

Full Council

25 February 2020



Report of:	Denise Murray, Chief Finance Officer & S151 Officer
Title:	2020/21 Budget Report
Ward:	City Wide
Member Presenting Report:	The Mayor and the Deputy Mayor / Cabinet Member for Finance, Governance and Performance

Recommendation

For Council to consider and approve the Mayor's 2020/21 Budget recommendations which include the various elements of the Revenue budget, Capital programme, Bristol City Council's Council Tax for 2020/21 and Adult Social Care Precept.

To note additional information has been added to the following areas since Cabinet on 21 January 2020 to reflect additional information from each individual budget report.

- Dedicated Schools Grant (Paragraph 9)
- Housing Revenue Account (Paragraph 11)
- West of England Combined Authority (paragraph 12)



1. MAYOR'S BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL

The approval of Mayor's budget proposals to Council in respect of 2020/21 as set out in this report, subject to any amendments agreed at the meeting:

To note:

- a) The report from the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and Resources Scrutiny Commission.
- b) The budget consultation process that was followed and feedback as outlined in Section 17 and Appendix 6.
- c) The feedback provided by the Schools Forum to Council, for their consideration in making final decisions on the Schools Budget for 2020/21 as outlined in Section 9.
- d) That the consultation feedback and equality impact assessments and relevance checks as set out in Appendix 7 and within the full reports for the ring fenced accounts (Dedicated Schools Grant and Housing Revenue Account), have been taken into consideration and has informed the final budget proposals.
- e) The comments of the Chief Finance Officer (s151 Officer) on the robustness of the Budget and adequacy of reserves as set out in Section 15.
- f) The delegation of authority to the Director of Finance after consultation with the Deputy Mayor, Cabinet Member for Finance, Governance and Performance and the Mayor, to make any necessary technical adjustments or adjustments to the figures upon receipt of the final Local Government Finance Settlement, and West of England Combined Authority Levy; with transfers to and or from reserves as appropriate.

To agree:

- g) The Bristol City Council levels of Council Tax increase of 3.99%; which includes 2% precept to support Adult Social Care and noting the precepts of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Avon and Somerset and the Avon Fire Authority.
- h) The calculations for determining the Council Tax requirement for the year 2020/21 as outlined in Appendix 8 and in accordance with the Local Government Finance Act 1992.
- i) The Council's General Fund net revenue budget for the year 2020/21 as £395.7 million and expenditure allocations as set out in Appendix 1; subject to any budget amendments properly notified to and approved by the Council in line with the Constitution.
- j) The temporary movement in general reserves of up to £6.1 million (31%) to mitigate the forecasted 2019/20 year end emergent pressures in the People directorate as outlined in Section 5.
- k) The Council's capital budget (excluding the HRA) for the years 2020/21 - 2024/25, totalling £612.0 million as set out in paragraph 13 and detailed in Appendix 2.
- l) The proposed Treasury Management Strategy for 2020/21 in Appendix 4, incorporating the Minimum Revenue Provision policy and the prudential indicators and limits.
- m) The Strategy for the Flexible use of Capital Receipts as set out in Appendix 5.

To agree:

- n) The distribution of the 2020/21 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) of £374.2 million as recommended by Cabinet and the Schools Forum and summarised in Section 9.

To agree:

- o) The Gross HRA revenue budget for the year 2020/21 as £119.1 million
- p) No increase in Housing Rents for 2020/21 for existing tenants.
- q) The use of flexibility in the rent standard with effect from April 2020, for new tenants:
- up to 5% for Housing.
 - up to 10% for Supported Housing.
- r) Increase of 2.7% (CPI +1%) with effect from April 2020 for Garage Rents.
- s) Authorise the Executive Director of Growth and Regeneration to set Service Charge budgets in line with the anticipated cost of delivery.
- t) The HRA capital budget for the years 2020/21 – 2024/25 totalling £354.0 million as detailed in Appendix 2 and including the following for 2020/21:
- £33.0 million capital expenditure on existing stock.
 - £40.8 million on the Development Programme.
 - £5.0 million on improvements to Sandy Park site subject to Business Case approval.
 - £0.9 million for other capital projects including the ICT project.

2. LIST OF APPENDICES

This report should be read alongside a series of appendices:

- Appendix 1 – Detailed Budget Summary by Directorate
- Appendix 2 – Capital Programme 2020/21 – 2024/25
- Appendix 3 – Budget Risk Matrix
- Appendix 4 – Treasury Management Strategy
- Appendix 5 – Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy
- Appendix 6 – Budget Consultation Report
- Appendix 7 – Equalities Impact Relevance Check
- Appendix 8 – Statutory Calculations in respect of Council Tax

3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

3.1. The council has a legal responsibility to set an annual balanced budget (Local Government Finance Act 1992) which sets out how our financial resources are to be allocated and utilised. The Government's recent spending round, announced in September 2019, committed additional funding to key public services including Education and Adult Social Care. It also enabled councils to remain in the 100% business rates retention pilot and generate more funding from local taxation via social care precept for a further year. The increase represents an important and welcome recognition of some of the major funding pressures being faced by local government.

3.2. We have been successful in managing our finances and not only setting an annual balanced budget but taking a medium-term approach, so we can invest in the areas that

really matter, seek to protect the most vulnerable during these uncertain times and to invest in our city, in order to build confidence in the future.

3.3. The Council's proposed budget for 2020/21 should be seen in the context of the Corporate Strategy and Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and represents a further step on the road through financial recovery to financial sustainability. It establishes a solid and resilient financial base to meet the future challenges that could result from the uncertain financial, social, economic and environmental climate.

3.4. The approved General Fund revenue budget for 2020/21 totals £395.7 million, a net increase of £17.4 million from 2019/20. This is made up of £26.0 million of investment in services offset by a tail of £8.7 million of savings and efficiencies previously agreed (2018/19). The ring-fenced budgets for Public Health is an indicative £32.5 million (increase of £0.9 million from 2019/20) and Dedicated Schools Grant £374.2 million (increase of £19.0 million from 2019/20) and Housing Revenue Account £119.1 million (a decrease of £3.7 million from 2019/20).

3.5. In addition to the above the Council continues to progress the delivery of an ambitious rolling capital programme over the period from 2020/21 to 2024/25, which has a gross value of £966.0 million (including the HRA) and is fully funded through the use of external funding, capital receipts and borrowing.

3.6. To finance the general fund budgets outlined above it is proposed that the Council's element of the Council Tax for 2020/21 is increased by 3.99%. This takes into account the Adult Social Care Precept of 2% and would enable a position to be achieved of a balanced budget for 2020/21 with no additional new savings.

4. COUNCIL STRATEGY & FINANCIAL PLANNING

4.1. The One City Plan sets out an ambitious vision and actions for the future of Bristol to 2050. It is a collaborative approach to reach a shared vision for Bristol and aims to use the collective power of Bristol's key organisations to make a bigger impact, by supporting partners, organisations and citizens to help solve key challenges, such as driving economic growth for everyone.

4.2. The Corporate Strategy 2018 – 2023 remains the Council's main strategic document and sets out our contribution to the city as part of the One City Plan. It outlines our vision and values and informs everything we do, how we plan for the future and how we will demonstrate progress in delivering those priorities.

4.3. In achieving this vision we have based our activities around four themes:

- Empowering and Caring
- Fair and Inclusive
- Well Connected
- Wellbeing

4.4. Our key commitments aligned to each theme are outlined in the Corporate Strategy and the full document can be accessed via the hyperlink below.

<https://www.bristol.gov.uk/policies-plans-strategies/corporate-strategy>

4.5. The Policy and Budget Framework provides the structure and process for budget decision making and the MTFP is a key financial planning document, covering a rolling five year period refreshed annually. It sets out the Council's strategic approach to the management of its finances and provides a financial framework within which delivery of the Council's priorities can be progressed.

4.6. The MTFP approved by Full Council on 17th December 2019 <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/council-spending-performance/council-budgets> outlined in broad terms, the specific service and funding issues over the period and how the Council will, within its financial constraints, fund its priorities and ensure financial sustainability and resilience can be achieved.

4.7. With the Spending Review now expected in 2020 and local government financial reforms of the system of business rates retention (100% to 75%) and fair funding review aimed at designing a new system for allocating funding between councils via a fair methodology, equalised as appropriate and set new funding baselines for every authority from 2021/22 this presents a significant risk to future funding.

4.8. The MTFP indicated that with sufficient planning for the uncertain financial climate in which we operate, the revised approach of de-risking the financial plan to ensure that government one-off, incentive or growth funding, that may be at risk in the future has been removed out of the base budget and funding for known on-going core services are aligned to on-going sustainable funding sources, the achievement of all historically agreed budget reductions, efficiencies and income generation proposals, targeted funding to support areas of need and setting council tax at levels assumed each year a balanced position could be achieved over the planning period.

4.9. The budget has been prepared giving full consideration to these strategic documents, ensuring that each year's budget is considered within the context of the Council's ongoing sustainability over the entirety of the planning period. This has been done using best estimates from available data and based on the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement for 2020/21 announced by government on 20th December 2019.

4.10. Outlined below are the variations noted in the provisional settlement from the original MTFP assumptions.

MTFP Changes	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Council Tax Base	0.306	0.251	0.181	0.098	-0.001
Other	0.005	0.003	-0.002	-0.004	0.003
One-off New Home Bonus	0.247	0	0	0	0
One-off Business Rates	0.401	0	0	0	0
Total Change	0.959	0.254	0.179	0.094	0.002

4.11. The above has been reflected in the budget and consideration of the Council's budget requirement and annual budget proposed in this report and will be used strategically to fund one off and emerging pressures, transformation / innovation or our planned invest to reduce revenue programmes.

