

## READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

### REPORT BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES

**TO: COUNCIL**

**DATE: 23<sup>rd</sup> FEBRUARY 2021**

**TITLE 2021/22 BUDGET & MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2021/22 - 2023/24**

**LEAD COUNCILLOR: COUNCILLOR BROCK**

**PORTFOLIO: LEADER OF THE  
COUNCIL**

**SERVICE: ALL**

**WARDS: BOROUGHWIDE**

**LEAD OFFICER: PETER ROBINSON**

**JOB TITLE: ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF FINANCE**

**E-MAIL:**

[peter.robinson@reading.gov.uk](mailto:peter.robinson@reading.gov.uk)

#### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1. Policy Committee at its meeting on the 14<sup>th</sup> December 2020 agreed a Draft 2021/22 Budget for consultation and Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for the three years 2021/22 - 2023/24. This report updates Members on the results of the subsequent budget consultation exercise, changes arising from the publication of the Local Government Finance Settlement (LGFS) as well as other changes that have arisen since the report to Policy Committee in December.
- 1.2. The Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) published the Final Local Government Financial Settlement on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2021 as this report was being published. Initial review indicates that there have been no changes from the Provisional Settlement that affect Reading. Members will be updated should any new issues emerge prior to the Policy Committee meeting. Additionally, updates will be provided for: Levies from the Environment Agency; and precepts from the Police and Fire authorities as we are notified of them.
- 1.3. The proposed Medium-Term Financial Strategy is informed by and supports delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan priorities including its commitment to address the climate change emergency; and seeks to ensure that the Council is "fit for the future".
- 1.4. The underpinning rationale of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy is to deliver a balanced and affordable 2021/22 budget and ensure that the Council's finances are robust and sustainable over the medium term and that in the longer term the Council's finances are not reliant on the unsustainable use of one-off reserves or funding. The Strategy is informed by the Council's Vision: "to ensure that Reading realises its potential - and that

everyone who lives and works in Reading can share in the benefits of its success”, as well as its Corporate Plan priorities:

- Securing the economic success of Reading;
- Improving access to decent housing to meet local needs;
- Protecting and enhancing the life outcomes of vulnerable adults and children;
- Keeping Reading’s environment clean, green and safe (which includes addressing the *declared* climate emergency);
- Promoting great education, leisure and cultural opportunities for people in Reading; and
- Ensuring the Council is ‘fit for the future’.

- 1.5. The preparation of the 2021/22 Budget and MTFS 2021/22 - 2023/24 has been particularly challenging due to extreme uncertainty caused by the many and wide-ranging implications of the Covid-19 pandemic, including yet another one-year Local Government funding settlement from Central Government. Whilst robust savings proposals of £28.0m have been identified to mitigate against budget pressures, it has not been possible at this stage; to completely close the budget gap in 2022/23 and 2023/24 on a recurring and permanent basis. The 2021/22 budget has been balanced by utilising £2.776m of one-off earmarked reserves. Additional savings of £3.649m will need to be identified as part of the 2022/23 budget setting process to bridge the budget gap in the latter two years as continued use of earmarked reserves to balance the budget is not sustainable.
- 1.6. The MTFS also assumes the use of £9.906m of the Direct Revenue Financing of Capital Earmarked Reserve in the current financial year (2020/21) to reduce the ongoing Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) charge to the revenue budget. This reserve was set aside to mitigate against capital receipts not being realised and available for use as previously expected. The impact of Covid-19 has meant that this reserve has had to be released, but it is hoped that as the economy picks up the reserve will be able to be replenished.
- 1.7. The Council is currently forecasting an in-year underspend on the General Fund Revenue Budget of circa £4.8m in 2020/21. This is primarily due to the Corporate Contingency budget not being required due to Covid grants from Central Government mitigating against non-delivery of savings in-year. It is assumed that any budget surplus will be transferred into earmarked reserves to offset the budgeted drawdown from reserves referred to above.
- 1.8. The Strategy builds on work over the previous two-three years to stabilise the Council’s financial position and build reserves back to more robust levels. This has enabled vital investment in core infrastructure to drive efficiency improvements, facilitate service redesign and thereby manage pressures within demand led services. This invest to save approach provides for a robust financial position going forward and enables vital and valued services to continue to be delivered. Whilst the Budget Strategy relies on significant service transformation to drive increased efficiency savings and income generation it does mean that service cuts are not required.

1.9. The budget assumptions include:

- a) Council Tax increases of 1.99% for all three years of the MTFs (2021/22 to 2023/24) plus an Adult Social Care precept of 3.0% in 2021/22 and 1.0% in both 2022/23 and 2023/24;
- b) £28.0m of efficiencies and increased income across the period;
- c) A contingency provision over the three years (£3.8m 2021/22; £4.5m 2022/23; and £6.1m 2023/24) to mitigate possible slippage or non-achievement of higher risk savings and/or income targets over the period;
- d) The set aside of £4.523m of Government funding to meet the continuing costs of the pandemic and facilitate recovery;
- e) Provision of a one-off grant in 2021/22 of £70 for residents in receipt of Council Tax Support to help mitigate the increase in Council Tax in the current circumstances;
- f) General Fund capital investment of £200m and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) capital investment of £101m over the period 2021/22 to 2023/24; and
- g) £9.885m of transformation funding (over the period 2021/22 to 2023/24) to support delivery of efficiency savings assumed within the MTFs and test new service delivery models, taking the total transformation funding to £21.729m across the whole life of the Delivery Fund.

1.10. Readers of this report are recommended to refer to the Draft Budget Report agreed by Policy Committee in December 2020 for further background information.

