

## BOROUGH OF KETTERING

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<b>Report Originator</b>	Strategic Management Team	<i>Fwd Plan Ref No: A19/002</i>	
<b>Wards Affected</b>	All	18 <sup>th</sup> September 2019	
<b>Title</b>	<b>DURABLE BUDGET REPORT</b>		

**Portfolio Holder: Cllr Lloyd Bunday**

### **1 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

The purpose of the report is to:

- a) Remind Members of the context / background to the council's budget and medium-term financial strategy;
- b) Provide updates (with appropriate commentary) on the latest projections for the council's three main accounts;
- c) Identify the key issues from the Government's recent 2019 Spending Round announcement;
- d) Ask members whether they wish to consider alternative options for the operation of the Council Tax Support scheme for 2020/21 (through a formal consultation process) or whether they would prefer to leave the current scheme unchanged for a further year;
- e) Seek delegated authority for a Business Rates Pilot or Business Rates Pool for 2020/21 (should the opportunity become available).

### **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1. The background / context section can now be found in **Appendix A**. This includes information about potential local government reform in Northamptonshire and what they may mean to future budget setting rounds.

### **3. BUDGET UPDATE (KEY ISSUES AND PROJECTIONS)**

- 3.1 The Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy is reproduced in Table 1. The forecast has been updated to reflect the fact that we have produced draft accounts for the 2018/19 financial year and now incorporates the financial year 2024/25 – notes to the Medium-Term Financial Forecast are included at **Appendix B**.

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TABLE 1 - MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL FORECAST							
		Current Spending Round		Future Spending Review Period			
		2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
		Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast
		£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<b>1</b>	<b>Net Council Budget</b>	11,118	10,387	10,104	10,331	10,363	10,397
<b>2</b>	<b>Forecast Resources:</b>						
	<b>Government Grant</b>						
<b>2a</b>	Revenue Support Grant	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>2b</b>	Business Rates	(2,484)	(2,000)	(2,000)	(2,000)	(2,000)	(2,000)
	<b>Total Government Grant</b>	<b>(2,484)</b>	<b>(2,000)</b>	<b>(2,000)</b>	<b>(2,000)</b>	<b>(2,000)</b>	<b>(2,000)</b>
	Council Tax / Coll'n Fund	(350)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)
	Income From Council Tax	(6,722)	(6,823)	(6,926)	(7,030)	(7,135)	(7,242)
	<b>Total Resources</b>	<b>(9,556)</b>	<b>(8,923)</b>	<b>(9,026)</b>	<b>(9,130)</b>	<b>(9,235)</b>	<b>(9,342)</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Budget (Surplus) / Deficit</b>	<b>1,562</b>	<b>1,464</b>	<b>1,078</b>	<b>1,201</b>	<b>1,128</b>	<b>1,055</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>'efficiencies' Identified</b>	<b>(1,562)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>'efficiencies' - To be Identified</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(1,464)</b>	<b>(1,078)</b>	<b>(1,201)</b>	<b>(1,128)</b>	<b>(1,055)</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Budget (Surplus) / Deficit</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
GENERAL FUND WORKING BALANCE							
		2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
		£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<b>7</b>	<b>Estimated Opening Balance</b>	<b>1,415</b>	<b>1,375</b>	<b>1,335</b>	<b>1,335</b>	<b>1,335</b>	<b>1,335</b>
<b>8</b>	Town Centre Initiatives	40	40	0	0	0	0
<b>9</b>	<b>Estimated Closing Balance</b>	<b>1,375</b>	<b>1,335</b>	<b>1,335</b>	<b>1,335</b>	<b>1,335</b>	<b>1,335</b>

- 3.2 The Executive at the April meeting approved that the Council continue using the existing budget delivery framework for the preparation of the 2020/21 budget.
- 3.3 As part of the 2020/21 budget process the key underlying assumptions have been updated and remodelled, the Medium-Term Financial Strategy will continue to be reviewed as part of the budget process. Overall the level of savings required over the four-year period 2020/21 – 2023/24 have reduced by £153,000 as detailed in Table 2.