4.12. Throughout the process of setting the budget, the Council has been very mindful of the impact of changes or reductions on residents and the Equalities Impact Assessments (EQIAs) are included in this and other associated reports. Decision makers will need to take these into account when considering this budget.

5. REVENUE BUDGET POSITION FOR 2019/20

5.1. This report is concerned mainly with the budget estimates for 2020/21 however, it is important to consider the current year financial performance and therefore the starting point for formulating these budgets is the latest 2019/20 (P8) forecast outturn.

5.2. The current forecast of the year end revenue position, based on actual expenditure at the end of November 2019 is an estimated overspends of £6.5 million general fund (1.7% of the budget). This is predominately attributed to Adult Social Care, increase in service demand, market costs pressures and as a result non delivery of savings, Education Home to School Transport – the volume of routes and complexity of needs continues to increase. £2.1 million underspend for HRA (1.3%), £1.0 million overspend for DSG (0.3%) and a balanced position including planned drawdown from reserves for the Public Health grant.

5.3. It is expected that mitigations will continue to be explored across services within the directorates for activity to be contained within the delegated cash limits. However the scale, nature and timing of the emergent pressures within Adult Social Care and lack of opportunities for mitigation across the People directorate it is unlikely that these pressures can be contained.

5.4. One-off additional grant funding of £8.2 million has been allocated to Social Care to relieve emerging pressures and therefore it is proposed that the principle of adopting a council wide approach and holding funds in abeyance by spending reductions elsewhere across directorates not be applied in this instance.

5.5. The planning assumptions in the budget are therefore that the resulting year end overspends within the People directorate of up to £6.1 million (up to 31% of the general reserve) attributed to the current pressures evident within Adult Social Care and Home to School Transport could be met by a temporary year end movement from general reserves in 2019/20; followed by a reinstatement of the general reserve in 2020/21.

5.6. In line with approvals for supplementary estimates that require a draw down from general reserves which result in a deviation from the Council's agreed minimum reserve level, full Council's approval is sought for a temporary movement in general reserves of up to £6.1 million to mitigate the forecasted year end emergent pressures in the People directorate.

Approved Budget £m		Revised Budget £m	Forecast Outturn £m	Variance £m
226.3	People	226.7	232.9	6.2
53.9	Resources	53.6	53.7	0.1
61.1	Growth and Regeneration	59.9	60.2	0.3
341.3	Sub-total	340.1	346.8	6.6
35.0	Corporate Expenditure	36.2	36.1	-0.1
376.3	Total	376.3	382.9	6.5

5.7. Due to various decisions and slippage in capital projects, the original budget of £236.4 million for 2019/20 is set to decrease to a forecast spend of £158.4m (67%). Budgets are due to be re-profiled during the year to reflect the updated spend profile.

Approved Budget £m		Revised Budget Proposed £m	Movement £m	% Change
25.8	People	22.0	(3.8)	(15%)
17.7	Resources	16.1	(1.6)	(9%)
130.4	Growth and Regeneration	55.8	(74.6)	(57%)
173.9	Sub-total	93.9	(80.0)	(46%)
10.7	Corporate Expenditure	0.0	(10.7)	(100%)
51.8	HRA	49.5	(2.3)	(4%)
0.0	Commercial Investments	15.0	15.0	n/a
236.4	Total	158.4	(78.0)	(33%)

5.8. Further details of the forecast year end position can be found in the Period 8 2019/210 Financial Monitoring Report presented to Cabinet 21st January 2020.

6. GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET 2020/21

6.1. The General fund base budgets are by far the most significant element of the Council's budget, they are the mainstream budgets for services and are monitored monthly and reported to the Corporate Leadership Board, the Mayor and Cabinet. An incremental approach has been adopted and whilst not the most efficient mechanism, it is one that is easy to understand, apply consistently and enable the changes applied to the current year budgets, to be transparent.

6.2. The proposed revenue budget for 2020/21 totals £395.7million, a net increase of £17.4 million from 2019/20. This is made up of £26 million of investment in services offset by £8.7million of previously agreed savings and efficiencies. These investments are detailed in further sections below and historically agreed savings applicable to 2020/21 budget are outlined in the directorate budget analysis.

6.3. The table below provides a summary of the proposed General Fund Revenue budget for the 5 year MTFP period comparing to the approved 2019/20 budget.

19/20		20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25
£m		£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
228.3	People	221.005	224.122	227.785	232.964	238.144
53.9	Resources	52.877	55.025	56.948	58.971	60.994
61.1	Growth and Regeneration	59.098	61.348	64.239	66.166	68.093
35.024	Corporate Expenditure Include One-off funding*	62.727	48.179	45.587	43.519	43.008
378.324	Total Funding	395.707	388.674	394.559	401.620	410.239
214.786	Council Tax	226.055	230.934	236.214	241.948	247.767
134.170	Business Rates (NNDR)	136.711	134.275	136.955	139.692	142.492
1.540	Business Rates Levy rebate	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
6.943	New Homes Bonus	6.387	3.485	1.410	0.000	0.000
19.985	Social Care Grant	28.190	19.980	19.980	19.980	19.980
0.900	Collection Fund Surplus/(Deficit)	-1.636	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
378.324	Total Funding	395.707	388.674	394.559	401.620	410.239
0	Budget Surplus/(Deficit)	0	0	0	0	0

*Pay Inflation is currently held under corporate budget and will be allocated out to directorates' following confirmation of final pay awards.

6.4. The following specific changes and key assumptions have been made in the development of the 2020/21 budget.

- Total Council Tax increase of 3.99% (including 2% Adult Social Care Precept)
- Increase of £2.5 million in the amount of business rates income receivable, due mainly to a 1.6% inflationary increase in the multiplier set by the government. Section 31 grants will continue to be received by us due to government decisions to limit inflationary increases in the business rates multiplier in previous years.
- Pay award of up to 2.7% for 2020/21; note final pay award has not yet been agreed with trade unions, this is held centrally pending final decision.
- Centrally held general inflationary provision for supplies and services budgets, e.g. essential utilities such as gas, electricity and water, external insurance premiums and business rates payable by the Council.
- General inflationary increase for fees and charges budgets.
- Specific inflationary increases in Private Finance Initiative (PFI) unitary charges based on contractual terms and conditions. Specific inflationary increases as set out in other (non-PFI) long-term contracts.
- Unallocated general reserve will be retained at between 5%- 6% of the net revenue budget.

6.5. Table below summaries the year on year baseline expenditure movement:

General Fund Baseline Budget	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Pay Award	(4.765)	(4.973)	(5.181)	(5.472)	(5.472)
Contract Inflation Net of Income Inflation	(4.603)	(4.754)	(4.941)	(3.785)	(3.784)
Capital Financing	(7.500)	(0.027)	0.588	(0.214)	0.637
Previously Approved Savings	8.652	3.100	0.724	0	0
Other Previously Approved Adjustments	(0.033)	(0.886)	(1.150)	0	0
Members Allowance	(0.140)	0	0	0	0
Adult Social Care	(2.500)	0.500	2.000	0	0
Waste Contract Inflation & Payment Mechanism Pressure	(1.000)	0	0	1.000	0
Safer City - Youth Violence	0.000	(0.030)	0	0	0
Land Charges- Legislative changes	0.000	(0.290)	0	0	0
Climate Change / Air Quality - Delivery Capacity	(0.150)	(0.150)	0	0	0
Health & Safety - Resources in Services	(0.100)	0	0	0	0
Pressures attributed to savings not deliverable	(0.380)	0	0	0	0
Baseline Budget Movement	(12.519)	(7.510)	(7.960)	(8.471)	(8.619)

6.6. It is important that the Council continues to plan ahead and it is clear that the growth of our local tax base is providing real additional resource that will assist with managing increases in service demand, and any further reductions in funding.

6.7. Whilst council tax capping rules remain in place, for 2020/21 the referendum threshold set by central government was maintained at 4% for Bristol, which includes 2% relating to the Adult Social Care precept. Where council tax is set below the referendum threshold the council tax yield will be permanently reduced with no opportunity to make up that baseline income loss in future years, without the costly exercise of a referendum.

6.8. During this period of continued uncertainty, we are conscious of the impact of council tax increases on Bristol residents. Given the growth in demand for our services and the absence of any new permanent funding being made available by government, the Council is required to take action to ensure the sustainability of Social Care therefore proposes a social care precept of 2%. The proposal within the report is that for 2020/21 budget should be predicated on the basis of a proposed increase of 3.99% (£8.7million) in the amount of Council Tax income receivable, split between:

- General Council Tax increase of 1.99% (i.e. £4.3m)
- Social Care precept of 2.0% (i.e. £4.3m)
- In addition to the above, Growth in the size of the Council Tax base (i.e. £2.4m)

6.9. The Council has continued to provide a Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme that supports working age people on a similar basis to those who previously received 100% Council Tax benefit prior to this being abolished in 2013; and is one of a handful of English councils to do so. Pensioners are protected from any changes under the prescribed national scheme. The overall scheme is estimated to cost in the region of £39.5 million in 2020/21.

6.10. Part of the budget process each year looks at unavoidable pressures on services that will have an on-going financial impact, some of which are outside of the control of the service

itself and cannot be immediately addressed by savings/efficiencies. Examples of these would be legislative changes.

6.11. There are other areas where the current budget is not adequate for the level of demand within the service, loss of grants or reduction in income is anticipated. Whilst these can be addressed it may not be possible to mitigate these changes immediately due to the need for an improvement programme which seeks to improve outcomes and deliver a sustainable long term strategy.

