Appendix A

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY (MTFS) 2017-2020

Purpose of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)

Introduction

This Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) provides a high-level assessment of the financial resources required to deliver the Council's strategic priorities and essential services over the next four years. It sets out how the Council can generate and use these resources within the financial context and constraints likely to be faced.

Like all local authorities, North West Leicestershire (NWL) is influenced by national government policy, funding changes and Government spending announcements, and the review of the MTFS builds on the existing strategy and updates assumptions to reflect known funding announced as part of the local government financial settlement for 2016/17 and estimated multi-year settlement figures beyond this. Financial planning assumptions will need to be kept under constant review given the increased level of uncertainty which will continue until more detail is released on funding later in the year and as implications from the move to 100% rates retention are clarified.

The Benefits of the MTFS

The MTFS assists in:

- Delivering the vision and priorities of the Council
- Improving financial planning and the strategic financial management of the Council's revenue and capital resources
- Considering future opportunities and investments
- Maximising the use of resources available to the Council
- Ensuring that the Council provides value for money
- Reviewing the Council's reserves policy to ensure there is protection against unforeseen events
- Responding to external pressures
- Developing a sustainable budget over the medium term
- Highlighting financial risks and mitigating controls.

National Economic Context

The UK economy

Following the decision to leave the EU, the long-term position of the UK economy will be largely dependent on the agreements the Government is able to secure with the EU, particularly with regard to Single Market access.

The short-term outlook is easier to predict. Economic and political uncertainty may have an impact on investment intentions and tighten credit availability, prompting lower activity levels and potentially a rise in unemployment. The downward trend in growth apparent on the run up to the referendum may continue through the second half of 2016.

Government predictions are that UK CPI inflation (currently 0.3% p.a.) will rise close to target over the coming year as previous rises in commodity prices and the sharp depreciation in sterling begin to drive up imported material costs for companies.

With Britain exiting the EU, local government will encounter a range of new challenges and fresh opportunities. There is a need to focus on the economic, social and democratic impact on local government.

Government borrowing and spending

The Government's intention to reduce the UK's current budget deficit and level of debt through public spending control has been well documented. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has indicated that there will be no 'austerity' budget, but the Comprehensive Spending Review on 23 November 2016 will be used to reduce the deficit. There is likely to be a continued commitment to protect services such as the National Health Service, education, overseas aid; and support for social care is continuing the pressure on the local government sector's overall national budget.

Future borrowing and spending will be affected by general economic conditions and Government priorities. In particular there is concern regarding plans for the 100% retention of business rates and the Government pledge to fix government funding to a four-year council efficiency plan.

The changing landscape of local government funding

Over the last few years, the nature of local government funding has changed from a central to local focus. Government has introduced:

- Incentivised Funding - New Homes Bonus (NHB) introduced in 2011
- The Business Rates Retention Scheme and Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme in April 2013
- Council Housing – the HRA self-financing regime, ending the housing subsidy system and giving more freedom and flexibilities to councils

- Devolution deals that result in additional responsibilities and funding from Government.

Business Planning

There are key links between the MTFS and other plans and strategies and a coherent joined up approach to each of these is essential:

Business Planning

Council Delivery Plan
MTFS Business Excellence Model BEE programme
Service & Team Delivery Plans

The Government's current arrangements for funding local government present local authorities with a higher degree of uncertainty and risk than the previous arrangements; and the uncertainty on the impact of exit from the EU will only exacerbate this. This presents NWL with both challenges and opportunities, and we need to continue to use our business planning to ensure that we have the right focus and aligned resources so that we achieve our outcomes and financial sustainability.

Council Delivery Plan

Our Council Delivery Plan covering five priority areas and our MTFS needs to be aligned to it:

Building Confidence in Coalville - We aim to regenerate and build confidence in Coalville.

Value for Money - We aim to provide council services that people feel give good value for money.

Homes and Communities - We aim to improve the wellbeing of people living in North West Leicestershire.

Business and Jobs - We aim to make the district a better place to invest, work and visit.

Green Footprints - We aim to make people feel proud to be part of a cleaner, greener district.

