

NORTH DEVON COUNCIL

REPORT TO: STRATEGY AND RESOURCES
Date: 1 February 2021
TOPIC: REVENUE BUDGET 2021-22, CAPITAL PROGRAMME AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2021-2025
REPORT BY: CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report notes the latest forecast position in the Performance and Financial Management Quarter 3 of 2020-21 reported separately on the agenda and the draft Budget for 2021-22. These figures will be the basis of the recommendation to Council on 24 February 2021 when the Council Tax levels for 2021-22 will be approved.
- 1.2 The Council has a legal duty to prepare a balanced budget and in order to achieve this position a number of pressures have been identified and assumptions made throughout the preparation process. Members are minded to consider whether to implement or amend these whilst taking into account the implications on the Council's overall financial position and the level of Council Tax for 2021-22 year.
- 1.3 The Council's Corporate Plan was approved by Full Council in September 2019. In taking decisions on the budget and Council Tax, Members will be mindful of the four key corporate objectives set out in the Plan, these being:
- We achieve financial security
 - We become focussed on delivering the best for our customers
 - Our environment is cherished and protected
 - We plan for North Devon's future
- 1.4 A continuing theme running through the Corporate Plan is the need to achieve savings and/or generate additional income within the Council's budgets. Sitting alongside and supporting the Corporate Plan is the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) which has been updated and is shown later in this report.

- 1.5 It is however pleasing to report that the Council has a good track record of delivering efficiencies and savings and is in good financial shape to meet this challenge.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That Members:

- 2.1.1 Note the latest forecast for Budget 2020-21 and the proposed contributions to earmarked reserves.
- 2.1.2 Note the Chief Financial Officer's assurance on the adequacy of the reserves and the robustness of the budget in paragraph 5.1.4.5
- 2.1.3 Note the Chief Financial Officer's highlighted areas of risk identified within the budget process set out in paragraph 5.1.4.6 and section 5.3
- 2.1.4 Note the latest Medium Term Financial forecast for 2021-2025 as shown in section 5.1.5
- 2.1.5 Subject to approval of 2.2.4 below, that funds are released for the capital schemes listed in section 5.2.2

2.2 Recommend to Council:

- 2.2.1 That there be an increase of 2.65% in the level of Council Tax charged by North Devon Council for 2021-22 (in accordance with the revised referendum limit ability of £5.00 per Band D property) with a Band D Council Tax level of £193.35.
- 2.2.2 The actions identified in sections 5.1.2 to 5.1.4, which are required to ensure a balanced budget is achieved and therefore recommend to Council the approval of 2021-22 General Revenue Account Budget.
- 2.2.3 To adopt the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021-2025 in section 5.1.5 as part of the Policy Framework.
- 2.2.4 The Capital Programme 2020-21 to 2022-23 as highlighted in section 5.2 be approved.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The 2020-21 latest forecast is reported to ensure the Council maintain budgetary control for the rest of the financial year.
- 3.2 To ensure Members have assurance on the financial standing of the Council and risks associated with the budgetary framework.
- 3.3 Decisions on the level of Council Tax need to be taken by Strategy and Resources as part of recommending next year's budgetary framework for adoption by Council.
- 3.4 To ensure the Council has a savings plan in place to deliver the long-term financial strategy of the Council.

- 3.5 To ensure Members control the performance improvement activities of the Council.
- 3.6 To ensure that future capital investment is available and targeted to the Council's priorities.

4. CONSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

Article or Appendix and paragraph	Referred or delegated power?
Part 3 Annexe 4	Delegated
Part 4 Budget Procedure Rules	Delegated

5. REPORT

5.1 Revenue Budget

5.1.1 Quarter 3 Forecast 2020-21

- 5.1.1.1 The Performance and Financial Management Quarter 3 of 2020-21 is also reported on the agenda. The current forecast is that the Council has a small net budget surplus of (£0.028m) against its budget.
- 5.1.1.2 The original budget for 2020/21 included a forecast to achieve £0.200m worth of salary vacancy savings. The current position forecasts this will be exceeded this year and vacancy savings of £0.388m will be achieved.
- 5.1.1.3 There was originally much pressure on the 2020/21 budget due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the Council's income streams have been greatly affected in the first three quarters of 2020/21 and expected to continue through the financial year. Also, additional costs have been incurred by the council in the provision of temporary accommodation, additional agency staff for waste and recycling and in supporting the local community.
- 5.1.1.4 Central government announced and paid local authorities four tranches of support funding totalling £1,575,000 for North Devon. The Council also claimed £160,000 in respect of the job retention scheme and received £268,000 New Burdens grant for the administering of business grants. Central government also announced they will help support local authorities for lost income by paying 75% of any income losses after Councils incur the first 5% variance.

