

BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK**JOINT PANEL MEETING**

Minutes from the Meeting of the Joint Panel Meeting held on Thursday, 3rd February, 2022 at 4.30 pm in the Assembly Room, Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn PE30 5DQ

PRESENT:

PANEL MEMBERS: Councillors Collingham (Chair), Bambridge, Bone, Bower, Bubb, Crofts, Devereux, Lowe, Moriarty, Morley, Rose, D Tyler, de Whalley and Whitby.

MEMBERS PRESENT REMOTELY ON ZOOM: Councillors Hudson, Jones, Manning, Rust, Ryves and Squire.

PORTFOLIO HOLDERS: Councillors Blunt and Dickinson

PORTFOLIO HOLDERS PRESENT REMOTELY ON ZOOM: Councillors Dark and Kunes.

PRESENT UNDER STANDING ORDER 34: Councillors Kemp and Nockolds.

OFFICERS:

Michelle Drewery – Assistant Director

Alexa Baker – Monitoring Officer

Lorraine Gore – Chief Executive

1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR FOR THE MEETING

RESOLVED: Councillor Collingham was appointed Chair for the meeting.

2 APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR FOR THE MEETING

RESOLVED: Councillor Devereux was appointed Vice Chair for the meeting.

3 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Beal and Gidney.

4 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: The minutes from the previous meeting were agreed as a correct record.

5 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There was none.

6 **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was none.

7 **MEMBERS PRESENT UNDER STANDING ORDER 34**

Councillors Kemp, Nockolds and Blunt.

8 **CHAIR'S CORRESPONDENCE**

There was none.

9 **BUDGET AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME**

[Click here to view the recording of this item on You Tube.](#)

Members received a presentation on the Budget and Capital Programme from the Assistant Director (Section 151 Officer) as attached.

It was noted that the Budget and Capital Programme would be presented to Cabinet at its meeting on 9th February 2022 and Full Council on 23rd February 2022.

The presentation firstly covered the Revenue Budget and questions and comments were invited from Members on this element of the presentation.

Councillor Morley referred to the pie chart for the Council Tax claim, he suggested that the Internal Drainage Board levy be added and that it be communicated to council tax payers that the Council had no control over this levy. He also referred to the West Norfolk Partnership and the budget that was attributed to this. He asked for information on the projects they had carried out.

The Chair also commented that it was a disadvantage that the Borough had to pay an Internal Drainage Board levy and others did not and that it was a matter for Westminster.

The Assistant Director explained that the Council had lobbied on funding reforms and that Internal Drainage Boards should be considered separately. The Council also engaged in relevant consultations and would update Members as appropriate.

With regard to the West Norfolk Partnership, the Assistant Director agreed to find out more information and feedback to Members.

Councillor Crofts explained that previously the Council used to get a percentage of Internal Drainage Board levies back from the Government and asked if this was still the case. The Assistant Director explained that this previously came through the Revenue Support Grant, but now nothing came back to the Council. She also made reference to the Revenue Support Grant and Rural Services Grant and that they were now only based on a one year settlement and would most probably not continue for much longer.

Councillor Moriarty explained that Internal Drainage Board levies had been an issue for a long time and asked if there was anything that could be done, especially as not all areas of the Borough benefitted from the Internal Drainage Board, but all of the Borough had to pay the levy. He also made reference to the Business Rates Pool and Business Rates Reform and the announcement made today by Government about the £150 Council Tax rebate. The Assistant Director explained that the Business Rates Pool had been revised and base lines reset and it was likely that the Borough would not benefit as much as it had previously from this. The process for the Business Rates Pool had been revised and now instead of bidding for projects the Pool was split across Norfolk.

With regard to the £150 Council Tax rebate announced by Government, the arrangements for this were still unknown, but it was likely that a grant from Government would be received.

Councillor Dark, Leader of the Council explained to Members that work was ongoing to make the Internal Drainage Board levy more visible to the public and a communications plan would be put in place.

In response to queries raised relating to fees and charges, Councillor Dark explained that the revenue from fees and charges contributed to providing a range of services.

Councillor Kemp addressed the meeting under Standing Order 34. She commented that it would be a challenge to balance the books and she noted that funding had been set aside for investments. She urged caution that risky investments should be avoided and to ensure that the necessary checks, balances and due diligence was carried out. She also made reference to the budget attributed to the West Norfolk Partnership. The Assistant Director explained that individual investments would be looked at on a case by case basis and business cases would be required.

Councillor Bambridge referred to the collection of Council Tax and commented that the financial plan based it on a 100% collection rate. The Assistant Director explained that the 100% collection rate ensured that estimates could be forecasted more smoothly.

Councillor de Whalley made reference to the draw down from reserves and the risks in doing so. The Assistant Director explained that the financial plan would be monitored and work to make savings would continue. She also reminded those present that the financial plan beyond 2023 was projections and estimates at the moment.

Councillor Ryves referred to the Town Plan and the impact this could have on finances. He also made reference to income generated by West Norfolk Property and if this would have a positive impact on the budget going forward. He commented that he would like to see further work carried out on car parking charges and options for car parking revenue. The Assistant Director explained that the Town Fund had been built into the Capital Programme and each project would be considered individually through the Councils decision making processes. With regard to West Norfolk Property, information on the loan and rate of return was provided and it was noted that a review on the Governance of Companies was currently being undertaken.

The Assistant Director then provided information to Members on the Capital Programme as included in the presentation. Questions and comments were then invited from those present.