Business Excellence Model

Our Business Excellence Model (BEM) looks to drive forward an approach to our priorities that are focussed on our desired outcomes and how they can be delivered efficiently and effectively. In addition it seeks to ensure we are flexible in order to respond to changing demand and opportunities; and that we are always learning and developing. At its centre is the customer and its primary objective is to ensure that we are the leading choice for customers and that we provide high quality, responsive, reliable services that the customer wants and values.

BEE Programme

Within our business planning there is a strong link to our BEE Programme as we need to ensure we develop an organisation that has the right skills, capabilities and capacity in place to deliver our priorities and outcomes. In practical terms, this will mean making sure what we do is effective and has impact, managing demands on our services (including a commitment to channel shift) and spending only on things that achieve our strategic priorities and essential services.

Spend our money wisely – Our staff ensure they deliver value for money in everything they do.

Support what is possible – Our staff identify, agree and provide the best possible outcomes for all customers.

Be fair and proud – Our staff show pride in their work and take individual responsibility for delivering what is agreed.

Listen carefully – Our staff listen and respond to the needs of customers and colleagues – both internally and externally.

Deliver agreed quality – Our staff ensure they deliver within agreed timescales and to the expected quality.

The Council's Key Funding and Income Sources

Revenue Support Grant

Funding from Revenue Support Grant (RSG) has been reducing year on year and the Government announced in the Autumn Statement 2015 that it will disappear by 2019/20. NWL currently receives over £1.1m in RSG.

Business Rates Retention Income.

Business Rates Retention affects councils as the level of business rates yield has a direct impact on the Council's funding, with both the risks and rewards of business rate growth / contraction being shared between central government and local authorities - 40% being retained by the Council.

In order to manage this risk and to maximise the potential amount of business rates that are retained within Leicestershire, all of its councils have entered into a business rates pooling arrangement where a percentage of business rates collected by each council goes into a pool. The financial surplus / deficit is shared between the councils and a proportion of the surplus is distributed to the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP).

There are over 3,200 business units including some big international distribution units and East Midlands Airport in our area. More than a dozen of these units have a rateable value of over £1m.

The figure of £3.975m (2017/18) is based on the growth levels set out in planning documents and by the Revenues and Benefits Partnership. Business rates are forecasted to plateau after 2017/18.

From 2020 local authorities as a sector will retain 100% of business rates and as a result will take on the full risks and rewards of the business base in the area – and additional responsibilities from central government.

The big question is how the total pot of business rates collected nationally will be distributed between different local authorities, and the Government will determine this and carry out a review of Funding Need.

The DCLG has published its consultation document *Self-sufficient local government: 100% Business Rates Retention*, with consultation ending on 26 September. There is a great deal of uncertainty and speculation as to the outcome of the consultation; and this could pose a significant risk to this Council's future funding from 2020.

New Homes Bonus (NHB)

The NHB Scheme provides local councils with funding that can be used to support any council activity or service.

The amount received is based on the average council tax band on each additional property built in the council's area; or on each long term void property that is brought back into use. It is paid for the following six years (legacy payment). The funding is shared between district and county councils on an 80/20 ratio respectively.

The Government has consulted on changes to the NHB scheme, with any changes likely to take effect from April 2017. The consultation had two elements:

- Changing the numbers of years for which payments are made
- Reforms to the NHB incentive.

Changing the number of years for which payments are made

The number of years for which payments are to be paid is likely to be reduced from six to four.

Reforms to the NHB incentive

The Government is considering three ways in which the incentive impact of the NHB could be improved:

- Withholding new bonus allocations in areas where no local plan has been produced
- Reducing payments for homes built on appeal
- Only making payments for delivery above a baseline representing deadweight.

The assumption in the MTFS is that NHB will reduce to four years from 2017/18. No allowance has been made for changes through reform. A further assumption is that total NHB revenue will remain stable over the period of this MTFS, with housing growth and the reduction in years paid cancelling each other out.

