

Appendix B (February 2022 Update)

Minimum Revenue Provision Policy

Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement 2022/23

From 2013/14, the council has not had a fully funded capital programme, and although there has not been a need to borrow in full externally, due to the use of investment balances, it is necessary to make adequate provision for the repayment of debt in the form of Minimum Revenue Provision, including in 2021/22 for the unfunded element of 2011/12 to 2014/15 expenditure. The **preferred method for existing underlying borrowing is Option 3 (Asset Life Method)** whereby the MRP will be spread over the useful life of the asset. Useful life is dependent on the type of asset and was reviewed in 2019/20. Following that review asset lives now ranges from 7 years (ICT equipment) to 50 years (Investment properties, regeneration sites and car parks for example).

In applying the new asset lives historic MRP had been overpaid and in accordance with current MHCLG MRP Guidance can be reclaimed in future years. The council has a policy to ring fence costs and income associated with regeneration assets and as such has shown these MRP changes separately, see table below. The overpayment of £1,057,660.39 results in no MRP needing to be charged to the accounts for the regeneration assets until 2025/26, when a partial charge will be required, utilising the remainder of the overpayment balance.

voluntary MRP made		Use of overpayment	
	Regeneration		Regeneration
2012/13	£46,929.65	2020/21	£193,703.12
2013/14	£140,788.95	2021/22	£193,703.12
2014/15	£163,165.30	2022/23	£193,703.12
2015/16	£141,355.30	2023/24	£193,703.12
2016/17	£141,355.30	2024/25	£193,703.12
2017/18	£141,355.30	2026/26	£89,144.79
2018/19	£141,355.30		
2019/20	£141,355.30		
cumulative total	£1,057,660.39	cumulative total	£1,057,660.39

The Council approved a **Property Investment** Strategy – an investment of £15Million in property funded from prudential borrowing. As having Investments for Yield in the capital strategy are no longer permitted, only the MRP payable of £35,119 per year on the investment made of £1,755,950 which will be payable. This was calculated under **Option 3 (Asset Life Method) and the annuity method**, which links the MRP to the flow of benefits from the properties.

The forecast annual MRP for 2022/23 is £408,312 based on the capital expenditure in the draft 2021/22 Financial Accounts, with the lower figure of £214,609 needing to be charged to the 2022/23 Financial Accounts taking into account the overpayment on the regeneration assets. The forecast annual MRP for 2023/24 is £489,626 with £295,923 to be charged to the 2023/24 Financial Accounts.

Finance lease payments due as part of the Queensway regeneration project are also applied as MRP, funded from the payments received in the year, as will any MRP due on borrowing taken in relation to the Housing Wholly Owned Company.

Additional Information

1. What is a Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP)?

The Minimum Revenue Provision is a charge that Councils which are not debt free are required to make in their accounts for the repayment of debt (as measured by the underlying need to borrow, rather than actual debt). The underlying debt is needed to finance the capital programme. Capital expenditure is generally expenditure on assets which have a life expectancy of more than one year e.g. buildings, vehicles, machinery etc. It is therefore prudent to charge an amount for the repayment of debt over the life of the asset or some similar proxy figure, allowing borrowing to be matched to asset life. Setting aside an amount for the repayment of debt in this manner would then allow for future borrowing to be taken out to finance the asset when it needs replacing at no incremental cost. The manner of spreading these costs is through an annual Minimum Revenue Provision, which was previously determined under Regulation, and is now determined by Guidance.

2. Statutory duty

Statutory Instrument 2008 no. 414 s4 lays down that:

“A local authority shall determine for the current financial year an amount of minimum revenue provision that it considers to be prudent.”

The above is a substitution for the previous requirement to comply with regulation 28 in S.I. 2003 no. 3146 (as amended).

There is no requirement to charge MRP where the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) is nil or negative at the end of the preceding financial year.

The share of Housing Revenue Account CFR is not subject to an MRP charge.

3. Government Guidance

Along with the above duty, the Government issued guidance which came into force on 31st March 2008 which requires that a Statement on the Council's policy for its annual MRP should be submitted to the full Council for approval before the start of the financial year to which the provision will relate.