## 2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

**That Full Council:**

- 2.1 taking due regard of the results of the budget consultation exercise and resident's survey (as outlined in Section 3 and 4, and set out in more detail in Appendices 10 and 11), approve the 2021/22 General Fund and Housing Revenue Account budgets, Capital Programme and Medium Term Financial Strategy as set out in Appendices 1-9, noting the following:
- a) the Council's General Fund Budget Requirement of £146.166m for 2021/22 and an increase in the band D Council Tax for the Council of 1.99% plus an additional 3.00% Adult Social Care Precept, or £84.44 per annum, representing a band D Council Tax of £1,776.60 per annum, excluding precepts from Police and Fire, as set out in paragraph 9.2;
  - b) the proposed utilisation of one-off grant funding in 2021/22 to award £70 to residents in receipt of Local Council Tax Support to help mitigate the increase in Council Tax in the current circumstances as set out in paragraph 5.3;
  - c) the proposed efficiency and invest to save savings of £13.7m together with additional income of £1.4m in 2021/22 required to achieve a balanced budget for that year as set out in Appendices 2 and 3

- d) the overall savings proposed within the MTFS of £28.0m (of which increases to income, fees and charges is £5.4m) and three-year growth changes to service budgets of £19.5m as set out in Appendices 2 and 3;
- e) the budgeted draw from earmarked reserves totalling £2.776m to balance the 2021/22 budget (as set out in paragraph 5.18);
- f) the Housing Revenue Account budget for 2021/22 of £43.647m as set out in Appendix 4 and the average increase of 1.5% in social dwelling rents from April 2021 giving a revised weekly average social rent of £104.11;
- g) the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account Capital Programmes as set out in Appendices 5a and 5b;
- h) the Strategy for the use of flexible capital receipts to deliver future transformation and ongoing savings as set out in Appendix 6;
- i) the Fees and Charges set out in Appendix 7 of the report;
- j) the Equalities Impact Assessment as set out in Appendix 8;
- k) the allocation of Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) as set out in Appendix 9.

## **APPENDICES**

- Appendix 1 - Summary of General Fund Budget 2021-22 to 2023-24
- Appendix 2 - General Fund Revenue Budget by Service 2021-22 to 2023-24
- Appendix 3 - Detailed General Fund Budget Changes 2021-22 to 2023-24
- Appendix 4 - Housing Revenue Account Budget & Reserves 2021-22 to 2023-24
- Appendix 5 - General Fund and HRA Capital Programme 2021-22 to 2023-24
- Appendix 6 - Flexible Capital Receipts Strategy
- Appendix 7 - Fees and Charges
- Appendix 8 - Equality Impact Assessment
- Appendix 9 - Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Funding 2021-22
- Appendix 10 - Budget Consultation
- Appendix 11 - Residents Survey 2020

### **3. BUDGET CONSULTATION**

- 3.1. As agreed by Policy Committee in December 2020, the Council has consulted on its draft budget proposals for 2021/22. The consultation ran from 15<sup>th</sup> December 2020 to 15<sup>th</sup> January 2021 and was promoted through the Council's main communication channels (website, email, social media, local press, partner organisations).
- 3.2. The consultation asked residents:

Q1. To comment on the draft budget proposals and where you don't agree with them, give your suggestions for alternative savings, income generation opportunities or investment proposals, and

Q2. What additional suggestions do you have for how we could we make the savings required to balance the budget?

3.3. There were 114 responses to the consultation which is considerably lower than the 619 responses received last year. The low level of response makes it difficult to gauge wider public opinion.

3.4. Despite the low response rate, a wide-ranging set of suggestions and comments were received, with 133 different comments and proposals. Themes included reviewing services, reducing certain services and investing in others.

Topic / Service Area	No. of Responses
Fair budget / agree with proposals	21
Spend more on road maintenance	11
Increase charges for services (e.g. allotment and garage rents, library archives, registrars' services)	9
Reduce cost of salaries / review workforce	7
Manage accounts better	5
Delay / review swimming pool / leisure plans	4
More shared services	4

3.5. The feedback regarding the need for increased spending on roads maintenance aligns with the recent residents' survey (see section 4 below) where this also came out as a priority for residents.

3.6. It is good to note that of those responding the largest response was supportive of the draft budget proposals. In the main the Council's plans and key investments align with residents' priorities:

- The revenue budget proposals include £28.0m of efficiency and invest to save proposals;
- The Capital Programme includes £7.5m for highways infrastructure works over and above the more routine works and £7.0m for essential bridge works (a £14.5m investment in total).
- Fees and charges have been reviewed in areas such as registrars to bring them in line with market levels.
- Many of the efficiency proposals involve reviewing workforce arrangements with a net reduction of 111 full time equivalent posts over the three-year period.

- 3.7. The areas which attracted the greatest concern were increased parking charges and the new proposals for waste collection. This does not appear to sit readily with concerns over climate change and the environment which featured high in the wider Residents Survey.
- 3.8. On the issue of Council Tax there was no clear steer, with similar numbers both for and against further increases.
- 3.9. The meeting with the Council's Statutory consultees which took place in early January 2021, was both well attended and well received. The principal feedback included a desire to see:
- Transformation of safeguarding services and the Education front door
  - Increased youth provision
  - Increased priority skills provision to meet local employers needs and address levelling up
  - Innovation and skills training for local businesses to enable them to adapt and change
- 3.10. A detailed description of the consultation process and results is contained in Appendix 10.

#### **4. RESIDENT'S SURVEY 2020**

- 4.1. Opinion Research Services (ORS) were commissioned by the Council to undertake a representative sample (age, gender and working status) survey of 1,000 residents via telephone.
- 4.2. The purpose of the survey was to gauge levels of satisfaction with the local area, the Council and the services it provides and where relevant draw a comparison with national data for England obtained from the LGA's four-monthly telephone survey which asks residents some of the same questions in relation to their local Council(s).
- 4.3. The survey of residents aged 18 and over took place between 11th September and 1st December 2020 . When compared to our Citizens Panel Survey of 2018, the results are overwhelmingly positive:
- 77% of residents said they are satisfied with their local area as a place to live, compared with 65% in the 2018 Survey and 64% said they were satisfied with the way the Council runs things, a huge improvement on the 38% from the Panel Survey
  - The number of residents who agree that the Council provides value for money has more than doubled from 22% to 45%
- 4.4. Reading Borough Council's results are slightly lower compared to the most recently available national data, compiled by the Local Government Association (LGA), which is from October 2020. For example, in relation to the three core questions: 77% of Reading

residents are satisfied with their local area as a place to live compared to 83% nationally ; 64% of Reading residents are satisfied with the way their council runs things compared to 68% nationally; and 45% of Reading residents believe their council provides value for money, compared to 54% nationally. However, ORS point out that results for urban areas are often less positive than those obtained elsewhere.