Council Tax

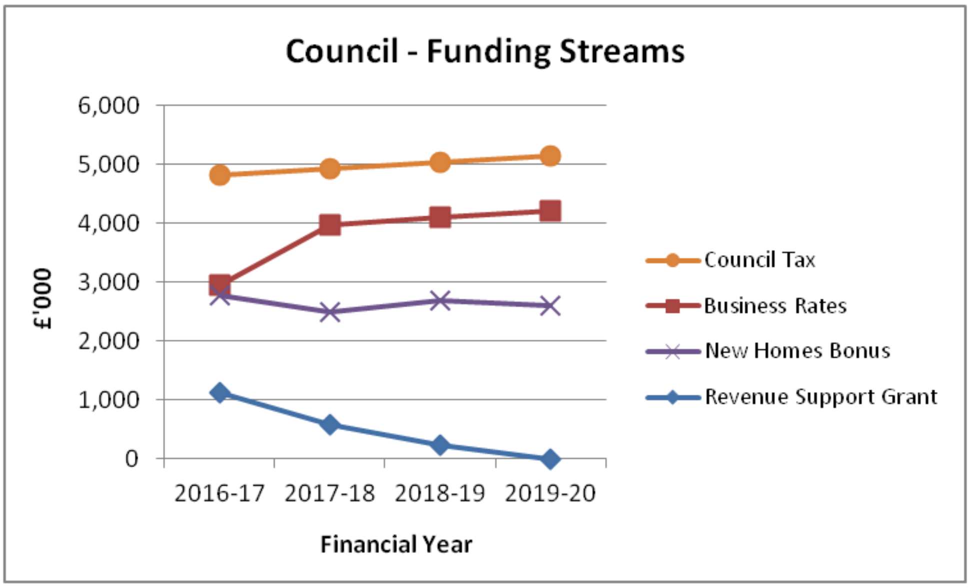
The Council levies council tax on properties that are based in the district. It is budgeted to collect £4.8m in the current financial year. This is the Council's largest funding stream and will only increase in importance following the removal of the RSG and changes to the NHB and business rates funding streams. Currently it accounts for 40% of the Council's funding.

The Council has maintained its policy to freeze council tax since 2010. The benefit to a Band D household over those seven years is a saving of £23.45. This approximately equates to around £3.35 p.a. per Band D household.

The Council received Council Tax Freeze Grant as part of its RSG from 2011/12 to 2015/16. This grant amounted to £595k, but is now incorporated within the diminishing RSG. The overall impact is that the Council's tax is £2.1m lower than if the freeze grant had not been taken (assuming a 1.99% increase each year).

The assumption within the MTFS is that the Council will maintain its policy to freeze council tax.

The current growth in council tax income is purely based on the number of new homes being built into the base each year. The MTFS is based on an increase of around 520 homes per annum which gives us a cumulative increase of £82k on our council tax per annum.



The data used to populate this graph forms part of the table at Appendix 1.

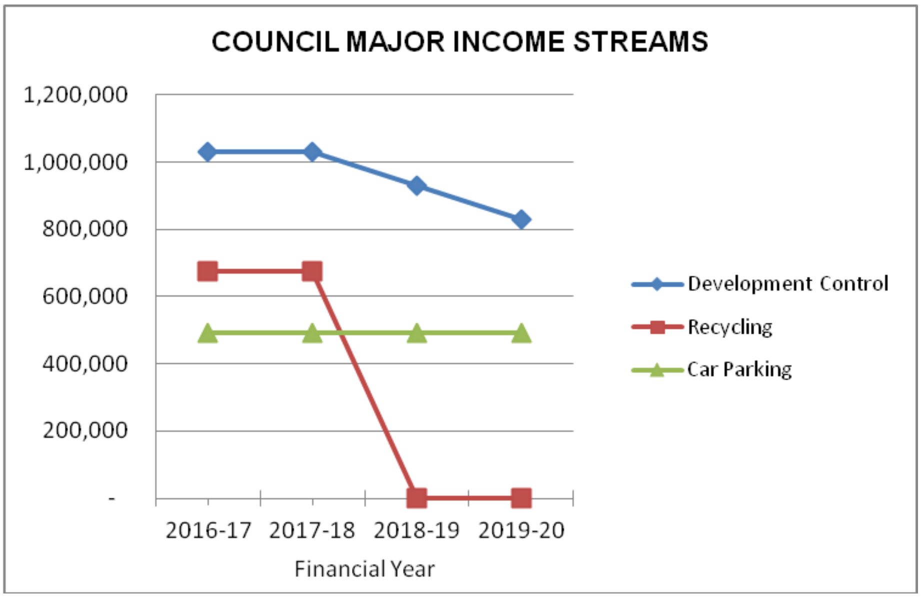
Major Income Streams

The Council wherever possible and acceptable looks to generate additional income from its day to day activities in order to achieve funding levels that will deliver our strategic priorities and essential services. The major income streams are Planning Fees, Recycling and Car Parking.