Councillor Morley referred to the Capital Programme phasing and the Assistant Director explained that projects were being reviewed with Service Managers and as part of setting the Capital Programme schemes had been refined.

Councillor Moriarty referred to the ICT Development Group and asked for information on the Group. He also referred to funding from reserves for dog bins and play areas and asked if these should be funded in a different way such as Special Expenses. The Assistant Director explained that the ICT Development Group was made up of Members and Officers and looked at ICT projects to be submitted for approval. She also explained that money had been set aside for projects such as the dog bins and play areas.

Councillor Moriarty agreed to submit additional questions he had relating to the Financial Plan to Cabinet in advance of their meeting next week and advised he would be attending the Cabinet Meeting under Standing Order 34.

Members were requested to consider any recommendations they would like to submit to Cabinet.

Councillor Morley suggested that it be recommended to Cabinet that assurance be sought that the 2022/2023 expenditure had been verified and that profiling on Capital Spend had been checked and expenditure was in line with project outcomes.

Members considered this recommendation and it was agreed that this be submitted to the Cabinet as well as Cabinet being asked to note the comments made by the Panel.

RESOLVED: That the Joint Panel make the following recommendation to Cabinet:

1. That the comments made by the Joint Panel are noted.
2. That assurance is sought that the 2022/2023 expenditure had been verified, profiling on Capital Spend had been checked and that expenditure was in line with project outcomes.

The meeting closed at 6.12 pm

Budget 2021-2026

Joint Panel Meeting
03 February 2022

525

Michelle Drewery
Assistant Director Resources (Section 151 Officer)

Borough Council of
King's Lynn &
West Norfolk



Minute Item 9

Headlines - Current Position

- 2020/21 Outturn position was £16.331m requiring £1.083m from general fund reserve balance (includes £4m Covid grant income allocations)
- 2021/22 Revised Budget Requirement of £21.7m including an estimated contribution at year end of £161k to general fund reserve balance
- Budget includes Government support grant of £0.922m for Covid
- Cost reduction/saving targets were not budgeted due to pandemic

526

Headlines – Financial Plan

- Budget for 2022/23 provides a contribution to general fund reserve balance of £0.5m
- A ‘funded budget’ position for the period 2023/24 and 2024/25
- 527 • ‘Funded’ budget requires drawdown from general fund reserve balance of £8.6m over the period. General fund reserve balance held at a higher level due to a planned approach to achieving early cost savings in response to anticipated reductions in Government funding which have been delayed by the pandemic
- In 2025/26 general fund balance is reduced to minimum required level of £1.1m with a budget gap remaining of £2.3m which will need to be addressed



Headlines – Government Funding

- Government announced one year funding settlement for 2022/23
- A further year of Revenue Support Grant and Rural Services Delivery Grant which was expected to end (£1.1m)
- One off Government grants of £0.6m for 2022/23 - Lower Tier Services Grant and new Service Grant (part offset against 1.25% NI increase)
- New Homes Bonus of £0.6m in 2022/23 (Nil budget thereafter)
- Significant risk on business rates income due to uncertainties around impact of future implementing of reforms to the Business Rates Retention Scheme and Fair Funding Review – further delayed by Government with expectation for consultations to resume in Spring 2022

528

Headlines

- Service costs updated and increases contained wherever possible.
- Growth items to reflect contract or statutory requirement (including minimum pay pledges). BCKLWN will meet or exceed the minimum wage rise
- Investment in some service area resources to increase capacity where necessary

529

Headlines

- The Budget 2021-2026 will be considered Cabinet on 9 February 2022.
Council Tax setting and approval of the Financial Plan 2021-2026 at Council on 23 February 2022
- Funding dependency in future years on income raised locally: Council Tax, Business Rates, Fees and Charges
- Significant risk from 2023/2024 – awaiting impact of delayed financial reforms to Business Rates Retention Scheme and from Fair Funding Review

530

Headlines

- Proposed council tax increase of £4.50 on Band D property in 2022/2023
- Proposed £4.50 increase in council tax for remaining years of Financial Plan

Financial Plan 2021/2026

Service Areas	Original Budget (Financial Plan) 2021/2022	Budget (October Monitoring) 2021/2022	Projection 2022/2023	Projection 2023/2024	Projection 2024/2025	Projection 2025/2026
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Total Service Expenditure	16,674,140	16,882,020	16,123,180	16,858,840	17,824,250	18,918,150
Financing Requirement	1,903,940	1,790,350	2,345,670	2,460,370	2,444,670	2,452,580
Internal Drainage Boards	2,868,510	2,868,510	3,006,790	3,084,970	3,149,760	3,212,750
Council Tax Support to Parishes	21,210	21,210	0	0	0	0
Borough Spend	21,467,800	21,562,090	21,475,640	22,404,180	23,418,680	24,583,480
Estimated Recovery of Grant	0	0	(450,000)	0	0	0
Contributions to/(from) General Fund Balance	255,390	161,100	524,530	(2,809,780)	(3,427,410)	(2,015,360)
Borough Requirement	21,723,190	21,723,190	21,550,170	19,594,400	19,991,270	22,568,120



