

## **I stand to present the 2020/21 Budget**

The budget reflects the financial requirements of the Council and the overarching principal of delivering first class services to resident's and customers.

### **The budget meets our fiscal responsibilities and follows the advice and guidance of the Section 151 Officer**

Over the last three years Government funding has reduced by 22%, in real terms this equates to around £425k, the Council has not received Revenue Support Grant (RSG) since 2018, the sum total of RSG is now negative which means if the government chooses they could ask us to repay around £330,000.

**Furthermore, the Government has announced that the New Homes Bonus will cease to exist from 2021. Whilst the details of the new funding formula is currently unknown it is likely that it will provide less than the current New Homes Bonus scheme**

**On the plus side the Council has completed the Transformation Programme which will deliver efficiency savings and income of £1.9m per annum based on the 18/19 budget.**

For the Council to become Sustainable and meet its MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY for 2020/1 – 2023/4 it must start to generate NEW commercial income via its Corporate Projects Plan. Projects from the plan and other new emerging projects will be presented to Council and its committees for consideration in the coming months.

The council pension fund has a requirement of £25m and is currently underfunded by approximately £7m compared to £8.5m a few years ago. Following the request from the FUND ACTURIES it is proposed a payment of £1.5m is made to the scheme to cover the years 2020 to 2023

**Sums of £100k each will be required to support both the Resources Department and the doorstep collections of Glass and Green Waste for recycling. The investment in the Waste Collection Service will enable us to work more efficiently – it will also mean that the 800 plus households that are currently waiting for a garden waste recycling bin will get one and that moving forward, and in recognition of the HOUSING DELIVERY PROJECTION of the LDP and the expected requirements of our existing residents an additional 2,500 green bins will be made available to residents over the coming years.**

To meet these extraordinary cost's, it will be necessary to draw down £1.7m from reserves.

**To support the budget Capital Project Bids have been kept to a bare minimum and only include those items that are considered essential or a where there has been a service failure**

With regards to DISCRETIONARY FEES and CHARGES the council has where appropriate met and consulted with customers and residents to ensure that any CHANGES that it is planning are FAIR AND TRANSPARENT. As a result, and in recognition of the enormous value they bring to the District the Council will NOW meet with the Thames Sailing Barge Operators on a regular basis to ensure that their needs and those of the Council are properly understood.

**It would be remiss of me not to highlight some of the financial issues that we will be facing over the coming years. Towards the end of the administration the first statutory review of the LDP will need to be undertaken - the estimated cost to deliver this piece of work is likely to be in the region of £600,000. The Bradwell B project is gathering momentum with an announcement today that the GDA GENERIC DESIGN ASSESSMENT is moving to the final stage of the assessment process, it is also anticipated that the first public consultation will start in the Spring and whilst an initial PPA has been agreed with BRB this will only cover certain elements of the consultation and DCO process. As far as MAXIMISING the SOCIO-ECONOMIC benefits to the District are concerned the Council will have to meet the costs of developing its own SOCEC team. Costs for both projects could with the agreement of Council be met partly through the New Homes Bonus Reserve.**

The costs of dealing with Planning Appeals can be significant - following today's announcement that the Council has passed the Statutory Housing Delivery Test and that its five year housing land supply is re-confirmed as a result; it is hoped that the number of appeals and associated costs will reduce accordingly.

**The Budget provides for the delivery of an inordinate amount of services and whilst we monitor our performance through both Statutory and Corporate indicators it is always helpful to see how others see us. To that end I am delighted to announce that the latest Quality of Life survey by the Halifax has reported that Maldon District is the 5<sup>th</sup> best place to live in the UK. The survey was based on 26 different factors including safety, access to green space, wellbeing, lifestyle, affordability, cleanliness and happiness. The District Council should be very proud of the part it has played in making that happen.**

Each year the Council faces inflationary costs that it has no control over, for 20/21 these include in salary cost increases of £163,000, a £221,000 increase in Employers Pension Contributions and £69,000 to mitigate the impact of the increase in the living wage on the WASTE CONTRACT

**With the exception of the draw down from reserves the budget is balanced but to achieve that we need to protect our tax base, keep track with inflation, meet costs outside of our control and ensure that our statutory and other frontline services are maintained to the highest standards for both our residents and customers. We are therefore proposing that the Maldon District Council's Band D Council Tax is increased by £5 per annum; this equates to 42p per month for a band D Property, and that all other bands are determined proportionally in accordance with the Local Government Finance Act 1992**

In summary chairman... To meet our overarching corporate Objective of a 'Sustainable Council – with a Prosperous Future' we need to become financially independent and sustainable and thereafter use every pound we raise to deliver first class services for our residents and customers. Chairman to do otherwise will eventually leave us with no reserves and the bleak prospect of having to merge with another authority.

**This budget lays the FOUNDATION STONES for a SUSTAINABLE, RESILIENT AND AUTONOMOUS COUNCIL - going forward we MUST build on THIS BUDGET to ensure we prosper for the benefit of our residents and future generations who choose to live in MALDON District**

CHAIRMAN I COMMEND THE BUDGET TO THE COUNCIL.

Cllr Adrian S Fluker

Leader of the Council

Ward Member for Southminster