2020/21-2024/25	56 - 100

Issued on Tuesday 12 November 2019

Continued Over/:

Alison Broom

Alison Broom, Chief Executive

15. Reference on Whole Council Elections from the Democracy and General Purposes Committee Held on 13 November 2019 (if any)

PUBLIC SPEAKING AND ALTERNATIVE FORMATS

If you require this information in an alternative format please contact us, call **01622 602899** or email committee@maidstone.gov.uk.

In order to speak at this meeting, please contact Democratic Services using the contact details above, by 5 p.m. one clear working day before the meeting (i.e. Monday 18 November 2019). If asking a question, you will need to provide the full text in writing. If making a statement, you will need to tell us which agenda item you wish to speak on. Please note that slots will be allocated on a first come, first served basis.

To find out more about the work of the Committee, please visit www.maidstone.gov.uk.

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 23 OCTOBER 2019

Present: Councillor Cox (Chairman), and
Councillors Mrs Blackmore, Brice, D Burton, M Burton,
Chappell-Tay, Clark, Cox, English, Garten, Mrs Gooch,
Harvey, McKay, Mortimer, Newton, Perry and Purle

Also Present: Councillors T Sams

74. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

It was noted that apologies had been received from Councillor Round.

75. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

It was noted that the following Members were present as Substitute Members:

- Councillor D Burton for Councillor Round until the arrival of Councillor Brice who then attended as a Substitute Member for Councillor Round and Councillor D Burton left the meeting.
- Councillor Garten for Councillor Springett.

76. URGENT ITEMS

The Chairman informed the Committee that he had decided to accept a Question from Councillor T Sams and would take it as part of item 10 – Questions and answer sessions for members of the public.

The Chairman informed the Committee that he had also decided to take the nomination form for Councillor Garten under item 14 – Nominations to Outside Bodies.

77. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

It was noted that Councillor T Sams was present as a Visiting Member to ask a question for item 10 – Question and answer session for members of the public.

78. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

79. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

Councillor Gooch stated that she had been lobbied on item 14 – Nominations to Outside Bodies.

80. TO CONSIDER WHETHER ANY ITEMS SHOULD BE TAKEN IN PRIVATE BECAUSE OF THE POSSIBLE DISCLOSURE OF EXEMPT INFORMATION.

RESOLVED: That item 15 – Granada House be taken in private due to the possible disclosure of exempt information.

81. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18 SEPTEMBER 2019

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 18 September 2019 be agreed as an accurate record of the meeting and signed.

82. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS (IF ANY)

There were no petitions.

83. QUESTIONS AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC (IF ANY)

Question from Ms Joanna Burns

Ms Burns asked the following question of the Chairman of the Committee:
“It has been six months since Maidstone Borough Council declared a climate emergency. What progress has been made with regards to this such as:-

- *Introducing the City Tree and/or planting more trees;*
- *Not building houses or roads on green spaces;*
- *Building an extensive integrated cycle path system;*
- *Solar panels on new builds.*

And to this end when will policies such as these be implemented?”

Ms Burns asked the following supplementary question:

“When will the public get to see a report?”

The Chairman responded to both the question and supplementary question and invited Group Leaders or their representatives to do the same. The full response was recorded on the webcast and was made available on the Maidstone Borough Council website.

Question from Cllr Tom Sams

Councillor Tom Sams asked the following question of the Chairman of the Committee

"On Wednesday 18th September at the P&R committee, in relation to the garden community proposal at Lenham, it was written in the report that there is IRO £150K to be spent this financial year. Additionally there is a £5 million risk to this Council. The £5m was not reflected in the minutes, nor the subsequent press release, nor in response to your question asked at council the following week. Is the figure £5m as stated in the report?"

The Chairman responded to the question. The full response was recorded on the webcast and was made available on the Maidstone Borough Council website.

Note: The meeting was adjourned during the course of this item as there was a fire drill and the Town Hall was evacuated. The Committee returned and continued on this item.

84. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Director of Finance and Business Improvement updated the Committee on their work programme and informed them that items of business on 20 November 2019 would be moved to 4 December 2019 to better balance workload.

RESOLVED: That the Committee Work Programme be noted.

85. BUSINESS RATES RETENTION PROJECTS - QUARTERLY UPDATE

The Director of Finance and Business Improvement gave a short update on the Business Rates Retention Projects. In particular the spend on Housing and Rough Sleepers was drawn to the Committee's attention as the £80k had been committed in year; though that did not yet show in the report.

RESOLVED:

1. That the further progress with the 2018/19 BRR pilot projects (set out in paragraph 2.5 and Appendix 1) be noted; and
2. That the early progress with the 2019/20 BRR pilot projects (set out in paragraph 2.14 and Appendix 2) be noted.

Note: Councillor Brice arrived after consideration of this item (7.12pm)

86. PROPERTY ASSET REVIEW UPDATE

The Director of Finance and Business Improvement presented the report providing the regular update on the progress of the 'Next Steps' work stream of the Property Asset Review.

The Committee discussed the usage of the Carriage Museum as part of a discussion on the Archbishop's Palace. The Director confirmed that the Archbishop's Palace was the priority building as it was being vacated by KCC and the future of the building needed consideration. However, there were concerns about a wasted opportunity to look at the Carriage Museum (the Archbishop's stables). It was therefore agreed to remove the word spatial from the report in order to suggest a wider look at the context of the two buildings.

RESOLVED: That, with the word spatial removed from paragraph 2.8, the progress made on the effective use of the Council's property assets over the last three months and in response to the Property Asset Review report be noted.

87. NOMINATIONS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

The Democratic and Electoral Services Manager presented the report on nominations to outside bodies and requested that the Committee determine who they would like to appoint to the One Maidstone BID Advisory Board, on the extra place that had been requested by the Committee previously, and onto the two vacancies on the Upper Medway Internal Drainage Board.

The Committee agreed to appoint the two nominees, Councillors Harper and Round, to the two vacancies on the Upper Medway Internal Drainage Board. The Committee then considered the two nominations received for the single One Maidstone BID Advisory Board and resolved to appoint Councillor Garten.

RESOLVED:

1. That Councillors Harper and Round be appointed to the Upper Medway Internal Drainage Board; and
2. That Councillor Garten be appointed to the One Maidstone BID Advisory Board.

Note: The meeting was adjourned from 7.40pm to 7.50pm to allow Members time to consider the part II papers. Councillor Purle left the meeting after consideration of this item.

88. GRANADA HOUSE

The Housing Delivery Manager presented the report on a rooftop extension to Granada House. The proposal was to award the contract to a specialist company and to carry out a wider refurbishment of the building. The intention was to create additional market rent units that would be retained by the Council, within its property company Maidstone Property Holdings Limited.

The Committee requested early engagement with Ward Members on proposals as they came forward to ensure that issues that had occurred on previous Council led building projects did not arise this time. Concerns were raised about the rising rents that would result from improving the building and were assured that the Council would raise rents gradually, on a renewal basis, meaning they would not be causing homelessness and would be in line with market rates for the area.

Some concerns were raised about the viability of building a fourth storey and the value that the Council would get out of the building, particularly without lift access. It was noted that providing a lift was not a building regulations requirement for four storeys and there were other examples of similar setups elsewhere.

Development and refurbishment of the building would also have a positive impact on the ground floor retail units.

The following was proposed:

Recommendations as per the papers and add at the end of recommendation 3. '...and subject to the continuing viability of the scheme as outlined in 5.4 with the outcome of that work being reported back to the committee.'

The proposal was not carried.

The following was then proposed:

Recommendations as per the papers and add the end of recommendation 3. '...and subject to the continuing viability of the scheme as outlined in 5.4.'

The proposal was agreed.

RESOLVED:

1. That the tender price submission bid by preferred contractor described in the report and the indicative financial returns for the new build roof top extension to Granada House shown at Exempt Appendix 1, which support the Housing Development and Regeneration Investment Plan be noted;
2. That the Director of Finance and Business Improvement be granted delegated authority to appoint and enter into a JCT Pre Contract Services Agreement (PCSA) with the preferred contractor for stage 1 (pre-construction phase) works to Granada House;
3. That the Director of Finance and Business Improvement be granted delegated authority to enter into a JCT Design and Build and Minor Works Contract with the preferred contractor for the stage 2 (construction phase) works to Granada House, subject to satisfactory performance and planning consent being achieved in

stage 1 and subject to the continuing viability of the scheme as outlined in 5.4; and

4. That the Head of Mid Kent Legal Services be authorised to instruct/appoint the Solicitors required and to complete the necessary contract documentation and agreements associated with the works and consultancy services provided for Granada House, on the terms agreed by the Director of Finance and Business Improvement.

89. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 9.02 p.m.

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 11 NOVEMBER 2019

**Present: Councillor Cox (Chairman), and
Councillors Mrs Gooch, McKay, Newton, Perry and
Purle**

90. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

It was noted that Councillor Chappell-Tay had given her apologies.

However, as the meeting had been called urgently and some Members would have been unaware of it the Committee agreed to accept apologies from all absent Members of the Committee.

91. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

There were no substitute members.

92. URGENT ITEMS

The Chairman informed the Committee that the meeting had been called urgently to consider a single item, Item 8. – Outside Body – Substitute Appointment to Upper Medway Internal Drainage Board.

The reason for urgency was that a meeting of the Upper Medway Internal Drainage Board was due to be held on 12 November 2019 and the Council needed full representation on the Board.

93. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

There were no visiting members.

94. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

95. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

96. TO CONSIDER WHETHER ANY ITEMS SHOULD BE TAKEN IN PRIVATE
BECAUSE OF THE POSSIBLE DISCLOSURE OF EXEMPT INFORMATION.

RESOLVED: That all items be taken in public, as proposed.

97. OUTSIDE BODY - SUBSTITUTE APPOINTMENT TO UPPER MEDWAY
INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

RESOLVED: That Councillor Perry be appointed as a Substitute Member for Councillor Round, to attend and vote at the Upper Medway Internal Drainage Board during his period of absence.

2019/20 WORK PROGRAMME

	Committee	Month	Lead	Report Author
Asset Management Strategy	P&R	22-Jan-20	Mark Green	Georgia Hawkes
Debt Recovery Policy	P&R	22-Jan-20	Alison Broom	Sheila Coburn
Collection Fund adjustment 2018/19 and Council Tax base 2019/20	P&R	22-Jan-20	Mark Green	Chris Hartgrove
Business Rates Retention Projects - quarterly update	P&R	22-Jan-20	Mark Green	Chris Hartgrove
Fees & Charges 2019/20	P&R	22-Jan-20	Mark Green	Chris Hartgrove
Medium Term Financial Strategy - Capital Programme 2020/21 -	P&R	22-Jan-20	Mark Green	Chris Hartgrove
Property Asset Review - quarterly update	P&R	22-Jan-20	Mark Green	Deborah Turner
Equalities Update	P&R	22-Jan-20	Angela Woodhouse	Orla Sweeney
Final Budget Proposals 2020/21	P&R	12-Feb-20	Mark Green	Chris Hartgrove
Q3 Budget and Performance Monitoring	P&R	12-Feb-20	Mark Green	Chris Hartgrove
Annual Reports of Outside Bodies and Consideration of Outside Bodies for the Next Municipal Year	P&R	12-Feb-20	Angela Woodhouse	Mike Nash
KPIs for 2020-21	P&R	25-Mar-20	Angela Woodhouse	Angela Woodhouse
Risk Management Update	P&R	25-Mar-20	Rich Clarke	Rich Clarke

2019/20 WORK PROGRAMME

	Committee	Month	Lead	Report Author
Business Rates Retention Projects - quarterly update	P&R	22-Apr-20	Mark Green	Chris Hartgrove
Property Asset Review - quarterly update	P&R	22-Apr-20	Mark Green	Deborah Turner
Biodiversity and Climate Change Action Plan	P&R	22-Apr-20	Biodiversity and Climate Change Working Group	Angela Woodhouse
Commissioning and Procurement Strategy	P&R	TBC	Mark Green	Georgia Hawkes
Kent Medical Campus Innovation Centre	P&R	TBC	John Foster	Abi Lewis

Policy & Resources Committee 20 November 2019

2nd Quarter Budget & Performance Monitoring Report 2019/20

Final Decision-Maker	Policy & Resources Committee
Lead Head of Service	Mark Green, Director of Business Improvement
Lead Officer and Report Authors	Chris Hartgrove, Interim Head of Finance Paul Holland, Senior Finance Manager (Client) Clare Harvey, Data Intelligence Officer
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

This report sets out the 2019/20 overall financial and performance position for the Council, including the services reporting directly into the Policy and Resources Committee (PRC), as at 30th September 2019 (Quarter 2). The primary focus is on:

- The 2019/20 Revenue and Capital budgets; and
- The 2019/20 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that relate to the delivery of the Strategic Plan 2019-2045.

The combined reporting of the financial and performance position enables the Committee to consider and comment on the issues raised and actions being taken to address both budget pressures and performance issues in their proper context, reflecting the fact that the financial and performance-related fortunes of the Council are inextricably linked.

Budget Monitoring

With regard to revenue, at the Quarter 2 stage, the Council has incurred net expenditure of £6.813 million against a profiled budget of £7.553 million, representing an under spend of £740,000. For the services reporting directly to PRC, net expenditure of £3.002 million has been incurred against a profiled budget of £3.197 million, representing an under spend of £195,000. An over spend of £352,000 against the PRC annual budget of £12.100 million is anticipated at the year end.

With regard to capital, at the Quarter 2 stage, the Council has incurred total expenditure of £5.443 million against a total budget allocation within the Capital Programme of £51.754 million. It is anticipated that there will be overall slippage of £15.650 million into 2020/21. Expenditure for services reporting directly to PRE of £689,000 has been incurred against the annual budget of £29.440 million. It is anticipated that there will be slippage of £6.655 million.

Performance Monitoring

All reportable KPIs achieved their Quarter 2 target, with only two exceptions.

Purpose of Report

The report enables the Committee to consider the financial position and any performance issues at the end of September 2019.

This report makes the following recommendations to the Committee:

1. That the Revenue position at the end of the Quarter 2 and the actions being taken or proposed to improve the position, where significant variances have been identified, be noted.
2. That the Capital position at the end of Quarter 2 be noted.
3. That the Summary of Performance for Quarter 2 for Key Performance Indicators is noted.

Timetable

<i>Meeting</i>	<i>Date</i>
Policy & Resources Committee	20 November 2019

2nd Quarter Budget & Performance Monitoring Report 2019/20

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	<p>This report monitors actual activity against the revenue budget and other financial matters set by Council for the financial year. The budget is set in accordance with the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy which is linked to the Strategic Plan and corporate priorities.</p> <p>The key performance indicators and strategic actions are part of the Council's overarching Strategic Plan 2019-45 and play an important role in the achievement of corporate objectives. They also cover a wide range of services and priority areas.</p>	Director of Finance and Business Improvement (Section 151 Officer)
Cross Cutting Objectives	This report enables any links between performance and financial matters to be identified and addressed at an early stage, thereby reducing the risk of compromising the delivery of the Strategic Plan 2019-20, including its cross-cutting objectives.	Director of Finance and Business Improvement (Section 151 Officer)
Risk Management	This is addressed in Section 5 of this report.	Director of Finance and Business Improvement (Section 151 Officer)
Financial	<p>Financial implications are the focus of this report through high level budget monitoring. Budget monitoring ensures that services can react quickly enough to potential resource problems. The process ensures that the Council is not faced by corporate financial problems that may prejudice the delivery of strategic priorities.</p> <p>Performance indicators and targets are closely linked to the allocation of resources and determining good value for money. The financial implications of any proposed changes are also identified and taken into account in the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy and</p>	Senior Finance Manager (Client)

	associated annual budget setting process. Performance issues are highlighted as part of the budget monitoring reporting process.	
Staffing	<p>The budget for staffing represents a significant proportion of the direct spend of the council and is carefully monitored. Any issues in relation to employee costs will be raised in this and future monitoring reports.</p> <p>Having a clear set of performance targets enables staff outcomes/objectives to be set and effective action plans to be put in place.</p>	Director of Finance and Business Improvement (Section 151 Officer)
Legal	<p>The Council has a statutory obligation to maintain a balanced budget and this monitoring process enables the committee to remain aware of issues and the process to be taken to maintain a balanced budget for the year.</p> <p>There is no statutory duty to report regularly on the Council's performance. However, under Section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999 (as amended) a best value authority has a statutory duty to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. One of the purposes of the Key Performance Indicators is to facilitate the improvement of the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of Council services. Regular reports on Council performance help to demonstrate best value and compliance with the statutory duty.</p>	Team Leader (Corporate Governance), MKLS
Privacy and Data Protection	The performance data will be held and processed in accordance with the data protection principles contained in the Data Protection Act 2018 and in line with the Data Quality Policy, which sets out the requirement for ensuring data quality. There is a program for undertaking data quality audits of performance indicators.	Team Leader (Corporate Governance), MKLS
Equalities	No impact as a result of the recommendations in this report. An EqIA would be carried out as part of a policy or service change should one be identified.	Equalities and Corporate Policy Officer

Public Health	Performance recommendations will not negatively impact on population health or that of individuals.	Public Health Officer
Crime and Disorder	No specific issues arise.	Director of Finance and Business Improvement (Section 151 Officer)
Procurement	Performance Indicators and Strategic Milestones monitor any procurement needed to achieve the outcomes of the Strategic Plan.	Director of Finance and Business Improvement (Section 151 Officer)

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Medium-Term Financial Strategy for 2019/20 to 2023/24 - including the budget for 2019/20 - was approved by full Council on 27th February 2019. This report updates the Policy and Resources Committee (PRC) on how Council services have performed in the first six months of the financial year with regard to revenue and capital expenditure against approved budgets.
- 2.2 This report also includes an update to PRC on progress against the Council's Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).
- 2.3 Attached at **Appendix 1**, is a report setting out the revenue and capital spending position at the Quarter 2 stage. Attached at **Appendix 2**, is a report setting out the position for the KPIs for the corresponding period.

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 There are no matters for decision in this report. The Committee is asked to note the contents but may choose to take further action depending on the matters reported here.

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 In considering the current position on the revenue budget, the Capital Programme and the KPIs at the end of September 2019, the Committee can choose to note this information or it could choose to take further action.
- 4.2 The Committee is requested to note the content of the report and agree on any necessary action to be taken in relation to the budget position or the KPIs report.

