

West Devon Hub Committee



West Devon
Borough
Council

Title:	Agenda
Date:	Monday, 19th December, 2016
Time:	10.30 am
Venue:	Chamber - Kilworthy Park
Full Members:	<p style="text-align: center;">Chairman Cllr Sanders Vice Chairman Cllr Baldwin</p> <p><i>Members:</i> Cllr Benson Cllr Parker Cllr Edmonds Cllr Sampson Cllr Moody Cllr Samuel Cllr Oxborough</p>
Interests – Declaration and Restriction on Participation:	Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any disclosable pecuniary interest not entered in the Authority's register or local non pecuniary interest which they have in any item of business on the agenda (subject to the exception for sensitive information) and to leave the meeting prior to discussion and voting on an item in which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest.
Committee administrator:	Member.Services@swdevon.gov.uk

1. Apologies for absence

2. Declarations of Interest

Members are invited to declare any personal or disclosable pecuniary interests, including the nature and extent of such interests they may have in any items to be considered at this meeting.

If Councillors have any questions relating to predetermination, bias or interests in items on this Agenda, then please contact the Monitoring Officer in advance of the meeting.

3. Items Requiring Urgent Attention

To consider those items which, in the opinion of the Chairman, should be considered by the Meeting as matters of urgency (if any)

4. Confirmation of Minutes

1 - 6

Minutes of meeting held 29 November 2016

**PART TWO ITEMS WHICH MAY BE TAKEN IN THE ABSENCE
OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS ON THE GROUNDS THAT
EXEMPT INFORMATION IS LIKELY TO BE DISCLOSED**

The Committee is therefore recommended to pass the following resolution:

“RESOLVED that under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the Meeting on the grounds that exempt information may be disclosed as defined in the paragraph given in Part 3 of Schedule 12A to the Act.”

**5. Revenue and Capital Budget Proposals Report 2017-18
(Cllr Sanders)**

7 - 50

Agenda Item 4

At a Meeting of the **HUB COMMITTEE** held at the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Kilworthy Park, Drake Road, **TAVISTOCK** on **TUESDAY** the **29th** day of **NOVEMBER, 2016** at **2.00pm**

Present:

Cllr P R Sanders – Chairman
Cllr R E Baldwin – Vice-Chairman

Cllr M J R Benson	Cllr C Edmonds
Cllr J B Moody	Cllr R J Oxborough
Cllr G Parker	Cllr R F D Sampson
Cllr L Samuel	

In attendance:

Executive Director (Strategy and Commissioning)
Executive Director (Service Delivery and Commercial Development)
Group Manager Commercial Services
Group Manager Business Development
COP Lead Assets
COP Lead Housing, Revenues and Benefits
COP Lead Place Making
COP Lead Development Management
Benefit Specialist
Senior Case Manager Strategy & Commissioning

Other Members in attendance:

Cllrs Cheadle, Leech, Moyse, Musgrave and Roberts

***HC 33**

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were invited to declare any interests in the items of business to be discussed but none were made.

***HC 34**

MINUTES

The Minutes of the Hub Committee Meeting held on 1st November, 2016 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record, subject to the inclusion of comments made by the Chairman at that meeting under 'Urgent Business' (Minute *HC 25 refers) in respect of an update on the progress made by the Heart of the South West (HotSW) Devolution Project Group. The Chairman had advised the Committee that he had recently attended a meeting with the Executive Directors and Tracy Lee, Chief Executive of Plymouth City Council who had responsibility for one of the work streams within the HotSW Devolution project. Discussions were ongoing with colleagues across Devon and many agreed that the concept of an elected Mayor would be a red line to the proposals. Regardless of this, authorities were continuing to look at arrangements for a Combined Authority as the intention was to make sure the good work undertaken so far was not lost. A number of similar bids across the country had collapsed, and all eyes were on the Autumn Statement for any further information.

URGENT BUSINESS

(a) 1Life (formerly Leisure Connections)

The Chairman invited representatives of 1Life, formerly Leisure Connections, to update the Hub Committee on progress in respect of Meadowlands Pool. Theresa England, the Regional Director, Lauren Parker, the West Devon Contract Manager and Nick Cotton, Meadowlands Pool Duty Manager were all in attendance. Theresa England confirmed that an issue had been discovered with the flue during preventative maintenance work. The flues had been replaced and the work completed to a good standard, however, it was subsequently discovered that there was a fault with a pressurised unit. It was expected that the Pool would reopen no later than Monday 5 December, and they were working with Fusion, the new leisure contractor from 1 December 2016, to ensure a consistent message was going out to the public.

The Chairman thanked the representatives for attending, and thanked them for the work undertaken during their time as contractors for the West Devon leisure centres. Theresa England thanked the Members and stated that they had worked well in partnership and that there had been a real sense of collaboration and partnership working. Other Members asked that appreciation be recorded to 1Life for their work in developing leisure services, and that the positive attitude of staff and management be noted.

(b) Lead Hub Committee Member Update – Cllr Edmonds

As agreed at the previous meeting (minute *HC25 refers), the Chairman invited Cllr Edmonds to update the Hub Committee on matters within his area of responsibility. Cllr Edmonds advised that a special meeting of the Hub Committee had been convened for 19 December, 2016 to discuss budget and capital programme matters. He updated the Committee on the headlines from the Chancellor's Autumn Statement and brought Members attention to a letter from SPARSE to the Local Government Minister that made the case for rural areas who currently received less funding per head of population compared to urban areas. In terms of the other areas within his remit, the Transition Resources monitoring report was presented to the O&S (Internal Committee on 8 November and all fixed term resources were now recruited. An ICT Strategy was currently being developed and the new website should be available in the New Year. He had attended the Standards Committee meeting that morning and since January 2016, there had been only three Code of Conduct complaints made against Borough and Parish Councillors. This was testament to the professionalism of the councillors and the sound guidance of the Monitoring Officer.

Members thanked Cllr Edmonds for his comprehensive update.

HC 36**ADOPTION OF A UAV/DRONE POLICY**

The Lead Member for Environment introduced a report that proposed formal adoption of the UAV/Drone Policy. Members had a number of questions of clarity on the policy such as:

- Was the fee appropriate?
- How would the policy be enforced?
- What was the definition of UAVs and were kites included? and
- Did the proposed policy align with neighbouring authorities?

The COP Lead Assets advised that the purpose of the policy was to ensure a consistent approach to anyone who applied to fly drones from Council owned land. The fee would ensure that any costs were covered.

As there were a number of queries, Members agreed to amend the recommendation to enable the Policy to be amended prior to presentation with the minutes at full Council.

It was then **RESOLVED** that Council be **RECOMMENDED** to:

1. consider formal adoption of the UAV/Drone Policy as set out at Appendix A of the presented report, if not already addressed by the use of bye laws; and
2. authority be delegated to the COP Lead Assets in consultation with the Lead Member for Environment to make minor amendments as necessary.

HC 37*HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY 2017-2022 – PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

The Lead Member for Health and Wellbeing presented a report that requested Members to consider the draft South Hams and West Devon Homeless Strategy 2017-2022. The strategy would be subject to public consultation during December and January with a view to Council adoption and approval from 1 April 2017.

Members welcomed this Strategy and officers were congratulated on an excellent report.

It was then **RESOLVED** that:

1. The content of the draft homeless strategy 2017-2022 be noted; and
2. The Homeless Strategy be presented for public consultation from 1 December 2016 – 1 February 2017.

HC 38**COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME**

The Lead Member for Health and Wellbeing presented a report that asked Members to consider the results of the public consultation scheme and recommended that no changes were made to the scheme so that the 16/17 scheme continued for 17/18.

The Leader advised that across Devon there had been plans to put a single scheme in place, however, that was no longer appropriate for 2017/18 and a full review of the scheme would take place in time for next year.

It was then **RESOLVED** that Council be **RECOMMENDED**:

1. To note the results of the public consultation for the Council Tax Reduction Scheme; and
2. That the 2016/17 scheme be retained for 2017/18

***HC 39**

WEST DEVON FIVE YEAR HOUSING LAND SUPPLY ASSESSMENT 2016 UPDATE

The Lead Member for Strategic Housing and Planning presented a report that informed Members of the updated five year housing land supply for West Devon based on a monitoring point of 31 March 2016. He set out the mechanism for how the figures within the presented report had been arrived at. He also introduced Richard Grant, Local Planning Manager, Plymouth City Council who was leading the joint work on the Joint Local Plan. Richard Grant responded to a number of detailed questions, particularly in light of recent appeals and how the figures could be used, and the weight to be given to Neighbourhood Plans. The Chairman also brought Members attention to the second recommendation as it would confirm the figures for minimum housing need for 2014 to 2034.

It was then **RESOLVED** that:

1. The updated five year housing land supply for West Devon (excluding Dartmoor National Park) be noted; and
2. The emerging Joint Local Plan minimum need for housing development in West Devon (excluding Dartmoor National Park) of 3200 for the period 2014 to 2034 be endorsed.

HC 40

ECONOMY WORKING GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS

The Lead Member for Economy presented a report that set out a number of recommendations that had previously been presented to the Overview and Scrutiny (Internal) Committee, and included their views. He set out the background and reasoning behind each of the recommendations, examples of which include the following:

The Working Group wanted to support the Business Information Point as they undertook consultations and provided advice and, as an organisation, could have a major impact on businesses within the Borough.

The Teenage Market was an initiative that Members had heard about as at a Department of Communities and Local Government event and would result in extra support to local authorities who were willing to engage. This was a programme that had already been rolled out in 26 authorities nationwide, and would provide a complete approach to engaging young people to encourage them to market their own goods by providing marketing, administration, support and advice.

The Group felt it was no longer necessary to support Villages in Action or South West Museum Development to the same extent and prioritised other initiatives. The Group also felt that there was more work to be undertaken in respect of supporting the economy in the Borough, for example, compiling a database of all businesses to better understand the economic demographic in the area.

In respect of the recommendation for additional staffing resource, Members had a detailed debate on how best to achieve the resource, and also on where Members could influence operational decisions. As a result, the published recommendation was amended.