- 5.1.1.5 The projected net budget surplus of (£0.028m) above includes a projection for the rest of the 2020-21 year based upon the current environment and the continuing Covid-19 impact on our income sources and additional expenditure being incurred. We will continue to be monitoring these figures over the next couple of months to keep a close eye on any potential variances that need to be highlighted.
- 5.1.1.6 At the 31st December 2020 total external borrowing was £0.500m. The timing of any future borrowing is dependent on how the authority manages its treasury activity and due to current low interest rates and reduced returns on investments it is prudent for the Council to 'internally borrow' and use these monies to fund the Capital Programme.
- 5.1.1.7 The recommended level of general fund balance is 5%-10% of the council's net revenue budget (£0.669m to £1.338m). The forecast general fund reserve at 31 March 2021 is £1.161m, which is a level of 8.7%.

5.1.2 Budget 2021-22

- 5.1.2.1 Preparation of the 2021-22 budget began in the autumn of 2020 in order to consider the cost of known budgetary pressures and provide opportunity to consider the impact of proposed reductions.
- 5.1.2.2 The Government's Spending Review (SR2020) took place in November 2020, which announced future year government spending plans.
- 5.1.2.3 There was no new longer-term funding for district councils however there was some continuation of one-off additional financial support to mitigate the current financial impact from the Covid-19 pandemic continuing into the initial 3 months of 2021-22 financial year.
- 5.1.2.4 Core income from areas such as car parks, planning, sale of recyclable materials, commercial waste and pannier market continue to be detrimentally impacted as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Whilst some government funding has been provided through the 75% income loss reimbursement scheme to mitigate this impact in 2020-21; and extended to now also include the first 3 months of 2021-22 (April to June 2021) it remains difficult to predict when stability and, or any significant improvement will return to the economy and it therefore **continues to be a source of major risk** to the Council's Budget 2021-22.
- 5.1.2.5 The Council does have both general fund and earmarked reserve balances which it could call upon in 2021-22 to mitigate any shorter

term economic impact being experienced but clearly this would have much longer term solvency implications for the authority.

- 5.1.2.6 However, continued pressure and uncertainty on our funding sources remains as the Government's Fair Funding Review and Business Rates Retention changes, originally planned for 2021-22 year was again delayed by a further year until April 2022.
- 5.1.2.7 The Council made the decision during 2016-17 to accept the Government's offer of a 4-year financial settlement through to the 2019-20 year. By accepting the 4-year settlement helped the Council to plan ahead with greater certainty and to provide a financial platform to delivery upon our corporate plan. However, due to the funding review changes above now being delayed, the financial settlement for 2021-22 year is again only a one-year funding announcement which leaves local authorities with much greater uncertainty in being able to plan further ahead.
- 5.1.2.8 The refreshed 4-year Medium Term Financial Strategy was approved this time last year (February 2020) and the forecast cumulative budget gap / (surplus) was shown as follows;

Years	2020-21 £m	2021-22 £m	2022-23 £m	2023-24 £m
Budget gap / (surplus)	0	1.781	2.110	2.678

A further refresh, in light of the financial impact being experienced due to the pandemic was carried out in October 2020 and amended the forecast position to be;

Years	2020-21 £m	2021-22 £m	2022-23 £m	2023-24 £m
Budget gap / (surplus)	0	1.995	2.898	3.371

- 5.1.2.9 The forecast for 2021-22 (in October 2020) was a projected budget gap of £2million.
- 5.1.2.10 Following a more detailed annual budget setting exercise there have been a number of movements to this forecast however I am pleased to be in a position to put forward a balanced budget for 2021-22 financial year.