5. RISK

- 5.1 This report is presented for information only and has no direct risk management implications.
- 5.2 The Council has produced a balanced budget for both revenue and capital income and expenditure for 2019/20. This budget is set against a backdrop of limited resources and a difficult economic climate. Regular and comprehensive monitoring of the type included in this report ensures early warning of significant issues that may place the Council at financial risk. This gives the Committee the best opportunity to take actions to mitigate such risks.
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6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 6.1 The KPI Update is reported quarterly to the service committees; Communities Housing and Environment Committee, Strategic Planning & Infrastructure Committee and Economic Regeneration & Leisure Committee. Each Committee will receive a report on the relevant priority action areas. The full set of KPIs are presented to the Committee, based on the priority areas of: "A Thriving Place", "Safe, Clean and Green", "Homes and Communities" and "Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure".
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7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 7.1 The Quarter 2 Performance and Budget Monitoring reports are being considered by the relevant service committees during October and November 2019, including this full report to PRC on 20th November 2019.
- 7.2 Details of the discussions which have taken place at service committees regarding budget and performance management will be reported to this Committee where appropriate.
- 7.3 The Council could choose not to monitor the Strategic Plan and/or make alternative performance management arrangements, such as reporting frequency. This is not recommended as it could lead to action not being taken against performance during the year, and the Council failing to deliver its priorities.
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8. REPORT APPENDICES

- Appendix 1: Second Quarter Budget Monitoring 2019/20
 - Appendix 2: Second Quarter Key Performance Indicators 2019/20
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9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

Second Quarter Budget Monitoring 2019/20

Policy & Resources Committee

20 November 2019

Lead Officer: Mark Green

17 Report Authors: Chris Hartgrove/Paul Holland

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Executive Summary

This report provides members of the Policy & Resources Committee (PRC) with an overview of progress against the 2019/20 revenue and capital budgets as at 30th September 2019 (i.e. the Quarter 2 cumulative position) for the Council overall, including those services reporting directly into the PRC.

The analysis also includes both revenue and capital year-end projections (to 31st March 2020), and updates the Committee on a range of other inter-related financial matters including Local Tax Collection, Reserves and Balances, Treasury Management and Maidstone Property Holdings.

The headlines for Quarter 2 are as follows:

Part A: Second Quarter Revenue Budget 2019/20

- Overall net expenditure for the Council is £6.813 million, compared to the profiled budget of £7.553 million, representing an under spend of £0.74 million. The Council is also forecast to remain within its overall net revenue expenditure budget of £21.138 million for the year, with an additional income stream anticipated in Quarter 3 expected to offset current spending pressures; and
- Overall net expenditure for the services reporting directly to PRE is £3.002 million, compared to the profiled budget of £3.197 million, representing an under spend of £195,000. However, at this stage, PRC is expected to overspend its overall net revenue expenditure budget for the year, recording a small overspend of £352,000 against its annual budget of £12.100 million.

Part B: Second Quarter Capital Budget 2019/20

- Capital expenditure for the Council overall of £5.443 million has been incurred against the annual budget of £51.754 million. At this stage, it is anticipated that there will be slippage of £15.650 million at year end; and
- Capital expenditure for the services reporting directly to PRE of £689,000 has been incurred against the annual budget of £29.440 million. At this stage, it is anticipated that there will be slippage of £6.655 million.

Part C: Local Tax Collection 2019/20

- Collection rates for Council Tax and Business Rates for Quarter 2 were both just marginally off target; and
- Latest available projections for the Kent Business Rates Pool (@ Quarter 1, as reported to PRC 18th September 2019) are forecasting that forecast income retained from the growth in Business Rates is ahead of original expectations.



Part D: Reserves & Balances 2019/20

- At the Quarter 2 stage, the balance on the General Fund reserve is expected to decrease to £8.819 million by 31st March 2020, which is above the minimum contingency balance of £2.0 million adopted by the Council.

Part E: Treasury Management 2019/20

- The Council held short-term investments totaling £27.98 million at 30th September 2019.

Part F: Maidstone Property Holdings Ltd. (MPH)

- MPH net rental income from April 2019 to September 2019 was £74,569, which compares to £39,447 over the same period in 2018/19, representing a year-on-year increase of 89%.

Part A

Second Quarter Revenue Budget 2019/20



A1) Revenue Budget: Council

A1.1 At the Quarter 2 stage, overall net expenditure for the Council is £6.813 million, compared to the profiled budget of £7.553 million, representing an under spend of £0.74 million. Based on forward projections, the Council is expected to remain within its overall net revenue expenditure budget of £21.138 million for the year.

A1.2 Charts 1 and 2 below show the income and expenditure position for each service committee.

Chart 1: Revenue Budget Performance: INCOME BY SERVICE COMMITTEE

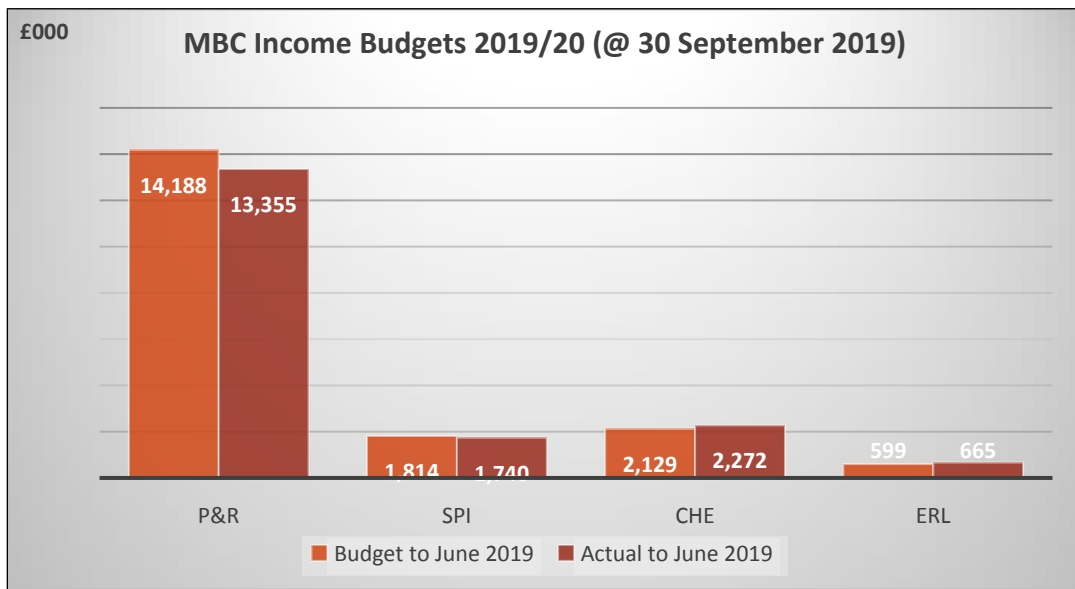
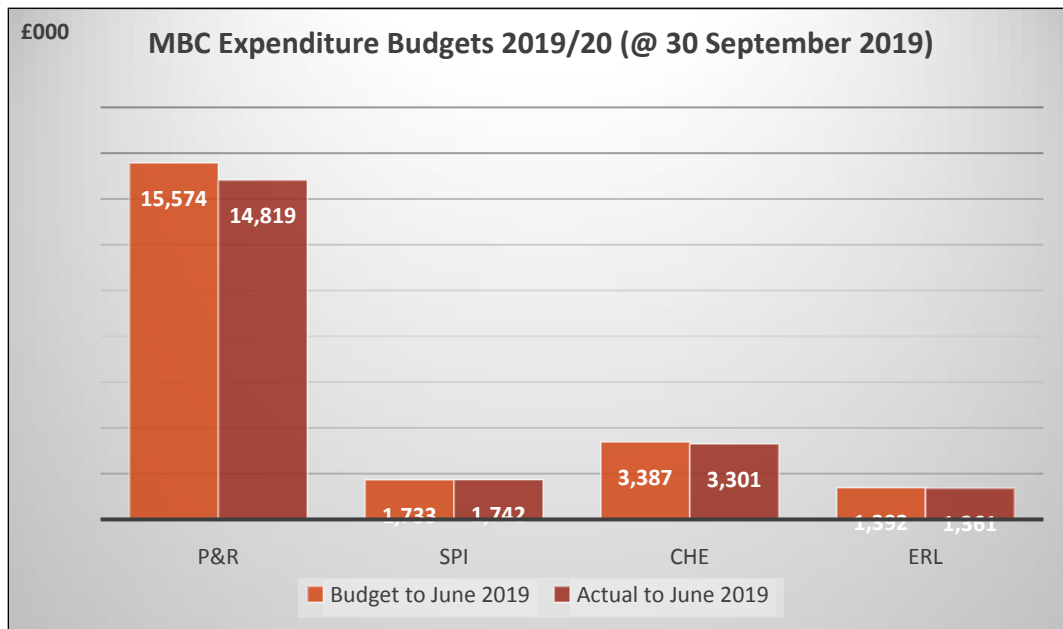


Chart 2: Revenue Budget Performance: EXPENDITURE BY SERVICE COMMITTEE



A1.3 Tables 1, 2 and 3 below provides further insight into the Council's income and expenditure position for Quarter 2 2019/20 by providing alternative analyses; by Committee, Priority and Subjective Heading.

Table 1: Net Expenditure 2019/20 (@ 2nd Quarter): Analysis by COMMITTEE

Committee	Full Year Budget £000	To 30 September 2019 £000	Actual £000	Variance £000	Year End Forecast £000	Year End Variance ¹ £000
Policy & Resources	12,100	3,197	3,002	195	12,452	-352
Strategic Planning and Infrastructure	-1,158	-509	-327	-181	-748	-410
Communities, Housing & Environment	8,972	4,157	3,556	601	8,846	126
Economic Regeneration & Leisure	1,224	708	583	125	1,242	-18
Sub-Total	21,138	7,553	6,813	739	21,792	-654
Commercial Investment Income/ Discretionary Spending Reduction	0	0	0	0	-654	654
Net Revenue Expenditure	21,138	7,553	6,813	739	21,138	0

A1.4 It should be noted from Table 1 above the expectation that – in Quarter 3 – the currently projected year-end overspend of £654,000 should be eliminated by an additional income stream following the anticipated purchase of a significant commercial asset. In the event that the acquisition does not proceed as expected, a moratorium on discretionary spending would be introduced to ensure that revenue spending comes in on budget at the year end.

Table 2: Net Expenditure 2019/20 (@ 2nd Quarter): Analysis by PRIORITY

Priority	Full Year Budget £000	To 30 September 2019 £000	Actual £000	Variance £000	Year End Forecast £000	Year End Variance ¹ £000
Safe, Clean and Green	6,348	3,535	3,318	217	6,199	149
Homes and Communities	2,232	518	102	416	2,212	20
Thriving Place	1,489	804	670	134	1,398	91
Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure	-975	-417	-308	-109	-647	-328
Central & Democratic	12,044	3,114	3,032	82	12,630	-586
Net Revenue Expenditure	21,138	7,553	6,813	739	21,792	-654

Table 3: Net Expenditure 2019/20 (@ 2nd Quarter): Analysis by SUBJECTIVE SPEND

Subjective	Full Year Budget	To 30 September 2019	Actual	Variance	Year End Forecast	Year End Variance ¹
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Employees	21,894	10,990	10,803	187	22,048	-154
Premises	4,776	3,146	3,316	-170	4,829	-53
Transport	872	479	428	50	872	0
Supplies & Services	18,414	4,518	3,982	536	18,234	180
Agency	6,431	3,237	3,194	44	6,431	0
Transfer Payments	49,191	21,175	20,842	333	49,191	0
Asset Rents	1,237	0	0	0	1,237	0
Income	-81,676	-35,992	-35,752	-240	-81,049	-627
Net Revenue Expenditure	21,138	7,553	6,813	739	21,792	-654

A2) Revenue Budget: Policy & Resources (PRC)

A2.1 Table 4 below provides a detailed summary on the budgeted net expenditure position for the services reporting directly into PRC at the end of Quarter 2. The financial figures are presented on an 'accruals' basis (e.g. expenditure for goods and services received, but not yet paid for, is included).

Table 4: PRC Revenue Budget: NET EXPENDITURE (@ 2nd Quarter 2019/20)

(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)
Cost Centre	Budget for Year £000	Budget to 30 September 2019 £000	Actual £000	Variance £000	Forecast 31 March 2020 £000	Forecast Variance 31 March 2020 £000
Civic Occasions	42	31	25	6	42	0
Members Allowances	380	190	184	6	380	0
Members Facilities	29	14	4	10	29	0
Contingency	90	45	0	45	90	0
Performance & Development	7	5	1	4	7	0
Corporate Projects	94	20	0	20	94	0
Press & Public Relations	35	20	6	14	35	0
Corporate Management	92	53	61	-8	92	0
Mid Kent Improvement Partnership	1	1	1	-0	1	0
Unapportionable Central Overheads	1,783	875	864	11	1,783	0
Council Tax Collection	53	26	21	5	53	0
Council Tax Collection - Non Pooled	-366	25	26	-1	-366	0
Council Tax Benefits Administration	-152	-152	-148	-4	-152	0
NNDR Collection	-1	-0	1	-1	-1	0
NNDR Collection - Non Pooled	-150	47	36	11	-150	0
MBC- BID	0	7	0	7	0	0
Registration Of Electors	48	-23	-17	-6	48	0
Elections	164	127	149	-22	164	0
European Election	0	0	43	-43	0	0
Emergency Centre	25	22	17	5	25	0
Brexit	0	0	-122	122	0	0
Medway Conservancy	115	58	59	-1	115	0
External Interest Payable	310	29	0	29	110	200
Interest & Investment Income	-100	-50	-106	56	-150	50
Palace Gatehouse	-5	-3	-5	2	-5	0
Archbishops Palace	-101	-42	-47	4	-101	0
Parkwood Industrial Estate	-310	-155	-137	-18	-310	0
Industrial Starter Units	-29	-11	-6	-5	-29	0
Parkwood Equilibrium Units	-70	-33	-27	-6	-70	0
Sundry Corporate Properties	-342	-172	-44	-128	-70	-272
Parks Dwellings	26	13	4	9	26	0
Chillington House	0	0	0	0	0	0
Phoenix Park Units	-234	-118	-119	1	-234	0
Granada House - Commercial	-108	-54	-57	3	-108	0
Granada House - Residential	-108	1	2	-2	-108	0
Heronden Road Units	-153	-77	-96	19	-153	0
Boxmend Industrial Estate	-103	-51	-55	3	-103	0
Lockmeadow Complex	-76	-38	15	-52	19	-95
Lenworth House	-76	2	1	1	-76	0
General Fund Residential Properties	-104	-52	-42	-10	-104	0

(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)
Cost Centre	Budget for Year £000	Budget to 30 September 2019 £000	Actual £000	Variance £000	Forecast 31 March 2020 £000	Forecast Variance 31 March 2020 £000

Pensions Fund Management	1,333	0	0	0	1,333	0
Non Service Related Government Grants	-3,730	-1,940	-1,949	8	-3,730	0
Rent Allowances	-161	-66	-244	178	-161	0
Non HRA Rent Rebates	-7	332	449	-117	-7	0
Discretionary Housing Payments	2	175	142	32	2	0
Housing Benefits Administration	-395	-204	-183	-21	-395	0
Democratic Services Section	181	91	91	-0	181	0
Mayoral & Civic Services Section	110	55	53	2	110	0
Chief Executive	177	88	90	-2	177	0
Communications Section	201	101	93	8	201	0
Policy & Information Section	316	138	129	9	316	0
Head of Policy and Communications	111	56	57	-1	111	0
Revenues Section	480	230	239	-9	480	0
Registration Services Section	135	68	63	5	135	0
Benefits Section	458	183	183	0	458	0
Fraud Section	46	116	99	17	26	20
Mid Kent Audit Partnership	211	111	50	61	172	39
Director of Finance & Business Improvement	139	70	68	1	139	0
Accountancy Section	720	372	374	-2	720	0
Legal Services Section	511	257	302	-45	589	-78
Director of Regeneration & Place	138	69	70	-1	138	0
Procurement Section	111	56	79	-23	111	0
Property & Projects Section	410	202	198	4	410	0
Facilities & Corporate Support Section	239	116	120	-4	239	0
Improvement Section	331	163	175	-12	331	0
Executive Support Section	145	73	70	2	145	0
Head of Commissioning and Business Improvement	97	49	45	4	97	0
Mid Kent ICT Services	536	265	267	-1	516	20
GIS Section	109	54	54	1	109	0
Customer Services Section	643	319	312	7	643	0
Director of Mid Kent Services	43	-22	-24	2	43	0
Mid Kent HR Services Section	390	195	161	34	390	0
MBC HR Services Section	96	48	25	23	49	46
Head of Revenues & Benefits	68	42	39	3	68	0
Revenues & Benefits Business Support	141	64	58	5	141	0
Dartford HR Services Section	-18	-9	-8	-1	-18	0
Salary Slippage 1PR	-247	-124	0	-124	-0	-247
Town Hall	101	58	46	12	101	0
South Maidstone Depot	158	119	111	7	158	0
The Link	97	114	99	15	97	0
Maidstone House	1,149	880	867	13	1,149	0
Museum Buildings	298	192	253	-61	351	-53
I.T. Operational Services	532	276	300	-24	532	0
Central Telephones	15	7	4	3	15	0
Mid Kent ICT Software	0	0	0	0	0	0
Youth Development Programme	48	24	14	11	48	0
Internal Printing	-6	-3	-11	8	-6	0
Debt Recovery Service	18	76	-5	81	0	18
Debt Recovery MBC Profit Share	-155	-78	-60	-18	-155	0
General Balances	-840	-840	-840	0	-840	0
Earmarked Balances	5,990	0	-16	16	5,990	0
Invest To Save	10	0	0	0	10	0
Appropriation Account	1,237	0	1	-1	1,237	0
Pensions Fund Appropriation	-1,333	0	0	0	-1,333	0
Total	12,100	3,197	3,002	195	12,452	-352

A2.2 The table shows that, at the Quarter 2 stage, overall net expenditure for the services reporting to PRC is £3.002 million, compared to the profiled budget of £3.197 million, representing an under spend of £195,000. However, based on forward projections, PRC is

expected to overspend on its overall net revenue expenditure budget for the year, recording a deficit of £352,000 against its budget of £12.100 million.