The Council has received large planning application fees for the last three years and the forecast is that this will carry on for the next 18 months. The MTFS then assumes a slight slowdown in the fees of around £100k per annum from 2018/19 for the next two years.

The County Council as part of its MTFS is consulting on various options on how it pays recycling credits and collection of recycling materials to realise savings. The MTFS assumes nil income from recycling materials from 2018/19.This budgeted loss of income totalling £675k, is on top of £264k already lost through recycling credit for green waste in 2015/16. CLT will consider what to do as a result of this loss of approximately £940k of income.

Car parking income stands at approximately £490k p.a and charges have not been increased for the last six years. Car parking is a non profit making service and any surpluses which are made are invested back into the service. It has been assumed that car parking income will remain stable over the period of this MTFS.



Other factors affecting the MTFS

Council Tax Surplus

All council tax due in the North West Leicestershire area is collected by this Council and paid into a Collection Fund. From here are paid the shares due to Leicestershire County Council, Leicestershire Police, Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service, and town and parish councils. These are known as precepting authorities. This Council's share is transferred from the Collection Fund to its General Fund.

The Collection Fund account ensures that surpluses or deficits are taken into account when setting future council tax rates and are proportionately shared amongst the precepting authorities. In practice there is generally a balance, but not one that is significant in overall terms.

Local Council Tax Reduction / Support Scheme

As part of the Welfare Reform Act and the introduction of Universal Credit, the Government reformed the national Council Tax Benefit scheme and abolished Council Tax Benefits (CTB) from 1 April 2013. At the time the Government reimbursed councils approximately 85% of the historic cost of CTB to fund the new scheme, but pledged no additional funding to meet increased demand. Funding has since been rolled into the RSG, which has been cut further.

As a result of the changes, local schemes were established to replace the CTB scheme. Pensioners received the same level of support as under CTB but working age recipients were given granted reduced levels of support, to offset the funding reduction.

NWL's level of support for working age recipients is currently 85% and a county-wide exercise is being undertaken to review the local schemes. At the end of the exercise each council will consider the level of council tax support it proposes to apply from 1 April 2017 and this will be reflected in the 2017/18 revenue budgets.

The assumption within this MTFS is a change to the level of support from 85% to 75%.

The reform to the CTB scheme also had implications for Special Expenses, town and parish councils as it reduced the amount of Council Tax payable and therefore a Special Expense, town and parish council would collect a reduced total level of precept. While town and parish councils could increase their council tax, due to the conditions and nature of the Council Tax Freeze Grant, Special Expenses could not.

For 2013/14 only the Government identified a separate grant to meet the cost of the introduction of the changes on town and parish councils. There has been no specific element of funding since then, but the Council has continued to support the Special Expenses, town and parish councils with this grant.

As the RSG is reducing year on year and will be nil by 2019/20, the Council will not be able to sustain this grant to the town and parish councils. The assumption in the MTFS is to reduce the grant to town and parish councils by £25k (approximately 25%) per annum over four years from the financial year 2018/19, and maintain Special Expenses at their current levels.

General Fund Reserve

We are required to maintain adequate financial reserves to meet the needs of the authority. The reserves we hold can be classified as either working balances – known as the general fund reserve, or as specific reserves which are earmarked for a particular purpose – known as earmarked reserves.

The Council holds a general fund reserve as a contingency to cover the cost of unexpected expenditure or events during the year. This currently stands at £2.4m, which equates to 22% of net 'core' expenditure at the 2016/17 Budget level.

It is seen as good practice to hold a balance which is equivalent to 10% of a council's net budget – that is approximately £1.1m for NWLDC. But there are a number of future risks such as NHB and 100% retention of Business Rates that lead to the assumption that the balance should be kept at a high level.

