




Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP
Secretary of State for Housing, Communities
and Local Government
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Via email: robert.jenrick@communities.gov.uk

24 April 2020

Dear Mr Jenrick,

SUPPORT FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

I am very grateful, on behalf of staff and councillors at Maidstone Borough Council, for your letter last weekend recognising the contribution made by local government during the coronavirus pandemic.

However, I have to say that this vital contribution is in severe jeopardy because of the financial position in which we now find ourselves. Not only are we incurring additional expenditure, but the income on which we depend to fund our services is falling rapidly.

In Maidstone, as reported in the survey that your department undertook last week, we already plan to spend £266,000 on measures to address the pandemic, nearly five times the amount of £57,000 which we have received as grant so far. This expenditure includes supporting rough sleepers and the homeless, provision of food and other essential supplies to vulnerable people and setting up a community hub.

Even more damaging, we expect to lose £7.4 million in income this financial year, arising from slower collection of Council Tax and Business Rates, and loss of fees and charges through the closure of council services like our leisure centre. This figure assumes severe disruption to the end of June and will be even higher if it continues beyond then.

The combination of additional expenditure and reduced income will severely damage our capacity to support the recovery of our community from the pandemic.

If you value the role of local government, it is essential that we receive significant more financial support than has hitherto been the case. I look forward to hearing from you as to what further measures you can take to support councils like ours.

Yours faithfully



Councillor Martin Cox

Leader of the Council

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