A3) PRC Revenue Budget: Significant Variances (>£30,000)

A3.1 Within the headline figures, there are a number of both adverse and favourable net expenditure variances for individual cost centres. It is important that the implications of variances are considered at an early stage, so that contingency plans can be put in place and, if necessary, be used to inform future financial planning.

A3.2 Table 5 below highlights and provides further detail on the most significant variances (i.e. those meeting or exceeding £30,000, either at the end of Quarter 2, or expected to do so by year-end) for those services reporting directly into PRC.

Table 5: PRC Variances >£30,000 (@ 2nd Quarter 2019/20)

	Positive Variance Q2	Adverse Variance Q2	Year End Forecast Variance
Policy & Resources Committee	£000s		
Contingency – This budget is held to deal with unexpected spending pressures. It is assumed that it will be fully utilised by year end.	+45		0
European Elections – This is a cost neutral budget (with expenditure incurred, externally funded). The negative variance at the Quarter 2 stage is therefore temporary and is eliminated from year end projections.		-43	0
Brexit – The positive variance represents the grant income received to fund the cost of Brexit preparations. It is assumed that this funding will be spent in full by the year end.	+122		0
External Interest Payable – This budget is related to the need to borrow to finance the Capital Programme. However, to date there has been no borrowing therefore there will be an under spend on this budget by year-end.	+29		+200
Interest & Investment Income – due to the reduced borrowing forecast for the year and slippage in the Capital Programme, additional income is being generated so far this year.	+56		+50

Table 5 cont.	Positive Variance Q2	Adverse Variance Q2	Year End Forecast Variance
Policy & Resources Committee	£000s		
Sundry Corporate Properties – the original budget assumed that income would be generated from the purchase of further commercial properties, but there have been none to date this year, so the income target is unlikely to be realised.		-128	-272
Lockmeadow Complex – The service charges budget for this site has been under pressure for some time. Following a review by the Corporate Property Manager, including discussions/negotiations with the managing agent, it has been identified that the Council is/will be (in future) liable for higher service charges under the terms of the lease than assumed in the current budget.		-52	-95
Rent Allowances – Expenditure on Rent Allowances has reduced significantly due to the rollout of Universal Credit. However, there will be a corresponding reduction in Housing Benefit entitlement, which is expected to eliminate the variance by year end.	+178		0
Non-HRA Rent Rebates – Expenditure on Rent Rebates has increased significantly due to rising demand (and hence cost) for/of temporary accommodation. However, there will be a corresponding increase in Housing Benefit entitlement, which is expected to eliminate the variance by year end.		-117	0
Discretionary Housing Payments – Spending on Discretionary Housing Payments is slightly ahead of original expectations at the Quarter 2 stage. However, such expenditure forms part of the Housing Benefits system with Council expenditure fully funded by Central Government (hence 'on budget' assumption for year-end).	+32		0
Mid-Kent Audit Partnership – The positive variance reflects a number of vacancies in the team earlier in the financial year; these vacancies have now been filled.	+61		+39
Legal Services Section – Activity levels on Legal Services supplied to MBC are running at a higher level than that assumed within the budget for the shared service contract.		-45	-78

Table 5 cont.	Positive Variance Q2	Adverse Variance Q2	Year End Forecast Variance
Policy & Resources Committee	£000s		
MBC HR Services Section – variance primarily due to salary savings due to vacancies (£30,000)	+34		+44
Salary Slippage – This is a credit budget, which allows for service underspends on salaries, due to temporary vacancies arising from staff turnover. There is currently an adverse variance, which is expected to be offset by service underspends by the year end.		-124	-247
Museum Buildings – Following a revaluation of the site, the Business Rates liability for the Museum has increased significantly beyond the current budget provision.		-61	-53
Debt Recovery Service – Net expenditure in the first half of the financial year has been lower than budgeted mainly due to the combined impact of higher than expected income and reduced employee costs due to staff vacancies, both in Quarter 1. Two additional staff have now been appointed, and increased income cannot be assumed for the year at this stage, so a reduced (although still positive) variance is assumed for the year end.	+81		+18

A4) Other Revenue Budgets: Significant Variances (>£30,000)

A4.1 Tables 6, 7 and 8 below highlight and provide further detail on the most significant variances (i.e. those meeting or exceeding £30,000, either at the end of Quarter 2, or expected to do so by year-end) for other Council services.

Table 6: SPI Variances >£30,000 (2nd Quarter 2019/20)

	Positive Variance Q2	Adverse Variance Q2	Year End Forecast Variance
Strategic Planning & Infrastructure Committee	£000's		
<p>Development Control Majors & Other – This year has seen a significant drop in income from Planning Applications compared to original budget expectations. This is particularly the case for Major Applications (10 residential units and above).</p> <p>As reported in Quarter 1, planning officers are working in partnership with the Finance team both in an attempt to identify mitigating budget savings elsewhere within the service and also undertaking analyses on Planning Applications patterns, including future expectations in particular, for both the remainder of 2019/20 and beyond (2020/21 to 2024/25).</p> <p>However, whilst positive progress is being made with this task, it has been identified that there is a significant piece of enabling work to be completed first in reconciling the Planning system (“Uniform”) to the Financial Ledger (“Agresso”).</p> <p>Once the reconciliation work is completed, it will help enable the production of more accurate revised estimates for this financial year and a robust updated Medium-Term Financial Plan for the purposes of future financial planning and budget setting.</p>		-225	-338
Mid-Kent Planning Support – The current variance has arisen due to a number of posts that are being held vacant.	+60		+30
Salary Slippage – This is a credit budget, which allows for service underspends on salaries, due to temporary vacancies arising from staff turnover. There is currently an adverse variance, which is expected to be offset by service underspends by the year end.		-41	-82
On-Street Parking – Higher than budgeted income is being driven by higher than expected (On-Street) parking space turnover.	+31		+50

Table 6 cont.	Positive Variance Q2	Adverse Variance Q2	Year End Forecast Variance
Strategic Planning & Infrastructure Committee	£000's		
<p>Residents Parking – A number of Tribunal cases have been lost where the adjudicator has ruled that the wrong contravention code has been used within resident parking bays. Consequently processes have been adapted, entailing a lower contravention code (leading to a lower penalty charge), which is depressing income from this source. PCN volumes for Residents Parking infringements are also down slightly compared to last year.</p>		-40	-70
<p>Pay & Display Car Parks – Income levels from Pay & Display car parks are not meeting expectations. A contributory factor is that the budget was set on the basis that 30 car parking spaces would be retained at Brunswick Street, which has not been the case. This accounts for £20,000 of the variance for the year to date.</p>		-65	-139
<p>Off-Street Parking Enforcement – although overall PCN volumes are comparable to last year, a slightly greater proportion have been issued for Off-Street infringements than the budget assumes, which is offset by a slightly lower proportion issued for Residents Parking infringements (as noted above).</p>	+71		+90
<p>Mote Park Pay & Display – Increased demand for parking is being experienced on the site following the recent opening of the Adventure Zone. The increased volumes are expected to be maintained (subject to seasonal demand fluctuations).</p>	+37		+50

Table 7: CHE Variances >£30,000 (@ 2nd Quarter 2019/20)

	Positive Variance Q2	Adverse Variance Q2	Year End Forecast Variance
Communities, Housing & Environment Committee	£000s		
Parks and Open Spaces – Residual undelivered savings of £63,000 in respect of a previous re-structure is the most significant factor in the over spend.		-35	-61
Crematorium – Higher than budgeted maintenance costs partly driven by un-accrued (maintenance) expenditure from 2018/19 (of £18,000) is the reason for the budget pressure at the Quarter 2 stage, although the budget is expected to be met by year end.		-60	+21
Recycling Collection – Savings from the purchase of wheeled bins (£31k April to September 2019) has been the biggest factor in lower than budgeted expenditure at the Quarter 2 stage. Current expenditure patterns are assumed to continue for the remainder of the financial year.	+40		+80
Community Environmental Engagement – The variance relates to the “Go Green, Go Wild” project, funded by the Business Rates Pilot initiative. The updated spending profile for the project, envisages £31,000 being rolled forward into 2020/21 to fund a Community Engagement Officer post.	+31		0
Homeless Temporary Accommodation – A positive variance has arisen at the Quarter 2 stage as savings are being realised due to the use of MBC properties for temporary accommodation (compared to the former use of third party providers). The savings realised will offset overspending elsewhere on MBC temporary accommodation properties.	+39		0
Homelessness Prevention – The variance at this stage is largely due to unspent Government Housing Grant. It is currently assumed that this will be spent by the year end, although any balance would be carried forward into 2020/21.	+216		0

Table 7 cont.	Positive Variance Q2	Adverse Variance Q2	Year End Forecast Variance
Communities, Housing & Environment Committee	£000s		
Housing First Project – The variance relates to the “Housing First and Rough Sleepers” project, funded by the Business Rates Pilot initiative, which has been successful in housing 6 homeless people. The residual budget is now available to meet potential landlord liabilities upon the expiry of the tenancies and is being re-profiled to reflect this pattern.	+39		0
Depot Services Section – Lower employee costs are being experienced following the recent implementation of a staff re-structure.	+36		+30
Salary Slippage – This is a credit budget, which allows for service underspends on salaries, due to temporary vacancies arising from staff turnover. There is currently an adverse variance, which is expected to be offset by service underspends by the year end.		-49	-99
Fleet Workshop & Management – A reduced need for vehicle hire (saving £22,000, following the recent purchase 3 new sweepers) is the single largest item in reduced expenditure at the Quarter 2 stage, although the cost centre is expected to come in on budget, with no significant surplus, at year end.	+40		0
Grounds Maintenance Commercial – Additional income has been generated in this area from Section 106 funded works, and other external works.	+56		+86

Table 8: ERL Variances >£30,000 (@ 2nd Quarter 2019/20)

	Positive Variance Q2	Adverse Variance Q2	Year End Forecast Variance
Economic Regeneration & Leisure Committee	£000s		
Mote Park Adventure Zone - the facility is now open. However, the contract awarded allows for an initial rent free period for the first three months and the final contract value was less than forecast.		-28	-55
Community Environmental Engagement – the variance is caused by a timing difference; the appointment of a temporary Community Engagement Officer (as part of a Business Rates Retention funded initiative) was later than assumed within the budget provision.	+31		+31
Economic Development Section - the variance predominantly relates to salary savings due to two vacant posts.	+40		+54
Salary Slippage – There is a credit budget to allow for the fact that services usually underspend on salaries, owing to temporary vacancies arising from staff turnover. This is currently an adverse variance from the salary slippage budget, but the actual service underspends (such as that for Economic Development above) will be offset against the salary slippage budget at year end and are expected to eliminate the adverse variance.		-27	-54

A5) Virements

- A5.1 In accordance with the Council’s commitment to transparency and recognized good practice, “virements” (the transfer of individual budgets between objectives after the overall budget has been agreed by full Council) are reported to the Policy & Resources Committee on a quarterly basis.
- A5.2 Virements may be temporary, meaning that there has been a one-off transfer of budget to fund a discrete project or purchase, or permanent, meaning that the base budget has been altered and the change will continue to be reflected in the budget for subsequent years.
- A5.3 The virements made in Quarter 2 are presented in Table 9 below.

Table 9: Virements (@ 2nd Quarter 2019/20)

Reason	From	To	Value £	Perm/Temp*
Transfer Vehicle Maintenance Budgets	TD10 (Fleet Workshop & Management)	AE10 & AE14 (Mote Park and Parks & Open Spaces)	15,000	Permanent
Reverse funding from Business Rates Retention pilot underspend and fund from Contingency	AA45, CL80, LJ14 (Festivals & Events, Public Conveniences, Member's Community Grant)	YD11 (Business Rates)	80,000	Permanent
Move Contrancts & Compliance post	SN24 (Procurement Section)	SA13 (Leisure Services Section)	40,010	Permanent
Fund additional public conveniences provision	GC10 (Contingency)	CL80 (Public Conveniences)	14,580	Permanent
BRP Funding	YA11 (Business Rates Growth Earmarked Balances)	EN40, EL21, AG10 (Economic Dev., Town Centre Management Sponsorship, Tourism)	19,090	Temporary
Fund BRR Pilot Projects	YD11 (Business Rates)	EN40 (Economic Dev - Promotion & Marketing) EE20 (Conservation) SG22 (Policy & Information Section) CC10 (Community Safety) PN20 (Homelessness Prevention) EC10 (Development Control Advice) EG10 (Community Environmental Engagement) CR10 (Household Waste Collection) AE10 (Parks & Open Spaces)	298,700	Temporary
Fund Various from Contingency	GC10 (Contingency)	AA45, CL80, LJ14 (Festivals & Events, Public Conveniences, Member's Community Grant)	80,000	Temporary
Fund BRR Pilot Project	YD11 (Business Rates)	CC10 (Community Safety)	6,200	Temporary
Fund BRR Pilot Project	YD11 (Business Rates)	AE20 (Cobtree Manor Park)	74,000	Temporary
Fund Co Star membership, Kent Construction expo & printing	YA11 (Business Rates Growth Earmarked Balances)	SE16, EL20 (Economic Dev., Business Support & Enterprise)	4,620	Temporary
Funding for post in Policy & Information	SN29 (Executive Support Section)	SG22 (Policy & Information)	19,050	Temporary

Part B

Second Quarter Capital Budget 2019/20



B1) Capital Budget: Council

- B1.1 The overall five-year Capital Programme for 2019/20 to 2023/24 was approved by the Council on 27th February 2019. Most capital funding will now come from prudential borrowing as other sources of funding are not sufficient to cover the costs of the Programme, although funding does continue to be available from the New Homes Bonus (NHB). At the time of preparing this report there has been no need to borrow, but it is anticipated that borrowing will be needed during the latter half of 2019/20.
- B1.2 The 2019/20 element of the Capital Programme has a total budget of £51.754 million. At the Quarter 2 stage, capital expenditure of £5.443 million has been incurred. It is anticipated that there will be slippage of £15.650 million at year end.

B2) Capital Budget: Policy & Resources Committee (PRC)

- B2.1 Progress towards the delivery of the 2019/20 PRC element of the Capital Programme at the Quarter 2 stage is presented in Table 10 below. The budget for 2019/20 includes resources brought forward from 2018/19.
- B2.2 At the Quarter 2 stage, expenditure of £689,000 million has been incurred against a budget of £29.440 million for PRC. It is anticipated that there will be slippage of £6.655 million at year end (the Committee will be asked to approve/note the carry forward of resources into the next financial year).

Table 10: Capital Expenditure (@ 2nd Quarter 2019/20)

Capital Programme Heading	Estimate 2019/20 £000	Actual to September 2019 £000	Budget Remaining £000	Q3 Profile £000	Q4 Profile £000	Projected Total Expenditure £000	Projected Slippage to 2020/21 £000
Communities, Housing & Environment							
Brunswick Street - Net Cost of Scheme	3,441	1,700	1,740	870	870	3,440	0
Union Street - Net Cost of Scheme	2,085	337	1,748	874	874	2,085	-0
Indicative Schemes	4,124	100	4,024	1,408	808	2,316	1,808
Housing - Disabled Facilities Grants Funding	1,570	226	1,343	175	250	651	918
Temporary Accommodation	3,236	1,831	1,405	1,000	64	2,895	341
Housing Incentives	1,040	6	1,034	50	50	0	1,040
Gypsy Site Improvement Works	42	25	17	17		42	-0
CCTV Upgrade and Relocation	150	13	137	37	100	150	-0
Commercial Waste	180		180	180		180	
Street Scene Investment	147		147	25	25	50	97
Flood Action Plan	1,000		1,000	100	100	200	800
Continued Improvements to Play Areas	422	49	373	20	20	89	333
Commercial Projects - Crematorium Projects	40	12	28	28		40	-0
Commercial Projects - Cemetery Chapel Repairs	100		100	25	75	100	
Other Parks Improvements	100	1	99	49	50	100	-0
Total	17,677	4,301	13,376	4,858	3,286	12,340	5,337
Economic Regeneration & Leisure							
Commercial Projects - Mote Park Adventure Zone		378	-378			378	
Mote Park Centre & Estate Services Building	2,496	17	2,479	75	100	192	2,304
Mote Park Lake - Dam Works	267	1	267	167	100	268	-0
Museum Development Plan	11	25	-13			25	-13
Total	2,775	420	2,354	242	200	862	2,290
Policy & Resources							
High Street Regeneration	547	235	312	312		547	0
Asset Management / Corporate Property	1,417	212	1,206	300	300	812	606
Feasibility Studies	113	91	22	11	11	113	0
Infrastructure Delivery	1,200		1,200				1,200
Software / PC Replacement	124	50	74	50	24	124	0
Digital Projects	20		20	10	10	20	
Acquisition of Commercial Assets	24,850		24,850	20,000		20,000	4,850
Kent Medical Campus - Innovation Scheme	649	75	575	150	425	650	-0
Maidstone East/Sessions Square	520	27	493		493	520	-0
Total	29,440	689	28,751	20,833	1,263	22,785	6,655
Strategic Planning & Infrastructure							
Mall Bus Station Redevelopment	1,540	22	1,518	75	75	172	1,368
Bridges Gyrotory Scheme	121	10	111	50	61	121	-0
Total	1,661	32	1,629	125	136	293	1,368
Section 106 Contributions	201						
TOTAL	51,754	5,443	46,110	26,058	4,885	36,280	15,650

B3) Capital Budget Variances (@ 2nd Quarter 2019/20)

Policy and Resources Committee

B3.1 The most (financially) significant PRC items in the table above are as follows:

- Asset Management/ Corporate Property – There is at present a forecast under spend of £0.606 million, which will be carried forward to 2020/21, although this total may change during the year if any unexpected urgent works are required to be undertaken
- Infrastructure Delivery – No projects have been identified to date this year. The budget will therefore be carried forward to 2020/21; and
- Acquisition of Commercial Assets – One significant acquisition is scheduled for Quarter 3, and at this stage there are no further acquisitions planned, so the remainder of the budget will be rolled forward to 2020/21.

