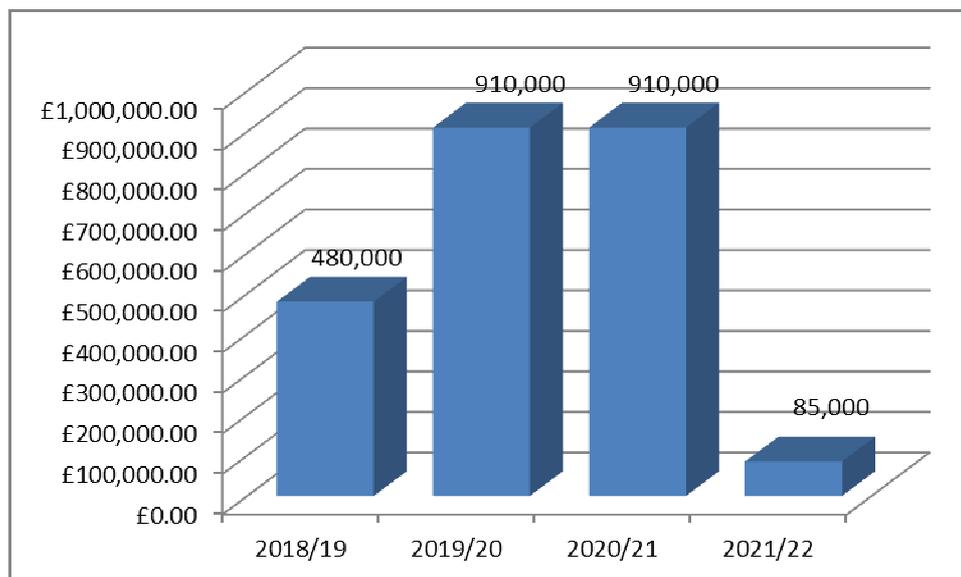


## District Councillor report for Brightling Parish Council – April 2017

Since 2011, the Government has cut its grant to Rother District Council by a total of £5.4 million, including a reduction of £600,000 for 2016/17. The Government general grant will be cut by a further £620,000 in 2017/18. In 2016/17, the grant was £1.07 million therefore in 2017/18 we will only receive £450,000. By 2020 the Government will not pay us any general grant.

Our latest forecasts show we expect a shortfall in our income over the next five years of around £2.4 million. This calculation takes into account other changes to our spending and income generated from other sources. We have balanced our revenue budget for 2017/18 by securing savings and additional income of around £1.2 million. The annual funding gap is shown in the chart below:



More detailed information on the Council's finances can be read in our draft medium term financial strategy. Our Sustainability and Efficiency Plan sets out how we will meet the funding challenges ahead and also we will decide which services to prioritise and how lower priority services might be delivered over the next three years. You can find both documents on the Council's website at <http://www.rother.gov.uk/article/1059/Budgets-and-accounts>

Given the above, the Council is looking to spend every pound raised in tax as efficiently as possible and much can be achieved by close working with other Councils, principally Wealden. Waste collection, environmental health, legal services, building control and financial systems are all shared, bringing economies of scale and reductions in overheads. However cuts are inevitable and the Council has to focus on its key priorities.

Maintaining the community grants budget is seen as a key priority since it enables local groups to achieve their ambitions; and with many of the larger parish councils certain functions are being devolved.

Rother District Council is working with the County Council to ensure that the local economy remains one of the fastest growing in the whole country and projects like the Bexhill Link Road and the Northern Access Road, which is currently under construction, will benefit the whole area by providing space for new businesses and for a large part of the housing Rother has to build.

This helps keep the pressure on our villages down and helps us to defend the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. However without some growth of housing in our rural areas, we shall continue to lose our younger population. So the right balance must be struck. Rother is committed to deliver more affordable housing and where developments are small, the developer has to pay cash towards that programme. The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) enables parishes to profit from any new development.

Inevitably this year your Council tax had to rise and the Council was at one in thinking we should add £5 to the bill of a Band D household – that is roughly a 3% rise in the RDC element of your Council tax.