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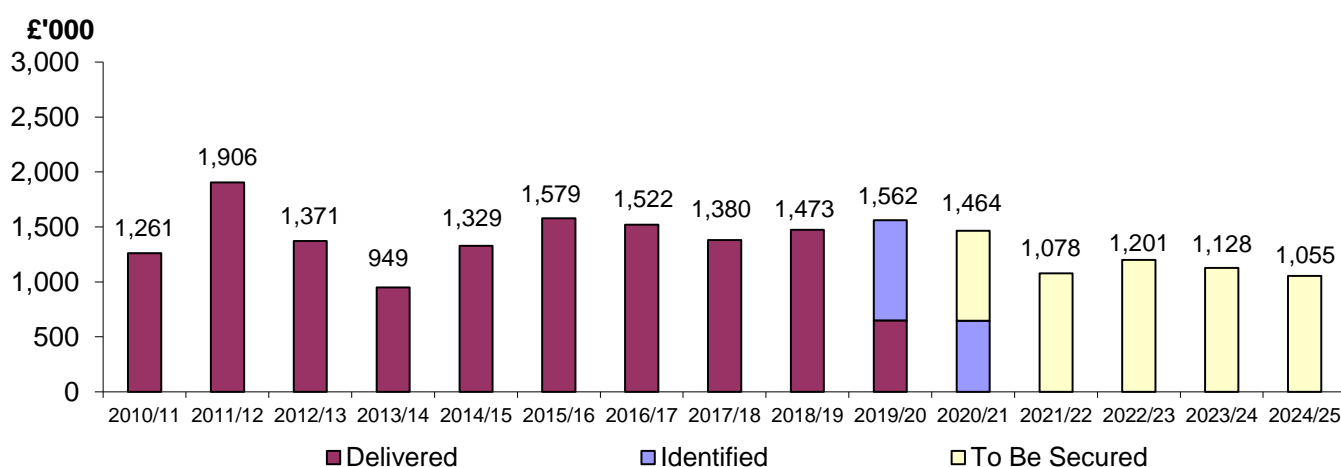
Table 2 – Medium Term Financial Savings	June Executive £000	Current MTFS £000	Difference £000
2020/21	1,462	1,464	2
2021/22	1,081	1,078	(3)
2022/23	1,352	1,201	(151)
2023/24	1,129	1,128	(1)
<b>Total Efficiencies – to be secured</b>	<b>5,024</b>	<b>4,871</b>	<b>(153)</b>

3.4 Whilst Table 2 illustrates that the projected efficiencies required over the four- year period (2020/21 – 2023/24) are around £4.9m members are reminded that a further £1,055,000 is also required in 2024/25 taking the savings target over the next five years to around £6m.

3.5 As clearly outlined in previous budget reports considered by the Executive and Full Council, the best estimates of the ongoing efficiency targets going forward are at least of a similar scale to those already met, Chart 1 shows:

- Efficiencies of £12.8m have been identified and delivered between 2010/11 – 2018/19;
- Efficiencies of £1.562m have been identified and continue to be delivered for 2019/20
- Efficiencies of around £6m need to be identified and delivered over the next five years (2020/21 – 2024/25).

**Chart 1**  
**Efficiencies / Savings / Income Generation**



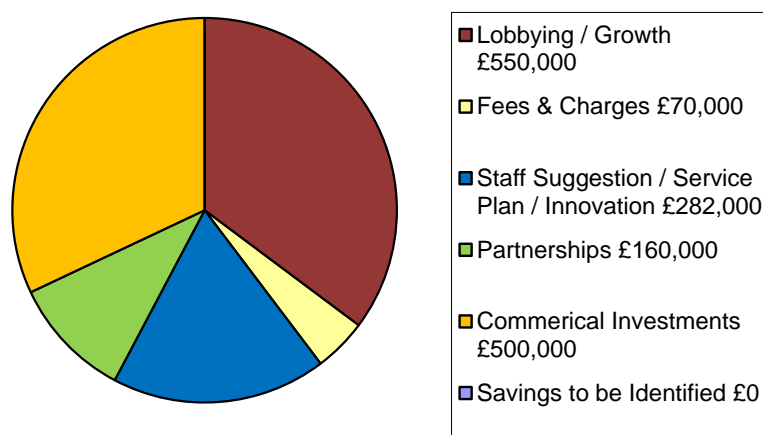
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### 2019/20 Budget Update (General Fund)

- 3.6 Members will recall that additional ongoing 'efficiencies' of £1,562,000 were required to set a balanced budget for 2019/20. Those 'efficiencies' were identified in full before the budget was formally set and are summarised in Chart 2:

**Chart 2  
Framework Efficiencies for the next Year  
(2019/20)**



- 3.7 Table 3 provides further information – relating to the composition of the 2019/20 Framework efficiencies:

<b>Table 3 – Composition of 2019/20 Efficiencies</b>		
<b>Framework</b>		<b>£'000</b>
Commercial Investments	Income from Commercial Investments	500
Lobbying / Growth	Business Rates Income	400
Staff / Innovation	Treasury Management Income	280
Partnerships	Joint Working	110
Lobbying / Growth	Homelessness Grant	83
Lobbying / Growth	New Homes Bonus	67
Fees & Charges	Crematorium Income	28
Fees & Charges	Recycling Credits	22
Various	Minor Variations	72
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,562</b>

- 3.8 During each budget process, members are informed of a number of 'big ticket' items. These are typically items of large value that could have a disproportionate impact on the Council's budget if they moved in an adverse fashion. Consequently, these are monitored very closely and members and officers may occasionally try to influence (through lobbying) any changes that may take place especially when such changes are triggered through changes in national policy. These items are included in the Council's Swing – o – meter as detailed at **Appendix C**.

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3.9 The General Fund remains broadly on target to be delivered within budget for 2019/20 however there continues to be some key areas of volatility – the most significant of these are shown in Table 4.

<b>Table 4 – General Fund Projected Variances (2019/20)</b>		
	<b>Projected Variance</b>	<b>Reason</b>
Treasury Management	£200,000 (favourable)	This reflects additional income from investing surplus cash and lower borrowing costs which is in line with the Council's Treasury Management Strategy.
Commercial Investments	£100,000 (favourable)	The additional income reflects the Council's continued progress with its Commercial Investment Strategy.
Homelessness	£150,000 (adverse)	There continues to be a significant increase in the number of homeless applications, which is reflective of the picture across the country. Locally, the Council's response has been to ensure we are best placed to take action to prevent homelessness and, secondly, to minimise expenditure on expensive nightly paid accommodation and bed & breakfast hotels. This has involved utilising HRA properties for temporary accommodation and acquiring a number of properties on the open market to use as temporary housing for homeless households.
Fee Income	£100,000 (adverse)	A number of the Council's main income streams (eg, Parking and Crematorium Income) are generating less income than budgeted at the present time. This is partly off-set by additional income for planning fees which reflects a number of large planning applications.
Other Items	£50,000 (adverse)	The General Fund budget consists of many budgets to which there is some degree of variation – overall current projections show this as an adverse variance.

3.10 These areas will continue to be closely monitored and further reviewed as part of the forthcoming budget process.

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- 3.11 Members may recall that the financial landscape changed significantly from April 2013 following the Government's introduction of the Business Rates Retention Scheme prior to this date all Business Rates were pooled and distributed nationally there was no risk or reward for authorities who collected more or less in Business Rates. However, from 1 April 2013 local authorities would receive a reward where there is growth in Business Rates and would see a reduction in grant if there was a decline in Business Rates.
- 3.12 The Council takes a prudent view and resilience tests savings before they are incorporated into the budget as such any growth from the Business Rates Retention Scheme would only be reflected in the budget when the growth has actually been delivered. This approach ensures that only growth that has been delivered is budgeted and secondly will act as a smoothing strategy when the scheme is reset which will enable to Council to meet the significant financial challenges a full re-set is expected to bring.
- 3.13 It should be noted that a favourable variance of around £1.5m from timing variances is projected from the Business Rates Retention Scheme during 2019/20. Due to the technical nature and the accounting arrangements for Business Rates being spread over three years a further favourable variance of around £700,000 is projected which will be accounted for over the next two years.

### **2020/21 Budget (General Fund)**

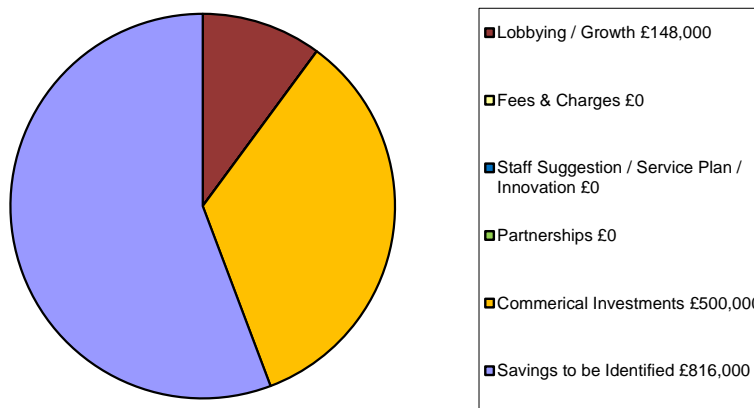
- 3.14 The Executive at the April meeting approved that the Council continue using the existing budget delivery framework for the preparation of the 2020/21 budget.
- 3.15 At that time, the period from 2020/21 onwards was identified as much more uncertain. That was due to uncertainty about the future operation of the local government finance system following a review by the government – that was expected to be completed during this year and a new system commencing from 2020/21 onwards.
- 3.16 As part of the Governments Spending Round announcements on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> September, it was announced that any new system of local government funding would not now be introduced until 2021/22. This clearly will have implications for all local authority budget planning – the key elements of the Spending Round announcement are included at Section 6 of this report. Members should note that at this stage, the numbers being modelled in the budget projections in this report **have not been updated** following the announcement – this is because the information about how this will impact upon individual council budgets will not be available until later in the year (following a detailed technical consultation which is expected shortly). As more information becomes available, the projections will be updated accordingly.