- 4.5. Road and pavement repairs again came out as the highest priority area in terms of needing to be improved (47% of responses, compared to 58.05% in 2018), which indicates an improvement in the period which correlates to the Council’s investment in highways infrastructure. The Council has committed to invest £14.5m in the Council’s local highways infrastructure (including Bridges) over the period 2021/22-2023/24 to continue to address this resident priority.
- 4.6. Further details on the Residents Survey and the results are attached at Appendix 11.

## 5. CHANGES FOLLOWING PUBLICATION OF DRAFT BUDGET FOR CONSULTATION

### General Fund

- 5.1. At the time of publishing the Draft Budget a number of matters remained to be confirmed. In particular, the Local Government Finance Settlement had not been announced, negotiations around the 2021/22 (and subsequent years) contract sum for the activities provided by Brighter Futures for Children (BFfC) the Council’s wholly owned children’s company had not concluded, and details of the contract for the provision of leisure centre facilities remained to be finalised due to the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic on leisure facilities. The budget gap at the time of the draft budget is shown in Table 1 below:

**Table 1. Budget Gap at the time of the Draft Budget (Dec 2020)**

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
	(£'000)	(£'000)	(£'000)
<b>Budget Gap - December 2020</b>	<b>5,030</b>	<b>4,632</b>	<b>4,282</b>

- 5.2. The following section details those budget and planning assumptions that have changed since the publication of the Draft Budget and which are now incorporated into the final recommended budget which is summarised later in this report.

### Local Government Finance Settlement (LGFS)

- 5.3. The Provisional LGFS was announced on the 17<sup>th</sup> December 2020 and the Final Settlement announced on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2021 and as a result, certain assumptions have been amended as follows:
  - The existing New Homes Bonus (NHB) scheme will be maintained for a further year but with no new legacy payments. The provisional allocations for the Council were therefore less than previously anticipated. The net effect of this is to reduce the level of NHB from that assumed in the draft budget by £0.707m in 2021/22 and a further £0.292m in 2022/23. As part of the Final Settlement, Government published

a consultation on options for reforming the NHB scheme from 2022/23 onwards with an aim of providing an incentive which is more focused and targeted on ambitious housing delivery. Whilst the impact is not currently known, Government have stated an intent to remove the concept of legacy payments and to increase the baseline on which bonus payments are calculated. Overall the likely impact is therefore that NHB payments from 2022/23 will be lower than those previously received, although at present the Council has assumed zero allocation from 2022/23, so all things remaining equal any NHB payment in 2022/23 will reduce the residual gap.

- The Spending Review announced the continuation of the Social Care Grant introduced in 2020/21, plus further additional funding. The Draft Budget assumed the new funding would be allocated on the same basis as previously. However, the Provisional Settlement showed this not to be the case and as a result Reading's allocation is £0.458m lower than anticipated. This is a one-off grant so only affects 2021/22;
- A new one-off Lower Tier Services Grant has been introduced for 2021/22 only. The Council's allocation, which had not previously been anticipated, is £0.273m;
- The Government have consolidated and enhanced Homelessness Prevention Grant funding, resulting in increased funding for Reading of £0.176m. Although this grant is un-ringfenced, it is assumed that the funding will be needed to support increased expenditure in homelessness prevention as a result of the pandemic and economic downturn.
- Further un-ringfenced general support funding to cope with the expenditure impacts of Covid-19 have been provided for 2021/22. The allocation for Reading is £4.523m. In view of the continuing uncertainty created by the virus these funds will be held as a contingency in order to provide a flexible response to issues as they arise during the year and thereby ease recovery;
- Additionally, the Council has been allocated an un-hypothecated Local Council Tax Support Grant of £1.300m for 2021/22. In 2020/21 the Council received a hypothecated grant (£0.953m) that had to be paid to eligible Local Council Tax Reduction Support Scheme (LCTRS) claimants (£150). Whilst the new funds are not similarly ringfenced and have no specific payment requirements attached, it is recommended that £0.539m is set aside to provide additional one-off support of £70 to residents in receipt of Local Council Tax Support to help mitigate the impact of the increase in Council Tax in the current circumstances, with the remaining £0.761m used to help offset the reduced tax base and level of Council Tax income caused by the increase in LCTRS caseload;
- The Government are providing councils with some compensation for lost Council Tax revenue due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This funding will cover 75% of lost income compared to original 2020/21 forecasts. It is not possible to determine the actual level of compensation that the Council will receive until after the end of the current financial year, however a prudent estimate of anticipated funding is £0.513m, phased equally as £0.171m per year for three years from 2021/22 to match the required phasing of the deficit.

5.4. The impact of the above on the budget gap is set out in Table 2 below:

**Table 2. Amendments resulting from the Provisional Finance Settlement**

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
	(£'000)	(£'000)	(£'000)
New Homes Bonus Grant	707	999	
Social Care Grant	458		
Lower Tier Services Grant	(273)		
Homelessness Prevention Grant	(176)	(176)	(176)
Additional Homelessness Expenditure	176	176	176
Covid General Grant	(4,523)		
Covid Expenditure Provision	4,523		
Local Council Tax Support Grant	(1,300)		
Additional Local Council Tax Support to Residents	539		
Council Tax Income Compensation	(171)	(171)	(171)
<b>Total</b>	<b>(40)</b>	<b>828</b>	<b>(171)</b>

5.5. MHCLG published the Final LGFS on 4th February 2021 and initial consideration indicates that none of the minor changes to funding allocations affect Reading. However, Government did announce an extension to the Flexibility of Capital Receipts Directive that was due to end in 2021/22. This scheme has now been extended until 2024/25.

#### **Other Changes to the Draft Budget Report**

##### **Brighter Futures for Children (BFfC) Contract Sum**

5.6. Following the December Draft Budget, BFfC presented their business plan and associated budget proposals to the Council which have been reviewed by Officers and Members. The budget proposals identified additional savings of £0.500m in 2021/22 from the Draft Budget position.

