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DIRECTOR OF STRATEGY,
PERFORMANCE AND
GOVERNANCE'S OFFICE
DIRECTOR OF STRATEGY, PERFORMANCE
AND GOVERNANCE
Paul Dodson

08 July 2020

Dear Councillor

You are summoned to attend the meeting of the;

COUNCIL

on **THURSDAY 16 JULY 2020** at 1.00 pm.

Please note that this will be a **remote meeting** – Members to access the meeting via Microsoft Teams. Members of the press and public may listen to the live stream on the Council's website

<https://democracy.maldon.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=130&MIId=2142>.

A copy of the agenda is attached.

Yours faithfully



Director of Strategy, Performance and Governance

Please note: Electronic copies of this agenda and its related papers
are available via the Council's website www.maldon.gov.uk.

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AGENDA COUNCIL

THURSDAY 16 JULY 2020

1. **Chairman's notices**
2. **Apologies for Absence**
3. **Declaration of Interest**

To disclose the existence and nature of any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests, other Pecuniary Interests or Non-Pecuniary Interests relating to items of business on the agenda having regard to paragraphs 6 - 8 inclusive of the Code of Conduct for Members.

(Members are reminded that they are also required to disclose any such interests as soon as they become aware should the need arise throughout the meeting).

4. **Minutes - 2 July 2020** (Pages 7 - 16)

To confirm the Minutes of the council meeting held on 2 July 2020 (copy enclosed).

5. **Public Questions**

To receive questions from members of the public, of which prior notification in writing has been received (no later than noon two clear working days before the day of the Council meeting).

Should you wish to submit a question please complete the online form at www.maldon.gov.uk/publicparticipation.

6. **Chairman's Announcements**

7. **Minute Book**

To consider the Minutes of the under mentioned Committees (copy to follow).

* Please note that where Minutes contain recommendations to the Council the Minute reference for these recommendations are listed below for Members' information.

- a) **Performance, Governance and Audit Committee - 25 June 2020** (To Follow)

8. **Minutes of Meetings of the Council**

To note that since the last Council, up until Wednesday 8 July 2020 (Council agenda dispatch) the following Committees have met, and to receive any questions in accordance with Council and Committee Procedure Rule 6 (2).

Minutes NOT finalised for publication:

North Western Area Planning Committee	1 July 2020
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9. **Questions in accordance with Procedure Rule 6(3) of which notice has been given**

10. **Draft Lower High Street Action Plan - Endorsement by the Council following Business and Stakeholder Review and COVID-19 Re-set and Recovery Response**
(Pages 17 - 48)

To consider the report of the Director of Strategy, Performance and Governance (copy enclosed).

11. **Bradwell Development Plan Document - Housing** (Pages 49 - 60)

To consider the report of the Director of Strategy, Performance and Governance, (copy enclosed).

12. **Appointment to Vacant Seats on Committee** (Pages 61 - 62)

To consider the report of the Director of Strategy, Performance and Governance (copy enclosed).

13. **Medium Term Financial Strategy** (Pages 63 - 98)

To consider the report of the Director of Resources, (copy enclosed).

14. **COVID-19 - Reset and Recovery Member Working Group** (Pages 99 - 102)

To consider the report of the Director of Strategy, Performance and Governance, (copy enclosed).

15. **Council Constitution - Addition to Officer Scheme of Delegation - Pavement Licences** (Pages 103 - 104)

To consider the report of the Director of Service Delivery, (copy enclosed).

16. **Questions to the Leader of the Council in accordance with Procedure Rule 1 (3)(m)**

17. **Business by reason of special circumstances considered by the Chairman to be urgent**

18. **Exclusion of the Public and Press**

To resolve that under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act, and that this satisfies the public interest test.

19. **Leisure Contract** (To Follow)

To consider the report of the Leisure Contract Member Task and Finish Working Group following its meeting on Friday 10 July 2020, (copy to follow by 15 July 2020).

NOTICES

Sound Recording of Meeting

Please note that the Council will be recording and publishing on the Council's website any part of this meeting held in open session. At the start of the meeting an announcement will be made about the recording.

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**MINUTES of
COUNCIL
2 JULY 2020**

PRESENT

Chairman	Councillor R G Boyce MBE
Vice-Chairman	Councillor Mrs P A Channer, CC
Councillors	E L Bamford, Miss A M Beale, B S Beale MBE, M G Bassenger, M F L Durham, CC, M R Edwards, Mrs J L Fleming, A S Fluker, B E Harker, M S Heard, M W Helm, A L Hull, K W Jarvis, J V Keyes, K M H Lagan, C Mayes, C P Morley, C Morris, S P Nunn, N G F Shaughnessy, R H Siddall, W Stamp, Mrs J C Stilts, C Swain, Mrs M E Thompson and Miss S White

1. CHAIRMAN'S NOTICES

The Chairman welcomed everyone to this remote meeting of the Maldon District Council, held under new regulations which had come into effect in response to the COVID-19 situation. The Chairman then went through some general housekeeping arrangements for the meeting.

A roll call of those Members present was taken.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies of absence were received from Councillors V J Bell, R P F Dewick and N J Skeens. It was noted the Councillor M F L Durham would be joining the meeting a little late.

3. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor M F L Durham joined the meeting at this point.

Councillor Mrs P A Channer declared a non-pecuniary interest as a member of Essex County Council on any matter on the agenda which referred to the County Council, specifically Agenda Item 8 – Adoption of Air Quality Action Plan 2020 – 2025 as this had been done in conjunction with the County Council.

Councillor A S Fluker declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 12 – River Patrols and Enforcement as he was a Maldon Harbour Improvement Commissioner and sailed regularly on the River Blackwater.

Councillor C Mayes declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 8 – Adoption of Air Quality Action Plan 2020 – 2025 as she sat on the Working Group and was a Ward Member for Maldon North.

Councillor Durham apologised for arriving late and declared a non-pecuniary interest as a member of Essex County Council on any matter on the agenda which referred to the County Council, specifically Agenda Item 8 – Adoption of Air Quality Action Plan 2020 – 2025 as this had been done in conjunction with the County Council.

4. MINUTES - 23 JUNE 2020

Councillor Miss S White joined the meeting during this item of business.

RESOLVED

- (i) that the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 23 June 2020 be received.

Declaration of Interest

Councillor Mrs P A Channer advised that her declaration was incorrectly Minuted and it was agreed that this be amended to “...Consultation as *the consultation document highlighted an area (with a large circle) which included part of the village of Althorne and although her property fell outside of this having sought...*”. This amendment was noted.

Notice of Motion

Councillor M S Heard advised that in respect of Motion 2 he had spoken about this being amended to read the Council weighs the overall political control of the Joint Standards Committee. This was noted.

RESOLVED

- (ii) that subject to the above amendment the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 23 June 2020 be agreed.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

In accordance with Procedure Rule 1(3)(e) and the Council’s Public Question Time and Participation at Council and Committee Meetings Scheme, the Chairman of the Council referred to four questions from Judy Lea on behalf of the Maldon Society of which prior notification had been given. A copy of the questions and the prepared response from the Leader of the Council was circulated prior to the meeting.

We understand that the whole of the Local Development Plan has only one policy reference to a new nuclear power station (confirmed by Director Paul Dodson via email on 28th April this year). Embedded in Policy D4 there is the statement “The council will strongly support the principle of the development of a new nuclear power station at Bradwell-on-Sea”.

Our question is in four related parts:

- a) Can the Council please now make widely available and easily accessible the detailed arguments and supportive evidence upon which this policy was founded?

Response:

The documentation on the preparation of the Renewable Energy and Low Carbon policy is already a matter of public record and is available on the council's website:

https://www.maldon.gov.uk/info/20048/planning_policy/9163/local_development_plan_supporting_documents

From here, the documents that have informed the development of the District's renewable energy and low carbon policy can be inspected, including the consultation documents and Committee Reports.

The policy was considered by the Planning Inspectorate during the Examination in Public between 2016-2017 an Inspector's Report was issued detailing his considerations for alterations to Policy D2.

- b) The need for a new station is determined by national government, but that policy is now well overdue for reassessment. Since calculations were made in support of the current national policy there have been enormous changes to both the means of electricity supply and storage, and the consumer demand for it. For example, even pre virus, there has been a 37% drop in electricity consumption below the government prediction. Amongst many other factors which have changed are the increased political awareness of the dangers of relying on China, the reduced costs of green energy, and the knowledge extreme weather events are becoming more frequent. Does the District Council therefore now consider it wise to suspend its unequivocal support for the new station until its place in national government policy has been properly reassessed and the need reaffirmed?

Response:

Whilst the Council may choose to now advise it no longer supports the new station (by a Motion for example), in 2017 it adopted the Local Development Plan which advises that the statutory policy position of the Council is different. The policy has statutory weight in decision-making and the Council cannot just withdraw aspects of policies it no longer supports when it is inclined to. The Council may feel that is inclined to change its position based on evidence and judgement, but I can only see that it can do that in two ways:

- i. *by completing a full / partial review of the Local Development Plan, submit it to the Government and be advised by a Planning Inspector that it is legal, sound and can be adopted – which would take at least 3 years to pass through all legal stages; or*
- ii. *By notifying the Government it intends to withdraw the whole Local Development Plan – this would result in a policy vacuum and would mean the Council has very little influence over any other type of development or land management in the District. The Council would also then be on the radar of the Government for not having an up to date Local Plan and could face intervention or some planning powers being withdrawn.*

- c) In the light of the greater knowledge now circulating about the potential practical implications of the district's own policy (as evidenced for example in the BRB public consultation documentation and its evident omissions (such as power distribution infrastructure), is support by a majority of current members really still wholly unqualified and 'strong'?

Response:

As set out in in the LDP, Policy D4 "The council will strongly support the principle of the development of a new nuclear power station at Bradwell-on-Sea". This is current policy until such time as the LDP be withdrawn or amended as set out above in point b).

- d) Since the construction of the proposed station and its varied associated works (such as roads, piers, commuting traffic, staff accommodation etc.) is the largest single development affecting the District, likely to affect in one way or another the whole of the district (as well as many people beyond its borders), we therefore also ask that any MDC voting processes concerning Bradwell BRB now and in the future be by named vote please, in order that constituents are aware of the view of their elected representative.

Response:

In accordance with the Council constitution in rule 13(3) members can request a recorded vote on any motion providing that is seconded.

The Leader of the Council advised of a typographical error in paragraph 3.1 a) of his response, this was duly corrected. Having read his responses to the questions submitted, the Leader of the Council advised the Maldon Society that the Council was happy to engage with them on any matter and should they require any information to write to the Director of Strategy, Performance and Governance.

6. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were none.

7. QUESTIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH PROCEDURE RULE 6(3) OF WHICH NOTICE HAS BEEN GIVEN

There were none.

8. ADOPTION OF AIR QUALITY ACTION PLAN 2020 - 2025

The Council considered the report of the Director of Service Delivery presenting the Air Quality Action Plan 2020 – 2025 (AQAP) (attached as Appendix 1 to the report) for approval. It was noted that the AQAP set out the measures the Council was intending to take to improve air quality in the District between 2020 and 2025. A source apportionment study and further modelling studies were attached as Appendices 2 and 3 to the report.

The report provided detailed background information regarding the creation of the AQAP and Members were informed that the proposed plan had been approved by the Department for Environment, Fisheries and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). The AQAP also sought to address the requirements under part IV of the Environment Act 1995 whereby once an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) had been declared, as had been for Market Hill in 2018, a Local Authority must produce an AQAP. The report outlined the detailed consultation process that had been undertaken as part of these requirements and it was noted that any significant amendments to the AQAP would require further consultation.

The Leader of the Council thanked Tracy Farrell, Environmental Health Officer, Tim Savage from Chelmsford City Council and the Working Group for the enormous work they had done in relation to the AQMA. The Leader drew Members' attention to the amendment to the Clean Air Zone as requested by DEFRA and advised this was not considered to be a significant change. He then handed over to the Environmental Health Officer who presented the report to the Council.

The Leader of the Council proposed that the Council adopt the Air Quality Action Plan 2020 / 2025 and move forward with the Essex County Council Transport Strategy. This proposal was duly seconded.

Councillor Mrs P A Channer referred to a typographical error within page (ii) of the AQAP, advising that Ward Member should be written with capital letters at the start of each word. She declared that she was the County Councillor for the division of Maldon and also thanked Officers for their work on the AQAP.

Councillor S P Nunn asked that it be Minuted that despite Market Hill being in his and Councillor C Mayes Ward they had only joined the Working Group at its last meeting (24 June 2020) and as such had limited input into the paper. He advised that both Ward Members continued to receive feedback from residents and how it was important to have a clear communications strategy which targeted the residents of Market Hill.

Other Members of the Council expressed thanks to Officers and commented on the AQAP raising a number of points including:

- Tying the AQAP into the work being undertaken on Maldon High Street in response to COVID-19.
- A number of suggestions were made in relation to the Transport Strategy including park and ride sites and possible measures and improvements that could be brought forward in relation to Market Hill.

In response, the Environmental Health Officer reassured Members that there was a lot of ongoing monitoring taking place to support any further works required.

The Leader of Council thanked Members for their comments and advised that following the last meeting of the Working Group the Council was working to provide communications to all residents of Market Hill to keep them up to date and informed of all works on Market Hill.

The Chairman then put the proposal in the name of the Leader of the council and upon a vote being taken this was declared carried.

RESOVLED that the Air Quality Action Plan 2020 - 2025 (attached as Appendix 1 to the report) be adopted.

9. HUMAN RESOURCES POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The Council considered the report of the Director of Resources, presenting the following revised policies and procedures for approval.

- Parental Bereavement Leave Policy and Procedure
- Job Evaluation (HAY) Policy and Procedure

The policies were attached as Appendices to the report and it was noted that they had been amended to take account of legislative and Maldon District Council (MDC) changes. The report provided an outline of the changes that had been made to the policies.

The Leader of the Council proposed that the recommendations as set out in the report be agreed. This was duly seconded.

In response to a question regarding the use of the HAY system for Job Evaluation, the Director of Resources clarified that the Council had always used HAY and the revisions to the Policy and Procedure were to update them to reflect the Council's new structure.

The Chairman then put the proposal in the name of the Leader of the Council and upon a vote being taken this was agreed.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the new Parental Bereavement Leave Policy and Procedure (attached at Appendix 1 to the report) is approved; and
- (ii) That the revised Job Evaluation (HAY) Policy and Procedure, (attached at Appendix 2 to the report) is approved.

10. HUMAN RESOURCES STATISTICAL REPORTING CHANGE

The Council considered the report of the Director of Resources seeking approval to change the requirement to report Quarterly Human Resource (HR) statistics to the Strategy and Resources Committee.

The report outlined the original requirement for quarterly reporting, the work that had been undertaken since then to address concerns and the improvements made to the Council's overall HR statistics. Members were advised of the measures in place for management key performance indicators and that any significant variances would be reported to the Strategy and Resources Committee. As a result it was suggested that the requirement for quarterly report be removed.

The Leader of the Council referred to staff welfare always being an important issue and taken very seriously by Members. He then proposed that the Council did not accept the recommendations as set out in the report and proposed that:

- (i) all staff statistics including a summary of exit interviews be reported to the Performance, Governance and Audit (PGA) Committee on a quarterly basis;
- (ii) the process of analysing staff sickness is reported to the PGA Committee;
- (iii) the Terms of Reference of the PGA Committee are updated accordingly.

This proposal was duly seconded.

A discussion then took place regarding whether the PGA Committee was the correct Committee to receive the statistical information. In response the Leader of the Council withdrew his proposed recommendation (iii) replacing it with a proposal that the Terms of Reference of the Strategy and Resources (S&R) Committee be updated. At this point the Lead Legal Specialist and Monitoring Officer provided some further clarification and how was important to avoid having two Committees dealing with the same issue. Further discussion ensued regarding whether review of the statistics should be considered by the PGA or S&R Committee.

The Chairman referred Members to the S&R Committee Terms of Reference and read out the specific term relating to HR statistics. In response to the discussion, the Lead Legal Specialist and Monitoring Officer suggested that a report be brought to a subsequent Council meeting to address the issue regarding the Terms of Reference and the remit of each Committee.

The Leader of the Council withdrew his earlier proposition and proposed that:

- (i) all staff statistics including exit interviews be reported to the relevant Committee on a quarterly basis;
- (ii) the Corporate Governance Working Group be asked to review the consideration of Human Resources statistics and report back to the Council for decision as to which Committee the statistic reports sit within.

This proposal was duly seconded and agreed.

RESOLVED

- (i) all staff statistics including exit interviews be reported to the relevant Committee on a quarterly basis;
- (ii) the Corporate Governance Working Group be asked to review the consideration of Human Resources statistics and report back to the Council for decision as to which Committee the statistic reports sit within.

11. SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES, VIREMENTS AND USE OF RESERVES - 1 OCTOBER 2019 - 31 MAY 2020

The Council considered the report of the Director of Resources, reporting virements and supplementary estimates agreed under delegated powers and procurement exemptions granted.

Members were advised that there had been four Supplementary Revenue Estimates approved during the period relating to:

- Topple testing at cemeteries;
- Heybridge Basin Capita work;
- Legal services – external legal fees;
- Planning Policy – subscriptions.

There had been no procurement exemptions and one drawdown from the Local Development Plan (LDP) reserve in relation to LDP activities.

The Leader of the Council proposed that the recommendation as set out in the report be agreed,

It was noted that within the table at paragraph 3.3.1 of the report item 3 Legal Services – external legal fees contained an error and reference to 03/03/03 required amendment to 02/03/20.

The Chairman put the proposal in the name of the Leader of the Council and this was duly agreed.

RESOLVED that subject to the above amendment, the Supplementary Revenue Estimates and Drawdown of Reserves as set out in paragraphs 3.3.1 and 3.5.1 of the report, be noted.

12. RIVER PATROLS AND ENFORCEMENT

The Council considered the report of the Director of Service Delivery seeking approval to finalise and enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the purpose of improved enforcement presence and action on the River Blackwater, subject to the provision and insurance of a single Personal Water Craft (PWC) by Maldon District Council (MDC). The report also sought approval of a revision to the Capital budget request approved by the Council in February 2020 from £40,000 to £17,000.

It was noted that the Council was responsible for ensuring that the bylaws relating to the tidal River Blackwater were enforced. The report provided further detail regarding this, the arrangements the Council currently has for discharging these and the equipment used.

The Leader of the Council advised that there had been some questions regarding whether the proposed partnership should be a Service Level Agreement (SLA) or MoU and explained that because it was non-financial (i.e. the Council was not paying the Police to provide a service) that a MoU was a better term of agreement. The MoU allowed for both parties to work together for mutual benefit.

The River Bailiff provided the Council with further details of the proposal and explained that as part of the partnership working there would be a dedicated Police Officer for the River Blackwater who could provide a targeted response and he highlighted the resources that had been offered as part of this. In response to a question the Officer advised that the PWC would be based either at Burnham-on-Crouch or Boreham and in respect of training, all Officers would need to meet the police and any national criteria to use the boat. Members were advised that all monies relating to

bylaws went to the Crown, the main holders of the legislation, however the Council could include that costs were awarded to the Council. Information regarding response times was provided and how use of other resources such as land assets could reduce response times.

The Leader of the Council proposed that the recommendations as set out in the report be agreed and the Council moved forward quickly to deal with anti-social behaviour and speeding vessels on the River. This was duly seconded and agreed.