Communities, Housing and Environment Committee

B3.2 The most (financially) significant CHE items in the table above are as follows:

- Indicative Schemes – The budget included provision for the purchase of a property initially valued at £1.2 million. However that purchase is no longer proceeding. In addition, updated cash flow projections for the Springfield Mill project anticipate slippage of £708,000 into 2020/21 (from a budget provision of £2.924 million). £100,000 is assumed to be spent in 2019/20 on feasibility works for replacement schemes
- Housing – Disabled Facilities Grants – Expenditure on housing adaptations often does not match the Council's financial year. The 2019/20 budget of £1.57 million is fully and includes allocations for a wider range of initiatives, including the "Helping You Home" scheme, operated in conjunction with Maidstone and Pembury hospitals
- Housing Incentives – Historically this budget has been under-utilised. The proposal with regard to the current surplus is to utilize it for major refurbishment works at the Council-owned gypsy sites in order to modernize facilities and bring them up to a good standard; initial survey works have started. The future use of the Housing Incentives budget is to be considered within the updated Housing Strategy (scheduled for 2020); and
- Flood Action Plan - The project specifications are currently being developed with the Environment Agency and the timing of the works has yet to be confirmed. At this stage it has been assumed that the majority (80%) of the budget will be carried forward into 2020/21.

Economic Regeneration and Leisure Committee

B3.3 The most (financially) significant ERL items in the table above are as follows:

- Mote Park Adventure Zone – the over spend relates to the additional costs incurred as a result of the sewage leak in the Park that significantly delayed project completion. The costs are the subject of an ongoing legal claim, so the overspend is being temporarily funded until the outcome of the claim is known; and
- Mote Park & Estates Services Building – The budgets have now been combined as the construction of this facility will be let as a single contract. At this stage, the timing of the building works has not been determined; the forecast assumes they will not begin until April 2020.

Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee

B3.4 The most (financially) significant SPI items in the table above are as follows:

- Mall Bus Station Redevelopment – the project is progressing, although the construction phase is not now expected to commence until Spring 2020. Therefore £1.336 million of the current budget will need to be carried forward into next year; and
- Bridges Gyratory Scheme – the residual budget is being used to fund flood prevention works by the Medway Street subway. Designs have been drawn up and the work is expected to take place in early 2020.

Part C

Second Quarter Local Tax Collection 2019/20



C1) Collection Fund

- C1.1 The Council is increasingly reliant on income generated through local taxation (Council Tax and Business Rates), which is accounted for through the Collection Fund.
- C1.2 Due to the risk in this area, including the risk of non-collection and the pooling arrangements in place for Business Rates growth, the Council monitors the Collection Fund very carefully.

C2) Collection Rates

- C2.1 The collection rates achieved for local taxation are reported in the table below, alongside the target for the year, and the actual amount collected at the Quarter 2 stage.

Table 11: Local Tax Collection Rates (2nd Quarter 2019/20)

Description	Target	Actual
	%	%
Council Tax	56.80	55.96
Business Rates	57.80	56.87

- C2.2 Collection rates for Council Tax and Business Rates for Quarter 2 were close to target with both just marginally off target. Business Rates is always subject to volatility, often as a result of Valuation Office Agency (VOA) instructions.
- C2.3 Billing and recovery timetables have progressed as planned so far in 2019/20.

C3) Business Rates Retention (BRR)

- C3.1 Following the Council's successful participation in the 2018/19 (100%) BRR Pilot, along with all other authorities in Kent and Medway, the Council has reverted to participating in the original (50%) Kent BRR Pool for 2019/20.
- C3.2 The Kent BRR Pool produced its first progress update for 2019/20 as at the end of June 2019, which was reported to the Policy and Resources Committee on 18th September 2019 (within the Quarter 1 report). The next Pool update is scheduled for 31st October 2019 (to inform forecasting and planning for 2020/21) and is being prepared at the time of reporting). At this stage, there is no intelligence to suggest that there will be any significant deviation to the Pooling position reported at the Quarter 1 stage, which showed that forecast income retained from the growth in Business Rates was ahead of original expectations.
- C3.3 Specifically (as at 30th June 2019) the overall growth in Business Rates measured against the Council's baseline was £2.517 million (original forecast £2.284 million), with a projected overall Pooling benefit of £1.157 million achieved. This included an allocation of £0.347 million to Kent County Council, with the balance – of £0.810 million – accruing to Maidstone (original forecast £0.735 million), as summarised in the table below.

Table 12: Business Rates Pooling (@ 30th June 2019)

MBC Business Rates Pooling Benefit 2019/20 (@ 30 June 2019) <i>(Reported to Policy & Resources Committee 18th September 2019)</i>		
Description	Amounts	Allocation of Pooling Benefit
	£'s	
Billing Authority Basic Share	347,125	Economic Development
Billing Authority Pool Growth Fund	347,125	Maidstone East (joint project with KCC)
Pool Safety Net Redistribution	115,708	Carry Forward to 2020/21
Total Benefit	809,958*	

**Excludes Kent County Council allocation of £347,125*

Part D

Reserves & Balances 2019/20



D1) Reserves & Balances

D1.1 The combined total of the General Fund balance and Earmarked Reserves as at 31st March 2019 was £15.1 million. The makeup of the balance, and the movements in 2019/20 up until the end of Quarter 2 are presented in the table below.

D1.2 The projected closing balance assumes a minimum balance of £2.0 million will be maintained in the General Fund balance (as agreed by full Council in February 2019).

Table 13: Reserves & Balances (2nd Quarter 2019/20)

	1 April 2019	30 September 2019	31 March 2020 (forecast)
	£000		
General Fund			
Unallocated balance	9,228	8,819	8,819
Sub-total	9,228	8,819	8,819
Earmarked Reserves			
New Homes Bonus funding for capital projects	0	1,940	0
Local Plan	200	200	200
Neighbourhood Plans	64	64	64
Planning Appeals	300	300	220
Civil Parking Enforcement	419	419	159
Housing Prevention & Temporary Accommodation	700	700	512
Business Rates Growth Fund	3,682	3,682	2,674
Other	462	462	462
Sub-total	5,827	7,767	4,291
Total General Fund balances	15,055	16,587	13,110

Part E

Treasury Management 2019/20



E1) Introduction

- E1.1 The Council has adopted – and incorporated into its Financial Regulations – the “Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy’s Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice (the CIPFA Code)”.
- E1.2 The CIPFA Code covers the principles and guidelines relating to borrowing and investment operations. In February 2019 the Council approved a Treasury Management Strategy for 2019/20 that was based on the CIPFA Code. That Strategy requires that the Policy and Resources Committee should formally be informed of Treasury Management activities quarterly as part of the budget monitoring process.

E2) Economic Headlines

- E2.1 During Quarter 2 (ending 30th September 2019), the Council’s advisors (Link Asset Services) reported:
- UK growth – ‘slightly negative’ (-0.2% quarter on quarter, +1.3% year on year) as expected, due to a stronger Quarter 1 growth, which was boosted by stock building ahead of the original (March) Brexit deadline
 - CPI Inflation – fell to 1.7% in August 2019 and is forecast to remain close to 2% over the next 2 years. However, if there was a ‘no deal Brexit’, it could rise towards 4%, primarily as a result of imported inflation on the back of a weakening pound
 - Wage Inflation – the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) does have concerns over the trend in wage inflation which peaked at a new post-financial crisis high of 3.9% in June 2019, before edging back to 3.8% in July 2019 (excluding bonuses)
 - Employment – growth fell to 31,000 in the three months to July 2019, which is well below the 2018 average. The unemployment rate remained at 3.8%; its lowest rate since 1975; and
 - Bank Rate – there have been no rises since the increase from 0.5% to 0.75% in August 2018 and it is unlikely there will be any further movements until the uncertainties over Brexit are removed. If there was a no deal Brexit, it is expected that the Bank Rate would be cut in order to stimulate growth.

E3) Council Investments

- E3.1 The Council held total investments of £27.98 million as at 30th September 2019. Most investments are held in short-term cash in notice accounts and Money Market Funds to enable access to funds when required to support the Capital Programme.

Table 14: Short-Term Investments (2nd Quarter 2019/20)

Counterparty	Type of Investment	Principal £	Start Date	Maturity Date	Rate of Return	MBC Credit Limits	
						Suggested Term	Maximum Deposit
London Borough of Croydon	Fixed Term Deposit	2,000,000	01/05/2018	01/05/2020	1.05%	5 Years	£5,000,000
Nationwide Building Society	Fixed Term Deposit	3,000,000	15/08/2019	22/11/2019	0.69%	6 months	£3,000,000
Svenska Handelsbanken	Call Account	1,290,000			0.60%	12 Months	£3,000,000
Goldman Sachs International Bank	Notice Account Deposit	2,000,000			0.90%	6 months	£3,000,000
Lloyds Bank Plc	Notice Account Deposit	3,000,000			0.95%	12 Months	£3,000,000
Aberdeen Asset Management	Money Market Fund	8,000,000			0.73%	2 Years	£8,000,000
Federated Investors LLP	Money Market Fund	6,000,000			0.74%	2 Years	£8,000,000
Federated Investors LLP	Cash Enhanced Fund	2,000,000			1.09%	2 Years	£8,000,000
Goldman Sachs	Money Market Fund	690,000			0.67%	2 Years	£8,000,000
		27,980,000					

E3.2 Investment income for Quarter 2 was £106,000, comfortably exceeding the budget of £50,000, with an average interest rate of 0.82% achieved. It is expected that investment income will reduce towards the end of the financial year as funds are spent and balances fall.

E4) Council Borrowing

E4.1 There has been no borrowing requirement in Quarter 2.

Part F

Second Quarter Maidstone Property Holdings 2019/20



F1) Maidstone Property Holdings Ltd. (MPH)

- F1.1 MPH is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Council and was incorporated on 30th September 2016. It is primarily a 'vehicle' for letting residential properties on assured short-hold tenancies. The company currently holds two properties, one of which consists of 20 flats on a 22-year lease from the Council, with the other consisting of 14 apartments on assured short-hold tenancies.
- F1.2 An Internal Audit review identified that there should be a mechanism in place to enable the company to formally report to the Council. Given the current level of activity within the company is relatively low, it was decided that this would be done via the quarterly budget monitoring process (to the Policy and Resources Committee). This section of the report provides an overview of the activity and performance of the company for the year to date.
- F1.3 The MPH financial year-end was changed to 31st March, in order to align with the Council's financial reporting period. The 2018/19 Accounts have now been audited by the company's external auditors, UHY Hacker Young. A board meeting will be convened shortly in order to formally approve the accounts, and the Company Secretary will ensure that these are filed with Companies House by the deadline of 31st December 2019.





F2) MPH Headlines (@ 2nd Quarter 2019/20)




- F2.1 Net rental income from April 2019 to September 2019 (i.e. 2019/20 Quarter 2 cumulative) totaled £74,569, which compares to £39,447 over the same period in 2018/19 (i.e. an increase of 89%). Net rental income represents rent charged to tenants, less costs recharged by the managing agent. As at 30th September 2019, there were no rent arrears or vacancies in either building.
- F2.2 The Council receives income from the company through charges made for services provided, and the property lease. For the 2018/19 financial year these charges totaled £76,107. After the corresponding charges have been taken into account this year, it is anticipated that the company will end 2019/20 in a break-even position.
- F2.3 As company activity increases over time, governance and reporting arrangements will be kept under review to ensure that they remain appropriate and commensurate with the scope of activity and associated risks.

Second Quarter Key Performance Indicators 2019/20








Policy & Resources Committee
20 November 2019
Lead Officer: Mark Green
Report Author: Clare Harvey

Key to performance ratings



RAG Rating	
	Target not achieved
	Target slightly missed (within 10%)
	Target met
	Data Only

Direction	
	Performance has improved
	Performance has been sustained
	Performance has declined
N/A	No previous data to compare

Strategic Scorecard

Performance Indicator	Q2 2019/20				
	Value	Target	Status	Long Trend	Short Trend
The percentage of land and highways with acceptable levels of litter	98.34%	98.00%			
Percentage of successful relief duty outcomes	54.33%	60.00%		N/A	
Percentage of successful prevention duty outcomes	60.00%	60.00%		N/A	

Q2 Targets that were not achieved

Performance Indicator	Q2 2019/20				
	Value	Target	Status	Long Trend	Short Trend
Number of students benefiting from the museums educational service <i>A Thriving Place</i>	1,027	1,450			
Success rate for planning appeals (6mth rolling) <i>Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure</i>	59.09%	75%			

Overall Summary of Performance

A Thriving Place

Overall, the majority of performance indicators (PIs) relating to “A Thriving Place” have performed well against target for Quarter 2, with five of the seven targeted PIs (71%) achieving target. Three of the reportable set show improvement in performance compared to Quarter 2 in 2019/20 and four show an improvement when compared the previous quarter.

While footfall in the Museum has achieved the quarterly target, the number of students benefiting from the Museum’s education service has not. This target is profiled to taken into account the seasonal variations in students visiting, using the last four years of data. The Quarter 2 out-turn represents a decrease of 28% compared to Quarter 2 in 2018/19. Last year, and this year, we have seen slightly higher than expected numbers in Quarter 1 and it has been suggested by the Museum Manager that schools are planning visits earlier in the year.

Safe, Clean and Green

The KPIs relating to “Safe, Clean and Green” are all performing well, with all of the targeted KPIs relating to this priority achieving their Quarter 2 targets. Although performance for land with acceptable levels of litter has declined marginally (less than 1%) since Quarter 2 last year, performance in this area is strong.

During Quarter 2 the “Clean Street” consultation concluded with a total of 1,785 responses. This showed that 44% of respondents think that their local area is “Fairly Clean” or “Very Clean”. The survey also asked respondents about fly-tipping hotspots and how they think different cleaning issues have changed over the last three years. This information will be used as part of the Street Cleaning review which will be reported to this Committee in 2020.

Homes and Communities

There are five targeted KPIs that relate to the priority “Homes and Communities”; three of these (60%) have been rated green as they have achieved their quarterly targets and two have been rated amber, having missed the target by less than 10%. The percentage of successful duty outcomes has marginally missed the quarterly target. This quarter’s outturn is an improvement from Quarter 1 when just under half of relief cases had successful outcomes (47.18%). While there is no overlap between homelessness prevention cases and homelessness relief cases, there is overlap between relief cases and where a main housing duty is owed. Therefore, it is expected that the ability to relieve homelessness in such cases will be contingent on properties being available.

Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure

Of the four targeted indicators for “Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure”, one (25%) has achieved the quarterly target, two (50%) have marginally missed their targets (within 10%) and the last indicator has missed the Quarter 2 target by more than 10%. There are three PIs which can be given a long trend, comparing the data for Quarter 2 this year with that for Quarter 2 in 2018/19; of these, one is showing an increase in the number of appeals received (this is neither positive nor negative, but provides contextual information about volumes). The other two PIs where a long-term trend can be calculated show a decline in performance compared to 2018/19. When performance for this quarter is compared to that of Quarter 1 (2019/20) three PIs show improvement, two show a decline and for one there was no change.

The success rate for planning appeals for the Council for the first half of the year is 59.09%; this is significantly below the target of 75%. During this period there were 44 appeals that were considered. The Development Control Manager reports that the dip in performance relates to cases considered between April and June where eight out of 22 cases were won by the Council. Some of these applications were Gypsy and Traveller applications which were overturned at appeal. Performance between July and September shows that the Council was successful in 18 out of 22 appeals, equating to an 82% success rate for this period.

Agenda Item 14

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

20 November 2019

Is the final decision on the recommendations in this report to be made at this meeting?

No

Medium Term Financial Strategy 2020/21-2024/25

Final Decision-Maker	Council
Lead Head of Service	Director of Finance and Business Improvement
Lead Officer and Report Author	Director of Finance and Business Improvement
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

This report sets out a draft new Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for the Council. The new strategy updates the existing strategy to cover the five-year period 2020/21 to 2024/25 and to reflect changes in the local authority financial landscape and corporate priorities.

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. That Council is recommended to adopt the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2020/21 – 2024/25 as set out in Appendix A.
2. That Council endorses the financial assumptions underlying the Medium Term Financial Strategy.
3. That Council agrees the Council Tax setting principle set out in in paragraph 2.12 of this report.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Policy and Resources Committee	20 November 2019
Council	18 December 2019
All Service Committees	January 2020
Policy and Resources Committee	12 February 2020
Council	26 February 2020

Medium Term Financial Strategy 2020/21-2024/25

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	The Medium Term Financial Strategy and the budget are a re-statement in financial terms of the priorities set out in the strategic plan. They reflect the Council's decisions on the allocation of resources to all objectives of the strategic plan.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Cross Cutting Objectives	The MTFS supports the cross-cutting objectives in the same way that it supports the Council's other strategic priorities.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Risk Management	This has been addressed in section 5 of the report.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Financial	The budget strategy and the MTFS impact upon all activities of the Council. The future availability of resources to address specific issues is planned through this process. It is important that the committee gives consideration to the strategic financial consequences of the recommendations in this report.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Staffing	The process of developing the budget strategy will identify the level of resources available for staffing over the medium term.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Legal	The Council has a statutory obligation to set a balanced budget and development of the MTFS and the strategic revenue projection in the ways set out in this report supports achievement of a balanced budget.	Legal Services
Privacy and Data Protection	Privacy and Data Protection is considered as part of the development of new budget proposals. There are no specific implications arising from this report.	Policy and Information Team
Equalities	The MFTS report scopes the possible impact of the Council's future financial position on service delivery. When a policy, service or function is developed, changed or reviewed, an evidence based equalities impact assessment will be undertaken. Should an	Equalities and Corporate Policy Officer

	impact be identified appropriate mitigations will be identified.	
Public Health	The resources to achieve the Council's objectives are allocated through the development of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.	Public Health Officer
Crime and Disorder	The resources to achieve the Council's objectives are allocated through the development of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Procurement	The resources to achieve the Council's objectives are allocated through the development of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) sets out in financial terms how the Council will deliver its Strategic Plan over the next five years. The Council agreed a new Strategic Plan in December 2018 which describes and prioritises our corporate objectives. The MTFS sets out how these objectives will be delivered, given the resources available.
- 2.2 The draft MTFS is attached as Appendix A. It builds on the existing MTFS, which was developed in parallel with the new Strategic Plan and was agreed by Council in December 2018. The main developments since December 2018 have been further central government announcements about local authority funding and refinement of our own corporate priorities.
- 2.3 A key outcome of the process of updating the MTFS is to set a balanced budget and agree a level of council tax for 2020/21 at the Council meeting on 26 February 2020. This report is a key step towards achieving that objective.

Local authority funding

- 2.4 It was originally anticipated that a new local government funding regime would be introduced in 2020/21. However, this has now been delayed until 2021/22 and the government plans to implement a 'roll-forward' settlement for 2020/21, with stability for the majority of funding sources for local government.
- 2.5 The implications of this for the key financial variables are as follows.