It was then **RESOLVED** that Council be **RECOMMENDED** to:

1. Adopt the proposed WDBC Our Plan Annual Delivery Plan, as shown in Appendix 1, for the period to March 2018
2. Increase funding to Business Information Point for business support services from £8,340 in 2015/16 to £15,100 in 2016/17 (pro-rata) & maintain this funding level for 2017/18
3. Reduce funding to Villages in Action from £8,000 in 2015/16 to £4,000 in 2016/17 and 2017/18
4. Reduce funding to South West Museum Development (SWMD) from £2,000 in 2015/16 to £1,000 in 2016/17
5. Cease offering economy grants in WDBC with immediate effect
6. Support the Youth Markets initiative from 2016/17 with funding of £1,000
7. Task the Head of Paid Service with utilising the staffing establishment to deliver the activities detailed in paragraph 3.6 of this report, identifying a lead officer of a suitable grade
8. establish a West Devon Economy Working Group (WDEWG) consisting of 4 Members
9. request that the WDEWG submit periodic reports to the Hub Committee

***HC 41**

WASTE AND CLEANSING MANAGED SERVICE UPDATE REPORT

(Resolved that under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting on the grounds that exempt information is likely to be disclosed as defined in Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12(A) to the Act).

The Lead Member for Commercial Services presented a report that updated the Hub Committee on the progress made by the Waste Working Group to date in entering into a two year external waste management arrangement, subject to specific conditions as set out by Council in July 2016 (Minute CM 27 refers). Members discussed the proposals and the Group Manager Commercial Services responded to a number of questions.

It was then **RESOLVED** that

1. The progress made on the negotiations for a two year managed service contract for waste and cleansing with the incumbent contractor and the next steps to be taken at this stage are noted;
2. Providing the conditions are met as outlined at para 1.1 of the presented report, an award is made in line with Council recommendations;
3. Authority be delegated to the Lead Specialist Waste Strategy (Strategy & Commissioning) in consultation with the Lead Hub Member for Commercial Services to make any minor changes to the terms as highlighted that are considered necessary; and
4. Any additional cost pressures identified through the final negotiations requiring urgent decisions to agree funding for the service outside of the base budget are presented to the Hub Committee within the Budget Report at the special meeting on 19 December 2016.

(The Meeting terminated at 5.35 pm)

Chairman

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

This report contains exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (applies to Appendix F)

Report to: **Hub Committee**

Date: **19 December 2016**

Title: **Revenue and Capital Budget Proposals Report 2017-18**

Portfolio Area: **CLlr P R Sanders - Annual Budget Setting Process**

Wards Affected: **All**

Relevant Scrutiny Committee: **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Urgent Decision: **N** Approval and clearance obtained: **Y**

Author: **Lisa Buckle** Role: **Finance Community of Practice Lead**

Contact: **Tel. 01803 861413**
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Recommendations:

It is recommended that the Hub Committee:

- i) Notes the contents of the latest Budget Report for 2017-18

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) is based on a financial forecast over a rolling five year timeframe to 2021/22 which will help ensure resources are aligned to the outcomes in Our Plan (see Section 5). The forecast is intended to provide a framework within which decisions can be made regarding the future service provision and council tax levels whilst building an approach that guarantees West Devon Borough Council's longer term viability.

- 1.2 The Council, along with other local authorities, has faced unprecedented reductions in Government funding since the Comprehensive Spending Review 2010. The Queen's Speech delivered on 27 May 2015 stated that the government will "continue the work of bringing the public finances under control and reducing the deficit, so that Britain lives within its means". The economic backdrop continues to be challenging, resulting in significant on-going reductions in Government funding, with the Council needing to focus on long term financial planning. Looking ahead, given the deficit in public finances, there will undoubtedly be more difficult times ahead in terms of reducing Government grants, which could be as much as 30% to 40% over the next 4 to 5 years. This will result in continuing pressures to find further significant savings, efficiencies and additional income.
- 1.3 In response, in 2013 the Council alongside its shared services partner, South Hams District Council, approved an innovative Transformation Programme (T18). This is delivering a new operating model to ensure that both Councils can continue to deliver quality services for its customers and communities. An investment budget of £2.83 million was approved, to deliver annual recurring revenue savings of £1.64 million. The payback period for the Programme is 2.75 years. The Transformation Programme has received the backing of Central Government and the Council was awarded £266,000 of Government funding towards the upfront investment costs.
- 1.4 The Council's Transformation Programme, coupled with savings from the re-procurement of contracts and other areas, has meant that in 2017/18 the Council has a projected Budget Gap of £236,017. In 2018/19 there is a projected Budget Gap of £662,781. There are Budget Surpluses in years 2019/20 and 2020/21 and the modelling assumes that these surpluses are used for one-off investment in the years 19/20 and 20/21 and are taken as a saving in the next financial year. Over the five years, the cumulative projected budget gap is £708,890 as shown below.
- 1.5 West Devon and South Hams are working together to deliver common strategies and priorities and design new ways of working differently, although how these will apply to the different localities and communities may still vary. However, the Councils continue to face considerable financial challenges as a result of uncertainty in the wider economy and constraints on public sector spending as outlined in the Comprehensive Spending Review announcement.
- 1.6 At the same time though, there are also funding sources and opportunities that the Councils must fully exploit as part of the business model. In this context, and like many other Councils, West Devon and South Hams have to make a number of sometimes difficult and complex financial decisions. The Councils are confident that their budgets and the approaches being adopted represent a sound platform for the medium term.

- 1.7 The following table illustrates the predicted budget gap from 2017/18 onwards for the Council as shown in Appendix B:

	2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	2020/21 £	2021/22 £
Annual budget gap/(surplus)	236,017	662,781	Nil	Nil	(189,908)
CUMULATIVE BUDGET GAP OVER THE FIVE YEARS TO 21/22					£708,890
In the years 2019/20 and 2020/21, a budget surplus arises and the modelling assumes that these surpluses are used for one-off investment in the years 19/20 and 20/21 and are taken as a saving in the next financial year.					

- 1.8 *The September Medium Term Financial Strategy set out a £492,000 Budget Gap over the next 5 years to 2021/22. The Budget Gap is now higher by approximately £0.2 million and this report updates the position and shows that the Council is facing a £709,000 Budget Gap over the next 5 years and there is a budget gap of £236,000 still to close for 2017/18. The main reason for the increase of £0.2 million is due to a cost pressure of £125,000 for a reduction in planning income (see 6.4) and changes in other cost pressures.*
- 1.9 If New Homes Bonus (NHB) were to be used as outlined in Section 8.3 of the report, this would mean that there is currently a shortfall in 2017-18 of £68,000, plus the amount of NHB paid to Dartmoor National Park. This assumes that £0.7 million of NHB will be used in this year to support the Revenue Base Budget.
- 1.10 The Budget for 2016/17 was approved by Council on 16th February 2016. This is the starting point for producing the refreshed MTFs and the detailed budget proposals for 2017/18. The 2016/17 Net Budget approved by West Devon Borough Council was £7.25 million.
- 1.11 Whilst there remains a great deal of uncertainty about various elements of income and expenditure, the forecast has been based on a set of assumptions (set out in Section 3) which represent a cautious estimate in order to focus attention on the revised funding gap. The figures will be continually updated as we progress through the financial year.
- 1.12 The Council's approach to financial planning over the medium term will include a focus on income generation and commercial opportunities. This will strengthen the position of the Borough Council by developing financial resilience through less exposure to reductions in Government funding.
- 1.13 The budget setting process is an iterative process that will constantly change over the next five years. As the Council becomes aware of new cost pressures or further reductions in funding over the next 5 years, this will increase the predicted budget gap. The converse is true for any savings or additional income which are identified over the next five years. Announcements during 2015 that local authorities will be able to retain 100% of business rates income from 2020 and that Revenue

Support Grant will be phased out, mean that the Council will need to keep its financial strategy under constant review and adapt the Council's business model to continue to respond to the challenges.

BUDGET PRINCIPLES

- 1.14 The MTFs sets out the key Budget Principles for how the Council will be developing its approach to achieving financial sustainability. These are set out below:-

A clear financial strategy, including a revenue budget and capital investment strategy that supports the above and sets out how the Council aims to tackle the Budget gap over the next five years.

To continue working in partnership with South Hams District Council, to embed the new business model, to enable the Council to respond to changes in Government funding that will support the delivery of strategic priority outcomes and the medium term financial sustainability.

To adopt an investment strategy that maximises funding streams e.g. New Homes Bonus and Business Rates and that delivers additional income and savings in the future e.g. doing things on an 'Invest to Save' basis.

Achieving efficiencies and cost reductions, through collaborative working and getting the basics right.

A more commercial approach, which could include the establishment of a local authority controlled company, through which we can generate additional income with a 'Profit for Purpose' basis.

2 FOUR YEAR SETTLEMENT FUNDING OFFER

- 2.1 The Government offered to all Councils to apply for a four year settlement funding offer by 14th October.

- 2.2 On 16 November, the Council received written confirmation from the Government that West Devon is now formally on the multi-year settlement list, following the Council's application for this. This means that the Council now has certainty over the levels of funding for Revenue Support Grant, Transitional Grant and Rural Services Delivery Grant that it will receive for the next three years.

- 2.3 These are:-

Revenue Support Grant - £223,284 for 17/18 and then Nil thereafter.

Transitional Grant - £30,689 for 17/18 only

Rural Services Delivery Grant - £372,638 for 17/18, £286,645 for 18/19 and £372,638 for 19/20

Business Rates are outside of the four year funding offer.

- 2.4 The Government has said that barring exceptional circumstances and subject to the normal statutory consultation process for the local government finance settlement, the Government expects these to be the amounts presented to Parliament each year.
- 2.5 97% of Councils applied which the Government said showed the understandable need for the sector to secure greater certainty at a time of significant reform.

3 ASSUMPTIONS FOR FINANCIAL MODELLING PURPOSES

3.1 A two year employee pay settlement has been agreed which equates to 1% in 2016/17 and 1% in 2017/18. Future levels of pay settlement will be determined by national negotiation between the Local Government Employers and the Trade Unions. A budget provision of 1% for 2017/18 (£40,000) onwards has been modelled. The MTFs is not an expression of Council Policy on pay awards, but a means of ensuring an appropriate provision is made as part of the overall financial planning of the Council.

