



**MINUTES of
COUNCIL
24 FEBRUARY 2022**

PRESENT

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

1. CHAIRMAN'S NOTICES

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and went through some general housekeeping arrangements for the meeting.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor V J Bell and R H Siddall.

3. MINUTES - 2 SEPTEMBER 2021

RESOLVED

- (i) that the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 2 September 2021 be received.

Minute No. 239 – Statement of Community Involvement – Adoption

Councillor Mrs P A Channer referred to this item and how at this meeting she along with the Council had acknowledged the good work of an officer, Leonie Alpin, when this item was considered. She asked that the Minutes be amended to include the Officers' name. This was duly agreed.

RESOLVED

- (ii) that subject to the above amendment the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 2 September 2021 be confirmed.

4. MINUTES - 4 NOVEMBER 2021

RESOLVED

- (iii) that the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 4 November 2021 be received.

Minute No. 354 – Chairman’s Notices

In response to a query from Councillor C Morris as to why his Point of Order had not been recorded in the Minutes, the Chairman advised of the following amendment to the fifth paragraph of this Minute to address this matter:

“~~Following interruptions by~~ Councillor C Morris ~~then raised a Point of Order. This was not taken by the Chairman and Councillor Morris kept repeating his Point of Order. Councillor Morris kept interrupting and other Members raised their voices.~~ The Chairman advised Councillor Morris that his behaviour was unacceptable and had breached the Council’s Code of Conduct.”

Councillor Mrs P A Channer referred to the comments made by Councillor Morris and asked that his reference to ‘channer-itus’ be recorded in the Minutes. The Chairman agreed to this.

At this point Councillor Morris provided further comment on the procedure when a Point of Order is raised.

The Chairman put the Minutes, as amended, to the Council and they were duly agreed by assent.

RESOLVED

- (iv) that subject to the above amendment the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 4 November 2021 be confirmed.

5. MINUTES - 16 DECEMBER 2021

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 16 December 2021 be approved and confirmed.

6. MINUTES 18 JANUARY 2022 (EXTRAORDINARY)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the extraordinary meeting of the Council held on 18 January 2022 be approved and confirmed.

7. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor W Stamp declared a non-pecuniary interest as a Member of Essex County Council (ECC).

Councillor M F L Durham declared a non-pecuniary interest as a Member of ECC, advising that ECC were the main beneficiaries for Council Tax.

Councillor C Mayes declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 9c – Discretionary Fees and Charges 2022 / 23 as she was the secretary for Maldon and Heybridge Heritage Harbour and the Brent Trust.

Councillor Mrs J L Fleming declared a non-pecuniary interest as a Member of ECC and any matter relating to them on the agenda.

Councillor A S Fluker advised that in relation to Agenda Item 13 – Updated Discretionary Non-Domestic Rate Relief Policy, given his involvement with Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in the District, how they worked and trained with regards to the Policy he would leave the chamber at the start of this item and not return.

Councillor M S Heard declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 9c – Discretionary Fees and Charges 2022 / 23 as a Trustee of the Brent Steam Tug Trust.

Councillor C Morris advised he would not be voting on anything to do with Council Tax. He made a brief statement at this point during which Councillor Mrs M E Thompson raised a Point of Order advising that declarations were for stating matters of fact. Councillor Morris continued referring to the legality of Council Tax in relation to the Local Government and Finance Act 1992.

Councillor K M H Lagan declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 9c – Discretionary Fees and Charges 2022 / 23 as a Member of the Maldon Heritage Harbour Association.

Councillor Miss S White declared in relation to Agenda Item 13 – Updated Discretionary Non-Domestic Rate Relief Policy she ran a small business and would listen to the debate but not vote on this item of business.

Councillor R P F Dewick declared that as a recipient of Non-Domestic Rates he had a pecuniary interest and would leave the room for Agenda Item 13 – Updated Discretionary Non-Domestic Rate Relief Policy.

Following the declarations Councillor Stamp raised a question regarding council tax arrears and during the discussion that followed Councillor Stamp asked that the Minutes note that Councillor Morris had made an allegation at this point.

8. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were none.

9. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman highlighted the work undertaken by the Council in light of the recent storms Eunice and Franklin. He outlined some of the work done by Council staff during this period, including the assistance provided to residents. The Chairman thanked all involved in the response for their work over this period, coming together as one team, at short notice. These thanks were echoed by Members.

At this point Councillor C Morris referred to a homeless person who had approached the Council for assistance prior to the storms and the response given which he felt was inadequate.

Councillor E L Stephens referred back to the previous item of business, Public Questions and commented that there was a member of the public in attendance who

had indicated he had a question. The Chairman sought clarification and it was confirmed that the Council had not received any notification from persons wanting to speak at this meeting. However, the Chairman advised that he would hear the question. The member of the public, Mr Bert Cottle, then addressed the Council and asked in respect of the budget why there was a need for a Non-Disclosure Agreement to be issued to people that work for the Council and whether the cost came out of the Council Tax budget. In response, the Chairman advised that this question would be passed to the Monitoring Officer who would respond outside of the meeting.

10. PERFORMANCE, GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE - 18 NOVEMBER 2021

RESOLVED

- (i) That the Minutes of the Performance, Governance and Audit Committee held on 18 November 2021 be received.

The Council considered the following recommendation set out in the Minutes.

Minute No. 388 – Decision to Opt into the National Scheme for Audit Appointments

RESOLVED

- (ii) that the public sector audit appointments' invitation to opt into the sector-led option for the appointment of external auditors to principal local government and police bodies for five financial years from 1 April 2023 be accepted.

RESOLVED

- (iii) That the Minutes of the Performance, Governance and Audit Committee held on 18 November 2021 be agreed.

11. STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE - 6 JANUARY 2022

RESOLVED

- (iv) That the Minutes of the Strategy and Resources Committee held on 6 January 2022 be received.

The Council considered the following recommendation set out in the Minutes.

Minute No. 426 – Pay Policy Statement 2022 / 23

RESOLVED

- (v) that the Pay Policy Statement attached at Appendix 1 to the Minutes of the Strategy and Resources Committee, be adopted for 2022.

RESOLVED

- (vi) That the Minutes of the Strategy and Resources Committee held on 6 January 2022 be agreed.

12. PERFORMANCE, GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE - 13 JANUARY 2022

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Performance, Governance and Audit Committee held on 13 January 2022 be agreed.

13. STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE - 3 FEBRUARY 2022

Councillor C Swain, Vice-Chairman of the Strategy and Resources Committee presented a number of recommendations coming forward from the last meeting of the Strategy and Resources Committee. He advised Members that a number of the recommendations were not for consideration at this point as they formed part of Agenda Item 9 – 2023 / 23 Budget and Medium-Term financial Strategy.