6.12. The budget outline above incorporates £18 million of one off or incentive funding and £1 million of redirected earmarked reserves. The MTFP principles is that one-off funding is utilised for one-off commitments and the table below summarises the proposed use of available one-off funding to support one off pressures in the budget.

General Fund One-off Budget	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	5 Year Total
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Forecast One-off Funding	18.030	3.490	1.400	0.000	0.000	22.920
Redirection from Reserves	1.145					1.145
Total One-off Budget	19.175	3.490	1.400	0.000	0.000	24.065
One-off Pressures:						
2019/20 Pressures (P8)- Adult Social Care	(5.500)					(5.500)
2019/20 Pressures (P8) - Home to School Transport	(0.600)					(0.600)
Total 19/20 Pressures	(6.100)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	(6.100)
One-off funding Available	13.075	3.490	1.400	0.000	0.000	17.965

*Items highlighted in Grey is 2019/20 overspend paid back to General Reserves in 2020/21

6.13. Table below illustrate the new pressures funded from one-off funding:

General Fund One-off Budget	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	5 Year Total
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
One-off funding Available	13.075	3.490	1.400	0.000	0.000	17.965
Facility Management part year pressures 2020-21	(1.000)					(1.000)
Developing Property Strategy/ Asset Management Plan	(0.500)	(0.500)	(0.500)			(1.500)
Children and Young people - Serious violence	0.000	(1.500)				(1.500)
Adult Social Care innovation fund	(2.100)	(0.600)				(2.700)
Climate Change Reserve	(3.000)					(3.000)
Resilience Reserve	(3.000)					(3.000)
Risk Reserve 2020/21 Pressure	(0.397)	0.010				(0.387)
Amount Held in Reserves	(9.997)	(2.590)	(0.500)	0.000	0.000	(13.087)
Transformation Projects (e.g. City Leap)	(1.500)					(1.500)
GF - Special Education Needs & Disability (SEND)	(0.500)	(0.500)	(0.500)	0.000	0.000	(1.500)
PMO Delivery Capacity	(0.400)	(0.400)	(0.400)			(1.200)
Bear Pit (not contained in 19/20 spend)	(0.350)					(0.350)
Project Management - Regeneration Projects	(0.250)					(0.250)
Economic strategy	(0.078)					(0.078)
Amount Allocated to Services	(3.078)	(0.900)	(0.900)	0.000	0.000	(4.878)
Total New Pressures	(13.075)	(3.490)	(1.400)	0.000	0.000	(17.965)
One-off Budget Position	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000

*Items highlighted in Grey are initially held in Reserves subject to further detail for draw down

People

Adults

6.14. Local authorities have a legal duty to commission care services for any adults who meet the requirement of the centrally set needs and means tests. The actual annual spend for Adult Social Care has increased from £138 million in 2017/18 (beginning of the five year rolling MTFP) to a forecast outturn of £154.4 for 2019/20 despite any efficiencies they might have made.

6.15. There are various drivers resulting in financial pressures a flavour of which is captured below:

- Rising demand for care among working-age adults - better health care has improved the life expectancy of people with some physical and learning disabilities, meaning more working-age adults are now in need of social care. These adults are also less likely than older adults to have financial assets and therefore qualify them to receive publicly funded care.
- The pressures on the NHS are well reported and impacting significantly on Adult Social Care with alleviating measures, in terms of reducing avoidable entries to hospitals, ensuring patients are not delayed and can get out of hospital quicker, home care, reablement, home adaptations and care in residential and nursing homes – which is more intensive and expensive.
- Both of the above factors have increased demand for placements across the region, and cost pressures due to lack of capacity in the market for delivering services.

6.16. Though adult social care is delivered and mainly funded locally, decisions by central government strongly shape how much money local authorities have to do this – as well as what they are obliged to spend it on. This makes adult social care a national as well as a local responsibility.

6.17. These increasing costs are threatening to overwhelm the Council's ability to manage its finances and it is not clear whether public funding for adult social care will increase. The government committed to "ensure that adult social care funding is such that it does not impose any additional pressures on the NHS over the coming five years" in the NHS long-term plan, but there is no clear timetable for social care reform and the 2019 spending round only confirmed grants for social care in 2020/21.

6.18. Whilst we recognise the need for wider change at a national level to make the social care system fair and sustainable in the future, tackling our immediate social care challenges will require decisive action and appropriate funding to help enable the transition to an approach based on a higher level of early intervention and prevention. This is why we are proposing a 2% Social care precept in 2020/21 (£4.3 million and prioritising additional expenditure of £8.2 million (£2.7million to be held in reserve subject to agreement of Cabinet of full detailed business case) in Adult Social care at a time of financial challenges and uncertainties.

Children's Social Care

6.19. The Children's Social Care service has experienced escalating levels of serious youth violence and extra-familial risk, including gang affiliation, criminal exploitation and abuse. This alongside a growing child population and improved intelligence and awareness of serious violence and complex safeguarding demands, has presented challenges to the directorate in achieving a balanced budget.

6.20. An earmarked reserve of £0.9 million was allocated in 2019/20 to meet the rising demand attributed to serious youth violence should the additional pressure not be contained

within the grant funding received. In recognition of the increasing trend a further £1.5 million has been earmarked from the one off grant funding.

Education

6.21. The Education service is reporting an in-year pressure of £0.6m relating to Home to School Transport for children who have special education needs. This is likely to result in a supplementary estimate.

6.22. Following the finding of a CQC inspection in 2019, the Education service has developed an action plan and sought approval for funding to address some of the concerns reported, which includes improvement of the Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) statutory processes and implement new diagnostic pathway for Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) assessment to impact on assessment times and offer clarity to parents and carers. The result of these improvements may also impact on SEND demand under DSG and Schools' budget which needs to be closely monitored and proactively managed throughout financial year 2020/21.

6.23. In addition to the £1.6 million funding approved by Cabinet in July 2019 to support resource plan for the SEND function, this budget is proposing a further £1.5 million from the one-off incentive funding to complement the £1.3 million funding identified from within the DSG in 2020/21 to support the improvement programme. Please note the DfE has placed restrictions to the use of general fund to support DSG deficits in the future.

Growth and Regeneration

6.24. The directorate has a number of key priorities which this budget is designed to support. They are as follows:

- Sustainable and inclusive economic growth
- Housing and regeneration
- Preventing homelessness
- Ensuring that air quality standards are met across the city

6.25. In addition to the above, waste management investment is predominantly attributed to a change in accounting treatment for the annual growth funding, which from the establishment of Bristol Waste Company, was first funded from the one-off earmarked reserves, and now added to the base budget. This growth is predominantly attributed to increasing demand resulting from increasing population, number of dwellings and the amount of waste that needs to be collected and disposed of across the city.

6.26. The capital programme contains some significant schemes in the pipeline attributed to Growth and Regeneration functional areas and these are outlined in more detail in the Capital Programme section of this report.

Resources

6.27. The Directorate contains the Council's key professional support services which support the strategic direction of the Council and provide essential support to Members and managers to improve outcomes and deliver change. The Directorate, beyond its core, statutory and regulatory duties, also serves some of the most vulnerable in the city.

6.28. During 2019/20 the responsibility for the Facility Management Services was transferred under Resource from G&R. At P8 Facility Management is reporting a forecast pressure of £1.6 million, £1.5 million of which has been mitigated as one-off actions by others services in Resources. This pressure mainly relates to costs in maintaining the Council's operational assets and internal services. The Directorate is exploring various options to find recurrent mitigations for this overspend.

Corporate Expenditure Accounts

6.29. Central accounts hold a variety of corporate budgets which do not relate directly to individual services, as well as council-wide budgets which largely for timing reasons are not allocated to individual services. Generally, these council-wide budgets will be allocated to services in year, once their impact is known. Corporate budgets include the Council's capital financing costs and associated entries relating to the complexities of the capital accounting requirements. In addition, in accordance with accounting requirements, central accounts include those costs which are defined as the Corporate and Democratic Core and Levies.

	2020/21 £m
Capital Financing	24.227
Corporate and Democratic Core and Levies*	6.543
One off funding held prior to transfer	18.030
Other including Contract Inflation and pay awards	13.929
Total	62.727

**This will be subject to adjustment to reflect the WECA levies*

Savings

6.30. At its meeting on 20 February 2018 Full Council approved £76.4m of pipeline saving activity. Savings proposals totalling £0.380m attributed to commissioning efficiencies on services provided by external partners could not be achieved without a reduction in community engagement activity and as such this has been reduced; utilising the Mayors risk consultation reserve in 2019/20 and base budget adjustment within the 2020/21 annual budget.

	Original Saving* £m	Delivered £m	Removed £m	Residual Saving £m
FP01 - Review and reduce spend on services provided by external partners	5.000	2.620	0.380	2.000
Total	5.000	2.620	0.380	2.000

**As outlined in savings agreed by Full Council February 2018*

6.31. The profile of the £12.4 million residual tail of the savings efficiency programme is outlined in the table below and £8.7 million was built within the MTFP for 2020/21. Meanwhile as outlined in the 2019/20 annual budget there were no new savings requirements in the proposed 2020/21 budget or over the further four forecast years of the MTFP.

	20/21 £m	21/22 £m	22/23 £m	23/24 £m	24/25 £m
Savings as agreed by Full Council	12.612	7.100	4.774	-	-
Crosscutting savings offset against inflationary pressures (delivered)	(3.960)	(4.000)	(4.050)	-	-
Total	8.652	3.100	0.724	-	-

Long Term Investments / Shareholdings

6.32. The Council has a range of long term investments and shareholdings some of which are wholly owned or to which it has a material interest. A set of business plans for these entity were presented to Cabinet 21st January 2020.