Council Tax - The government plans to set a limit of 2% to increases, above which a referendum would be required (as compared to 3% in 2019/20).

Business Rates - The Business Rates baseline, which dictates the amount of business rates that local authorities may retain locally, will be increased in line with inflation.

Negative Revenue Support Grant - The government is currently minded not to levy negative revenue support grant, but this is subject to consultation.

This would mean a broadly neutral revenue position in real terms for Maidstone Borough Council, so long as Council Tax is increased by 2% and no negative RSG is levied.

2.6 The new regime to be implemented in 2021/22 will include much more significant changes, which are likely to include:

- Implementation of a 'Fair Funding Review'
- 75% business rates retention by local authorities (versus 50% now)
- Resetting business rates baselines.

It should be noted that 75% business rates retention will not mean an increase in resources for individual local authorities. The government originally intended the increased business rates income to be accompanied by an increase in responsibilities, eg for public health; it remains to be seen what new responsibilities will actually be devolved to local authorities.

2.7 The implications of this for the MTFS are:

- Assuming no major changes in corporate priorities, a 'standstill' budget could be set for 2020/21, with updating simply to allow for inflation.
- For future years, there remains a considerable degree of uncertainty and it is therefore appropriate to plan for a number of different potential scenarios – favourable, neutral and adverse.

Corporate Objectives and Key Priorities

2.8 The Council's Strategic Plan sets out four key priorities, as follows:

- Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure
- Homes and Communities
- A Thriving Place
- Safe, Clean and Green.

Over the past year, the priority of 'Embracing growth and enabling infrastructure' has been made more explicit through our developing plans for an Innovation Centre, for Maidstone East and a new Garden Community. Investment plans have been approved by Policy and Resources Committee which seek to promote Maidstone as a 'Thriving Place', as well as generating a positive financial return for the Council. The priority of a 'Safe, Clean and Green' place has been emphasised by Council's decision to declare its recognition of global climate and biodiversity emergencies, and to consider adopting a target date of 2030 for the whole of the Borough of Maidstone to be carbon neutral.

2.9 These refinements of the Strategic Plan are likely to involve a limited amount of additional revenue expenditure in the short term, and additional capital investment in the medium to long term. This will be factored into the strategic revenue projections, whilst recognising that the overall requirement to deliver a standstill revenue budget means that budget growth in one area will need to be offset by savings or additional income in another.

Revenue Projections

2.10 Financial projections for the next five years have been updated, based on what is now known about the local government financial settlement for 2020/21 and other emerging information. These projections assume that budget savings already agreed by members, as set in Appendix B, are delivered. Financial projections indicate a budget position as follows under the different scenarios. Full details are set out in Appendix C.

	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m

Scenario 1 – Favourable					
Budget gap / (surplus)	-0.2	0.8	1.1	1.4	1.2

Scenario 2 – Neutral					
Budget gap / (surplus)	-0.1	0.9	1.6	2.1	2.2

Scenario 3 – Adverse					
Budget gap	0.4	1.9	3.3	4.6	5.5

2.11 These figures assume inflation of 2% per annum, in line with the Bank of England's long term forecast, and that Council Tax is increased correspondingly, ie by 2% per annum, such that its level remains constant in real terms. Inflation is currently slightly lower than 2%, at 1.7%, but it is expected to increase to 2%, which is the government's target inflation rate.

2.12 It is recommended that the Council adopts the principle of maintaining the level of Council Tax in real terms. This would mean increasing Council Tax in line with inflation and will help to cover the cost of maintaining the full range of services that the Council provides currently.

2.13 On the basis of these assumptions, a balanced position can be achieved in 2020/21 under the neutral and favourable scenarios. There will be an increasing budget gap in future years, although the deficit flattens out in year 5 as income from Council capital investments grows. The budget gap in the neutral scenario is considered to be manageable, in that by 2024/25 it still represents less than 5% of the Council's projected operating income.

2.14 The projected gap will be kept under review and steps taken to bring forward proposals for addressing it, whether by generating additional income or making savings, in good time such that there is no risk of the Council setting an unbalanced budget in future years.

2.15 The following table compares the position in the neutral scenario for a 2% Council Tax increase with that for a Council Tax freeze, as requested by Members at the meeting of Policy and Resources Committee on 23 July 2019.

	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m

Neutral Scenario – Council Tax increase 2% per annum					
Budget gap	-0.1	0.9	1.6	2.1	2.2

Neutral Scenario – Council Tax freeze					
Budget gap	0.2	1.6	2.6	3.5	4.0

Assuming all other factors remained unchanged, freezing Council Tax would lead to a budget gap of £200,000 in 2020/21. Over the longer term, it can be seen that not increasing Council Tax in line with inflation increases the budget gap to a level which risks being unmanageable.

Capital Programme

2.16 The capital programme plays a vital part in delivering the Council’s strategic plan, since it is only through long term investment that our ambitions for the borough can be realised. The capital programme is a rolling five year programme. The existing capital programme totals £109 million over five years. Major schemes include the following:

- Brunswick Street redevelopment
- Union Street redevelopment
- Further mixed housing and regeneration schemes
- Council affordable housing programme
- Housing for temporary accommodation
- Flood Action Plan
- Improvements at Mote Park
- Mote Park dam works
- Town centre regeneration
- Commercial property investments.

2.17 Schemes may be included in the capital programme if they fall within one of the four following categories:

- Required for statutory reasons, eg to ensure that Council property meets health and safety requirements;
- Self-funding schemes focused on strategic plan priority outcomes;
- Other schemes focused on strategic plan priority outcomes; and
- Other priority schemes which will attract significant external funding.

- 2.18 To the extent that schemes are self-funding, in other words they cover the cost of finance and a provision for repayment of borrowing, there is no net impact on the revenue budget. This gives scope for the capital programme to be expanded, subject to the Council's agreed prudential indicators. These indicators are important in ensuring that the burden of borrowing is reasonable given the Council's overall revenue budget.

Reserves

- 2.19 The Council maintains reserves as a safety net to allow for unforeseen circumstances. There is no statutory definition of the minimum level of reserves: the amount required is a matter of judgement. However, the Council has agreed to set £2 million as the minimum General Fund balance.
- 2.20 In practice, reserves are higher than this. In total, General Fund balances at 31 March 2019 amounted to £14.4 million. The budget for the current financial year allows for a further £1.6 million, money that was originally set aside to pay negative Revenue Support Grant, to be added to reserves as a contingency for future funding pressures. It is proposed that this contingency be rolled forward to 2021/22, given that the government's standstill funding settlement does not require us to draw on the contingency in 2020/21. This would maintain reserves at a healthy, but not excessive level.

Conclusion

- 2.21 In the short term, the government's spending round announcements allow the Council to assume a real terms 'stand still' spending position for 2020/21, provided Council Tax is increased up to the referendum limit of 2%.
- 2.22 In the longer term, a budget gap is likely to emerge. Budget proposals will be brought forward to address the projected gap as necessary, whether by generating additional income or making savings, such that there is no risk of the Council setting an unbalanced budget in future years.

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 The Committee could recommend adoption of the draft MTFS attached at Appendix A, endorsement of the underlying financial assumptions and agreement to the Council Tax setting principle set out in paragraph 2.12 above.
- 3.2 The Committee could recommend adoption of the draft MTFS, subject to any amendments that it may agree.
- 3.3 The Committee could choose not to recommend the MTFS for adoption.

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The Committee is asked to recommend adoption of the draft MTFS along with the underlying assumptions and the Council Tax setting principle described above. Without an agreed MTFS, the Council will have no formal framework for consideration of next year's budget, and will therefore risk not being able to meet its statutory responsibility to set a budget. The basis for the assumptions underlying the MTFS and the proposed Council Tax setting principle are set out in the body of this report.
-

5. RISK

- 5.1 The preceding paragraphs have indicated at several points the risks and uncertainty surrounding the Council's financial position. In order to address these in a structured way and to ensure that appropriate mitigations are developed, the Council has developed a budget risk register. This seeks to capture all known budget risks and to present them in a readily comprehensible way. The budget risk register is updated regularly and is reviewed by the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee at each meeting.
-

6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 6.1 Policy and Resources Committee reviewed the background to setting a new Medium Term Financial Strategy at their meeting on 23 July. They noted the planning assumptions and requested that officers consider the implications of both (a) a Council Tax freeze and (b) maintaining the level of Council Tax in real terms.
- 6.2 The three Service Committees – Economic Regeneration & Leisure, Strategic Planning & Infrastructure and Communities, Housing & Environment – have considered the draft MTFS at their meetings in November. The outcomes will be reported at this evening's meeting.
- 6.3 A survey has recently concluded, in which residents were consulted on what they wish to see in the budget. The results will be reported when detailed budget proposals are presented to the Committee in January 2020, so Members will be able to take into account residents' views at that stage.
-

7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

7.1 An outline timetable for developing the Medium Term Financial Strategy and budget for 2020/21 is set out below.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Meeting</i>	<i>Action</i>
20 November 2019	Policy and Resources Committee	Agree updated MTFS for submission to Council
18 December 2019	Council	Approve updated MTFS
October – December		Develop detailed budget proposals for 2020/21
January 2020	All Service Committees	Consider 20/21 budget proposals
12 February 2020	Policy and Resources Committee	Agree 20/21 budget proposals for recommendation to Council
26 February 2020	Council	Approve 20/21 budget

8. REPORT APPENDICES

The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix A: Draft Medium Term Financial Strategy 2020/21 – 2024/25
- Appendix B: Agreed Budget Savings 2020/21 – 2023/24
- Appendix C: Strategic Revenue Projections 2020/21 – 2024/25 – under different scenarios.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL
MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY
2020/21 – 2024/25

DRAFT

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1. OVERVIEW AND SUMMARY OF MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

Background

- 1.1 The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) sets out in financial terms how the Council will deliver its Strategic Plan over the next five years. The Council agreed a new Strategic Plan in December 2018 which describes and prioritises our corporate objectives. The MTFS sets out how these objectives will be delivered, given the resources available.
- 1.2 Resources depend first of all on the broad economic environment. The overall picture for the economy is one of slower growth, but it is hoped that growth will resume as the uncertainties around Brexit are resolved. The present government has responded to lower growth and the reaction against austerity by announcing significant new spending initiatives. These initiatives have been in other areas from the public sector from District Councils, so there is not expected to be a direct benefit to this Council. To the extent that the Council wishes to fund new initiatives, it is likely to have to rely on self-generated resources.
- 1.3 Most of the Council's income already comes from Council Tax and other local sources, including parking, planning fees and property income. This relative self-sufficiency provides a level of reassurance, but there is considerable uncertainty about the position for 2021/22 onwards. The Government offered a four year funding settlement to local authorities in 2016, covering the years 2016/17 to 2019/20, and for 2020/21 the funding arrangements have been rolled forward without significant changes, but the future position is very uncertain.
- 1.4 Capital investment faces a different set of constraints. As set out in section 6 below, funds have been set aside for capital investment and further funding is available, in principle, through prudential borrowing. The challenge is to ensure that capital investment is affordable and sustainable, given the return on investment and the cost of finance, and that the overall scale of the capital programme remains proportionate to the Council's overall budget.

Revenue Projections

- 1.5 The strategic revenue projections underlying the MTFS 2019/20 – 2023/24 suggested that there would be a budget gap of £400,000 in 2020/21, increasing to £2.2 million by the end of the five year period, as follows. The projections were based on a 'neutral' scenario.

Table 1: Current MTFS Revenue Projections 2019/20 – 2023/24

	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Council Tax	16.2	16.8	17.5	18.2	18.9
Retained Business Rates	3.2	1.7	0.4	0.5	0.6

Business Rates Growth	1.1	0.0	0.2	0.4	0.7
Budget requirement	20.5	18.5	18.1	19.1	20.2
Fees and Charges	20.8	21.0	21.2	21.4	21.6
Total Funding Available	41.3	39.5	39.3	40.5	41.8
Predicted Expenditure	42.5	41.5	41.2	41.1	42.6
Budget Gap	1.2	2.0	1.9	0.6	0.8
Required Savings – Cumulative	1.2	3.2	5.1	5.7	6.5
Savings identified – Cumulative	1.2	2.8	3.7	4.3	4.3
Still to be identified	0.0	0.4	1.4	1.4	2.2

- 1.6 The MTFS 2020/21 – 2024/25 sets out an updated set of financial projections in section 7. However, it is important to note that projections like these can only represent a best estimate of what will happen. In updating the projections, various potential scenarios have been modelled – adverse, neutral and favourable.
- 1.7 In accordance with legislative requirements the Council must set a balanced budget. The MTFS sets out a proposed approach that seeks to address this.

2. CORPORATE OBJECTIVES AND KEY PRIORITIES

2.1 The Council has developed a new Strategic Plan which was approved by Council in December 2018. The development of a new Strategic Plan was brought forward in order to inform the refresh of the Local Plan, which sets out the framework for development in the borough and is due to be completed by April 2022. The new Strategic Plan likewise informs the whole range of other Council strategies and policies.

2.2 The new Strategic Plan went through a thorough process of discussion and refinement over the period June – October 2018 and was approved by Council on 12 December 2018. It sets out four key priorities, as follows:

- Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure
- Homes and Communities
- A Thriving Place
- Safe, Clean and Green.

'Embracing growth and enabling infrastructure' recognises the Council's role in leading and shaping the borough as it grows. This means taking an active role in policy and master planning for key sites in the borough, and where appropriate, investing directly ourselves.

'Homes and communities' expresses the objective of making Maidstone a place where people love to live and can afford to live. This means providing a range of different types of housing, including affordable housing, and meeting our statutory obligations to address homelessness and rough sleeping.

'A thriving place' is a borough that is open for business, attractive for visitors and an enjoyable and prosperous place to live for our residents. We will work to regenerate the County town and rural service centres and will continue to grow our leisure and cultural offer.

A 'safe, clean and green' place is one where the environment is protected and enhanced, where parks, green spaces, streets and public areas are looked after, well-managed and respected, and where people are and feel safe.

2.3 Since the adoption of the Strategic Plan in December 2018, the priority of 'Embracing growth and enabling infrastructure' has been made more explicit through our developing plans for an Innovation Centre, for Maidstone East and a new Garden Community. Investment plans have been approved by Policy and Resources Committee which seek to promote Maidstone as a 'Thriving Place', as well as generating a positive financial return for the Council. The priority of a 'Safe, Clean and Green' place has been emphasised by Council's decision to declare its recognition of global climate and biodiversity emergencies, and to consider adopting a target date of 2030 for the whole of the Borough of Maidstone to be carbon neutral.

2.4 The purpose of the MTFs is to describe how the outcomes associated with these objectives and priorities can be delivered, given the financial resources available to the Council, and bearing in mind the prioritisation of

objectives. 'Financial resources' include both revenue resources, for day-to-day expenditure, and capital resources, for one-off investment that will deliver benefits over more than a year.

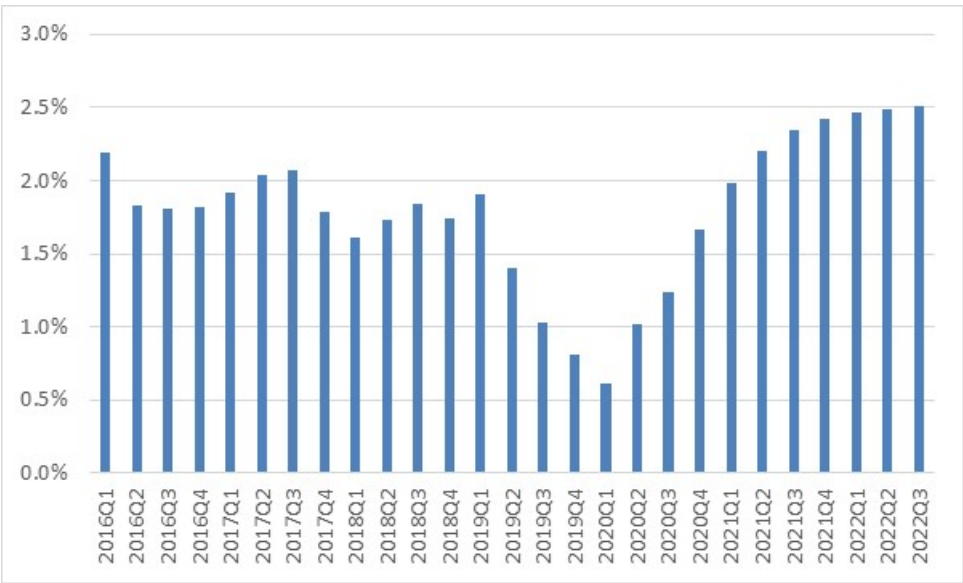
- 2.5 Resources are described in section 4 below. It will be seen that there are constraints on the funding available for the revenue budget, and there are in any case service pressures which must be accommodated. This implies a process of matching resources against the objectives in the Strategic Plan.
- 2.6 Capital investment has hitherto been funded from the New Homes Bonus, internal revenue resources and third party contributions such as Section 106 payments on new developments. From 2019/20 onwards capital investment will increasingly be funded by external borrowing. The constraints on capital expenditure are different from those facing revenue expenditure, because the current local authority funding regime does not set cash limits for borrowing. However, borrowing must be sustainable in terms of the Council's ability to fund interest payments and ultimately repayment of capital. Capital investment plans also depend on having the capacity, in terms of internal resources, to develop projects, work effectively with partners, and secure third party funding.

3. NATIONAL CONTEXT

Economic Outlook 2020 – 2025

- 3.1 The prospects for the national economy depend both on global economic prospects and on the consequences of Brexit. Growth projections in most leading economies, as expressed in Purchasing Managers’ Indices, have been falling, particularly where growth is heavily dependent on international trade. The Bank of England has pointed out that UK’s composite output PMI is now at the bottom of a range of advanced economies, indicating that the prospects for the UK are further exacerbated by Brexit-related uncertainties.
- 3.2 So far, these uncertainties have led to volatility in economic growth, with businesses stocking up in anticipation of Brexit in March 2019, followed by a slowdown. This has not yet pushed the economy into recession, which is defined as two successive quarters of negative growth: output grew in the three months to the end of August by 0.3% after a contraction of 0.2% in the three months to the end of June.
- 3.3 It remains to be seen whether recession can be avoided in the short term. In the medium term, the Office of Budget Responsibility expects growth in 2019 and 2020 to be slightly below potential, as Brexit uncertainty weighs on the economy. From 2021 onwards, it assumes that Brexit uncertainty will begin to fade and potential productivity growth will pick up, which means that GDP growth would rise¹. Bank of England projections show a similar picture – see graph below.