5.1.2.11 A summary of the main budget movements for 2021-22 is as follows:

	Original Projected £000s	Draft 2021-22 Budget £000s	Movement - Cost / (Saving) £000s
Employee costs	415	290	(125)
Borrowing costs	99	99	0
Transformation reserve adj	(250)	(250)	0
Fees and charges	(100)	(100)	0
Funding - New Homes Bonus	1,022	483	(539)
Funding - Lower Tier Services	0	(140)	(140)
Funding - Collection Fund deficit	429	0	(429)
Funding - Council Tax 2021-22	(279)	(140)	139
	1,336	242	(1,094)
C-19 ongoing impact on income	660	210	(450)
C-19 additional costs continuing	0	165	165
C-19 support grant	0	(537)	(537)
	660	(162)	(822)
Other changes (net)	0	(80)	(80)
	1,996	0	(1,996)

The Council's net budget for 2021-22 is £13.639m; a table outlining the summary Budget 2021-22 is attached as **Appendix A**.

Details showing the recommended level of strategic grants for 2021-22 are in **Appendix B**; which proposes no reduction to the current level of grants supporting these organisations and maintains funding at the level they have been receiving since 2017-18 year.

5.1.3 Budget 2021-22 Funding

- 5.1.3.1 There are three main sources for the Council to fund its net budget of £13.639m; direct Government Grants, Business Rates and income collected from Council Tax payers.
- 5.1.3.2 The level of funding the Council receives for its share of the Council Tax bill equates to £6.768m.
- 5.1.3.3 The main grant received from Central Government is paid via the Local Government Finance Settlement.

5.1.3.4 North Devon has been provisionally allocated £3.332m, which is in line with the amount awarded for 2020-21. The final settlement is due to be approved by Parliament in February 2021.

5.1.3.5 The balance of funding of £3.539m used to fund the Budget 2021-22 is as follows:

- New Homes Bonus of £1.354m, which is made up as follows:

	<u>Increase</u>	<u>Cumulative total</u>
Year 1 (2018-19)	£379,672	
Year 2 (2019-20)	£434,860	
Year 3 (2021-22)	£539,898	£1,354,430

- The government reviewed New Homes Bonus as part of the 2017-18 finance settlement and made changes to reduce the legacy payments of the original scheme of 6 years down to 4 years from 2018-19. In addition to this, the scheme also would now only be rewarding growth over a national baseline of 0.40%.
- The 2020-21 finance settlement announced that the 2020-21 in-year allocation of New Homes Bonus funding £723,191 would only be for one-year only and there would be no legacy payments on this allocation being received for the following three years. For 2021-22 year a similar arrangement for a one-year allocation of £539,898 was announced.
- The Government intends to consult on the future of this housing incentive during 2021 and move towards a new, targeted approach that rewards local authorities where they are ambitious in delivering new homes and a scheme which is aligned with other measures on planning performance. We await to see the outcome from this review and what impact this has on the funding for North Devon.
- Business Rates Retention growth of £1.509m. In the current year 2020-21 we are reporting additional business rates income from growth of £0.300m less than the budgeted £1.659m business rates growth.
- Lower Tier Services Grant of £0.139m. An additional one-off grant provided for 2021-22 year.
- Covid-19 Support Grant of £0.537m. An additional one-off grant provided to meet continuing expenditure pressures in 2021-22.

5.1.4 Reserves

- 5.1.4.1 The Council started 2020-21 with earmarked reserves of £5.395m and a General Fund Balance of £1.161m.
- 5.1.4.2 The Performance and Financial Management Quarter 3 report of 2020-21, also on the agenda, provides an updated forecast position for reserves. It is currently forecast that the amount held in earmarked reserves will reduce slightly to £5.138m and the General Fund Balance to remain at £1.161m as at 31 March 2021.
- 5.1.4.3 The Budget 2021-22 includes contributions to and (from) specific earmarked reserves. Appendix A summarises these reserve movements.
- 5.1.4.4 **Appendix C** details the forecast reserve balances for the period to 31 March 2022 and it is currently forecast that the amount held in earmarked reserves will be £4.048m and the General Fund Balance of £1.161m as at 31 March 2022.
- 5.1.4.5 In compliance with the Local Government Act 2003 the Chief Financial Officer assures Members of:
- The robustness of the estimates; and
 - The adequacy of the proposed financial reserves
- 5.1.4.6 The Chief Financial Officer would also like to draw Members' attention to the risks associated with Revenue and Capital budgets identified in section 5.3 below.

