

Cabinet Lead for Finance – Councillor Tony Denton

Finance & Treasury

As presented to Council in February 2022, our financial position remains challenging. Although a balanced revenue budget was approved for 2022/23, our published 5- year Medium Term Financial Strategy indicates a funding gap of £2.6m.

Over recent months we have been re-aligning the 2022/23 revenue budget to match with the new organisational structure for Havant BC. In undertaking this work we have performed a detailed analysis against all service and staffing lines to ensure that the revised budget accurately reflects expenditure commitments under each Executive Head of Service. Known budget pressures, such as spend on housing people in temporary accommodation and waste services through Norse, have been addressed through bringing in savings and income elsewhere such as the reducing cost of the Capita contract and surplus income from Treasury Management.

The re-based 2022/23 revenue budget will form the basis of a revised Medium Term Financial Strategy which will be presented to Cabinet in November 2022.

A new Finance structure has now been approved for Havant and progress has been made in making appointments to several posts which will provide greater resilience and capacity moving forwards.

A revised Discretionary Business Rates Relief scheme is presented to Council at this meeting which details how the council will be using discretionary powers to support over 80 local sports and community clubs which aligns strongly with our corporate priorities. This new scheme represents excellent value for money with a net cost to the council of circa £67k per annum.

Council Tax - Energy Rebates - £150 payments

The application process ended in June, bank checks were conducted and payments to nearly 8,500 households, totalling around £1.275m were paid into bank accounts.

A final sweep of payments will be made in July, where circumstances have changed or where further checks have now been made.

The final step in the mandatory scheme is to credit Council Tax accounts (approx. 5,900 households) with a payment £150, where we have been unable to pay, or an application has not been made. A new bill will be sent with revised instalments reflecting this additional payment. A covering letter will also be included and a refund form if the account is now in credit. The work is planned to be completed in July, which means we are in advance of the government's deadline of the end of September.

Since the scheme started in April a total of 39,620 payments have been made, totalling £5.943 million.

Once the mandatory scheme is complete, we will launch the discretionary scheme. This scheme mainly supports households receiving Council Tax Support on 1st April 22, in bands E to H.

Mayoralty

The Mayor's Office over the last few months have been putting plans in place for events, both official engagements for the Mayor to attend and those that are being arranged by the Mayor's Office directly, where there is a need to support national event(s). These include:

Remembrance Sunday Parade's at Havant, Hayling Island and Emsworth on 13th November 2022: The Council have been working with relevant organisations to ensure that all Health and Safety measures are followed, that all processes set down by the Council and Police are complied with, and that the appropriate Risk Assessments are in place.

Holocaust Service on 27th January 2023, working with Cllr Leah Turner who is the lead Cllr for the event. As a Council, we will also work with other organisations to promote and organise the event. In doing this we would always normally have a number of other LA's attending our event, as they do not organise one.

In addition to these events, the Facilities Manager works very closely with the Mayor, Mayor's Secretary and the Portfolio Holder to update and give the assurance that the budgets against the mayoralty for facilities support and other associated budget lines remain on track. There are no areas of concern that need to be raised at this time. Work is underway to review the mayoral provision, to ensure this vital function remains well supported, going forward.

Corporate governance

The Annual Governance Statement (AGS) 2021-22 was reviewed by the Audit & Finance Committee and the draft will now be incorporated into the draft Annual Statement of Accounts which will be published in due course. The final version of the AGS and Statement of Accounts 2021-22 will be finalised once reviewed by External Audit.

At its last meeting the Audit & Finance Committee approved the updated Corporate Governance & Risk Policy, the Local Code of Corporate Governance and the update RIPA (corporate surveillance) Policy. All these updated documents have been published on our website and are available for viewing.

As part of the transition work an updated Policy Register has been established and will be used to manage the updating and reviewing of all policies going forward.