The Council considered the following recommendations as set out on the agenda.

Review of Memorials in Cemeteries, Parks and Open Spaces Policy

Councillor Swain moved the recommendations, these were duly seconded and agreed.

Councillor K M H Lagan asked that this dissent in respect of this item be recorded for the reasons as advised to the Strategy and Resources Committee. This was noted.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the sale of benches as an individual item available for purchase, which are then installed in our Parks and Open spaces, cease;
- (ii) That a new scheme be introduced where customers can lease a plaque on a bench for ten-year periods;
- (iii) That the updated Memorials in Cemeteries, Parks and Open Spaces Policy (attached as Appendix 1 to the Minutes of the Strategy and Resources Committee) be agreed and implemented no later than 1 April 2022;
- (iv) That the new scheme be introduced with effect from 1 April 2022 and will not be applied retrospectively.

Lease Agreement

Councillor Swain moved the recommendations, these were duly seconded and agreed.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the Director of Service Delivery seek legal clarification in relation to Clauses 16 and 19 of the lease;
- (ii) That subject to (i) above the Council agrees a new lease for 30 years for the organisation outlined in the report;
- (iii) That in consultation with the Chairman of the Strategy and Resources Committee, the Director of Service Delivery be given authority to agree the annual rent figure in line with a current market valuation with annual Retail Price Index (RPI) adjustment.

14. JOINT STANDARDS COMMITTEE - 8 FEBRUARY 2022

Councillor M G Bassenger, Chairman of the Joint Standards Committee presented the following recommendation coming forward from the last meeting of the Joint Standards Committee and set out on the Council agenda.

Adoption of New Code of Conduct for Members

Councillor Bassenger moved the recommendation, this were duly seconded and agreed. Councillor C Morris asked that his dissent in respect of this be noted.

RESOLVED that the Model Code of Conduct attached as Appendix 1 to the Council agenda, (version of May 2021) together with the amendment resolved at the Joint Standards Committee on 8 February 2022 to include 'or well-being' in Appendix B, paragraph 9 (a) of the code be adopted and that the code take effect by 1 November 2022 unless brought into effect prior by the Monitoring Officer depending on when Essex County Council bring into effect the New Code of Conduct.

15. MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL

The Council noted the list of Committees that had met before and since the last meeting of the Council, up until Wednesday 16 February 2022 for which Minutes had been published.

16. 2022 /23 BUDGET AND MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

The Council considered the reports of the Section 151 Officer, on the recommendations of the Strategy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 6 January 2022 relating to the revenue budget and the proposed level of Council for 2022 / 23.

The Leader of the Council made a budget speech (attached at **APPENDIX 1** to these Minutes), thanking the Director of Resources and his team for their hard work and commended the budget for 2022 / 23 to the Council.

In response to the budget speech, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Councillor Mrs J L Stilts, thanked the Leader of the Council and also acknowledged the hard work put into the budget for this and subsequent years in light of the current covid issues.

The Chairman of the Council proposed that the recommendations as set out in reports 9a to 9f be taken en-bloc. This was duly seconded.

The Director of Resources provided a brief summary of the reports highlighting the:

- Member engagement that had taken place;
- Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and forecast budget changes over the next three years;
- financial impact of Covid;
- use of General Funds.

Councillor A S Fluker advised that he wished to make an additional proposal in accordance with Procedure Rule 1(13)(b). He referred to the significant draw down on reserves necessary over the forthcoming year which he felt was unsustainable and highlighted the comments of the Section 151 Officer who cautioned that unless the

Council acted sooner its reserves would run out. Councillor Fluker then provided further explanation in respect of this. Referring to the work of the Finance Member Working Group (the Working Group) and given the Council's fiscal position he felt the membership of the Working Group should be expanded to include Members that did not sit on the Strategy and Resources Committee. Councillor Fluker advised that he had consulted with the Section 151 Officer and proposed that with immediate effect a full budget review be carried out by a cross chamber, cross Committee Working Group and that this Group report back to the Council with its recommendations in the spring. This proposal was duly seconded.

The Leader of the Council reminded Members of the Finance Working Group and suggested like the Planning Policy Working Group that this be opened up to Members from outside of the Working Group membership. She advised that Officers had been requested to ensure that all Members were briefed on such matters, with the next briefing being on commercial projects which she encouraged all Members to attend.

A lengthy discussion ensued during which further comments were made. It was suggested that the Finance Working Group and the Strategy and Resource Committee be asked to consider inviting Members from outside of the Committee. It was noted that the Terms of Reference for this Working Group sat with the Strategy and Resources Committee. Following further debate the Leader confirmed that other Members could be invited to the Finance Working Group to broaden its membership. Councillor Fluker highlighted urgency of the matter and therefore the need to ensure that something was brought back to the Council in the spring. With the Leader citing that other Members could be invited to attend the Finance Working Group he then withdrew his earlier proposal.

The Chairman reminded the Council that a recorded vote was required in respect of the following items:

- 9e - Revised 2021 / 22 and Original 2022 / 23 Budget Estimates and Council Tax 2022 / 23
- 9f – Council Tax 2022 / 23

He referred back to the earlier proposal that they be considered en-bloc and the voting was as follows:

For the recommendation:

Councillors M G Bassenger, Miss A M Beale, B S Beale, R G Boyce, Mrs P A Channer, R P F Dewick, M F L Durham, M R Edwards, Mrs J L Fleming, A S Fluker, M S Heard, M W Helm, B B Heubner, A L Hull, J V Keyes, K M H Lagan, C Mayes, C P Morley, S P Nunn, N G F Shaughnessy, N J Skeens, W Stamp, E L Stephens, Mrs J C Stilts, C Swain, Mrs M E Thompson and Miss S White.

Against the recommendation:

None.

Abstention:

None.

Capital and Investment Strategies for 2021 / 22 and Minimum Reserve Strategy 2022 / 23

RESOLVED

- (i) That the Capital and Investment Strategies for 2021 / 22 and Minimum Reserve Strategy 2022 / 23 report and following appendices be approved for 2022 / 23:

- the Capital Strategy (Appendix 1 to the report);
- the Capital Project Bids (Appendix 2);
- Investment Strategy (Appendix 3), and
- Minimum Revenue Provision Statement (Appendix 4).