Figure 1: Real UK gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate assuming constant interest rates
(Source – Bank of England Quarterly Inflation Report August 2019)



- 3.4 The most recent Consumer Price Inflation (CPI) data shows 1.7% for the year to August 2019. The Bank of England projects inflation of 1.92% for quarter 1 of 2020 assuming constant interest rates. Thereafter, inflation is

¹ <https://obr.uk/forecasts-in-depth/the-economy-forecast/real-gdp-growth/>

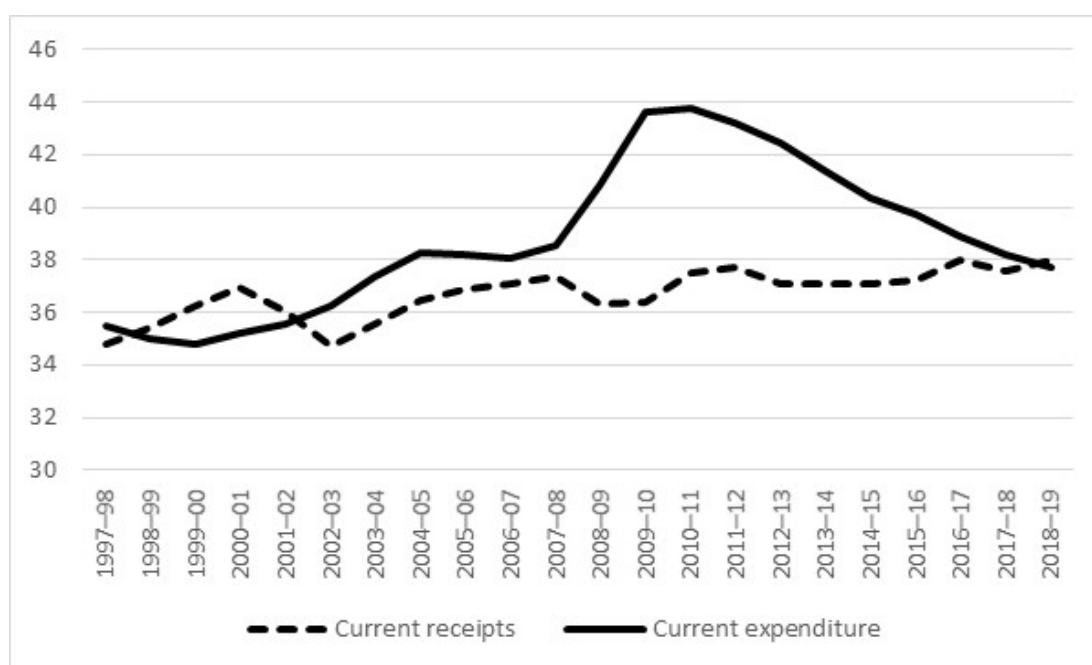
judged likely to rise slightly above the target inflation rate of 2%, based on domestic inflationary pressures. Over the longer term, policy action will be designed to ensure inflation remains within 1% above or below the target of 2%.

- 3.5 The overall picture for the national economy is therefore for slower growth in the short term before resuming a moderate rate of growth in the medium term. Inflation is projected to increase to above the Bank of England target of 2% next year, but with the expectation that policy action will bring it back in line with target in the longer term.

Public Finances

- 3.6 After a period of austerity between 2010 and 2017, government spending has come back into line with receipts.

Figure 2: Current receipts and expenditure as % of national income

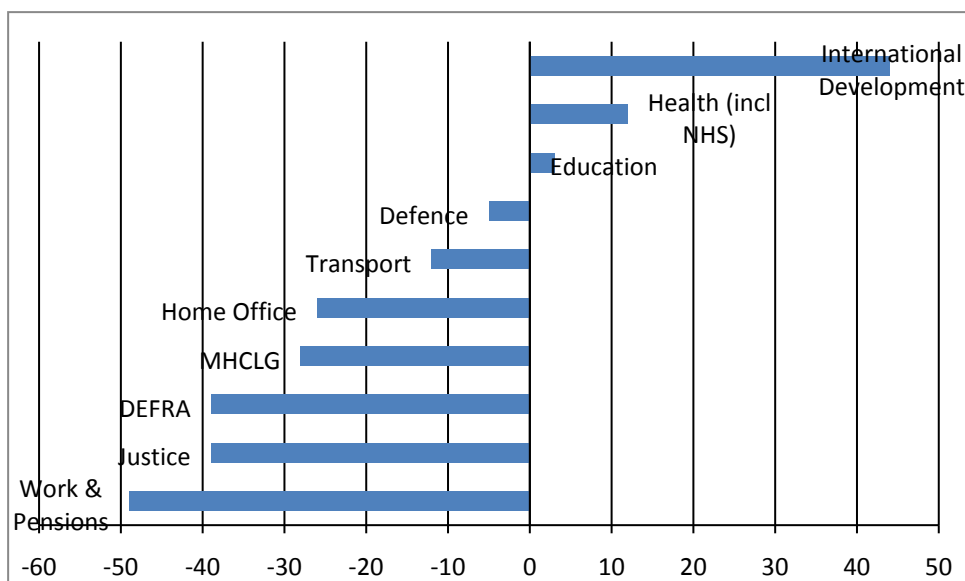


However, the cumulative deficit is at its highest ever level in relation to GDP, at 82% of national income. The government has also now rapidly changed direction following the long period of austerity, with a number of increasingly generous public spending commitments over the past twelve months. This will increase the level of borrowing as a percentage of GDP, even under a smooth Brexit scenario².

- 3.7 Within the overall reduction in public expenditure, there has been a widely disparate pattern between different government departments.

² IFS, Green Budget 2019

Figure 3: Planned real change to Departmental Expenditure Limits 2010-11 – 2019-20 (per cent)



- 3.8 MHCLG, which provides central government funding for local authorities, has seen some of the biggest cuts. Although the policy of austerity has now been reversed, it is unlikely that local government will see significant benefits given the pressures elsewhere on the public purse, in particular from the NHS.
- 3.9 The effects of austerity in local government have not been spread evenly between authorities. The increasing costs of adult social care and children’s social care – services delivered by the upper tier of local government - contribute by far the majority of the funding gap faced by the sector. When local government spending needs are assessed against resources in the planned 2020 Spending Review, it is likely that any rebalancing of public spending will benefit the upper tier authorities that deliver these services, rather than District Councils like Maidstone.
- 3.10 The Queen’s Speech on 14 October 2019 announced a White Paper on devolution. This may be the first step towards local government reorganisation, but at this stage it is appropriate to plan on the basis of the Council retaining its current level of autonomy.

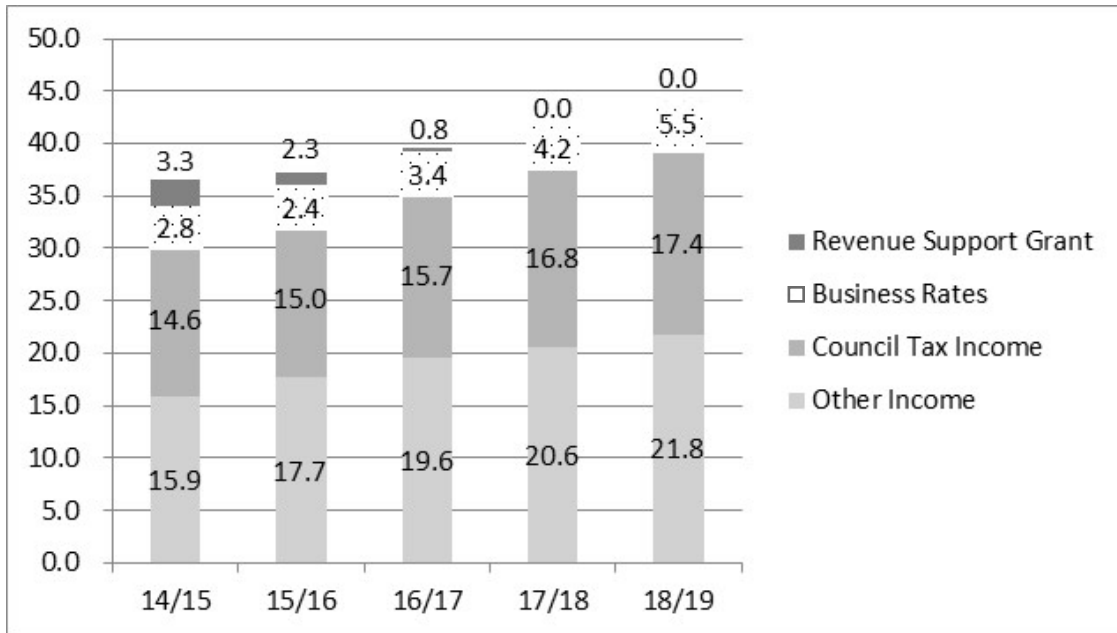
Conclusion

- 3.11 Growth in the national economy is slowing, and is vulnerable to Brexit related uncertainty. Although the government plans aggressive public expenditure which would counter-act any downturn in the economy, there is unlikely to be much direct benefit to District Councils. This Council is already largely self-sufficient, so for financial planning purposes, it needs to assume a continued reliance on self-generated resources, and to maintain a level of reserves that will allow it to withstand external shocks.

4. FINANCIAL RESOURCES

- 4.1 The Council's main sources of income are Council Tax and self-generated income from a range of other sources, including parking, planning fees and property investments. It no longer receives direct government support in the form of Revenue Support Grant; although it collects around £60 million of business rates annually, it retains only a small proportion of this.

Figure 4: Sources of Income (£m)



Council Tax

- 4.2 Council Tax is a product of the tax base and the level of tax set by Council. The tax base is a value derived from the number of chargeable residential properties within the borough and their band, which is based on valuation ranges, adjusted by all discounts and exemptions.
- 4.3 The tax base has increased steadily in recent years, reflecting the number of new housing developments in the borough. See table below.

Table 2: Number of Dwellings in Maidstone

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Number of dwellings	67,721	68,519	69,633	70,843	71,917
% increase compared with previous year	0.81%	1.18%	1.63%	1.74%	1.52%

Note: Number of dwellings is reported each year based on the position shown on the valuation list in September.

- 4.4 The level of council tax increase for 2020/21 is a decision that will be made by Council based on a recommendation made by Policy and Resources Committee. The Council's ability to increase the level of council tax is limited

by the requirement to hold a referendum for increases over a government set limit. The referendum limit for 2019/20 was the greater of 3% or £5.00 for Band D tax payers. Council Tax was increased by the maximum possible, ie £7.56 (3%).

- 4.5 In the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2019/20 – 2023/24, it was assumed that the Council Tax base would increase by 2% per annum for the MTFs period, and Band D Council Tax increases would revert to 2% per annum after 2019/20. Given the risk of an economic slowdown, and the fact that growth of 2% per annum has never actually been achieved, a more prudent assumption for increases in the Council Tax base would be 1.5%.

Other income

- 4.6 Other income is an increasingly important source of funding for the Council. It includes the following sources of income:

- Parking
- Shared services
- Commercial property
- Planning fees
- Cremations
- Garden waste collection
- Income generating activity in parks

Where fees and charges are not set by statute, we apply a policy that guides officers and councillors in setting the appropriate level based on demand, affordability and external factors. Charges should be maximised within the limits of the policy, but customer price sensitivity must be taken into account, given that in those areas where we have discretion to set fees and charges, customers are not necessarily obliged to use our services.

- 4.7 In developing the strategic revenue projection for 2020/21 a broad assumption of a 2% increase in future fees and charges has been used for the development of the MTFs, in line with overall inflation assumptions.

Business Rates

- 4.8 Under current funding arrangements, local government retains 50% of the business rates it collects. The aggregate amount collected by local government is redistributed between individual authorities on the basis of perceived need, so that in practice Maidstone Borough Council receives only around 7% of the business rates that it collects.

- 4.9 Prior to the 2017 General Election, the Government was preparing to move to 100% business rates retention with effect from 2020. The additional income would have been accompanied by devolution of further responsibilities to local government. However, the need to accommodate Brexit legislation meant that there was no time to legislate for this. Government now intends to increase the level of business rates retention to the extent that it is able to do within existing legislation, and plans to introduce 75% business rates retention with effect from 2021/22.

- 4.10 In the meantime, the Autumn 2019 Spending Round announcement assumes a 'roll-forward' settlement for 2020/21, with the existing 50% scheme retained and the amounts retained by individual local authorities increased in line with inflation.
- 4.11 As with 50% business rates retention, the new 75% business rates retention regime will be linked to a mechanism for rates equalisation to reflect local authorities' needs. These will be assessed based on a 'Fair Funding Review'. The overall amounts to be allocated as part of the Fair Funding Review are also subject to a planned Spending Review which is now expected to take place in 2020. It is therefore difficult to predict with any degree of accuracy whether the proportion of business rates retained by Maidstone will remain the same, increase or decrease from 2021/22 onwards.
- 4.12 The current local government funding regime gives authorities the opportunity to pool their business rates income and retain a higher share of growth as compared with a notional baseline set in 2013/14. Maidstone has been a member of the Kent Business Rates pool since 2014/15. Its 30% share of the growth arising from membership of the pool is allocated to a reserve which is used for specific projects that form part of the Council's economic development strategy. A further 30% represents a Growth Fund, spent in consultation with Kent County Council. This has been used to support the Maidstone East development.
- 4.13 It should be noted that in 2021, the baseline will be reset, so all growth accumulated to that point will be reallocated between local authorities as described in paragraph 4.11 above.
- 4.14 A further element of growth was retained locally for one year only in 2018/19 as a result of Maidstone's participation in the Kent & Medway 100% Business Rates Retention pilot. Kent & Medway local authorities were successful in bidding for pilot status, which meant that 100% of business rates growth, rather than 50%, was retained locally. The additional growth was split between a Financial Sustainability Fund (70%) and a Housing and Commercial Growth Fund (30%).
- 4.15 Unfortunately, Kent & Medway was unsuccessful with its bid to form a pilot again in 2019/20, and no further pilots are planned for 2020/21.
- 4.16 Total projected business rates income for 2019/20 and the uses to which it will be put are summarised in the table below.

Table 3: Projected Business Rates Income 2019/20

	£000	
Business Rates baseline income	3,208	Included in base budget
Growth in excess of the baseline	1,129	Included in base budget
Pooling gain (MBC share)	315	Funds Economic Development projects
Pooling gain (Growth Fund)	315	Spent in consultation with KCC, eg on Maidstone East
Total	4,967	

- 4.17 Whilst the proportion of total business rates income retained by the Council is relatively small, the amounts retained have grown significantly since the introduction of 50% business rates retention. Pressure on the government to reduce the burden of business rates and the unpredictability of future arrangements for equalising business rates income between Councils place future income growth from this source at risk.

Revenue Support Grant

- 4.18 Maidstone no longer benefits directly from central government support in the form of Revenue Support Grant, as it is considered to have a high level of resources and low needs. In fact, Councils in this situation were due to be penalised by the government under the existing four year funding settlement, through a mechanism to levy a 'tariff / top-up adjustment' – effectively negative Revenue Support Grant. Maidstone was due to pay negative RSG of £1.589 million in 2019/20. However, the government faced considerable pressure to waive negative RSG and removed it in the 2019/20 Local Government Finance Settlement. The government has also stated that it is minded not to levy negative RSG in 2020/21.
- 4.19 From 2021/22 there will be a new local government funding regime. However, it should be noted that a needs-based distribution of funding will continue to create anomalies like negative RSG, so it cannot be assumed that the threat of losing funding in this way (even if the mechanism is different) has gone away.
- 4.20 The potential negative RSG of £1.589 million for 2019/20 was held as a contingency for future funding pressures, to be applied to cushion the impact of likely reductions in resources in the future. Given that it appears that negative RSG will not be levied in 2020/21, it is proposed to continue rolling forward this contingency in anticipation of the impact of the new funding regime in 2021/22.

Balances and Earmarked Reserves

- 4.21 The Council maintains reserves as a safety net to allow for unforeseen circumstances. There is no statutory definition of the minimum level of reserves: the amount required is a matter of judgement. However, the Council has agreed to set £2 million as the minimum General Fund balance.

- 4.22 Within the General Fund balance, amounts have been allocated for specific purposes. These amounts do not represent formal commitments. Instead, they represent the level of reserves considered to be required for specific purposes, including asset replacement, commercialisation and Invest to Save projects.
- 4.23 In addition to unallocated General Fund balances, the Council holds reserves that are earmarked for specific purposes. Full details of reserves held are set out below.

Table 4: General Fund balances as at 31 March 2019

	31.3.18 £000	31.3.19 £000
Earmarked Reserves		
New Homes Bonus funding for capital projects	1,404	0
Local Plan Review	200	200
Neighbourhood Plans funding carried forward	70	64
Planning Appeals Contingency	0	300
Accumulated Surplus on Trading Accounts	51	31
Civil Parking Enforcement	481	419
Future Capital Expenditure	0	431
Housing Prevention & Temporary Accommodation	0	700
Unspent Business Rates Growth (Pool and Pilot)	692	3,682
Sub-total Earmarked Reserves	2,898	5,828
Unallocated Balances	9,022	8,620
Total General Fund balances	11,920	14,448

- 4.24 The unallocated balances comfortably exceed the £2 million minimum. They represent around 20% of the gross revenue budget, which is well in excess of the 10% benchmark that is sometimes cited as a reasonable level. It can therefore be seen that the level of reserves is adequate without being excessive.

Capital Funding

- 4.25 Typically, local authorities fund capital expenditure by borrowing from the Public Works Loan Board, which offers rates that are usually more competitive than those available in the commercial sector. Maidstone Borough Council has so far not borrowed to fund its capital programme, instead relying primarily on New Homes Bonus to fund the capital programme. Borrowing has not been required so far in 2019/20, but is likely to be in subsequent years. The cost of any borrowing is factored into the MTFS financial projections.
- 4.26 Public Works Loan Board funding has for several years offered local authorities a cheap source of finance, which has been used more and more extensively. The amount authorised by the Treasury for PWLB lending is currently capped at £95 billion, and with borrowing reaching £85 billion in October 2019, it was announced that the cost of borrowing would be increased by 100 basis point across the board, with the clear intention of

dampening demand for funds. This meant, for example, that the annual interest on a 50 year loan, repayable on maturity, increased from 1.8% to 2.8%. Given that borrowing costs in the market generally remain very low, it is considered likely that local authorities will be able to continue to borrow cheaply from other lenders, if not from the PWLB.

