



Council name	COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 2 FEBRUARY 2021
Report Number	AGENDA ITEM 10
Subject	MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY AND BUDGET 2021/22
Wards affected	ALL
Accountable member	Cllr Mike Every, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance Email: Mike.Every@cotswold.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Jenny Poole, Chief Finance Officer Email: jenny.poole@cotswold.gov.uk
Summary/Purpose	The report provides an update to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the budget proposals for 2021/22 and the associated Medium Term Financial Strategy.
Annexes	Annex A – Draft Medium Term Financial Strategy Annex B – Detailed Revenue Budget 2021/22 Annex C1 – Budget Consultation Survey Responses Annex C2 - Other Budget Consultation Response Annex D - Capital Strategy Annex E - Investment Strategy Annex F - Treasury Management Strategy
Recommendation/s	<i>That the budget proposals 2021/22 and the Medium Term Financial Strategy be considered, and feedback provided to the Cabinet and Council.</i>
Corporate priorities	The draft budget for 2021/22 reflects the financial implications of the Council Priorities as approved in the Council Plan in September 2020.
Key Decision	NO

Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	The Medium Term Financial Strategy and draft Budget for 2021/22 has been developed in consultation with the Council's statutory officers, Publica management, Ubico management, and members of the Cabinet. Consultation has been carried out with members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Audit Committee and with the District's residents, businesses and community organisations.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. Cabinet approved its draft Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for the period 2021/21 to 2024/25 and the associated budget proposals for 2021/22 for consultation on 7 September 2020. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the proposed MTFS and 2021/22 budget on 1 December 2020. The budget and MTFS have now been updated to reflect the following:
 - A. The government's announcement of the provisional local government settlement 2021/22;
 - B. Estimates of the income from the Business Rates Retention Scheme 2021/22;
 - C. Estimated Council Tax Base 2021/22 and the Collection Fund deficit from Council Tax collection in 2020/21; and
 - D. Provision for changes which have arisen since 7 September 2020;
- 1.2. The MTFS has been developed from the previous spreadsheet format into a new Strategic document. The new Strategy incorporates all of the changes set out at 1.1 and is attached as **Annex A**.
- 1.3. This report focuses upon changes to budget proposals since 7 September 2020.

2. MAIN POINTS

Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement 2021/22

- 2.1. On 25 November 2020, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced the outcome of the Spending Review 2020. The Spending Review sets the Government's departmental spending limits. The Spending Review is again for one year only - 2021/22.
- 2.2. The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has used the outcome from the Spending Review to set the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement 2021/22. The Local Government Finance Settlement, announced 17 December 2020, establishes Government funding for individual councils.
- 2.3. Key announcements for district councils included:
 - 2.3.1. Funding (known as the funding baseline) increases in line with inflation (0.55%);
 - 2.3.2. Councils impacted by "negative Revenue Support Grant", which includes this Council, would continue to be protected from this funding cut;
 - 2.3.3. New Homes Bonus funding will continue for 2021/22 but the grant will be for one-year only. The 2020/21 New Homes Bonus grant remains payable for that year only, so will not continue in 2021/22. Prior to 2020/21, New Homes Bonus grant was awarded for multiple financial years, initially six years and latterly four years. A consultation paper on the future of New Homes Bonus is due to be published shortly with an indication that changes will be implemented in 2022/23;
 - 2.3.4. Rural Services Delivery Grant continues in 2021/22;
 - 2.3.5. Disabled Facilities Grant funding will continue at current levels;
 - 2.3.6. Government will compensate local authorities for the increased cost of Local Council Tax Support in 2021/22 through a Local Council Tax Support Grant. Government has

also introduced a Local Tax Income Guarantee Scheme (LTIGS). The LTIGS will fund 75% of local authorities' irrecoverable losses for Council Tax and Business Rates;