6.33. As at 31 December 2019, the Council had approved investment of £62.4 million in long term investments and shareholdings in the wholly owned Council subsidiaries as outlined in the Capital Strategy <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/council-spending-performance/council-budgets> with £54 million invested as at this date. In addition to the above we have earmarked £4 million in the development of Bristol City Leap and this report makes provision for a further £1.5 million to the end of the procurement process to which an update report to Cabinet will follow in the coming months.

6.34. In relation to the wholly owned companies these are complex businesses and when entering into long term investments such as these it is important to assess the market conditions and acknowledge that the industry is ever-changing and as such will always be subject to external influences, volatility and risks.

6.35. As a public sector body we should only intervene when there is a failure or gap in the market and when intervention will lead to an improvement or greater efficiency. Where taxpayers' money or assets are involved in delivering the ambition, the Council must also ensure that Value for Money (VfM) is secured. A VfM assessment extends beyond consideration of a financial case but also need to take into account the economic case and social value.

6.36. Business plans need to be closely monitored, agile and refreshed to reflect the changing market conditions and operating models required to be sustainable. These businesses will be able to deliver services whilst at the same time accessing a wider market, in order to generate income from additional customers. It is anticipated that from these investment the Council will eventually benefit from the generation of profits. Following the pay-back period, the profits can be used as appropriate to support the Council's revenue budget position or be reinvested to deliver key priorities.

6.37. Governance, monitoring and quality performance parameters are agreed by the Shareholder and regularly reported to the Shareholder Group / Cabinet. To ensure the Council's investment is protected, commercial information that could impact on an individual company value will be managed sensitively. As a public authority it will be necessary to consider the sensitivity of the information being requested at the time of the request and the nature of any harm that would be caused prior to disclosure.

7. COLLECTION FUND SURPLUS / DEFICIT

7.1. Bristol City Council is required by statute, to maintain a Collection Fund separate from the General Fund of the Council. Income from council tax and business rates are fixed at the start of each financial year. Any variations from this are realised through the Collection Fund and are distributed in subsequent years. Following changes to council tax discounts and exemptions and localisation of business rates, there is now significantly greater volatility and risk in relation to collection fund income.

7.2. As previously reported to the Council on 14 January 2020, overall there is an estimated deficit on the Collection Fund for the year ending 31 March 2020 of £1.636 million.

8. COUNCIL TAX 2020/21

8.1. The referendum threshold for increasing the council tax has remained at 4% which include 2% Social Care Precept and core council tax increase of 2%. The precept will need to be identified separately and the s151 Officer will be expected to notify the Secretary of State of the amount intended to be raised and verify that the funding has been used for adult social care.

Calculation of the Council's Tax Base

8.2. On 14th January 2020 Full Council approved the Bristol City Council's tax base for the year 2020/21 as 128,566. This represents an increase of some 1.2% on the previous year's tax base (126,999).

Council Tax by Band

8.3. It is recommended that the following amounts be submitted for agreement by Full Council for the year 2020/21:

- £226,055,027 being the sum to be met from Council tax in 2020/21 for services provision 214,732,458 in 2019/20.

Bristol City Council's share of the council tax for the year 2020/21 for the services it provides for each category of dwelling shown as follows:-

	Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D	Band E	Band F	Band G	Band H
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
2020/21 Council Tax	1,172.20	1,367.56	1,562.92	1,758.28	2,149.02	2,539.74	2,930.48	3,516.57
2019/20 Council Tax	1,127.21	1,315.08	1,502.95	1,690.82	2,066.56	2,442.30	2,818.03	3,381.64
Percentage Increase	3.99%	3.99%	3.99%	3.99%	3.99%	3.99%	3.99%	3.99%
Annual Increase	44.99	52.48	59.97	67.46	82.46	97.44	112.45	134.93

9. DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT

9.1. A summary of the planned use and distribution of the Dedicated Schools Grant is incorporated within this report and the full report and associated appendices can be

accessed

at:

<https://democracy.bristol.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=3691&Ver=4>

9.2. The Dedicated Schools Grant for 2020/21, as allocated by the Education and Skills Funding Agency is outlined in the table below and takes into account the increase in minimum funding per pupil and the National Funding Formula (NFF). The funding is primarily generated by pupil numbers from the October 2019 census, which had 36,150 primary pupils, a decrease of 67 (0.18%) from October 2018, and secondary pupil numbers increasing by 798 (4.34%) to 19,180. Funding per pupil has also increased (by 3.94%), to £4,276.40 for primary age pupils and £5,578.84, for secondary age pupils resulting in an overall increase in the DSG funding of £19.039m to £374.1 million.

9.3. The table below provides a high level description for each block and shows the annual changes in funding.

DSG Blocks	Purpose	2019/20	2020/21	Increase	Increase
		DSG	DSG		
		£m	£m	%	£m
Schools Block	For distribution through the mainstream formula for mainstream maintained schools and academies , and for growth in schools	261.45	273.86	5%	12.41
Central Services Block	For Local Authority core functions, admissions and historic commitments	2.90	2.72	-6%	(0.18)
High Needs Block	Funding for pupils with special educational needs in mainstream, special and out-borough schools, for pupils in alternative provision and local authority or commissioned services for high needs pupils.	53.93	60.67	13%	6.74
Early Years	Funding for distribution to Early Years settings for 2, 3 and 4 year old early years provision, with some provision for central oversight and co-ordination.	36.88	36.94	0%	0.06
Total Funding Received		355.16	374.19	5%	19.03
DGS Advance funding		2.41	0.00		(2.41)
Budget Position		357.6	374.2		16.6

9.4. In order to ensure a balance DSG position for 2020/21, a number of transfers between the blocks are proposed. These transfer between blocks remains below 0.5% threshold, the level which would require Secretary of State Approval.

<i>DSG Blocks</i>	DSG Settlement 2020/21	Movement between blocks	Final DSG allocations 2020/21
	£m	£m	£m
Schools block	£273.86	(£1.37)	£272.49
Central Services Block	£2.72	(£0.33)	£2.39
High Needs Block	£60.67	£1.70	£62.38
Early Years	£36.94		£36.94
Total	£374.19	£0.00	£374.19

9.5. The Schools Block budget is £272.4million for 2020/21, after £1.3million of the overall Schools Block DSG has been transferred to the High Needs Block as agreed by the Schools Forum. The basis for distributing the residual funding to mainstream schools is on the basis of using NFF values as selected as the preferred option in the 2020/21 formula consultation with Schools and Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) to be set at +0.5% per school. The Growth Fund for established schools expanding in September 2020 is set at £2.0m (a component of the total Schools Block budget)

9.6. The purpose of the Central Services Block (CSSB) is to provide funding for the statutory duties the Council hold for both maintained schools and academies. The Council must seek Schools Forum approval for Central Services spend, apart from the item relating to school licences which must be repaid to the DfE on behalf of all maintained schools and academies. The CSSB allocation for 2020/21 is £2.7 million. This block is funded in two parts, for ongoing (£1.787m) and historic (£0.932m) responsibilities. The funding for historic commitments has been reduced by 20% (£0.233m) as it has been an aim of ESFA to withdraw this funding over time. Within the historic responsibilities part there is funding of £0.333m for Prudential Borrowing, this initiative ceased in 2017/18, therefore it is proposed to transfer this to the High Needs Block to assist with the level of need.

9.7. In order to fund the High Needs Budget in 2019/20, £2.4 million of High Needs DSG funding was brought forward in advance from 2020/21 which is permissible under the DSG regulations. This did not address the underlying shortfall in the High Needs DSG but provided additional short term funding to meet the in-year need. The level of funding and forecast spend in 2020/21 mean that this advance funding will not be repaid in 2020/21 but will carry forward to future years and a longer term recovery plan will be required.

9.8. Forecast spend in 2019/20 is £1.3 million over budget (which includes the £2.4million accelerated funding). Total overspend against actual block funding is £3.8 million. In the table the spend forecast for 2020/21 has been increased slightly to reflect potential increases in cost/demand.

Table: High Needs Block showing carry forward amounts.

	2019/20 £m	2020/21 £m
High Needs Block Allocation	53.931	60.674
Transfer from Central Block	0.566	0.333
Transfer from Schools Block	2.000	1.369
Total Block Funding	56.497	62.376
Forecast Spend	60.281	61.007
Education Transformation Spend	0.000	1.369
Total Spend	60.281	62.376
In year over/(under) spend	3.784	0.000
Opening Balance brought forward	(0.433)	3.351
Closing Balance carry forward	3.351	3.351

9.9. The High Needs Block budget is set at £62.4 million for 2020/21, after receiving transfers of £1.7 million from other blocks (£1.3 million from Schools block held in abeyance for the Education Improvement programme). It is noted that even with the additional funding the cumulative deficit in the High Needs Block is expected to be in the region of £3.3 million by the end of March 2021.

9.10. Schools Forum considered the budget proposals at its meeting on 15 January 2020 and provided the following comments for presentation at the Cabinet and Full Council budget meeting by the Cabinet Member for Education.

Bristol City Council be informed of the following views of Schools Forum for consideration in making final decisions on the Schools Budget for 2020/21 by Cabinet/Council:

(a) Schools Forum requests that information is provided on how resources transferred to the High Needs Block are being used effectively including milestones and evidence of impact;

(b) the scale of the High Needs deficit needs to be taken into account in the Written Statement of Action and associated SEND action plan;

(c) SEND planning work needs to be joined up across BCC departments and organisational boundaries.

9.11. The Council will continue to explore opportunities for additional funding with government to support the deficit recovery.