3.2 The MTFs assumes inflation will run at 2% over the five year period. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) has said that the annual inflation rate as measured by the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) rose to 1% in September 16. The Retail Prices Index measure of inflation rose to 2% in September 2016.

3.3 The MTFs has included a cost pressure of £70,000 for Inflation and increases on Goods and Services. The main items are:-

- £20,000 – Business Rates increases (Revaluation 2017/18 onwards)
 - £1,500 – Apprenticeship Levy
 - £7,500 – Utilities inflation
 - £17,600 - Development Surveyor post – build into salary establishment (Minute HC 69– see 10.6 as year 1 costs were being funded from an Earmarked Reserve)
 - £8,400 – Insurance premiums
- An amount of just over £15,000 is to fund a 2% uplift on other expenditure budgets.

3.4 The predicted interest rate forecast from our treasury management advisors, Sector, is shown below. On 4th August, the Bank Base Rate was cut from 0.5% to 0.25%. The Council’s budgeted investment income in 2016/17 is £45,321. It is assumed that the interest rate return for our investments will average 0.5 % for 2017/18 rising to 1.0% by 2021/22 as shown below:-

2017/18	-	0.5%
2018/19	-	0.5%
2019/20	-	0.5%
2020/21	-	0.75%
2021/22	-	1.0%

The latest predictions for Bank Rate is that they will remain at 0.25% until Summer 2019 when it is predicted they may rise to 0.5%. The Council is investigating alternative investment vehicles which were discussed at the Financial Principles Member Workshop on 5th December.

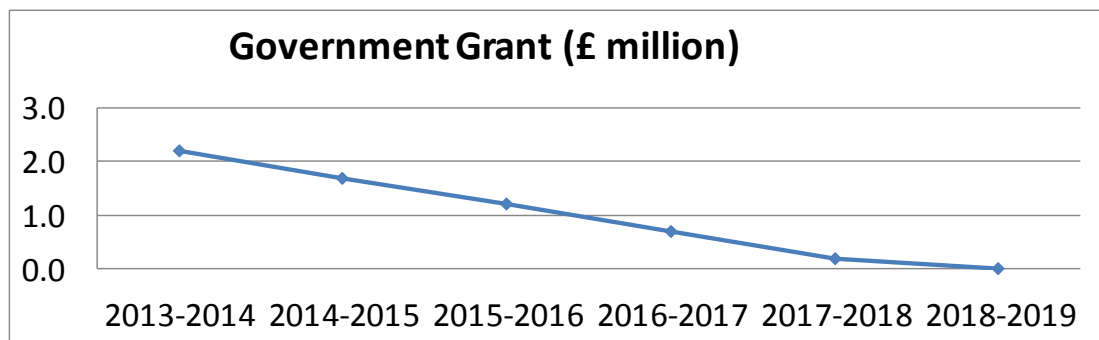
- 3.5 An increase in council tax of £5 for the next five years has been modelled for council tax purposes. This would equate to a Band D council tax for West Devon of £218.39 in 2017/18 as shown in Appendix B.
- 3.6 It has been assumed that the number of properties within the Borough will increase by 300 per annum from 2017/18 to 2021/22 – this is an increase of approx. 1.5% - the Council had £19,733.41 Band D equivalent properties in 2016/17. These additional properties have been used to calculate the amount of additional Council Tax and also the potential for New Homes Bonus. These figures will be updated when actual figures are known around mid December.

4. GOVERNMENT FUNDING, BUSINESS RATES AND COUNCIL TAX

4.1 Revenue Support Grant (Government Grant funding)

By 2018/19 the Council will receive no Government funding (Revenue Support Grant) and the Council will need to be self-sufficient. The withdrawal of Government funding has happened two years earlier than expected.

- 4.2 Since 2013, the Council has seen a 45% reduction in Government funding. In 2013/14 the Council received £2.2 million in Revenue Support Grant and this will be reduced to zero by 2018-19 as shown.



- 4.3 The reductions in Revenue Support Grant (RSG), as shown in the four year funding settlement offer by the Government, are as follows:

	2016/17 £	2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	2020/21 £
Revenue Support Grant (RSG) (2015/16 RSG was £1.215 m):	£623,404	£223,284	Nil	Nil	Nil

- 4.4 **Rural Services Delivery Grant** - The Council will receive rural funding through a separate Rural Services Delivery Grant. This is something that was lobbied for through our work with SPARSE to reflect the fact that it costs more to deliver services in rural communities. The Council's grant allocations (from the four year settlement offer) are shown in Appendix B and are:
- | | |
|---------|----------|
| 2016-17 | £461,498 |
| 2017-18 | £372,638 |
| 2018-19 | £286,645 |
| 2019-20 | £372,638 |
- 4.5 There is no information available on whether the Rural Services Delivery Grant will continue from 2020/21 when 100% Business Rates Retention (BRR) is introduced. It is potentially one of the grants that could be rolled into the 100% BRR Scheme. The financing of Local Government may look very different and an assumption has been made in the MTFs that funding of £250,000 will be available in 2020/21 and 2021/22 in some form.
- 4.6 **Retained Business Rates** - The Government introduced the Business Rates Retention system from April 2013. There is a risk of volatility in the system because Councils are exposed to any loss of income if businesses go into decline.
- 4.7 In line with good financial management principles, a provision has been made in the Accounts for likely refunds of business rates as a result of appeals, against the rateable value of business properties. The appeals provision is based on the total value of outstanding appeals at the year end as advised by the Valuation Office Agency and on advice from them about the likely success rate of appeals. The Council is part of the Devonwide Business Rates and in 2015/16 made a pooling gain of £38,094.
- 4.8 In 2015/16 there has been a £1.185 million increase in the provision for appeals within the Council's Collection Fund. This has resulted in a deficit in the Business Rates Collection Fund of £1.5 million. West Devon Borough Council's share of the deficit is 40% (£607,000).
- 4.9 The Council will need to pay additional sums into the Collection Fund in future years to bring the Collection Fund back into balance. Monies have been set aside in the Business Rates Retention Earmarked Reserve to mitigate the impact of this in future years and to fund the volatility in Business Rates income. The balance on this reserve is £844,000 at 31 March 2016 (as per Appendix D).
- 4.10 The Council was in the safety net position for 2015-16 for Business Rates (income was more than 7.5% below the business rates baseline due to the size of the appeals provision) and therefore for future years, business rates income has been budgeted for at the Business Rates baseline.

4.11 The Council's Business Rates Gross amount payable has increased from £9.8 million in 2011/12 to £11.1 million in 2016/17 – an increase of over 2% per annum. Of the Business Rates collected of £11.1 million, the Council is predicted to retain in funding only £1.508 million of this in 2016/17. So the Borough Council retains approximately 13.5p in every £1 to run our services.

Self-sufficient local government: 100% Business Rates Retention

4.12 The Council's response to the consultation document was an item on the agenda for the September Hub Committee meeting. The consultation paper confirmed that the move from 50% to 100% Business Rates Retention (BRR) will see new responsibilities given to local government, with certain central government grants being phased out (such as Revenue Support Grant). The Government has previously announced that the move to 100% BRR will be fiscally neutral.

4.13 **Business Rates Revaluation** - There will be a Business Rates Revaluation which will go live on 1 April 2017. A flyer from the Valuation Office was included with all business ratepayers bills in March 2016. A summary of the revaluation changes are shown below.

Table 2 - Summary of Revaluation Changes - Devon wide				
Devon Authorities	Change in RV £	Change in RV %	Change in Gross rates £	Change in Gross rates %
District				
East Devon	3,672,626	4.12%	199,698	0.46%
Exeter	1,806,153	0.97%	(2,323,577)	-2.58%
Mid Devon	1,229,526	3.01%	(121,278)	-0.61%
North Devon	946,411	1.11%	(1,012,643)	-2.45%
South Hams	2,657,072	3.16%	(187,428)	-0.46%
Teignbridge	1,659,923	2.01%	(631,902)	-1.58%
Torridge	3,438,326	10.28%	1,037,053	6.41%
West Devon	2,343,538	8.09%	601,704	4.29%
Districts total	17,753,575	2.81%	(2,438,373)	-0.80%
Unitary				
Plymouth	1,083,143	0.47%	(3,386,667)	-3.06%
Torbay	(5,795,624)	-5.90%	(4,375,751)	-9.21%
Unitary total	(4,712,481)	-1.44%	(7,762,418)	-4.90%
Overall Devon total	13,041,094	1.36%	(10,200,791)	-2.20%

4.14 Although for all Districts in Devon there has been an increase in rateable value, the Government proposes to reduce the national small rate multiplier by 1.7p from 48.4p to 46.7p and the standard multiplier is also estimated to fall by 1.7p to 48.0p so that total business rate receipts in England remain constant in real terms.

- 4.15 Under the Government's proposals, West Devon would see an increase in the tariff paid over to the Government. However the Government has acknowledged that this methodology does not take into account the impact of reliefs and has indicated that it will keep the decision under review.

COUNCIL TAX

- 4.16 West Devon Borough Council's share of the council tax bill in 2016/17 was **12%**, being £213.39 out of an average Band D council tax bill of £1,736.13. The total income from council tax in 2016/17 is £4,210,912. The table below shows how an average Band D council bill is made up for West Devon for the last two years:

Precepting Authority	Band D 2015/16	Band D 2016/17	£ Increase	% Increase
West Devon Borough Council	£208.39	£213.39	£5.00	2.40%
Devon County Council Precept	£1,161.27	£1,184.39	£23.12	1.99%
Adult Social Care Precept *		£23.23	£23.23	2.00%
Devon & Cornwall Police & Crime Commissioner	£169.47	£172.84	£3.37	1.99%
Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue	£78.42	£79.98	£1.56	1.99%
Average Parishes/Towns	£60.77	£62.30	£1.53	2.52%
TOTAL	£1,678.32	£1,736.13	£57.81	3.44%

£5 council tax referendum limit for District Councils for four years

- 4.17 The final Finance Settlement announced in February 2016 stated that the Council Tax referendum limit for all District Councils for the next four years (2016/17 to 2019/20) is the higher of 2% or more than £5. This means the Borough Council would have the flexibility to increase its Band D council tax by £5 per year until 2019/20. (An increase of £5.01 triggers a council tax referendum).
- 4.18 District Councils lobbied for the ability to be able to increase council tax by up to £5. The Council made the point that Councils must be given the freedom to set the council tax locally based on local need and local understanding of the services and demands on those services. The Band D council tax level for 2016-17 was set by Council at £213.39.