- 2.3.7. A fifth tranche of Government grant in recognition of the impact of Covid-19 on Council finances was announced and the Sales, Fees and Charges Compensation Scheme was extended to the first quarter of 2021/2;
- 2.3.8. The Government introduced a new Lower Tier Services Grant to ensure that no local authority saw an overall reduction in Core Spending Power in 2021/22. Core Spending Power includes income from Retained Business Rates, Council Tax, Lower Tier Support Grant, New Homes Bonus and Rural Services Delivery Grant;
- 2.3.9. The Government delayed changes to local government funding from the Fairer Funding Review and Business Rate Retention Scheme for a year to April 2022.
- 2.4. In September, the Council's draft budget for 2021/22 prudently included only legacy New Homes Bonus Grant (from the 2018/19 and 2019/20 allocations) as the future of New Homes Bonus was uncertain and will be reviewed by Government as part of the Fairer Funding Review. An indicative figure of £500,000 was included for Rural Services Delivery Grant and Retained Business Rate income remained in line with the current year. The impact of the Provisional Local Government Settlement on the Council's revenue budget for 2021/22 is set out below:
 - 2.4.1. New Homes Bonus increased by £173,000;
 - 2.4.2. Rural Services Delivery Grant increased by £132,000;
 - 2.4.3. Retained Business Rate income increased by £98,000 to reflect inflation;
 - 2.4.4. The new Lower Tier Services Grant increases Government funding by £691,000;
 - 2.4.5. The 2021/22 revenue budget funded by core Government funding has therefore increased by £1.094 million.

Estimated Income from Business Rates Retention Scheme 2021/2

- 2.5. A key element of funding from the Government comes from retained business rates. The MTFS assumes the Council will be compensated (through section 31 revenue grant) for any negative impact upon business rates income relating to any national announcements on discounts or reliefs to businesses (such as those previously announced in the Chancellor's Autumn Statements and Budgets).
- 2.6. Changes to the Business Rates Retention Scheme were due to come into effect from April 2021. As stated in 2.3.9, this change will now take place in April 2022. The MTFS reflects forecast income from the revised scheme using advice from Pixel Financial Management who are providing expert advice to support local authorities and national bodies such as Sparse and the Local Government Association.

The Gloucestershire Business Rates Pool

- 2.7. The Gloucestershire Business Rates Pool was set up in 2013/14 to maximise the business rate income retained within the County and to support economic growth within the area of the Local Enterprise Partnership. Details of past performance of the Business Rates Pool is included in the Medium Term Financial Strategy at **Annex A**.
- 2.8. Any windfall gain associated with the Business Rates Pool in 2020/21 and 2021/22 will be allocated to the Council Priorities Fund.

- 2.9. Each year the Council forecasts whether its collection of Business Rates will be higher than anticipated, resulting in a “surplus” on the Collection Fund, or lower than anticipated, resulting in a “deficit” on the Collection Fund.
- 2.10. Where this Council forecasts a surplus on the Collection Fund, the surplus is paid out in the following financial year to the County Council (10%), Government (50%) and the District Council (40%). Similarly, where the Council forecasts a deficit, the deficit is recovered in the same proportions in the following financial year.
- 2.11. For 2020/21, the forecast is a Collection Fund deficit of £19,043,032. Of this £17,441,911 is as a result of additional Government business rate relief awarded in 2020/21 in response to the economic impact of Covid-19. The Council will receive a Government grant of £6,976,764 in 2020/21 to reflect its 40% share of the cost of this additional relief. This grant will be recorded in the General Fund (revenue budget) rather than the Collection Fund. In order for this grant to be used to fund the Collection Fund deficit in 2021/22, a transfer from the General Fund to an earmarked reserve - the Business Rate Smoothing Reserve - will take place on 31 March 2021.
- 2.12. The proportion of the Collection Fund deficit which relates to financial years before 2020/21 is £1,240,636. This is referred to as the historical deficit. Of this historical deficit, Cotswold District Council’s share is £496,254 which will be funded in 2021/22.
- 2.13. The Collection Fund deficit which relates to the 2020/21 financial year is £360,485. This is an exceptional deficit resulting from Covid-19. This Council’s share of the exceptional 2020/21 deficit is £144,194. This deficit will be spread equally over the next three financial years 2021/22 to 2023/24 at £48,065 per annum.
- 2.14. The Government has promised a grant to fund 75% of the exceptional deficit.
- 2.15. The Council’s share of the Collection Fund deficit to be funded in 2021/22 totals £7,521,083. The Business Rates Smoothing Reserve will be used to fund £7,425,196 of this deficit.
- 2.16. Overall, the estimated income from Business Rates in 2021/22 remains the same as in the draft budget in September 2020.
- 2.17. The budget for 2021/22 includes the following key data form the business rates estimates for 2021/22:

	2021/22 £
Estimate of business rate income to the District	13,654,017
Tariff to Government	(11,485,278)
Section 31 Grants – reflecting impact of Government decisions on local government financing	2,203,207
Estimated Levy Payable to Government	(996,071)

Net Retained Business Rates 2021/22	3,375,875
Collection Fund Surplus/(Deficit) forecast to end 2019/20	(7,521,083)
Transfer from Business Rates Smoothing Reserve	7,425,196
Net Overall Income from Retained Business Rates	3,279,988

Estimated Council Tax Base 2021/22 and Collection Fund Deficit 2020/21

- 2.18. Each year the Council estimates the size of the Council Taxbase. The Taxbase is calculated as the number of dwellings in the District equivalent to “Band D” Council Tax properties. For example, a Band H property pays twice the amount of Council Tax as a Band D property. In Taxbase terms, this property is worth 2 Band D properties. The Taxbase is reduced to allow for the cost of the Local Council Tax Support Scheme and other exemptions and discounts. The Taxbase is increased for empty properties which incur a premium.
- 2.19. In September 2020, the draft 2021/22 budget assumed a Taxbase of 42,026.7. The detailed calculation of the Taxbase was carried out in October 2020. The result was a taxbase of 41,848.2. The lower Taxbase reflects an expectation of more Local Council Tax Support payable as a result of the economic conditions in 2021/22 and a slowdown in housing supply as a result of Covid-19. This has resulted in a reduction of income from Council Tax of £24,810.
- 2.20. The Localism Act 2011 introduced a power for the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government to issue principles that define what should be considered as excessive Council Tax, including proposed limits. The principles are subject to approval by the House of Commons. From 2013 onwards, any Council that wishes to raise its Council Tax above the limit that applies to it will have to hold a referendum.
- 2.21. For this Council, the Government is proposing a maximum council tax increase of 2% or £5 for 2021/22, whichever is the higher. The budget for 2021/22 proposes a Council Tax increase of £5. The Collection Fund is the account where Council Tax income is recorded. This income is then paid out to the “precept” authorities, i.e. Gloucestershire County Council, Gloucestershire Police and Crime Commissioner, this Council and those Town and Parish Councils which have requested a precept for the year.
- 2.22. Each year the Council forecasts whether its collection of Council Tax will be higher than anticipated, resulting in a “surplus” on the Collection Fund, or lower than anticipated, resulting in a “deficit” on the Collection Fund.
- 2.23. Where this Council forecasts a surplus on the Collection Fund, the surplus is paid out in the following financial year to the County Council, Police and Crime Commissioner and the District Council in proportion to their respective level of precept for the financial year. Similarly, where the Council forecasts a deficit, the deficit is recovered proportionately from the three major preceptors in the following financial year.

Collection Fund surplus or deficit is not passed on to the Town and Parish Councils but is shared proportionately by the three major preceptors.

- 2.24. For 2020/21, the forecast is a Collection Fund deficit of £1,284,500. Of this £1,081,739 is an exceptional deficit resulting from Covid-19. The proportion of the Collection Fund deficit which relates to financial years before 2020/21 is £202,761. This is referred to as the historical deficit. Of this historical deficit Cotswold District Council's share is £23,948 which will be funded in 2021/22. This Council's share of the exceptional 2020/21 deficit is £127,763. This deficit will be spread equally over the next three financial years 2021/22 to 2023/24 at £42,588 per annum. The Government has promised to fund 75% of the exceptional deficit - £31,941 a year. The net impact of Covid-19 upon the Council's revenue budget for each of the next three years is £10,647. The impact of the historical Collection Fund deficit and the Covid-19 net deficit in 2021/22 is £34,595.
- 2.25. As part of the Provisional Local Government Settlement, the Government announced an additional grant for Local Council Tax Support of £88,353 for 2021/22 only.
- 2.26. The draft 2021/22 budget assumed Council Tax income of £5,792,106. This was based upon an estimated Tax Base of 42,026.7, a £5 increase to Band D Council Tax, a Collection Fund deficit of £46,667 and no Government grant to compensate for the impact of Covid-19. Since September, the following changes have impacted upon Council Tax income for 2021/22:

Changes to Council Tax income 2021/22	
Draft Budget September 2020	£5,792,106
Formal Council Tax Base Calculation	(£24,810)
Collection Fund Deficit, net of Government grant,	£12,072
Additional Government Grant for cost of Local Council Tax Support	£88,353
Revised Income from Council Tax	£5,867,721
Increase in Council Tax income	£75,615

- 2.27. Since the draft budget in September 2020, income from Council Tax related funding has increased by £75,615.