5.7. The budget proposals are facilitated by an additional Delivery Fund request to fund transformation of £1.570m. The Council has set this additional request aside within the Delivery Fund, pending submission and approval of associated business cases from BFfC.

##### **Leisure Contract**

5.8. Progress with implementation of the Council's recently awarded Leisure contract had to be put on hold due to the pandemic. The elapsed time has allowed further consideration of the value that can be obtained from the contract, but also a need to take account of the impact of the pandemic. The result is anticipated additional costs of £0.685m in the short term, but greater savings, £0.883m in the medium term.

## **Local Council Tax Support Scheme**

- 5.9. The Local Council Tax Support Grant, announced in the Provisional Settlement, is a one-off for 2021/22 only. As a result of the increased level of Council Tax and the current economic climate, the Council will review and consult on its Local Council Tax Support Scheme for 2022/23 with a view to providing greater support to Council Tax payers on very low incomes. Whilst details of how an improved scheme might work and cost implications determined, provision of £0.650m has been made from 2022/23 onwards to mark this intent.

## **Additional DEGNS Savings**

- 5.10. The Directorate for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services (DEGNS) has revisited a number of its business cases and reprofiled savings between years. In addition, two additional savings proposals have been identified. These proposals contribute net one-off savings of £0.948m and £0.662m in 2021/22 and 2022/23 respectively with a recurring net additional saving of £0.200m from 2023/24 onwards.

## **Corporate Budgets**

- 5.11. The Council's corporate budgets have been further reviewed and re-allocated in order to facilitate an increase in funding to support transformation more broadly over the coming years. In recent years this transformation funding has been financed by the flexible use of capital receipts permitted by Government. However, this is currently planned to come to an end after 2021/22 and therefore additional revenue funding to finance additional transformation is required. A total of £8.153m has been set aside to fund additional transformation from revenue across the three years 2021/22-2023/24 (per Table 13). Following this review, it has also been possible to release a net £2.140m from 2023/24 towards closing the budget gap.

## **Council Tax Base and Council Tax Collection Fund Deficit**

- 5.12. The Council Tax Base report which was approved by Full Council on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2021, identified a Council Tax Base which is lower than that assumed at the time of the draft budget and thus leads to a lower Council Tax yield. The reduction in tax base is due to an increased LCTRS caseload; reduced expectations of new build properties materialising; and an increased allowance for non-collection, all arising from the impact of Covid-19. The cumulative reduction totals £0.725m across the MTF5 period.
- 5.13. The Council Tax Base report also declared the estimated balance on the Council Tax Collection Fund. The estimated deficit balance is an improvement of £0.103m from that which was assumed in the Draft Budget.

## **Business Rates and Business Rates Collection Fund Deficit**

- 5.14. The budget has been updated to reflect the latest available information and assumptions included in the NNDR1 return made to Central Government in January 2021. The overall

impact is an improvement of £0.260m in 2021/22 and an increased pressure of £0.981m from 2022/23 when compared to the Draft Budget.

### Capital Financing

- 5.15. The revenue impact of the proposed Capital Programme has been updated to reflect changes to existing schemes (including re-profiling), the addition of new schemes and the lower than previously anticipated level of capital receipts. The cumulative additional capital financing or budget pressure is £1.507m.

### Adult Social Care Precept

- 5.16. Due to the inherent pressures already on the Adult Social Care budget coupled with both the immediate and long-term impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic on service demand arising from increased frailty, it is recommended that the full flexibility of the 3% Adult Social Care precept is taken up in 2021/22. This represents an increase of 2% on the Draft Budget position, which will generate additional funds of approximately £2m p.a.
- 5.17. A summary of the 'other changes' outlined above is shown in the Table 3 below:

**Table 3. Other Changes to the Draft Budget Position**

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
	(£'000)	(£'000)	(£'000)
BFFC Contract Sum	(500)	(500)	(500)
Leisure Contract Revisions	685	(315)	(883)
Revised Council Tax Support Scheme		650	650
DEGNS Savings Review	(948)	(662)	(200)
Review of Corporate Budgets	500	(500)	(2,140)
Council Tax Base	319	463	725
Council Tax Collection Fund Deficit	(103)	(103)	(103)
Business Rates (including Collection Fund Deficit)	(260)	981	981
Capital Financing	263	144	1,507
Increase in ASC Precept	(1,890)	(1,969)	(2,051)
<b>Total</b>	<b>(1,934)</b>	<b>(1,811)</b>	<b>(2,014)</b>

- 5.18. Table 4 shows the impact of both the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement and the other changes set out in Table 3 above on the Draft Budget position published in December 2020. As can be seen, there remains a revised gap in the budget across all three financial years. It is therefore proposed that the budget gap is closed in 2021/22 by drawing on reserves on a one-off basis of £2.776m (a £3.056m movement from the Draft Budget which contained a transfer to reserves of £0.280m). However, due to the current levels of extreme uncertainty caused by Covid-19 combined with a further one-year only financial settlement from Central Government it is proposed that the underlying gap in subsequent years is addressed as part of the 2022/23 budget setting process.

**Table 4. Impact of all Changes on the Budget Position reported in December 2020**

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
	(£'000)	(£'000)	(£'000)
<b>Budget Gap - December 2020</b>	<b>5,030</b>	<b>4,632</b>	<b>4,282</b>
<b>Subsequent Changes:</b>			
Changes due to Provisional Financial Settlement (Table 2)	(40)	828	(171)
Other Changes (Table 3)	(1,934)	(1,811)	(2,014)
<b>Revised Budget Gap</b>	<b>3,056</b>	<b>3,649</b>	<b>2,097</b>
Use of Earmarked Reserves	(3,056)		
<b>Budget Variation</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3,649</b>	<b>2,097</b>

- 5.19. Whilst further use of earmarked reserves could have been used to balance 2022/23 and 2023/24 on a one-off basis, this would not address the underlying need to close the budget gap and would push the issue out to 2024/25 and beyond. Therefore, further initiatives to close the remaining budget gap in 2022/23 and beyond will need to be identified as part of the 2022/23 budget setting process.