4.19 **Collection Fund Surplus** – At the end of March 2016, the Council has a balance on its Collection Fund (council tax collection fund) of £2.26 million. A large part of this has been distributed in 16/17 but there is a predicted £1.1 million to distribute in 2017/18. This means that the Borough Council’s share of this distribution is £178,000 which is funding available towards the 2017/18 Budget.

5 THE COUNCIL’S STRATEGIC PRIORITIES – OUR PLAN

5.1 The Council’s ‘Our Plan’ describes the Council’s vision and its aspirations for our communities. It does this by setting out what the Council wishes to deliver to our communities under eight themes. These themes are: Homes; Economy; Communities; Wellbeing; Infrastructure; Environment; Heritage; and Resources. There is then a plethora of external policies and strategies which support the delivery of ‘Our Plan’.



5.2 The Council has a number of strategic documents and plans that guide its approach to achieving its vision and ensuring that it remains financially sustainable. The most impactful and important of these are: Our Plan; Joint Local Plan; Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS); and the Asset Management Plan.



6 BUDGET PRESSURES, SAVINGS AND INCOME GENERATION FOR 2017/18 ONWARDS

6.1 Financial modelling has been undertaken for the next five years to predict the Council's financial situation for the short and medium term.

6.2 **Appendix A** to the Medium Term Financial Strategy sets out the Budget Pressures forecast for the next five years and the additional savings and income forecast. **These figures in Appendix A show the changes to the existing base budget.** A description of the larger budget pressures are set out below.

6.3 Inflation on waste collection, recycling and cleansing

A budget pressure of £400,000 has been built into the MTFS as an estimate.

6.4 **Planning fee income** – In the Budget Monitoring report to the Hub Committee on 1 November 2016, it was highlighted that there is predicted to be a shortfall in income from planning applications of £60,000. Following the budget scouring process where all budgets have been scrutinised and also from having three months more of data, it is now anticipated that planning income will be under budget by £125,000. This position is expected to continue in 2017/18 and therefore a cost pressure of £125,000 has been added to the budget report. In 16/17 the budgeted income is £383,000 and it is anticipated actual income will be in the region of £260,000. At the end of November 2016 (end of Month 8) the amount of planning fee income was £170,000.

There is nothing concrete yet in legislation to allow Councils to charge a cost recovery basis for Planning applications. The Council's understanding is that secondary legislation will be required for this to happen. At this stage, it is felt prudent to reduce the planning income budget for next year.

6.5 **Triennial Pension revaluation** – The Council's Pension Fund is valued every three years. A revaluation was due for March 2016. Any new employer's pension contribution rates will apply from April 2017. Some preliminary figures have been made available to the Council and the cost pressure has been increased by £5,000 to £80,000 in 2017/18 as a result.

6.6 **Inflation and increases on goods and services** – There is a cost pressure of £70,000 in the MTFs for Inflation and increases on goods and services, the detail of which is shown in 3.3.

6.7 **Salaries** – A 1% provision for a pay award has been included for 2017/18 which totals £40,000. This is explained in section 3.1. Also an amount of £40,000 has been included for salary increments.

6.8 **Housing Benefit administration subsidy and Council Tax Support Admin Grant** - The Council currently receives grant income of £160,000 in Housing Benefit administration subsidy and £59,000 in Council Tax Support Admin Grant. It is anticipated that these grants could reduce by £30,000 next year (between both grants) and a cost pressure has been included for these amounts.

6.9 **National Living wage and National Insurance** – The Government has committed to following the recommendations of the independent Low Pay Commission to increase the National Living Wage (NLW) by 4.2% from £7.20 to £7.50 from 2017. The Government's target is for the NLW to reach 60% of median earnings by 2020 subject to sustained economic growth. There will also be a small increase in national insurance contributions. A cost pressure of £20,000 has been included for these elements.

- 6.10 **Recycling credits income** – As highlighted in the Budget Monitoring report (Hub Committee 1 November 2016), it is anticipated there will be a £40,000 cost pressure.

Devon County Council has taken West Devon's leaf sweepings and garden waste into the County contract and has ceased paying recycling credits on this material. As has been previously reported, a phasing into the DCC contract was negotiated to minimise the budgetary impact. This has resulted in a loss of income gained from recycling credits from DCC, which is largely offset by West Devon no longer having to pay gate fees for composting the materials. Members will be aware that prices for recycling have dropped with the market changing significantly due to external factors. The income target in 2016/17 was reduced to £330,000, but the current monitoring position is showing that the budget needs to be further reduced by £40,000.

- 6.11 **Finance Community of Practice** – A cost pressure of £15,000 has been included for the cost of an extra 0.6FTE post within the Finance COP team (above the blueprinted establishment for finance). This is to reflect the fact that the blueprinted resources for the team were on the assumption that self-serve for budget holders was fully embedded and that budget managers would manage their budgets with minimal input or assistance from the finance team. Due to changing the coding structure for both Councils, the system support required on Civica Financials, the complexity of shared services accounting and the self-serve training still required on the finance system, it is recommended that the establishment reflects the current position and a £15,000 cost pressure is recognised.
- 6.12 The summary of the Recommendations from the Economy Working Group are shown in Appendix A. These were approved by Council on 6 December 2016.

EARMARKED RESERVES

- 6.13 As part of the compilation of the MTFs, a review has been carried out of the Council's Earmarked Reserves to assess the adequacy of the level of Earmarked Reserves. A schedule of Earmarked Reserves is shown in Appendix D.
- 6.14 **Creating an ICT Earmarked Reserve** - Following a review of all Earmarked Reserves, it is recommended to amalgamate a few older small reserves that haven't been used and re-allocate these to create an ICT Earmarked Reserve. These are the Young Persons Prevention Officer (£10K set up in 13/14), Inspire Anex 11 (£7K set up in 13/14) and Local Authority Business Growth Incentive LABGI funding (£25K set up in 12/13) – total of £42,000. This will be a recommendation of the January 2017 Hub Committee budget report.

- 6.15 **ICT Development Reserve** – It is recommended that the Council makes an annual contribution of £25,000 per year into this reserve to fund IT expenditure. An ICT Strategy will be reported to the Hub Committee
- 6.16 **Planning Reserve** – An annual contribution to the Planning Reserve is recommended, in order to be able to make a provision for the cost of the Council defending planning appeals.
- 6.17 **Contribution to the Strategic Change Reserve (T18)** – The contributions to the T18 Strategic Change Earmarked Reserve were set out in the Business Case in the Council report of 9th December 2014. These contributions are to meet redundancy and pension strain costs and other non-recurring costs. These one-off investment costs are funded by the savings.

SAVINGS AND INCOME GENERATION

- 6.18 **Re-procurement of contracts** – The MTFS shows the savings in Appendix A from the re-procurement of outsourced contracts.
- 6.19 **Income from fees and charges** - A report will be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 17 January, to consider the fees and charges for 2017/18. Therefore no figure for savings/additional income has yet been shown in the Budget report and this is shown as 'To be agreed'.
- 6.20 **Budget Scouring savings** - All of the existing base budgets have been scrutinised and challenged by the Leadership Team and Finance Business Partners, in order to identify further savings. The following savings of £75,000 have been identified to date:-
- i) A £45,000 reduction in the annual contribution of £103,000 to the repairs and maintenance earmarked reserve for car parking (The car parking maintenance earmarked reserve currently has a balance of £408,000 in the reserve)
 - ii) A £25,000 saving on the purchase of equipment in the planning service and a £5,000 saving on staff travel
- 6.21 **Business Rates pooling gain** – A pooling gain of £30,000 has been estimated within the savings.
- 6.22 **Kilworthy Park** – Additional rental income of an extra £5,000 per annum has been built into the MTFS.
- 6.23 **Transformation Programme 2018 (T18) savings** – As shown in Appendix A, as approved in the 9th December 2014 Council report, in 2016/17 recurring annual staff savings of £700,000 (30% of current staffing levels) and £25,000 other staff saving costs (ancillary costs) were built in. Note the £725,000 savings in 2016/17 are in addition to £962,000 of savings already built into the 2015/16 Base Budget, with total savings being £1.6 million.

7. OVERALL POSITION – BUDGET GAP

- 7.1 Appendix B illustrates the overall financial forecast for the forthcoming five years. Although the Council's Net Budget is £7.25 million in 2016/17, the Gross Expenditure of the Council is around £26 million.
- 7.2 A Summary forecast is shown below of the potential budget situation if all of the budget pressures and the savings and income generation in Appendix A were approved. It also shows the situation if the Council Tax is increased by £5 (shown in Appendix B).
- 7.3 The Council's Transformation Programme, coupled with savings from the re-procurement of contracts and other areas, has meant that in 2017/18 the Council has a projected Budget Gap of £236,017. In 2018/19 there is a projected Budget Gap of £662,781. There are Budget Surpluses in years 2019/20 and 2020/21 and the modelling assumes that these surpluses are used for one-off investment in the years 19/20 and 20/21 and are taken as a saving in the next financial year. Over the five years, the cumulative projected budget gap is £708,890 as shown below.
- 7.4 The following table illustrates the predicted budget gap from 2017/18 onwards for the Council as shown in Appendix B:

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
	£	£	£	£	£
Budget gap/(surplus)	236,017	662,781	Nil	Nil	(189,908)
CUMULATIVE BUDGET GAP OVER THE FIVE YEARS TO 21/22					£708,890
In the years 2019/20 and 2020/21, a budget surplus arises and the modelling assumes that these surpluses are used for one-off investment in the years 19/20 and 20/21 and are taken as a saving in the next financial year.					