Financial Plan 2021/2026

533

	Original Budget (Financial Plan) 2021/2022	Budget (October Monitoring) 2021/2022	Projection 2022/2023	Projection 2023/2024	Projection 2024/2025	Projection 2025/2026
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Revenue Support Grant	(627,670)	(627,670)	(647,530)	0	0	0
Rural Service Delivery Grant	(485,690)	(485,690)	(485,690)	0	0	0
New Homes Bonus	(837,670)	(837,670)	(589,610)	0	0	0
Other Government Grants	(1,309,230)	(1,309,230)	(624,870)	0	0	0
Taxation						
Business Rates Retention Funding	(8,943,220)	(8,943,220)	(9,033,790)	(9,187,090)	(9,301,350)	(9,301,350)
Business Rates Renewable Energy	(2,500,000)	(2,500,000)	(2,811,280)	(2,770,000)	(2,770,000)	(2,770,000)
Council Tax Collection Fund Surplus	0	0	(25,000)	(25,000)	(25,000)	(25,000)
Council Tax Band D	134.87	134.87	139.37	143.87	148.37	152.87
Council Tax Base	52,048	52,048	52,611	52,911	53,211	53,511
Council Tax (Net of Council Tax Support Scheme Cost)	(7,019,710)	(7,019,710)	(7,332,400)	(7,612,310)	(7,894,920)	(8,180,230)
Total Funding	(21,723,190)	(21,723,190)	(21,550,170)	(19,594,400)	(19,991,270)	(20,276,580)
Funding Position	0	0	0	0	0	2,291,540

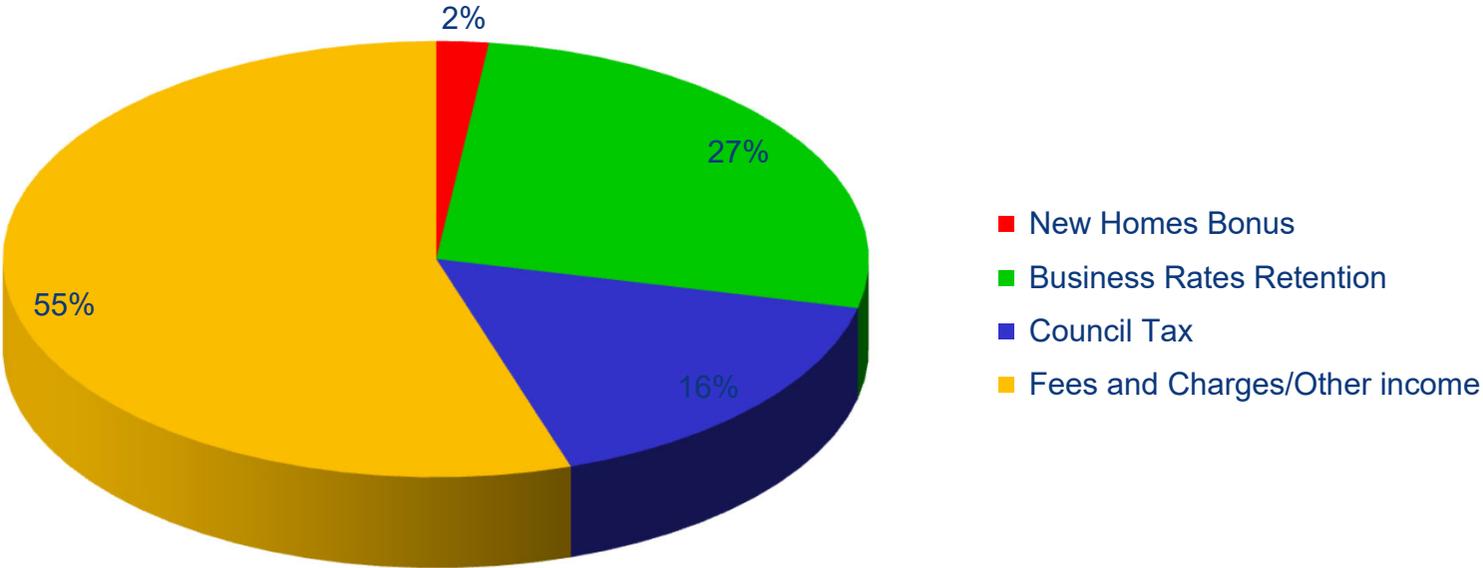
Estimated Budget Gap of £2,291,540 in 2025/2026