Treasury Management Strategy 2022 / 23

RESOLVED

- (ii) That the Treasury Management Strategy 2022 / 23 be approved, along with the following amendments:
 - a) The counterparty limit for Operational Banking be increased from £2m to £3m to allow for larger value transactions to be managed within the counterparty limit, as per Table 3 at Appendix 1 to the report.
 - b) The sector limit for Money Market Funds be increased from £12m to £20m to allow for larger investment within this safe and flexible sector without exceeding the sector limit, as per Tables 3 and 4 at Appendix 1 to the report.
- (iii) That the Treasury Management Policy (TMP 5) amendment be noted as being brought into line with the Treasury Management Strategy as per TMP 5 at Appendix 2 to the report.

Discretionary Fees and Charges 2022 / 23

RESOLVED

- (iv) That the detailed Fees and Charges for 2022 / 23 as set out in Appendix A to the report be agreed.

Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2022 / 23 to 2024 / 25

RESOLVED

- (v) That the Medium-Term Financial Strategy for 2022 / 23 to 2024 / 25 (as at 24 February 2022) at Appendix 1 to the report be approved.

Revised 2021 / 22 and Original 2022 / 23 Budget Estimates and Council Tax 2022 / 23

RESOLVED

- (vi) that the following be approved:
 - (a) the Revised 2021 / 22 and Original 2022/23 General Fund Revenue Budget Estimates (Appendices 1, 2 and 3 to the report),
 - (b) an average Band D council tax of £212.40 (excluding parish precepts) (£5 increase) for 2021 / 22 (Appendix 1 to the report),
 - (c) policies on the designated use of financial reserves (Appendix 4 to the report),
 - (d) maintain the current policy of a minimum general fund balance of £2,600,000.

- (vii) that the Council gives due regard to the Director of Resources' (Section 151 Officer) statement on the robustness of budgets and adequacy of reserves in Appendix 5.

Council Tax 2022 / 23

RESOLVED

- (viii) that Maldon District Council's Council Tax Requirement for 2022 / 23 is set at £5,421,362;
- (ix) that the Maldon District Council's Band D Council Tax (excluding Parish precepts) is set at £212.40, reflecting an increase of £5.00, all other bands being determined in accordance with the relevant Sections of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended;
- (x) that the precept demands and level of Band D Council Tax of the Essex County Council, the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority for both Police and Fire, and the various Parish Councils within the District be determined as set out in the report, all other bands being determined in accordance with the relevant Sections of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended;
- (x) That it be noted that at its meeting on 18 January 2022 the Council calculated its Council Tax Base for the year 2022 / 23:
- (a) for the whole district as 25,524.3 Item T in the formula in Section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (the Act), as amended by the Localism Act 2011; and
- (b) for dwellings in those parts of its district to which a Parish precept relates as listed below:

| | |
|-------------------|---------|
| Althorne | 511.5 |
| Asheldham | 64.3 |
| Bradwell-on-Sea | 340.7 |
| Burnham-on-Crouch | 3,465.4 |
| Cold Norton | 504.3 |
| Dengie | 49.1 |
| Goldhanger | 313.9 |
| Great Braxted | 175.2 |
| Great Totham | 1,276.5 |
| Hazeleigh | 60.6 |
| Heybridge | 2,813.3 |
| Heybridge Basin | 272.0 |
| Langford | 90.8 |
| Latchingdon | 470.1 |
| Little Braxted | 82.2 |
| Little Totham | 196.1 |
| Maldon | 5,541.6 |
| Mayland | 1,493.9 |
| Mundon | 149.0 |
| North Fambridge | 435.5 |
| Purleigh | 578.3 |
| Southminster | 1,618.8 |
| St. Lawrence | 591.7 |

| | |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| Steeple | 189.8 |
| Stow Maries | 86.2 |
| Tillingham | 395.7 |
| Tollesbury | 998.9 |
| Tolleshunt D'arcy | 450.7 |
| Tolleshunt Knights | 421.8 |
| Tolleshunt Major | 276.1 |
| Ulting | 74.2 |
| Wickham Bishops | 1,004.4 |
| Woodham Mortimer | 259.6 |
| Woodham Walter | 271.9 |
| | 25,524.3 |

- (xi) Calculate that the Council Tax Requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2022/23 (excluding Parish precepts) is £5,421,362.
- (xii) That the following amounts be calculated by the Council for the year 2022 / 23 in accordance with new Sections 31 to 36 of the Act as amended:
- (a) £28,809,602 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act, taking into account all precepts issued to it by Parish Councils (**i.e. gross expenditure including Parish precepts**)
 - (b) £21,064,827 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act (**i.e. gross income including government grants**)
 - (c) £7,024,775 being the amount by which the aggregate at xii(a) above exceeds the aggregate at xii(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act, as its Council Tax Requirement for the year (Item R in the formula in Section 31B of the Act) (**i.e. Council Tax Requirement including Parish precepts**).
 - (d) £275.22 being the amount at xii(c) above (Item R) divided by the amount at 1(a) above (Item T), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (**i.e. average Band D Council Tax including Parish precepts**)
 - (e) £1,603,414 being the aggregate amount of all special items (Parish precepts) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act (**i.e. Parish Council precepts**)
 - (f) £212.40 being the amount at xii(d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at xii(e) above by Item T (x(a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no special item relates (**i.e. District**

Council Band D Council Tax excluding Parish precepts).

(g) Basic Amount of Council Tax by Parish 2022 / 23

| Town/Parish | Local Precept | Town/Parish Band D | District + Town/Parish Band D |
|--------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Althorne | 25,000.00 | 48.88 | 261.28 |
| Asheldham | 3,569.95 | 55.52 | 267.92 |
| Bradwell-on-Sea | 27,540.00 | 80.83 | 293.23 |
| Burnham-on-Crouch | 198,390.00 | 57.24 | 269.64 |
| Cold Norton | 38,749.00 | 76.84 | 289.24 |
| Dengie | 2,726.05 | 55.52 | 267.92 |
| Goldhanger | 10,000.00 | 31.86 | 244.26 |
| Great Braxted | 9,550.00 | 54.51 | 266.91 |
| Great Totham | 17,054.00 | 13.36 | 225.76 |
| Hazeleigh | 1,161.47 | 19.15 | 231.55 |
| Heybridge | 200,000.00 | 71.09 | 283.49 |
| Heybridge Basin | 34,000.00 | 125.00 | 337.40 |
| Langford | 6,183.00 | 68.12 | 280.52 |
| Latchingdon | 54,590.00 | 116.12 | 328.52 |
| Little Braxted | 4,500.00 | 54.74 | 267.14 |
| Little Totham | 8,790.00 | 44.81 | 257.21 |
| Maldon | 380,581.00 | 68.68 | 281.08 |
| Mayland | 100,249.00 | 67.11 | 279.51 |
| Mundon | 5,500.00 | 36.91 | 249.31 |
| North Fambridge | 20,250.00 | 46.50 | 258.90 |
| Purleigh | 44,000.00 | 76.08 | 288.48 |
| Southminster | 140,990.00 | 87.10 | 299.50 |
| St. Lawrence | 26,763.00 | 45.23 | 257.63 |
| Steeple | 10,531.00 | 55.45 | 267.85 |
| Stow Maries | 6,695.00 | 77.66 | 290.06 |
| Tillingham | 36,200.00 | 91.49 | 303.89 |
| Tollesbury | 92,599.50 | 92.70 | 305.10 |
| Tolleshunt D'arcy | 21,514.00 | 47.73 | 260.13 |
| Tolleshunt Knights | 10,000.00 | 23.70 | 236.10 |
| Tolleshunt Major | 8,900.00 | 32.23 | 244.63 |
| Ulting | 4,317.00 | 58.20 | 270.60 |
| Wickham Bishops | 21,545.00 | 21.45 | 233.85 |
| Woodham Mortimer | 4,975.53 | 19.17 | 231.57 |
| Woodham Walter | 26,000.00 | 95.62 | 308.02 |