9.12. Simultaneously a high needs improvement programme has begun, with four constituent projects: top-up funding; alternative provision; hospital education; and support services. These are focussed on how best to improve outcomes for children and young people, but may result in lower spend over time, if investment is made in activities most likely to promote such outcomes. The improvement plan will be co-developed with schools and consider the EQIA and also requirements under the Children and Families Act.

9.13. The Early Years Block budget is £36.936m for 2020/21, noting that spend and DSG income will vary up or down, according to participation levels in each of the three terms. The funding distribution will be based on a continuation of all existing rate arrangements and supplements as agreed in the previous consultation (agreed by the Schools Forum in January 2019, p.65) into the financial year 2020/21 with one exception; Bristol City Council will increase the hourly base rate for Eligible 2 Year Olds by £0.08 (increasing the rate from £5.40 to £5.48 from April 2020) after receiving an £0.08 increase from the Department for Education.

9.14. It should be noted that school balances are expected to be in the region of £4.9m at the end of 2019/2020, with 12 of the 70 maintained schools forecasted to be in deficit, and the overall DSG position is currently expected to overspend by £1.4m for 2019/2020.

10. PUBLIC HEALTH GRANT

10.1. The annual Public Health grant is currently provided to the local authority by the Department of Health and Social care. The grant meets the cost of Public Health services and functions which transferred to the local authority under the terms of the 2012 Health and Social Care Act.

10.2. The SR19 included a 'real-terms increase to the ring fenced PH Grant budget. If the anticipated uplifts are forthcoming the Bristol estimate the budget for 2020/21 to be c. £32.5m (in comparison to £31.6m 2019/20. However, there has been no confirmation of the final settlement for 2020/21. It is expected that additional obligations would accompany any increase, and that these may well exceed the overall grant total.

10.3. Additional obligations are likely to include costs of PREP prescribing for HIV, the cost of Agenda for Change uplifts for all nursing staff in commissioning services; and mandate tobacco control. The cost is currently unquantified but may exceed the anticipated uplift.

10.4. The future of Public Health beyond 2020/21 is more uncertain and will be subject to the government's fair funding review and may include moving from a grant to a baseline formula with attached conditions.

10.5. See table below for details of the indicative Public Health 2020/21 budget:

Public Health Budget	2019/20 Budget	2019/20 Forecast	2020/21 Indicative
	£'m	£'m	£'m
Public Health Grant	31.6	31.6	32.5
Other Income	4.7	4.6	4.7
Use of Reserve	0.8	0.1	0.3
Total Funding	37.1	36.4	37.5
Salaries	-2.8	-2.5	-2.7
Running Costs & Overheads	-1.2	-1.2	-1.3
Internal Commissioned Services	-5.9	-5.9	-5.3
External Commissioned Services	-27.2	-26.7	-27.3
Proposals in Development	0.0	0.0	-0.9
Gross Cost	-37.1	-36.4	-37.5
Net Spend	0.0	0.0	0.0

10.6. Public Health Commissioned Services and Programmes include:

- Substance Misuse

- Sexual Health
- Public Health Nursing
- Domestic Violence
- Smoking Cessation and Tobacco Control
- Mandated Health Checks
- National Child Measurement Programme
- Sport and Leisure Services
- Thrive Bristol (Mental and Emotional Wellbeing)
- Alive Bristol (Healthy Weight)

10.7. The Public Health Grant also funds:

- The Bristol City Council Community Development Team
- A contribution to the Bristol Impact Fund
- A contribution to Children's Centres

11. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT

11.1. Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is a ring-fenced self-financing account, where the Council retains all rental income but must finance all capital and revenue costs associated with its existing and new housing stock. The Council has a duty to agree a balanced HRA budget for the next financial year, as well as a sustainable long term business plan, which takes account of capital investment needs in its stock and the revenue costs of managing and maintaining it. Although the account is ring-fenced, which means there can be no cross-subsidy between the revenue cost of services provided through the General Fund and the HRA, there are many services provided to both and paid for through recharges.

11.2. For 2020/21 a one year budget is being presented for approval. A revised 30 year Business Plan that reflects the long term challenges, and opportunities, for the HRA service to maximise the use of its financial resources, in the light of the lifting of the HRA borrowing cap will be brought to Cabinet for approval in the Autumn alongside the Council's medium term financial plan.

11.3. The one year budget focuses on three main areas of activity:

- repairing, maintaining and improving existing stock;
- providing services for council tenants and leaseholders;
- and the continuation of our provision of new affordable homes programme.

11.4. The longer term perspective is crucial to ensure that the HRA can continue with an ambitious new build programme and make sure that our primary assets, the housing stock, are fit for purpose and there is sufficient financial capacity to carry out essential repairs and improvements.

11.5. There have been a number of changes to government policy which have impacted on HRA planning assumptions.

- The lifting of the HRA borrowing cap which means local authorities are now able to leverage the financial strength of the HRA to raise additional financing, in line with the Prudential Code.
- From 2020 a new national Rent Policy and Rent Standard are effective for assessing rents for social housing, which also provide guidance on rent changes. The new Standard allows social landlords to:
 - Increase rents by CPI +1% (subject to a rent cap)

- Utilise 5% flexibility for formula rents on general needs and 10% flexibility on formula rents for supported housing when re-letting to a new tenant

11.6. It is proposed that the Council freeze rents for existing tenants for one year from April 2020 and to have the option to utilise the 5% flexibility on relets which reflect the investments made in bringing these properties to an improved quality standard whilst still being lower than comparative benchmarks.

	2019/20 Budget	2020/21 Proposed Budget	Movement
	£'m	£'m	£'m
Gross Rent	(113.3)	(110.0)	3.3
Dwelling Voids	1.5	1.2	(0.3)
Net Service Charges	(8.5)	(8.2)	0.3
Other Revenue Income	(2.5)	(2.1)	0.4
Total Funding	(122.8)	(119.1)	3.7
Revenue Repairs	30.6	33.0	2.4
Management Costs	29.6	31.5	1.9
Service Costs	9.1	9.1	0.0
Debt Costs	11.6	11.5	(0.1)
Bad Debt Provision	2.9	1.8	(1.1)
Other	1.8	0.8	(1.0)
Depreciation	25.6	28.9	3.3
Revenue financing of capital	11.6	2.7	(8.9)
Net Spend	122.8	119.1	(3.7)

11.7. The Council has an ambitious development programme and the budget proposal assumes that £18.4m of the current HRA reserves (£86.5m) will be utilised in 2020/21 in order to fund the programme.

11.8. Additional information regarding the HRA budget is available on the Council's website: <https://democracy.bristol.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=3691&Ver=4>

12. WEST OF ENGLAND COMBINED AUTHORITY (WECA)

12.1. Working with our constituent councils and partners including the West of England Local Enterprise Partnership and local service providers, we aim is to deliver inclusive economic growth for the region and address some of the challenges we face together.

12.2. The 2020/21 Budget for the WECA (including the Mayoral Budget) was set on 31 January 2020 by the WECA Committee and outlined five main areas of funding / expenditure which are attributed to the Council and have therefore been incorporated within the Council's Budget proposal and considered for future financial planning:

Core Funding

12.3. 100% Business Rates Retention Pilot - Within the Business Rates Collection Fund the Council continues to provide for a 5% share of business rates to be allocated to the WECA in accordance with the 100% Business Rate Retention pilot. The fund meets the costs of Highways Maintenance and Transport Improvement Grants and revenue running

costs. The sustainability of this funding will need to be reviewed as the government moves to a national 75% business rates retention system from April 2021.

Transport Authority Costs

12.4. **A Transport Levy is in place** to meet the costs arising from the WECA transport responsibilities and is charges on the three constituent councils currently in direct proportion to the relevant share of costs based on historic and forecast spend. In addition to the previous areas of concessionary travel, Real Time Information for bus services and Community Transport, the levy for 2020/21 incorporates the following new areas of responsibility that will transfer from the Council to WECA with the associated budget and staff from April 2020 as approved by Cabinet on 21 January 2020.

- Bus Service Information
- Supported Bus Services (whilst remaining a joint function)
- TravelWest and
- Metrobus operations

12.5. The basis of the Levy remains in line with the Councils estimated share of costs and is set at £9.840m. This figure is indicative and will be finalised following finalisation of 2019/20 outturn. Any final adjustments required to this figure will be made by the Director of Finance under delegated authority and thereafter the baseline figure will be inflated by 2% annually. WECA will seek to create and build a transport 'smoothing reserve' to manage financial risks in relation to the operational transport services that are transferring to WECA from April 2020 and costs that exceed the 2% threshold agreed.

Adult Education Budgets

12.6. Adult Education Budgets was formally devolved to the Combined Authority with effect from the 2019/20 academic year. The first year's funding that reflects this responsibility transferred part way through the financial year (in August 2019).

Highways and Transport Grants

12.7. WECA currently pay transport related annual capital grant funding that was previously distributed directly by the Department for Transport (DfT) to the constituent councils based on the DfT historic allocation formula. For 2020/21 it is proposed that no changes are made to the distribution of the funding level as set out in the Roads Funding announcement by DfT of 4-year allocations covering 2017/18 to 2020/21; however it should be noted that this could be subject to change in future years. The total allocation for the Council is £6.527m which includes £0.652m for the highest level of incentive grants which is automatically provided for Mayoral Combined Authority areas.

- Highways maintenance grants - £3.132million
- Highways incentive grants - £0.652million
- Integrated transport grants - £2.743million

Total £6.527m

Investment Programme

12.8. The 2020/21 WECA Revenue budget takes account of the £350m WECA Investment Programme with an indicative pipeline and early feasibility propositions as approved by Committee in July 2019.