King's Lynn & West Norfolk

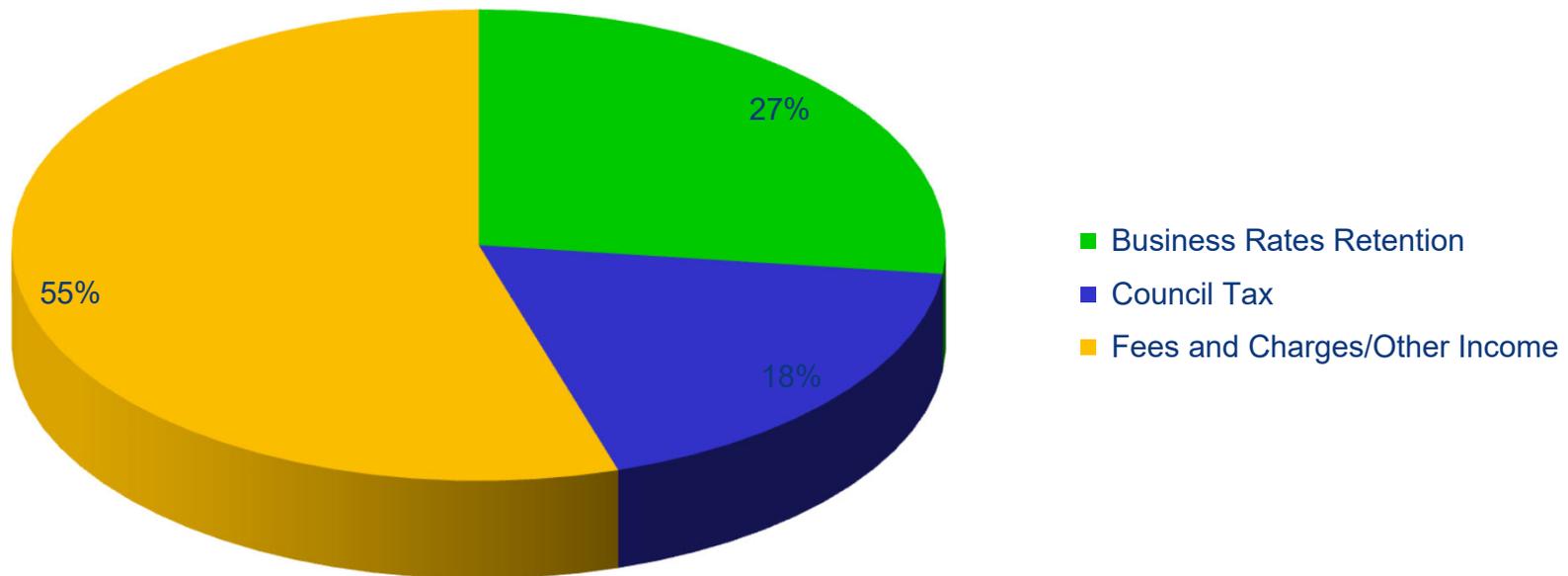


Budgeted Funding for 2021/2022

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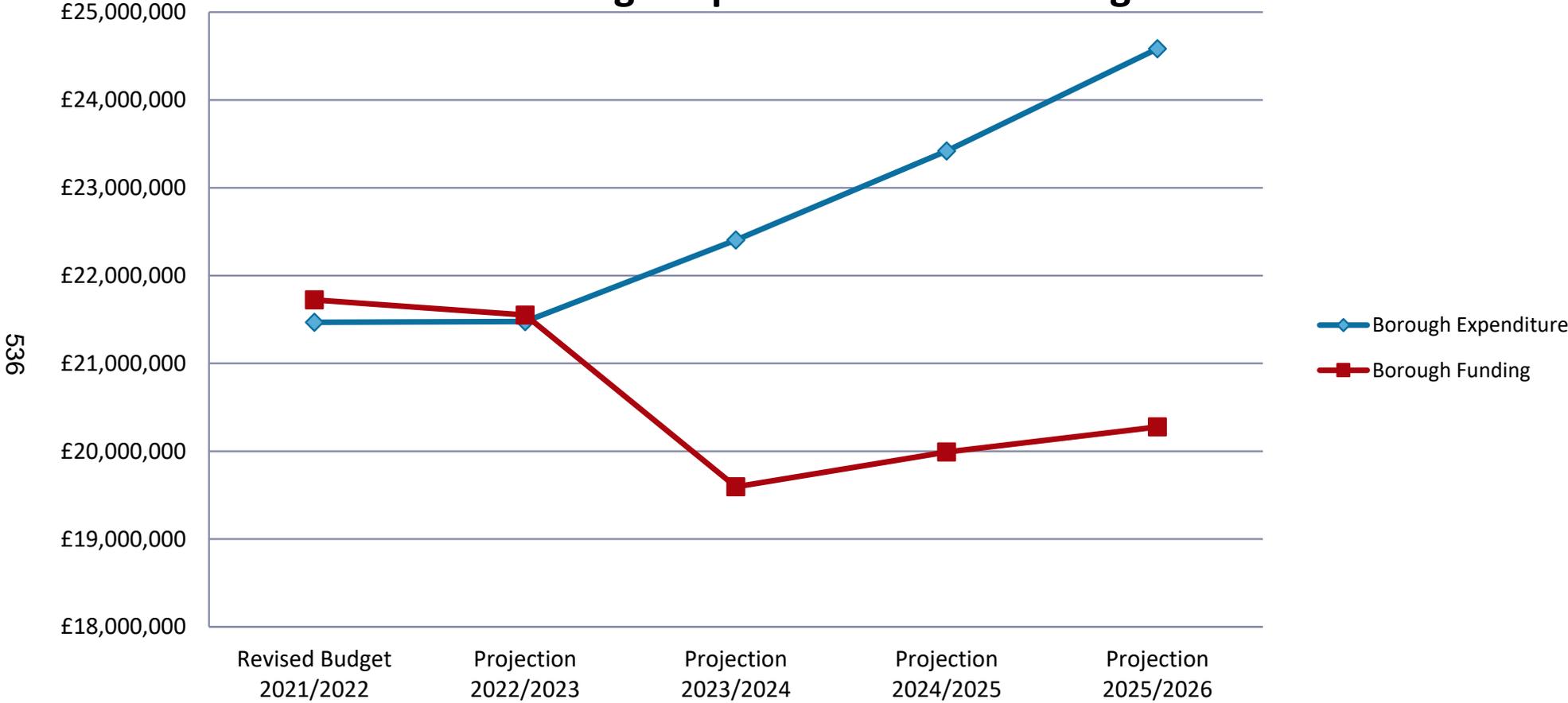