The Council is legally obliged to “have regard” to the guidance, which is intended to enable a more flexible approach to assessing the amount of annual provision than was required under the previous statutory requirements. The guidance offers four main options under which MRP could be made, with an overriding recommendation that the Council should make prudent provision to redeem its debt liability over a period which is reasonably commensurate with that over which the capital expenditure is estimated to provide benefits. The requirement to ‘have regard’ to the guidance therefore means that:

Although four main options are recommended in the guidance, there is no intention to be prescriptive by making these the only methods of charge under which a local authority may consider its MRP to be prudent.

It is the responsibility of each authority to decide upon the most appropriate method of making a prudent provision, after having had regard to the guidance.

The four recommended options are thus:

Option 1: Regulatory Method

Under the previous MRP regulations, MRP was set at a uniform rate of 4% of the adjusted CFR (i.e. adjusted for "Adjustment A") on a reducing balance method (which in effect meant that MRP charges would stretch into infinity).

This historic approach must continue for all capital expenditure incurred in years before the start of this new approach. It may also be used for new capital expenditure up to the amount which is deemed to be supported through the Supported Capital Expenditure (SCE) annual allocation.

Option 2: Capital Financing Requirement Method

This is a variation on option 1 which is based upon a charge of 4% of the aggregate CFR without any adjustment for Adjustment A, or certain other factors which were brought into account under the previous statutory MRP calculation. The CFR is the measure of an authority's outstanding debt liability as depicted by their balance sheet.

This is not applicable to the Council as it is for existing non supported debt

Option 3: Asset Life Method.

This method may be applied to most new capital expenditure, including where desired that which may alternatively continue to be treated under options 1 or 2.

Under this option, it is intended that MRP should be spread over the estimated useful life of either an asset created, or other purpose of the expenditure. There are two useful advantages of this option:

-Longer life assets e.g. freehold land can be charged over a longer period than would arise under options 1 and 2.

-No MRP charges need to be made until the financial year after that in which an item of capital expenditure is fully incurred and, in the case of a new asset, comes into service use (this is often referred to as being an 'MRP holiday'). This is not available under options 1 and 2.

There are two methods of calculating charges under option 3:

-equal instalment method – equal annual instalments,

-annuity method – annual payments gradually increase during the life of the asset.

This is the preferred method as it allows costs to be spread equally over the life of the asset.

Option 4: Depreciation Method

Under this option, MRP charges are to be linked to the useful life of each type of asset using the standard accounting rules for depreciation (but with some exceptions) i.e. this is a more complex approach than option 3.

The same conditions apply regarding the date of completion of the new expenditure as apply under option 3.

This method is not favoured by the Council as if the asset is subject to a downturn in value, then that amount would have to be written off in that year, in addition to the annual charge.

4. Date of implementation

The previous statutory MRP requirements ceased to have effect after the 2006/07 financial year. Transitional arrangements included within the guidance no longer apply for the MRP charge for 2009/10 onwards. Therefore, options 1 and 2 should only be used for Supported Capital Expenditure (SCE). The CLG document remains as

guidance and authorities may consider alternative individual MRP approaches, as long as they are consistent with the statutory duty to make a prudent revenue provision.

Current Consultation

As set out in the report, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC, formerly MHCLG) issued “Consultation on changes to the capital framework: Minimum Revenue Provision” on 30th November 2021 to last for 10 weeks until 8th February 2022. The government is proposing additional text to be added to the 2003 Regulations to make explicit that:

1. Capital receipts may not be used in place of the revenue charge. The intent is to prevent authorities avoiding, in whole or part, a prudent charge to revenue. It is not the intention to prevent authorities using capital receipts to reduce their overall debt position, which may have the effect of reducing the MRP made with respect to the remaining debt balance.

2. Prudent MRP must be determined with respect to the authority’s total capital financing requirement. The intent is to stop the intentional exclusion of debt from the MRP determination because it relates to an investment asset or capital loan. Authorities should still be able to charge MRP over the period in which their capital expenditure provides benefits and begin charging MRP in the year following capital expenditure, in accordance with proper accounting practices set out in the government’s statutory guidance on Minimum Revenue Provision.

These changes are not intended to have any impact on the Housing Revenue Account, or on treasury management activities that do not score as capital spend. The government wants authorities to still be able to exercise judgement in determining a prudent amount and does not want to move back to a prescriptive method.

Officers have been reviewing the potential impact the changes may make to the MRP charged to revenue and are taking this into account when making borrowing decisions. Point 2 above is already complied with, MRP is charged on any capital expenditure which relates to an investment asset or capital loan. The impact may arise from Point 1 in that the way capital receipts are applied as part of available capital financing may change.