Reserves

The Council holds Usable Reserves on its Balance sheet. These are predominantly categorised as follows:

General Fund Reserve (£2.4m) - The General Fund Reserve (referred above) is not held for a specific reason, nor committed to any specific project. It is generally recommended to hold a balance which is equivalent to 10% of the council's net budget –for our Council that is approximately £1.1m. But there are number of future risks such as NHB and 100% retention of Business Rates which signal the need for balances to be kept high.

Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Reserve (£5.7m) - This is similar to the General Fund Reserve but the balance is gradually being increased to pay off loans which were taken out in relation to HRA self-financing settlement in 2012. The HRA business plan assumes a minimum balance of £1m to be retained in this reserve.

Earmarked Reserves – General Fund and HRA (£9.9m) - The Council holds reserves that are earmarked for a particular purpose and are set aside in order to meet known or predicted future expenditure in relation to that purpose.

Capital Receipts Reserve (£4.0m) - This Reserve holds the proceeds from sale of our assets - mainly council housing stock sold under the Right to Buy regulation. Part of the funding arrangements for the capital programme is the disposal of surplus assets to generate capital receipts.

The Asset Management Strategy will review assets before they are sold to assess whether there are alternative uses that could generate additional income for the Council e.g. whether there is a development opportunity instead. The Council revise its Asset Management Strategy to make sure all its assets are used effectively and efficiently and where opportunities arise to take advantage of market conditions to dispose surplus assets

Major Repairs Reserve (£1.8m) - The Major Repairs Allowance (MRA) represents the estimated long-term average amount of capital spending required to maintain housing stock in its current condition. It is calculated according to the profile of the housing stock. The Major Repairs Reserve is the accumulation of this allowance and is held specifically to be spent on the housing stock.

Capital Grants/S106 Funds (£1.1m) - These are S106 Grants which have been received by the Council and have conditions attached to them. They normally stipulate the projects / areas where the grant should be spent.

The table below summarises the Council's Reserves position as at 31 March 2016:

	£000
General Fund Reserve	2.4
HRA Reserve	5.7
Earmarked Reserves (General Fund and HRA)	9.9
Capital Receipts Reserve	4.0
Major Repairs Reserve	1.8

Capital Grants / s106	1.1
Total Reserves	**24.9**

Capital Investment Strategy

The table below shows the current four year planned capital programme for 2016/17 to 2019/20, together with information on the funding of that expenditure (i.e. borrowing, grants and contributions, use of earmarked revenue reserves and usable capital receipts reserve). A detailed version of the capital programme can be viewed in the Budget Book.

	2016/17	**2017/18**	**2018/19**	**2019/20**	**TOTAL**
General Fund	2,799	1,176	1,802	228	**6,004**
HRA	8,165	7,110	8,187	6,546	**30,008**
TOTAL BUDGET	**10,963**	**8,286**	**9,989**	**6,774**	**36,012**
Funded By:					
Revenue	136	566	2,401	697	**3,800**
Reserves	1,667	106	134	209	**2,116**
S106's	400	-	-	-	**400**
Disabled Facilities Grant	298	298	298	**-**	**894**
Capital Receipts	1,797	1,711	1,711	1,561	**6,781**
MRA	4,984	4,863	4,077	4,079	**18,003**
Unsupported Borrowing	1,682	742	1,368	228	**4,020**
TOTAL FUNDING	**10,963**	**8,286**	**9,989**	**6,774**	**36,012**

Treasury Management Strategy

The capital and revenue budget plans inform the development of our Treasury Management and Investment strategies, which are agreed annually as part of the budget setting report. The Treasury Management Strategy sets out borrowing forecasts / limits and who the Council can invest with.

We will review the strategy to align to the Council Delivery Plan and the MTFS.

Prudential Borrowing

Councils can borrow to provide new assets, invest in community facilities and services, and maintain assets. They can also borrow to invest in new funding models that will both provide new assets and deliver a rate of return.

Borrowing will only be taken where it delivers the Council’s priorities and outcomes, such as the district sports and leisure project.

