



**WYCOMBE**  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Report For:	Cabinet
Date of Meeting:	Cabinet 4 February 2019
Part:	Part 1 - Open Report with Part 2 Appendices
If Part 2, reason:	Para 3 - Information about the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

<b>SUMMARY</b>	
<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>REVENUE BUDGET AND COUNCIL TAX SETTING 2019/20</b>
Cabinet Member:	Councillor David Watson
Officer Contact: Direct Dial: Email:	David Skinner 01494 421322 David.Skinner@wycombe.gov.uk
Wards affected:	All
Reason for the Decision:	The Council has a statutory requirement to set a balanced budget for 2019/20 and this report forms a key part of the budget setting process by setting out the likely Revenue expenditure for that year recommending to Council the proposed budget for 2019/20 and the associated Council Tax level.

<p><b>Proposed Recommendation:</b></p>	<p>Cabinet is requested to recommend to Council to:</p> <p><b>Revenue Budget</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Set the Council Tax requirement for the Council of £9,467k for 2019/20;</li> <li>(b) Approve the base estimates for 2019/20 as shown in Table 2, with further details in Appendices A &amp; B;</li> <li>(c) Approve the Fees and Charges schedules for 2019/20 in Appendices C &amp; D (Part 2);</li> <li>(d) Approve the Repairs and Renewals fund programme for 2019/20 of £633k in Appendix E;</li> <li>(e) Approve the Higginson Park Trust budget for 2019/20 of £193k in Appendix F;</li> <li>(f) Approve the Special Expenses revenue budgets for High Wycombe Town Committee for 2019/20 totalling £365k which will be funded from precept of £275k and reserves of £90k detailed in Appendix G. Note that the precept of £275k will generate a Band D equivalent charge of £11.82;</li> <li>(g) Approve the Special Expenses estimate for West Wycombe closed churchyard for 2019/20 totalling £7,000, in Appendix H;</li> <li>(h) Note that this budget paper, when approved by Council, will form part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2019/20 to 2022/23, see Appendix I;</li> <li>(i) Approve the statement by the Chief Finance Officer in Appendix J on the robustness of the budget estimates and level of reserves;</li> <li>(j) Note the Cabinet responses to the referral from IRC on the recommendations of the Budget Task and Finish Group; and</li> </ul> <p><b>Council Tax</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(k) Maintain Council Tax for a Band D property, so it remains at £136.99 for 2019/20. All the five options for Council Tax changes in Section 6 were considered before making the decision.</li> </ul>
<p>Sustainable Community Strategy/Council Priorities - Implications</p>	<p>The approval of the Council's budget is key to the delivery of the Council's Vision and Priorities.</p> <p>Risk: The key financial risks relating to the 2019/20</p>

	<p>budget are set out in the main body of the report and cover the following key risks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council Tax Support</li> <li>• Business Rates Income</li> <li>• Homelessness –</li> <li>• Volatility of material income streams</li> <li>• Inflation</li> <li>• Brexit</li> <li>• MLG</li> </ul>
Monitoring Officer/ S.151 Officer Comments	<p><b>Monitoring Officer:</b> The report addresses the statutory obligations placed upon the Council.</p> <p><b>S.151 Officer:</b> This is a Section 151 Officer report and all the financial implications are included in the report.</p>
Options:	The Council will be considering a number of options for Council Tax as set out in the report.
Next Steps:	This paper will be presented to Full Council for approval on 21 February 2019.
Background Papers:	<p>2019/20 Draft Revenue Budget report to Cabinet on 17 December 2018.</p> <p>The 'Medium Term Financial Strategy Refresh' report to Cabinet on 09 July 2018.</p>
Abbreviations:	<p>MTFS - Medium Term Financial Strategy</p> <p>MHCLG - Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government</p> <p>RSG - Revenue Support Grant</p> <p>SFA - Settlement Funding Assessment</p> <p>BFL - Baseline Funding Level</p> <p>NHB - New Homes Bonus</p> <p>CPI - Consumer Price Index</p> <p>RPI - Retail Price Index</p> <p>MLG - Modernising Local Government</p>

Appendices to this report are as follows:

APPENDIX A: DRAFT BUDGET SUMMARY 2019/20 – ANALYSED BY PORTFOLIO HOLDER

APPENDIX B: DRAFT BUDGET SUMMARY 2019/20 – ANALYSED BY SUBJECTIVE CATEGORY

APPENDIX C – FEES & CHARGES TEMPLATES

EXEMPT- APPENDIX D – FEES & CHARGES TEMPLATE PART 2

APPENDIX E – REPAIRS AND RENEWALS PROGRAMME 2019/20

APPENDIX F – HIGGINSON PARK TRUST BUDGET

APPENDIX G – SPECIAL EXPENSES BUDGET FOR HIGH WYCOMBE TOWN COMMITTEE

APPENDIX H – SPECIAL EXPENSES BUDGET FOR WEST WYCOMBE CLOSED CHURCHYARD

APPENDIX I – MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY UPDATE

APPENDIX J – STATEMENT BY CFO ON ROBUSTNESS OF BUDGET AND LEVEL OF RESERVES

APPENDIX K – (TO FOLLOW) CABINET RESPONSES TO REFERAL OF IRC TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF BUDGET TASK AND FINISH GROUP

## 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the final revenue budget proposals for 2019/20 following a comprehensive process to review service budgets, and develop necessary savings and development initiatives. The key elements are savings and growth proposals, fees and charges proposals, and funding changes.
- 1.2 The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) has been updated to reflect the impact of these proposals, and estimates of events and their impacts in future years. A summary is given below of the budget requirement positions over the life of the MTFS (2019/20 to 2022/23), comparing the current position with that at the last refresh in July 2018. The savings requirement over the life of this MTFS is £1,829k. The draft capital programme does not require borrowing, so the MTFS includes no capital financing costs. Appendix I provides further details on the MTFS.
- 1.3 The risk of non-delivery of savings targets has been considered for future years from 2020/21 onwards. There is a 50% risk to the aspiration to deliver further savings of £1m over two years within the Planning service. This will be updated in more detail over the summer and the shadow authority will be accordingly updated.

MTFS Projections	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
	£k	£k	£k	£k
Latest - Cumulative	0	2,218	1,858	1,829
Latest - Year on Year	-	2,218	- 360	- 29
July 2018 - Cumulative	331	1,358	1,663	2,153
July 2018 - Year on Year	331	1,027	305	490

## 2. Background

- 2.1 There has been a series of budget briefings and planning meetings throughout the budget cycle involving Portfolio Holders, members of the Council's leadership team, Heads of Services, Budget Managers and the Finance Team. In addition, there have been briefings for Budget Task and Finish group during December and January, during which Members considered the 2018/19 forecast outturn positions and impacts on the 2019/20 budgets.
- 2.2 The draft 2019/20 Revenue Budget was presented to Cabinet on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2018. Several changes to that position are included in this, final budget proposal, and an analysis of these changes is given in Table 1 in Paragraph 5 below.
- 2.2 The budget has been prepared to deliver the Council objectives in line with the council's current Corporate Plan. The vision of the Council is to be economically strong and the place to live, work and visit. This vision is supported by four key priorities as detailed below:

A great place to be – our Place priority

Strong communities – our People priority

Growth and prosperity – our Prosperity priority

Efficient and effective – our Progress priority

### 3. The 2019/20 Local Government Finance Settlement

- 3.1 On 13 December 2018, the Secretary of State for the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), the Rt. Hon. James Brokenshire, MP, made a statement to Parliament on the provisional local government finance settlement 2019/20.
- 3.2 The 2019/20 announcement is the final year of the Spending Review 2015 period, which gave a four year funding window. Confirmation of the provisional figures is expected in late January 2019. A verbal update will be given at the meeting; no material changes are expected.

Future years' announcements are dependent on a number of factors, including:

- Spending Review 19 (expected Autumn 2019),
  - The outcome of the Fair Funding Review,
  - The planned reset of the Business Rates Retention (BRR) scheme,
  - The move to 75% BRR, and
  - Any reform of the 'New Homes Bonus' funding scheme.
- 3.3 The main changes on the national position as announced in the 2019/20 provisional settlement are set out below:

**Council Tax** – No change here: increases of less than 3%, or up to and including £5 (whichever is higher) above the authority's relevant basic amount of council tax for 2018/19 can be made without triggering a referendum. The Police precept will however be allowed to increase by £24 per annum (up from £12 pa in 2018/19).

**New Homes Bonus** - the **2019/20 allocations have been announced** (previously only indicative). The expected changes to the deadweight threshold (at 0.4%) and property eligibility criteria were not forthcoming, as government provided additional £10m funding.

**Business Rates Pilots (75% retention)** - in July 2018, the government invited authorities to bid for pilot status in 2019/20. Following a competitive process, Buckinghamshire was successful in its application, alongside 14 other areas around the country (plus the London Pilot). The impact of this for the Council is detailed in paragraph 4.4 below.