5.1.5 Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021-2025

- 5.1.5.1 Whilst preparing the Budget 2021-22 each Head of Service was tasked with preparing service plans covering 2021-22 and beyond. These plans have been through Policy Development Committee in January 2021 and if applicable the revenue implications have been factored into the budget. The purpose of these plans is to ensure that the Council has a strategic approach to delivering the budget reductions expected as a result of the Government's austerity programme.
- 5.1.5.2 The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) was last considered by Strategy and Resources at its meeting on 3 February 2020. Council approved the MTFS 2020-21 to 2023-24 at its meeting on 26 February 2020.
- 5.1.5.3 The MTFS underpins and provides the financial cornerstone of the Corporate Plan, which will shape the Council's activities. It is good

practice that the MTFS is refreshed on an annual basis to ensure that the Council's forward looking financial position is considered particularly in the current economic climate.

- 5.1.5.4 The MTFS model represents a view as of today based on numerous financial assumptions about the future, which are described in detail together with the risks associated with their volatility.
- 5.1.5.5 The refresh of the MTFS has involved reviewing all previous assumptions in light of new and more current information. These changes reflect actual experience and additional information or remove unsafe assumptions. The main assumptions in the forecast are as follows:
- **Pay settlement.** The Government previously indicated continued strict controls needed to minimise public sector pay and pay increases were historically targeted at around 1%. The 2020 pay offer announced relaxed this target and for 2020-21 the impact equated to an additional £0.400m cost. The Chancellor announced at the Spending Review a move back towards the previous control levels and the budget for the future years in the MTFS have prudently assumed a 1% cost increase. The risk however is that a higher increase is agreed which would add further cost to what has been predicted.
 - **No further borrowing to fund capital expenditure in addition to already approved projects.** The Budget 2021-22 and Treasury Management strategy includes borrowing costs of up to £0.644m in 2021-22 to cover current capital programme commitments. The future model assumes borrowing increasing to £1.3m by 2024-25 to cover approved capital projects in the programme. It assumes no further borrowing is undertaken than currently committed to above. If borrowing beyond this is considered a business case will be made outlining all the possible funding options.
 - **Additional legislative requirement will be funded by additional grant.** Under the new burdens doctrine the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) provides additional grant funding, either as a specific grant or included in formula grant. It is also assumed that the grant will be sufficient to fund the additional costs.
 - **The move to Universal Credit has a nil effect.** The move from rent allowances to universal credit will see reductions in expenditure and grant income. It is assumed that we will make sufficient savings to match the grant reduction. It is also assumed that there will be no significant impact on homelessness and prevention.

- **No impact from future changes to pensions.** The impact from the 2020-21 triennial review of the pension scheme has already been factored into the base budget which sets out the authority's employer contributions for the periods to 2022-23. The next triennial review of the pension scheme takes place in the autumn of 2022; the model has prudently assumed an increased cost for 2023-24 year. However, if the actual results are in line with the assumptions recently made within the pension review then this impact should be lower.
- **Review of fees and charges.** Core fees and charges for service areas such as carparks have not been reviewed for a number of years; however the running costs for these services have increased. A review of fees and charges has been incorporated within the forecast and will require Member approval in advance of the 2022-23 year. The risk to the financial forecast is that fees are not increased and thus increases the forecast budget gap by £0.175m.
- **Includes increases in the level of council tax per annum with effect from 2021-22.** This does not mean that the Council cannot freeze or amend the level of council tax, but the decision will be made as part of the budget consideration each year. However, the model assumes a rise each year, if a decision is made to not increase then this will produce a cumulative budget gap of £0.170m in each of the years the tax is not increased.
- **Government Fair Funding Review and income from retention of Business Rates.** From 2013-14 the government allowed authorities to share in the benefit from growth in business rates. The latest forecast for 2020-21 we are reporting additional business rates income from growth of £0.300m less than the budgeted £1.659m business rates growth.
- Due to the funding review changes originally planned for the 2021-22 year now being delayed, the financial settlement for 2021-22 year is only a one-year funding announcement which leaves local authorities with much greater uncertainty in being able to plan further ahead.
- Baseline funding is being reviewed and a planned reset for 2022-23 year which will see the above business rates growth reset and a new Baseline funding level for each authority. The MTFS model forecasts an assumed overall reduction in Baseline funding and Business Rates income for 2022-23 onwards. Indicative funding allocations should be announced in autumn 2021, however the risk to the Council is that the overall funding is lower than the level assumed in the financial forecast.
- **Use of New Homes Bonus.** The government reviewed New Homes Bonus and made changes to reduce the legacy

payments of the original scheme of 6 years down to 4 years from 2018-19. In addition to this, the scheme now only rewards growth over a national baseline of 0.40%.