Council Housing

In relation to Council Housing, the HRA Business Plan presents a positive financial picture over the longer term (a thirty year period as required under the self-financing regime), but there are short to medium term challenges. These challenges were heightened by proposals announced by Government last year:

- The Welfare Reform and Work Act includes a requirement for all social landlords to reduce rents by 1% each year from 2016 to 2019
- The Bill also proposes a reduction in the benefit cap for working age families from £26k to £20k
- The Housing and Planning Bill includes a requirement for households with an income higher than £31k to be charged higher rents
- Councils are to make a payment to government to fund Right to Buy discounts for housing association tenants.

The roll out of Universal Credit is also expected to impact upon our rental income collection as housing benefit becomes payable one month in arrears to the individual rather than directly to the landlord.

The HRA business plan was originally predicated on an annual rent increase of CPI + 1% (the formula agreed by the government in 2014) plus an additional sum of up to £4 p.w. until all our properties were at target rent – most likely by 2019. In business planning terms, the loss to the HRA is therefore considerably greater than 1% per annum reduction; and the cumulative impact of the rent reduction results in a reduced income against the business plan projections; which in turn reduces the resources available to deliver services, to maintain and improve the existing housing stock and to develop new council housing.

The HRA business plan has been reviewed to take account of all the above factors and a snapshot of the HRA business plan covering the MTFS period is attached at Appendix 2.

New Build Programme and retention of Right to Buy receipts

Right to Buy (RTB) sales for the Council have exceeded projections in business plans. In 2015/16 NWL sold 33 against projections of 24 sales and we are now projecting 36 p.a. going forward.

The money received from RTB sales can only be used as a 30% contribution towards the cost of a replacement home. The remaining 70% of the replacement cost has to be found from other HRA resources. As sales increase, it means that the level of match funding required (70%) increases. If the receipts are not spent within the three year period allowed, they have to be repaid to Government with interest 4% above base rate.

The self-financing regime has applied a cap to the amount that councils can borrow through the HRA. This means that borrowing levels are restricted, although we have the potential to borrow up to £13.5m, which is quite a healthy sum for a council of our size. Historically we have been able to support the spending of RTB receipts; the building of new council homes; and invest in the maintenance and improvement of council homes within the current borrowing headroom. Now, the 1% rent reduction and the proposed high value dwellings levy threaten to make finding the 70% match funding for Right to Buy receipts more difficult and may require some of the borrowing headroom to be utilised.

The situation could be further affected by the requirement to charge higher rents for tenants with higher incomes (£31k+), which has the potential to encourage affected tenants to exercise their Right to Buy.

Currently, the estimated funds to support our housing investment strategy are:

- Borrowing headroom within the Government's overall debt cap (£13m)
- Surplus annual funds from the HRA for investment in new and existing homes due to the new self-financing freedoms given to councils
- Commuted sums collected from developers in lieu of affordable housing provision on site
- Disposal of assets with negative Net Present Value.

Summary of our Financial Position

There are limitations to the degree to which we can produce medium term financial projections as there are always uncertainties. It is important to remember that these financial forecasts have been produced within a dynamic financial environment based on ever changing assumptions; and that they will be subject to change over time.

The assumptions already set out in this MTFS are:

	2016/17	**2017/18**	**2018/19**	**2019/20**
Grant reduction on RSG	£0.64m	£0.55m	£0.33m	£0.24m