**Rural Services Delivery Grant** – The 2019/20 funding level has been increased from £65m to £81m. This is not applicable to WDC.

**Top Up/Tariff Adjustments (Negative RSG)** – As expected, the government will provide an additional £153m in funding to those authorities that were due to pay negative RSG for 2019/20. This is positive for Wycombe, see details below.

**£180m additional funding** – This has been funded from the surplus on the BRR 'Levy / Safety net' account. MHCLG have confirmed it is outside the Core Spending Power figures.

**Commercialisation** – The Secretary of State also said that he shared CIPFA's concerns about some councils' commercial investments, and the potential "risks they are exposing" themselves and the public to; he plans to discuss with the Treasury "whether further intervention might be required". There have been no concerns raised by either CIPFA or MHCLG concerning WDC's commerciality.

3.4 The 2019/20 provisional finance settlement represents the seventh year in which the Business Rates Retention (BRR) scheme is the principal form of external local government funding. As in previous years, the provisional settlement provides authorities with a combination of provisional grant allocations and their baseline figures within the BRR scheme.

The updated National Core Spending Power figures show an increase of 2.8% for 2019/20, and a total increase of 3.8% for the Spending Review 2015 period, 2015/16 to 2019/20.

3.5 The largest source of central government funding is the Settlement Funding Assessment (SFA) which consists of three funding streams:

- Business Rates Retention – known as ‘Baseline Funding’
- Revenue Support Grant (RSG)
- Tariff/Top Up adjustment amounts

Nationally, the total amount of SFA will reduce by 6.5% in 2019/20, down to £14.56m

This completes the downward trend over the life of the four-year settlement, with an aggregate reduction of 31.5% between 2016/17 and 2019/20.

#### 4. Settlement Funding Assessment for Wycombe

- 4.1 The council has benefitted from two of the three streams in central government’s funding para 3.5 above: Baseline Funding & RSG, though RSG is reducing to £0 in 2019/20 from £0.117m in 2018/19.
- 4.2 Baseline Funding is provided by Business Rates, and the amount is determined by Government’s assessment of need within Wycombe. The provisional settlement for 2019/20 is £3.293m compared to £3.219m in 2018/19.
- 4.3 Taking Baseline Funding & RSG together, the comparative figures are £3.293m in 2019/20 and £3.336m in 2018/19, a reduction of 1.3%.
- 4.4 **Business Rates Pilots (75% retention)** - in July 2018, the government invited authorities to bid for pilot status in 2019/20. Buckinghamshire was successful in its application, alongside 14 other areas around the country (plus the London Pilot). The estimated impact of this is new Business Rates income of £1.2m for the Council and has been included in the proposed 2019/20 Budget. The council plans to use the new income to invest in the Economic Development within the District.
- 4.6 As expected under the four-year settlement, the year on year reduction in the Council’s **Settlement Funding Assessment** for 2019/20 is 1.3% (£43k), against a reduction for district councils nationally of 5.8%. For the four year settlement period, however, the reduction is 41.3% for Wycome against 38.3% national average for DCs. The disparity between Wycombe and the national position for DCs has reduced this year because of funding to remove the negative RSG impact.
- 4.7 The reason Wycombe’s SFA overall reduction is high relative to the district council average is that grant reductions within the four-year settlement were based on

Government's assessment of each council's **Core Spending Power**. This methodology ensures that the grant reduction for each council also takes into account the amount that a council can raise locally, i.e. through growth in Council Tax Base and increase in Council Tax. Government has assumed a 4.8% increase in Council tax for year, and on the basis if this technical assessment assumes that Wycombe can absorb a greater reduction in government funding than most district councils. Currently the budget is based on no increase in Council tax.

## 5. Revenue Budget 2019/20

- 5.1 The final 2019/20 budget builds upon the current year (2018/19) budget, so this year's monitoring position provides useful context, as it highlights and manages many of the challenges expected in the new financial year. In addition, assessment of progress on delivery of existing savings targets is of vital importance in considering both the feasibility of future savings initiatives, and the potential need to identify alternative measures where planned savings cannot be secured.
- 5.2 The draft 2019/20 Revenue Budget was presented to Cabinet on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2018. Several changes to that position are included in this, final budget proposal, and an analysis of these changes is given in Table 1 below:

**TABLE 1**

	£k
<b>Draft Revenue Budget Requirement December Cabinet</b>	<b>15,731</b>
Digital First	235
Funded from Earmarked reserves	-235
Economic Development grants – Business Rates Pooling	1,230
Repairs & Renewals uplift	108
Funded from Earmarked reserves	-108
High Wycombe Street Wardens	315
Funded from Earmarked reserves	-315
<b>Proposed Final Budget Requirement February Cabinet</b>	<b>16,961</b>
<b>Movement funded from Business Rates Pooling Income</b>	<b>-1,230</b>

- 5.3 The movements from the 2018/19 base budget to the 2019/20 final budget requirement are summarised in Table 2 below.