- 7.5 **Identification of further savings and income generation** – There are several areas where further work is being carried out by officers to identify further savings and income generation and to robustly challenge existing funding levels within the base budget:
- Fees and charges – This will be considered as part of the annual budget setting process by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 17 January 2017.
 - A Financials Principles Workshop was held with Members on 5 December to focus on an approach and strategy for Income Generation

- 7.6 There are areas which are shown as possible future savings (shown in grey on Appendix A) which are being progressed by the Senior Leadership Team. These were the subject of a report to the Hub Committee in March 2016 (Income Generation report) and Special Council on 26 July 2016 (Local Authority Controlled Company – LACC Business Case). These total £337,000.
- 7.7 The Finance Settlement will be announced before Christmas and this should state the level of New Homes Bonus funding for the Council for 2017/18. The Council can then take a view on the proposed distribution of the New Homes Bonus funding (see Section 8). Depending on the amount received, the Council may want to review the amount of NHB that it uses to fund the Revenue Base Budget. This report models the Council using £0.7 million to fund the Revenue Base Budget.
- 7.8 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee have reviewed partnership funding levels and it was resolved (O & S (E)18) that the funding levels remain the same for the Citizens Advice and Community Voluntary Service for 2017/18.

8. NEW HOMES BONUS (NHB)

- 8.1 This grant was introduced in 2011/12 and provides incentives for local authorities and local communities to be supportive of housing growth. It is not ring fenced and can be spent on anything.
- 8.2 New Homes Bonus allocations for future years are estimates and cannot be taken with any certainty as the whole NHB system is subject to change following a Government consultation exercise in March 2016.
- 8.3 The table below shows estimated amounts of NHB receivable in future years:-

	2017-18 (£)	2018-19 (£)	2019-20 (£)	2020-21 (£)	2021-22 (£)
Predicted NHB amount	1,100,000	900,000	800,000	800,000	800,000
Potential uses of the NHB:-					
Capital Projects (9.1)	468,000	299,000	299,000	299,000	299,000
To fund the Revenue Base Budget	700,000	500,000	400,000	400,000	400,000
Dartmoor National Park allocation	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
Funding remaining unallocated	(68,000) funding shortfall	101,000	101,000	101,000	101,000

- 8.4 The figures above in 8.3 are based on the NHB consultation proposals to reduce the number of years from 6 years to 4 years (with 5 years funding for 2017/18 as a transitional year).
- 8.5 The modelling in 8.3 assumes a contribution from NHB of £700,000 to fund the Revenue base budget in 2017/18 (In 2016/17 this was £1million). There is a funding shortfall in 17/18 and the Council is currently awaiting an announcement from the Government on the amount of NHB it will receive for 2017/18.
- 8.6 Dartmoor National Park (DNP) – On an annual basis Dartmoor National Park request a share of the New Homes Bonus to reflect new homes delivered within the park. The money is used to support a local community fund and, for example, joint work through the rural housing enabler. Members consider this on an annual basis as part of the Budget process.

9. CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2017/18 to 2021/22

- 9.1 The table below shows the capital budget proposals for the Capital Programme for 2017/18 to 2021/22.

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Tenants Incentive Scheme (TIS) -Note 1	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000
Village Halls and Community Projects Note 2	-	36,000	36,000	36,000	36,000
Affordable Housing (see Note 3)	350,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000
Disabled Facilities Grants (see Note 4)	450,000	450,000	450,000	450,000	450,000
Waste (Note 5)	55,000	-	-	-	-
TOTAL CAPITAL PROGRAMME	870,000	701,000	701,000	701,000	701,000
Suggested method of funding the Capital Programme:					
Better Care funding towards DFGs (see Note 4)	(402,000)	(402,000)	(402,000)	(402,000)	(402,000)
New Homes Bonus (Required to fund the Capital Programme)	468,000	299,000	299,000	299,000	299,000

Note 1 – Tenants Incentive Scheme (TIS)

A bid is made to the Capital Programme for an allocation of £15,000 for TIS for 2017/18.

The Tenants Incentive Scheme (TIS) was first brought into use in 2004. This enabled the Council to look at the best ways that the Council could use its current stock. There were a lot of residents who were considered to be under occupying their homes as children had moved out and there were increasing pressures on the housing options service. Many of these residents would not have downsized if an incentive was not offered, as this helped them to cover the costs of moving and in some cases helped to carpet and furnish their new homes.

In recent years due to the caps on LHA, this has helped a considerable number of people move to a smaller home, that is more suited to their financial means and has assisted with clearing the arrears that have accrued due to the 'spare bedroom tax'.

The cost savings that need to be considered when this money is paid does not just affect the Council but also the court system in terms of evictions, social services, Housing Associations and of course the issues around the health services as people may be less worried as preventative measures have decreased the anxiety caused by being in debt or worrying about how they will cover their household costs.

Below are some facts about TIS and how this has helped residents in our community:

- Since 2004, 65 people have moved using the scheme. This means that 65 people have been permanently rehoused from the West Devon housing register.
- The average sum of money paid is £1,500 per household. This is primarily paid to those freeing up family sized accommodation in the two bedroom properties.
- The cost of accommodating a family in Bed and Breakfast per night is £60. Legally families can only stay in bed and breakfast for 6 weeks but this alone totals £2,520 for that stay.
- Alternatives to bed and breakfast are expensive self contained units which normally cost about £450 per week. If this is required this could cost an additional £2,700 for a 6 weeks stay.
- There has been very little affordable housing in the South of the Borough since 2010 and therefore WDBC has had to make sure that our stock is being occupied by those in the most need.

- The TIS scheme has helped to keep families local in order to provide or receive support and children in the schools that they are used to. It has also helped residents in terms of not being stuck in a benefit trap as family sized accommodation has become available to help them continue to work or to avoid going into expensive private accommodation.

Note 2 – Village Halls and Community Projects

The Capital Budget Monitoring report to the Hub Committee on 1 November 2016 highlighted that this scheme currently has a budget allocation of £106,000 in 2016/17 which is anticipated to be underspent (by at least £36,000). Due to the level of predicted underspend, no budget allocation has been requested for 2017/18 and the underspend from 2016/17 will be rolled forward to meet costs in 2017/18.

Note 3 – Affordable Housing

The current level of capital funding allocated to the delivery of affordable housing is an annual contribution of £200,000. It is now proposed that this budget be increased by £150,000 to £350,000 to support housing need in the Borough.

Due to the reduction in available grant for affordable housing, there is currently no funding for assisting with the provision of rented properties. The schemes detailed below at South Tawton, Brentor and Horrbridge may need an element of 'top up' money. It is possible that Section 106 monies could finance this 'top up' however there is a need to safeguard these schemes if there is insufficient s.106 money available. Section 106 funds to date total £193,000, this is not ring fenced to a particular location but can be used throughout the whole of West Devon. Further off-site contributions are under discussion.

Financial viability information has been received for South Tawton and the Horrbridge scheme is in the process of being prepared. It is unclear at this time whether additional funds will be required for Brentor, therefore this is a worst case scenario.

Scheme Details:

South Tawton – 6 units - viability report provided.

Horrbridge – 10 units - awaiting viability

Brentor – 8 – 10 units - awaiting viability

A bid for £350,000 to the Capital Programme for 2017/18 has been made.

These schemes will not provide the Council with a long term income stream, but they will provide some financial gain as well as being of social benefit to the community.

Advantages in both financial and social benefit per unit are shown below:

- New Homes Bonus
 - Council Tax (ongoing – costs depend on property size)
 - Reduction in numbers on the housing register
 - Meets WDBC's statutory need – although these schemes are within the Dartmoor National Park planning area, WDBC is the housing authority for the Borough and the statutory duty to meet housing need falls upon this Council
-
- Reduction in the use of temporary accommodation, this can cost between £130 - £450 per week (location and time of year). This could increase if duties are extended to non-priority applicants - proposed bill due for its second reading.
 - Social benefits can have huge impact on the reduction of support services that need to be provided. This can also extend to school transport, disruption to children if forced to change schools when housing is not available and the reduction on health services.

Note 4 - Private Sector Renewals, primarily Disabled Facilities

Grants – This budget is used to fund Private Sector Renewals, primarily Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG's). DFG's are mandatory, means tested and enable people to live independently within their own home. Adaptations range from simple stair lifts and Level Access Showers through to full extensions. The budget of £450,000 will be made up of the expected £402,000 from the Better Care Fund and a contribution from the Council of £48,000. The demand for DFG's is not under our control and cannot be predicted at this stage.

Note 5 – Waste - A capital bid for £55,000 for Waste is set out in Exempt Appendix F.

- 9.2 The Capital Programme is set by the Council and may be funded by sale proceeds from the disposal of assets (capital receipts), external grants and contributions, directly from revenue or from borrowing.
- 9.3 As part of the budget proposals, it is necessary to review the level and phasing of schemes within the Capital Programme. It is important that the programme is matched with available resources and the impact on reserves and the revenue budget is fully assessed. For example the Waste capital bid has a revenue implication.
- 9.4 **Prudential Borrowing** - The Council will consider the use of prudential borrowing to support capital investment to deliver services and will ensure that the full costs of borrowing are taken into account when investment decisions are made.

- 9.5 In July 2016 (Minute CM28), the Council agreed to undertake prudential borrowing of £1.5 million for the new leisure contract.
- 9.6 Also at Council on 26 July 2016 (Minute CM27), Council agreed that subject to the approval of the recommendation set out in 11.11 of the report, that the Council enters into an external Waste Management arrangement; this arrangement will be subject to full affordability assessment, risk analysis and in compliance with Public Contract Regulations 2015, for a 2 year period with a view to waste services transferring to the LACC at the end of the 2 year period; and that the Council proceeds to acquire the fleet required to satisfy the West Devon Waste specification as set out in Appendix D of the presented agenda report. If purchased, as opposed to leased, the cost of the fleet is to be financed through borrowing.

10. EARMARKED AND UNEARMARKED RESERVES

- 10.1 The Council's Net Budget is £7.25 million in 2016/17. It is still recommended to retain the same policy of maintaining a minimum level of Unearmarked Reserves of £750,000. The summary below shows the position at 31 March 2016:

The Use of Unearmarked Revenue Reserves	
	£'000
Balance B/fwd 1.4.2015	1,023
Revenue Outturn Underspend for 2015-16	32
Unearmarked revenue reserves at 31.3.2016	1,055
Earmarked revenue reserves at 31.3.2016 (see Appendix D)	2,395

The Unearmarked General Fund Revenue Reserve balance at 31st March 2016 was £1,055,000 and the Earmarked Reserves balance was £2,395,000. This gave total Revenue Reserves of £3,450,000.