- The 2020-21 finance settlement announced that the 2020-21 in-year allocation of New Homes Bonus funding £723,191 would only be for one-year only and there would be no legacy payments on this allocation being received for the following three years. For 2021-22 year a similar arrangement for a one-year allocation of £539,898 was announced. The Government intends to consult on the future of this housing incentive in spring 2021 and move towards a new, targeted approach that rewards local authorities where they are ambitious in delivering new homes and a scheme which is aligned with other measures on planning performance.
- Based on the current scheme North Devon is forecast to receive £1.35m for 2021-22 year; however we have prudently assumed only the remaining legacy payment of £0.435m for 2022-23. The risk to the Council is that the scheme is changed fundamentally and the financial impact results in a lower than assumed income figure for these payments. The MTFS has incorporated the estimated impact of the changes for future year forecasts through to 2022-23; however as any replacement scheme is unknown we have indicated a worse-case scenario of receiving no payment from any revised scheme.

5.1.5.6 The MTFS looks at the changing financial situation of the Council over the future four financial years for 2021-22 to 2024-25. The starting position is the Budget 2021-22, which is rolled forward based on a set of assumptions. However as touched on earlier the unknown future year government funding levels result in so much uncertainty, **I have prudently based the future year forecast for 2022-23 year on a worse-case scenario of losing £0.916m of core funding/business rates and £0.919m reduction of New Homes Bonus grant.**

5.1.5.7 The refreshed MTFS model detail is shown in **Appendix D** and the forecast cumulative budget gap / (surplus) is shown as follows:

Years	2021-22 £m	2022-23 £m	2023-24 £m	2024-25 £m
Budget gap / (surplus)	0	2.270	2.785	2.890

5.1.5.8 Clearly, this creates a large budget gap to bridge moving forwards however it is crucial that both Officers and Members understand the potential financial context that we 'could' end up with, subject to any transitional arrangements the government put in place. This

clearly focuses minds on becoming more efficient within the services we currently provide and becoming entrepreneurial in the way we deliver services into the future and move towards a more commercially minded Council to generate additional income for the revenue budget.

- 5.1.5.9 In order to agree some parameters around this approach, Members approved a Commercialisation Strategy at Full Council in November 2020. This strategy set out the context of the financial parameters we are working within and how it should move forwards to enable the Council to become a more efficient, business like operation and increase revenue generation to bridge the future predicted budget gaps.
- 5.1.5.10 We have set some very clear outcomes from the above strategy which is crucial if we are going to be successful in delivering upon bridging the financial projections, these being;
- Commercial operating is increasing across the Council
 - The efficiency of the Council has been improved
 - Generating additional and sustainable income streams for the Council
 - Reducing the net budget of a service by reducing controllable costs of a service whilst still achieving service outcomes
 - Having staff with a commercial 'mind-set' across the organisation through developing and upskilling our staff to be more enterprising and innovative
- 5.1.5.11 The Council has been preparing and positioning itself for on-going budget reductions and will continue to work on options to deliver savings and efficiencies necessary towards bridging the budget gaps through to 2024-25 year.
- 5.1.5.12 The figures shown in the model are forecast and members should be mindful of the sensitivity of some of the figures incorporated; the following **sensitivity analysis** highlights how figures can change both upwards and downwards:
- A 1% movement on pay awards has an impact of £0.110m; the MTFs has factored in 1% each year therefore any variance to this will change the forecast
 - No Council Tax rise is a cost impact of £0.170m each year in lost income on the base budget
 - For every £1m extra borrowed (over a 10 year period) would be an additional annual cost to revenue budget of £0.120m
- 5.1.5.13 There are some potential areas not yet factored into the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) as these require further work and analysis to be carried out before inclusion in any plans; these are:

- 5.2.5 The timing and realisation of capital receipts can be impacted by events beyond the control of the Council and we have been able to manage cash flows for projects through internal borrowing.
- 5.2.6 We also have authority to borrow from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) as outlined in the Treasury Management Annual Investment Strategy and the Council currently has external borrowing of £0.500m.