These amounts are calculated by adding to the amount at xii(f) above, the amounts of the special item or items relating to dwellings in those parts of the Councils area mentioned above divided in each case by the amount at x(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(3) of the Act, as the basic amounts of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate.

(h) Calculation of Basic Amounts of Council Tax by Parish for Different Valuation Bands

| PARISH | Band A | Band B | Band C | Band D | Band E | Band F | Band G | Band H |
|--------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Althorne | 174.19 | 203.22 | 232.25 | 261.28 | 319.34 | 377.40 | 435.47 | 522.56 |
| Asheldham | 178.61 | 208.38 | 238.15 | 267.92 | 327.46 | 387.00 | 446.53 | 535.84 |
| Bradwell-on-Sea | 195.49 | 228.07 | 260.65 | 293.23 | 358.39 | 423.55 | 488.72 | 586.46 |
| Burnham-on-Crouch | 179.76 | 209.72 | 239.68 | 269.64 | 329.56 | 389.48 | 449.40 | 539.28 |
| Cold Norton | 192.83 | 224.96 | 257.10 | 289.24 | 353.52 | 417.79 | 482.07 | 578.48 |
| Dengie | 178.61 | 208.38 | 238.15 | 267.92 | 327.46 | 387.00 | 446.53 | 535.84 |
| Goldhanger | 162.84 | 189.98 | 217.12 | 244.26 | 298.54 | 352.82 | 407.10 | 488.52 |
| Great Braxted | 177.94 | 207.60 | 237.25 | 266.91 | 326.22 | 385.54 | 444.85 | 533.82 |
| Great Totham | 150.51 | 175.59 | 200.68 | 225.76 | 275.93 | 326.10 | 376.27 | 451.52 |
| Hazeleigh | 154.37 | 180.09 | 205.82 | 231.55 | 283.01 | 334.46 | 385.92 | 463.10 |
| Heybridge | 188.99 | 220.49 | 251.99 | 283.49 | 346.49 | 409.49 | 472.48 | 566.98 |
| Heybridge Basin | 224.93 | 262.42 | 299.91 | 337.40 | 412.38 | 487.36 | 562.33 | 674.80 |
| Langford | 187.01 | 218.18 | 249.35 | 280.52 | 342.86 | 405.20 | 467.53 | 561.04 |
| Latchingdon | 219.01 | 255.52 | 292.02 | 328.52 | 401.52 | 474.53 | 547.53 | 657.04 |
| Little Braxted | 178.09 | 207.78 | 237.46 | 267.14 | 326.50 | 385.87 | 445.23 | 534.28 |
| Little Totham | 171.47 | 200.05 | 228.63 | 257.21 | 314.37 | 371.53 | 428.68 | 514.42 |
| Maldon | 187.39 | 218.62 | 249.85 | 281.08 | 343.54 | 406.00 | 468.47 | 562.16 |
| Mayland | 186.34 | 217.40 | 248.45 | 279.51 | 341.62 | 403.74 | 465.85 | 559.02 |
| Mundon | 166.21 | 193.91 | 221.61 | 249.31 | 304.71 | 360.11 | 415.52 | 498.62 |
| North Fambridge | 172.60 | 201.37 | 230.13 | 258.90 | 316.43 | 373.97 | 431.50 | 517.80 |
| Purleigh | 192.32 | 224.37 | 256.43 | 288.48 | 352.59 | 416.69 | 480.80 | 576.96 |
| Southminster | 199.67 | 232.94 | 266.22 | 299.50 | 366.06 | 432.61 | 499.17 | 599.00 |
| St. Lawrence | 171.75 | 200.38 | 229.00 | 257.63 | 314.88 | 372.13 | 429.38 | 515.26 |
| Steeple | 178.57 | 208.33 | 238.09 | 267.85 | 327.37 | 386.89 | 446.42 | 535.70 |
| Stow Maries | 193.37 | 225.60 | 257.83 | 290.06 | 354.52 | 418.98 | 483.43 | 580.12 |
| Tillingham | 202.59 | 236.36 | 270.12 | 303.89 | 371.42 | 438.95 | 506.48 | 607.78 |
| Tollesbury | 203.40 | 237.30 | 271.20 | 305.10 | 372.90 | 440.70 | 508.50 | 610.20 |
| Tolleshunt D'arcy | 173.42 | 202.32 | 231.23 | 260.13 | 317.94 | 375.74 | 433.55 | 520.26 |
| Tolleshunt Knights | 157.40 | 183.63 | 209.87 | 236.10 | 288.57 | 341.03 | 393.50 | 472.20 |
| Tolleshunt Major | 163.09 | 190.27 | 217.45 | 244.63 | 298.99 | 353.35 | 407.72 | 489.26 |
| Ulting | 180.40 | 210.47 | 240.53 | 270.60 | 330.73 | 390.87 | 451.00 | 541.20 |
| Wickham Bishops | 155.90 | 181.88 | 207.87 | 233.85 | 285.82 | 337.78 | 389.75 | 467.70 |
| Woodham Mortimer | 154.38 | 180.11 | 205.84 | 231.57 | 283.03 | 334.49 | 385.95 | 463.14 |
| Woodham Walter | 205.35 | 239.57 | 273.80 | 308.02 | 376.47 | 444.92 | 513.37 | 616.04 |

These amounts are calculated by multiplying the amounts at xii(g) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band, divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation Band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year, in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands.