#### **Housing Revenue Account (HRA)**

- 5.20. The draft HRA budget as published in December 2020 is summarised as follows:

**Table 5. Draft HRA Budget (December 2020)**

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
	(£'000)	(£'000)	(£'000)
Total Income	(41,676)	(42,733)	(43,668)
Total Expenditure	41,808	42,843	43,842
<b>Net (Surplus)/Deficit</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>174</b>
<b>Forecast Opening HRA Balance</b>	<b>(45,365)</b>	<b>(45,233)</b>	<b>(45,123)</b>
<b>Net (Surplus)/Deficit</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>174</b>
<b>Forecast Closing HRA Balance</b>	<b>(45,233)</b>	<b>(45,123)</b>	<b>(44,949)</b>

- 5.21. The changes from the draft HRA Budget are set out in the following paragraphs and summarised in Table 6. A summary of the revised HRA budget is set out in Table 11 below and in more detail in Appendix 4.

#### **Major Repairs/Depreciation & Debt Costs**

- 5.22. The HRA budget has been updated to reflect the revised Major Repairs estimates and Debt Cost budgets required in respect of the HRA Capital Programme Schemes and the asset appropriations from the General Fund.

#### **Dwellings Rents**

- 5.23. The budget for Dwellings Rents has been updated to reflect the addition of new builds and acquisitions coming online in year.

## Other Changes

- 5.24. Other changes to HRA budget have been made to reflect the latest update to the HRA Business Plan.

**Table 6. Changes to HRA Draft Budget**

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
	(£'000)	(£'000)	(£'000)
Major Repairs/Depreciation	998	1,208	1,418
Debt Costs	839	572	175
Other Expenditure Budgets	2	80	163
<b>Total Expenditure Changes</b>	<b>1,839</b>	<b>1,860</b>	<b>1,756</b>
Dwelling Rents	(84)	(458)	(851)
Other Income Budgets	2	(5)	(11)
<b>Total Income Changes</b>	<b>(82)</b>	<b>(463)</b>	<b>(862)</b>
<b>Change to Net (Surplus)/Deficit</b>	<b>1,757</b>	<b>1,397</b>	<b>894</b>

## Capital Programme

- 5.25. Capital spending (and associated funding streams) have been updated to reflect latest anticipated spend forecasts in 2020/21, changes in future year profiling, and a small number of amendments relating to existing or additional schemes. A detailed breakdown of the General Fund and HRA capital schemes is included in Appendix 5a and 5b.
- 5.26. The revised General Fund Capital Programme expenditure for the period 2021/22 - 2023/24 totals £200.023m. This is a net increase of £22.407m from the draft Capital Programme published in December 2020. However, the majority of this relates to fully funded education capital schemes. There have also been some minor amendments and additions to DEGNS schemes (including revised funding) and a minor re-profiling of the Corporate Schemes (Delivery Fund) between 2020/21 and 2021/22. A summary of changes from the Draft Capital Programme is set out in Table 7 below.

**Table 7. Changes to Draft Capital Programme 2021/22 - 2023/24**

	Total Expenditure	Total Funding	Total Additional Net Expenditure
	(£'000)	(£'000)	(£'000)
Education Schemes	23,989	(23,989)	0
DEGNS Schemes	(2,078)	3,820	1,742
Corporate Schemes	496	0	496
<b>Total</b>	<b>22,407</b>	<b>(20,169)</b>	<b>2,238</b>

- 5.27. The revised HRA Capital Programme expenditure for the period 2021/22 - 2023/24 totals £100.802m. This is an increase of £0.831m from the draft Capital Programme published in December 2020 and primarily relates to the new build programme for older people and vulnerable adults' scheme which was approved by Policy Committee on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

## 6. FINAL RECOMMENDED BUDGET AND MTFS

- 6.1. Taking into account the changes outlined in Section 5 above, that have arisen since the Draft Budget and MTFS was considered by Policy Committee in December, the overall recommended Budget and MTFS position is shown in Table 8 below:

**Table 8. Directorate and Corporate Budgets - Three Year Summary**

	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>
	<b>(£'000)</b>	<b>(£'000)</b>	<b>(£'000)</b>
<b>Service Expenditure</b>			
Adult Social Care and Health	37,947	37,232	37,703
Economic Growth & Neighbourhood Services	18,491	13,172	11,409
Resources	16,470	16,085	15,972
Chief Executive	1,554	1,514	1,553
Children's Services	48,193	47,693	47,193
<b>Total Service Expenditure</b>	<b>122,655</b>	<b>115,696</b>	<b>113,830</b>
<b>Corporate Budgets</b>			
Capital Financing Costs	15,534	17,048	18,252
Contingency	3,844	4,454	6,074
Movement to / (from) Reserves	(2,776)	0	0
Other Corporate Budgets	6,909	2,029	3,506
<b>Total Corporate Budgets</b>	<b>23,511</b>	<b>23,531</b>	<b>27,832</b>
<b>Net Budget Requirement</b>	<b>146,166</b>	<b>139,227</b>	<b>141,662</b>
<b>Financed By:</b>			
Council Tax Income	(99,220)	(102,683)	(107,024)
NNDR Local Share	(32,095)	(31,126)	(31,741)
New Homes Bonus	(2,108)	(969)	0
Section 31 Grant	(3,549)	0	0
Revenue Support Grant	(2,040)	(2,040)	(2,040)
Other Government Grants	(6,739)	(643)	(643)
One-off Collection Fund (Surplus)/Deficit**	(415)	1,883	1,883
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>(146,166)</b>	<b>(135,578)</b>	<b>(139,565)</b>
<b>Over/(Under) Budget</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3,649</b>	<b>2,097</b>
<b>Change from Draft Budget</b>	<b>(5,030)</b>	<b>(983)</b>	<b>(2,185)</b>

\*Any in-year 2020/21 deficit must be phased equally over three years in line with new regulations brought in as a result of Covid-19. The 2021/22 figure also includes the residual brought forward Collection Fund net surplus balance from 2019/20 which cannot be phased.