RESOLVED

- (i) That principle of a River enforcement partnership through means of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Essex Police; for an initial three year period, followed by a gateway review and scope to renew for a further two year period be agreed;
- (ii) That the Capital Budget be revised and approved for £17,000 to procure a single Personal Water Craft which Maldon District Council will provide as part of the future MoU with Essex Police for Patrols and Enforcement upon the River Blackwater.

13. AMENDMENT TO MINUTES

The Leader of the Council proposed that amendment to the Council Minutes as set out on the agenda be agreed. This was duly seconded and agreed.

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 21 November 2019 be amended as follows:

Minute 562 – Appointment of Members to Service on Working Groups of the Council:
Second paragraph of this Minute to be amended to read:

The Leader of the Council proposed that the recommendation as set out in the report be agreed, subject to an amendment to amend the membership of the Corporate **Projects Member Task and Finish** Working Group to:

- Councillors Mrs P A Channer, A S Fluker, B E Harker, R H Siddall and **Mrs M E Thompson.**

14. QUESTIONS TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL IN ACCORDANCE WITH PROCEDURE RULE 1 (3)(M)

Councillor C Morris asked the Leader of the Council if a previous Joint Standards Committee decision was decided to be predetermined would those Councillors step down from all Committees. The Leader responded advising that a report was coming to the next Council meeting regarding Joint Standards Committee where all comments would be considered.

15. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED that under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act, and that this satisfies the public interest test.

At this point the Chairman thanked members of the public for joining the meeting and confirmed that the live stream was now turned off.

16. LEISURE CONTRACT

The Council the report of the Director of Service Delivery advising Members of the current position with the Leisure Contract and seeking authorisation to negotiate a change in the contract terms to deal with the impact of COVID-19.

The Leader of the Council provided the Council with an update following the recent meeting of the Leisure Contract Working Group and that Councillor K W Jarvis had been appointed chairman of the Working Group. The Council were informed that the Working Group had requested additional information and was due to meet again the following week. In light of this, the Leader asked Members to note the report and proposed that recommendations (i) and (ii) as set out in the report not be agreed and that recommendation (iii) be amended as follows:

That an update report be brought to the meeting of the Council on 16 July 2020
~~dependant on the progress with the negotiations.~~

This was duly seconded.

Following some discussion the Chairman put the Leader's proposal which was duly agreed.

RESOLVED that an update report on the Leisure Contract be brought to the meeting of the Council on 16 July 2020.

There being no further items of business the Chairman closed the meeting at 2.24 pm.

R G BOYCE MBE
CHAIRMAN



**REPORT of
DIRECTOR OF STRATEGY, PERFORMANCE AND GOVERNANCE**

**to
COUNCIL
16 JULY 2020**

**DRAFT LOWER HIGH STREET ACTION PLAN - ENDORSEMENT BY THE
COUNCIL FOLLOWING BUSINESS AND STAKEHOLDER REVIEW AND COVID-
19 RE-SET AND RECOVERY RESPONSE**

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To present the findings of the comments received through business and stakeholder review.
- 1.2 To outline the proposed amendment to the draft Lower High Street Action Plan following business and stakeholder review.
- 1.3 To outline a further amendment based on the Covid-19 Reset and Recovery Response.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- (i) That the Council approves the proposed amendment to the draft Lower High Street Action Plan following business and stakeholder review and the Covid-19 Reset and Recovery Response;
- (ii) That the Council endorses of the Lower High Street Action Plan;
- (iii) That two Council Members be appointed to sit on the Maldon High Street Focus Group.

3. SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 Project 2 Lower High Street Improvements is one of eighteen projects in the Maldon and Heybridge Central Area Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (the Masterplan), supplementing Policy S5, Local Development Plan (LDP). Policy S5 seeks to sustain the market town focus of Maldon's High Street and support 'regeneration and diversification in the town centre (including the evening economy), encourage sustainable travel and to 'improve the retail offer' and 'increase footfall' at the Lower High Street (Wantz Road / Butt Lane to Church Street). The Covid-19 Reset and Recovery Response for the High Street, echoes the overarching Masterplan approach to support businesses to re-open safely; to minimise travel and shop locally and encourage the public to walk or cycle to the High Street, by making it safe to do so.

- 3.2 All Masterplan projects are managed through Project Management Organisation (PMO) and the Masterplan Priority Programme. Project 2 Lower High Street Improvements is Priority 1 in the Masterplan Priority Programme. Progress on the draft Lower High Street Action Plan (**APPENDIX 1**) has been reported to the Planning and Licensing Committee on 7 March 2019 (Minute No. 933 refers) and 5 September 2019 (Minute No. 366 refers) via six-monthly Masterplan updates on 'active' Masterplan projects. This report was deferred from the 2 April 2020 Strategy and Resources Committee until there could be a better understanding of the economic impact of Covid-19 on the High Street and that Members were fully engaged in discussions where the Lower High Street (LHS) Action Plan (AP) may need further amendment.
- 3.3 The Masterplan Project 2 Lower High Street Improvements is a short-term project (1-5 years) to prepare an Action Plan to encourage investment in the quality of the environment; the type and quality of retail activity; a food and drink offer and improving the evening economy. The Lower High Street is identified in the Masterplan as the pivotal link from the Upper (West Square to Market Hill) and Middle (Market Hill to Wantz Road) retail sections of the High Street, linking the High Street with the events and visitor attractions at Hythe Quay and Promenade Park. The draft Lower High Street Action Plan has been prepared by Strategy Theme Lead - Place, in accordance with LDP Policy S5 and the overarching Masterplan objectives. Since the Masterplan was adopted by the Council in November 2017, there has been a national downturn in retail premises on High Streets.
- 3.4 Business engagement commenced in November 2018 with presentations and meetings with local business groups, individual businesses and employers and local groups and societies. A specific workshop was held with local businesses, local groups and stakeholders through the 'Maldon Business Hub', an established local business group, at their meeting on 27 February 2019 to propose 'actions' that the business community, the Council and its partners could take forward to improve and enhance the Lower High Street. The ideas, suggestions and comments are at Section 5, **APPENDIX 1**. The presentations, meetings and workshops were informed of the wider town centre challenges, including declaration of an Air Quality Management Area on Market Hill and the national picture for declining retail through the Future High Streets Fund Guidance and the Government's Future High Street Task Force. The Future High Street Task Force has extensive resources focussed on making town centres more vital and viable and are supporting towns respond to Covid-19.
- 3.5 The draft Lower High Street Action Plan is at Section 9, **APPENDIX 1** and has seven Actions (LHS1 – LHS7) to realise the potential of the Lower High Street to contribute to the Masterplan objectives to sustain the vitality and vibrancy of the whole High Street, supporting the Market Town focus of Maldon and encouraging a diverse town centre economy, including the evening economy and promotion of visitor attractions and the visitor economy. Whilst the visitor economy has been suspended, the Covid-19 Reset and Recovery Response instil the same 'actions' with the added considerations for safety and maintaining a 'town centre' offer for the community.
- 3.6 The seven Actions within the draft Lower High Street Action Plan (draft LHS AP) were reviewed by businesses and stakeholders via a digital survey prepared by Strategy Theme Lead, Prosperity during 13 November 2019 and 20 December 2019. Five responses were received from anonymous individuals (to the digital survey),

named individuals and local groups via e-mailed responses. The respondents are set out in **APPENDIX 2**.

- 3.7 The salient points from the five responses have been logged and considered against the 7 draft Actions in the draft LHS AP, the objectives of the Masterplan and the overarching Strategic Policy S5 and are set out in **APPENDIX 2**.
- 3.8 One amendment is proposed to Action LHS1 as a tracked change to **APPENDIX 1** (Section 9, Page 16) ensuring the proposed Maldon High Street Focus Group is a partnership group with its own Terms of Reference working for the best interests of the High Street and supported by the Council's adopted LDP Strategic Policy S5, the delivery of Masterplan SPD project and the Corporate Outcome 'to engage efficiently and effectively with businesses'. This group will be wider than businesses and will include representatives of Maldon District Council, Maldon Town Council, businesses and community groups.
- 3.9 A pre-launch of the draft Lower High Street Action Plan was presented to businesses and stakeholders by the Strategy Theme Lead Place at the Maldon Business Hub meeting on Wednesday 19 February 2020. The businesses and stakeholders support the seven Actions in the draft Lower High Street Action Plan with a strong appetite for involvement, change and opportunity for the High Street to achieve the seven Actions as a partnership going forward.
- 3.10 The response to Covid-19 for the High Street re-opening has galvanised the local business and community response working at District and County levels. The draft Lower High Street Action Plan promotes the partnership working to continue to deal with the Covid-19 response, recover the local economy and achieve the overarching Masterplan and Policy S5 objectives to ensure a vibrant and vital town centre moving forward. The Council will lead the Maldon High Street Focus Group as per LHS Action 1.

4. CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 The seven Actions within the draft Lower High Street Action Plan have been tested against LDP Policy, the Masterplan objectives and the outcomes in the Corporate Plan 2019-2021 followed by business and stakeholder review during 13 November 2019 and 20 December 2019. The response to Covid-19 and re-opening the High Street has engaged business and community groups at a local level to ensure safe social distancing and to encourage safe walking and cycling on the High Street.
- 4.2 The draft Lower High Street Action Plan will galvanise business groups, individual businesses and stakeholders to take ownership of the challenges on the High Street as a collective group. The Maldon High Street Focus Group (Action LHS1) will be led by the District Council and include High Street businesses, business groups, local amenity groups, statutory consultees and Town and District Councils to work together to address the challenges and opportunities identified in the Town Centre and on the High Street.

5. IMPACT ON STRATEGIC THEMES

- 5.1 The adopted LDP and Maldon and Heybridge Central Area Masterplan SPD support the Strategic Theme of Prosperity as set out in the Corporate Plan to engage efficiently and effectively with businesses.
- 5.2 The adopted LDP and Maldon and Heybridge Central Area Masterplan SPD support the Strategic Theme of Place as set out in the Corporate Plan for sustainable growth and new infrastructure.

6. IMPLICATIONS

- (i) **Impact on Customers** – The Masterplan Project 2 will deliver tangible results in the Masterplan area. Communication through business and stakeholder review provides effective communication to communities, businesses and stakeholders to be involved and influence change.
- (ii) **Impact on Equalities** – None identified.
- (iii) **Impact on Risk** – Progression of Masterplan Project 2 has been managed effectively and reported to relevant Committees through Corporate Performance.
- (iv) **Impact on Resources (financial and human)** – Delivery of the Masterplan projects is programmed to internal work streams and work plans. The Masterplan SPD underpins adopted strategic policy direction and consequent opportunities for funding.
- (v) **Impact on the Environment** – The Masterplan projects promote sustainable development and environmental enhancement.
- (vi) **Impact on Strengthening Communities** – The Masterplan Project 2 has galvanised support in the business community and local community groups.

Background Papers:

Maldon District Local Development Plan (2014-2029) www.maldon.gov.uk/ldp
Maldon and Heybridge Central Area Masterplan SPD 2017 www.maldon.gov.uk/SPD
Report to the Planning and Licensing Committee 5 September 2019

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DRAFT

ACTION PLAN

LOWER HIGH STREET IMPROVEMENTS, MALDON

Including an 'Area Strategy' for the town centre



Maldon and Heybridge Central Area Masterplan SPD

Project 2 Lower High Street Improvements

Autumn 2019

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 A development and regeneration strategy for the Maldon and Heybridge Central Area ['Central Area'] is set out in the Maldon and Heybridge Central Area Masterplan SPD ['the Masterplan'] adopted November 2017. The objectives for the Central Area emerge directly from policy and have been refined by stakeholder input. The Masterplan has 18 key projects and a project priority programme to deliver economic growth and environmental enhancements over the next 10 years to 2029.
- 1.2 *Maldon Central* is one of 3 sub-areas in the Masterplan area focussing on the retail function of the High Street. The Masterplan promotes Maldon's town centre as a 'market town' that serves a wide catchment area. The Lower High Street has the potential for improvement as it has lower footfall and the retail offer is not as vibrant as the middle and upper sections. The Lower High Street is a pivotal connecting point between the popular Hythe Quay and Promenade Park area with the High St.
- 1.3 The Masterplan Project 2 '*Lower High Street Improvements*' is a short-term project (1-5 years) to prepare an Action Plan to encourage investment in the quality of the environment; the type and quality of retail activity; a food and drink offer and improving the evening economy. In effect, responding to the Policy S5, LDP requirement for '*regeneration and diversification*' in the town centre.
- 1.4 This Action Plan is the result of working collaboratively with local businesses, local groups and key stakeholders to propose actions that the business community, the Council and its partners could take forward to enhance and improve the Lower High Street. It aligns with Policy S5 objectives, wider town centre challenges and communicates actions to stakeholders.
- 1.5 The Action Plan intervenes to advance the local economy, enhance the public realm and improve signage and wayfinding to tackle changing consumer habits affecting footfall and allowing the Lower High Street to diversify, adapt and revive to improve its offer.
- 1.6 A wider 'Area Strategy' is included for the town centre to meet other challenges: to keep it viable and vital as expressed in national policy; to address an air quality management area that may have implications for traffic flows; and monitoring the impact of out of centre retail parks and supermarkets on the High Street.

2 Lower High Street Defined Area

- 2.1 The preparation of this Action Plan has considered previous stakeholder engagement and public consultation through the masterplanning process including the 'Area Strategies' within *Intermediate Study*, Allies and Morrison, 2014, the 'Options Workshop' in June 2016 for the final Masterplan and the Masterplan public consultation for 6 weeks during March and April 2017.
- 2.2 The Masterplan sets out the Lower High Street area in terms of environmental enhancements, gateway locations and public realm improvements to increase footfall and improve the retail offer:

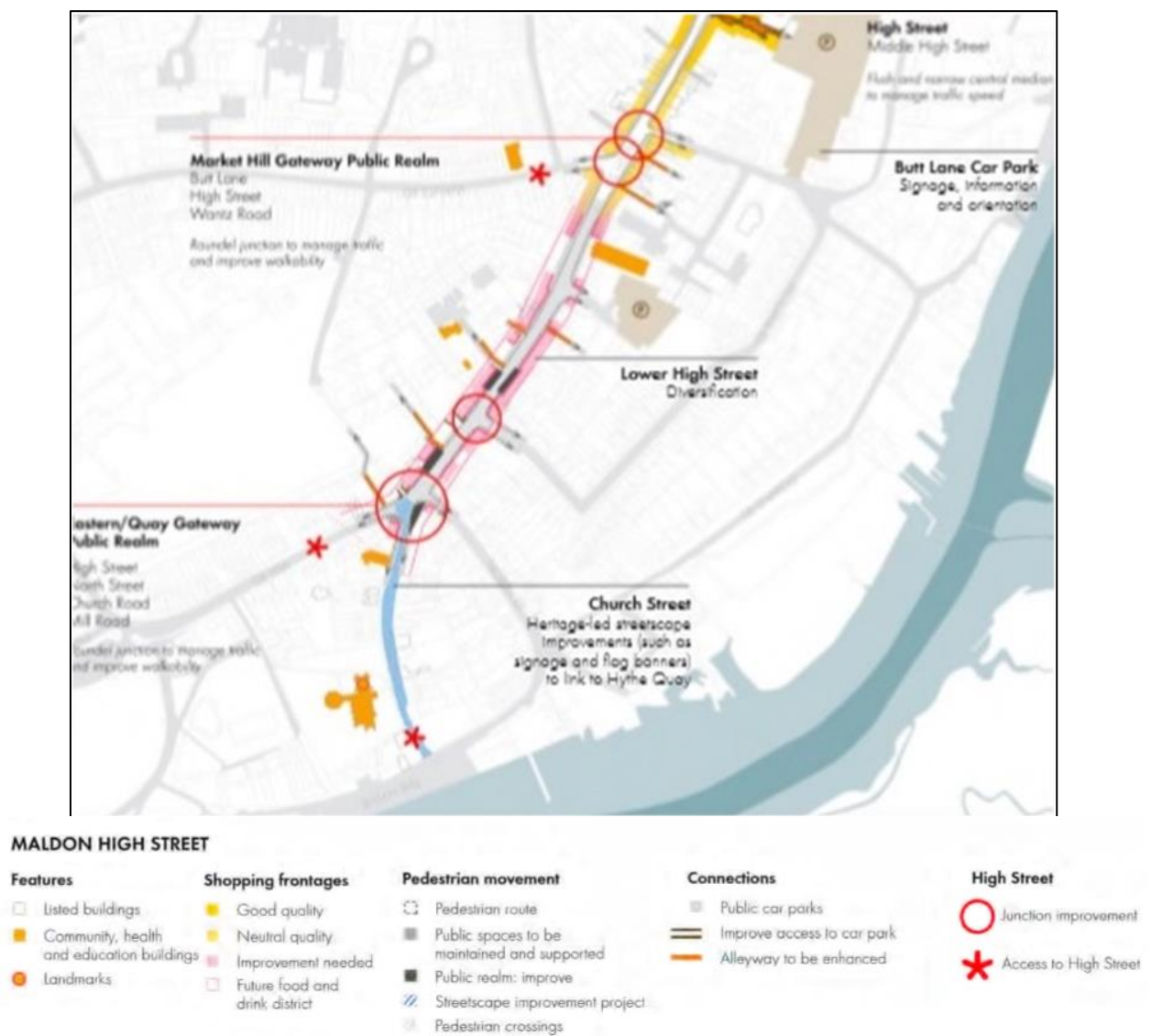


Figure 1 *Maldon and Heybridge Central Area Masterplan SPD, Nov 2017, page 36*

- 2.3 The Lower High Street area was defined in April 2018. Maldon's High Street is facing key challenges through changing consumer habits and the impact of edge of town retail areas and supermarkets offering free parking away from the High Street.
- 2.4 This Action Plan addresses LDP Policy S5 requirements for the Lower High Street to improve its retail offer in comparison with the retail offer on the upper and middle sections of the High Street and to increase footfall. By capitalising on the Lower High Street's relationship with the visitor footfall at Hythe Quay and Promenade Park (the District's main leisure and recreational area on the Blackwater Estuary) a gateway entrance to the High Street from the lower end at North St/Church St junctions is envisaged.