- 4.27 There has been a reduction of the period for which New Homes Bonus would be paid from six years to five in 2017/18 and then to four in 2018/19 and 2019/20. The government has announced its intention of paying New Homes in 2020/21, but under the new Local Government funding regime to be implemented from 2021/22 a new, unspecified mechanism for incentivising housebuilding is envisaged.
- 4.28 External funding is sought wherever possible and the Council has been successful in obtaining Government Land Release Funding for its housing developments and ERDF funding for the Kent Medical Campus Innovation Centre.
- 4.29 Funding is also available through developer contributions (S 106) and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). The Community Infrastructure Levy was introduced in Maidstone in October 2018.
- 4.30 The current funding assumptions used in the programme are set out in the table below.

Table 5: Capital Programme Funding

	19/20 £000	20/21 £000	21/22 £000	22/23 £000	23/24 £000	Total £000
External sources	6,901	9,179	3,253	2,782	860	22,975
Own resources	15,185	1,082	1,277	1,485	1,682	20,712
Debt	29,667	8,644	9,153	8,371	9,338	65,173
TOTAL	51,754	18,905	13,683	12,638	11,880	108,860

A review of the schemes in the capital programme will take place during the course of Autumn 2019. Proposals will also be considered for new schemes to be added to the capital programme. The affordability of the capital programme will be considered as part of this review, as it is essential that any borrowing to fund the capital programme is sustainable and affordable in terms of its revenue costs.

- 4.31 Under CIPFA's updated Prudential Code, the Council is now required to produce a Capital Strategy, which is intended to give an overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the provision of local public services, along with an overview of how associated risk is managed and the implications for future financial sustainability. A Capital Strategy was approved by Council at its meeting on 25 September 2019.

- 4.32 The outcome of the capital programme review and an updated Capital Strategy will be considered by Policy and Resources Committee in January 2020 and an updated capital programme and strategy recommended to Council for approval.

5. SCENARIO PLANNING

- 5.1 Owing to uncertainty arising from the economic environment, and from the lack of clarity about what the government's plans for local government funding will mean for the Council, financial projections have been prepared for three different scenarios, as follows.

1. Favourable

Brexit is accompanied by a government-induced stimulus to the economy, which provides more funding for local government. In the medium term, this generates higher economic growth which more than offsets any potential negative Brexit impacts.

2. Neutral

Current trends are maintained. The Council is able to maintain existing service levels and to fund inflationary increases in expenditure thanks to a steadily growing Council Tax base and regular annual increases in Council Tax. However, without any overall increase in local government spending, new spending pressures have to be funded from within existing resources.

3. Adverse

An adverse outcome from Brexit leads to recession, reducing Council income but increasing service pressures in areas like homelessness, requiring spending cuts in order to ensure that statutory services are maintained.

Details of key assumptions underlying each of these scenarios are set out below.

Council Tax

- 5.2 It is assumed that the Council will take advantage of any flexibility offered by central government and will increase Council Tax up to the referendum limit. The government plans to set a referendum limit of 2% for 2020/21. It is not known at this stage what the referendum limit will be for subsequent years, but it is assumed to be 2%, to align with the government's inflation target. This assumption applies to all three scenarios, as Council Tax is the authority's principal and most reliable source of income, and it would not be prudent to fail to maximise income from this source.
- 5.3 The other key assumption regarding Council Tax is the number of new properties. The number of new properties has been increasing in recent years, from a low of 0.38% in 2014, peaking at 1.74% in 2018. The rate of increase nevertheless remains lower than that implied by Local Plan new homes targets. Assumptions are as follows:

Favourable – 2%

Neutral – 1.5%

Adverse – 1%

- 5.4 The target collection rate for Council Tax is 98%. Current indications are that the actual collection rate for 2019/20 will be at, or very close to, this level. However, in the event of a recession, residents will be under greater financial pressure and this could lead to a lower collection rate. A further 0.5% of income is therefore assumed to be lost in this scenario.

Business Rates

- 5.5 The Council receives only a small proportion of the business rates that it actually collects. In 2020/21, the Government indicated in its Spending Round announcement in September 2019 that it would roll forward the existing arrangements, with an increase in the business rates baseline to reflect inflation.
- 5.6 After 2021, the proportion of business rates retained by the authority will be adjusted to reflect the findings of the Fair Funding Review and the Spending Review. It is very difficult to predict what this will mean in practice. However, for the purposes of revenue projections, a number of assumptions have been made.
- 5.7 The starting point in the government's calculations will be Maidstone's perceived level of need, which in the current four year funding settlement led to the Council being faced with a negative revenue support grant payment of £1.589 million in 2019/20. In the event, this was not levied on the Council, following concerted lobbying by Maidstone and other authorities that faced negative RSG. The amount of negative RSV thus avoided in 2019/20 is being held in reserve to address likely future funding pressures.
- 5.8 The starting point for future business rates income is therefore assumed to be the current baseline share of business rates income, as adjusted for inflation in 2020/21, less £1.589 million. It is not accepted that this would be a fair allocation of business rates income but it is nevertheless prudent to make this assumption for forecasting purposes.
- 5.9 A further factor to be considered is the resetting of the government's business rates baseline in 2021/22. This represents the level above which the Council benefits from a share in business rates growth. It is likely that the government will reset the baseline in order to redistribute resources from those areas that have benefitted most from business rates growth in the years since the current system was introduced in 2013, to those areas that have had lower business rates growth. Accordingly, cumulative business rates growth has been removed from the projections for 2021/22, then is gradually reinstated from 2022/23.
- 5.10 The target collection rate for Business Rates is 98.6%. Current indications are that the actual collection rate for 2019/20 will be closer to 98%. In the event of a recession, businesses will be under greater financial pressure and the number of businesses failures will be higher, leading to a still lower collection rate. A further 2% of income is therefore assumed to be lost in this scenario.

- 5.11 Given these assumptions, the specific assumptions for business rates growth in each scenario are as follows:

Favourable – 2% increase in multiplier plus 2% growth in base

Neutral – 2% increase in multiplier plus 1% growth in base

Adverse – 3% increase in multiplier, 0% growth in base and 2% losses from lower collection rate

Inflation

- 5.12 The most recent Bank of England inflation report recognised an inconsistency between market expectations of inflation, which assume very low interest rates in the near term, and the Bank's own inflation forecasts, which align with its more aggressive assumptions about interest rates. A further potential factor is the impact of any sterling depreciation on input prices, which could push up inflation rates.
- 5.13 For the purpose of forecasting, it is assumed that the government's target rate of inflation is 2% is achieved in the favourable and neutral scenarios. A higher rate of 3% is assumed in the adverse scenario, reflecting the risk of increases in input prices pushing up inflation rates.

Pay inflation

- 5.14 Pay is the Council's single biggest item of expenditure, accounting for around 50% of total costs. Although the Council sets pay rates independently of any national agreements, in practice it has to pay attention to overall public sector and local authority pay settlements, as these affect the labour market in which the Council operates. It will be difficult for the Council to ignore this, so the assumption about pay inflation in all scenarios is that it will be in line with general inflation assumptions. Furthermore, an additional 0.5% has to be allowed for in pay inflation assumptions arising from the annual cost of performance related incremental increases for staff.

Fees and charges

- 5.15 The projections imply that fees and charges will increase in line with overall inflation assumptions, to the extent that the Council is able to increase them. In practice, it is not possible to increase all fees and charges by this amount as they are set by statute. Accordingly, the actual increase in income shown in the projections is 50% of the general inflation assumption in each scenario.
- 5.16 A favourable economic climate could be expected to boost fees and charges income above and beyond the rate of inflation. Conversely, in the event of a recession, as assumed under the adverse scenario, a number of the Council's income streams could suffer. In some cases (eg Planning fees) the Council could eventually cut its costs accordingly, although there would be a time lag. However, this does not apply to all income streams. In particular, Parking income is highly sensitive to the overall economy, and there are few mitigations available if income falls. Accordingly, under the adverse scenario, a 2% year on year loss of income is assumed.

Contract costs

Costs are generally assumed to rise in line with inflation, but a composite rate is applied to take account of higher increases on contracts like waste collection where the growth in the number of households leads to a volume increase as well as an inflation increase.

5.17 Inflation assumptions are summarised as follows.

Table 6: Inflation Assumptions

	Favourable	Neutral	Adverse	Comments
General	2.00%	2.00%	3.00%	2% is the government's target inflation rate but there is a risk of higher inflation if sterling depreciates following Brexit
Employee Costs	2.00%	2.00%	3.00%	Neutral assumption is in line with the most recent pay settlement and government inflation targets
	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	The annual cost of performance related incremental increases for staff
Contract costs	2.00% - 5.00%	2.00% - 5.00%	2.00% - 8.00%	A composite rate is applied, reflecting different pressures on individual contracts
Fees and charges - price	2.00%	2.00%	3.00%	In line with general inflation assumptions
Fees and charges - volume	2.00%	0.00%	-2.00%	Reflects overall economic conditions

Service Spend

5.18 Strategic Revenue Projections under all scenarios assume that service spend will remain as set out in the previous MTFs, so savings previously agreed by Council will be delivered and no further growth arising from the new Strategic Plan is incorporated. In practice, it is likely that service spending would need to be reduced if the adverse scenario were likely to arise.

5.19 The projections include provision for the revenue cost of the capital programme, comprising interest costs (2.5%) and provision for repayment of borrowing (2%).

Summary of Projections

5.20 A summary of the financial projections under each of the scenarios is set out in section 7.

6. SPENDING PLANS – REVENUE AND CAPITAL

- 6.1 This section sets out current revenue and capital spending plans, so that an assessment can be made as to whether the plans support the Council's strategic priorities, and therefore whether resources are employed appropriately.

Revenue

Table 7: 2018/19 Revenue Outturn and 2019/20 Savings and Growth

Committee	Service	2018/19			2019/20	
		Final adjusted budget	Actual outturn for the year	Variance (-Adverse/ Favourable)	Budget savings	Budget growth
		£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
CHE	Communities & Housing	4,444	4,089	355	119	0
	Environment & Public Realm	4,244	4,539	-295	116	-30
ERL	Heritage, Culture & Leisure	1,852	1,951	-99	167	0
	Economic Development	614	576	38	7	0
S P I	Planning Services	1,291	1,507	-216	60	-24
	Parking & Transportation	-1,939	-1,978	39	271	0
P & R	Property & Investment	-79	-300	221	291	0
	Corporate and Shared Services	9,022	8,911	111	151	-27
	Total	19,449	19,294	154	1,182	-81

Details by service area are set out below.

Communities and Housing

- 6.2 This service area supports the corporate priority 'Housing and Communities'. The Housing Service has been successful in managing an increasing workload over the past couple of years, thanks in part to one-off government grant funding, and to local initiatives such as the purchase of property to provide temporary accommodation. The service remains demand-driven, so whilst the number of families in temporary accommodation appears currently to have stabilised at around 100, this could change. Current budgets however assume that the status quo is maintained.
- 6.3 Our project with EY Xantura, funded via the Business Rates Retention pilot one-off resources, seeks to target homelessness prevention interventions and reduce the risks and incidence of homelessness in the medium term.

- 6.4 The capital budget for 2019/20 includes provision for phase 3 of the temporary accommodation investment programme and ongoing expenditure on the Brunswick Street and Union Street developments, both of which are currently in progress.
- 6.5 In the longer term, the Housing Development and Redevelopment Investment Plan and our plans for Council affordable housing are designed to contribute towards meeting housing need across a range of different tenures.

Environment & Public Realm

- 6.6 These services support the 'clean and green' agenda, as they include street cleaning, grounds maintenance in parks and open spaces, and household waste collection. Waste collection is outsourced and the cost of the service is directly linked to inflation indices. The adverse variance in 2018/19 was owing to a one-off change in accounting treatment of Garden Waste income and has no ongoing implications.
- 6.7 Budgets assume that current service levels are maintained. However, a provision has been included in the MTFS for a potential annual increase in costs of £500,000 when the existing contract with Biffa comes to an end.

Heritage, Culture & Leisure

- 6.8 This service area helps to make Maidstone a 'thriving place'. It includes the museum, leisure services and bereavement services. Leisure services are seeing significant capital investment at Mote Park with the Adventure Zone and the forthcoming Visitor Centre. This forms part of a long term strategy for Mote Park whereby self-sufficiency is achieved by investment in income generating activities, so the Adventure Zone is projected to deliver £114,000 additional income annually which will contribute towards the running costs of the park. However, it is clear that new visitors also create additional spending pressures in Mote Park generally, highlighting the need for careful forecasting when planning future investment.
- 6.9 The Bereavement service continues to be successful in exceeding its income targets. The business case for further investment in the service is therefore strong.

Economic Development

- 6.10 Economic Development likewise supports the priority of making Maidstone a thriving place. The Council has a small ongoing revenue budget for economic development, supplemented by funding from the Business Rates Pool. The service also plays a key role in major capital-funded projects including the Kent Medical Campus Innovation Centre and Maidstone East.

Planning Services

- 6.11 Planning Services provide the essential framework for 'embracing growth and enabling infrastructure'. These services include spatial planning, and specifically the Local Plan review, infrastructure planning, liaison with

developers on major applications, and day-to-day development management and processing of planning applications. The Planning Service is subject to some volatility in income, particularly with major applications, which led to a budget shortfall in 2019/20. This will require careful management. The current MTFS allows for £800,000 to be spent over the next four years on the Local Plan refresh.

- 6.12 There remains a risk of costs in relation to planning appeals, but known likely costs have been provided for in the accounts as at the end of 2018/19.

Parking & Transportation

- 6.13 Parking and Transportation likewise support growth and infrastructure, as well as serving the priority of making Maidstone a thriving place. The Parking Service traditionally out-performed its income budgets, and budgets were increased accordingly. 2018/19 saw a budget surplus, but the margin was smaller than in previous years, reflecting the fact that more income has been built into the base budget. Future years' income will be heavily dependent on performance of the wider economy and specifically on Maidstone Town Centre's success in attracting visitors.

- 6.14 A saving has been achieved by re-commissioning the Park and Ride service.

Property & Investment

- 6.15 This service is responsible for the Council's own property and investments. The Council's commercial property investment strategy both generates a financial return and supports the regeneration agenda by investing in the local economy. In recent years the Council has been able successfully to generate additional income from commercial investments. Further capital investment has been undertaken in 2019/20 and is planned in the future.

Corporate & Shared Services

- 6.16 Corporate services provide the essential support structure to enable all the corporate priorities to be realised. They include central staffing budgets and office accommodation. The Council's future office accommodation needs are under review, with its lease on Maidstone House expiring in 2023. In the meantime, we will seek to maximise value from the space occupied.

- 6.17 Shared Services continue to provide resilience and offer the potential for additional income, eg from lending Internal Audit staff to other authorities and from our debt collection service.

Summary - Revenue

- 6.18 Most service areas are already scheduled to deliver savings in 2020/21 following previous Council decisions. To the extent that savings cannot be delivered, or additional revenue growth is required in order to meet strategic priorities, further savings will need to be identified so as to remain within the constraint of an overall standstill budget.

Capital

6.19 In drawing up the capital programme, there has been a focus on schemes that both meet strategic priorities and are self-funding. Major initiatives include the following.

- The Housing Development and Regeneration Investment Plan provides for the Council to develop housing ourselves, following on from the developments at Brunswick Street and Union Street, thereby addressing the need for new homes in the borough and generating long term revenue returns through developing homes for market rent.
- The Affordable Housing programme envisages the acquisition of up to 200 social rented homes on smaller developments, to be managed by a Registered Provider (RP).
- The Commercial Investment Strategy builds on the Council's existing commercial investment property portfolio and assumes that we will continue to expand the portfolio, subject to opportunities arising that generate the required rate of return and support the priority of making Maidstone a thriving place.
- The Kent Medical Campus Innovation Centre, part-funded by the ERDF, will bring new businesses and jobs into the area.

Table 8: Capital Programme 2019/20 to 2023/24

	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Brunswick Street - Net Cost	3,441	-100				3,341
Union Street - Net Cost	2,085	-1,843				242
Indicative Schemes	4,124	5,426	3,750	3,750		17,050
Council Affordable Housing			3,750	3,750	7,500	15,000
Disabled Facilities Grants	1,570	800	800	800	800	4,770
Temporary Accommodation	3,236					3,236
Housing Incentives	1,040	175	175	175	175	1,740
Gypsy Site Improvement Works	42					42
CCTV Upgrade and Relocation	150					150
Commercial Waste	180					180
Street Scene Investment	147	25				172
Flood Action Plan	1,000	63				1,063
Communities, Housing & Environment Total	17,015	4,546	8,475	8,475	8,475	46,986
Improvements to Play Areas	422					422
Crematorium and Cemetery Projects	140	130				270
Mote Park Improvements	374					374
Mote Park Visitor Centre	2,122					2,122

	19/20 £000	20/21 £000	21/22 £000	22/23 £000	23/24 £000	Total £000
Mote Park Lake - Dam Works	267	1,650	100			2,017
Other Parks Improvements	100					100
Museum Development Plan	11	125	200	64		401
Economic Regeneration & Leisure Total	3,437	1,905	300	64		5,706
High Street Regeneration	547					547
Asset Management / Corporate Property	1,417	467	175	175	175	2,409
Feasibility Studies	113	50	50	50	50	313
Infrastructure Delivery	1,200	600	600	600	600	3,600
Software / PC Replacement	124	287				411
Digital Projects	20	20	20	20	20	100
Acquisition of Commercial Assets	24,850	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	34,850
Kent Medical Campus-Innovation Centre	649	8,250	1,500			10,399
Maidstone East	520					520
Policy & Resources Total	29,440	12,174	4,845	3,345	3,345	53,149
Mall Bus Station Redevelopment	1,540					1,540
Bridges Gyratory Scheme	121					121
Strategic Planning & Infrastructure Total	1,661					1,661
Sub-Total	51,553	18,625	13,620	11,884	11,820	107,502
Section 106 Contributions / CIL	201	280	63	754	60	1,358
TOTAL	51,754	18,905	13,683	12,638	11,880	108,860

6.20 A review of the schemes in the capital programme will take place during the course of Autumn 2019 and proposals will be considered for new schemes to be added to the capital programme, whilst ensuring that the overall capital programme is sustainable and affordable in terms of its revenue costs.