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- 3.17 As well as monitoring framework savings identified for 2019/20 work as in previous years continues on identifying savings for the following year (2020/21). Members are reminded that the Medium-Term Financial Forecast required an additional £1,462,000 of ongoing savings to balance the budget in 2020/21 – the latest projections (which are reflected in Table 1) now assumes savings of £1,464,000 will be required to deliver a balanced budget in 2020/21.
- 3.18 Members are reminded that significant efficiency savings have been delivered in recent years as shown in Chart 1. It has been previously reported that savings and income growth of this magnitude are going to be difficult to maintain and this is emphasised by the 2020/21 budget process.
- 3.19 It was agreed at the June Executive to amend the New Homes Bonus (NHB) Strategy – meaning an additional estimated income of £148,000 can be shown as an efficiency in 2020/21. Further efficiencies of £500,000 have been identified these relate to additional income from Commercial Investments, meaning further efficiencies of £816,000 are required in order to deliver a balanced budget for 2020/21. Chart 3 illustrates how the identified efficiencies are to be delivered and the levels of efficiencies that are required to deliver a balanced budget – to date around 45% have been identified.

**Chart 3  
Framework Efficiencies for the next Year  
(2020/21)**



- 3.20 As explained in previous budget reports although we have traditionally referred to the term ‘efficiencies’, in reality these are a combination of efficiency savings and additional income. Table 5 illustrates how the efficiency targets in 2020/21 are being delivered:

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<b>Table 5 – 2020/21 Budget Changes</b>			
<b>Framework</b>	<b>Additional Income £'000</b>	<b>Reduced Expenditure £'000</b>	<b>Total £'000</b>
Lobbying / Growth	148	0	148
Commercial Investments	500	0	500
<b>Total</b>	<b>648</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>648</b>

3.21 It is important that the Council considers all frameworks and all income streams and continues to explore how efficiency savings of around £800,000 can be delivered to meet the estimated savings target for 2020/21. As further savings are identified, and resilience tested these will be reported to future Executive meetings.

#### **4 HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT**

##### **2019/20 - Update**

4.1 A summary of Housing Revenue Account monitoring at the end of August 2019 is shown in Table 6. The HRA remains broadly on target to be delivered within budget for 2019/20.

<b>Table 6 - HRA</b>	Current Budget	Projected Outturn	Variance
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Gross Expenditure	15,318	15,318	0
Gross Income	(15,318)	(15,318)	0
Net Expenditure	0	0	0

##### **2020/21**

4.2 In 2020/21 councils and housing associations will be allowed to raise housing rents by CPI plus 1% for five years – it is however expected to take until around 2022/23 to get back to rent levels that were being charged in 2015/16 which is a direct result of the 1% rent reduction over the four-year period 2016/17 -2019/20.

4.3 The rent setting levels will be discussed at the Tenants Forum meeting on 6th February 2020 where the Tenants Forum will formally recommend a rent level to be considered by the Executive at the meeting on 19th February 2020 where the rent levels will be formally set. Overall a reduction in rental income of £91,000 is



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currently being modelled in 2020/21– the composition of this is summarised in Table 7.

<b>Table 7 – Changes in Rent Levels</b>	
Description	£'000
Reduction in Rent from 2019/20 being a 53 Week Year	287
RTB Sales	126
Rent Increase – CPI (2%) plus 1%	(446)
Additional Income from New Build and refurbishment schemes	(58)
<b>Total Increase in Rent from 2019/20 to 2020/21</b>	<b>91</b>

### 5 CAPITAL PROGRAMME

#### 2019/20 - Update

5.1 A summary of the Capital Programme monitoring at the end of August 2019 is shown in Table 8. The current budget reflects the carry forwards that were approved by the Executive at the June meeting and since the last report to the June Executive the Council has been notified that it has been successful in the grant funding it had applied for, for Electric Vehicle Charging Points, the total external funding amounts to around £35,000 a further £16,000 will be funded through existing Section 106 agreements, resulting in capital scheme of £51,000. The Capital Programme is currently projecting to come in on budget for 2019/20.