Forecast Funding for 2025/2026



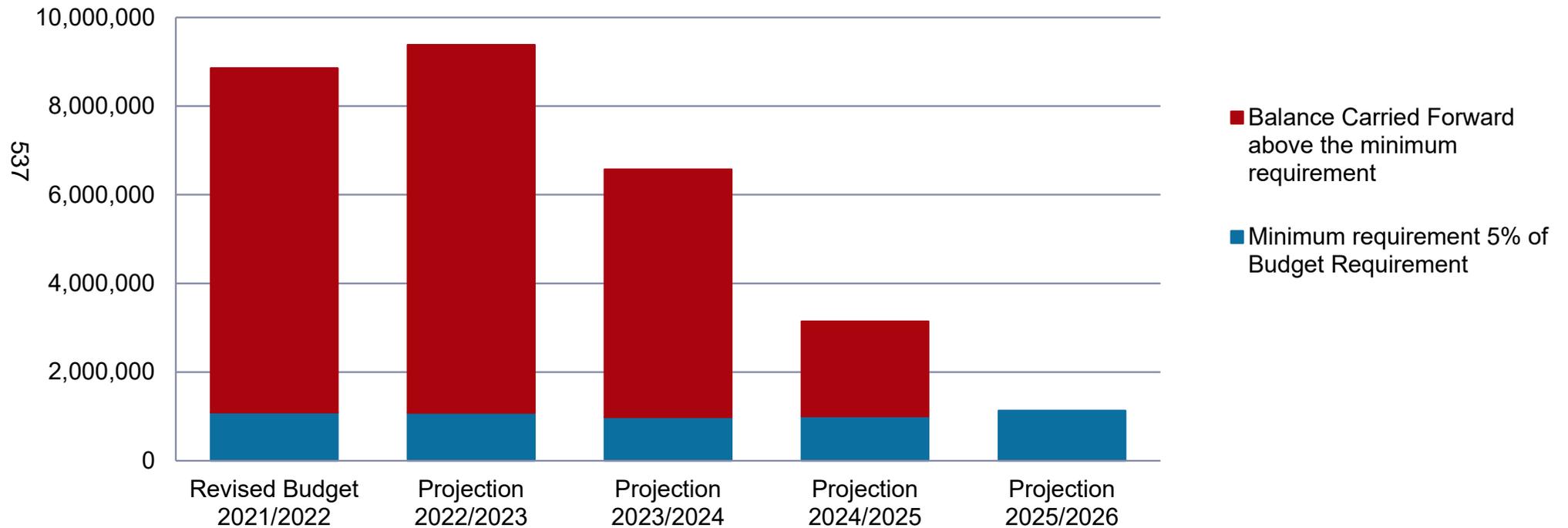
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Borough Expenditure and Funding



General Fund Balance

Level of General Fund Balances



Addressing the funding gap in 2025/2026

- Financial Plan reliant on drawdown from General Fund Reserve balance - not sustainable as reserves depleted by 2025/2026
- Budget Gap of £2.3m in 2025/2026 – could be more following financial reforms imposed by Government
- Work in progress:
 - Review of earmarked reserves - £3m set aside (for investment) with further review to be undertaken
 - Review of capital programme to align resources/capacity
 - Review of fees and charges structures
 - Workshops to identify/progress projects to generate income streams

538

Changes to Business Rates Discounts

As part of the Autumn budget statement in October 2021 the Chancellor confirmed the continuation of a number of business rate reliefs into 2022/2023:

- A 50% discount for all eligible retail, hospitality and leisure businesses, regardless of their rateable value but subject to a cash cap of £110,000 per ratepayer
- Phased increases for higher bills for small and medium businesses caused by rises in Rateable Values at the last revaluation
- The scheme to limit increases in bills where businesses have lost reliefs due to the last revaluation, and
- The continuation of the £1,500 annual discount for office space occupied by local newspapers to 31 March 2025.

Business Rates Retention Reform

- Still do not know how scheme will work - final report setting out full conclusions of the review was to be published in Spring 2021 but did not happen due to ongoing pandemic
- Previously envisaged business rates baseline would be 'reset' in 2020 with objective to stop councils gaining or losing disproportionately over time according to their ability to grow their revenue from rates. Now anticipating implementation in April 2023. Frequency of resetting of baseline was previously announced to take place every 3 years
- Impact of Valuation Office delays and decisions (ongoing due to impact of Covid)
- Will 100% of renewable energy growth be retained – currently £2.8m in budget
- No new money?
- How much will be 'top sliced' to address economic differences across the country to support the 'levelling up' agenda and particular pressures such as adult social care?
- Rating Revaluation confirmed as 1st April 2023. Government to consult on details of adjustments ahead of 2023/2024 settlement

540

Business Rates Retention Pool

- Norfolk councils decided not to participate in a pool arrangement in 2021/22 due to uncertainty around delivering business rates growth across the county (impact of pandemic)
- Following review of forecasts, decision made to resume pool arrangement for 2022/2023 – estimated benefit to Norfolk of £5.9m overall
- Financial Plan does not include any growth other than ‘banked’ growth - cautious approach taken
- Renewable energy – 100% business rates retention £2.8m in plan – at risk
- Significant uncertainty and risk remains

541

Fair Funding Review

- Outcome of Fair Funding Review further delayed due to pandemic – consultations due to resume Spring 2022. Anticipate implementation of reforms in 2023/2024
- Still the same questions as last year with added uncertainties around impact of pandemic
- Expect winners and losers
- Unknown if/what transitional arrangements will be