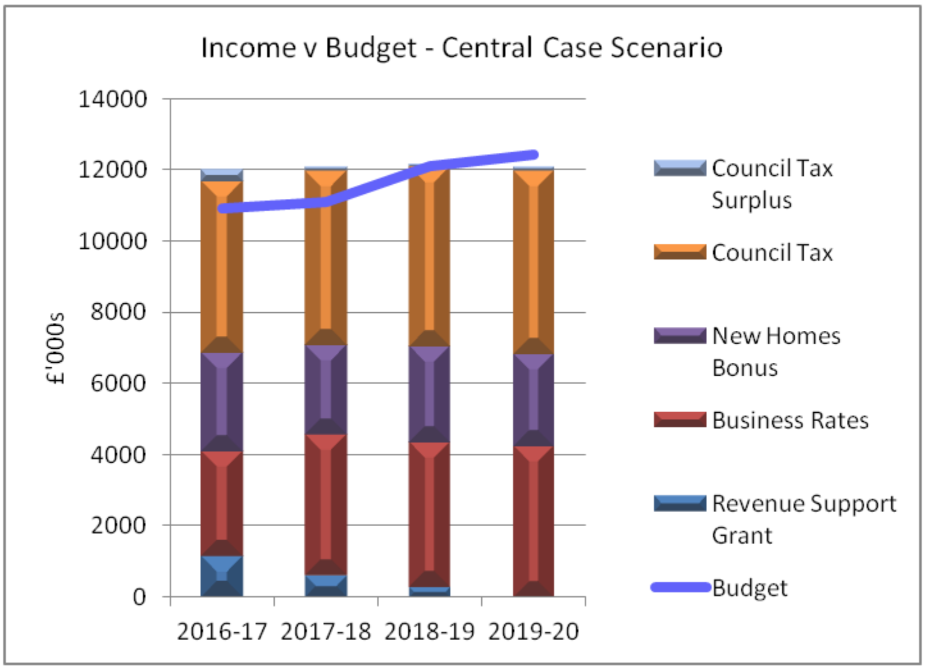
- NHB reducing from six years to four from 2017/18, but actual NHB income remaining stable
- Council Tax assumed at 0% increase to the Council Tax base per annum
- Best estimates of new build (520 homes p.a.) and impact on council tax base and NHB
- A slight slowdown in planning fees from 2018/19.
- Waste income reduced to nil from 2018/19
- Stable car parking charges and income
- A change to the Local Council Tax Reduction / Support Scheme for working age recipients from 85% to 75%
- From 2018/19 to reduce the Local Council Tax Reduction / Support Scheme grant to town and parish councils by £25k (approximately 25%) per annum over four years, and maintain Special Expenses at their current levels
- General Fund Reserve balance kept at current level.

Other assumptions include:

Type of Expenditure	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
General inflation / utilities	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%
Fees and charges	1%	1%	1%	1%
Employee pay increase	1%	1%	1%	1%
Increase in Employer's pension contribution	1%	1%	1%	1%
Return on investments	0.4%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%
Apprenticeship Levy		0.5%	0.5%	0.5%
Combined Authority costs		£10k	£10k	£10k
Collection Fund Surplus	£100k	£100k	£100k	£100k

A number of scenarios could be modelled, based on different assumptions on growth and funding streams. The graph below shows the most likely financial position for the Council over the next four years i.e. it shows our increasing cost base from budget pressures and our known income at this stage, but does not reflect any potential actions to address the future funding position.

The revenue position as currently forecast is detailed in Appendix 1 and the figures have also been used for the graph below. This indicates a potential shortfall of just over £0.46m in 2019/20. CLT will continue to monitor the situation – especially with regard to Government announcements in the Autumn Statement and as a result of changes to the NHB and business rates initiatives, and will come forward with recommendations as appropriate.



Managing Risks

In setting the revenue and capital budgets, we take account of the key financial risks that may affect our plans and these are included in the Council's Corporate Risk Register, which is regularly monitored by the Cabinet. An awareness of the potential risks and the robustness of the budget estimates also inform decisions about the level of working balances needed to provide assurance that the Council has sufficient contingency reserves to meet unforeseen fluctuations and changes.

There are a number of key risks associated with the assumptions within the MTFS including delivery of economic growth, the potential wider implications of the Government's welfare reform agenda, NHB reform and most importantly the wide-ranging changes to the business rate funding.

Revenue Budget Strategy

The approach taken to financial management over the period of the MTFS seeks to achieve the following objectives:

- Keep council tax as low as possible
- Deliver budgets necessary to continue to live within our means
- Continuously improve efficiency by transforming the ways of working
- Continue to ensure that the financial strategy is not reliant on contributions from minimum working balances
- Maximise revenue from our assets and investments.