12.9. Bristol's element of this programme will be a reflected our capital programme dependent on stage of maturity and formal endorsement received from WECA.

12.10. It is not expected that any additional costs will fall on the Council for 2020/21 and the Council will continue to work with the WECA to identify opportunities to deliver efficiencies

through economies of scale, optimising the use of existing resources and delivering value for money.

12.11. Full details of the WECA Budget proposals are available at www.westofengland-ca.gov.uk.

13. CAPITAL PROGRAMME

13.1. The Council plays a key role in investing in the infrastructure of the city and its communities; providing facilities for local people to use as well as stimulating investment to support growth in housing and business premises that provide jobs and opportunities. Our longer term capital programme aspirations are significant, however we recognise that these investments are essential if we are to deliver revenue savings and transform our capacity to meet future needs.

13.2. The Council's capital strategy which was approved in December is aligned to the financing principles set out in the MTFP, ensuring that the development of all prospective schemes is based on clear evidence base and whole-life costing with where appropriate, anticipated pay-back of the investment. The capital strategy is reviewed annually and particularly in line with the development of an asset management strategy, which will outline the approach to capital investment, ensuring that it is affordable, sustainable and prudent as well as aligned to the Council's corporate priorities. It will support the provision of the right blend of investment in key priority areas to do the following:

- *undertake mandatory duties keeping the public safe and maintain its investment,*
- *invest for inclusive economic growth;*
- *invest to save by reducing costs that would be borne by the revenue account or generating external income.*

13.3. The Council has an ambitious capital programme over the next five years. A significant proportion of this programme is aligned to large infrastructure investments that will support long term regeneration across the city, such as programme of new housing building and developing the Temple Quarter area. This is balanced against areas which will support improvements in on-going Council services such as investing in infrastructure to support delivery of Social Care and Education services.

13.4. The Capital Programme as over the next five years at a gross budget of £966 million is fully funded through the use of external funding, capital receipts and borrowing where appropriate. A number of the schemes are earmarked only with business cases pending approval. Should approval not be forthcoming, these funds may be redirected to ensure maximum available capital investment is targeted to works that begin to address the ambition to make Bristol a more equal, aspirational and resilient city, where everyone can share in its success. Further details on the refreshed rolling capital programme are contained in Appendix 2.

13.5. Capital and revenue expenditure cannot be considered in isolation of each other. The capital strategy set a principal to contain the annual revenue expenditure to finance capital investment at 10% of the annual net revenue budget.

13.6. High levels of capital investment means the Council will incur a higher level of fixed annual costs for the foreseeable future and impacts upon revenue resources available to fund day-to-day services. Any new proposals go through defined prioritisation criteria as set out in the strategy to ensure it remains within an affordable envelope. This has involved broadly ranking any new pressures as priority 1 or priority 2 and the outcome of that exercise is reflected in the programme that is now recommended to the Council. Improved

governance arrangements for the development and management of capital projects will be introduced to ensure greater assurance of delivery.

13.7. The Council has significant capital investment requirements in its HRA Housing stock, which includes regular planned maintenance and refurbishments to existing assets as well as programmes to deliver new housing stock. In October 2018 the Government lifted the HRA borrowing cap meaning Councils were able to increase borrowing within the HRA. The current capital programme for the HRA includes a previously approved £43m of borrowing to support the programme of new build housing. The 30 year HRA business plan is currently being reviewed which will include reviewing the level of planned borrowing.

13.8. The Council must ensure sufficient funding is available to meet the requirements of the agreed projects within its Treasury Management Strategy, which is reviewed annually and updated to reflect projects as they are refined or become ready for delivery. The draft Treasury Management Strategy is set out as Appendix 4 to this report.

13.9. The table below summarises our current capital spending plans for the next five years that total £966 million. The detailed draft programme and its financing are set out in Appendix 2.

19/20 £m		20/21 £m	21/22 £m	22/23 £m	23/24 £m	24/25 £m
22.0	People	32.3	14.6	0.1	0.0	0.0
56.9	Growth & Regeneration	163.3	104.6	61.6	67.1	45.8
16.0	Resources	14.3	7.6	5.3	4.0	0.0
0.0	Corporate	1.5	1.5	3.4	4.4	7.0
0.1	Pending Schemes	0.6	12.4	23.8	25.4	11.4
49.5	Housing Revenue Account	79.7	63.0	76.7	76.3	58.3
144.4	Total	291.9	203.8	170.8	177.2	122.4
	<i>Financed by:</i>					
(34.5)	Prudential Borrowing	(71.6)	(43.9)	(24.1)	(25.7)	(7.2)
(41.1)	Grant	(90.0)	(38.9)	(30.4)	(33.4)	(16.9)
(1.4)	Developer Contributions	(9.1)	(12.6)	(10.1)	(8.5)	(6.5)
(15.1)	Capital Receipts (GF)	(25.2)	(28.8)	(20.5)	(24.1)	(19.4)
(0.3)	Revenue/Reserves (GF)	(2.2)	(1.5)	(0.3)	0.0	0.0
(2.5)	Economic Development Fund	(14.0)	(15.2)	(8.8)	(9.3)	(14.2)
(49.5)	Housing Revenue Account	(79.7)	(63.0)	(76.7)	(76.3)	(58.3)
(144.4)	Total	(291.9)	(203.8)	(170.8)	(177.3)	(122.4)

14. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

14.1. The Council's Treasury Management Strategy, Minimum Revenue Provision Policy, Investment Strategy and Prudential Indicators are set out in Appendix 4.

15. RISK MANAGEMENT AND FINANCIAL ASSURANCE STATEMENT

15.1. Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 requires that when a local authority is making its budget calculations, the Chief Finance Officer of the authority must report to the Council on the robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the calculations and the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves.

15.2. In considering the robustness of any estimates, the following criteria need to be considered:

- Is performance against the current year's budget on track and where variances are evident, ongoing and unavoidable, are they appropriately reflected in the plans?
- Are arrangements for monitoring and reporting performance against the savings plans robust?
 - The reasonableness of the underlying budget assumptions.
- The alignment of resources with the Council's service and organisational priorities.
 - A review of the major risks associated with the budget.
 - The availability of un-earmarked reserves to meet unforeseen cost pressures.
 - Have realistic income targets been set and 'at risk' external funding been identified?
 - Has a reasonable estimate of cost pressures been made?
- Are arrangements for monitoring and reporting performance against the budget robust?
 - Is there a reasonable contingency available to cover the financial risks faced by the Council?
 - Is there a reasonable level of reserves which could be used to mitigate any issues arising and are they reducing as the risks decrease?
- The strength of the financial management function and reporting arrangements.
- Has there been quality of engagement with colleagues and councillors in the process to develop and construct the budget?

15.3. Responses to the above are outlined in section 15.11 below.

15.4. This section of the report advises of any significant risks identified in the budget process and sets out the range of measures and provisions put in place to mitigate these risks. There will always be risks inherent in the budget process. It is important that these are identified, mitigated and managed effectively.

- The Corporate Risk Register (CRR) is a live document which seeks to provide assurance to senior management and Members that the Council's main risks have been identified and that arrangements are in place to manage those risks within agreed tolerance. Appendix 3 – Budget Risk Matrix contains a summary of selected key strategic risks, causes, impact, mitigating actions and provides an indicative assessment of how the risks identified in the CRR could be managed should they be realised during this medium term.

15.5. The collection of council tax and the generation of business rate yields are two key risks which need to be closely monitored.

- Council tax collection rates and level of arrears will be subject to regular reviews.
- Provisions for the impact of business rates appeals have been reviewed for sufficiency and activity in this regard will be proactively monitored.
- Business rates income continues to be a significant risk, however as in the case of council tax, any losses greater than those assumed in setting the budget will materialise through a collection fund and will not impact in the current year.

15.6. Parent Company Guarantees are in place that underwrites our subsidiary trading activity and these could present significant risks. As the value grows, mitigating actions are being considered which de-risk the activity and the details where relevant will be outlined within the Business Plan of the subsidiary. An assessment is also undertaken of the sufficiency of the Council's earmarked and general reserves and the Council's ability to mitigate this risk should the need arise. Regular reports are provided to enable the Council

to actively monitor the position during the course of the year and take the necessary action to reduce activity or increase the risks provision.

15.7. The Council's financial controls are set out in the Council's financial regulations and scheme of delegations. The Council has a well-established framework for financial reporting at Executive Director Meetings, Corporate Leadership Board, Statutory Policy Board (Member representation), Scrutiny Commissions and Cabinet with a separate dashboard for each directorate. Where unavoidable pressures are identified that cannot be mitigated, collective ownership is taken and where appropriate, funds are held in abeyance, subject to mitigations or a supplementary estimate being agreed to minimise significant variations to net approved budgets.

15.8. The Council must ensure reserves and balances are retained at an appropriate level in order to provide an adequate buffer for any series of one-off pressures – or to provide sufficient time to identify on-going mitigations in a systematic way. Based on the results of the risk assessments undertaken, an adequate level of reserves is as follows:

- General Fund un-earmarked reserve of £20.0million and a financial risk resilience reserve totalling £7.4m as at 1 April 2020, which when combined represent 6.9% of the 2020/21 net revenue budget.
- Other earmarked reserves totalling £60.3 million as at 1 April 2020 (excluding, HRA and school balances), which in an emergency can be utilised on a short-term temporary basis, provided the funding is replaced in the following year.