542

Fair Funding Review

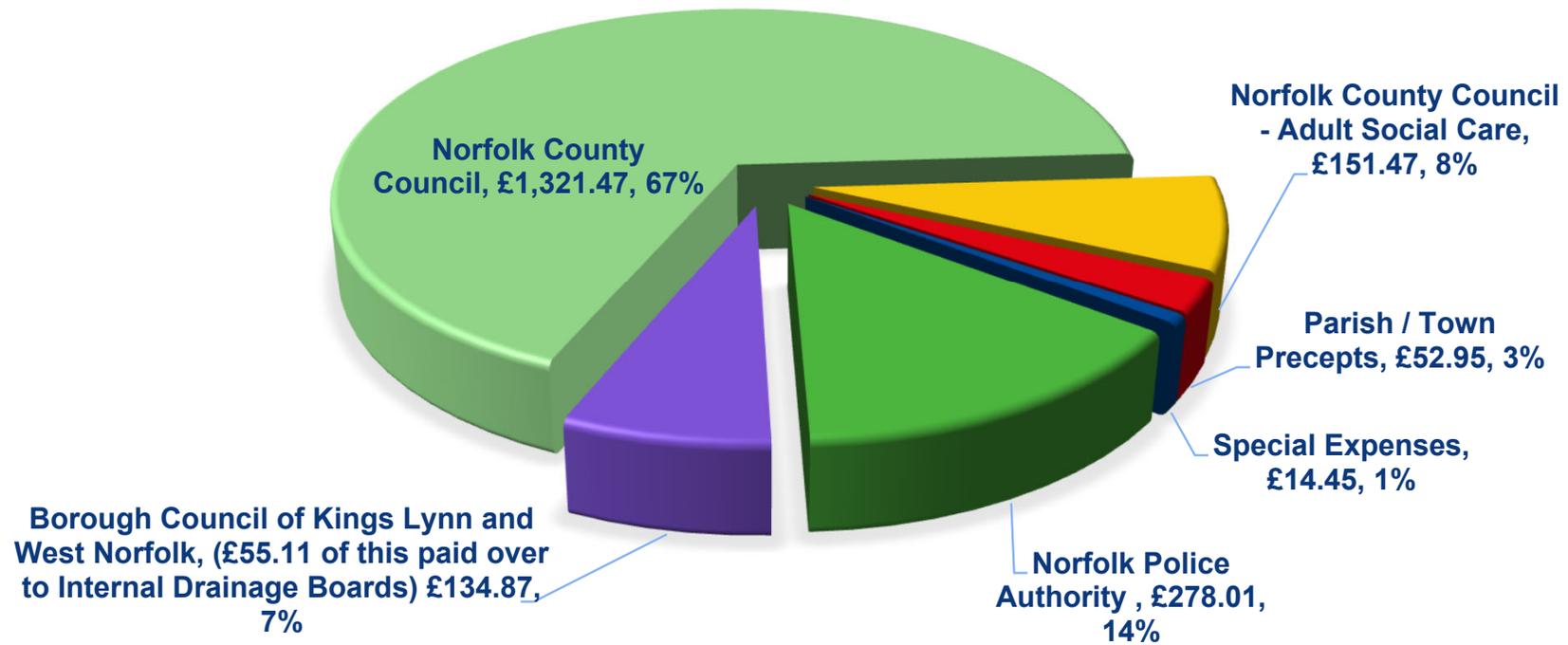
- Expect income which can be generated locally to be taken into account; council tax, fees and charges
- Still uncertainty on how Internal Drainage Board funding will be reflected (£3.0m of £7.3m Council Tax in 2022/23)
- Funding from 2022/2023 is calculated based on the existing 50% Business Rates Retention scheme.
- It is anticipated that next year the budget setting process will reflect the new business rates retention scheme and will be redistributed according to the outcome of the reformed needs assessment.

New Homes Bonus

- The government announced, as part of the Provisional Settlement, that it will fund the New Homes Bonus scheme in 2022/2023, along with funding of a final legacy payment associated with 2019/2020 allocation.
- However there is no commitment to fund anything after this.
- Funding included in the Financial Plan:

New Homes Bonus	£
2021/2022	(837,670)
2022/2023	(589,606)
2023/2024	0
2024/2025	0
2025/2026	0

BREAKDOWN OF AN AVERAGE BAND D COUNCIL TAX BILL OF £1,953.22 FOR 2021/2022



545

Council Tax

The 'Referendums Relating to Council Tax Increase (Principles) (England) Report 2022/2023' published on 16 December 2021 state that for the borough council the principles for 2022/2023 are an increase of 2% or up to £5, whichever is higher.

546

This will apply to the overall increase in general council tax and special expenses.

Council Tax base 2022/2023 52,611 Band D properties

Assumed annual increase of 300 properties from 2023/2024

Council Tax 2022/2023

The proposed levels of council tax for 2022/2023 includes a £4.50 increase on a Band D.

BAND	2021/2022	BAND	2021/2022
	£		£
A	92.91	E	170.34
B	108.40	F	201.31
C	123.88	G	232.28
D	139.37	H	278.74

547

Council Tax Discounts

There have been no changes to council tax discounts for 2021/2022

Council Tax Support Scheme – Council agreed to the continuation of the current scheme at its meeting on 25 January 2022 with an uplift to the maximum weekly council tax support that can be paid under the scheme – this has increased from 75% to 84% for 2022/23 onwards

Chancellor has announced a £150 council tax rebate for Bands A-D in April 2022. Also a discretionary fund of £150m for people on low incomes in bands E-F, and those in Bands A-D who are exempt from council tax.