Explanations of significant items are given in paragraph 5.3.

Objective analysis (by Service) is provided in **Appendix A** and Subjective analysis (by Spend and Income category) in **Appendix B**.

Details of proposed fees and charges for 2019/20 are in **Appendices C and D (Part 2)**.



The proposed final budgets reflect the current position and incorporate movements since the MTFS Refresh paper to Cabinet in July 2018, when the funding gap for 2019/20 was estimated to be £331k.

Key budget changes are shown below (with full details of Growth, Savings and Additional Income in Tables 3 & 4 below):

	£k	£k
<b><u>Net Cost of Services 18/19</u></b>		<b>17,030</b>
Inflation		557
<b>Growth – Table 3 below</b>		6,610
<b>Savings – Table 4 below</b>		
– Staff	(356)	
- Supplies & Services	(497)	(853)
<b>Additional income – Table 4 below</b>		(2,444)
Corporate item		382
<b><u>Net Cost of Services 19/20</u></b>		<b>21,282</b>

**TABLE 2**

<b>2019/20 Budget Summary by: Portfolio Holder</b>	<b>Net Approved Budget</b>	<b>Movements</b>	<b>Final Net Budget</b>
	<b>2018/19</b>	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2019/20</b>
	£k	£k	£k
Community	2,029	246	2,275
Youth	78	-	78
Economic Development and Regeneration	(4,930)	434	(4,496)
Environment	5,472	(1,074)	4,398
Housing	1,898	57	1,955
Digital Development and Customer Service	5,364	253	5,617
Strategy and Communications	3,231	1,203	4,434
Planning	1,492	(428)	1,064
Finance and Resources	2,396	3,560	5,956
<b>Net Cost of Services</b>	<b>17,030</b>	<b>4,252</b>	<b>21,282</b>
			-
Interest Receipt	(539)	(390)	(929)
Capital Financing Charges	(2,193)	176	(2,017)
Net movement to/(from) Earmarked Reserves	(587)	(1,449)	(2,036)
Revenue Contribution to Capital Outlay	685	(25)	660
Payment to Parishes	94	(94)	-
<b>Corporate items</b>	<b>(2,540)</b>	<b>(1,782)</b>	<b>(4,322)</b>
<b>Budget Requirement</b>	<b>14,490</b>	<b>2,471</b>	<b>16,961</b>
Funded by:			-
Collection Fund Surplus	(261)	122	(139)
Business Rates	(3,225)	(2,595)	(5,820)
Revenue Support Grant	(117)	117	-
New Homes Bonus	(1,560)	25	(1,535)
<b>Net Expenditure before Council Tax</b>	<b>9,327</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>9,467</b>
Council Tax Base	68,084	1,021	69,105
Council Tax Band D	£136.99	£0.00	£136.99
<b>Demand on the Collection Fund</b>	<b>(9,327)</b>	<b>(140)</b>	<b>(9,467)</b>

5.4 Explanation of significant movements and main assumptions are detailed below:

5.4.1 **Council Tax :**

(i) Band D: The final proposed budget recommends **NO** increase in Council Tax, so the average Band D will remain the same as 2018/19 at £136.99.

(ii) Council Tax Base: There has been a steady housing growth in the District and improvement in collection rate which has been reflected in the increase in tax base by 1.5%. This gives an increase of approximately 1,021 Band D-equivalent properties in 2019/20, generating approximately £140k additional income.

**5.4.2 Business Rates:** Following the successful bid for Business Rate 75% Pilot scheme, the Buckinghamshire pool will be able to retain 75% of business rates growth above the baseline compared to 50% in prior years. The Council's share of this growth is budgeted at £2,530k.

**5.4.3 Revenue Support Grant (RSG):** At the time of the December Cabinet paper the Council was expected to be in a 'Negative RSG' position of £462k for 2019/20. However, the government has now provided additional funding in the provisional settlement to remove this pressure. This leaves the position on RSG for 2019/20 as Zero.