15.9. In the context of the above, the Chief Finance Officer considers the proposed budget for 2020/21 as robust and that the level of reserves are adequate, given a clear understanding by members and senior management of the following:

- Directors and other budget holders should accept their budget responsibilities and subsequent accountability.
- The level of reserves is in line with the risk matrix but their enhancement will be a prime consideration for the use of any fortuitous in-year saving.
- Risk based budget monitoring and scrutiny arrangements are in place and include arrangements for the identification of remedial action.
- Budget risks are identified and recorded at the earliest opportunity and will be subject to focused control and management.
- To prevent the realising of operational earmarked reserves, directorates are required to have in place a clear plan for the drawdown of the reserves in line with the profile.
- Effective governance arrangements at a service and corporate level, to monitor the overall delivery of the 2020-21 budget plus regular finance monitoring reports to Cabinet and Scrutiny Commissions.
- There is a clear understanding of the duties of the Council's statutory finance officer and that the service implications of them being exercised are fully understood.

15.10. Risks and opportunities are outlined in depth within the MTFP and key risks summarised below:

- Local government funding – 2021/22 potential risk of material variation resulting from the 2020 Spending Review, Fair funding equalisation, and Business rates reforms including the future of the 100% business rates retention pilot. The significant uncertainty in the future funding available means that we need to ensure the Council is resilient to any future financial shocks that may impact the Council.

15.11. Table – Assessment of robustness of any estimates

Area	Y/N	Response
Is performance against the current year's budget on track and where variances are evident, ongoing and unavoidable, are they appropriately reflected in the plans?	Y	Management action plans are presented to Budget Scrutiny / CLB containing propositions to manage, include in transformation or request a contingency.
Are arrangements for monitoring and reporting performance against the savings plans robust?	Y	Monthly Budget Monitoring, including Savings tracker. Governance via EDM, CLB, Delivery Executive, Cabinet and commissioning scrutiny.
The reasonableness of the underlying budget assumptions	Y	Allocations for propositions which do not have a source or clear methodology are held in abeyance subject to the production of a business case with detailed options and financial analysis.
The alignment of resources with the Council's service and organisational priorities	Y	Integrated budget and service planning exercise is undertaken for 2020/21 budget with alignment to the corporate strategy and MTFP.
A review of the major risks associated with the budget	Y	Corporate and other risk have been reviewed, likelihood and impact assessed.
The availability of un-earmarked reserves to meet unforeseen cost pressures	Y	Unallocated general reserve in line with policy 5-6% net revenue budget; however should this be exceeded as a short term emergency measure longer term earmarked reserve could be utilised.
Have realistic income targets been set and 'at risk' external funding been identified?	Y	The income aspects of the overall budget are calculated based on previous and current trends, known influences and identified risks and external funding changes are built into the medium term financial modelling and incorporated in the calculation of the budget gap.
Has a reasonable estimate of demand cost pressures been made?	Y	
Have one-off cost pressures been identified?	Y	Risks and pressures are identified, provisions made where evidence and or mitigating opportunities explored.
Has a reasonable estimate of future income been made?	Y	Yes for income streams material to the councils financial position. E.g. Business Rates.
Are arrangements for monitoring and reporting performance against the budget and savings plans robust?	Y / N	Arrangements for revenue are robust. The governance and monitoring of the delivery of the schemes in the capital programme are at early stages and still need to be embedded.
Is there a reasonable contingency available to cover the financial risks faced by the council?	Y	Risk reserves are outlined in section 14 and a small element remains of contingencies set aside for non-delivery of savings across the life of the MTFP
Is there a reasonable level of reserves, which could be used to mitigate any issues arising and are they reducing as the risks decrease?	Y	The adequacy of the level of reserves is fully assessed and set annually, and it is reviewed periodically throughout the course of the year to check appropriate direction or release where no longer required.

The strength of the financial management function and reporting arrangements?	Y	A risk based approach is taken to the alignment of staff to projects and programmes in order to optimise the skills available and where necessary additional skills / capability is commissioned.
Has there been a degree and quality of engagement with colleagues and councillors in the process to develop and construct the budget?	Y	There has been widespread and practical engagement throughout the budget development and construction process with senior colleagues, Executive Councillors and Scrutiny MTFP task and Budget Task and finish group.

16. RESERVES AND BALANCES

16.1. The Council holds a number of reserves as part of its approach to maintaining a sound financial position and to demonstrate that there are no material uncertainties about the Council as a going concern. The requirement for financial reserves is linked to legislation such as Local Government Act 1992, which requires Councils to “have regard” to the level of reserves needed to meet future expenditure when calculating a budget.

16.2. The application and use of reserves supports the achievement of service delivery and improvements and can support any in year service budgetary pressures or budget pressures arising from central government’s ongoing funding reductions. The Council’s reserves policy is described below and reflects the guidance previously provided by the Audit Commission, in respect of the appropriate level of general reserves.

16.3. Additionally, some specific earmarked reserves are set aside to manage timing differences between the receipt of income and expenditure being incurred, in accordance with accounting rules.

General Reserve

16.4. The purpose of the Council’s General Reserve will be to cover emergency events only such as unforeseen financial liabilities or natural disasters and support one-off and limited on-going revenue spending. It will be maintained at a minimum level of between 5% and 6% of the council’s net revenue budget.

16.5. The balance of the General Fund Reserve at 1 April 2020 is anticipated to be £20m (5%) This will be reviewed annually and maintained at this level for 2020/21.

Earmarked Reserves

16.6. The purpose of the Council’s earmarked reserves is to meet identified spending commitments. These reserves will only be used for the purpose for which they were created and will be reviewed periodically but as a minimum annually.

16.7. The opening balance in earmarked reserves on 1 April 2019 was £81.2 million. During the year 2019/20 there was a planned contribution of £8.9m approved by Full Council under 2019/20 budget setting, (mainly from clawback of MRP overprovision from previous years).

16.8. Cabinet at P4 approved the reallocation and redirection of £6.8m of reserves to a list of Mayoral priorities in 2019/20. This was achieved by redirecting £3.2m general reserves (from 18/19 one-off revenue surplus) and reallocating £3.6m of earmarked reserves to those areas. Table below also includes the additional movements since P4 as result of OED on Period Friendly Budget (£0.025m) and presentational re-categorisation of licencing reserve from Service Reserve to Ring-fenced reserve due to its ring fenced nature (£0.260m).

16.9. The estimated forecast drawdown of reserves is £31.8m leaving a forecast closing balance at 31 March 2020 of £81.6m.

Reserve Type	Opening Balance 01.04.2019	Previously Approved Movement	Revised Opening Balance 19/20 at P4	Proposed Reprioritisation in this Budget	Estimated Draw Down 19/20	Closing Balance at 31.03.2020
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Capital Investment	(14.230)	(9.450)	(23.680)		9.225	(14.455)
Risk	0.000	(6.193)	(6.193)	(1.178)		(7.372)
Service	(17.419)	(1.605)	(19.024)	0.805	10.375	(7.843)
Statutory/Ring-Fenced	(14.825)	(0.260)	(15.085)		0.400	(14.685)
Business Transformation	(4.362)	1.015	(3.347)		0.920	(2.427)
Financing	(11.735)	1.421	(10.314)		0.500	(9.814)
Risk Management	(16.859)	2.901	(13.958)		3.610	(10.348)
Legal	(0.750)	0.000	(0.750)		0.250	(0.500)
Consultation reserve	(1.000)	0.051	(0.949)	0.340	0.380	(0.229)
Earmarked Reserve Total	(81.179)	(12.120)	(93.299)	(0.033)	25.660	(67.672)
General Reserves	(23.258)	3.225	(20.033)	0.033	6.100	(13.900)
Total Reserves	(104.437)	(8.895)	(113.332)	0.000	31.760	(81.572)

Reserve type and description

Capital Investment Reserves	The capital reserve is maintained to provide funding for the Council's capital / commercial investments and growth in Enterprise areas including Energy.
Business Transformation Reserves	Invest to save funds and feasibility funds for transformation programmes
Specific Risk Management Reserves	Risk Reserves Funds set aside to mitigate known risks not otherwise provided for including, contribute to costs of Waste contract, volatility in Housing Benefit Subsidy and uninsured risks.
Statutory/Ring-Fenced Reserves	Amounts required by statute or accounting code of practice to be set aside and ring-fenced for specific purposes, e.g. Public Health Reserve, City Deal Business Rate Pooling, Stoke Park Dowry.
Financing Reserves	Technical Financial Reserves - Includes PFI sinking fund, grant income carried forward in accordance with accounting regulations, including troubled families grant and resources set aside to match known contract liabilities,
Service Specific Reserves	Amounts set aside to finance specific projects or to meet known expenditure plans, including: - Bristol Futures - to provide new technology to improve public services - Development Fund primarily to fund Docks Asset Survey existing and proposed regeneration schemes - Election reserve for local elections
Legal Reserve	Funds set aside to commission advice and mitigate risks of potential litigation/claims.

Mayors Consultation Reserve Funds set aside to mitigate risks of delays to delivery of savings as a result of consultation outcomes

General Risk Reserve Funds set aside to mitigate risks aligning to risk register not specifically quantified

16.10. As set out in accordance with the policy on reserves, all forecasted balances to 31 March 2020 have been reviewed for their continuing need, alignment with council priorities and a risk assessment considering internal and external factors has been undertaken.