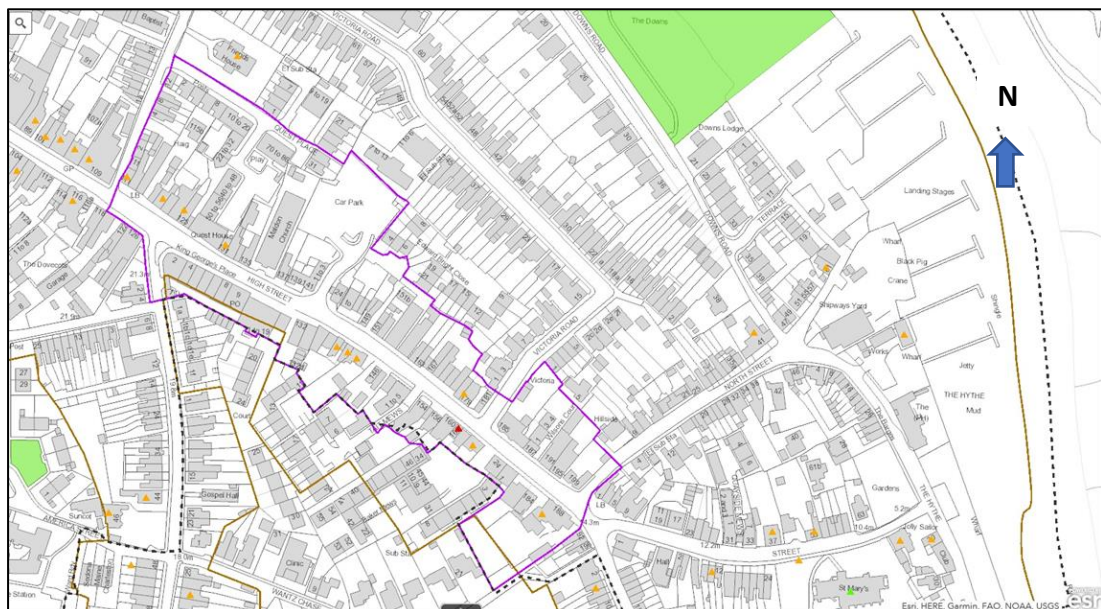


Figure 2 **Lower High Street Defined Area (Larger plan Appendix 1)**

- 2.5 The Lower High Street defined area centres on the road layout, bordered by Butt Lane to the West and Church Street to the East. The northern and southern boundaries are at the rear of High Street units generally following property boundaries. There are 63 premises fronting the Lower High Street, Quest Place, Wantz Road, Mill Road and Church Street in the defined area.
- 2.6 The defined area contains the High Street East 'pay and display' car park with 67 spaces and bus stops located at Victoria Road and Wantz Road serving the 31 (plus 31B, C and X), 33, 75, 90, 95, 288 and 673. The bus routes serve settlements from the north, east, west and south of the District to Maldon's town centre. The 288 is a free bus service from the Tesco store at Fullbridge, Maldon.

3 Project Objectives and Approach

- 3.1 The Lower High Street Action Plan will address identified issues to improve the retail offer and increase footfall. The Maldon Retail Study of July 2015 (White Young Green – Evidence Base to Masterplan) found that *“the bottom end of the high street has a high turnover rate of retailers and the units have a more run-down look than their counterparts further up the high street.”* It is acknowledged that the lower rents in this part of the High Street have provided an opportunity for new businesses to test the market. However, successful businesses at the lower end tend to move up to the middle and upper sections of the High Street.

A key objective is to attract and retain high quality new businesses at the Lower High St.

- 3.2 The Lower High Street has a pivotal role linking the middle and upper sections of the High Street with Hythe Quay and Promenade Park. Linking activities, events, a local food heritage offer and the evening economy at the Lower High Street will encourage a coherent visitor offer.

A key objective is to establish a local food and drink offer at the Lower High St.

- 3.3 Encouraging customers to ‘park and stride’ from Promenade Park car park and the edge of town retail areas via the ‘riverside route’ with new signage and wayfinding infrastructure will change the dynamic of arrival in the town centre to increase footfall at the Lower High Street.

A key objective is to increase dwell time and consumer spend at the Lower High St.

- 3.4 Improving the look and feel of the Lower High Street and finding space for events and potentially a street market requires enhancement of the public realm and investment in the townscape with wayfinding signage, information points and resting places with street furniture and cycle storage points.

A key objective is to prioritise the pedestrian and cycle movements at the Lower High St.

- 3.5 The Lower High Street could accommodate ‘Pop-up’ shops representative of the seasonality of food and drink and the festivals and occasions established and celebrated in Maldon and the wider District.

A key objective is to revive, adapt and diversify the Lower High St.

4 Lower High Street Appraisal April 2018

- 4.1 The use of the 63 premises in the Lower High Street Defined Area were appraised in April 2018 and detailed in Table 1 below:

Table 1 Lower High Street Appraisal April 2018

Use Class	Number	% NDP	Combined Use Percentage
			Food and Drink
Restaurant and Café (A3)	8	13%	
Takeaway – hot food (A5)	6	9%	
Public House (A4)	2	3%	25%
			Retail
Retail (A1) including hairdressers	29	46%	46%
Retail (A1) excluding hairdressers (4)	(25)	(40%)	(40%)
Guest House and Motel (C1)	2	3%	
Places of Worship, Clinics (D1)	4	6%	9%
			Beauty Services
Sui Generis (nail bars, beauty salons and tanning studios)	8	13%	13%
Sui Generis plus hairdressers (4)	(4)	(6%)	(19%)
			Vacant
Vacant (previous use class A1 & D1)	5	7%	7%

NB: 64 uses recorded because the Motel (C1) has a café attached (A3)

- 4.2 The April 2018 Appraisal remains reflective of the LDP evidence base and the Policy S5 objective to improve the retail offer at the Lower High Street.
- 4.3 Townscape enhancements and opportunities were identified to improve the look and feel of the Lower High Street and to meet the LDP Policy S5 objective to increase footfall at the Lower High Street.
- 4.4 The analysis and findings of the April 2018 Appraisal were used to inform engagement with the High Street business community to progress this Action Plan.

5 Business Engagement

- 5.1 Business Engagement commenced in November 2018 with presentations and meetings with local business groups, individual businesses and employers and local groups and societies. The presentations and meetings focussed on the Masterplan requirements to increase footfall and improve the retail offer at the Lower High Street and to understand the business community's appetite to support change.
- 5.2 The business community and local groups raised concerns over town centre car park capacity, congestion, traffic flows and the impact of edge of centre retail on the High Street. However, there was an ambition to make a positive impact to deliver tangible improvements on the High Street as a whole.
- 5.3 A dedicated Masterplan platform was launched in January 2019 to communicate Lower High Street project activity and for businesses to register an interest in the project through an Expression of Interest Form. A focussed engagement workshop for the Lower High Street was planned and held on 27 February 2019 supported by the Maldon Business Hub.
- 5.4 Workshop attendees were placed in groups with a map, pens and sticky notes and asked how they would like the Lower High Street to look and function within the following guidance to support increased footfall and an improved retail offer:

- **Claiming back pavements with outdoor areas**
- **Bringing the outdoors in with shopfront design**
- **Champion the pedestrian with wayfinding and signage**
- **Traffic flows / Bus route impacts**
- **Vacant buildings for community use, pop-up's, seasonal food & drink**
- **Attractions and Events, public art installations,**
- **The evening economy**

In addition, workshop attendees were asked to consider the Sense of Place guidance:

- **Creating an identity**
- **Building Community Spirit**
- **Celebrating local food and drink**
- **Designing a High Street**

5.5 Based on the business engagement and workshop for the Lower High Street the three main outcomes for the Lower High Street are:

1. Working with ECC Highways to change pedestrian pavement widths, re-routing bus routes, introducing new one-way routes and creating a 'pedestrian friendly zone' with space for events, festivals and a street market.
2. Working with existing businesses, landlords and landowners to improve the Lower High Street retail offer with shopfront upgrades, street furniture, street trees, redeveloping 'Gateway' sites, art installations, sponsored wayfinding and signage.
3. Targeting local businesses to have a presence at Lower High Street to tap into the visitor economy and Hythe Quay/Promenade Park activity including global and international brands, wine and beer makers with spin off retail, food and drink

5.6 The following plan captures the outcomes from the workshop material:

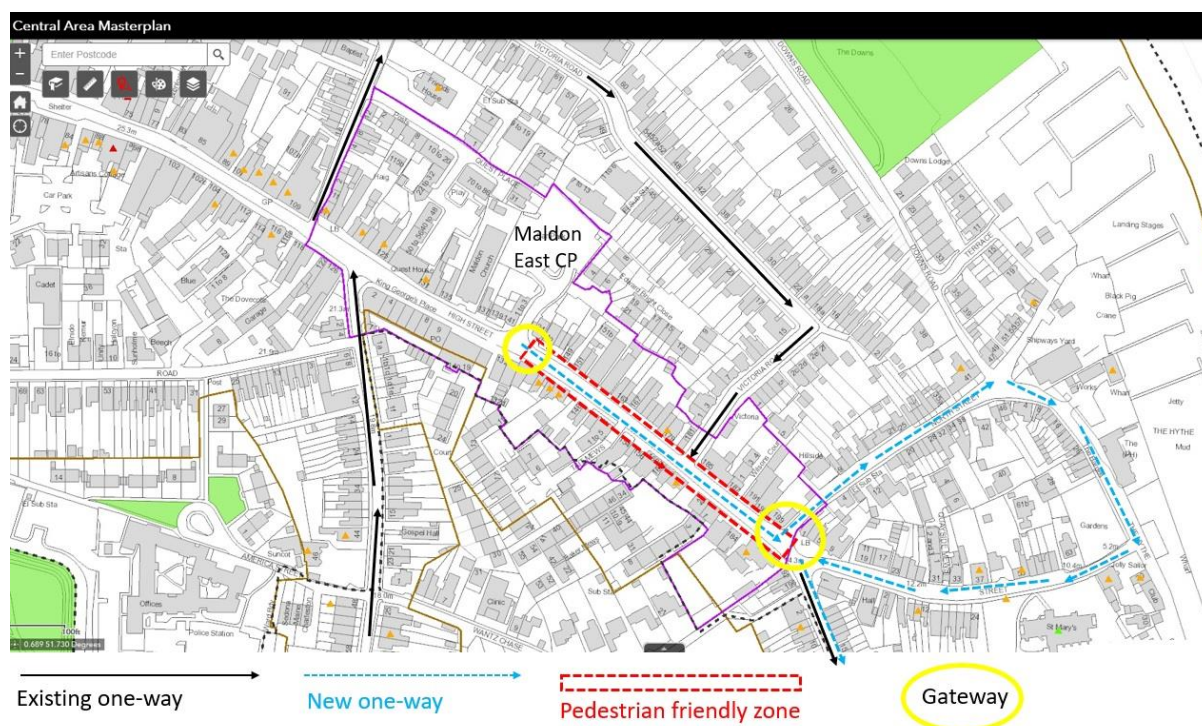


Figure 3 Combined workshop material outcome

5.7 In consideration of the business engagement and workshop outcomes it is concluded that Outcome 1 above is not achievable through this Action Plan and should form part of a wider area strategy for the town centre.

6 Lower High Street Appraisal July 2019

- 6.1 Following the business engagement and capturing the support and enthusiasm for change with the business community, a re-appraisal of the current uses and vacancy rates in the 63 premises within the Lower High Street Defined Area was assessed in July 2019:

Table 2 Lower High Street Appraisal July 2019

Use Class	Number	% NDP	Combined Use Percentage
			Food and Drink
Restaurant and Café (A3)	11	17%	
Takeaway – hot food (A5)	5	7%	
Public House (A4)	2	3%	27%
			Retail
Retail (A1) including hairdressers	28	44%	44%
Retail (A1) excluding hairdressers (3)	(25)	(40%)	(40%)
Professional Services (A2)	1	1.5%	
Guest House and Motel (C1)	2	3%	
Places of Worship, Clinics (D1)	3	5.5%	10%
			Beauty Services
Sui Generis (nail bars, beauty salons and tanning studios)	7	12%	12%
Sui Generis plus hairdressers (3)	(10)	(16%)	(16%)
			Vacant
Vacant (previous use class A1 & D1)	5	7%	7%

NB: 64 uses recorded because the Motel (C1) has a café attached (A3)

- 6.2 Comparison of the appraisals shows a 2% increase in food and drink premises and a 2% drop in retail uses within the intervening year. A C2 professional services use is within the defined area for the first time.
- 6.3 Vacancy rates are static at 7% (5 premises) although not the same units are vacant illustrating the high turnover rate. One business has located to the middle section of the High Street.

7 Maldon Town Centre Key Challenges

7.1 The key challenges for Maldon's town centre are:

- **Congestion and Air Quality**
- **Pedestrian flow and footfall trends**
- **Accessibility**
- **Impacts of 'edge of centre' retail**
- **Vacancy**

7.2 An Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) has been declared on Market Hill in December 2018. The culmination of reliance on the motor vehicle, congestion in the town centre and accessibility to the town centre via Market Hill has raised Nitrogen Dioxide levels to unacceptable levels.

The challenge is addressing the impacts of the AQMA and working on the Air Quality Action Plan due in December 2019 to ensure any actions are not a barrier for vehicular access to the High Street and/or consumers accessing the High Street.

7.3 The High Street is approximately 800m long and is a vehicle highway with pedestrian footpaths either side. The High Street has access roads to it from the north, south and west of the District for all modes of transport.

The challenge is to marry an offer at the lower end of the High Street to draw down footfall from the middle and upper sections and draw up footfall via the lower section from the activities and attractions at Hythe Quay and Promenade Park to the middle and upper sections.

7.4 Arrival to the town is mainly by motor vehicle. The town centre car parks are located to the rear of both sides of the High Street and accessed via the roads that lead into the town centre. The car parks are at capacity daily accommodating community and visitors to the current uses on the High Street plus the employers and employees.

The challenge is to maintain access to the town centre for all modes of transport and encourage footfall to the High Street for existing and new residents and maintain footfall from the wider catchment area. In the spirit of sustainable places, public transport infrastructure should be enhanced, and the pedestrian and cyclist should be able to access the town via safe and attractive routes.

The challenge is to make the Lower High Street the pivotal point for accessing the High Street from two new parking areas: encouraging footfall from the out-of-centre retail free parking areas via direct and attractive pedestrian/cycle routes; upgrading Promenade Park car park to a 'town centre' car park, and delivering a 'park and stride' facility, and utilising an existing free bus route from Tesco to a 'park and ride' facility at Blackwater Leisure Centre. This will change the High Street dynamic to the lower end to give the High Street a new emphasis.

- 7.5 The High Street cannot accommodate larger floor space retailers because of its historic buildings and historic townscape. However, the out-of-centre retail should integrate with the High Street offer to encompass a whole retail offer for the town centre. The free car parking at the out-of-centre retail stores and access to a free bus route into town can relieve Market Hill of congestion and its air quality issues and provide a convenient access to the High Street. Also, signposting and wayfinding routes to and from the out-of-centre retail to and from the High Street are self-supporting for both consumer choices.

The challenge is to integrate the out-of-centre retail offer with the High Street offer and the connections to and from each for all modes of transport to ensure they essentially act as a whole 'town centre' offer. The 2-year monitoring of the impact of out of centre retail (Blackwater Retail Park) on the High Street commenced in November 2018 and needs to address the High Street business community's fears which see free car parking and out-of-centre retail as a threat to the future of the High Street for their businesses.

- 7.6 There are two vacant floorspaces at Upper High Street within the 'Primary Retail Frontage' that have remained empty for several years: the [built for purpose] former 2 storey Police Station empty since 2017 and the ground floor of the former Post Office empty since 2015 (upper floors converted to residential). Both buildings are within the Maldon Conservation Area and the former Post Office is also listed Grade II. The premises are too large and expensive in terms of rental for independent retailers and are too small with access issues for corporate chains.

The challenge is to find new uses for these vacant premises and explore current Government grants to assist local authorities or charities to CPO premises in the core retail area to support the High Street's future.

8 Wider Town Centre Area Strategy

8.1 The 'Wider Town Centre Area Strategy' is based on key town centre challenges in Section 7 above and the following Masterplan Projects and Masterplan Programme:

- Parking Strategy
- Movement and Connectivity Framework:
- Project 1 Upper High Street Improvements
- Project 2 Lower High Street Improvements
- Project 3 Butt Lane Car Park Improvements
- Project 4 Hythe Quay Improvements Initiative
- Project 5 Maldon Riverside Route
- Project 15 Destination Hub
- Project 16 Promenade Park Management Plan

Strategy/Action	Town Centre Objective	Commenced/ Commence	Target Date for Completion
Lower High Street Improvement Action Plan	Increase footfall, improve retail offer, reduce vacancy rates and establish 'Gateway entrance' to High Street at lower end	March 2018	Autumn 2019
Upper High Street Improvements	Monitor impact of out of centre retail on High St. De-clutter Market Hill/High Street junction and enhance public realm	November 2018 May 2021	November 2020 November 2021
Air Quality Management Area Action Plan Steering Group	Ensure town centre is accessible for all modes of transport	December 2018	June 2020
Butt Lane Car Park Improvements	Town centre information boards, wayfinding and signage, car park enhancements as key arrival point	June 2019	May 2021
Destination Hub	Visitor destination and attraction	Under Review	TBC
Prom Park Management Plan	Rationalise existing car parking and deliver park and ride and park and stride	July 2020	May 2021
Hythe Quay Improvements	Visitor destination and attraction	October 2020	January 2021
Maldon Riverside Route	Walkable and cyclable route from out of centre retail to Butt Lane (Middle High Street)	January 2022	June 2022
	MDC owned land		

- 8.2 The town centre strategy aligns with national planning policy and guidance in terms of promoting a positive vision through masterplanning and bringing together stakeholders to support sustainable economic and employment growth.
- 8.3 The town centre strategy considers the wider issues of changing shopping / leisure patterns, retail formats and the impact these are likely to have. Complementary uses including healthcare, educational or specialist housing can help to support the vitality of the town centre along with temporary activities such as ‘pop-up’ shops and restaurants. Evening activities have the potential to increase economic activity within town centres and provide additional employment opportunities.
- 8.4 The Parking Strategy in the Masterplan has considered sustainable transport modes (public transport, walking and cycling) to and from the town centre and vehicle access to town centre car parks. The Masterplan Projects support safe and attractive walking and cycling routes away from the main vehicle highway and prioritise the pedestrian on the High Street in a ‘shared space’ manner by removing defensive barriers that give motor vehicles priority.
- 8.5 The Movement and Connectivity Framework in the Masterplan has considered the existing public transport routes and bus stops. It is important for the town centre strategy to maintain these routes and bus stops to ensure public transports is effective and efficient in bringing customers to the High Street from the wider catchment area and, where possible, extending the Tesco free bus route to pick up at the new South Maldon Garden Suburb on Limebrook Way (it already stops at Holloway Road at North Heybridge Garden Suburb) to bring new customers to the edge-of centre retail and the High Street.
- 8.6 The Government’s High Streets Task Force can assist local authorities to realise the potential of their High Streets. To help support change on high streets, new permitted development rights came into force on 25 May 2019 allowing more changes of use between premises to enable them to adapt and diversify to respond to consumer demand and avoid premises lying empty. A register of empty commercial properties is being piloted that may be rolled out nationally.
- 8.7 Funding for the changes in the town centre strategy should take advantage of local authority compulsory purchase powers for vacant buildings; Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) for community-based projects and S106 obligations through re-development proposals.

9 Lower High Street Action Plan

Project 2 Lower High Street Improvements, Masterplan aims to increase footfall and improve the retail offer at the Lower High Street. Based on the engagement with local businesses and local groups set out in Section 5, the following actions will realise the potential of the Lower High Street to contribute to the Masterplan objectives: supporting the Market Town focus of Maldon; encouraging a diverse town centre economy and promotion of visitor attractions and the visitor economy.