7. REVENUE PROJECTIONS

- 7.1 It is inherent in the Medium Term Financial Strategy that the Council matches available resources to strategic objectives, such that income and expenditure are balanced and any budget gap is eliminated. In addition to the legal requirement to set a balanced budget for 2020/21, the Council needs to have credible plans in place to address any budget gap in subsequent years. In the interests of prudence, these plans need to address not only a neutral set of projections but also the potential adverse scenario outlined above.
- 7.2 Based on the assumptions set out in Section 5, financial projections indicate a revenue budget position as follows under the different scenarios.

Table 9: Projected Budget Gap 2020/21 – 2024/25

	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Scenario 1 – Favourable					
Budget gap / (surplus)	-0.2	0.8	1.1	1.4	1.2
Scenario 2 – Neutral					
Budget gap / (surplus)	-0.1	0.9	1.6	2.1	2.2
Scenario 3 – Adverse					
Budget gap	0.4	1.9	3.3	4.6	5.5

- 7.3 Current spending plans, as set out in the previous section, have been reviewed for feasibility, affordability and consistency with strategic objectives. As the financial projections indicate a broadly balanced position for 2020/21, no specific targets have been set for savings or increased income generation in this year. However, any service pressures, or initiatives with revenue expenditure implications, will have to be funded from within the overall budget envelope, meaning savings or additional income growth to offset the expenditure growth.
- 7.4 In subsequent years, the projections indicate a likely requirement either to make savings or generate increased income. By planning a build up in reserves that can be released in 2021/22, the MTFs avoids a potential cliff-edge where savings need to be made at short notice.
- 7.5 Detailed budget proposals are currently being developed, prior to consideration by Service Committees and the wider stakeholder group in January 2020.
- 7.6 The following table compares the position in the neutral scenario for a 2% Council Tax increase with that for a Council Tax freeze, as requested by Members at the meeting of Policy and Resources Committee on 23 July 2019.

Table 10: Projected Budget Gap with Council Tax freeze

	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m

Neutral Scenario – Council Tax increase 2% per annum					
Budget gap	-0.1	0.9	1.6	2.1	2.2

Neutral Scenario – Council Tax freeze					
Budget gap	0.2	1.6	2.6	3.5	4.0

Assuming all other factors remained unchanged, freezing Council Tax would lead to a budget gap of £200,000 in 2020/21. Over the longer term, it can be seen that not increasing Council Tax in line with inflation increases the budget gap to a level which risks being unmanageable.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 8.1 As indicated in the previous sections, the Council's MTFS is subject to a high degree of risk and certainty. In order to address this in a structured way and to ensure that appropriate mitigations are developed, the Council has developed a budget risk register. This seeks to capture all known budget risks and to present them in a readily comprehensible way. The budget risk register is updated regularly and is reviewed by the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee at each meeting.
- 8.2 The major risk areas that have been identified as potentially threatening the Medium Term Financial Strategy are as follows.
- Failure to contain expenditure within agreed budgets
 - Fees and Charges fail to deliver sufficient income
 - Commercialisation fails to deliver additional income
 - Planned savings are not delivered
 - Shared services fail to meet budget
 - Council holds insufficient balances
 - Inflation rate predictions in MTFS are inaccurate
 - Adverse impact from changes in local government funding
 - Constraints on council tax increases
 - Capital programme cannot be funded
 - Increased complexity of government regulation
 - Collection targets for Council Tax and Business Rates missed
 - Business Rates pool fails to generate sufficient growth
 - Adverse financial consequences from a disorderly Brexit
- 8.3 It is recognised that this is not an exhaustive list. By reviewing risks on a regular basis, it is expected that any major new risks will be identified and appropriate mitigations developed.
- 8.4 An assessment of the relative impact and likelihood of the risks identified is set out below.

Table 11: Budget Risk Matrix

Likelihood	5					
	4			L	H,N	
	3		M	G, I	B	
	2		E	C	A,D	J
	1		K	F		
		1	2	3	4	5
		Impact				

Black – Top risk

Red – High risk

Amber – Medium risk

Green – Low risk

Blue – Minimal risk

Key

- A. Failure to contain expenditure within agreed budgets
- B. Fees and Charges fail to deliver sufficient income
- C. Commercialisation fails to deliver additional income
- D. Planned savings are not delivered
- E. Shared services fail to meet budget
- F. Council holds insufficient balances
- G. Inflation rate predictions in MTFS are inaccurate
- H. Adverse impact from changes in local government funding
- I. Constraints on council tax increases
- J. Capital programme cannot be funded
- K. Increased complexity of government regulation
- L. Collection targets for Council Tax and Business Rates missed
- M. Business Rates pool fails to generate sufficient growth
- N. Adverse financial impact from a disorderly Brexit

8.5 For all risks shown on the Budget Risk Register, appropriate controls have been identified and their effectiveness is monitored on a regular basis.

9. CONSULTATION

- 9.1 Each year the Council carries out consultation as part of the development of the MTFS. A consultation is currently under way and the results will be taken into account by Members when they consider detailed budget proposals in January 2020.

- 9.2 Consultation will also be carried out in December 2019 – January 2020 on the detailed budget proposals. Individual Service Committees will consider the budget proposals relating to the services within their areas of responsibility. Full details of the proposals will be published and residents' and businesses' views welcomed.

Document History

Date	Description	Details of changes
21.10.19	Draft to Service Committees	

Service	Proposal	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	Total
		£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
C C T V	Commissioning review	-25				-25
Voluntary Sector Grants	Phased reduction of grants	-11	-11			-22
C C T V	Cease monitoring of cameras	-155				-155
Depot/Grounds Maintenance	Commercial Income Growth	-50				-50
Community Services	Review of Community Services	-50				-50
Gypsy & Caravan Sites	Transfer of sites to KCC		-25			-25
Total Communities, Housing & Environment		-291	-36	0	0	-327
Festivals & Events	Cease direct delivery of festivals and events	-10				-10
Mote Park Centre	Income from new Café	-40				-40
Economic Development	Business Terrace Phase 4	-20				-20
Museum	Reprofile NNDR saving	-119				-119
Bereavement Services	Income from investment in chapel	-15	-15			-30
Total Economic Regeneration & Leisure		-204	-15	0	0	-219
New commercial investments	Income from new acquisitions	-143	-143	-143		-429
Elections	Spread elections cost over 4 years		-28			-28
Housing & Regeneration	Income from new developments	-542	-598	-400	-200	-1,740
Communications	Review of communications	-30				-30
Elections	Change in legislation for annual canvas 2020	-25				-25
Maidstone House	Rental income from sub-letting space	-20				-20
Maidstone House	General facilities review	-5				-5
Debt recovery	Increased profit share	-25				-25
Internal Audit	Increased income generation	-20				
Asset management	Implement recommendations of Gen2 review	-25	-25			-50
Total Policy & Resources		-835	-794	-543	-200	-2,352
Development Management	Cost reduction following adoption of 2017 Local	-40				-40
Pay & Display Car Parks	5% increase in income	-100				-100
Grants to outside bodies	Phased reduction of grants	-16	-15			-31
Parking Services	Increase income budget	-50	-50	-50		-150
Planning Policy	Offset staff costs with CIL	-15	-15	-15		-45
Planning	Adoption of commercial business practices	-30	-15	-15		-60
Planning	Income generation from PPAs and Pre-application	-15				-15
Building Control	Increase income budget	-15				-15
Total Strategic Planning, Sustainability & Transportation		-281	-95	-80	0	-456
GRAND TOTAL EXISTING SAVINGS		-1,611	-940	-623	-200	-3,374

Negative figures shown above represent a reduction in expenditure budgets, or increased income targets. Positive figures indicate increased expenditure, or a reduction in the income budget.

**REVENUE ESTIMATE 2020/21 TO 2024/25
STRATEGIC REVENUE PROJECTION - NEUTRAL**

2019/20 £000		2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000
PROJECTED INCOME						
16,157	COUNCIL TAX	16,728	17,318	17,929	18,562	19,218
17	EMPTY HOMES PREMIUM					
3,208	RETAINED BUSINESS RATES	3,269	1,681	1,715	1,749	1,784
1,129	BUSINESS RATES GROWTH	1,152	0	180	362	546
49	LEVY ACCOUNT SURPLUS					
-85	COLLECTION FUND ADJUSTMENT					
20,475	PROJECTED NET BUDGET	21,148	18,999	19,824	20,673	21,547
20,839	OTHER INCOME - EXISTING	21,048	21,258	21,471	21,685	21,902
0	OTHER INCOME - NEW INVESTMENTS	673	900	310	765	1,484
41,314	TOTAL RESOURCES AVAILABLE	42,869	41,158	41,605	43,124	44,933
PROJECTED EXPENDITURE						
38,853	CURRENT SPEND	41,314	42,869	41,158	41,605	43,124
	INFLATION & CONTRACT INCREASES					
997	PAY, NI & INFLATION INCREASES	999	1,029	1,059	1,090	1,122
40	MAIDSTONE HOUSE RENT INCREASE					
	EXTERNAL BUDGET PRESSURES					
6	PENSION DEFICIT FUNDING	150	150	150		
	LOCAL PRIORITIES					
-400	PLANNING APPEALS					
-100	PLANNING ENFORCEMENT					
	LOCAL PLAN REVIEW			-200		
131	GROWTH TO MEET STRATEGIC PRIORITIES	24				
	ADDITIONAL GROWTH AGREED BY P&R	10	-10			
50	GENERAL GROWTH PROVISION	50	50	50	50	50
-20	ENVIRONMENTAL ENFORCEMENT					
91	OTHER SERVICE PRESSURES					
	PROVISION FOR MAJOR CONTRACTS				500	
78	REVENUE COSTS OF CAPITAL PROGRAMME	1,836	640	634	630	730
1,589	CONTINGENCY FOR FUTURE PRESSURES		-1,589			
41,314	TOTAL PREDICTED REQUIREMENT	44,383	43,139	42,851	43,875	45,026
	SAVINGS REQUIRED	-1,515	-1,982	-1,245	-751	-93
	EXISTING SAVINGS	1,611	940	623	200	0
	NEW / AMENDED SAVINGS PROPOSALS	0	0	0	0	0
	SURPLUS / (DEFICIT)	96	-1,042	-622	-551	-93
	CUMULATIVE SURPLUS / (DEFICIT)	96	-946	-1,568	-2,119	-2,212

**REVENUE ESTIMATE 2020/21 TO 2024/25
STRATEGIC REVENUE PROJECTION - FAVOURABLE**

2019/20 £000		2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000
PROJECTED INCOME						
16,157	COUNCIL TAX	16,810	17,489	18,196	18,931	19,696
17	EMPTY HOMES PREMIUM					
3,208	RETAINED BUSINESS RATES	3,269	1,681	1,715	1,749	1,784
1,129	BUSINESS RATES GROWTH	1,152	0	360	728	1,102
49	LEVY ACCOUNT SURPLUS					
-85	COLLECTION FUND ADJUSTMENT					
20,475	PROJECTED NET BUDGET	21,231	19,170	20,271	21,408	22,582
20,839	OTHER INCOME - EXISTING	21,048	21,258	21,471	21,685	21,902
0	OTHER INCOME - NEW INVESTMENTS	673	900	310	765	1,484
41,314	TOTAL RESOURCES AVAILABLE	42,951	41,329	42,052	43,858	45,968
PROJECTED EXPENDITURE						
38,853	CURRENT SPEND	41,314	42,951	41,329	42,052	43,858
	INFLATION & CONTRACT INCREASES					
997	PAY, NI & INFLATION INCREASES	999	1,029	1,059	1,090	1,122
40	MAIDSTONE HOUSE RENT INCREASE					
	EXTERNAL BUDGET PRESSURES					
6	PENSION DEFICIT FUNDING	150	150	150		
	LOCAL PRIORITIES					
-400	PLANNING APPEALS					
-100	PLANNING ENFORCEMENT					
	LOCAL PLAN REVIEW			-200		
131	GROWTH TO MEET STRATEGIC PRIORITIES	24				
	ADDITIONAL GROWTH AGREED BY P&R	10	-10			
50	GENERAL GROWTH PROVISION	50	50	50	50	50
-20	ENVIRONMENTAL ENFORCEMENT					
91	OTHER SERVICE PRESSURES					
	PROVISION FOR MAJOR CONTRACTS				500	
78	REVENUE COSTS OF CAPITAL PROGRAMME	1,836	640	634	630	730
1,589	CONTINGENCY FOR FUTURE PRESSURES		-1,589			
41,314	TOTAL PREDICTED REQUIREMENT	44,383	43,222	43,022	44,322	45,761
	SAVINGS REQUIRED	-1,432	-1,893	-970	-463	207
	EXISTING SAVINGS	1,611	940	623	200	0
	NEW / AMENDED SAVINGS PROPOSALS	0	0	0	0	0
	SURPLUS / (DEFICIT)	179	-953	-347	-263	207
	CUMULATIVE SURPLUS / (DEFICIT)	179	-774	-1,121	-1,385	-1,177

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**REVENUE ESTIMATE 2020/21 TO 2024/25
STRATEGIC REVENUE PROJECTION - ADVERSE**

2019/20 £000		2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000
PROJECTED INCOME						
16,157	COUNCIL TAX	16,645	17,148	17,666	18,199	18,749
17	EMPTY HOMES PREMIUM					
3,208	RETAINED BUSINESS RATES	3,237	1,648	1,665	1,682	1,698
1,129	BUSINESS RATES GROWTH	1,140	0	0	0	0
49	LEVY ACCOUNT SURPLUS					
-85	COLLECTION FUND ADJUSTMENT					
20,475	PROJECTED NET BUDGET	21,023	18,796	19,331	19,881	20,447
20,839	OTHER INCOME - EXISTING	21,152	21,469	21,791	22,118	22,450
0	OTHER INCOME - NEW INVESTMENTS	673	900	310	765	1,484
41,314	TOTAL RESOURCES AVAILABLE	42,847	41,166	41,432	42,764	44,381
PROJECTED EXPENDITURE						
38,853	CURRENT SPEND	41,314	42,847	41,166	41,432	42,764
	INFLATION & CONTRACT INCREASES					
997	PAY, NI & INFLATION INCREASES	1,474	1,540	1,609	1,681	1,757
40	MAIDSTONE HOUSE RENT INCREASE					
	EXTERNAL BUDGET PRESSURES					
6	PENSION DEFICIT FUNDING	150	150	150		
	LOCAL PRIORITIES					
-400	PLANNING APPEALS					
-100	PLANNING ENFORCEMENT					
	LOCAL PLAN REVIEW			-200		
131	GROWTH TO MEET STRATEGIC PRIORITIES	24				
	ADDITIONAL GROWTH AGREED BY P&R	10	-10			
50	GENERAL GROWTH PROVISION	50	50	50	50	50
-20	ENVIRONMENTAL ENFORCEMENT					
91	OTHER SERVICE PRESSURES					
	PROVISION FOR MAJOR CONTRACTS				500	
78	REVENUE COSTS OF CAPITAL PROGRAMME	1,836	640	634	630	730
1,589	CONTINGENCY FOR FUTURE PRESSURES		-1,589			
41,314	TOTAL PREDICTED REQUIREMENT	44,858	43,629	43,408	44,293	45,301
	SAVINGS REQUIRED	-2,011	-2,463	-1,976	-1,529	-921
	EXISTING SAVINGS	1,611	940	623	200	0
	NEW / AMENDED SAVINGS PROPOSALS	0	0	0	0	0
	SURPLUS / (DEFICIT)	-400	-1,523	-1,353	-1,329	-921
	CUMULATIVE SURPLUS / (DEFICIT)	-400	-1,923	-3,276	-4,604	-5,525

**REVENUE ESTIMATE 2020/21 TO 2024/25
STRATEGIC REVENUE PROJE+ A52CTION - COUNCIL TAX FREEZE**

2019/20 £000		2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000
PROJECTED INCOME						
16,157	COUNCIL TAX	16,400	16,646	16,895	17,149	17,406
17	EMPTY HOMES PREMIUM					
3,208	RETAINED BUSINESS RATES	3,269	1,681	1,715	1,749	1,784
1,129	BUSINESS RATES GROWTH	1,152	0	180	362	546
49	LEVY ACCOUNT SURPLUS					
-85	COLLECTION FUND ADJUSTMENT					
20,475	PROJECTED NET BUDGET	20,820	18,327	18,790	19,260	19,736
20,839	OTHER INCOME - EXISTING	21,048	21,258	21,471	21,685	21,902
0	OTHER INCOME - NEW INVESTMENTS	673	900	310	765	1,484
41,314	TOTAL RESOURCES AVAILABLE	42,541	40,485	40,571	41,711	43,122
PROJECTED EXPENDITURE						
38,853	CURRENT SPEND	41,314	42,541	40,485	40,571	41,711
	INFLATION & CONTRACT INCREASES					
997	PAY, NI & INFLATION INCREASES	999	1,029	1,059	1,090	1,122
40	MAIDSTONE HOUSE RENT INCREASE					
	EXTERNAL BUDGET PRESSURES					
6	PENSION DEFICIT FUNDING	150	150	150		
	LOCAL PRIORITIES					
-400	PLANNING APPEALS					
-100	PLANNING ENFORCEMENT					
	LOCAL PLAN REVIEW			-200		
131	GROWTH TO MEET STRATEGIC PRIORITIES	24				
	ADDITIONAL GROWTH AGREED BY P&R	10	-10			
50	GENERAL GROWTH PROVISION	50	50	50	50	50
-20	ENVIRONMENTAL ENFORCEMENT					
91	OTHER SERVICE PRESSURES					
	PROVISION FOR MAJOR CONTRACTS				500	
78	REVENUE COSTS OF CAPITAL PROGRAMME	1,836	640	634	630	730
1,589	CONTINGENCY FOR FUTURE PRESSURES		-1,589			
41,314	TOTAL PREDICTED REQUIREMENT	44,383	42,811	42,178	42,841	43,613
	SAVINGS REQUIRED	-1,843	-2,326	-1,607	-1,130	-491
	EXISTING SAVINGS	1,611	940	623	200	0
	NEW / AMENDED SAVINGS PROPOSALS	0	0	0	0	0
	SURPLUS / (DEFICIT)	-232	-1,386	-984	-930	-491
	CUMULATIVE SURPLUS / (DEFICIT)	-232	-1,618	-2,602	-3,532	-4,024