16.11. As a result this report proposed to redirect £1.2 million of earmarked reserves, detailed in the table below:

Reserve Name	Redirected Reserve £m	New Reserve £m	Net Movement £m
Business Risk Reserve (19/20 P4 Pressure)		(0.033)	(0.033)
New Funding Holder Reserve 2020/21		(1.145)	(1.145)
Risk Total	0.000	(1.178)	(1.178)
Bear Pit		(0.340)	(0.340)
Business Information Management Systems (BIMS)		(0.068)	(0.068)
Cems & Crems Renewals	0.459		0.459
City Centre Revitalisation		(0.150)	(0.150)
Deferred Payment agreement 1516 revenue grant	0.098		0.098
Development Fund		(0.382)	(0.382)
Economic strategy		(0.078)	(0.078)
Energy Budget	0.106		0.106
Highways Asset Management System	0.020		0.020
Housing Delivery	0.384		0.384
Housing Delivery Service Redesign	0.000		0.000
JSP & Local Plan record		(0.272)	(0.272)
Marketing Budget	0.000		0.000
Neighbourhood Partnerships	0.100		0.100
Parking Renewals a/c	0.041		0.041
Parks	0.325		0.325
Pest control - Gull Work	0.050		0.050
Place - Highways Services Agency Staff Funding	0.020		0.020
Pledges		(0.438)	(0.438)
Project Management		(0.250)	(0.250)
Transport	1.181		1.181
Service Total	2.783	(1.978)	0.805
Business Transformation Reserve	2.000		2.000
Key Line of Business Systems*		(2.000)	(2.000)
Business Transformation Total	2.000	(2.000)	0.000
Future Risk (saving consultation reserve)	0.340		0.340
Consultation reserve Total	0.340	0.000	0.340
Total Earmarked Reserve	5.123	(5.156)	(0.033)
General Reserves	0.033	0.000	0.033

16.12. During 2020/21 there is a planned contribution to reserves of £21.0m. This will be allocated to the areas as outlined below:

Reserve Name	Proposed Transfers in 20/21 £m	Proposed Transfers in 21/22 £m	Proposed Transfers in 22/23 £m
Capital Investment	(6.000)	(6.000)	(4.076)
Risk / Resilience	(3.252)	0.010	-
Serious violence and Contextual safeguarding	-	(1.500)	-
Docks Dredging	(0.095)	-	-
Adult Social Care Innovation Fund	(2.100)	(0.600)	-
Property Asset Management Plan	(0.500)	(0.500)	(0.500)
Climate Change Reserve	(3.000)	-	-
Sub-Total	(14.947)	(8.590)	(4.576)
General Reserves	(6.100)	0.000	0.000
Total	(21.047)	(8.590)	(4.576)
Financed by:			
One-off Funding 2020/21 Held in Reserves	13.807	2.590	0.500
Draw down Redirected Reserves	1.145	-	-
MRP Claw-back	6.000	6.000	4.076
Service Revenue Contribution	0.095	-	-
Total	21.047	8.590	4.576

16.13. The Council recently declared a climate emergency and the new climate change reserve has been proposed for tackling climate change and the damaging impact of air pollution.

16.14. The levels of General and Earmarked reserves recommended in this report for the financial year 2020/21 are believed to be sufficient to meet all of the Council's obligations, and have been based on a detailed risk assessment. The reserve limits will be reviewed on an annual basis against prevailing risk assessments which consider both internal and external factors.

17. CONSULTATION AND SCRUTINY INPUT

Internal consultation:

17.1. Development of the MTFP and budget has been reviewed and challenged by a Task and Finish Group of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Management Board from September to November 2019. The Resources Scrutiny commission considered the final budget proposals in meetings scheduled for 24 January 2020 and 6 February 2020.

17.2. Comments received from Overview and Scrutiny Management Board on any individual matter arising will be incorporated in this report for Full Council.

External consultation:

17.3. The consultation on the Council's 2020/21 budget was open for six weeks from 23 October 2018 until 4 December 2019. The consultation sought views about alternative options for the level of Council Tax increase and Social Care Precept in 2020/21, before

decisions on the 2020/21 budget are made by Full Council in February 2020.

17.4. The consultation was widely publicised through media, social media and communications with the public, including partner organisations, non-domestic rate payers and other stakeholders, a range of formats were available and utilised to boost response and individual responses were received and responses from organisations and individuals via email, suggestion boxes and at events.

17.5. The final report summarising the result is attached at Appendix 6.

17.6. The proposed budget contains propositions for increasing income and reducing costs. These proposals were included in previous consultations over the last three years.

Consultation Principles for New Proposals

17.7. The Mayor and the Cabinet are keen to listen to any ideas for generating efficiencies and increasing income. Where it has been identified that further public consultation is required in relation to a new initiative or specific implementation of an existing proposition the opportunity will be provided to discuss with the city the details of exactly how the proposal could be delivered within the approved cash limits.

17.8. Principles:

- Where specific consultation is still considered necessary, Full Council will set the service cash limit but will not make decisions on operation issues within the service budget.
- Decision (and consultation) in respect of detailed operational proposals are a matter for Cabinet.
- Following Full Council, Cabinet will decide how best to allocate funds within the designated cash limits. When making decisions on specific proposals within budget lines it will take into consideration consultation responses and Equalities Impact Assessments where needed, fully recognising the constraints on any departure from the Council's budget / financial plan.
- Services should ensure consultation is undertaken on defined proposals, giving consultees enough time and information to respond properly and that responses are taken into account. Informal engagement at a formative stage of proposals can also be beneficial.

18. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

18.1. Throughout the budget process, large number options are proposed and assessed in terms of opportunities, pressures, income generation, investments and risks. All of which need to be considered in the context of a balanced budget and appropriate level of reserves. This is a complex process with many iterations and possibilities too numerous to present as discrete options. This report presents the final overall package of detailed proposals, which together seek to balance the delivery of our strategic priorities and statutory and regulatory duties.

19. PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTIES

19.1. As part of this decision making process, the Public Sector Equality Duty Decision requires council staff and elected members to consider what will be the impact on people with protected characteristics, whether in the wider city or in our own organisation. We need

to understand who will be affected, how will they be affected and where possible, how to minimise unintended negative consequences by planning in mitigations from the start.

19.2. This report sets out the Mayor's budget proposals for Full Council to set the budget. Specific decisions made within the overall budget set by Full Council may require a relevance check and, where it is indicated as needed by the relevance check, a full Equalities Impact.

20. RESOURCE AND LEGAL IMPLICATONS

a. Finance Implications:

The Council's financial position has been set out in this report. Council is under a legal obligation (Local Government Finance Act 1992) to set a balanced budget and in doing so they are obliged, under normal administrative principles, to take into account the various relevant factors, particularly in respect of consultation and equalities.

Members are entitled to exercise their political judgement, paying due regard to the relevant factors rather than being absolutely determined by them.

The budget report sets out a comprehensive picture of the Council's finances over the short and medium term to assist in the decision making process in setting the 2020/21 budget and the forward look for the Council.

In considering the budget report, the following key considerations should be highlighted in particular:

- The extent to which the service overspends in 2019/20 is recurrent and may present a risk in 2020/21, requiring further budget provision of efficiencies to be agreed in-year.
- Effective governance arrangements to monitor and report the overall delivery of the 2020/21 budget.

Provisions have been made in the budget for risks and the budget proposed is realistic and affordable, albeit challenging.

The increases in council tax as set out in this report, if agreed in this and subsequent years will generate additional revenue over time, which will facilitate the sustainable delivery of key services. If agreed, this budget would provide for affordable services in 2020/21 to 2024/25, however this may be impacted by the outcome of the Spending Review and other changes in Local Government Finance.

Advice given by: Michael Pilcher, Chief Accountant 14/02/2020

b. Legal implications:

Approval of a balanced budget each year is a statutory responsibility of Full Council (Local Government Finance Act 1972).

Full Council 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 (Local Government Act 2003).

When considering the Budget proposed by the Mayor, Members must bear in mind their fiduciary duty to the council taxpayers of Bristol. Members must have adequate evidence on which to base their decisions and must satisfy themselves that sufficient mechanisms are in place to ensure both that any savings are delivered and that new expenditure is contained within the available resources.

Public consultation has taken place in relation to the level of Council tax to be set in 2020/21. In doing so the Council has satisfied its statutory duty to consult with non-domestic rate payers (S65 Local Government Finance Act 1992).

Responses to the consultation must be taken into account by Full Council when setting the budget. Full Council should also be satisfied that a proper consultation has taken place in that consultation was undertaken when proposals were at a formative stage and sufficient reasons and time has been given to allow consultees to understand and respond to them properly.

The appendices to the report set out the process that was undertaken and how responses have been taken in to consideration by officers when developing proposals for final decision.

The report sets out the consultation process to be undertaken relation to any relevant operational decisions required to be made by Cabinet within the service budgets set by Full Council.

The Public Sector Equality duty requires Full Council to consider the need to promote equality for persons with “protected characteristics” and to have due regard to the need to i) eliminate discrimination, harassment, and victimisation; ii) advance equality of opportunity; and iii) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it.

The Equalities Relevance Check is designed to assess whether there are any barriers in place that may prevent people with a protected characteristic using a service or benefiting from a policy. Full Council must take into consideration the information in the check before taking the decision.

Advice given by: Nancy Rollason, Head of Legal Services 14/02/2020

c. Human resources implications:

The budget proposals for 2020/21 do not include a requirement for workforce reductions. They include provision for national pay settlements for 2020/21. It should be noted that the pay settlement for 2020/21 has not been agreed for employees covered by the Local Government national agreement which covers the vast majority of the workforce. If the final pay settlement exceeds the provision, there will be a need to consider mitigating measures.

Some workforce reductions may arise in service areas through service redesign but these are not anticipated to be significant. Any requirement for redundancies will be mitigated through pro-active vacancy management and redeployment. Service managers will consult with employees and trade unions in accordance with agreed HR policies. As an employer, the City Council is under an obligation to avoid redundancies and will use its best endeavors to avoid any job losses.

Advice given by Mark Williams, Head of Human Resources 14/02/2020.