<b>Table 8 - Capital Programme</b>	<b>Current Budget 2019/20</b>	<b>Projected Outturn 2019/20</b>	<b>Variance (underspend) / overspend</b>
	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Expenditure</b>			
HRA Schemes	7,531	7,531	0
General Fund Schemes	48,749	48,749	0
	56,280	56,280	0
<b>Financing</b>			
Capital Receipts	2,342	2,342	0
Prudential Borrowing	48,815	48,815	0
Revenue Contribution	2,728	2,728	0
Grants and Contributions	2,395	2,395	0
	56,280	56,280	0

5.2 The Council continues to make progress with its Commercial Investments programme and in July 2019 the Council jointly acquired a 247,761 sq. ft. warehouse facility with Corby Borough Council in Corby at Hunters Point, Brakey Road for £15.7m (KBC Share £7.85m) the estimated gross return is around 6.5%.

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5.3 All the commercial investments that have been completed to date have been done in accordance with the requirements of (1) the Council Constitution and (2) the Council's Property Investment Strategy.

### 6. 2019 SPENDING ROUND

6.1 The key elements from The Chancellor's statement of 4<sup>th</sup> September, are contained in Table 9;

<b>Table 9 – Spending Round 2019</b>	
<b>Key Issue</b>	<b>Initial Observations</b>
<p><b>Local Government Funding</b> The figures contained in the announcement were at the top end of expectations for the local government sector. Of particular interest were the following;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• £1bn new social care funding;</li> <li>• £700m new funding for children and young people;</li> <li>• Additional funding to help tackle housing and homelessness.</li> </ul>	<p>This is very good news for local authorities that have responsibilities for social care and children's services. It is also better than expected for other local authorities although we will need to wait until the publication of the forthcoming technical consultation to understand the implications properly.</p> <p>MHCLG have stated that they expect to get provisional funding allocations out by early December.</p>
<p><b>Local Government Finance System – Reform</b> The Government has delayed the introduction of a reformed system of local government funding until 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021.</p>	<p>For 2020/21 this is good news for KBC and other local authorities that have a good record of facilitating business growth – this is because the proposed reset of the system will see a significant proportion of the additional business rates receipts being redistributed nationally at that stage.</p>
<p><b>New Homes Bonus</b> MHCLG have confirmed that funding for the legacy payments element of NHB has been provided for in the spending round.  It has also confirmed that there is funding for a scheme to continue to operate in 2020/21 – although have not yet confirmed what the details of that scheme are.</p>	<p>This is also positive news and is in-line with KBC's medium term budget planning assumptions, although individual authority allocations will not be announced until later this year.</p>
<p><b>Council Tax</b> The referendum threshold for 2020/21 is proposed to be 2%. This is a reduction from the current level of 3%. The Government have indicated that they will consult on raising up to a further £500m via a 2% increase in council tax through the Adult Social Care precept.</p>	<p>This issue is for political consideration.</p>
<p><b>Business Rates Pilots</b> MHCLG have stated that they do not intend to operate (or extend) any of the current business rate pilots into 2020/21.</p>	<p>The Northamptonshire local authorities have separately requested that the Govt continue the Northamptonshire pilot for 2020/21 (due to the unique situation re: local government reorganisation).</p>

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6.2 Further analysis of the 2019 Spending Round can be found by reference to the LGA's briefing – at the following link;

<https://www.local.gov.uk/parliament/briefings-and-responses/spending-round-2019-day-briefing>

### **7. LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME**

- 7.1 Council Tax Benefit (which was funded 100% by the national welfare scheme) was replaced by a Local Council Tax Support scheme in 2013. The scheme was designed to be met locally and, as such, the government funding to support it has been reduced year on year since implementation in 2013.
- 7.2 Although this is a 'local scheme', some key variables of it have been determined on a national basis; for example, pensioners entitled to local council tax support, are 'protected' – this means that the liability to pay falls on the remaining households of working age claimants.
- 7.3 To comply with Kettering Borough Council's 'Budget Containment Strategy', each year the cost of scheme has generally been reflective of reduced Government funding levels, however in the financial year 2018/19 members were mindful of the economic environment for residents and unanimously voted to keep the taper rate static for two years to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020.
- 7.4 Table 10 provides a summary of the history of the Council Tax Support scheme within the borough of Kettering, since its introduction in 2013/14;