- (xiii) That it be noted for the year 2022 / 23 the major precepting authorities have issued precepts to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each category of dwellings in the Council's area as indicated in the table below:

| Precepting Authority | Valuation Bands | | | |
|--|-----------------|-----------|---|-----------|
| Essex County Council | A | £934.08 | E | £1,712.48 |
| | B | £1,089.76 | F | £2,023.24 |
| | C | £1,245.44 | G | £2,335.20 |
| | D | £1,401.12 | H | £2,802.24 |
| Essex Police, Fire Crime Commissioner (PFCC) Fire and Rescue Association (F&RA) Essex Police and Crime Commissioner | A | £145.68 | E | £267.08 |
| | B | £169.96 | F | £315.64 |
| | C | £194.24 | G | £364.20 |
| | D | £218.52 | H | £437.04 |
| Essex PFCC F&RA Essex Fire and Rescue Authority | A | £50.22 | E | £92.07 |
| | B | £58.59 | F | £108.81 |
| | C | £66.96 | G | £125.55 |
| | D | £75.33 | H | £150.66 |

- (xiv) That, having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at xii(h) and xiii above, the Council, in accordance with Sections 30 and 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended, hereby sets the following amounts as the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2021 / 22 for each part of its area and for each of the categories of dwelling shown in Table A attached.
- (xv) Determines that the Council's basic amount of Council Tax for 2022 / 23 is not excessive in accordance with the principles approved under Section 52ZB of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended.

As the billing authority, the Council has not been notified by a major precepting authority that its relevant basic amount of Council Tax for 2022 / 23 is excessive and that the billing authority is not required to hold a referendum in accordance with Section 52ZK of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended.

TABLE A

Total Council Tax Amounts (£) by Band and Area 2022 / 23

| Parish/Area | Band A | Band B | Band C | Band D | Band E | Band F | Band G | Band H |
|-------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Althorne | 1,304.17 | 1,521.53 | 1,738.89 | 1,956.25 | 2,390.97 | 2,825.69 | 3,260.42 | 3,912.50 |
| Asheldham | 1,308.59 | 1,526.69 | 1,744.79 | 1,962.89 | 2,399.09 | 2,835.29 | 3,271.48 | 3,925.78 |
| Bradwell-on-Sea | 1,325.47 | 1,546.38 | 1,767.29 | 1,988.20 | 2,430.02 | 2,871.84 | 3,313.67 | 3,976.40 |
| Burnham-on-Crouch | 1,309.74 | 1,528.03 | 1,746.32 | 1,964.61 | 2,401.19 | 2,837.77 | 3,274.35 | 3,929.22 |
| Cold Norton | 1,322.81 | 1,543.27 | 1,763.74 | 1,984.21 | 2,425.15 | 2,866.08 | 3,307.02 | 3,968.42 |
| Dengie | 1,308.59 | 1,526.69 | 1,744.79 | 1,962.89 | 2,399.09 | 2,835.29 | 3,271.48 | 3,925.78 |
| Goldhanger | 1,292.82 | 1,508.29 | 1,723.76 | 1,939.23 | 2,370.17 | 2,801.11 | 3,232.05 | 3,878.46 |
| Great Braxted | 1,307.92 | 1,525.91 | 1,743.89 | 1,961.88 | 2,397.85 | 2,833.83 | 3,269.80 | 3,923.76 |
| Great Totham | 1,280.49 | 1,493.90 | 1,707.32 | 1,920.73 | 2,347.56 | 2,774.39 | 3,201.22 | 3,841.46 |
| Hazeleigh | 1,284.35 | 1,498.40 | 1,712.46 | 1,926.52 | 2,354.64 | 2,782.75 | 3,210.87 | 3,853.04 |

| Parish/Area | Band A | Band B | Band C | Band D | Band E | Band F | Band G | Band H |
|--------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Heybridge | 1,318.97 | 1,538.80 | 1,758.63 | 1,978.46 | 2,418.12 | 2,857.78 | 3,297.43 | 3,956.92 |
| Heybridge Basin | 1,354.91 | 1,580.73 | 1,806.55 | 2,032.37 | 2,484.01 | 2,935.65 | 3,387.28 | 4,064.74 |
| Langford | 1,316.99 | 1,536.49 | 1,755.99 | 1,975.49 | 2,414.49 | 2,853.49 | 3,292.48 | 3,950.98 |
| Latchingdon | 1,348.99 | 1,573.83 | 1,798.66 | 2,023.49 | 2,473.15 | 2,922.82 | 3,372.48 | 4,046.98 |
| Little Braxted | 1,308.07 | 1,526.09 | 1,744.10 | 1,962.11 | 2,398.13 | 2,834.16 | 3,270.18 | 3,924.22 |
| Little Totham | 1,301.45 | 1,518.36 | 1,735.27 | 1,952.18 | 2,386.00 | 2,819.82 | 3,253.63 | 3,904.36 |
| Maldon | 1,317.37 | 1,536.93 | 1,756.49 | 1,976.05 | 2,415.17 | 2,854.29 | 3,293.42 | 3,952.10 |
| Mayland | 1,316.32 | 1,535.71 | 1,755.09 | 1,974.48 | 2,413.25 | 2,852.03 | 3,290.80 | 3,948.96 |
| Mundon | 1,296.19 | 1,512.22 | 1,728.25 | 1,944.28 | 2,376.34 | 2,808.40 | 3,240.47 | 3,888.56 |
| North Fambridge | 1,302.58 | 1,519.68 | 1,736.77 | 1,953.87 | 2,388.06 | 2,822.26 | 3,256.45 | 3,907.74 |
| Purleigh | 1,322.30 | 1,542.68 | 1,763.07 | 1,983.45 | 2,424.22 | 2,864.98 | 3,305.75 | 3,966.90 |
| Southminster | 1,329.65 | 1,551.25 | 1,772.86 | 1,994.47 | 2,437.69 | 2,880.90 | 3,324.12 | 3,988.94 |
| St. Lawrence | 1,301.73 | 1,518.69 | 1,735.64 | 1,952.60 | 2,386.51 | 2,820.42 | 3,254.33 | 3,905.20 |
| Steeple | 1,308.55 | 1,526.64 | 1,744.73 | 1,962.82 | 2,399.00 | 2,835.18 | 3,271.37 | 3,925.64 |
| Stow Maries | 1,323.35 | 1,543.91 | 1,764.47 | 1,985.03 | 2,426.15 | 2,867.27 | 3,308.38 | 3,970.06 |
| Tillingham | 1,332.57 | 1,554.67 | 1,776.76 | 1,998.86 | 2,443.05 | 2,887.24 | 3,331.43 | 3,997.72 |
| Tollesbury | 1,333.38 | 1,555.61 | 1,777.84 | 2,000.07 | 2,444.53 | 2,888.99 | 3,333.45 | 4,000.14 |
| Tolleshunt D'arcy | 1,303.40 | 1,520.63 | 1,737.87 | 1,955.10 | 2,389.57 | 2,824.03 | 3,258.50 | 3,910.20 |
| Tolleshunt Knights | 1,287.38 | 1,501.94 | 1,716.51 | 1,931.07 | 2,360.20 | 2,789.32 | 3,218.45 | 3,862.14 |
| Tolleshunt Major | 1,293.07 | 1,508.58 | 1,724.09 | 1,939.60 | 2,370.62 | 2,801.64 | 3,232.67 | 3,879.20 |
| Ulting | 1,310.38 | 1,528.78 | 1,747.17 | 1,965.57 | 2,402.36 | 2,839.16 | 3,275.95 | 3,931.14 |
| Wickham Bishops | 1,285.88 | 1,500.19 | 1,714.51 | 1,928.82 | 2,357.45 | 2,786.07 | 3,214.70 | 3,857.64 |
| Woodham Mortimer | 1,284.36 | 1,498.42 | 1,712.48 | 1,926.54 | 2,354.66 | 2,782.78 | 3,210.90 | 3,853.08 |
| Woodham Walter | 1,335.33 | 1,557.88 | 1,780.44 | 2,002.99 | 2,448.10 | 2,893.21 | 3,338.32 | 4,005.98 |