ACTION	MASTERPLAN OBJECTIVE	ACCOUNTABLE	Phasing/Funding/Support
LHS1 Set up the Maldon High Street Focus Group through ‘Sense of Place’ championing the best interests of the High Street for the community, visitors, local economy, transportation (all modes) with digital technology at the forefront of partnership working and decision making. The group will support and inform the delivery by MDC	CA1 Masterplan: <i>Support the Market Town focus of Maldon and encourage a diverse town centre economy</i>	Maldon DC	Maldon High Street Focus Group to be set up with inaugural meeting. A sustainable partnership determining its membership, representation, brand and drawing up its Terms of Reference at inception.
LHS2 Maldon District Council will facilitate a programme for information points and wayfinding signage for all modes of transport at key arrival points, key locations and gateways to encourage footfall to and from the Lower High Street	CA3 Masterplan: <i>Promote the Maldon Central Area as a focus for culture and visitor attractions with a range of accommodation to support the visitor economy</i>	Maldon District Council, Essex County Council	Community Infrastructure project with business sponsorship and external funding CIL ECC Path to Prosperity
LHS3 Maldon District Council will prioritise pedestrian movement and safety, and facilitate a programme of cycle and mobility scooter parking and street benches at key locations	CA3 Masterplan: <i>Promote the Maldon Central Area as a focus for culture and visitor attractions with a range of accommodation to support the visitor economy</i>	Essex County Council, Maldon District Council, Maldon Town Council	Community Infrastructure project with business sponsorship and external funding CIL ECC Path to Prosperity

LHS4 The Council and partners will utilise the Lower High Street to showcase events and attractions and support main events in Promenade Park and Hythe Quay and Upper and Middle High Street to encourage and increase footfall.	CA3 Masterplan: <i>Promote the Maldon Central Area as a focus for culture and visitor attractions with a range of accommodation to support the visitor economy</i>	Essex County Council (for highways requirements) Maldon District Council and Maldon Town Council	Visit Maldon and Maldon District Council websites Maldon Town Council through Tourist Information Point
LHS5 The Council and partners will facilitate a programme of public art, heritage trails, street events and festivals at the Lower High Street to celebrate the seasonal and local food and drink offer as a focus for visitor attractions, reducing shop vacancy and supporting an evening economy	CA3 Masterplan: <i>Promote the Maldon Central Area as a focus for culture and visitor attractions with a range of accommodation to support the visitor economy</i>	Essex County Council (for highways requirements) Maldon District Council and Maldon Town Council	Visit Maldon and Maldon District Council websites Maldon Town Council through Tourist Information Point District-wide businesses and sponsorship Future High Streets Task Force
LHS6 The Council will liaise with the Maldon High Street Focus Group on re-development opportunities and parking improvements to lift the profile of the Lower High Street	CA1 Masterplan: <i>Support the Market Town focus of Maldon and encourage a diverse town centre economy</i>	Maldon District Council	Maldon District Council Future High Streets Task Force ECC Path to Prosperity
LHS7 The Council will update the Maldon Focus Group on progress with an Area Strategy for the Town Centre and the opportunities or outcomes from the Air Quality Management Area Action Plan due December 2019	Working with the outcomes of the Air Quality Management Area Action Plan and Government Agenda for High Streets and access to Town Centres	Essex County Council Maldon District Council	Air Quality Management Area Action Plan Future High Streets Task Force CPO CIL National Bus Strategy 2019

Stakeholder input

Maldon and Heybridge Central Area Masterplan Contextual Study, 2012
Maldon and Heybridge Central Area Masterplan Intermediate Study, 2014
Consultation Statement Maldon and Heybridge Central Area Masterplan SPD
Lower High Street Business Engagement

Websites and links referred to:

Maldon and Heybridge Central Area Masterplan SPD:

https://www.maldon.gov.uk/info/20048/planning_policy/9226/urban_design/5

Future High Streets Task Force:

https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-task-force-to-help-revitalise-high-streets-and-town-centres?utm_source=4d9421b9-17c6-45c8-816c30468365cc4c&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=daily

National Bus Strategy:

<https://www.transport-network.co.uk/Ministers-promise-a-national-bus-strategy/16185>

Draft Lower High Street Action Plan: [Business and Stakeholder Review 13 Nov – 20 Dec 2019](#)

Project 2, Lower High Street Improvements, Maldon and Heybridge Central Area Masterplan SPD

Policy S5, LDP: 'improve the retail offer and increase footfall at the Lower High Street'

Name	Organisation	Representation S = Survey Response E = E-mail response	Action Reference in draft Lower High Street (LHS) Action Plan	Change draft LHS Action Plan?	Recommended Change
Anonymous	Anonymous	S - Support for Action Plan Additional comment to LHS5 – <i>Maldon already does very well with this</i>	Actions LHS1 – LHS7 Action LHS5	The additional comments are a basis to support the LHS Action Plan and its intention to facilitate more public art, heritage trails, street events and festivals through the proposed Focus Group (LHS1)	None required
Anonymous	Anonymous	S - Support for Action Plan <u>Additional comment to LHS2</u> – <i>closure of the swimming lake has affected trade at the LHS. Promenade Park and Hythe Quay are being set up as a self-contained area that will further affect the LHS. Supportive of signed routes from Promenade Park and Hythe Quay to LHS and bolster signage for the offer and attractions at LHS for visitors to Prom Park and Hythe Quay. Signage to heritage buildings needs improvement.</i> <u>Additional comments to LHS4</u> – <i>the type of pop up shop or event/festival should reflect our food heritage and maritime heritage.</i> <u>Additional comments to LHS7</u> – <i>the air pollution problems on Market Hill will affect what happens at the Lower High Street.</i>	Actions LHS1 - LHS7 Action LHS2 Action LHS4 Action LHS7	The additional comments are supportive of the LHS Action Plan to move forward and improve the retail offer and increase footfall. The overarching Masterplan objective is to connect the Leisure Quarter, Maldon Central and the Causeway Regeneration Area and make it easier to park and to connect with shops, attractions and events. Air Quality Management Action Plan affecting the LHS will be reported to the proposed Focus Group (LHS1 and LHS7)	None required None required None required

Name	Organisation	Representation S = Survey Response E = E-mail response	Action Reference in draft Lower High Street (LHS) Action Plan	Change draft LHS Action Plan?	Recommended Change
Janet Coleman Clerk to	Maldon Town Council	E – <i>Disappointed at lack of tangible proposals in the Action Plan and consider greater Town Council involvement in the development proposals which impact on the Town Centre is essential</i>	Actions LHS1 - LHS7	The proposed Focus Group (LHS1) (including TC) will facilitate proposals to achieve tangible results for the whole High Street. TC is a consultee on all development proposals.	None required
		<i>What is being done to resolve the pollution problem on Market Hill. This is key to what can be achieved at the Lower High Street</i>	Action LHS7	Air Quality Management Action Plan will be reported to the Focus Group (LHS1 & LHS7)	None required
		<i>Support practical measures relating to signage</i>	Action LHS2		
		<i>Town Cllrs would like to see quantification of employee parking in the town centre and to what extent this contributes to parking issues in the town</i>	Action LHS6	Through Action LHS6 MDC will liaise with the proposed Focus Group on any parking improvements	None required
		<i>Town Cllrs question the practicality of using Prom Park CP as a feeder to the 288 – the point of a P&R is to provide a cheaper and more practical way to access a town centre than taking the car there. This would conflict with MDC policy on parking charges, as would the development of another site</i>	Action LHS6	Bus 288 is a <u>free bus service</u> mitigating impact of Tesco on High Street. The 288 already stops at Prom Park and Blackwater Leisure. The Masterplan's 'Parking Strategy' seeks to improve connectivity throughout the Masterplan area via sustainable modes of public transport including 288 bus, walking and cycling and management of car parking and car parks.	None required
		<i>Does the reference to P&R at the Leisure Centre imply using the existing area or laying out the adjacent derelict area?</i>	Representation not specific to Actions in LHS Action Plan		

Name	Organisation	Representation S = Survey Response E= E-mail response	Action Reference in draft Lower High Street (LHS) Action Plan	Change draft LHS Action Plan?	Recommended Change
		<p><i>Town Cllrs consider mixing the town centre offer and Prom Park offer will not be successful</i></p> <p><i>Town Cllrs are disappointed at the lack of proposals to address parking capacity.</i></p> <p><i>Existing bus routes to the town are good and that the Local Development Plan is weak in that it does not provide for P&R facilities on the outskirts of the town to cope with increased visitors and town centre employees</i></p> <p><i>The makeup of the Focus Group determining these issues is unclear and Cllrs believe that the Town Council should be represented on this group</i></p>	<p>Representation not specific to Actions in Action Plan</p> <p>Action LHS1 and LHS6</p> <p>Representation not specific to Actions in the LHS Action Plan. This representation should be submitted/considered through the review of the IDP (Infrastructure Delivery Plan), LDP commencing late Spring 2020 (Parish and Town Councils to engage in this process)</p> <p>Action LHS1</p>	<p>The adopted Masterplan SPD promotes a whole Maldon offer to tourists, visitors, employers, employees and the community. The Masterplan 'Intermediate Study' identified through stakeholder input (including the Town Council) that the LHS is the pivotal link to draw people up from the Park to the High Street and down from the High Street to the LHS, Park and Hythe Quay. Businesses at the LHS would like to feel part of the High Street and the Hythe Quay / Prom Park activities and are supportive of marrying the offers and benefits to business to increase footfall and improve the retail offer at the LHS.</p> <p>The proposed Focus Group (LHS1) (including Town Council) will facilitate proposals for change to achieve tangible results for the whole High Street. The proposed Focus Group will have its own Terms of Reference.</p>	<p>None required</p> <p>None required</p> <p>None required</p> <p>Change Action LHS1</p>

Name	Organisation	Representation S = Survey Response E = E-mail response	Action Reference in draft Lower High Street (LHS) Action Plan	Change draft LHS Action Plan?	Recommended Change
				Through Action LHS6 MDC will liaise with the proposed Focus Group on any parking improvements to lift the profile of the LHS and wider town centre parking matters	
Janet Hall	Steam Tug Brent Trust	E – <i>Ambience of LHS is tired, run down area with lack of prosperity. Mish mash of residential and retail. Residential out of scale with retail.</i>	Representation specific to Masterplan	Noted. Identified in Masterplan SPD, Project 2 LHS Improvements seeks to address the representation.	None required
		<i>LHS needs to express vibrancy and prosperity. Tidy up decrepit shop fronts, large fascia signs and shabbiness with grants.</i>	Action LHS1	The proposed Focus Group (LHS1) (including High St businesses) will facilitate proposals for change to achieve tangible results.	None required
		<i>Supports a heritage food offer at LHS. Should not overstretch café offer. Supports signage at Prom Park to highlight delights of the High Street. Supports events/attractions at LHS and redesign of the area and cycle routes/trails for pedestrian and cycle access. Suggests cycle hire.</i>	Actions LHS2 and LHS4	The additional comments are supportive of the LHS Action Plan to improve the retail offer and increase footfall.	None required
		<i>Supports a gateway to LHS at Church Street/North Street junction with interpretation of Maldon's historic retail High Street, outdoor seating and public art installations to add interest</i>	Action LHS6	The overarching Masterplan objective is to connect the Leisure Quarter, Maldon Central and the Causeway Regeneration Area and make it easier to park and to connect with shops, attractions, events.	None required
		<i>Supports 'park and stride' from Prom Park car park to link with LHS</i> <i>LHS needs a buzz – interpret retail</i>		The additional comments are a basis to support the LHS Action Plan and its	None required

Name	Organisation	Representation S = Survey Response E= E-mail response	Action Reference in draft Lower High Street (LHS) Action Plan	Change draft LHS Action Plan?	Recommended Change
		<i>history and Maldon businesses (salt/jam), displays in shop windows, loan from Museums for displays.</i>	Action LHS6	intention to facilitate more public art, heritage trails, street events and festivals through the Focus Group (LHS1)	
Judy Lea to Town Council / Heritage Group		<p>E – <i>Is it realistic to expect large enough groups of people who come for a day out at the Prom to then walk or bus into town? Maldon Central serves distinct client groupings with even those ‘visitors wanting a nice day out’ split between day trippers for fun at the prom, and others wanting heritage architecture and shopping. I suggest each need addressing separately, as realistically there is little cross over on any given day, except perhaps when it comes to the barges and the quay.</i></p> <p><i>Efforts to artificially force activity at the lower end will be at the expense of what we already have and get spread too thinly. The upper end is where the car parks are and only a short walk away which I suggest is the primary reason for them being as successful as they are. The lower area already has 25% of its premises involved in a food and drink offer – is significantly more really likely to be viable?</i></p> <p><i>I suspect a managed conversion to housing in some specified parts of the</i></p>	Representation not specific to Actions in draft Action Plan	<p>The overarching Masterplan SPD promotes a whole Maldon offer to tourists, visitors, employers, employees and the community. It identified through stakeholder input (including the Town Council and the Maldon Society) that the LHS is the pivotal link to draw people up from the Park to the High Street and down from the High Street to the LHS, Park / Hythe Quay.</p> <p>Businesses at the LHS want to feel part of the High Street and the Hythe Quay / Prom Park activities and are supportive of marrying the offers and benefits to business to increase footfall and improve the retail offer at the LHS. A vibrant area will attract new businesses. Not everyone drives into town. The High Street serves a wide community.</p> <p>LHS Residential use is at</p>	<p>None required</p> <p>None required</p> <p>None required</p>

Name	Organisation	Representation S = Survey Response E = E-mail response	Action Reference in draft Lower High Street (LHS) Action Plan	Change draft LHS Action Plan?	Recommended Change
		<p><i>lower high street will become inevitable and needs to be anticipated and directed.</i></p> <p><i>Support for pop up shops and community and arts venues in vacant buildings at LHS.</i></p> <p><i>Siting a street market so far from cars is expecting a lot. Better to focus on reinvigorating Butt Lane. Or holding indoors if drop off for setting up can be strictly enforced.</i></p> <p><i>Supports 'gateway' to river-based attractions at Church Street/North Street junction with maritime themed shops and cafes. Better signage needed to avoid steep hill on Church Street.</i></p> <p><i>Supports traffic management in town centre and favours traffic taking people along the High Street to see what is there.</i></p>	<p>Action LHS4</p> <p>Action LHS4</p> <p>Actions LHS2 and LHS4</p> <p>Actions LHS6 and LHS7</p>	<p>Tait Mews, Embassy Court and 'above the shop'. Residential use not supported in ground floor commercial floorspace (Policy E2, LDP). Contrary to increasing footfall and <u>improving the retail offer</u> at the LHS.</p> <p>Noted.</p> <p>Presumption that everyone arrives in Maldon by private car. Bus stops at LHS and residential community also service the High Street. The overarching Masterplan SPD promotes a whole Maldon offer to tourists, visitors, employers, employees and the community.</p> <p>Noted.</p> <p>Noted.</p>	<p>None required</p> <p>None required</p> <p>None required</p> <p>None required</p>

Name	Organisation	Representation S = Survey Response E= E-mail response	Action Reference in draft Lower High Street (LHS) Action Plan	Change draft LHS Action Plan?	Recommended Change
David Smye	The Maldon Society	E-mailed late response <i>Regarding Figure 3 on page 5.6 - concerns at creating one-way streets and proposing one-way streets that will put off exploring the LHS. A one-way street at the LHS will not allow all bus routes into the LHS to drop off and pick up passengers. Suggests timed zones for servicing retail units. Traffic calming required to improve safety for pedestrians at busy attractions (Hythe Quay/Church St junction).</i>	Actions LHS1, LHS2, LHS4, LHS6	The proposed Focus Group (including ECC and MDC reps) will discuss any proposals altering existing highway network permanent or temporary (for events), timed zones for servicing retailers or traffic calming measures. The AQMA Action Plan may require mitigation where the flow of traffic through the High Street from Market Hill i.e. numerous bus routes stopping in the High Street and parked delivery vans, interrupt flow.	None required
		<i>Support for CIL/S106 to improve worn out features of the town and 'buy in' from LHS businesses to the bigger picture for meaningful outcomes benefitting them and the wider town.</i>			
		<i>Traffic calming measures such as wider footpaths and differing road surface treatments need to be agreed to ensure pedestrian, vehicle and cyclists' safety. Slowing traffic can also benefit air quality and reduce noise pollution. Responsibility between Maldon DC and Essex CC needs to be defined.</i>			
		<i>Support for diversification and adaptation of premises through the proposed Focus Group. Planning Services must be open to bold and innovative proposals that could</i>	Action LHS7	MDC has committed to informing the proposed Focus Group of any development proposals on	None required

Name	Organisation	Representation S = Survey Response E = E-mail response	Action Reference in draft Lower High Street (LHS) Action Plan	Change draft LHS Action Plan?	Recommended Change
		<p><i>enhance the visitor experience.</i></p> <p><i>High Street is very long and residential uses in sectors could alleviate gaps in the trading premises and add life to areas that at present are deserted in the evenings.</i></p> <p><i>Designate Hythe Quay and Heybridge Basin 'Heritage Harbour' status</i></p> <p><i>Every activity at the Hythe Quay area, whether National, Regional or local has an enormous impact upon the town's financial viability and has a far-reaching impression upon users and potential users and visitors.</i></p> <p><i>The provision of adequate and sufficient signage for all, particularly visitors, is of prime importance. Signage needs to be clear, attractive, accurate and fully integrated with the necessary signage by all public authorities and undertakings. Too many signs generate clutter, too little and people are lost and disorientated.</i></p>	<p>Actions LHS1, LHS2, LHS4, LHS6</p> <p>Actions LHS1, LHS2, LHS4</p>	<p>the High Street.</p> <p>Contrary to LDP - primary retail frontage areas. Living above the shop and to rear of High Street retail units exists. The LHS has ground floor private residential at Tait Mews, Baker Mews and Embassy Court fronting the LHS that has deactivated and domesticated the area.</p> <p>Not within the gift of a draft LHS action plan</p> <p>Supports the objectives of the overarching Masterplan to link the High Street with activities at <u>Prom Park</u> and Hythe Quay via LHS</p> <p>The overarching Masterplan objective is to connect the Leisure Quarter, Maldon Central and the Causeway Regeneration Area and make it easier to park and to connect with shops, attractions, events by walking cycling</p> <p>The additional comments are a basis to support the</p>	<p>None required</p> <p>None required</p> <p>None required</p> <p>None required</p> <p>None required</p>

Name	Organisation	Representation S = Survey Response E= E-mail response	Action Reference in draft Lower High Street (LHS) Action Plan	Change draft LHS Action Plan?	Recommended Change
				LHS Action Plan and its intention to facilitate more public art, heritage trails, street events and festivals through the Focus Group (LHS1)	

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REPORT of DIRECTOR OF STRATEGY, PERFORMANCE AND GOVERNANCE

**to
COUNCIL
16 JULY 2020**

BRADWELL DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT - HOUSING

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Council of the potential need to provide housing, within the District, to meet the need of Bradwell B Power Station once operational. To ensure that the Council has control of the location and magnitude of housing it is proposed to deliver a Development Plan Document (DPD), as resolved by the Council in February 2020. This report highlights the key housing issues and Member input required to deliver the DPD.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- (i) That Members to endorse the approach that Maldon District Council seeks to ensure that housing demand created through the provision of a new nuclear power station at Bradwell, once operational, will be within the District, and defined within a Development Plan Document;
- (ii) That a workshop to be provided for all Members which will include the opportunity to provide comment on the principles of delivering housing to meet the need of Bradwell B Power Station once operational.

3. SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES

3.1 Bradwell B Nuclear Power Station

- 3.1.1 Current Government policy is that new nuclear power stations are a key component of the County's future energy generation strategy. The National Policy Statement for Nuclear Power Generation (NPS EN-6) (2011) explains that there is an urgent need for new nuclear power stations and identifies Bradwell as one of eight sites considered suitable for the siting of a new nuclear power station.
- 3.1.2 China Generation Nuclear Power Corporation (CGN) and EDF Energy are partnering together to develop proposals for the Bradwell B nuclear power station. The Stage One Consultation is currently underway.
- 3.1.3 Once operational it is estimated that there will be almost 1,000 jobs created at the new power station. It is envisaged that a large number of these future employees will wish

to locate in close proximity to the site of the proposed new power station within the District of Maldon.

- 3.1.4 The increased housing demand, resulting from the growth in operational jobs, means that it is very likely that there will be significant pressure on the existing local housing market within the District, which is likely to lead to the need to provide additional housing to meet this demand.
- 3.1.5 It is anticipated that there will also be wider growth in the local economy during both the construction and the operational phases, such as support services and supply chain sectors. It is anticipated that expansion of the local economy will be likely to generate additional growth in the local labour force and population. This will generate demand for additional housing and associated infrastructure and will further impact on the existing local housing market.
- 3.1.6 Planning permission to build Bradwell B (plus associated developments such as roads and construction worker accommodation), a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP), would be granted through a Development Consent Order (DCO). This would be granted by the relevant Secretary of State, who would be advised by the UK Planning Inspectorate.
- 3.1.7 A DCO is different from normal Town and County Planning Act (TCPA) planning applications where the decision maker is the relevant local authority. In the case of DCOs Local Authorities do not have a decision-making role but are important consultees throughout the development of the proposals.
- 3.1.8 However it is possible for the longer-term housing demand to be identified and delivered via the Local Development Plan (LDP) process, and in this case through the development of a Development Plan Document (DPD).
- 3.1.9 Whilst officers are looking for strategic guidance it is important to note that the decision on the provision of new housing, including numbers, type and location, will need to be based on a sound and robust evidence base, prepared in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG).

3.2 Maldon District Council's current stance

- 3.2.1 In February 2020 the Council approved the preparation of a DPD to provide an adopted planning policy framework and to provide clarity on the Council's vision and development strategy in relation to the wider development impacts and opportunities arising from the development of a new nuclear power station at Bradwell-on-Sea.
- 3.2.2 A focused DPD has a number of advantages compared to incorporating this element of development strategy within a wider update of the Local Development Plan.
- 3.2.3 A DPD will be quicker to prepare than an update of the LDP. It could therefore provide a basis to inform earlier discussions on Bradwell B and to identify early opportunities to seek to influence peripheral aspects of the Bradwell B project, to better support the District's wider vision and development strategy. This can help to secure an improved legacy for the District.

- 3.2.4 A standalone DPD can also be readily placed to one side if Bradwell B does not proceed, without undermining the policies of the existing LDP. (The work undertaken, however, would not necessarily be unproductive as it could inform any subsequent review of the LDP.)

3.3 **Future Housing Provision**

- 3.3.1 Maldon District Council's position regarding meeting the need for new housing generated through the new nuclear power station being operational is:
- (i) that Maldon District Council seek to ensure that housing demand created through the provision of a new nuclear power station at Bradwell, once operational, will be within the District.
 - (ii) that Maldon District Council encourages that any permanent housing is not delivered through the Development Consent Order.
- 3.3.2 However, these points will be regularly reviewed to ensure that they are still the appropriate position, for the Council, based on emerging evidence and information.
- 3.3.3 To address the likely impact of the development of Bradwell 'B' on the housing market within the District and to maximise the delivery of development and associated infrastructure, whilst taking into account the remote nature of the site for the new power station and Maldon District Council's (MDC) aspiration / commitment in supporting sustainable development, it is considered that MDC should seek to ensure that new housing is provided within the District in appropriately evidenced locations.
- 3.3.4 The 2014 Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) highlighted two local factors which have the potential to further exacerbate pressures on the local housing market. These could arise where increased employment opportunities within the District lead to inward migration of people to undertake these roles.
- 3.3.5 Firstly, income levels for those residents currently working within the District are considered extremely low. This is likely to result in local residents finding it more difficult to compete within the local housing market.
- 3.3.6 Secondly, the SHMA shows that the District has a disproportionately high number of dwellings with three or more bedrooms and has less than half the national average of one- and two-bedroom units. Around 71% of all owner-occupied properties have three or more bedrooms. The Council is currently encouraging a greater proportion of smaller units through its Local Development Plan 2014-2020 (LDP) to meet the identified needs and demands.
- 3.3.7 Furthermore, the provision of new housing developments, of more than 10 units, will be expected to contribute towards affordable housing provision.

3.4 **Maldon District Council's Planning Policy Position**

3.4.1 Planning law and Government policy within the NPPF, is clear that planning applications must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material consideration.

3.4.2 Maldon District Council benefits from a relatively recently adopted (July 2017), and therefore up to date, LDP. This means that in most instances the Council is in a stronger position to defend adversarial planning applications.

3.5 **Local Development Plan and Bradwell B**

3.5.1 The LDP only has one policy reference to a new nuclear power station, under Policy D4:

“The Council will strongly support the principle of the development of a new nuclear power station at Bradwell-on-Sea.”

3.5.2 It is important to note that the LDP does not take into consideration the wider impacts of a new nuclear power station being built, including its impacts on housing, on the district. Paragraph 3.43 states:

“Given the uncertainty of the project, the possibility and impacts of a new nuclear power station in the District will not be considered further at this stage. The situation will be monitored by the Council, and if required local planning policy may be reviewed to consider any future power station proposals.”

3.6 **Local Development Plan and Housing**

3.6.1 Since 2012 there has been a greater pressure from the Government for local planning authorities to ensure that they “*significantly boost the supply of new homes*”. This is currently achieved by the Council establishing a minimum local housing need figure for new homes within the District, which then informs a quantitative local housing requirement. This approach called the ‘Standard Methodology’ was introduced in 2018. Councils are also monitored on the delivery of new homes within their area, against the identified housing requirement figure and range of penalties can be imposed on the planning system in the district as a result of poor performance.

3.6.2 The LDP seeks to deliver a range and volume of housing to meet the needs of the District by 2029; which amounts to a minimum of 4,650 dwellings, or 310 homes per annum. The vast majority of the housing is to be delivered through a number of allocated strategic sites and predominately in the form of Garden Suburbs. As can be seen from the **APPENDIX 1** nearly all of these allocated sites already benefit from planning permission and had either been completed or are under construction.

3.6.3 A number of developments that fall outside of the LDP allocations, known as windfall sites, also benefit from planning permission.

3.7 Five Year Housing Land Supply

- 3.7.1 As part of the drive to deliver new homes the Government has stated that there is a need for councils to demonstrate that there are sufficient sites available to meet the housing requirements for the next five years; this is known as the Five Year Housing Land Supply (5YHLS). If a council has an up-to-date Local Plan, it should be relatively straightforward to demonstrate a supply of deliverable sites for the next five years. An up to date Local Plan will have identified enough sites for housing development to meet the housing requirement. The Planning Policy Guidance states that the 5YHLS is:

“A 5 year land supply is a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide 5 years’ worth of housing (and appropriate buffer) against a housing requirement set out in adopted strategic policies, or against a local housing need figure, using the standard method, as appropriate in accordance with paragraph 73 of the National Planning Policy Framework.”

- 3.7.2 Where a Local Planning Authority is unable to demonstrate that it has a 5YHLS, the presumption in favour of sustainable development will apply. This is set out in paragraph 11d of the National Planning Policy Framework which states:

“For decision taking this means:

“(d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:

“(i) the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed or

“(ii) any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.”

- 3.7.3 What this means in practice is that when a council does not have a 5YHLS, the adopted policies that are relevant to the supply of housing are considered to be out-of-date. This is a ‘material consideration’, the consequence of which means planning applications are then decided on the basis of national policies with regard to housing supply, rather than the LDP. In essence, that means that if a site can be considered to otherwise be ‘sustainable development’, then planning permission should be granted.
- 3.7.4 The consequence of not having a 5YHLS is therefore, that councils start to lose a degree of control over where new homes are built. In these circumstances, if a developer submits an application to build homes on a site that is in a sustainable location, councils will often have to approve that application, even if it is not a preferred site. When councils choose to resist these applications, they are often subsequently allowed at appeal.
- 3.7.5 MDC has undertaken a full assessment of the 5YHLS within the District and it has concluded that the Council is currently able to demonstrate a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide for more than five years’ worth of housing against the Council’s identified housing requirements.

- 3.7.6 However, it is not considered that there is any additional capacity in the supply of identified deliverable housing sites, taking into account the delivery of homes to date on the strategic sites, to meet additional demand arising from the development of a new nuclear power station at Bradwell-on-Sea. If the Council does not identify additional housing supply it is likely that the Council will not be able to sustain its current 5YHLS position, which would have negative consequences on the Council's ability to coordinate and manage the locations of new development.

3.8 Maldon District Council's Future Planning Policy Framework

- 3.8.1 An adopted development strategy will provide clarity on the Council's vision and development strategy in relation to the wider development impacts and opportunities arising from the development of a new nuclear power station at Bradwell-on-Sea. The development strategy provides an opportunity to set out how the District intends to accommodate the resulting growth demands, such as increased need for additional homes, employment space and supporting infrastructure.

3.9 Delivery Options

- 3.9.1 At this time the Council is unsure of the level of housing that will be required; this will be determined through a formal evidence-based approach which includes updating the Local Housing Needs Assessment and including a specific section on the impacts from BRB and associated growth.
- 3.9.2 However, it is considered appropriate to seek some guidance on the suggested methods of delivering the various levels of development potentially to come forward; once again that the final decision will need to be evidenced based.
- 3.9.3 Whilst officers may consider that some of the options below are unlikely to be the level of housing required to meet the increase in demand from the new nuclear power station, either as they are too small or too large, it is considered appropriate to still consider the various options possible.
- 3.9.4 It is considered appropriate for a workshop to be facilitated for all Members which will feed in to the Council direction of travel in relation to the housing aspect of the DPD. The workshop should consider the levels of housing in the categories laid out below.
- No real demonstrable impact;
 - Minimal impact (under 100 houses);
 - Small impact (between 100 and 500 houses);
 - Medium impact (between 500 and 1,000 houses);
 - Large Impact (between 1,000 and 2,000 houses);
 - Substantial impact (over 2,000 houses).

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The provision of a new nuclear power station is very likely to have a significant and demonstrable impact on the existing housing market within the District; this is likely to lead to the need to provide additional housing. Whilst officers are keen to seek guidance from the Council the final decisions are required to be evidence-based. However, it is considered appropriate to have a workshop for Members to provide some direction of travel for the location of new housing requirements born out of the new nuclear power station.

5. IMPACT ON STRATEGIC THEMES

- 5.1 The delivery of good quality housing which meets the needs of the District will have positive impact on the corporate goals of which underpin the Council's vision for the District, in particular Sustainable growth and new infrastructure and Protected and improved environment for residents and visitors.

6. IMPLICATIONS

- (i) **Impact on Customers** – There is a need to ensure the effective delivery of the service to customers in the immediate and longer term.
- (ii) **Impact on Equalities** – None.
- (iii) **Impact on Risk** – None.
- (iv) **Impact on Resources (financial)** – Potential cost of defending planning appeals for adversarial developments and the production of new planning policies.
- (v) **Impact on Resources (human)** – To continue to be identified through the management of the service.
- (vi) **Impact on the Environment** – Failure to have an effective planning policy position could result in an adverse impact on the environment resulting in long term harm which might be difficult to mitigate.
- (vii) **Impact on Strengthening Communities** – None.

Background Papers: None.

Enquiries to: Matt Leigh, Lead Specialist Place.

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Allocated Sites with the Local Plan and their current position in relation to delivery.

Site		Permission Number	Work in progress 18/19	Total Capacity
S2(a)	South of Limebrook Way	14/01003/OUT	Not started	394 (gross)
		18/00494/FUL 18/00531/RES 19/00411/RES	Under Construction	606 (gross)
S2(b)	Wycke Hill (North)	15/01327/OUT	Resolution to grant subject to 106	320 (net)
S2 (c)	Wycke Hill (South)	13/00763/OUT 15/01055/RES	Under Construction	108 (gross)
S2 (d)	North of Heybridge	19/00741/OUT		1138 (net)
S2(e)	Land to the North of Holloway Road	14/00990/OUT 17/00712/RES	Under Construction	84 (gross)
S2 (f)	West of Broad Street Green Road	15/00885/FUL	Under Construction	145 (gross)
S2 (g)	Park Drive	14/00581/FUL	Completed	4 (net) 131 (gross)
S2 (h)	Heybridge Swifts	N/A	N/A	N/A
S2 (i)	West of Burnham-On-Crouch	14/00356/FUL	Under Construction	180 (gross)
S2(j)	North of Burnham on Crouch (West)	16/00093/FUL	Under Construction	180 (gross)
S2 (k)	North of Burnham on Crouch (East)	N/A	N/A	N/A

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DPD Preparation

- 6.1 Government regulations establish the process that must be followed in the preparation of a DPD. The key stages in this process are summarised below:

Preparation of a DPD (Regulation 18)

- 6.2 This represents the first stage of consultation in the process. The purpose is to engage with local residents and relevant organisations to identify what the Development Plan should contain.

Publication of a DPD (Regulation 19)

- 6.3 This represents what the Council considers to be the final version of the plan. The public consultation at this stage allows interested parties to have an opportunity to comment on whether they consider the plan to be sound - i.e. positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy.

Submission of documents and information to the Secretary of State (Regulation 22)

- 6.4 Following public consultation on the Publication development plan the development plan, together with all supporting documents and any comments that have been received, are submitted to the Secretary of State for Examination by an independent Inspector. This represents the start of the Examination period.

Independent Examination (Regulation 24)

- 6.5 Following submission, a Programme Officer is appointed to organise the Examination under the direction and guidance of the Inspector.
- 6.6 For a complex Development plan it is almost certain that a number of hearing sessions will be necessary to allow the Inspector to examine the key issues.
- 6.7 Hearing sessions are led by the Inspector, to allow for a concentrated examination of the key issues.

Adoption of a local plan (Regulation 26)

- 6.8 Once the examination process is complete, the Inspector will present his/her findings to the Council in the form of a report. If the Inspector recommends modifications to the submitted document in order for it to be found 'sound', there may be a need for further public consultation.
- 6.9 Assuming that the development plan has been found sound, adoption is the final stage of putting it in place. This requires confirmation by a meeting of the Full Council [Regulation 4(1) and (3) of the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000].
- 6.10 While the local planning authority is not legally required to adopt a development plan following examination, it is expected that the Council will proceed quickly with adopting any plan that has been found sound.

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REPORT of DIRECTOR OF STRATEGY, PERFORMANCE AND GOVERNANCE

**to
COUNCIL
16 JULY 2020**

APPOINTMENT TO VACANT SEATS ON COMMITTEES

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To invite the Council to fill vacant seats on Committees and other bodies following the resignation of Councillor Bob Boyce MBE from some committees, one panel and one working party and in accordance with the Council's resolution on 23 June 2020 to reconstitute the Joint Standards Committee with eight members.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- (i) That until the Statutory Annual Council meeting in September 2020, Councillors are appointed to fill the vacant seats on:
- Strategy and Resources Committee;
 - Licensing Committee;
 - Investigation and Disciplinary Committee;
 - Investigation and Disciplinary Panel; and
 - Corporate Governance Working Party.
- (ii) That appointments are made to the Joint Standards Committee in accordance with the nominations of the two political groups and that one non-aligned Member is also appointed, based on the following nominations:
- Councillor M W Helm, Conservative
 - Councillor Mrs P A Channer CC, Conservative
 - Councillor Mrs M E Thompson, Conservative
 - Councillor K W Jarvis, Conservative
 - Councillor S P Nunn, Independent Group
 - Councillor C Mayes, Independent Group
 - Councillor M G Bassenger, Independent Group
 - One non-aligned member, To Be Confirmed
 - Councillor Jon Anderson Parish Councillor (Non- voting)
 - Councillor Peter Stilts, Town Councillor (Non -voting)
 - Independent Person (Pool of 3)
- (iii) That a substitute for the non-aligned Member is appointed.

3. SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 Councillor Bob Boyce MBE has left the Conservative Group and resigned from the Committees to which he was appointed as a member of the Conservative Group. Councillor Boyce is now a non-aligned member. The next statutory review for political balance purpose will be the Annual Statutory Council meeting in September 2020 and so those vacated seats should be filled following the nominations of the Conservative Group.
- 3.2 Councillor Boyce will continue to serve as Chairman of the Council and continue to chair the District Planning Committee and serve on the South Eastern Area Planning Committee.
- 3.3 The reconstituted Joint Standards Committee will consist of eight members. The resolution of the Council on 23 June 2020 requires that the political balance principles should be followed but not to give a majority of seats to any political group. The Conservative Group therefore have four seats for nomination and the Independent Group have three nominations. Council must select one non-aligned member to sit on the Committee. No political group will have a majority.
- 3.4 The two political groups will be able to nominate substitutes from their groups but the non-aligned member has no such right. In order to prevent any one political group having a majority at any one committee meeting Council should consider naming a substitute for the non-aligned member

4. IMPACT ON STRATEGIC THEMES

- 4.1 None.

5. IMPLICATIONS

- (i) **Impact on Customers** – None.
- (ii) **Impact on Equalities** – None.
- (iii) **Impact on Risk** – None.
- (iv) **Impact on Resources (financial)** – None.
- (v) **Impact on Resources (human)** – None.
- (vi) **Impact on the Environment** – None.
- (vii) **Impact on Strengthening Communities** – None.

Background Papers: None.

Enquiries to: Simon Quelch, Lead Legal Specialist and Monitoring Officer.



REPORT of DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES

**to
COUNCIL
16 JULY 2020**

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY UPDATE 2020 / 21 TO 2023 / 24

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To present the revised Medium-Term Financial Strategy for 2020 / 21 to 2023 / 24 to the Council.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That the revised Medium-Term Financial Strategy for 2020 / 21 to 2023 / 24 (as at 6 July 2020) at **APPENDIX 1** be noted and an updated version be brought to the October meeting of the Strategy and Resources Committee.

3. SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 The Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) sets out how the Council will manage its revenue finances up to 2023 / 24. The MTFS supports the delivery of the Council's objectives and priorities as set out in the Council's Corporate Plan.
- 3.2 The MTFS was approved by the Council on 13 February 2020. However, since then the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly affected the estimates within the MTFS and it needs to be revised. The revised MTFS is at **APPENDIX 1**.
- 3.3 On 28 May 2020, the Council received a report setting out the key areas that were impacted by COVID-19 and what the potential financial impact might be, based on information available at the time. At that meeting the Council agreed that a revised MTFS would be presented to a future meeting.
- 3.4 There remains a great level of uncertainty around the global economy and the impact this will have on the Council's finances, particularly Council Tax and business rates. Therefore, the MTFS will need to be regularly updated and kept under review.

4. FINANCIAL IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE MTFS

- 4.1 A review of the COVID-19 pressures and the movements in the February MTFS have been undertaken. The updated MTFS is at **APPENDIX 1** and a summary of the changes from February included in there are provided in the following table.