5.3 Risk Assessment

- 5.3.1 Whilst formulating the budget proposals, risks to specific income and expenditure budgets were identified. During the course of the process assessments were made in respect of these risks. In light of the information that officers had available appropriate amendments were made to the budget forecasts where possible. Highlighted below are risks identified that could yet have a major impact on the Council's ability to achieve the Budget 2021-22;
- 5.3.2 **Government grants** – Parliament is expected to approve the funding allocated to Local Government in February 2021. The risk to 2021-22 is that it could be approved at different levels to that assumed in the Budget 2021-22, although the likelihood is unlikely based upon previous years' experience however until this is formally confirmed this is flagged as a risk. In addition, is the high level of uncertainty surrounding the future years funding settlements following the forthcoming Fair Funding Review and future of Business Rate Retention.
- 5.3.3 **Income** from car parks, planning, sale of recyclable materials, commercial waste and pannier market are key areas of income, which have been detrimentally impacted both since 2009 as a result of the recession and more recently in 2020-21 due to the Covid-19 impact on core source of income. Whilst some government funding has been provided to mitigate this impact in 2020-21 and extended to now also include the first 3 months of 2021-22 (April to June 2021) it remains difficult to predict when stability and, or any significant improvement will return to the economy and it therefore **continues to be a source of major risk** to the Council's Budget 2021-22. The Council does have both general fund and earmarked reserve balances which it could call upon in 2021-22 to mitigate any shorter term economic impact being experienced but clearly this would have much longer term solvency implications for the authority.
- 5.3.4 **Capital receipts** – The Council faces two main risks in this area. The first is the fact that the Capital Programme is forecast to be funded from as yet unrealised receipts. The second is the ongoing value of receipts generated could be lower due to the economic situation. Both these factors could lead the Council to seek other sources of funding, such as increasing external borrowing and therefore add further borrowing costs to that already included in the 2021-22 budget.

- 5.3.5 **Savings plans** – Service plans have been approved and any net savings factored into the 2021-22 budget. To achieve the full financial benefit of any savings identified will require negotiation with supplier, partners and other organisations therefore there is a risk that the full benefit may not be achieved, or achieved within 2021-22 financial year.
- 5.3.6 **Increase in demand for services** – Demand for specific services has continued to increase during 2020-21. Homelessness prevention measures in particular have increased over the past couple of years. It is considered that in light of the current economic climate and general public sector budget cuts that this will continue through 2021-22, which will further impact the Council's budget.
- 5.3.7 **Localisation of council tax support** – The Council Tax Reduction scheme was approved by Full Council in January 2021; however, changes due to increased take up or loss of collection above that forecast would have a direct financial impact on the Council and its major preceptors. The scheme will be reviewed as part of the quarterly performance and financial management report.
- 5.3.8 **Business Rates retention** – We are now exposed to the risk of lower collections, decline on the tax base and successful outstanding appeals. However this is mitigated by participating in the Devon-wide pool. The Council is also experiencing growth in Business rates income, which has been included in the financial plans.
- 5.3.9 **Welfare reforms** – The Government has embarked on significant changes to the welfare system in recent years, which includes changes to the amounts claimants are entitled to, consolidating different forms of benefit and payment methodology. These may generate risks both from increased demand for services and more directly on resources of the Council. The Council will continue to monitor progress and analyse the impact on our customers as well as the Council itself.

6. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Included in the report.

7. EQUALITIES ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 There are no equalities implications anticipated as a result of this report.

8. STATEMENT OF INTERNAL ADVICE

- 8.1 The author (below) confirms that advice has been taken from all appropriate Councillors and officers.

9. STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

9.1 This report contains no confidential information or exempt information under the provisions of Schedule 12A of 1972 Act.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 The background papers are available for inspection and kept by the author of the report.

Author: Jon Triggs, Head of Resources
Lead Member: Councillor Ian Roome

Date: 19 January 2021