- 6.2. Full details of General Fund service budgets, corporate funding and proposed changes to existing budgets are set out in Appendices 1 to 3 attached.

- 6.3. Savings required to balance the 2021/22 budget and assumed within the Draft MTFS are comprised of efficiency savings, invest-to-save initiatives and increased income from fees and charges and summarised in Tables 9 and 10 below. Further detail is provided in Appendices 2 and 3:

**Table 9. General Fund Savings Summary 2021/22 to 2023/24 by Service**

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Total
	(£'000)	(£'000)	(£'000)	(£'000)
Adult Social Care & Health Services	(4,488)	(3,059)	(1,503)	(9,050)
Economic Growth & Neighbourhood Services	(3,715)	(4,701)	(1,293)	(9,709)
Resources & Chief Executive	(897)	(756)	(614)	(2,267)
Corporate	(865)	0	0	(865)
<b>Total Council Services</b>	<b>(9,965)</b>	<b>(8,516)</b>	<b>(3,410)</b>	<b>(21,891)</b>
Children's Services (BFfC)	(5,118)	(500)	(500)	(6,118)
<b>Total</b>	<b>(15,083)</b>	<b>(9,016)</b>	<b>(3,910)</b>	<b>(28,009)</b>

**Table 10 General Fund Savings Summary 2021/22 to 2023/24 by Type**

	Efficiency Savings	Invest to Save Schemes	Income, Fees & Charges	Total
	(£'000)	(£'000)	(£'000)	(£'000)
Council Services	(12,142)	(4,334)	(5,415)	(21,891)
Children's Services (BFfC)	(6,118)	0	0	(6,118)
<b>Total Savings</b>	<b>(18,260)</b>	<b>(4,334)</b>	<b>(5,415)</b>	<b>(28,009)</b>

- 6.4. In order to Balance the MTFS across the latter two years of the plan on a sustainable basis further savings of £3.649m need to be identified as part of the 2022/23 budget setting process, which in turn will close the underlying budget gap of £2.097m in 2023/24.
- 6.5. Table 11. below sets out the Housing Revenue Account budget recommended for approval. Further details of the HRA revenue budget is set out in Appendix 4.

**Table 11. Summary HRA Three-Year Revenue Budget**

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
	(£'000)	(£'000)	(£'000)
Expenditure	43,647	44,703	45,598
Income	(41,758)	(43,196)	(44,530)
<b>Net (Surplus) / Deficit</b>	<b>1,889</b>	<b>1,507</b>	<b>1,068</b>
Opening HRA Reserve Balance	(45,365)	(43,476)	(41,969)
Net (Surplus) / Deficit	1,889	1,507	1,068
<b>Closing HRA Balances</b>	<b>(43,476)</b>	<b>(41,969)</b>	<b>(40,901)</b>

- 6.6. The proposed Housing Revenue Account budget for 2021/22 of £43.647m as set out in Appendix 4 assumes an average increase of 1.5% in social dwelling rents from April 2021 giving a revised weekly average social rent of £104.11.

- 6.7. Full details of the proposed Capital Programme are set out in Appendix 5. A summary of both the General Fund and HRA Capital Programmes are summarised in the table below:

**Table 12. Summary of the General Fund and HRA Capital Programme**

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
<b>Capital Expenditure</b>				
General Fund	64.938	88.153	69.032	42.838
HRA	20.457	39.675	23.415	37.712
<b>Total</b>	<b>85.395</b>	<b>127.828</b>	<b>92.447</b>	<b>80.550</b>

<b>Financed by:</b>				
Capital Grants & Contributions	(49.103)	(50.995)	(34.543)	(17.971)
Capital Receipts	(6.954)	(2.362)	(4.850)	(0.801)
Revenue Contributions	(0.327)	0	0	0
Capital Reserves (HRA)	(8.064)	(10.710)	(10.920)	(11.130)
<b>Net Borrowing Requirement</b>	<b>20.947</b>	<b>63.761</b>	<b>42.134</b>	<b>50.648</b>

<b>Net Borrowing Requirement Split:</b>				
General Fund	10.881	40.941	33.324	24.066
HRA	10.066	22.820	8.810	26.582
<b>Total</b>	<b>20.947</b>	<b>63.761</b>	<b>42.134</b>	<b>50.648</b>

## 7. FLEXIBLE USE OF CAPITAL RECEIPTS AND DELIVERY FUND

- 7.1. Over the last few years the Council has made use of freedoms around the flexible use of capital receipts to fund transformation change costs - this freedom was due to end in 2021/22, however as part of the Final Local Government Financial Settlement the Government announced an extension to 2024/24. However, based on current forecasts future capital receipt realisation is expected to be low during the MTFs period. In total £13.576m of capital receipts had previously been identified as available to fund such costs over the period 2017/18 to 2021/22. Nonetheless, the Council continues to have an ambitious transformation programme which will extend beyond 2021/22. To support these ambitions the budget proposals here include additional revenue funding to support continuation of the Delivery Fund across the period of the MTFs as set out in paragraph 7.6 and Table 13.
- 7.2. The current allocation methodology and governance of the Delivery Fund will continue to ensure continued best practice and in light of the extension of the directive to 2024/25.
- 7.3. Details of the proposed use of this funding were set out in the December Policy Committee Report. Since December, further work has been undertaken to verify overall bid requirements and identify where current requirements are likely to slip into future years. This includes a significant additional bid from Brighter Futures for Children of £1.570m to support their transformation programme and safeguard delivery against their agreed contract sum

- 7.4. As set out in Table 13 below, additional revenue resource has been allocated to pump prime transformation and test new ways of working, taking the total Delivery Fund envelope to £21.729m by 2023/24. This additional resource will also enable the Council to fund transformation beyond 2021/22 (including any slippage from 2020/21 and 2021/22).
- 7.5. Pending the submission and approval of detailed business cases, the current total of required transformation funding is £14.789m per Annex A to Appendix 6.
- 7.6. Full details of the Flexible Capital Receipts Strategy are set out in Appendix 6, with Annexes A and B to that Appendix providing details of proposed spend on a scheme by scheme basis. Table 13 below summarises the proposed use of the Delivery Fund:

**Table 13. Summary of Delivery Fund Spend**

	2017/18 Actual (£000's)	2018/19 Actual (£000's)	2019/20 Actual (£000's)	2020/21 Budget (£000's)	2021/22 Budget (£000's)	2022/23 Budget (£000's)	2023/24 Budget (£000's)	Total (£000's)
Capital Receipts Revenue	1,319	3,182	4,539	4,069	467	0	0	13,576
<b>February 2020</b>	<b>1,319</b>	<b>3,182</b>	<b>4,539</b>	<b>4,069</b>	<b>467</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>13,576</b>
Capital Receipts Revenue	1,319	3,182	3,287	4,552	1,236	0	0	13,576
<b>December 2020</b>	<b>1,319</b>	<b>3,182</b>	<b>3,287</b>	<b>4,552</b>	<b>1,236</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>13,576</b>
Capital Receipts Revenue	1,319	3,182	3,287	4,056	1,732	0	0	13,576
<b>February 2021</b>	<b>1,319</b>	<b>3,182</b>	<b>3,287</b>	<b>4,056</b>	<b>4,865</b>	<b>2,510</b>	<b>2,510</b>	<b>21,729</b>

## 8. DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT (DSG)

- 8.1. Schools funding is received through DSG and is split into four blocks. Allocations for 2021/22 were published on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2020. Details of the 2021/22 DSG allocation (together with the Deficit Recovery Plan) are included in Appendix 9 to this report but are summarised in the table below:

**Table 14. Dedicated Schools Grant Allocations**

BLOCK	2020/21	2021/22	Change	
	Revised (£'000)	Original (£'000)	(£'000)	(%)
Schools Block	95,536	103,481	7,945	8.3%
Central Schools Services Block	1,218	1,167	(51)	(4.2%)
Early Years Block	12,832	12,981	149	1.2%
High Needs Block	22,394	24,658	2,264	10.1%
<b>Total (Gross)</b>	<b>131,980</b>	<b>142,287</b>	<b>10,307</b>	<b>7.8%</b>
Less Recoupment - Schools	(49,165)	(54,699)	(5,534)	11.3%
Less Recoupment - High Needs	(3,829)	(4,177)	(348)	9.1%
<b>Total (Net)</b>	<b>78,986</b>	<b>83,411</b>	<b>4,425</b>	<b>5.6%</b>

## 9. COUNCIL TAX LEVELS

- 9.1. The total amount of Council Tax payable by residents will depend on both the Fire and Police authorities' precepts which have not yet been received. Members will be advised of these precepts when they become available.
- 9.2. The changes proposed to the Council's Draft Budget for 2021/22 as set out above include an increase in the Adult Social Care precept of 3.0%, which is an increase of 2.0% from that reported in December. The proposed band D charge of £1,776.60 for Reading's own requirement in 2021/22 represents a weekly increase for two adults in occupation (before any reliefs or discounts) of £1.62 per week.
- 9.3. Table 15 below shows the implications of the proposed Council Tax increase across each band (the largest number of properties in any one band being for a band C property).

**Table 15. Implications of Proposed Council Tax Increase 2020/21**

Band	Weight	No. of Properties	Ratio	2020/21 Charge	2021/22 Proposal	Change	Weekly Change
				(£)	(£)	(£)	(£)
A	6	7,565	10%	1,128.11	1,184.40	56.29	1.08
B	7	14,352	20%	1,316.12	1,381.80	65.67	1.26
C	8	29,665	40%	1,504.14	1,579.20	75.06	1.44
<b>D</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>11,241</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>1,692.16</b>	<b>1,776.60</b>	<b>84.44</b>	<b>1.62</b>
E	11	5,704	8%	2,068.20	2,171.40	103.20	1.98
F	13	3,309	4%	2,444.23	2,566.20	121.97	2.35
G	15	1,868	3%	2,820.27	2,961.00	140.73	2.71
H	18	86	0%	3,384.32	3,553.20	168.88	3.25
		<b>73,790</b>	<i>Weighted Increase - All Bands</i>			<b>78.79</b>	<b>1.52</b>

## **10. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS**

10.1. The Council's vision is to ensure that Reading realises its potential - and to ensure that everyone who lives and works in Reading can share the benefits of its success. The Council has six priorities which contribute to delivering this vision. These priorities are:

- Securing the economic success of Reading;
- Improving access to decent housing to meet local needs;
- Protecting and enhancing the lives of vulnerable adults and children;
- Keeping Reading's environment clean, green and safe;
- Promoting health, education, culture and wellbeing; and
- Ensuring the Council is fit for the future.

10.2. The setting and delivery of the Council's budget is essential to ensuring the Council meets its strategic aims and remains financially sustainable going forward.

## **11. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS**

11.1. The Council declared a Climate Emergency at its meeting on 26 February 2019, with the intention of being carbon neutral by 2030. The Council's Corporate Plan monitors progress in reducing our carbon footprint.

11.2. The Council's proposed Capital Programme for the next three years includes investment of £6.439 million in energy saving measures in buildings and renewable energy infrastructure to contributing to the Council's net zero carbon ambitions. Of this, £2.789m is allocated for 2021/22.

11.3. The Council has a long-standing programme of investment in energy efficiency, taking advantage of the SALIX Recirculation Fund, a revolving loan fund, which is available for the public sector. The Council's capital budget for this SALIX Recirculation Fund has enabled a large number of projects to be taken forward. A provision of £0.800m is included in the Capital Programme across the next three years which will enable additional projects in the pipeline to go ahead.

11.4. The Capital Programme also includes two budgets which specifically support the Council's climate change commitment, enabling a step change in ambition. The first will take advantage of the SALIX Decarbonisation fund, designed to support more ambitious carbon reduction projects in the public sector. In 2021/22, £0.416m has been allocated with a further £1.0 million over the following two years. The second will support further investment in renewable energy. In 2021/22, £2.073m has been allocated for this purpose with a further £1.546 in 2022/23 and £0.604m in 2023/24. This will enable a number of more ambitious projects to be progressed, including ground-source heat pumps, solar arrays and potentially district heating systems.