**5.4.4 New Homes Bonus:** During 2017/18 and 2018/19, two major changes were implemented: introduction of national baseline for housing growth of 0.4% and moving to 5 year payments in 2017/18 and then down further to 4 years in 2018/19. There have been no changes to the baseline growth. The NHB allocation for 2019/20 is £1,535k (£1,560k 2018/19) which is a reduction of £25k. Within the draft budgets £875k is allocated to support revenue budget and the remaining £660k will be set aside to fund the capital programme.

**5.4.5 Pay Inflation:** This is assumed at 2% (National pay rise).

**5.4.6 Price Inflation:** The CPI for October was 2.4% and the RPI was 3.3%. Overall price inflation has not been allocated to budgets and services are expected to manage any increase through general efficiency. This impact is estimated at £300k for 2019/20. However, the following items were inflated as detailed below:

- Utilities 17.5%
- Business Rates as per the 2018 valuations
- Major contract inflation from the legal agreements.

**5.4.7 New Growth and Cost Pressures:** The total new growth is £6,610k. A full listing is shown in Table 3 below. Significant items are discussed here:

(i) **Feasibility Study:** The Council has an ambitious capital programme of £131.7m over the six year period from 2018/19 to 2023/24. The detailed final Capital programme is a separate item on this agenda. Due to the nature of some projects there are risks such as cost overruns, delays, interdependency, economic risks, etc. To ensure all these risks are mitigated, a feasibility study is essential. The aim of the feasibility study is to evaluate the project's potential for success which is conducted with an objective, unbiased approach to provide detailed business case which can be considered by Members for making informed decisions. The total estimated budget requirement for feasibility work for the 4 year period of the capital programme is approximately £4.8m, which represents around 3.5% of the total programme. The budget requirement of £170k for 2018/19 has been funded from the earmarked reserve set aside for feasibility work. The budget requirement for 2019/20 of £1.2m is included in the base budget.

(ii) **MLG Implementation:** With the need to resource an implementation plan a key consideration for the new shadow authority and the need to manage staffing costs across the transition period then it is prudent to set some money aside to cover these costs. An estimate of the likely costs to the council based on the business case submitted by BCC has been estimated at £750k to £3m (depending on the apportionment basis) based on the implementation costs of £16m. The detail of the implementation costs covering specialist resource to manage and support the work

streams required in a major change programme is still to be determined so this cost is likely to change. If the cost range was increased to allow for a contingency allowance of 50% for unknown factors (and the condensed timeframe for delivery) then the total requirement would have a range of £16-24m and increase the potential cost range to the Council to be £3-4.5m. This funding will be met from reallocation from within existing reserves and will be reassessed as more information is validated and agreed. There are a range of unknown factors that will influence the final costs for the Council, and therefore this area of the budget remains uncertain at this time. It will be kept under review and reported to Cabinet and Council once the costs become more certain.

**TABLE 3**

<b><u>Growth /Cost Pressures</u></b>		
<b><u>Portfolio Holder</u></b>	<b><u>Description</u></b>	<b><u>£</u></b>
Community	Prevent support	60,960
Community	ASB Street wardens	420,260
Digital Development and Customer Service	Repairs & renewals uplift	107,790
Digital Development and Customer Service	Digital First	235,000
Economic Development and Regeneration	Feasibility - Eastern Quarter, Regeneration Strategy & work arising	950,000
Economic Development and Regeneration	Broadband funding	50,000
Environment	Fly tipping recharge	15,000
Environment	Air Quality grant spend	25,000
Environment	PCN income	125,000
Environment	Parking review	70,000
Finance and Resources	MLG Implementation	3,000,000
Finance and Resources	Revs & Bens Grants	90,000
Housing	Housing Strategy (5 yrly cycle)	(70,000)
Housing	Asbestos Review - Red Kite	175,000
Housing	Flexible Homelessness Grant Spend	61,000
Planning	Reversal of 'Fit For' investment	(150,000)
Planning	Feasibility - Transport vision and strategy	200,000
Strategy and Communications	Ward member budgets	15,000
Strategy and Communications	Economic Development grants	1,230,000
		<b>6,610,010</b>

5.4.8 **New Savings / Income:** The total new savings / income is £3,297k. See [Table 4](#) below.