Table 1 – Changes from February MTFS

	20/21 £000	21/22 £000	22/23 £000	23/24 £000
COVID-19 Pressures	(2,321)	(305)	(225)	(225)
Removal of Investment Income Increases	0	(29)	(58)	(87)
Other Cost Pressures	(84)	(97)	(161)	(227)
Additional Staff Inflation in 20/21	(60)	(60)	(60)	(60)
Revised National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR) and Grant Funding	0	449	229	31
Use of Local Development Plan (LDP) Reserve	61	0	0	0
Total Additional Budget Pressure	(2,404)	(42)	(275)	(568)

- 4.2 The original MTFS had a reduction in 2021 / 22 for NNDR income in anticipation of the national business rates revaluation exercise. Government has now postponed this, and the NNDR income level has been brought back to that of 2019 / 20 in recognition that it will likely be less than in 2020 / 21.
- 4.3 The change in other cost pressures is mainly due to unachievable lease income forecast on Council land. The Union's final pay award offer of 2.75% is 0.75% higher than that originally budgeted for. Although this is yet to be agreed it has been included in the updated MTFS.
- 4.4 If these additional budget pressures and the savings yet to be identified in the original MTFS are funded from the General Fund reserve this would take the balance below the minimum level of £2.6m this year and be completely depleted by 2023 / 24. The following table shows the impact on the General Fund balance.

Table 2 – Impact of Unfunded Costs on the General Fund Balance

	20/21 £000	21/22 £000	22/23 £000	23/24 £000
Opening General Fund Balance	4,804	1,528	1,318	911
February MTFS Drawdown	(872)	(168)	(132)	(346)
Additional Drawdown Required	(2,404)	(42)	(275)	(568)
Closing General Fund Balance	1,528	1,318	911	(3)
Balance without Additional Drawdown	3,932	3,764	3,632	3,286

- 4.5 Without the savings already achieved through the transformation programme the budget gap would be larger, requiring even greater savings or use of reserves.
- 4.6 There are other options to using the General Fund including the use of earmarked reserves, generating additional income, making savings and receiving further grants. These options will need to be identified to prevent the depletion of the General Fund. Should the balance fall below the minimum level then a plan to replenish the fund would need to be put in place.

- 4.7 In addition to the costs already identified there is the impact on Council Tax and Business Rates income which is difficult to quantify at this time due to the level of uncertainty. Losses in collection can be recovered in future years which may reduce lost income. It is currently too early to reasonably estimate the impact but a 1% loss in Council Tax collection equates to c£50k and for business rates it is c£25k.
- 4.8 The Council received a government grant of £672k in financial support relating to COVID-19, which is included in the previous figures. On 2 July the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) announced a further £500m of support for local authorities impacted by a significant reduction in their income. Where losses are more than 5% of a council's planned income from sales, fees and charges, the government will cover them for 75p in every pound lost. At the time of writing, the details and allocations around this are yet to be announced. Additionally, the government stated a commitment to determine what support is needed to help councils meet the pressures of irrecoverable tax income at the next Spending Review.

5. NEXT STEPS

- 5.1 The MTFS will be updated regularly as more information becomes available. Although the pandemic remains a prominent risk the Country has begun moving to a recovery phase and the Council will need to plan for its financial recovery. This will include:
- Inclusion of 2019 / 20 actuals in the MTFS;
 - Reviewing budgets for historical underspends and savings;
 - Reviewing earmarked reserves;
 - Revising funding estimates;
 - Delaying recruitment where possible;
 - Spending freezes or delaying expenditure;
 - Income generation from commercial activity (Corporate Project Working Group meeting on 9 July 2020);
 - Savings proposals.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 Medium-Term financial planning is an important component of the Council's strategic planning framework. No more so than in the current uncertain economic climate due to the global pandemic, the still unknown implications of Brexit and ongoing unprecedented financial pressures and constraints in the public sector. Key financial decisions need to be set in the context of a plan that looks beyond the next financial year. Forward planning offers the opportunity to link service and financial planning, as decisions taken on an annual basis are limited in what they can achieve.

7. IMPACT ON STRATEGIC THEMES

- 7.1 The Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) provides the foundation against which the Council will strive to deliver the best possible value for money in the provision of efficient and cost-effective services across the District. Through the effective development and delivery of the Council's financial and other resource strategies it seeks to build upon past achievements as well as provide clear direction to the attainment of the Council's longer-term goals.

8. IMPLCATIONS

- (i) **Impact on Customers** – None arising directly from this report.
- (ii) **Impact on Equalities** – None arising directly from this report.
- (iii) **Impact on Risk** – The risks to the Council in respect of the available forecast resource envelope over the medium term are discussed in **APPENDIX 1**.
- (iv) **Impact on Resources (financial)** – The financial implications are set out in this report.
- (v) **Impact on Resources (human)** – None arising directly from this report.
- (vi) **Impact on the Environment** – None arising directly from this report.

Background Papers: MTFS to the Council 13 February 2020

Enquiries to:

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MALDON DISTRICT COUNCIL
MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

2020/21 TO 2023/24

(JULY 2020 UPDATE)



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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Medium term financial planning is an important component of the Council's strategic planning framework. Key financial decisions need to be set in the context of a plan that looks beyond the current financial year. Forward planning offers the opportunity to link service and financial planning, as decisions taken on an annual basis are limited in what they can achieve.
- 1.2 The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) provides the foundation against which the Council will strive to deliver the best possible value for money in the provision of efficient and cost-effective services across the District. Through the effective development and delivery of the Council's financial and other resource strategies it seeks to build upon past achievements as well as provide clear direction to the attainment of the Council's longer-term goals.
- 1.3 The medium-term financial planning process is an established part of the budget setting and financial review processes. It sets out a forecast of the cost of continuing provision of existing levels of service and the resources that are likely to be available to the Council over the period. It identifies any shortfalls and sets out how this will be managed. This document is reviewed at least annually; regular review and update is essential to ensure the MTFS takes full account of any changes in the Council's aspirations, strategic and service delivery priorities, changes in government legislation, financial regulation and funding streams and the general socio/economic environment that the Council operates in.
- 1.4 This MTFS reviews how the Council will manage its revenue finances up to 2023/24 and covers a five-year capital programme. The MTFS supports the delivery of the Council's 32 outcomes as set out in the Council's Corporate Plan 2019-23 and delivered and measured through the three strategic themes of Place; Community; Prosperity.
- 1.5 Underpinning the Corporate Plan are the individual service plans and several other key strategies and plans as set out below. In each case, these set out the detail of how the Council will achieve its objectives and the relevant milestones that will measure progress under the thematic strategies of Place; Community; Prosperity.
 - Information Technology Strategy
 - Workforce Development Strategy
 - Procurement Strategy
 - Risk Management Strategy
 - Treasury Management Strategy
 - Investment Strategy
 - Capital Strategy

The development of the 2020/21 budget took place within the context of a longer term strategic and resource planning process. It took account of the latest settlement data and the uncertain economic climate. However, it did not take into account the impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic, as it was

completed before the outbreak and subsequent social distancing measures imposed by the Government in March 2020.

- 1.6 Those reports concluded that the Council's future financial outlook was forecast to be more challenging over the next few years, because of continuing financial constraints in the public sector and the continued high expectation of public service delivery from the public. Council agreed on 9 August 2018 the Future Model Transformation Programme to achieve the required savings of £1.89m by 2022/23 when compared to the 2018/19 net budget. These already challenging financial targets have become significantly more challenging with the arrival of the pandemic.

2 OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 The objectives of this updated Medium Term Financial Strategy are:
- To ensure outcomes and priorities identified in the Corporate Plan inform the MTFS including importance, timing and financial implications, and reconsider them in the light of emergency measures required due to the pandemic
 - To provide updated projections of spending, including spending pressures and income; and set expectations on council tax increases, over the next three years
 - To provide projections for our investment in assets, (our capital spend) and its impact on general day to day revenue spending
 - To test sensitivity of, and apply risk analysis, to projections.
 - To provide a framework for consultation with the public and partners about our service priorities and resources allocated to them.

3 VISION FOR MALDON

- 3.1 The MTFS aims to support the Council's overall vision for the District:
- "Sustainable Council – Prosperous Future."

4 LOCAL CONTEXT

- 4.1 The Maldon District covers some 138 square miles and has a resident population of some 61,600 (2011 Census). With one of the lowest population densities in Essex, the District offers a wide range of residential properties, from period country cottages to brand new executive homes.
- 4.2 Maldon is an attractive and predominantly rural district. It retains an unspoilt nature and its own special character, forged largely by the principal waterways of the Blackwater and Crouch estuaries. Much of

the District's 60 miles of coastline of tidal salt marshes and mudflats is recognised as of international and national environmental significance and protected as such.

5 MALDON DISTRICT COUNCIL CORPORATE PLAN

5.1 The Corporate Plan 2019-23 identifies all local and many national priorities.

5.2 The Corporate Plan will be delivered through three thematic strategies – Place, Community and Prosperity. The three thematic strategies are underpinned by a focus on ‘Performance and Value’ with the aim of providing:

- excellent services and value for money; and
- becoming a financially independent and sustainable Council in the future.

5.3 The aims of the thematic strategies are:

Place:

- A protected and improved environment for residents and visitors;
- Sustainable growth and new infrastructure in the District

Community:

- Healthy, safe and vibrant communities

Prosperity:

- Local businesses are supported and new ones are attracted into the District

5.4 The three thematic strategies have the detailed outcomes and impacts that the Council is seeking to achieve over the period of the Corporate Plan.

5.5 The Workforce Strategy sets out the key priorities for improving the way in which the Council manages its workforce to achieve the corporate targets. Our greatest asset is our employees and we must have committed skilled and empowered employees to provide the best possible service standards to the residents of the District. The Council’s new organisational structure which went fully live from November 2019 as a result of the Future Model Transformation Programme will deliver this aim.

5.6 The MTFS therefore provides the resource strategy required to deliver the priorities and outcomes set out in the Corporate Plan through the three thematic strategies.

6 ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

- 6.1 Due to the impact of Coronavirus, the Bank of England's economic outlook as announced in the BoE Monetary Policy Report, May 2020, is more pessimistic than the Chancellor's economic outlook as announced in Spring Statement in March 2019, and is shown below. The 2020/21 growth of zero reflects the plummeting of economic growth during lockdown, followed by a fast recovery later in the year.

Year	Economic Growth (GDP)	
	Chancellor (March 2019)	Bank of England (May 2020)
2018	1.4%	1.4%
2019	1.2%	1.2%
2020	1.4%	0.0%
2021	1.6%	1.2%
2022	1.6%	1.2%
2023	1.6%	1.2%

- 6.2 The change of forecasts for the Consumer Prices Index (CPI¹) are shown below:

Year	CPI (% change)	
	Chancellor (March 2019)	Bank of England (May 2020)
2018	2.5%	2.5%
2019	2.1%	2.1%
2020	1.9%	1.5%
2021	2.0%	1.0%
2022	2.0%	2.0%
2023	2.0%	2.0%

- 6.3 In the medium term, the CPI inflation is forecast to be at or below the Bank of England's target of 2%. It is important to note that the Council's major contracts are linked to CPI as an inflationary increase with others linked to RPI. It is likely that the contractual inflation will see an increase in the council's costs in the medium term based on the forecasts.

¹ Chancellor's Spring Statement – March 2019

- 6.4 The Bank of England base rate was increased for the first time since 2009 in November 2017 to 0.50% from 0.25% and a further 0.25% to 0.75% in August 2018. The low levels have had a major impact on the Council's investment income. The Council is diversifying its investment portfolio to benefit from higher returns but at all times giving due regard to the security and liquidity of its funds over yields/returns. Since the MTFS reported in February 2020, the Bank of England has decreased its base rate. First down to 0.5% and then to 0.1%, due to corona virus.

7 GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET

Financial Context

- 7.1 The development of the 2020/21 to 2023/24 Medium Term Financial Strategy took place at a time which continued to be one of the most challenging periods for Local Government. This updated MTFS for the same period has since become even more challenging with the onset of Coronavirus.
- 7.2 Ten years of austerity measures have led to unprecedented reductions in local authority funding. The public sector and the local government sector are under increasing and relentless pressures in respect of funding for adult social care and children's services and a significant shift of resources is taking place from non-social care authorities such as Maldon to social care authorities. Funding pressures for mental health services has also been in the news recently. Additionally, the government is progressing preparations for changing the local government finance system. All this before the financial impact of the pandemic.

Local government is transitioning away from a world where councils were dependent on central government grants and towards greater self-sufficiency.

The Local Government Financial Settlement was published in February 2020. The result was that Maldon District Council will not receive any Revenue Support Grant but its Business Rates Pool (consisting of the Essex Councils) will retain 50% of Business Rates collected.

Risks and Opportunities

- 7.3 This section highlights the risks and opportunities facing the Council in the medium term.
- Demographic
 - External Income
 - Inflation
 - Service Demand
 - Business Rates Retention

- Other Developments
- Fairer Funding Review

Demographic

- 7.4 Demographic factors affect the Council's planning in several ways:
- Changes in the number of households affect the tax base for Council Tax purposes, and hence the total amount which will be raised from this source
 - The characteristics of both population and households can help identify specific implications for the type and nature of many services provided by the Council
 - All the above factors affect the level of demand for, and use of, services provided by the Council
- 7.5 The total population in Maldon, according to the 2014 based ONS Sub-national population projections, is projected to grow by 12%, 7,000 more people by 2039.

External Income

- 7.6 The Council relies on several external income sources. During the past few years, the economic downturn had an adverse impact on some income streams.

Several income streams to the council are at risk whereby they can be reducing year on year or subject to significant variances between years. The reasons for these are mainly outside the direct control of the Council such as macro-economic and/or seasonal conditions. These income streams are principally, from development control, building control, land charges, leisure and car parking related such as from the Splash Park and Promenade Park.

The garden waste collection service is now a significant source of income to the Council which goes to support the costs of providing the overall waste collection function, the costs of which are increasing with the growth of housing in the District.

Historically a key income stream for the council has been the income generated from investment of cash balances. The low interest rate has seen a large reduction in this income in recent years. Every 0.5% of movement in interest rates is equivalent to approximately £140k in income; however, the actual interest earned is also dependant on the level of free cash flow balances during the year.

The Council has a policy to maximise income from existing and new fees and charges where possible and practicable.

The recent social distancing measures imposed by Central Government and reduction of base interest rates by the Bank of England have had a significant adverse effect on these external income sources.

Inflation

- 7.7 The financial impact of a 2% movement in pay inflation represents around a £0.170m change in the general fund employee budget. A 2% uplift was built into the pay inflation. This is likely to be increased to 2.75% from 1 April 2020 based on the increase in cost of living, although it is still being finalised.
- 7.8 For the 2020/21 budget setting process, the contract prices have been uplifted by appropriate indices as stated in the conditions of the contracts. The financial impact of a 1% movement in contractual inflation is around £0.100m. No inflationary increase has been applied to the general services budget, except known specific items such as utilities.
- 7.9 For future years, the projection assumes an overall averaged inflation rate of around 2% for 2021/22 and 2% in each year thereafter (including a 2% pay award for 2021/22 onwards).

Service demand

- 7.10 Under the current economic climate the pressure on the Council to deliver services within a constrained financial base remains high compared to historic levels. There is also an imposed demand by Central Government on local authorities to take a major part in revitalising the local economy whilst, at the same time, bearing a significant part of the government's overall austerity measures, via reduced funding.
- 7.11 While there has been a recent improvement in UK growth, all economic commentators now say we are heading into a deep recession, due to the effects of the coronavirus. However, the increase in the demand on our services, coupled with the loss of external income, will restrict our ability to make radical improvements to our discretionary services.

2020/21 Final Local Government Finance Settlement

7.13 The final 2020/21 LGFS was announced on 6 February 2020. The table below shows Maldon's final settlement for 2020/21. The settlement for future years are expected to be towards the end of 2020.

Provisional Settlement 2017/18 to 2020/21	2017/18 Final LGFS £m	2018/19 Final LGFS £m	2019/20 Final LGFS £m	2020/21 Final LGFS £m
Settlement Funding Assessment	1.601	1.474	1.508	1.532
of which:				
Revenue Support Grant (RSG)	0.170	-	-	-
Baseline Funding Level (Business Rates)	1.431	1.474	1.508	1.532
Tariff/Top-up Adjustment	-	-	-	-
Annual Change (%)	-18.5%	-7.9%	2.3%	1.6%
Cumulative Change (%)	-18.5%	-25.0%	-23.2%	-22.00%
New Homes Bonus – MHCLG	0.800	0.696	0.832	0.898
Compensation for under indexing the Business Rates multiplier	0.021	0.034	0.049	0.061
Rural Services Delivery Grant	0.025	0.031	0.031	0.031
Transition Grant	0.040	-	-	-
Council Tax Requirement excluding parish precepts (incl. base growth and levels increasing by CPI)	4.440	4.635	4.809	4.982
Potential additional Council Tax from £5 referendum principle for all Districts	0.032	0.034	0.035	0.062
Total Core Spending Power	6.959	6.904	7.264	7.566
Change since 2017/18 (£ million)				0.607
Change since 2017/18 (% change)				8.7%

7.14 Over the period of the previous Spending Review the government used a new methodology to determine authorities' Revenue Support Grant (RSG) allocations. Rather than applying the same percentage cut to all authorities, the new approach considers individual authorities' council tax raising ability and the type of services they provide. The change in methodology has led to a fundamental shift of resources from authorities such as Maldon.

New Homes Bonus Scheme

7.15 The New Homes Bonus Scheme (NHBS) was introduced in 2011/12 to encourage local authorities to facilitate housing growth. For every additional property built or brought back into use, the government match funds the additional council tax, with an additional amount for affordable homes, for the following six years. The grant is not ring-

fenced and is split 80% to the lower tier and 20% to the upper tier. Previous changes to the NHBS were the introduction of a baseline housing growth of 0.4% before NHBS would be payable and a reduction in duration of legacy payments from the six years to five years and to four years. The government has stated that it wants to change the NHBS or introduce a new system of rewarding authorities for housing growth; based on performance. Therefore, the 2020/21 LGFS is the last year for the NHBS and there will not be any legacy payments in the future for 2020/21. The Council will therefore continue to receive legacy payments for previous years of £0.418m in 2021/22 and £0.198m in 2022/23. In 2018/19 the Council decided to end its reliance to support the General Fund expenditure from the NHBS. Therefore, since then only the legacy payments received for years prior to 2018/19 have been utilised to support the General Fund budget. A NHB reserve has been established which by the end of the financial year 2022/23 will total £1.9m to be utilised by Council decision.

Other Developments

Pension

7.17 Maldon District Council employees are eligible to be members of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS), for which the Government sets the terms and conditions nationally. This is a statutory condition of employment available to all local government employees. Essex County Council is the administering authority of the LGPS in Essex. In accordance with statutory requirements the Essex Pension Fund, of which this Council is a member, was actuarially valued as at 31 March 2020 as part of the triennial valuation cycle.

7.18 The draft 2019 Valuation shows that there has been a decrease in the Council's deficit position by 35% to £5.318m. This means that the funding level of the Council's element of the Fund will have increased from 81.7% in 2016 to 90.2% in 2019. Funding levels are taken as the ratio of assets to liabilities. In general, for the 2019 valuation, funding levels have increased due to:

- Salary increases being lower than expected
- Investment returns have been better than expected
- Deficit contributions paid by the Council to the Fund

The recovery period for the deficit was reduced from 15 years, set at the 2016 Valuation, to 12 years or less in the 2019 Valuation, depending on the individual circumstances of the Council. The effects of the pandemic on the Pension Fund are yet to be determined.