Value for Money and Efficiency Actions

Strategic Efficiencies Plan 2017 to 2020

	2017/18 £'000	2018/19 £'000	2019/20 £'000
Efficiencies Required as per Draft MTFS	0	0	(372)
Use of Reserves / Savings to be generated	0	0	(372)
Net (shortfall) / surplus	**0**	**0**	**0**

Securing the best value for money for the Council Tax payer is a key objective of the MTFS and has been a major factor in managing the reducing resources available particularly since 2010. We employ a variety of measures to promote and deliver value for money. These include:

- The identification of service improvement and efficiency savings
- Effective corporate procurement mechanisms.
- Performance management. We report to Cabinet quarterly.
- An organisational structure that is kept under review to ensure it meets the needs of the organisation.
- Scrutiny by the Policy Development Group.
- Internal audit.
- Capturing efficiency gains in-year.

We need to also carry out some specific actions to respond to the challenges we face and the opportunities we need to grasp, and these will include the following:

- Align resources to our priorities, the Council Delivery Plan and essential services using the Business Excellence Model and service / team planning
- Continue to support the Combined Authority and collaborative working
- Continue to develop our organisation through our BEE programme
- Encourage the use of digital interaction and transform our approach to customer access
- Behave more commercially and seize opportunities that present themselves and can to be justified through a business case.

Align resources to our priorities, the Council Delivery Plan and essential services using the Business Excellence Model and service / team planning

So far the Council has addressed the need for financial savings by reducing its staffing levels and hence reducing budgets. Over this MTFS period, the Council needs to continue to align and allocate resources with the priorities and outcomes set out in the Council Delivery Plan and to essential services; to ensure we are entirely focussed on those things that are most important to us.

Continue to support the Combined Authority and collaborative working

Leicestershire's local authorities are currently developing a Combined Authority that will deliver benefits from strategic planning, infrastructure development and the local economy.

Work is also being undertaken on a Devolution Deal. The current timetable indicates that the main document will be drafted in early September, so that it can be endorsed by the Combined Authority before being presented to central government for negotiations to commence.

Continue to develop our organisation through our BEE programme

We build relationships by listening carefully to the issues being raised by a broad range of people such as local communities, businesses, individual cases and colleagues. In listening, we support what is possible to be delivered and agree expectations that are fair to all. We deliver to the jointly agreed quality whilst using the Council's resources wisely.

We have an excellent BEE Programme and an agreed set of Council values that are helping us:

- Develop leaders so there are individuals in key positions that are orientated towards leadership rather than management; who can promote engagement and collaboration, are expert in leading change and have an outward-looking strategic view
- Improve the organisation's performance through changes to people management and engagement (especially through the Coaching Programme)
- Focus on how services can work together better to achieve the desired outcomes
- Develop performance management with the focus on key PIs and individual and team targets so that performance against outcomes can be measured, and services can be improved and be seen to improve
- Develop a culture where staff understand and believe in the organisation's purpose, trust its leaders and feel empowered and equipped to do their work
- Develop staff that are equipped with the right skills to do the job now and in the future.

Encourage the use of digital interaction and transform our approach to customer access

An ICT strategy has been developed that sets out a long term vision of how ICT will support the Council's business requirements, its future vision, its customers and its members. Its outcomes include: a fully-funded ICT plan that supports new, more efficient, sustainable, flexible, and customer-focused ways of working; an organisation with the right ICT infrastructure and level of resilience; and a workforce with the right IT tools and skills required to deliver services effectively and efficiently.

The transformation of our approach to customer access is an important part of our next phase of development and is inextricably linked to the need to ensure that our resources are being used to their optimum effect. Customer Services, and the way that other services interact with it, must have a clear approach to managing demand and to reduce our overheads through encouraging people to self-serve and to do business with us online.

We know that there will always be some customers who need to speak to us because of the nature of their needs, so they will always be able to reach us in the traditional way. Our goal, though, is to design our services for those people who wish to and can do their business with us digitally.

Redesigning our services and customer access is a significant and ambitious programme of work that needs to receive a new focus and serve as a catalyst to drive wider organisational change.

Behave more commercially and seize opportunities that present themselves and are able to be explained through a business case.

A key theme running through the work needed to deliver our outcomes is behaving more commercially. We need to be able to identify areas where there may be commercial opportunities for NWL to be able to generate additional income or contribute towards our priorities.