17. NOTICE OF MOTION

In accordance with Procedure Rule 4, the Chairman advised that a motion proposed by Councillor C Morris and seconded by Councillor M G Bassenger had been received.

Councillor Morris read out his motion and proposed that the following amendments be agreed along to his the motion. This proposal and the amendments were duly seconded by Councillor Bassenger.

“That MDC resolves to write an open letter to MP John Whittingdale *and Priti Patel* asking ~~him~~*them* to raise the lack of GP access (by possible parliamentary question, if necessary) in our District and enquire about emergency funding for Maldon District and any other areas with high *patient to* doctor ~~to-patient~~ ratios, to assist the residents and the emergency departments of our hospitals which are also under strain in these medically deprived areas.”

During the debate that followed the Leader of the Council and other Members outlined the work by the Council that had both taken place and was continuing in conjunction with Members of Parliament, the NHS and the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) in relation to this matter. It was noted that Mr Whittingdale had in December 2021 raised a question regarding this matter in Parliament.

The Leader of the Council proposed an amendment to the motion, that the suggested letter be updated to acknowledge the work that had been done and what had been found out so far but also seek the current state of play and an update on the situation. She suggested that an update be sought from both MPs as well as through the MP Liaison meeting. This proposal was duly seconded.

Councillor Morris responded to the proposed amendment from the Leader raising concern regarding requesting an update. He felt a solid, clear and concise question should be asked of both MPs and to agree the proposed amendment in the name of the Leader would dilute his motion.

In accordance with Procedure Rule No. 13 (3) Councillor C Morris requested a recorded vote.

Further debate ensued with comments being made in relation to the difficulty in accessing GPs including appointments and recent changes to healthcare provision. Some Members also provided updates following meetings they had attended with the CCG who were discussing similar concerns to those raised.

The Chairman moved the amendment to the original motion as proposed by Councillor Morris. This was duly agreed by assent.

The Chairman then put the proposal in the name of the Leader that the proposed letter be updated to acknowledge the work done, what has been found out so far on the current situation highlighting the need for access to GPs and that responses be reported back. The Leader suggested that these issues could also be taken up through the Leader / MP Liaison meetings. This was duly agreed by assent and the Chairman reported that this now became the substantive motion which following a further vote was agreed by assent.

RESOLVED that the Council writes an open letter to Members of Parliament, John Whittingdale and Priti Patel in respect of the lack of GP access in our District, acknowledging the work that they have done and seeking an update on the situation following the question being raised in Parliament. The letter should also highlight the need for access to GPs as well as enquiring about emergency funding for Maldon District and any other areas with high patient to doctor ratios, to assist the residents and the emergency departments of our hospitals which are also under strain in these medically deprived areas.

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

There were none.

19. COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2022 / 23

The Council the report of the Director of Resources seeking Members' consideration of the Local Council Tax Support Scheme (LCTS) and associated policies for 2022 / 23.

It was noted that the Scheme was significantly unchanged to support the delivery of a largely cost neutral LCTS within the proposed budget for 2022 / 23. Provision had been made to enable changes during the year and an Equality Impact Assessment had been carried out and was attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

The report suggested that the Council continued to offer the Exceptional Hardship Fund for 2022 / 23 and an updated framework to reflect universal credit arrangements was attached at Appendix 2.

The Leader of the Council moved the recommendations as set out in the report, these were duly seconded and agreed by assent.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the following changes to the existing schemes are approved:
 - a. a cost of living increase in line with the Department for Work and Pensions schemes be included in the Local Council Tax Support Scheme for 2022/23 for Pensioners only;
 - b. that any legislative changes being introduced to the Housing Benefit Scheme, for 2022 / 23 are mirrored in the Councils LCTS scheme to ensure consistency;
 - c. minor technical amendments to ensure that we are able to administer the scheme reflecting current local and national guidance;
- (ii) this decision has been made following Members careful reading of and regard to the Equality Impact Assessment at Appendix 1 to the report;
- (iii) That the updated Exceptional Hardship Fund for Council Tax Support Framework (Appendix 2 to the report) be endorsed.

Councillor M F L Durham advised that he was an election agent for the local election taking place today and had to attend the count. He left the meeting at this point and did not return.

Following their earlier declarations of interest Councillors R P F Dewick, A S Fluker and M W Helm left the meeting at this point and did not return.

Councillor Miss S White revised her earlier declaration of interest, advising that she would be leaving the chamber for the next item of business as her interest was pecuniary.

20. UPDATED DISCRETIONARY NON-DOMESTIC RATE RELIEF POLICY

The Council considered the report of the Director of Resources seeking approval of the updated Discretionary Non-Domestic Rate Relief Scheme attached at Appendix 1 to the report. It was noted that this updated and replaced existing policy to reflect changes announced by Central Government to support businesses. Central Government would be funding the new relief.

The Leader of the Council moved the recommendation set out in the report. This was duly seconded and agreed by assent.

RESOLVED that the proposed Discretionary Non-Domestic Relief Scheme (attached at Appendix 1 to the report) be approved.

Councillor Miss S White returned to the chamber at this point.

21. TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE POLICY AND LICENSING CONDITIONS

The Council considered the report of the Director of Service Delivery providing feedback following consultation with the taxi trade and other stakeholders on the proposed Taxi and Private Hire Policy (the Policy) (attached as Appendix 4 to the report) and licensing conditions. The policy was based on statutory guidance issued by the Department of Transport in 2020 and its main purpose was to ensure safeguarding measures to better protect children and vulnerable adults.

Responses to the consultation were set out in Appendix 1 to the report. Based on the feedback received a number of amendments to the licensing conditions were proposed and set out in Appendices 2 and 3 to the report.

The Leader of the Council put the recommendations as set out in the report. These were duly seconded and agreed by assent.

RESOLVED

- (i) that the amendments to the licensing conditions (set out in Appendices 2 and 3 to the report) be approved;
- (ii) that the Taxi and Private Hire Policy (Appendix 4 to the report) be approved.

22. COMMITTEE MEETINGS AND FUTURE OPTIONS

The Council considered the report of the Director of Strategy, Performance and Governance seeking Members' consideration of ongoing arrangements for Committee meetings in light of changes to government restrictions.

The report set out the measure agreed by the Council at its meeting on 2 September 2021 and the current legislation / guidance in respect of them. In light of the changing restrictions the Risk Assessment had been updated and was attached at Appendix A to the report. Further changes agreed by the Corporate Leadership Team in January 2022 were set out in the report.

Details of the current arrangements to stream meetings via YouTube were set out in the report and Members were asked to consider this and whether they wished to continue the You Tube Stream.

The Leader of the Council put the recommendations as set out in the report to the Council. These were duly seconded.

Councillor K M H Lagan referred to the Government legal consent ending and enabling as many public to physically attend meetings as possible. He then proposed that Members and Officers are at liberty to take whatever measures they feel fit to protect their own health and safety and the Chamber should accommodate as many members of the public to observe / participate as reasonably practicable and working within guidance and regulations. This proposal was duly seconded and agreed.

During the discussion that followed support was given for the continuation of YouTube live streaming, although an upgrade to the sound quality was requested. It was also requested that face masks be made available for Officers attending meetings. At this point and in response to a question the Director of Strategy, Performance and Governance clarified that the proposal from Councillor Lagan removed all current measures. The Chairman further clarified that subject to the availability of masks for officers Members were agreeing the recommendations set out in the report.

RESOLVED that Members and Officers are at liberty to take whatever measures they feel fit to protect their own health and safety and the Chamber should accommodate as many members of the public to observe / participate as reasonably practicable and working within guidance and regulations, including:

- noting the updated risk assessment for physical meetings set out at Appendix A to the report;
- extending the emergency decision for physical public meeting attendance, subject to capacity numbers as outlined in Appendix A to the report;
- continuing YouTube live streaming of meetings past the removal of Covid restrictions in light of the information set out at section 3.8 of the report;
- for non-regulatory matters those members unable to physically attend be allowed to join meetings remotely to ask questions / engage in debate, subject to Chairman approval, (noting that they would not be able to vote).

23. UPDATE ON SOCIAL ENTERPRISE ACCELERATOR FUND AND MEMBER REPRESENTATION

The Council considered the report of the Director of Service Delivery updating Members on the Additional Restriction Grant (ARG) funded to the Social Enterprise Accelerator Fund and seeking appointment of a Member representative to an Internal Awarding Panel.

The report provided background information following approval of the defrayal approach for the remaining Additional Restriction Grant (ARG) and the work the Council was undertaking in partnership with Social Enterprise East of England (SEEE) to deliver a Social Enterprise Accelerator Fund. £250,000 had been allocated to the project for grants up to £50,000 and the report outlined the grant application process developed and the proposal for an Internal Award Panel to review applications.

The Leader of the Council moved the recommendations set out in the report and proposed that in addition to those Members detailed in the report Councillor W Stamp be appointed to Internal Award Panel as a representative for Burnham-on-Crouch. This was duly seconded and agreed.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the creation of an Internal Award Panel for the Social Enterprise Accelerator Fund be approved;
- (ii) That following Members be appointed to the Internal Award Panel for the Social Accelerator Fund for the remainder of the Municipal Year.
 - Councillor Mrs P A Channer, Leader of the Council;
 - Councillor R H Siddall, Chairman of the Strategy and Resources Committee;
 - Councillor C Mayes, Liaison with the Maldon Business Forum;
 - Councillor W Stamp, Burnham-on-Crouch representative.

24. BUSINESS BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES CONSIDERED BY THE CHAIRMAN TO BE URGENT

There was none.

25. 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 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.

Councillor N J Skeens left the meeting at this point and did not return.

26. LEISURE CONTRACT UPDATE

The Council considered the report of the Leisure Contract Task and Finish Working Group (the Working Group) advising Members of the on-going work from the Working Group in relation to the current position with the Leisure Services. The report also sought Members' approval for the Working Group to continue to meet to review the forecasted financial parameters.

The report set out the work undertaken by the Working Group since its last report to the Council. This included a summary of the current position as well as the historical financial impact on Maldon District Council Leisure Centres as a result of the pandemic.

A proposed variation to the contract and management fee for 2022 / 23 had been reviewed by the Working Group. The report set out the details of a counter proposal submitted, acknowledged and accepted in principle, subject to a formal Council decision.

The Leader of the Council presented the report and moved the recommendations as set out in the report. This was duly seconded.

Members expressed thanks to Mr Butcher, Commercial Manager, his team and the Working Group for the work that had been done.

The Chairman put the proposal in the name of the Leader which was duly agreed.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the Council agrees a variation to the Places Leisure contract for financial year 2022 / 23. Within this agreement Places Leisure will undertake responsibility for staffing and day to day management of the splash park for the 2022 season;
- (ii) That the Leisure Contract Working Group continues to meet on a regular basis to consider options for the future management of Leisure Centres.

There being no further items of business the Chairman closed the meeting at 10.05 pm.

**M S HEARD
CHAIRMAN**

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Budget Speech 2022/23

The financial year 2021/22 has been a challenging one for Maldon District Council, again impacted by the Covid-pandemic, but one in which much has been achieved.

The Council has continued supporting the national response to the Covid Pandemic assisting the Vaccination programme, by provision of the Maldon vaccination centre delivered, by the NHS, through our District Council offices.

We continued to support our businesses distributing over £10 million of government support to local businesses to ensure that they, associated jobs and livelihoods are protected.