7.19 The 2019 Valuation shows an increase in the employer's ongoing contribution rate from 15.9% of pensionable pay to 19.9% of pensionable pay (£221k). Whilst the recovery of deficits covers up to a date, an ongoing contribution rate is also needed to obtain the level

of contributions required to meet the cost of new pension benefits and this is usually based on the same assumptions as are used for the deficit.

- 7.20 Automatic Enrolment has been established by the Government as a requirement for employers to provide a pension scheme for employees. The Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) is a qualifying scheme for the purposes of Automatic Enrolment within the terms set out by the Pension Regulator.
- 7.21 The Pensions Act 2008 includes a duty on employers to automatically enrol their eligible jobholders into a workplace pension scheme that meets certain requirements and provide a minimum employer contribution. From early 2014, the Council must have:
- Enrolled any new employees into the qualifying approved scheme;
 - Enrolled any employees who are not a member of the scheme but reach the age of 22; and
 - Enrolled any employee who is passing the rate of salary to £9,440 per annum for the first time
- 7.22 It should be noted the employee can still choose to opt out of the scheme, but the Council must not mention any option of how to opt out of the scheme during enrolment as it could be seen as an inducement not to join the scheme and could expose the council to a fine from the Pensions Regulator.

Universal Credits

- 7.23 Universal Credit (UC) is being rolled out through the Welfare Reform Bill and this is the biggest shake up of the system for 60 years. UC is an integrated working-age credit that will provide a basic allowance with additional elements for children, disability, housing and caring. It will support people both in and out of work, replacing Working Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit, Housing Benefit, Income Support, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance and income-related Employment and Support Allowance. For local authorities, this means the link between Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support will be broken for working age customers and that UC will be administered by the Department of Work and Pensions.

- The digital roll out of Universal Credits for Maldon, using the newer software started in December 2018 for new claims only
- The precise details of the full transfer date of all claims are yet unclear and the timescales have slipped on several occasions. Claimants affected by Covid-19 will have meant the rate of migration to UC will have increased recently.
- The Council would retain responsibility for Local Council Tax Support, as well as pensioner claims, and some working age claims, even after a full transfer of claims to UC. As such, the Council would retain 70-80% of existing workload even after UC has been fully introduced.

7.24 The transition to UC has had significant implications for local Council and its systems. There will be reduction in the Housing Benefit Administration Grant going forward, but this may not be proportional to the reduction in the workload or staffing. The financial impact of Universal Credits continues to be monitored on an ongoing basis.

Land Charges (transfer of responsibility to Land Registry)

7.24 The Infrastructure Act 2015 provided for the transfer of some of the Land Charges responsibilities from local authorities to the Land Registry. The implications for the Council are:

- Loss of local land charges income
- Incurring on-going costs for the supply of standardised accurate information related to local land charges to Land Registry to keep the register updated.
- Legal liability will rest with Local Authorities for any inaccurate information provided
- Transfer requires digital and business transformation
- Local authorities will continue to provide Con 29 searches

7.25 The timing of the transfer is still not confirmed, with relevant legislation being required, there is not yet a go live date.

7.26 The financial implication on the land charges transfer continues to be monitored on an ongoing basis.

2020/21 General Fund Budget

7.27 As part of the original budget setting process, Members examined information provided by officers relating to the level of existing resources. All budget options were considered in the context of current service performance and priorities. Also, all the growth, savings and capital bids went through a challenge process.

7.28 The details of the 2020/21 General Fund Revenue budget can be found in the Original 2020/21 Budget Estimates and Council Tax 2020/21 reports to the Council on 13 February 2020.

8 RISK MANAGEMENT

8.1 Risk Management is a key feature of the Council's financial planning process.

8.2 The Council is very aware of the need for effective risk management and considers that the assessment and minimisation of all types of risk to be vital. It has an adopted Risk Management Strategy in place, and the financial risks to the Council are assessed in the context of the Council's overall approach to risk management.

8.3 To mitigate risk the Council regularly monitors its budgets. The performance management system is used by the Council to identify, monitor and reports on risks. Regular reporting of the Corporate Risks, financial and non-financial performance occurs on at least a quarterly basis to the Corporate Leadership Team and the Performance, Governance and Audit Committee, and is programmed in the annual timetable.

8.4 The table below summarises the financial implications if assumptions made in the MTFS change in the future. This gives some indications to the kind of risks which need to be allowed for in considering the level of reserves in future years.

Estimated Financial Impact

Sensitivity Scenario	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Inflation - Pay award 1% higher than assumed	0.080	0.083	0.085	0.087
Other Inflation - 1% higher than assumed	0.075	0.101	0.104	0.106
Average investment interest rate - 0.5% lower than assumed	-0.141	-0.142	-0.143	-0.144
Savings - 10% of savings not delivered	-0.034	-0.020	-0.008	0.000
Council Tax Collection - 1% lower than assumed	-0.051	-0.052	-0.054	-0.055
NNDR Collection - 1% lower than assumed	-0.024	-0.015	-0.016	-0.016
Net Operating Expenditure - 1% overspent	0.086	0.111	0.080	0.084

* The current proposed 2.75% Pay award for 2020/21 is still being agreed and yet to be accepted by Maldon District Council, therefore no risk for 2020/21.

9 COUNCIL TAX

Council Tax

9.1 It is important to note that the Council has limited income generated from council tax. As shown in paragraph 8.4, for every 1% increase in the average Band D council tax; an additional £0.051m of income is raised. The MTFS allows an increase in the Basic Amount of Council Tax of £5.00 (2.53%) for 2020/21 and then 1.99% for the rest of the MTFS period in accordance with the 2020/21 Council Tax Referendum Principles.

Tax base for Council tax setting

9.2 The tax base for council tax setting assumed in the MTFS is shown below:

Year	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
	Calculated	Projected	Projected	Projected
Band D Equivalents	25,090.8	25,290.8	25,490.8	25,690.8

9.3 Using past trends together with information on already approved and likely future planning applications, projected housing growth has been used to forecast the council taxbase for the period of the MTFS. The taxbase forecast has been arrived at by considering the completion dates of the strategic housing developments in the District.

9.4 A copy of the medium term financial forecast on the general fund is attached in appendix A.

10 VALUE FOR MONEY AND EFFICIENCY

10.1 Value for Money (VFM) is an assessment of whether we obtain the maximum benefit from the goods and services we both acquire and provide, within the resources available to achieve it. This assessment includes considerations about suitability, quality, whole life costs and the relationship between economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

10.2 Value for money remains an integral part of the external audit opinion. The general feedback was that the council had consolidated previous improvements and demonstrates good value for money across our services.

Efficiencies

10.3 A key part of the Council's ethos is its focus on achieving efficiencies. This is a main driver during the budget and planning process; ensuring resources are directed in the appropriate areas and is embedded across the whole authority. Services are monitored and reviewed for efficiencies with a view to identify where savings and or productivity gains can be made. The Council is committed to

delivering efficiencies to drive costs down and maintain or improve services.

Finding efficiencies year on year to deliver a balanced budget and invest in services is a significant challenge. The Council commenced the implementation of the Future Model Transformation Programme in August 2018 to achieve savings and additional income totalling £1.89m by the end of the financial year 2022/23. Of this £1m is being achieved from the salaries cost by reducing the establishment headcount from 219.5 FTE to 181.5 FTE with a new salary structure. The Transformation Programme included, but was not limited to, the following considerations:

- Alternative delivery model of our services - where practicable and where there was a financial business case to do so
- Effective use of assets – challenging the asset base and the use of assets, and looking to manage and plan maintenance in the most effective way
- Working in partnership with both private and public bodies to improve quality and scope of service and reduce costs.
- Improving efficiency where possible - but the scale of the financial constraint will almost certainly require considerations on the number and levels of services that the Council provides.
- Exploring new areas of income generation and adopting the 'commercial council' approach
- Smarter procurement processes and ways of working.
- The Council uses several service review methods to identify efficiency savings, for example, best value reviews, benchmarking performance with other authorities, testing costs in a range of alternative service delivery options.

11 INCOME GENERATION

Forecasting Income

- 11.1 This section covers the income from fees and charges.

Policy on Fees and Charges

- 11.2 The Council has looked to maximise the potential from fees and charges. A significant proportion of its income comes from fees and charges and a balance must be struck between meeting statutory responsibilities and the subsidy on providing discretionary services. The Council takes the view that raising charges to recover part or all the costs of providing is preferable to removing the service completely. Charges are set after considering local circumstances and the user's ability to pay. The Council's fees and charges will normally increase at least in line with inflation or, where appropriate statutory defined, fees and charges increases. Increased or reduced income due to volume changes, or charge proposals above or below inflation, are addressed through the budget setting process.
- 11.3 The full list of fees and charges was shown in the Discretionary Fees and Charges 2020/21 report to the Council on 13 February 2020.
- 11.4 The Council's longer-term policy has three fundamental principles:
- Services should raise income wherever there is a power or duty to do so.
 - The income raised should cover the full costs of providing the service including all overheads.
 - Any departures from this policy must be justified in a transparent manner with reference to the Council's priorities and policies.
- 11.5 When the Council does not raise income in areas where it has the power to do so, it foregoes the opportunity to raise money to improve services and leaves less money available for spending on high priority services.
- A decision to forego income or to subsidise a service is a policy decision about resources as significant as any decision made in the budget setting process especially since the Council is expected to be become more self-sufficient. The cost will eventually fall on the council taxpayer if the service is to be protected to any extent.
- 11.6 Fees and Charges levels have not been reviewed with respect to Covid 19 but various concessions have been made such as 3-month lease holidays.

Income and Debt Management

- 11.7 The Council has a good history of debt collection. The Council continues to build on this to maximise income received and minimise

income written off. Monitoring information has been enhanced to provide information on evaluating the effectiveness of debt recovery actions, associated costs, and the cost of not recovering debt promptly.

12 USE OF RESERVES

- 12.1 The minimum General Fund Reserve is set at £2.6m. A minimum level is intended to allow sufficient resources to respond to unforeseen events such as the pandemic.
- 12.2 Risks to the Council's financial position could derive potentially from a budget overspend due to higher than budgeted expenditure or lower than budgeted income or a combination of both, loss of investment income, contractual/legislative failure or challenging/emergency events. Historically, the Council has had a very good record of outturn financial position being within budget and of predicting investment income well so hasn't had to make additional significant provision. However, Covid-19 has brought about an unprecedented emergency response from the Council, which will test its reserves if Central Government do not reimburse MDC for its losses. The Reserves Table in paragraph 12.4 shows that the General Fund Reserve will fall below the minimum level in 2020/21 without the use of earmarked reserves or additional government funding.
- 12.3 Equally, it is important that the use of reserves is not increasing year on year, creating an unsustainable future problem. Normally, it is a Council goal to meet the budget gap by making savings.
- 12.4 A summary of the proposed use of reserves is shown in the table below and is based on a budget projection that includes Covid-19 pressures, other pressures, aspects such as inflation, further salary increase, pension fund contributions and savings identified.

Predicted General Fund Balance Movement	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Balance b/f				
General Fund Reserves	4,804	1,582	1,318	911
Earmarked Reserves	2,735	3,178	3,658	4,138
Total	7,539	4,706	4,976	5,049
Projected Movement				
General Fund Reserves	(3,276)	(210)	(407)	(914)
Earmarked Reserves	443	480	480	(960)
Total	(2,833)	270	73	(1,874)
Balance c/f				
General Fund Reserves	1,528	1,318	911	(3)
Earmarked Reserves	3,178	3,658	4,138	3,178
Total	4,706	4,976	5,049	3,175

13 CAPITAL

Capital spend and funding

- 13.1 The Council's Capital Programme is agreed on an annual basis and serves the following purposes:
- It sets out how capital projects contribute to the achievement of the Council's corporate objectives.
 - It establishes the criteria for the allocation of capital resources.
 - It provides a framework for the administration of capital projects and monitoring of outcomes.
- 13.2 It is important to note that all capital investment and disposal decisions have been made with reference to the strategic objectives.
- 13.3 The Council's capital programme has in general always been funded using capital receipts, external contributions or from capital grants and the current five-year capital programme is underpinned mainly by capital receipts.
- 13.4 The programmes for 2020/23 to 2023/24 have been set in detail, any schemes above this level would need to seek alternate external funds or new capital receipts from the sale of assets. However, it should be noted that the diminishing levels of capital receipts in future years would warrant a comprehensive review of the way the capital programme is supported in the long term. The financing of the indicative five-year capital programme as shown would leave a projected £1.343m of capital resources remaining at 31 March 2024. It should be noted that the capital programme for 2021/22 to 2023/24 will be developed further through consideration of bids and any asset management plans and replacement of equipment strategies as they become crystallised. Therefore, the use of capital receipts will change over the period.
- 13.5 A summary of the programme and funding is given at Appendix B.

Revenue implications of capital programme

- 13.6 The key driver for the Council's approach to capital expenditure is revenue affordability.
- 13.7 Most Capital Projects have financial implications on the annual Revenue Budget. The revenue implications can take a variety of forms and they include:
- Capital financing costs
 - Loss of investment income
 - Annual non-capital financing costs, e.g.
 - Salaries

- Rent
- Rates
- Energy costs
- On-going maintenance costs
- Income generated from the scheme or project

13.8 The revenue implication of the capital programme has adjusted due to Coronavirus and these changes have been built into the updated MTFS.

14 TREASURY MANAGEMENT LINKS WITH FINANCIAL STRATEGY

14.1 The Council will continue to invest in accordance with the approved Treasury Management Strategy and will plan any consideration of borrowing closely through the MTFS and five-year Capital Budget.

14.2 Investment income is used to support the budgets of the authority and movements in interest rates can result in significant changes. Since the MTFS reported in February 2020, the Bank of England has decreased its base rate down to 0.1%, due to Coronavirus. This is expected to reduce MDC's short-term investment income by approximately 50% for the foreseeable future.

15 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS (EIA)

15.1 The council is committed to ensuring equality and diversity issues are given proper consideration. Equality Impact Assessments form an important part of our decision making to enable us to assess the impact of decisions on our residents, stakeholders and customers. Where the impact is high mitigation plans can be developed to reduce that impact of decisions. These are completed in accordance with national guidance and best practice.

16 CONCLUSION

16.1 The MTFS should be considered in the context of the following issues:

- The impact of Covid-19 since Government measures were imposed from March 2020, many of which will remain in place many months to come.
- The unprecedented reductions to local government funding since the 2010 Comprehensive Spending Review.
- The Council's current satisfactory financial strength as shown by the General Fund reserves, robust financial management and excellent track record in achieving efficiency savings
- That challenging decisions will still need to be made to safeguard frontline services and maintain a balanced budget together with an adequate level of General Fund reserves.

- That the Usable Capital Receipts Reserve will be utilised over the MTFS period leaving an estimated balance of £1.343m as at 31 March 2024 but bearing in mind the comment in paragraph 13.4 above.
- 16.2 The financial position over the medium term is shown in Appendix A. This also shows that the level of General Fund un-ringfenced reserves is expected to be above the minimum level of balance of £2.6m over the medium term to 31 March 2024. This needs to be considered in the context that for 2021/22 – 2023/24 budget estimates have been constructed with high level assumptions and the detailed work will be undertaken in line with the Council's budget cycle timetable for those years and taking into account the government grants announced at the time.

List of Appendices

Appendix A sets out medium term projections for the General Fund
Appendix B sets out the medium-term projections for Capital
Appendix C shows the Policy on reserves and balances

Appendix A - Medium Term Financial Strategy 2020/21 - 2023/24

Medium Term Financial Strategy					
	Current Year 2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	Cumul- ative Gap
Baseline net expenditure	8,620	11,085	8,029	8,409	
Savings Future Model	0	(195)	(82)	0	
Covid-19 Revenue Budget Pressures	2,993	(2,689)	(80)	0	
Other Cost Pressures / Income	84	(134)	0	0	
Staff Inflation	60	166	169	173	
Pension 3-Year Forward Payment	0	(1,556)	0	1,556	
Other Inflation	0	202	208	212	
Movement in income from fees & charges	0	(2)	(55)	(5)	
New Homes Bonus Changes in Payment	0	479	220	198	
Covid-19 Grant from Central Government	(672)	672	0	0	
Contribution to/(Use) of General Fund balances	(872)	0	0	0	
Contribution to/(Use) of Earmarked Reserves	443	480	480	(960)	
Projected net expenditure to be funded	10,656	8,509	8,889	9,584	
Budget Gap / Use of Reserves	(2,404)	(210)	(407)	(914)	(3,936)
Funding					
Renewable Energy	(746)	(758)	(770)	(783)	
Business Rates Baseline Funding	(1,532)	(1,557)	(1,582)	(1,607)	
Business Rates Growth incl S31	(1,474)	(1,049)	(1,049)	(1,049)	
Business Rates levy/benefit	614	386	386	386	
Estimated Ctax and NDR collection fund (surplus) / deficit	(36)	(100)	(100)	(100)	
Estimated Yield from Council Tax	(5,078)	(5,221)	(5,367)	(5,517)	
Total Funding	(8,252)	(8,299)	(8,482)	(8,670)	
Band D council tax charge	202.40	206.43	210.54	214.73	
Taxbase	25,090.8	25,290.8	25,490.8	25,690.8	
Council Tax Target increase	2.53%	1.99%	1.99%	1.99%	

Appendix A1 - Detailed inputs to MTFS Appendix A

	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000
Cost Pressures Due to Covid-19	2993	(2,689)	(80)	0
1. Revenues & Benefits - Lost Sharing Adjustment and additional BDP	146	(146)	0	0
2. Parks Operational Services - Additional costs	15	(15)	0	0
3. Parks Rangers - Loss of income	22	(22)	0	0

4. Service Delivery - Additional Revs & Bens staff and overtime	228	(148)	(80)	0
5. Resources - overtime	16	(16)	0	0
6. Strategy & Performance - overtime	34	(34)	0	0
7. Unallocated savings in the 2020/21 MTFS	133	0	0	0
8. Contractual items and obligations	1,425	(1,425)	0	0
9. Riverside Park - Lost events income	11	(11)	0	0
10. Maldon Promenade - Loss of Commercial and Parking Income	480	(480)	0	0
11. Other Parks & Open Spaces - Lost income	26	(26)	0	0
12. Parks Events - Lost income	27	(27)	0	0
13. Maldon Town Centre Centre - Loss of Parking Income	200	(200)	0	0
14. Accommodation for rough sleepers	44	(44)	0	0
15. Additional glass recycling collection costs	117	(117)	0	0
16. Change in level of investment income	72	20	0	0

Covid-19 Assumptions

1. Sharing Adjustment usually brings in c.£100k annually. Extra Bad Debt Provision to cover 3% fall in collection.
2. Additional costs in quarter 1 to make parks safe.
3. Parish Council and Parking Partnership not paying first quarter.
4. Additional £140k for Revs & Bens staff (£80k ongoing) and additional overtime in response to Coronavirus.
5. Additional overtime in response to Coronavirus.
6. Additional overtime in response to Coronavirus.
7. Project to identify further Savings postponed a year due to focus on Coronavirus.
8. Contractual items and obligations.
9. No amusements for year and reduced activity.
10. Loss of almost all income during first quarter of 2020/21 and reduced income during remainder of year.
11. No income from Burnham land or Roundabout sponsorship for whole year.
12. No income from parks events for whole year.
13. Loss of almost all income during first quarter of 2020/21 and reduced income during remainder of year.
14. Provision made for first 6 months of 2020/21.
15. Extra truck and crew required for remainder of financial year due to significant increase in recycling.
16. Impact on interest rates and dividends due to pandemic as recorded and predicted by Arlingclose.