The predicted earmarked and unearmarked reserves for 2016/17 are shown below:-

	£'000
Unearmarked Reserves balance as at 31 st March 2016	1,055
Earmarked Reserves	2,395
Predicted movement in Earmarked Reserves (Appendix D)	925
Total Predicted Reserves as at 31st March 2017 (Unearmarked Reserves of £1,030,000 and Earmarked Reserves of £3,345,000 as shown in Appendix D)	4,375

- 10.2 Our financial strategy recognises the need to maintain un-earmarked revenue reserves to provide stability for both medium and longer term planning and to provide a contingency against unforeseen events. In setting the minimum level at £750,000, the following have been taken into account:
- The size of the authority
 - The volatility of some income and expenditure budgets due to a dependency on the weather, tourism and state of the economy
 - The risks faced by the Council with regard to funding unforeseen events
 - Uncertainty over future Government funding and Business Rates
 - Uncertainty over future New Homes Bonus allocations
- 10.3 The Unearmarked Reserves (General Fund) balance of £1.055 million stands above the minimum balance of £750,000 and acts as a safeguard against unforeseen financial pressures.
- 10.4 **Specific Earmarked Reserves** - The level and commitments for each reserve are kept under review each year to make sure the committed balance is adequate for its purpose (in accordance with LLAP Bulletin 99, a guide on 'Reserves' from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance). Sections 6.13 to 6.17 of the report set out where the adequacy of the level of Reserves has been assessed and where recommendations have been made to increase the annual contribution to Earmarked Reserves.
- 10.5 A schedule of predicted Earmarked Reserves for 16/17 is shown in Appendix D. Earmarked Reserves are predicted to be £3,345,000 at the end of March 2017.
- 10.6 The tables below show the movements on the two Earmarked Reserves that were set up as part of the Budget approved for 2016/17.

2016/17 Budget Surplus Contingency Earmarked Reserve (£)	
Opening Balance – This is the Budget Surplus from 2016/17 which was put into an Earmarked Reserve.	669,292
Less known Commitments against this reserve:	
Council 26 July 2016 – To fund the LACC set up costs	(127,500)
Balance left uncommitted	541,792
Recommendation: To set aside £50,000 from this reserve for the Joint Local Plan (this will be a recommendation of the January Budget report)	(50,000)
Balance remaining (if £50K is approved)	491,792

Innovation Fund (Invest to Earn) Earmarked Reserve (£)	
Opening Balance - (Minute HC69) Unallocated New Homes Bonus funding from 16/17 and reallocated Capital Budget for Affordable Housing – both amounts were transferred into an ‘Invest to Earn’ reserve to fund income generating activities.	922,462
Less known Commitments against this reserve:	
Year 1 funding of Development Surveyor (Minute HC69)	(17,600)
Balance left uncommitted	904,862

It is recommended to set aside £50,000 from the 2016/17 Budget Surplus Contingency Earmarked Reserve for the Joint Local Plan. This is to cover numerous elements including a contribution to a programme manager role, the examination and legal representation. These costs would be shared with Plymouth City Council and South Hams District Council. This will be a recommendation of the January 2017 Hub Committee budget report.

- 10.7 **Sensitivity analysis and risk analysis** – The figures within the Medium Term Financial Strategy have been subject to a sensitivity analysis of the figures and a risk analysis. A copy was attached at Appendix F of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

11 OTHER BUDGET ITEMS

- 11.1 **Members’ Budget Workshop** – On 3rd October 2016 a Members’ Budget Workshop was held. This was to give all Members the opportunity to influence and shape the budget setting process.
- 11.2 At this workshop, there was early support for increasing council tax by the maximum allowable of £5. At this event it was recognised that this measure would increase the base budget for ensuing years and protect the delivery of services and the Council’s financial resilience.
- 11.3 **Council Tax Reduction Scheme** – The Council approved a grant distribution of £77,509 for 2016-17 for the Town and Parish element of the grant. It is estimated that the Council’s funding (Revenue Support Grant, Business Rates, Rural Services Delivery Grant and Transition Grant) will decrease by 23.5% in the next three years of the funding settlement (see Appendix B). The average of this is 8.6% each year over the next three years.
- 11.4 Towns and Parishes would like more certainty of their grant allocations for planning purposes and have been informed by the Council of a three year funding reduction of 8.6% each year for the next three financial years (2017/18 to 2019/20). This is an overall reduction of £6,600 for 2017-18.

Devolution

- 11.5 The Council plays an active part in the Heart of the South West LEP's devolution project. In September 2015 the Heart of the South West (HotSW) submitted its devolution Statement of Intent to Government. The partners are 17 local authorities, two National Parks, the Local Enterprise Partnership and the three Clinical Commissioning Groups.
- 11.6 In July 2016 (Minute CM 29) Council agreed to sign up to the principle of creating a Combined Authority for the Heart of the South West, as set out in the Prospectus for Productivity, as the basis for negotiation with Government towards a Devolution Deal for the area. It was noted that giving endorsement did not commit the Council to entering into a Devolution Deal or becoming a member of the Heart of the South West Combined Authority. This would be subject to future debate and agreement by the Council and subject to negotiations with Government.

Local Authority Controlled Company (LACC)

- 11.7 On 26 July 2016 (Minute CM27), Council considered a report on the findings of a business case that had been prepared by PriceWaterhouseCoopers (PWC) at the request of Members, on the merits of establishing a Local Authority Controlled Company (LACC). The company would be wholly owned by West Devon and South Hams Councils, to deliver the full range of District Council services. In doing so, it is anticipated that this would create an opportunity to sell these services to other organisations to generate income.
- 11.8 It was agreed that the Council proceed with the work which enables a more considered decision to be made with regard to the implementation of a LACC, subject to there being a satisfactory outcome to the outstanding pension, tax and governance questions and the production of a fully tested Business Plan. It was also agreed that a Joint Steering Group (JSG) with South Hams be established to deal with matters concerning the implementation of the LACC.

UK vote to leave the European Union

- 11.9 The full implications of the decision on 23 June 2016 by the UK to negotiate an exit from the European Union (EU) will become apparent over time. There may be changes in Government policy and any significant changes in the economy may have an impact on local government financing. The Budget report contains the latest high level forecasts in the public domain for budgeting purposes (those announced in the Local Government Finance Settlement in February 2016) and the Council will continue to monitor any impact on public sector funding and the Council's treasury management activity closely.

Income generation opportunities and the Council's asset management strategy

- 11.10 In this financial climate, income generation becomes a key priority area. Efficient and effective management of the Council's commercial property portfolio is inextricably linked to the Council's response to expected reduction in funding support and increasing the revenue from commercial property will help to bridge future funding gaps.
- 11.11 The commercial property portfolio is run as a commercial enterprise so as to generate a revenue stream for the Council. It is the aim of the Council to continue to run the commercial estate and over time, to increase its size, by developing out sites in its ownership, as well as through the purchase of new land where required. The development programme will form part of the capital programme, which is predicated on robust and compelling business cases. Whenever financially viable, the Council will consider and deploy renewable energy / environmentally friendly solutions and technologies.
- 11.12 In summary, the Council's asset management strategy is to:
- Pro-active dispose of non-strategic land to reduce operational expenditure
 - Use funds realised from asset disposals for future development
 - Bring forward strategic sites for development or disposal as appropriate (investment will be required)
 - Actively grow Commercial Asset Portfolio - Focus on Housing (Affordable, Rental, Market) & Employment Units
- 11.13 Other income generation initiatives will be pursued in tandem with extending the commercial property portfolio; linked to driving more value from Council assets and resources. This could be from providing customers with added value services.

12 Timetable for the Budget Setting Process

- 12.1 Appendix C sets out the timetable for the Budget Setting Process.

13 Looking Forward to the Future

- 13.1 Overall, the Council's finances remain strong. In order to maintain this position, the Council operates continuous monitoring of both income and expenditure. This ensures that services are delivered within approved budgets and that all three elements of value for money (economy, efficiency and effectiveness) are achieved for our residents.

14. IMPLICATIONS

Implications	Relevant to proposals Y/N	Details and proposed measures to address
Legal/Governance	Y	<p>The Hub Committee is responsible for recommending to Council the budgetary framework. In accordance with the Financial Procedure Rules, Council must decide the general level of Reserves and the use of Earmarked Reserves.</p> <p>The preparation of the Budget report is evidence that the Council has considered and taken into account all relevant information and proper advice when determining its financial arrangements in accordance with statutory requirements, and in particular, that it will set a lawful budget.</p> <p>Since there is commercially sensitive information in Appendix F, regarding the budgets for individual projects, there are grounds for the publication of this appendix to be restricted, and considered in exempt session. The public interest has been assessed and it is considered that the public interest will be better served by not disclosing the information in the appendix. Accordingly this report contains exempt Information as defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.</p>
Financial	Y	The financial implications are set out in Sections 1.7 to 1.9 of the Executive Summary.
Risk	Y	The financial risks are as set out in Appendix F of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (September 2016)
Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications		
Equality and Diversity		None directly arising from this report.
Safeguarding		None directly arising from this report.
Community Safety, Crime and Disorder		None directly arising from this report.

Health, Safety and Wellbeing		None directly arising from this report.
Other implications		None directly arising from this report.