Budget changes since draft Budget proposals in September 2020

- 2.28. As part of the Spending Review in November 2020, the Chancellor announced a partial pay freeze for public sector workers. The Chancellor is not able to impose a pay freeze upon local government workers as the local government pay award is subject to a negotiation process. In September 2020, the draft 2021/22 budget

assumed a pay award of 2.5%. While the outcome of the pay negotiations is still unknown, the revised MTFS reflects pay inflation of 1% for Officers and Publica staff and an associated 1% increase in councillor's allowances. This has reduced costs by £128,000 in 2021/22. The MTFS continues to assume pay inflation of 2.5% from 2022/23 onwards.

- 2.29. The Council is responsible for the collection of "sharps" from individuals in the District. Currently there is a contract between the NHS and pharmacies for the collection of sharps. The NHS is not renewing this contract and responsibility will therefore fall upon this Council to collect these sharps. There will be a change to the Council's contract with Ubico, and as a result costs are expected to increase by £12,000 each year.
- 2.30. The Council commissioned Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd to procure its contract for external audit services. Since the procurement, the Financial Reporting Council expectations of the work carried out by external auditors has increased. Sir Tony Redmond recognised this in his recent review of local authority financial reporting and external audit. PSAA Ltd is expected to increase the Scale Fee payable to the external auditor to reflect the changed regulatory framework within which external audit is provided. Additional funding of £15,000 is being included in the 2021/22 budget to provide for additional external audit fees.
- 2.31. A review of the Publica governance arrangements has led to changes to strengthen the Publica Executive Board which requires this Council to increase its financial contribution by £5,000 per annum.
- 2.32. Support provided by Publica to the Council's statutory officers and Cabinet Members has been reviewed and additional support has been requested. The additional cost of this support is £13,000 per annum.
- 2.33. The Council's draft Treasury Management Strategy for 2021/22 is attached at **Annex F**. The level of balances available for investment and the interest receivable has been reviewed in light of the Council's revenue and capital expenditure plans. Bank of England Base Rate is now only 0.1% and this has a significant impact upon the returns available on the Council's highly liquid cash investments. Overall treasury income is expected to reduce by £189,000 in 2021/22. Further information is contained within the Council's Capital Strategy at **Annex D**, the Investment Strategy at **Annex E** and the Treasury Management Strategy at **Annex F**.
- 2.34. In September 2020, the 2021/22 draft budget assumed that the financial impact from the Covid-19 pandemic would be limited to the 2020/21 financial year. As time has progressed it's clear that this will not be the case. The Provisional Local Government Settlement acknowledged the ongoing impact of Covid-19 and additional funding of £377,000 is available under a fifth tranche of Covid-19 funding. The Council's budget for 2021/22 includes a contingency for additional costs equal to the funding from the Government. This contingency will be allocated across relevant services as the financial impact becomes clearer during the early part of 2021/22.
- 2.35. Similarly, a contingency for the impact on income from Sales, Fees and Charges in 2021/22 as a result of Covid-19 has been included at £500,000. The Government

support for Sales, Fees and Charges losses at 75% of losses over and above the first 5% of the 2020/21 budget has been included at £356,000.

- 2.36. The draft 2021/22 budget assumes savings delivered from Publica and the Council's leisure services provider, SLM, amounting to £78,000. While the Publica savings are expected to be delivered, the savings from the SLM contract of £53,000 have been deferred until 2022/23 and are expected to be delivered either as part of an extension to the SLM contract or through revised leisure and cultural services provision arrangements.
- 2.37. Savings to be generated from the Recovery Investment Strategy have been realigned to reflect an anticipated delivery timescale. £276,000 of the 2021/22 savings target has been deferred to 2022/23.
- 2.38. Additional in-year savings of £10,000 have also been found in supplies and services budgets
- 2.39. Changes to the draft 2021/22 revenue budget, are set out in the table below:

2021/22 Revenue Budget	Income Change £000	Expenditure Change £000	Total £000
Pay Inflation		(128)	(128)
Additional in-year savings in supplies and services budgets		(10)	(10)
Collection of sharps – increase to Ubico contract		12	12
Council Taxbase lower growth	25		25
Collection Fund Deficit – Historical Council Tax	24		24
Collection Fund Deficit – 2020/21 Extraordinary deficit – 1/3 of total deficit	43		43
Council Tax Deficit 75% Government Funding	(32)		(32)
Government grant for additional costs of Local Council Tax Support	(88)		(88)

Remove Sep 20 Provision for Collection Fund Deficit (Council Tax)	(47)		(47)
Provision for external audit fee increase		15	15
Publica changes to the Board of Directors		5	5
Publica support for statutory officers and Cabinet Members		13	13
Reduced income from treasury investments	189		189
Contingency for pressure from Covid-19	500	377	877
Covid-19 Grant from Government – tranche 5	(377)		(377)
Covid-19 Grant from Government – Sales, Fees and Charges	(356)		(356)
Savings from SLM contract	53		53
Savings from the Recovery Investment Strategy	276		276
Increases to Government Core Funding		(1,094)	(1,094)
Changes to retained business rate income	(178)		(178)
Changes to 2021/22 Budget since Sept 20	32	(810)	(778)

Revenue Budget proposals 2021/22 – Fees and Charges

- 2.40. The Council plans to continue with its budget resolution from February 2020 to increase garden waste service fees to make the service cost neutral. For 2021/22, this means implementing the planned increase to £40 for each bin licence. The revenue benefit is expected to be £155,000 as it includes the £5 increase deferred from 2020/21 due to the suspension of the service in the first lockdown and the planned increase of £5 in 2021/22.
- 2.41. The Council intends to introduce charges for the delivery of waste and recycling containers which is expected to deliver additional income of £60,000. The charges will be in line with the Council's commitment not to subsidise the cost of services. The budget assumes a charge of £5 per container delivery.

- 2.42. In previous years, the cost of the bulky waste collection service has exceeded the income generated from service charges. In order to eliminate this subsidy, the charge for the service will increase from £14 to £25 for the collection of up to three items. The charge for additional items will remain at £5 per item, with an upper limit of six items. This additional income also allows the Council to support those residents on the lowest income - a discount of 50% will apply to residents in receipt of Housing Benefit or Local Council Tax Support.
- 2.43. The Council intends to continue with the provision of free after 3PM car parking in the following car parks: Cirencester - Brewery and Forum car parks, Moreton-in-Marsh - Old Market Way, Stow-on-the-Wold - Mangersbury Road, Tetbury - Church Street and West Street car parks. It is intended that free after 3PM car parking will be withdrawn from the Rissington Road car park in Bourton-on-the- Water. This is subject to confirmation of the Cabinet decision of 7 December 2020 following public consultation.

Impact upon General Fund Balance

- 2.44. The draft 2021/22 budget produced a budget deficit £772,000. Since September 2020, changes to the 2021/22 budget and Government funding, set out in the Table at 2.39 have improved the budget deficit. The Council now has a balanced budget, with a contribution to the General Fund Balance of £6,257.
- 2.45. Full details of the impact of the Council's budget proposals upon General Fund Balance, revenue and capital reserves are set out in **Annex A**.

Capital Programme

- 2.46. Details of the proposed Capital Programme for the period 2021/22 to 2024/25 are set out in the Council's Capital, Investment and Treasury Management Strategies at **Annex D, E and F**. There have been no changes proposed since Cabinet considered the revised Capital Programme in September 2020.

Review of Earmarked Reserves

- 2.47. The proposed use of the Council's Earmarked Reserves was set out in the Cabinet report in September 2020. The Council holds a Council Priorities Fund revenue reserve. This funding is available for investment in initiatives which support delivery against the Council's priorities. Details of commitments against the Council Priorities Fund is included in the Medium Term Financial Strategy at **Annex A**.
- 2.48. The Council Priorities Fund is now largely allocated and new initiatives will require Members to review existing commitments and to reallocate funds accordingly.

Consultation

- 2.49. Consultation on the draft budget proposals ran from 4 November to 8 December 2020. The Council promoted its consultation by advertising on the website and using signage across the District, inviting Town and Parish Councils to attend a webinar, using a leaflet drop targeted at new housing estates and at a wide variety of locations across the District and using "CDC Live".