Other Budget Pressures	84	(134)	0	0
Gypsy/Traveller Growth - only for 20/21 relates to second world war 75th Commemoration.	0	(100)	0	0
Corporate Management – Audit costs and electronic processing fees underbudgeted.	14	0	0	0
Planning Policy - Drawdown from Reserves for Housing Needs Assessment and for Economic Study.	61	(61)	0	0
Highway Rangers - EC - Full cost recovery should be reflected in Budget.	(15)	0	0	0
Net Sundry Adjustments.	24	27	0	0

Appendix B – Capital Programme

Capital Programme 2020/21 - 2023/24				
Project Title	Original	Original	Original	Original
	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Vehicle & Plant Replacement				
Parks Vehicle - Rolling replacement programme	59	22	22	22
New Rangers Vehicle	20			
Information & Communication Technology				
I.T Upgrades	65			
PC and Printer Replacement Programme	70	35	35	35
Provision of Superfast Broadband				
Future Model IT	110			
E-Mail replacement - Upgrade of Exchange and Enterprise Vault	18			
Maldon Promenade				
Waste Transfer Station containers	12			
New accessible play site	48			
Splash Park new elements	10			
Blackwater Leisure Centre				
Air Handling Unit	25			
Parks & open Spaces				
Multi Use Games Area - Prom	20			
Multi Use Games Area - Burnham-On-Crouch	26			
Playsite resurfacing - WMCC & Hester Place	28			
Splash Park Elements	20			
Rivers				
New inflatable Rib	40			
Sport				
Replacement Carpet Astro pitch Plume school			80	

Housing				
Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants	420	420	420	420
Cemeteries				
Heybridge Cemetery Chapel Roof				
Maldon Cemetery foundation work	10			
Toilet provision Maldon & Heybridge Cemetery	25			
Cemetery Digger Trailer	2			
Cemetery Digger	13			
Car Parks				
Phase 2 CCTV upgrades and new equipment - Maldon High Street & Car Park System Upgrade	69			
Car Park Machines Prom and Maldon Town Centre				
Total Capital Programme	1,109	477	557	477
Funding				
Capital Receipts Applied	689	57	137	57
Government Grant	420	420	420	420
Total Funding	1,109	477	557	477

Appendix C – Policy on Reserves and Balances

Purpose

A Policy for Reserve and Balances represents good financial management and should be reviewed annually.

Application

The general principles set out in this Reserves and Balances Policy apply to the General Fund for Maldon District Council. It applies to reserves only and not provisions.

The Existing Legislative/Regulatory Framework

The requirement for financial reserves is acknowledged in statute. Sections 32 and 43 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 require billing and precepting authorities to have regard to the level of reserves needed for meeting estimated future expenditure when calculating the budget requirement.

The Local Government Finance Act 1992 and Local Government Act 2003 set out that a range of safeguards to mitigate against local authorities over-committing themselves financially. These include:

- the balanced budget requirement

- Chief Finance Officers' duty to report robustness of estimates and adequacy of reserves when considering the budget requirement.
- Requirement for local authority to make arrangements for proper administration of their financial affairs and that the Chief Finance Officer is that responsible person (section 151 duties)
- the requirements of the prudential code .
- the auditor will consider whether audited bodies have established adequate arrangements to ensure that their financial position is soundly based.

Generally, the balanced budget requirement is sufficient discipline for the majority of local authorities. This requirement is reinforced by section 114 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 which requires the Chief Finance Officer in England and Wales to report to all the authority's councillors if there is or is likely to be unlawful expenditure or an unbalanced budget. This would include situations where reserves have become seriously depleted and it is forecast that the authority will not have the resources to meet its expenditure in a particular financial year. The issue of a section 114 notice by the Chief Finance officer cannot be taken lightly and has serious operational implications.

The prudential code requires chief finance officers to have full regard to affordability when making recommendations about future capital programmes.

Guidance on specific levels of reserves and balances is not given in statute or by CIPFA (the recognised accountancy body for local government finance). There is no statutory minimum level of reserves. It is up to local authorities themselves to set their own level of reserves and balances on the advice of the Chief Finance Officer.

The Role of the Section 151 Officer

Within the existing statutory and regulatory framework, it is the responsibility of Section 151 Officer to advise the Council about the level of reserves that it should hold and to ensure that there are clear protocols for their establishment and use.

The Council then, acting on and giving due regard to the advice of the Section 151 Officer must make its own judgements on the level of reserves and balances taking into account all the relevant local circumstances. These include the operational and financial risks, and the arrangements in place to manage them, including adequate and effective systems of internal control. The duties of the Chief Finance Officer in relation to the level of reserves are covered by the legislative framework described in 3 above. Under the Local Government Act 2003, the Chief Finance Officer must report to the Council on the adequacy of reserves (section 27) and reserve transactions must be taken account of within the required budget monitoring arrangements (section 28).

Types of Reserves

Reserves can be held for three main purposes:

- a working balance to help cushion the impact of uneven cash flows and avoid unnecessary temporary borrowing – this forms part of general reserves

- a contingency to cushion the impact of unexpected events or emergencies
– this also forms part of general reserves
- a means of building up funds, often referred to as earmarked reserves, to meet known or predicted liabilities.

The Council also holds other reserves that arise out of the interaction of legislation and proper accounting practice. These reserves are not resource backed and cannot be used for other purposes include:

- a Pensions Reserve (required under IAS19). This is a specific accounting mechanism used to recognise the Council's share of pension fund liabilities in its balance sheet. As this is a reserve which arises from an accounting standard it is not available to finance Council expenditure.
- a Revaluation Reserve – this records unrealised gains in the value of fixed assets.
- a Capital Adjustment Account – this is a specific accounting mechanism used to reconcile different rates at which assets are depreciated under proper accounting practice.

For each earmarked reserve held by the Council there should be a clear protocol setting out:

- the reason for/purpose of the reserve
- how and when the reserve can be used
- procedures for the reserve's management and control
- a process and timescale for review of the reserve to ensure continuing relevance and adequacy.

This Reserves and Balances Policy ensures that when establishing reserves, Maldon District Council complies with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom (the Code) and the need to distinguish between reserves and provisions.

Policy and Principles to Assess the Adequacy of Reserves

The principles used by the Chief Finance Officer to assess the adequacy of unallocated general reserves when setting the budget, ensure that account is taken of the strategic, operational and financial risks facing the authority.

Setting the level of reserves is just one of several related decisions in the formulation of the medium term financial strategy and the budget for a year. This is carried out as part of the four-year Service and Resource Planning Process. Account is taken of the key financial assumptions underpinning the budget alongside a consideration of the authority's financial management arrangements. In addition to the cash flow requirements of the authority the following factors are considered:

- The treatment of inflation and interest rates
- Estimates of the level and timing of capital receipts

- The treatment of demand led pressures
- The treatment of planned efficiency savings / productivity gains
- The financial risks inherent in any significant new funding partnerships, major outsourcing arrangements or major capital developments
- The availability of other funds to deal with major contingencies and the adequacy of provisions.
- The economic situation, unforeseen events etc.
- The risks identified by the authority as part of its risk management arrangements

The Council holds two types of reserves

- General non-earmarked reserves (the Council's General Fund Balances)
- Earmarked reserves held for specific purposes

It is the current policy of Maldon District Council for the *General Fund reserves* (the General Fund Balances) to be held at a level of, at least, £2.6m. This is reviewed at least annually, during the setting of the budget. Factors which are considered during the review include; the level of balances as a percentage of the net revenue requirement, budget management and monitoring procedures, risk levels and financial projections for future years.

Reserves can be created or increased to ensure that the Service and Resource Planning Process takes account of any need to increase due to factors which may arise and to fully account for these factors.

In addition, the regular budget monitoring process carried out by the Council throughout the year will report on any changes in the level of balances or reserves.

The Reserves and Balances Policy is set in the context of the authority's Medium Term Financial Strategy and does not focus exclusively on short-term considerations. Balancing the annual budget by drawing on general reserves may be viewed as a legitimate short-term option. However, where reserves are to be deployed to finance recurrent expenditure this will be made explicit. Advice will be given by the Chief Finance Officer on the adequacy of reserves over the lifetime of the medium term financial projections. This is addressed in the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

A New Reporting Framework

The Chief Finance Officer has a fiduciary duty to local taxpayers, and must be satisfied that the decisions taken on balances and reserves represent proper stewardship of public funds. Compliance with this Reserves and Balances Policy assists in allowing the Chief Finance Officer to be satisfied that there is proper stewardship of public funds. The level and utilisation of reserves is determined formally by the Council at its meetings to approve the annual budget and the final accounts. These decisions are informed by the advice and judgement of the Chief Finance Officer.

The Reporting Policy for Maldon District Council is:

- The Medium Term Financial Strategy report to the Council includes a statement showing the proposed use of, or contribution to, general and earmarked reserves for the year ahead. Reference should be made as to the extent to which such reserves are to be used to finance recurrent expenditure
- The budget report itself includes a statement from the Chief Finance Officer on the adequacy of reserves in respect of the forthcoming financial year and the authority's medium term financial strategy.
- The Councils' annual statement of accounts includes a schedule of all reserves in the balance sheet, showing opening balance, net movement in year and year-end balance. Notes to individual reserves are given in the accounts and significant reserve movements are explained in the Chief Finance Officer's foreword to the accounts and the covering report to Council which accompanies the presentation of the accounts.
- The regular in-year Budget Monitoring reports to Committee include details of any transactions affecting the Council's reserves.

Good Governance

It is important that local authority councillors take responsibility for ensuring the adequacy of reserves and provisions when they set the budget. This will be subject to the advice of the Chief Finance Officer and the arrangements for reviewing and reporting on the level of reserves and balances as set out above.

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REPORT of DIRECTOR OF STRATEGY, PERFORMANCE AND GOVERNANCE

**to
COUNCIL
16 JULY 2020**

COVID-19 - RESET AND RECOVERY MEMBER WORKING GROUP

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To seek Council approval to establish a Covid-19 Reset and Recovery Member Working Group to consider and inform the work being undertaken to produce a Covid-19 Reset and Recovery Plan for Maldon District Council.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- (i) That the Council agrees that a Covid-19 Reset and Recovery Member Working Group of up to six Members be established;
- (ii) That Council appoints six Member representatives to the Working Group.

3. SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES

3.1 Background

- 3.1.1 The Council has played a central role in supporting the residents of the District throughout the Covid outbreak. Business continuity plans were activated in March 2020 to enable the Council to react to the national response to the Covid1-19 virus in what has been a fast moving and quickly changing situation.
- 3.1.2 The approach of the Council has and continues to be, to maintain service delivery to support Maldon District residents, whilst also protecting our staff and Members, and following Government guidance. Actions are guided by the latest Government guidance and the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) have been engaged with all of the major co-ordinating groups, primarily through the Essex Resilience Forum. These groups include representatives from Central Government, Police, Fire, Health, Local Authorities, Voluntary Sector, and the Covid response across the District has been co-ordinated with all partners.
- 3.1.3 Some of the key actions and issues addressed throughout the Covid emergency have included:
- enabling staff to access technology to work from home and reviewing and updating working procedures to reflect the changing work environment.

- working with county and national planning agencies to ensure a coordinated response for those shielding and residents requiring assistance;
- working with voluntary sector partners to establish the Community Hub service, providing support to vulnerable residents;
- making decisions in the public interest on the short-term suspension of Council facilities and services and where appropriate recovery work to commence re-delivery of these in a safe and appropriate manner;
- introduction of remote meetings of council, with the implementation of the necessary associated technology and process.
- supporting Businesses to re-open effectively and find new ways of working, to maximise local economic recovery.
- digesting and disseminating the fast moving Covid-19 related guidelines and restrictions so that the Council, and Maldon District residents, have understood the appropriate responses at each stage of the pandemic to mitigate risk to themselves and to protect the safety of others;
- recording and analysing the effect of Coronavirus on both Council and key delivery contractor staffing capacity so that impact to residents could be mitigated and services continue as close to normal as possible.

3.2 **Planning for Recovery**

3.2.1 As the Covid-19 situation develops we now look to recovery and the Council will engage at a National, County and local level to manage a safe recovery for the Council, and our communities and businesses.

3.2.2 The impacts of the Covid emergency have been wide ranging, affecting all aspects of our lives, through the direct impact of the virus, the changes we have had to make to maximise the safety of our staff and residents, and the impact and future implications of those changes and adaptations.

3.2.3 As a Council we are already involved in significant work, both looking at the impact of the emergency and also the way in which we deliver services in the new circumstances. These actions and considerations include:

- Council Business Impact – The changes that are required internally to business continuity arrangements for the Council including arrangements for the period during which social distancing measures are still required; guided by government directives. Consideration of the financial impact on the Council.
- Community Impacts – Social impact on the District as a whole and potential support required long term, with focus on those who fall into marginalised or vulnerable groups. This includes working with hard working families, those not previously considered vulnerable and key stakeholders in voluntary sector to build on the partnership working established throughout the emergency.
- Business and Economic Support – Impact on local economy, supporting economic recovery, additional benefit claimants, debt issues, and fulfilling required roles as identified by Government initiatives, including distribution of financial support.

- 3.2.4 As well as the need to co-ordinate activity, this is a major opportunity for the Council to capture the learning and partnership working that has developed through the emergency and to harness it for the future.

3.3 Terms of reference

- 3.3.1 It is proposed that the terms of reference relate to the following key areas, expanding on the work highlighted above. The Terms of Reference will relate to the Working Group having an overview, to ensure that the Council is addressing the workstreams set out below, as part of a co-ordinated and cohesive strategy in addressing the issues relating to the Covid-19 recovery:

- Supporting businesses;
- Council Financial recovery;
- Town Centre Recovery;
- Economic Development;
- Future ways of working;
- Other recovery activities.

- 3.3.2 The Terms of Reference will be finalised at the first meeting of the Working Group.

- 3.3.3 It is likely that the implications of this work will influence the future Corporate Plan and Medium-Term Financial Strategy of the Council. The work of this group and any emerging plan will help to inform those decisions.

- 3.3.4 Where other groups exist for specific issues, these will not be duplicated within this group but will feed in, with this group taking a co-ordinating role.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 Establishing this Working Group will provide an opportunity for Member input into the development of the Councils Covid-19 Reset and Recovery Plan and support the Council in resolving the wider impacts and opportunities created through the current challenges.

5. IMPACT ON STRATEGIC THEMES

- 5.1 As outlined above the impact of Covid-19 is acute and wide ranging, and impacts a number of strategic themes, creating both challenges and opportunities to review the way we work.

6. IMPLICATIONS

- (i) **Impact on Customers** – The impact of Covid-19 has imposed major changes to the way in which the Council has service customers throughout the emergency. This has included significant channel shift, away from face-to-

face or telephone contact, to online solutions. It is important that this change is reviewed to determine how services are provided in future.

- (ii) **Impact on Equalities** – . The impact of Covid has been seen to affect some groups more than others Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities for example. It is important that these issues are explored and addressed in the recovery plan.
- (iii) **Impact on Risk** – A co-ordinated and cohesive recover plan will help to address the risks the Council is currently facing, which include financial risks based on loss of income due to the Covid emergency.
- (iv) **Impact on Resources (financial and human)** – As above, the Covid emergency has had an impact on the financial and human resources of the Council and the work of the group will help to mitigate the impact as we go forward.
- (v) **Impact on the Environment** – One of the impacts of the Covid Emergency has been a positive impact on the environment, through the reduction of traffic and reduced industrial output. However there have been negative environmental impacts too including increased fly-tipping and litter. Whilst the proposals above do not impact directly, the emerging plan will address the environmental issues.
- (vi) **Impact on Strengthening Communities** – The partnership working and community response to Covid 19 was another positive impact and the Recovery Plan will seek to build upon the partnerships and shared objectives that have been established

Background Papers: None.

Enquiries to: Paul Dodson, Director of Strategy, Performance and Governance, (email paul.dodson@maldon.gov.uk).



REPORT of DIRECTOR OF SERVICE DELIVERY

**to
COUNCIL
16 JULY 2020**

COUNCIL CONSTITUTION – ADDITION TO OFFICER SCHEME OF DELEGATION – PAVEMENT LICENCES

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To request approval for an addition to the Scheme of Delegation giving power to the Director of Service Delivery fully to administer a new scheme of licensing for the use of pavements for food and drink businesses within the District.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- (i) That the Scheme of Delegation giving powers to the Director of Service Delivery under the sub- heading “Others” is amended to add the following:
- “To carry out all functions under the Business and Planning Act 2020 – sections 1-10 -for the licensing of the use of highways for the consumption of food and drink outdoors, including the grant, revocation and enforcement of such licences”
- (ii) That the fee for Pavement Licence applications be set at £100.

3. SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 The Government has introduced the Business and Planning Bill 2020 (the Act) with the purpose of assisting the recovery of the economy in relation to several pressing matters following the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Bill has passed through the House of Commons and is at an advanced stage in the House of Lords. The Government believes that the Act needs to receive the Royal Assent as quickly as possible.
- 3.2 One of the those matters relates to the temporary grant of pavement licences for those businesses supplying food and drink. The licence would enable the business owner to place removable furniture on pavements such as serving stalls, table and chairs. This will enable the public to purchase food and drink in the open air and allow them to consume it more safely in the open air.
- 3.3 The application must be made to the Council with a fee of up to £100. There has to be public consultation for seven days and consultation with Essex County Council, as highway authority. The Council will have a further seven days to determine the

application otherwise a licence will be deemed to have been granted. Representations received during the public consultation period must be taken into account, and a decision whether to grant will include whether there would be any unacceptable obstruction of the pavement or other safety issue. Conditions can be imposed.

- 3.4 A licence can last from a minimum of three months up to 30 September 2021 which is the date when this legislative provision will expire. The grant of a licence will have the effect of deemed of planning permission for the activity, and provide exemption from street trading legislation.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The Council needs to be ready to implement this new provision as soon as it becomes law. It forms a part of the Government's strategy to assist businesses to recover. The information so far shows that there is less likely to be the spread of the disease if normal life activity is conducted in the open air. This new provision implements that strategy. The Council needs to be agile in being able to deal with applications under the new provisions, and delegation to the Director of Service Delivery will provide that agility.

5. IMPACT ON STRATEGIC THEMES

- 5.1 Assists the recovery of the local economy within a public health safety context.

6. IMPLICATIONS

- (i) **Impact on Customers** – Business owners will be able to apply for licences.
- (ii) **Impact on Equalities** – None.
- (iii) **Impact on Risk** – None.
- (iv) **Impact on Resources (financial)** – It is anticipated that this work will be absorbed by the existing staff and so there will be no known financial implications.
- (v) **Impact on Resources (human)** – Staff will be expected to absorb this new work and so have more pressure. It is not known how many applications will be made.
- (vi) **Impact on the Environment** – Could affect the appearance of the main town centres within the District.

Background Papers: Business and Planning Bill 2020.

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