Supporting Information

Appendices:

Appendix A – Budget pressures and savings

Appendix B – Modelling of council tax increasing by £5

Appendix C – Budget Timetable for 2017/18 onwards

Appendix D – Schedule of Reserves

Appendix E – Feedback from the Members' Budget Workshop

Appendix F (EXEMPT) – Capital Bid

Background Information

Hub Committee – 20 September 2016 – Medium Term Financial Strategy for the five year period 2017/18 to 2021/22

Hub Committee – 1 November 2016 – Revenue Budget Monitoring report for Quarter 2 of 2016/17

Hub Committee – 1 November 2016 – Capital Budget Monitoring report for Quarter 2 of 2016/17

Approval and clearance of report

Process checklist	Completed
Portfolio Holder briefed	Yes
SLT Rep briefed	Yes
Relevant Exec Director sign off (draft)	Yes
Data protection issues considered	Yes
If exempt information, public (part 1) report also drafted. (Committee/Scrutiny)	N/A

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WEST DEVON BOROUGH COUNCIL

	BASE 2016/17 £	Yr1 2017/18 £	Yr2 2018/19 £	Yr3 2019/20 £	Yr4 2020/21 £
BUDGET PRESSURES					
Inflation on the waste collection, recycling and cleansing contract (estimate) - see 6.3	80,000	400,000	70,000	70,000	70,000
Inflation on the street cleaning and public conveniences	10,000	30,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
Reduction in planning income - see 6.4	0	125,000	0	0	0
Triennial Pension revaluation - see 6.5	60,000	80,000	25,000	0	75,000
Recycling of garden and leaf collections	90,000	0	0	0	0
New glass recycling banks x 3	(8,000)	0	0	0	0
Inflation on goods and services - see 6.6	70,000	70,000	70,000	70,000	70,000
Increase in salaries - increments and pay and grading - see 6.7	40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000
Increase in salaries - pay increase at 1%	40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000
Reduction in Recycling credits - see 6.10	0	40,000	0	0	0
Reduction in Housing Benefit administration subsidy - see 6.8	40,000	30,000	20,000	20,000	0
National Insurance and National Living Wage - see 6.9	60,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000
Revenue implication of the waste capital bid in 2017/18 capital programme - Exempt App F	0	0	13,000	0	0
Finance Community of Practice - staffing resource - see 6.11	0	15,000	0	0	0
Business Information Point (increase from £8,340 to £15,100) - Economy Working Group recommendations - see 6.12	0	6,760	0	0	0
Reinvest saving of £2,811 in Town Benchmarking reports and £1,000 to Youth Markets (Economy WG recommendations) - see 6.12	0	3,811	0	0	0
Reduction in the Homelessness Grant	50,000	0	0	0	0
Kilworthy Park - running costs	45,000	0	0	0	0
Tamar Valley Legacy Plan	3,000	0	0	0	0
Tamar Estuaries Consultative Forum	1,000	0	0	0	0
<i>The following are all one-off cost pressures in 2016/17 and are not required in 2017/18 and are therefore reversed out in 2017/18</i>					
Trading company - specialist advice - One off	150,000	(150,000)	0	0	0
Specialist resource - Waste and Cleansing options review and delivery -one off	80,000	(80,000)	0	0	0
Our Plan	75,000	(75,000)	0	0	0
Elections - reversal of 15/16 one off cost pressure	(50,000)	0	0	0	0
TOTAL IDENTIFIED BUDGET PRESSURES	836,000	595,571	308,000	270,000	325,000

WEST DEVON BOROUGH COUNCIL

	BASE 2016/17 £	Yr1 2017/18 £	Yr2 2018/19 £	Yr3 2019/20 £	Yr4 2020/21 £
Contribution to Earmarked Reserves (This line shows the annual contributions into the Reserve)					
Contribution to IT Development Reserve (£25K per annum) - see 6.15		25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000
Contribution to Planning Reserve (£25K per annum) - see 6.16		25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000
Transformation Project (T18) - Approved at 9th December 2014 Council (One-off investment costs) Contribution to Strategic Change Reserve to meet redundancy and pension costs - Contributions reduce to zero in 2020/21 - see 6.17	125,000	160,000	120,000	35,000	0
Net contribution to T18 Reserve to meet other non-recurring costs (Contributions are offset by savings as per the Business Case)	67,000	67,000	67,000	67,000	0

Total Contribution to Earmarked Reserves

192,000	277,000	237,000	152,000	50,000
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SAVINGS AND INCOME GENERATION IDENTIFIED

	BASE 2016/17 £	Yr1 2017/18 £	Yr2 2018/19 £	Yr3 2019/20 £	Yr4 2020/21 £
Re-procurement of contracts - see 6.18	0	346,000	0	93,000	187,000
Budget Scouring exercise (£45,000 reduction in the contribution to the repairs and maintenance earmarked reserve for car parking maintenance, £25,000 saving on purchase of equipment and £5,000 on staff travel) - see 6.20	0	75,000	0	0	0
Housing Benefit recoveries	30,000	0	0	0	0
Other staffing expenses	60,000	0	0	0	0
Additional investment income	5,000	0	0	0	0
Business Rates pooling gain - see 6.21	10,000	30,000	0	0	0
Villages in Action (£8,000 to £4,000), SW Museum (£2,000 to £1,000) and cease Economy Grants (£5,571) - Economy Working Group recommendations - see 6.12	0	10,571	0	0	0
Council Tax Reduction Scheme - 8.6% reduction in Town and Parish Grant - see 11.4	0	6,600	0	0	0
Reduced running costs at Kilworthy Park and additional leasing income - see 6.22	15,000	5,000	10,000	15,000	0
Transformation Project (T18) savings - Approved at 9th December 2014 Council report £700,000 staff savings (30% of current staffing levels) and £25,000 other staff saving costs (ancillary costs) - Note the £725,000 savings in 2016/17 are in addition to £962,000 of savings already built into the 2015/16 Base Budget.	725,000	0	0	0	0
TOTAL SAVINGS AND INCOME GENERATION	845,000	473,171	10,000	108,000	187,000

MEMORANDUM

POSSIBLE FUTURE SAVINGS(see 7.6)

	BASE 2016/17 £	Yr1 2017/18 £	Yr2 2018/19 £	Yr3 2019/20 £	Yr4 2020/21 £
Income generation from alternative investment vehicles (e.g. property investment fund)		15,000			
LACC Waste savings (as per Special Council report 26 July 2016)				293,000	14,000
TOTAL SAVINGS AND INCOME GENERATION		15,000		293,000	14,000

Note: These savings have not yet been built into the Budget for 2017/18 onwards but are shown for illustration purposes only, as to possible future savings. These areas are currently being worked upon by officers but are not yet confirmed or approved.

Line No.	Example B1 - Council Tax is increased by £5 annually Modelling for the financial years 2017/18 onwards	BASE 2016/17 £	Yr1 2017/18 £	Yr2 2018/19 £	Yr3 2019/20 £	Yr4 2020/21 £	Yr5 2021/22 £
1	Base budget brought forward	7,262,325	7,253,325	7,139,707	6,774,926	7,047,105	7,249,652
2	Budget pressures (as per Appendix A)	836,000	595,571	308,000	270,000	325,000	250,000
3	Savings already identified (as per Appendix A)	(845,000)	(473,171)	(10,000)	(108,000)	(187,000)	(39,000)
4	Reversal of Budget Surplus in the following year - used as a saving					(110,177)	(174,724)
5	Projected Net Expenditure:	7,253,325	7,375,725	7,437,707	6,936,926	7,074,927	7,285,927
	Funded By:-						
6	Council Tax income - Modelling a £5 increase in council tax each year (Taxbase 16/17 = 19,733.41 Band D Equivalent properties)	4,210,912	4,375,096	4,542,281	4,712,467	4,885,652	5,061,836
7	Collection Fund Surplus	280,000	178,000	100,000	80,000	80,000	80,000
8	Revenue Support Grant	623,404	223,284	0	0	0	0
9	Localised Business Rates	1,508,000	1,537,000	1,583,000	1,634,000	1,684,000	1,734,000
10	Funding from Rural Services Delivery Grant	461,498	372,638	286,645	372,638	250,000	250,000
11	Funding from New Homes Bonus	1,000,000	700,000	500,000	400,000	400,000	400,000
12	Funding from Transition Grant	30,803	30,689	0	0	0	0
13	Less: Contribution to Earmarked Reserves	-192,000	-277,000	-237,000	-152,000	-50,000	-50,000
14	Less: Contribution to Budget Surplus Contingency Earmarked Reserve	-669,292					
15	Total Projected Funding Sources	7,253,325	7,139,707	6,774,926	7,047,105	7,249,652	7,475,836
	Budget (surplus)/ gap per year						
16	(Projected Expenditure line 5 - Projected Funding line 15)	0	236,017	662,781	-110,177	-174,724	-189,908

Less: Contribution of Budget Surplus to an Earmarked Reserve for one-off investment. (This means a total of £474,809 is available for one-off investment for the five year period)					110,177	174,724	189,908
Resulting Budget Gap		236,017	662,781	0	0	-189,908	
Actual Predicted Cumulative Budget Gap (Assumes any Budget Surpluses are used for one-off investment in the year they occur and that budget surpluses are used in the following year as a saving - shown in Line 4)		236,017	898,798	898,798	898,798	898,798	708,890
<i>Possible Cumulative Budget Gap</i> (including possible future savings which are not yet confirmed, as shown in grey on Appendix A and in Section 7.6)		221,017	883,798	590,798	576,798	576,798	371,890

(In the last year the saving reduces the overall cumulative budget gap)

Modelling Assumptions:	An assumption of an additional 300 Band D equivalent properties per year has been included in the TaxBase and modelling above for 2017/18 onwards					
Council Tax (Band D) (an increase of £5 per annum has been modelled)	213.39	218.39	223.39	228.39	233.39	238.39
Council TaxBase	19,733.41	20,033.41	20,333.41	20,633.41	20,933.41	21,233.41

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APPENDIX C

West Devon Borough Council - Budget Timetable for 2017/18 onwards

Date	Committee
20th September 16	Hub Committee – To consider the draft Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)
3 rd October 16	Members’ Budget Workshop – To carry out a full review of the MTFS
19 December 16	Hub Committee – Draft Budget Proposals for 2017/18
17 January 2017	Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee – To comment on the Draft Budget Proposals for 2017/18
24 January 17	Hub Committee – To recommend Final Budget Proposals to Council for 2017/18
2 February 17	Date which Council Procedure Rule 16 applies
7 February 17	Full Council – To approve Final Budget Proposals for 2017/18 and set the WDBC share of the Council Tax
21 February 17	Council Tax Resolution Panel – to agree the Council Tax Resolution for 2017/18 (This is WDBC share plus all other precepting authorities share).