Fees and Charges

- Fees and Charges – ONS inflation forecast for CPI at 4.8% (August 21). Reviewed on individual basis. Increases kept at minimum levels wherever possible but unavoidable in some areas – contract increases, utility costs, fuel
- Car park charges – no increase since 2017/18. Various increases proposed from April 2022. Some offset against investment in events to attract more tourism to the borough

Internal Drainage Board Levies

- Future funding of IDB levies charged to the Council is still uncertain
- Fair funding review needs to address IDB funding – outcome delayed again
- Financial Plan includes increases ranging from 0% to 5.66% for 2022/2023
- IDB levies 2022/2023 £3.0m – 14% of Borough spend of £21.5m
- The Council will pay £57.44 (41%) of £139.37 Council Tax collected (Band D) to meet the IDB levies in 2022/2023

Capital Programme Objectives

Provide assets (acquisition, construction or enhancement)

- to deliver the Council's key priorities
- to deliver against the Council's Financial Plan
- appropriate to the delivery of the Council's services

Capital Programme Challenges

- Limited capital resources
- Need to reduce revenue costs, prioritise schemes which:
 - Reduce revenue expenditure
 - Increase or generate new revenue income
 - Increase council tax base
- Statutory requirements and managing demand
 - Private sector housing assistance
- ‘Maintain - reduce – improve’ existing service levels
- Take advantage of technology and digital strategy
- Opportunity cost of decisions
- Understand Public Service vs Commercial Activity

552

Capital Programme Challenges

- Prioritising competing schemes
- Funding arrangements
- Use uncommitted resources
- Take out additional borrowing
- Review current programme v new opportunities
- Ageing assets and systems
- Promote innovation
- Delivery timescales and lead in times
- Deliver enhancements

553

Capital Programme 2021/2026

	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026
	£	£	£	£	£
Major Projects	27,784,100	41,657,530	32,920,080	21,053,420	5,245,500
Community and Partnerships	2,694,810	2,371,850	2,315,000	2,315,000	2,315,000
Resources	281,250	150,000	150,000	150,000	150,000
Property and Projects	66,000	268,000	0	0	0
Operational and Commercial Services	1,358,000	1,571,520	694,390	129,680	0
Leisure and Community Facilities	93,900	1,135,130	90,000	15,000	15,000
Central Services	0	0	0	0	0
Total	32,278,060	47,154,030	36,169,470	23,663,100	7,725,500
Exempt Schemes	11,604,660	15,131,080	9,018,140	4,739,560	0
Total Capital Programme	43,882,720	62,285,110	45,187,610	28,402,660	7,725,500

554

Major Projects

- Towns Fund
- Major Housing Projects – Examples:
 - Lynnsport
 - NORA phase 4
 - Salters Road
 - Alexandra Road, Hunstanton
 - Parkway

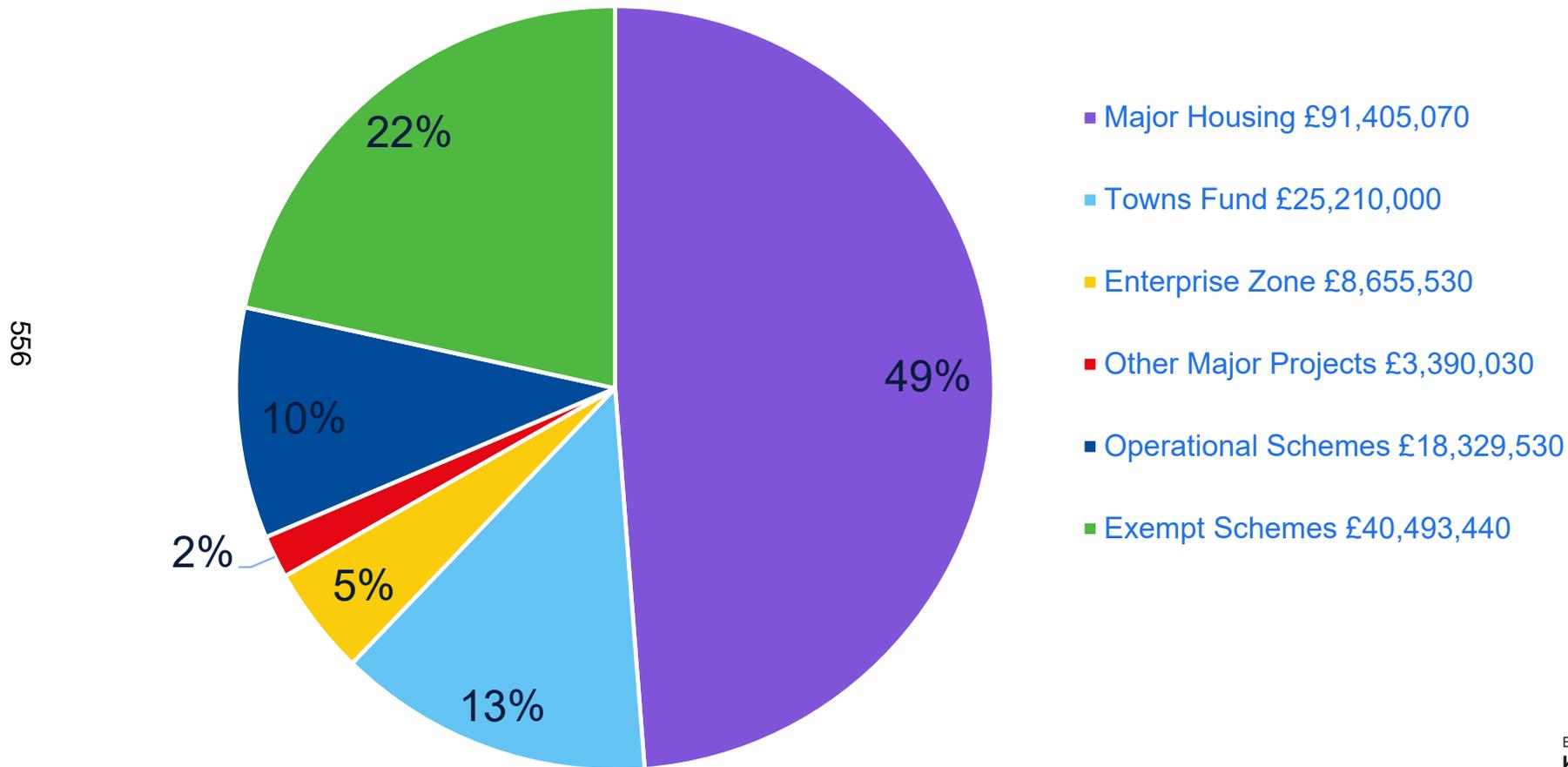
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- Enterprise Zone – infrastructure
- Decarbonisation Refit Scheme