11.5. Other capital investments - in offices, housing, transport and waste - will also contribute to the Council's carbon reduction ambitions by improving the efficiency of our buildings and operations.

11.6. Going forward, major capital projects which will contribute directly to greenhouse gas emissions reduction include:

- £2.169m for Green Park Station (2021/22)
- £13.750m for the South Reading MRT (2021/21-2023/24)
- £4.223m for renewable energy (2021/22-2023/24)
- £2.216m for energy saving measures via the Salix Decarbonisation and Recirculation funds (2021/22-2023/24)
- £0.189m for food waste collection (2021/22), in addition to £1.300m in 2020/21
- £0.150m for retro-fitting the bus fleet to lower emission standards (2021/22)
- £0.847m to complete the LED streetlighting investment programme (2021/22)
- £0.050m for additional electric vehicle charging points (2021/22)
- £0.150m for tree planting programmes (2021/22-2023/24)

## **12. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION**

12.1. The public budget consultation ran from 15th December 2020 until 15th January 2021. The feedback from this consultation, alongside the feedback from the Resident's Survey 2020 is set in in sections 3 and 4 of this report and in appendices 10 and 11.

## **13. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 13.1. The financial implications are set out in the body of this report and associated appendices.
- 13.2. Due to the current levels of extreme uncertainty caused by Covid-19 and combined with a further one-year only financial settlement from Central Government, the budget gap in 2021/22 has been balanced on a one-off basis by drawing down on earmarked reserves by £2.776m, which have been built up by prudent financial management in recent years. Whilst further use of earmarked reserves could have been used to balance 2022/23 and 2023/24 on a one-off basis, this would not address the underlying need to close the budget gap and would push the issue out to 2024/25 and beyond. Therefore, further savings to close the remaining budget gap in 2022/23 and beyond will need to be identified as part of the 2022/23 budget setting process.
- 13.3. A draw from the Direct Revenue Financing of Capital Earmarked Reserve is required in the current financial year (2020/21) to reduce the ongoing Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) charge to the revenue budget by paying-off debt on short-life asset. This reserve was set aside to mitigate against capital receipts not being realised and available for use as previously expected. The impact of Covid-19 has meant that this reserve has had to be released, but it is hoped that as the economy picks up the reserve will be able to be replenished.

13.4. The Council's General Fund balance remains at £7.5m over the plan period. The projected 2020/21 General Fund Revenue Budget underspend of circa £4.8m will be used to bolster reserves, in part mitigating the budgeted draw from earmarked reserves in 2021/22.

#### **14. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

14.1. The Council must set its budget in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Finance Act 1992. Approval of a balanced budget each year is a statutory responsibility of the Council.

14.2. The provisions of section 25, Local Government Act 2003 require that, when the Council is making the calculation of its budget requirement, it must have regard to the report of the Chief Finance (s.151) Officer as to the robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the calculations and the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves. The report will be formally made to the Council's budget setting meeting in February.

#### **15. RISK**

15.1. The budget is set in a period of considerable uncertainty. Estimates are based on current information available, but it is important that the council is aware of the significant risks it faces in terms of central funding and business rates in the medium term.

15.2. Income targets have been reviewed to ensure that they are realistic, which has scaled back certain income targets in 2021/22 before recovering in following years within the budget plans.

15.3. Whilst the budget proposals include some provision for risk and contingency, risk remains for demographic, inflationary or other demand pressures to place pressures on those available provisions.

15.4. The MTFs assumes £28.0m of additional savings and income, if these are not delivered or there is any delay to their delivery, it would pose a potential threat to the sustainability of the Council's budget.

15.5. There is a risk in respect of capacity of the Council to deliver and focus on savings delivery whilst managing the impact of Covid-19 and lockdown etc.

15.6. Business Rates income in particular is subject to considerable volatility in the current economic climate.

15.7. There are also the following risks in respect of the Council's wholly owned companies:

- Reading Transport Limited (RTL) - due to RTL operating on very low margins and combined with the current Covid-19 climate, there are concerns in respect of the company's future economic viability. The Council is working with RTL in addressing these concerns.
- Homes for Reading (HfR) - the Council's current dispensation to not charge Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) on borrowing relating to loans given to HfR is reliant on the value of the fixed assets on the company's Balance Sheet exceeding the loan

liability. The asset valuation is dependent on the economy and the housing market and the current Covid-19 situation is a risk in this regard.

- Brighter Futures for Children (BFfC) - the Council's arms-length children's company has significant transformational change planned and its delivery also represents a risk.

15.8. The Council has the potential to be impacted in a variety of ways, with the state of the national economy, particularly in the current Covid-19 environment, impacting on demand levels, income and funding available to be distributed through central government. As upper tier authorities across the country are finding changes in social care demand can create significant cost pressures arise within adults and children's social care budgets.

15.9. The Council's Section 151 Officer is required under Section 25 of the Local Government Act to report to Council on the robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the calculations of the budget and the adequacy of the proposed level of financial reserves. This report appears elsewhere on this agenda.

## **16. EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

16.1. Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

16.2. An initial Assessment of the proposals as set out in the MTFS has been undertaken and Appendix 8 sets out the individual savings proposals where specific equality impact assessments will need to be undertaken prior to implementation.

16.3. Additionally, when considering changes to service provision, local authorities are under a duty to consult representatives of a wide range of local stakeholders. Authorities must consult representatives of council tax payers, those who use or are likely to use services provided by the authority and those appearing to the authority to have an interest in any area within which the authority carries out functions. The consultation on the Draft Budget proposals assists with this requirement.

## **17. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 2020/2021 to 2022/23 Budget Setting and Medium-Term Financial Strategy approved by Full Council (25th February 2020)
- Spending Review 2020 - HM Treasury (25th November 2020)

- Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement 2021/22 - MHCLG (17<sup>th</sup> December 2020)
- Final Local Government Finance Settlement 2021/22 - MHCLG (4<sup>th</sup> February 2021)
- Draft Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan 2021/22- 2023/24 Report approved by Policy Committee (14<sup>th</sup> December 2020).