Note 1- Council Procedure Rule 16 states that ‘Where a member intends to move a motion or amendment in relation to the Budget, the text of that motion or amendment must be put in writing and submitted to the Head of Paid Service by 9am on the third working day before the meeting, in order that officers may have sufficient time to consider and advise the Council of the financial implications of any such motion or amendment’. As per the timetable above, this would need to be submitted by 9am on Thursday 2nd February.

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RESERVES - PROJECTED BALANCES					
	Opening balance	Additions to the	Predicted spend	Projected balance	
	1 April 2016	Reserve	to 31.3.2017	31.3.2017	Comments
	£000		£000	£000	
EARMARKED RESERVES					
Specific Reserves - General Fund					
Business Rates Retention Scheme	(844)		100	(744)	This reserve will be used to offset the balance on the Collection Fund. This relates to a timing issue on the accounting adjustments required for the localisation of business rates.
Car Parking Maintenance	(408)			(408)	
Budget Surplus Contingency reserve		(669)	60	(609)	This is the Budget Surplus from 2016/17 which was put into an Earmarked Reserve. Commitment of £127,500 for LACC set up costs.
Innovation Fund (Invest to Earn) reserve		(922)	18	(904)	Yr 1 funding of development surveyor
T18 Strategic Change Reserve	0	(192)	192	0	To meet redundancy and pension strain costs (one off investment costs funded by savings).
Local Authority Business Growth Incentive (LABGI)	(25)			(25)	Reserve from 12/13
Habitats Earmarked Reserve	(15)		15	0	Biodiversity
Cannons Meadow	(19)		3	(16)	Written down to revenue annually
County Election	(24)			(24)	
Landscape Maintenance	(5)			(5)	
Fifth Wave Neighbourhood Front Runners	(65)		25	(40)	
DCLG Business Support Scheme	(13)		13	0	
DCC Public Health	(25)		25	0	
Devon County Council - TAP Funds	(64)	(40)	30	(74)	
Economic Grant Initiatives	(16)		16	0	
Flood Works	(20)		20	0	
Homelessness Prevention	(30)		30	0	A new reserve set up to cover additional costs in the winter months.
New Homes Bonus 2014-15	(446)		446	0	Funding transferred to Invest to Earn reserve - previously funding allocated for affordable housing
New Homes Bonus 2015-16	(251)		140	(111)	Hub Committee 7th June 16 - £216K to fund transitional staffing resources and £29K to fund two Case Managers for Disabled Facilities Grants.
New Homes Bonus 2016-17		(1,745)	1,400	(345)	£1 million to fund the revenue budget. Other funds are funding the capital programme and £300K transferred to Invest to Earn earmarked reserve.
Planning Enforcement	(45)		45	0	To fund planning enforcement team
Other Reserves below £15,000	(80)		40	(40)	
TOTAL EARMARKED RESERVES	(2,395)	(3,568)	2,618	(3,345)	
TOTAL UNEARMARKED RESERVES	(1,055)		25	(1,030)	Projected overspend of £25,000 for 2016-17
TOTAL REVENUE RESERVES (EARMARKED AND UNEARMARKED RESERVES)	(3,450)	(3,568)	2,643	(4,375)	

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Summary of the Members' Budget Workshop – 3rd October 2016

A Members' Budget Workshop was held in order to carry out a full review of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and to look at the eight themes within Our Plan. This was to give all Members the opportunity to influence and shape the forthcoming Budget Setting Process for 2017-18. The key points of the Medium Term Financial Strategy were discussed and reviewed. The Member Workshop also looked back on last year's feedback from the Members' Budget Workshop held in 2015.

Themes within 'Our Plan':-

Homes and Communities Themes

On the Homes Theme, Members were asked what they feel are their priority projects and were there any gaps which Members feel we should investigate further. The following were discussed:

- Community Land Trusts/VHI/community led fund
- Self Build/Self finish in terms of serviced plots
- Temporary accommodation – Tiny houses
- Best use of stock
- Shared housing for under 35's – what can we do?
- Communities & Neighbourhood Planning

The discussions and Member responses were as follows:

- Affordable housing in rural areas is slow to deliver and often beset with problems e.g. the developer goes into liquidation.
- Discussion on the investment return from the Housing Capital Programme (£200,000 annual investment). We are delivering affordable homes for local people which is a Council priority, albeit it with no direct return apart from New Homes Bonus. Discussion on should we still put cash into Affordable Housing? Some Member support for the £200,000 annual investment.
- If the Council developed housing through the LACC it would be exempt from the Right To Buy.
- Await results of the Autumn Statement, potentially money available for small builders
- Discussed Community Land Trusts – there is one in Chagford that is all. The Council should be trying different ways of delivering housing. Some Members felt CLTs were very time consuming.
- Going into partnership with Housing Associations to build housing for specific groups. The Council to provide the capital and get a return.
- There is not enough small, market housing for older people to downsize into. The Borough needs open market homes for elderly persons to downsize into, Blue Cedar Homes Model.

- Some Members felt the Council could put covenants on the land to protect our investment, particularly as in the future we could be losing housing stock through the Right to Buy.
- Members referred to the Innovation Fund (Invest to Earn) Earmarked Reserve which currently had a balance of £905,000 remaining.

Well-being Theme

Through grant and contract funding, the Council works with a number of partners to discharge both its statutory duties and strategic priorities, which in turn deliver positive health and wellbeing outcomes for residents in the District.

The question was asked of 'Would Members support opportunities to work more closely with the voluntary sector?'

Members were keen on stripping out duplication for customers (where partners such as the CAB were seeing the same customers as the Council regarding housing or benefit enquiries). Concerns were raised over resilience and the cutbacks that the voluntary sector had also had to make.

A series of small suggestions which could improve how effective our partners can be at delivering better services for our shared customers were made such as co-location, dedicated phone lines and using sound websites such as the CAB's to signpost customers, rather than duplicating the same content on our own website.

Infrastructure and Heritage Theme

The majority of Members were keen on the idea of both charging for duty and introducing planning performance agreements (PPAs). However a smaller number of Members felt that the duty should be free as part of the Council services.

The Key factors were;

Duty

To ensure that where people need to access information about active applications that this is isn't chargeable

Reasonable charge

Ensure service is of value - timely, suitably experienced staff etc.

Consult and advertise changes

PPAs

Ensure that it is simply help through the process

Ensure it is not a twin track process – i.e. those who can afford it get a better/quicker service

In both cases Members agreed that income should be ring fenced to Development Management for the first year and then a decision made based on a business case and future forecasting from then on.

Next steps - in line with the Peer Challenge Action Plan – to review present arrangements and cost out future options.

Resources Theme

Members were in support of increasing Council Tax by the maximum allowable (which is £5 for 2017/18). This measure would increase the base budget for ensuing years and protect the delivery of services and the Council's financial resilience.

Members asked for Officers to undertake a review of Earmarked Reserves and to report back to Members in December as part of the Draft Budget for 2017-18 for Members' consideration.

Investigate the purchase of vacant business properties (Okehampton and Tavistock) and convert them into flats.

Use of New Homes Bonus (NHB) funding

Support for an element of NHB to be used to continue to support funding the Revenue Base Budget. This is currently predicted to be £700,000 for 2017-18.

ICT Strategy

Resilience is a top priority for ICT as this causes the most discontent. Need to ensure an uninterrupted power supply at all times. Members had concerns that sometimes there maybe patches put on, rather than a whole solution. Concerns of over-reliance on one individual in some areas.

Disaster Recovery is a priority for Members. Practical issues need to come out of the Strategic Principles within the ICT Strategy – e.g. demand reduction. There is Member concern that the system could be overloaded at times. Members said they would be prepared to consider putting temporary additional resource into ICT on a business case basis. It was discussed that a report would be being presented to Members on the ICT Strategy.

Members were pleased with the work happening on the new website. Member frustrations with their iPads e.g. the ability to do tracked changes on documents, having to maintain two separate diaries etc.

There was a discussion about possible scope creep in new IT and around possibilities with the Cloud. Wi-Fi access is an issue.

Environment Theme

There was a discussion around the fact that a large proportion of the Environment budget is tied up in committed costs e.g. contract costs, fuel/manual costs etc. so a smaller proportion is discretionary in terms of being able to offer to improve the revenue budget.

Ideas discussed were as follows:

Invest to save – capital bids for waste and cleansing, CCTV cameras (fly tipping) – capital outlay but potential revenue savings. Business cases required.

Education – preventative work e.g. fly tips (reduce revenue costs), pro-active to boost recycling (increase income from sales and credits)

Increase income – charge for public toilets to rebalance costs

Garden waste – More tailored system suggested.

Trade waste – may be limited opportunities in this area

Building & grounds maintenance – more opportunities for income if working through a LACC

The Member groups discussed the discretion for fees and charges to be applied in this service area and the impact of this. There was a clear motivation to continue to improve on recycling performance and to increase income through increased recycling sales. It was also acknowledged that this is currently being affected by changes in national behaviour which the Council needs to take account of.

Economy Theme

Areas the council should consider for income generation / efficiencies:

- Direct delivery of housing on council owned land
- Acquiring land to deliver housing or employment accommodation (without necessitating a Housing Revenue Account)
- Letting housing
- Increasing commercial investments to ensure the right accommodation is available and/or land which can be developed for employment uses (to retain / attract businesses to the area)
- Discussions around the provision of car parking facilities
- Views were expressed by Members that the Council needs to step in where there is a gap in the market e.g. making sure there are suitable business premises in the area, particularly start-ups, but also sites for expanding businesses
- Extending commercial waste services, e.g. clinical / offensive waste, trade waste, holiday homes, recycling services
- Review of the treasury management strategy to increase the return from monies held (to explore opportunities and to look at risk versus returns)
- There should be greater collaboration between public bodies – not just devolution, with a focus of reducing cost and improved service delivery
- Work in partnership with RSLs to invest in property for shared rewards, not just housing, but stock improvement (e.g. investment in renewable energy)
- Greater borrowing at historic low levels to generate long term revenue streams (e.g. property or land investment). Don't be afraid to "think big" in terms of borrowing if there is a robust business case to support it and generate profits.
- Planning fee related income – increased pre-application advice

Support for the Economy

- The Council should offer more signposting for economic queries, i.e. support new, existing, fledgling businesses
- Clarity required over whether the Council is seeking to sweat assets for financial benefit or for community benefit – financial principles

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