Core services throughout the pandemic have been maintained, including:

- Maintaining kerbside collection of waste and recycling through working with our partners SUEZ, despite challenging operating conditions including the national driver shortage.
- Delivered Environmental Health service whilst meeting the increased challenges and regulation regarding Covid
- Ongoing delivery of customer engagement and service delivery whilst working remotely

We continued supporting the community response to Covid. We will build on the strong partnerships formed, with the establishment of 'One Maldon District'. Bringing together the public, private and community sectors to support health and wellbeing in the district.

We adopted our Climate Action Strategy – Our Home Our Future, - to bring about positive change for the District. The Strategy was welcomed and praised as excellent work by ECC's Climate Action Commission's Chairman.

The Maldon District Local Development Plan (LDP) is an essential important document. The LDP Review has started and the Issues and Options consultation is underway and I urge everyone to engage and respond.

Work continued to improve the efficiency of the Council via the process improvement programme funded through the 20/21 budget.

Other notable achievements include:

- Resilient IT systems meant we were not impacted by the national ‘Log4j’ cyber-attack in December 2021
- Shortlisted for the Workplace Transformation award for our work on Future Ways of Working ([Shortlist | Smarter Working Live 2021](#))
- Jointly secured a Local Digital Fund (LDF) bid of £280k with Colchester and Tendring, to develop a Dynamics task allocation tool in line with our ICT strategy
- Continued commitment to encourage residents’ views, using them to shape services through running a budget survey as part of the budget setting process, plus our annual resident and business survey.
- The Council developed and approved a new Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy with a focus on how we can support and engage better with our communities.

In November, we launched the ‘Enough is Enough’ campaign highlighting the recent increase in unacceptable behaviour towards our staff and members. This has been supported by other local authorities. We look now to move on from these challenges but it remains we will challenge any form of unacceptable behaviour towards the Council.

I recently became Leader of the Council. I thank those that have gone before me.

I also thank all Councillors and Officers for their dedication, relentlessly defending in the fight against Covid. Working closely with partners and various other bodies all have applied great effort to support and protect our communities.

We now need to march positively and proactively forward in the recovery from Covid.

Promotion and support of our economy; environment; efficient, effective and value services are important.

We had to be innovative and adopt new ways of working during the pandemic and those foundations can be built upon in seeking further improvements in the delivery of accessible cost- effective services.

We need to do the right things. Continue to be a Council that is focussed on its residents. Services need to support people. It matters for them, we need to be

responsible. People need to have confidence in our Council, our ability to deliver.

Therefore, budgets need to be sustainable, it is not just about balancing budgets, it is important that use of reserves is not increasing year on year. We need to look ahead, organise things, consider, and take action .

With the challenges of the past year it is not totally unexpected that the budget for the year succumbed to some pressure. There was additional budget pressure that could not be offset, currently the forecast indicates £112k will be utilised from the general fund to balance the budget.

Council finances may appear healthy with the General Fund Reserve currently sitting at £5.6 million. However, the Medium-Term Financial Strategy shows increasing budgetary pressures in coming years forecasting the General Fund level will slip below the minimum reserve level of £2.6m by 2024/25, unless action is taken. This being against a potentially worsening picture with costs rising due to increased inflation at 5.5%. Regular review of the MTFS will maintain an accurate forecast.

The financial settlement from Government for 2022/23 is a one-year settlement. It includes Business Rates Baseline funding; Lower Tier Services Grant; Services Grant; Rural Services Delivery Grant plus New Homes Bonus with an increase to £961,172 from £929,981 in 2021 / 22. The Rural Services Delivery Grant allocation remains at £32,339 ,the same as 2021 /22 .The Services Grant allocation of £105,646, is to help alleviate the 1.25% increase in National Insurance. The provisional base Homelessness Prevention Grant is maintained at £142,320, with an additional £3,690 for Domestic Abuse New Burdens.

It is important to highlight that the settlement funding assessments calculation regarding the core spending power of local authorities includes Councils increasing Council tax by £5 per annum.

During the budget setting process for 2022/23 the Council's cross-party Finance Member Working Group has met on several occasions to provide input into the budget. I'm pleased that members have had the opportunity to work collaboratively and share their views at these and other meetings, particularly the Strategy and Resources Committee. Part of that process ensuring that any growth is kept to a minimum recognising the financial challenges and unknowns ahead of us.

However, some investment was considered right. This includes:

Some additional staffing to ensure services have the capacity to operate.

Investing in our commercial activity to bring forward income generation and wider benefits for the District

Ensuring capacity to deliver on Council policy such as the Climate Action Strategy.

Due to the financial challenges ahead, 2022/23 requirements are for consolidation, focus on delivery of existing policies and priorities, as per our Corporate plan 2021-23. The Council will be exploring the opportunities for the District that may emerge from the recently published Levelling Up White Paper.

Priorities will include:

- Deliver process improvement training for staff and build capacity for continual improvement work across the organisation
- Review major corporate contracts including waste and leisure.
- Explore opportunities for closer partnership working and shared service opportunities with other local authorities where they improve efficiency, enhance resilience and capacity of the individual councils.
- Deliver a Customer Access Strategy, linking with the ICT strategy and Process Improvement Framework and demonstrating how we will support our customers offline.
- Deliver an updated commercial strategy, seeking to increase Council income through an approach that brings together our strategy and commercial objectives.

Tourism is a key driver for our local economy and the council can help to create opportunities for further growth and prosperity, focussing again on our tourism offer now restrictions are lifting.

All Members need to be kept informed, engaged with, so enabling greater understanding and sound decision making. Officers have been charged to prepare briefings on, initially, Commercial Projects and the Levelling Up White Paper.

Constant challenge remains to ensure best value services and deal with the need for financial sustainability whilst acknowledging the pressures that households are also facing.

Bearing in mind our financial pressures and need for financial sustainability we are proposing that Maldon District Council's Band D Council Tax is increased by £5 for 2022/23; this equates to 42p per month for a band D Property. Whilst bringing in this increase, we note that:

- Government has recognised the pressures currently facing both Councils and residents and has introduced a £150 refund for those in band A-D properties as well as allocating money for a discretionary fund.
- The Council tax rise of £5 equates to approx. 10p a week.
- The Council continues to be impacted by the cost of COVID
- Inflation is at 5.5%, Council tax increase is well below at 2.41%.
- Commercial activities being developed to generate income.

The Council is the guardian of the public purse and needs to spend wisely. To ensure our residents know how we perform, if services are efficient, effective, and best value, do we deliver on our priorities, officers are charged to prepare an easily readable understandable Annual Report for them.

I thank Chris Leslie, the Director of Resources and his team for all the hard work they have done regarding the budget.

CHAIRMAN I COMMEND THE BUDGET TO THE COUNCIL.