**TABLE 4**

<b><u>Savings</u></b>		
<b><u>Portfolio Holder</u></b>	<b><u>Description</u></b>	<b><u>£</u></b>
Community	Service review	(50,000)
Community	General efficiencies	(9,000)
Community	Museum	(12,000)
Community	Devolved grounds maintenance fees to some parishes	(12,000)
Digital Development and Customer Service	FM repairs - reassessment	(20,000)
Digital Development and Customer Service	Miscellaneous efficiencies	(11,000)
Digital Development and Customer Service	HR Software	(35,000)
Digital Development and Customer Service	Capita contract	(77,210)
Environment	Reduce agency	(70,000)
Environment	Parking Services Review	(250,000)
Environment	Food Safety service efficiencies	(5,000)
Environment	Reduced Parking Operating fees	(90,000)
Environment	Waste Client team efficiencies	(30,000)
Environment	Public conveniences Business rate relief	(25,000)
Finance and Resources	Revs & Bens restructure	(20,000)
Finance and Resources	Print savings	(2,000)
Finance and Resources	Reduced risk management software	(3,600)
Finance and Resources	Treasury advice	(10,000)
Planning	Fit for Competition efficiencies	(50,000)
Planning	Other efficiencies	(41,000)
Strategy and Communications	Temp Accommodation allowance	(2,000)
Strategy and Communications	Miscellaneous efficiencies	(28,100)
		<b>(852,910)</b>

<b><u>New Income</u></b>		
<b><u>Portfolio Holder</u></b>	<b><u>Description</u></b>	<b><u>£</u></b>
Community	New Crematorium income	(239,000)
Community	Reduced Insurance premia	(10,000)
Environment	Licensing fees	(8,000)
Environment	Sale of waste bins	(25,000)
Environment	Increased Parking tariffs	(900,000)
Environment	Parking review	(70,000)
Environment	Air Quality grant	(25,000)
Housing	HMO Licences	(50,000)
Housing	Additional Temporary housing units	(30,000)
Housing	Flexible Homelessness Grant	(61,000)
Planning	Fit for Competition new income	(450,000)
Economic Development and Regeneration	New Estates Rental income	(572,000)
Strategy and Communications	Review legal charges	(4,000)
		<b>(2,444,000)</b>

5.4.9 **Corporate Items:** Net movement of £(1,782)k, as detailed below:-

- (i) **Interest Receipt:** The increase in investment income of £390k is due to higher cash balances due to re-profiling of 2018/19 capital programme and higher interest rates.
- (ii) **Capital financing charges:** The increase in budget of £176k has resulted from the review of accounting and funding cost of Higginson Park Trust.
- (iii) **Net Movement to Earmarked Reserves:** The breakdown of movement of £(1,449)k is summarised below:

<b>Description</b>	<b>2018/19 £k</b>	<b>Movement £k</b>	<b>2019/20 £k</b>
Repairs and Renewals	(526)	(108)	(634)
Land Charges Digitalisation	20		20
Planning Reserve	(81)	81	0
Business Rates growth over baseline		1,300	1,300
Negative RSG elimination to RDR		462	462
Feasibility funding from RDR		(1,150)	(1,150)
MLG work funding (GF, RDR, Business Rates)		(3,000)	(3,000)
Contribution to MLG reserve		1,516	1,516
Digital First Funding		(235)	(235)
HW Street Wardens Funding		(315)	(315)
<b>Total</b>	<b>(587)</b>	<b>(1,449)</b>	<b>(2,036)</b>

## 6. Options

The Council has 5 options in relation to Council Tax for 2019/20 as follows:

- **0% Increase in Council Tax** as assumed in the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan and the basis of how the proposed budget for 2019/20 has been compiled.
- **Increase Council Tax by £5 per Band D Property (3.77%)** as assumed by Central Government's spending power reduction. This would increase the amount of Council Tax raised by £0.348m.
- **Increase Council Tax by £2.73 per Band D Property (1.99%)** which would generate an additional amount of Council Tax of £0.190m.
- **Increase Council Tax by an amount between £0 and £5 per Band D Property.**
- **Increase Council Tax by above £5 per Band D Property (3.77%)** and seek a referendum – this is not recommended.

In considering the above 5 options, Cabinet will need to take cognisance of the precept recommendation levied by High Wycombe Town Committee (HWTC). As this is an unparished area with Special Expenses, the precept paid to HWTC is part of the overall expenditure when calculating Band D Council Tax for Wycombe District Council.

The Council has one of the lowest levels of Council Tax in England for a District Authority at £136.99pa (£2.63 per week) for a Band D property, which is also the lowest in Buckinghamshire.

Members will also need be aware that any decision on Council Tax levels in 2019/20 may have a bearing on the council tax harmonisation process that will occur for the 2020/21 financial year as part of the new unitary district council.