- 2.50. As the leaflet drop took place later in the consultation period than planned, the online survey period was extended to 11 December 2020 to ensure that as many residents as possible had the opportunity to have their views considered.
- 2.51. The Council has received 339 responses to the consultation, an increase of 51 responses from the consultation last year. Feedback from the online survey is included at **Annex C1**. In addition to the online survey, the Council has also received various other correspondence, included at **Annex C2**..
- 2.52. Cabinet considered the budget consultation responses on 4 January 2021.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1. The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy has been updated to reflect the proposals set out in this report and is attached at **Annex A**.
- 3.2. A summary of the impact of the budget proposals for 2021/22 is set out below:

Summary of changes to the Council's Net Budget Requirement	£
Original Net Budget Requirement 2020/21 (as approved by Council in February 2020)	12,260,273
Inflationary Pressure – expenditure budgets	276,250
Unavoidable budget pressures, investment in Priorities expenditure and accounting changes (net decrease)	(259,558)
Unavoidable budget pressures – income	410,300
Savings	(274,000)
Impact of one-off Covid-19 pressure on expenditure	377,000
Impact of one-off Covid-19 pressure on income	500,000
Covid-19 Government Funding	(733,250)

Net Budget Requirement 2021/22	12,557,015
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3.3. The Council's net budget requirement will be funded as follows:

	£	£
Net Budget Requirement 2021/22		12,557,015
Net Business Rate Income (see table at 2.19)	3,279,988	
Council Tax payers @ £138.93 Band D	5,813,963	
Collection Fund Deficit	(66,536)	
Government Grants - Council Tax impact of Covid-19	120,294	
New Homes Bonus	2,092,561	
Rural Services Delivery Grant	632,183	
Lower Tier Services Grant	690,819	
Total Funding		12,563,272
Budget Surplus		6,257

3.4. The budget proposals assume a budget surplus of £6,257. This surplus will be added to the General Fund Balance.

3.5. The detailed revenue estimates for the Council are attached at **Annex B**.

3.6. Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 places a duty on the Chief Financial Officer to make a report to the Council on the robustness of the budget estimates and the adequacy of the Council reserves. The Council must have regard to this report when making its decisions about budgets and council tax for the forthcoming year.

The Finance Officer report will be included in the Cabinet and Council reports in February 2021.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1. None directly as a result of this report.

5. RISK ASSESSMENT

5.1. Details of national and local risk which may impact upon the financial sustainability of the Council are set out within the Medium Term Financial Strategy at **Annex A**.

6. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

6.1. The draft budget for 2021/22 is subject to consultation until February 2021. During the consultation period, the Cabinet encourages feedback on its proposals for consideration. The Audit Committee will consider the Capital, Investment and Treasury Management Strategies on 28 January 2021.

6.2. At Council on 20th January 2021, a motion was proposed by Councillor Tony Berry and Seconded by Councillor Julia Judd as follows:

'The new mapping system introduced to identify instances of fly-tipping is highly successful and much appreciated. On checking recently that various events had been reported I was dismayed to see that there were 6 current instances in my Ward and so I spoke with ERS about what we might do to reduce this amount, particularly in those spots which regularly received unwanted deposits. To my amazement I was told we don't have any cameras which we can put in these locations to catch/deter those dumping their (or someone else's) rubbish.

Catching and finding these people that desecrate our countryside must be the best deterrent and usually gains good publicity. Although considerable efforts are being made to try to do so, catching people in the act must surely be an option our officers have to help them.

From some research I discovered that motion activated cameras of good quality can be purchased for under £500. Whilst these might not be the right sort of camera, we can surely find out from Councils which are best suited and have good success rates. Even if they cost £1,000 each, it must be a worthwhile investment.

Equally there must be other 'good practices' in the industry that we could investigate (e.g. paying for skips in strategic locations).

We would therefore recommend to this Council that it puts aside up to £50,000 to:

1) Investigate the purchase and use of cameras to support the efforts to catch and fine fly-tippers.

2) Investigate other possible activities that would help reduce or remove this scourge from our district, and report back to this Council if further funds are required.'

6.3. The motion was referred to the Cabinet to consider as part of the budget proposals.

- 6.4.** On 8 February 2021, Cabinet will consider feedback from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Audit Committee and will determine the final budget proposals to be presented to Council for consideration.