Year	Level of Council Tax Support	Amount of Council Tax to Pay (Taper Rate)
2013/14	91.5%	8.5%
2014/15	85%	15%
2015/16	75%	25%
2016/17	55%	45%
2017/18	55%	45%
2018/19	55%	45%
2019/20	55%	45%

- 7.5 If members want to consider changing any elements of the current scheme (including the taper rate) then the council will need to undertake a full statutory consultation exercise. Following past practice, such a consultation would identify different options for the scheme going forward, taking into account the councils financial strategy and guiding principles. If the preferred option for members is to leave the scheme unchanged for 2020/21, then there is no need to undertake a consultation exercise.

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- 7.6 It is our understanding, that given the spectre of local government reform, the other local authorities in North Northamptonshire plan to keep their current schemes unchanged for 2020/21.
- 7.7 Whatever schemes are in operation for 2020/21, the new Shadow Authorities will be required to come up with a new scheme for the new unitary authority for 2021/22 – in essence it will have to look at its overall financial position and determine a scheme. As part of that work, there will be a requirement for Local Council Tax Support schemes to be reviewed alongside all Council Tax discounts and exemptions and, at that point, full public consultation will be necessary.
- 7.8 Members of the Executive need to determine whether they wish a consultation exercise to be undertaken for next years' scheme. If a consultation exercise is not undertaken, the scheme for 2020/21 will remain the same as the 2019/20 scheme.

### **8 BUSINESS RATES PILOTS**

- 8.1 The current Business Rates Retention Scheme took effect from 1 April 2013 and allowed authorities that experience a growth in business rates income (above treasury targets) to retain some of the money. The growth would be subject to a levy payment to the Government.
- 8.2 Members will recall that Kettering administers the Pool on behalf of the Northamptonshire authorities. The Northamptonshire pool has been successful in that it has allowed the pool members to retain more funding because the 'levy' that must be paid to the Government (on business rates growth) is lower in such an aggregate pool position.
- 8.3 Officers across the County compiled a joint bid submission in summer 2019 to become a Pilot in 2019/20 for 75% Business Rates Retention which would enable more of the growth to be retained locally. The bid had the agreement of all local authorities within the county area (Districts and the County Council).
- 8.4 Northamptonshire was selected as a pilot along with 14 other Pools to be Pilots for 75% Business Rate Retention. Becoming a Pilot in 2019/20 for 75% Business Rates Retention will enable more of the growth to be retained locally - which is good news for Northamptonshire. The financial benefit for Northamptonshire is estimated to be around £20m.
- 8.5 If an opportunity exists to continue to be a Pilot for next year, Members are asked to delegate authority to the Council's Section 151 Officer (in consultation with the Finance Portfolio Holder) to formalise KBC's sign-off of a Northamptonshire Pilot Bid for 75% Business Rates Retention for 2020/21.
- 8.6 If there were no pilots in 2020/21 Members are asked to delegate authority to the Council's Section 151 Officer (in consultation with the Finance Portfolio Holder) to formalise KBC's position within a Northamptonshire Business Rates Pool for 2020/21.

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8.7 Given the original pooling decision was taken here at Executive it is appropriate to bring a report here regarding Business Rates for 2020/21.

### **9. CONSULTATION AND CUSTOMER IMPACT**

9.1 As outlined in the report.

### **10. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 As outlined in the report.

### **11. USE OF RESOURCES**

11.1 As outlined in the report.

### **12. CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

12.1 As detailed in section 5.1, the Council has been successful in being awarded external funding for the installation of some Electronic Vehicle Charing Points.

### **13. RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the Executive Committee;

- a) Note the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy and associated guiding principles;
- b) Note the Council's updated Medium-Term Financial Strategy and the estimated level of savings required in the medium term.
- c) Determine whether it wishes to undertake a consultation exercise in relation to the Local Council Tax Support Scheme for 2020/21;
- d) Delegate authority to the Council's Section 151 Officer (in consultation with the Finance Portfolio Holder) to formalise KBC's sign-off for either a Business Rates Pilot or a Business Rates Pool for 2020/21 depending on Government announcements.

Background Papers:  
Contact Officers: M Dickenson

Previous Reports/Minutes:  
Monthly Durable Budget Reports