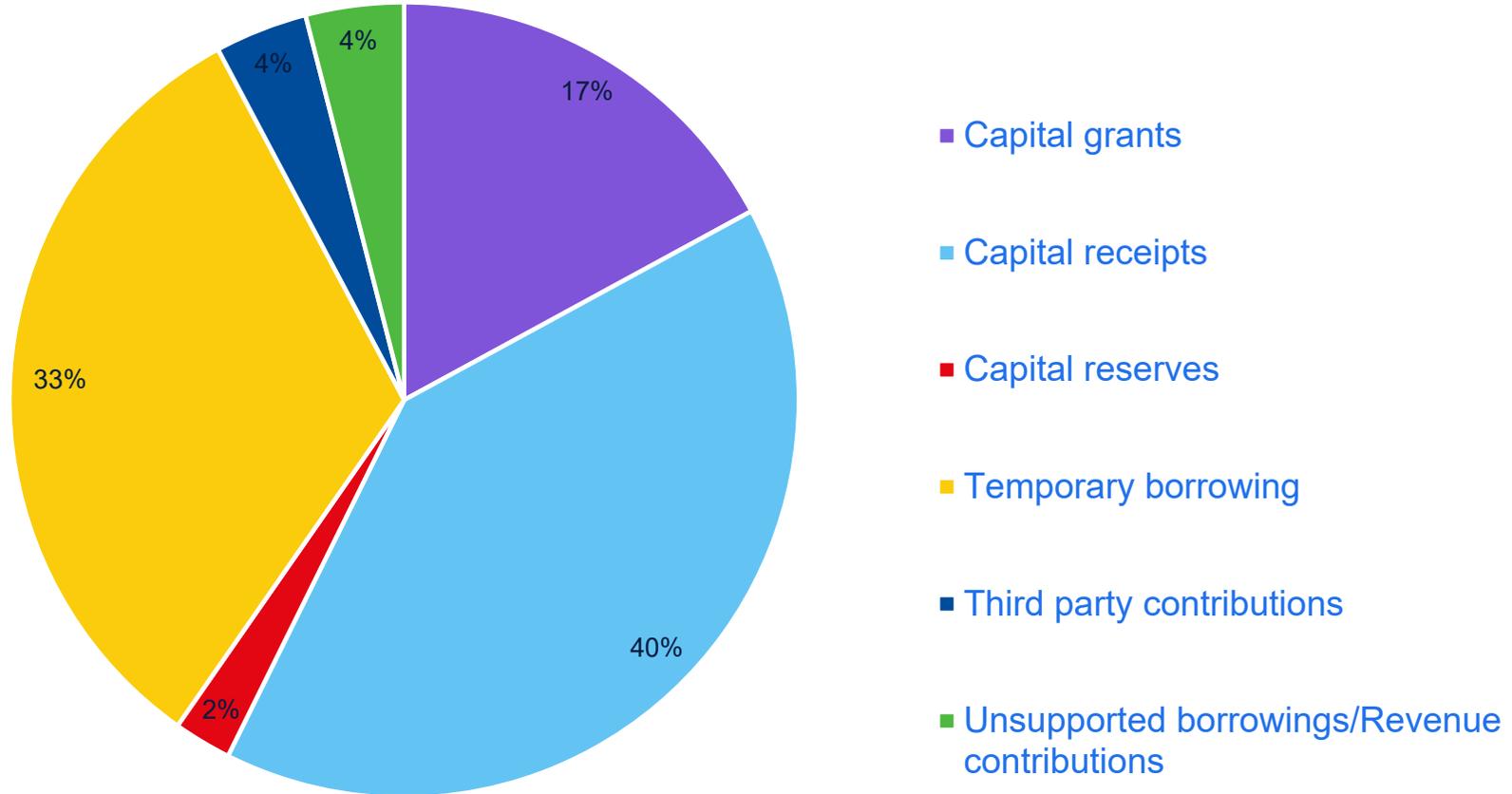
Operational Schemes

- Private sector housing assistance – Disabled Facilities Grants
- Councillor Community Grant Scheme
- Vehicles
- ICT Development
- Leisure facilities – equipment and buildings refurbishment
- Car Parks & CCTV – equipment and repairs

Capital Estimates 2021/2026 - Expenditure



Capital Estimates 2021/2026 - Funding



Questions?

558