Report to Cabinet Item

14 January 2015

Report of Chief finance officer

Subject Revenue budget monitoring 2014-15 : Period 08

7

Purpose

To update cabinet on the financial position as at 30 November 2014, the forecast outturn for the year 2014/15, and the consequent forecast of the general fund and housing revenue account balances.

Recommendation

To note the financial position as at 30 November 2014 and the forecast outturn for 2014-15.

Corporate and service priorities

The report helps to meet the corporate priority value for money services and the service plan priority to provide accurate, relevant and timely financial information.

Financial implications

The general fund budget is forecast to achieve an underspend of £0.869m. The housing revenue account budget is forecast to achieve an underspend of £0.834m.

Monitoring of key budgets does not indicate any unusual cause for concern; however the position will need to be continually monitored in order to deliver to the forecast outturn

Ward/s: All wards

Cabinet member: Councillor Waters – Deputy leader and resources

Contact officers

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Background documents

None

Report

- 1. Council approved budgets for the 2014-15 financial year on 18 February 2014.
- 2. The attached appendices show the forecast outturn and year-to-date positions for the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account:
 - Appendix 1 shows the general fund by corporate leadership team responsibilities, and by subjective group
 - Appendix 2 shows the housing revenue account in (near) statutory format, and by subjective group
 - Appendix 3 shows budget and expenditure for the year to date in graphical format

General fund

3. Budgets reported include the resources financing the council's net budget requirement (which includes a contribution of £0.541m to balances as allowed for in the *Medium term financial strategy*) so that the net budget totals zero:

Item	Approved Budget £000s
Net Budget Requirement	18,407
Non-Domestic Rates	(4,651)
Revenue Support Grant	(5,980)
Council Tax precept	(7,776)
Total General Fund budget	0

4. The general fund has been forecast to underspend by £0.869m at year end. This compares to a forecast underspend of £0.874m at the end of October. Significant forecast overspends and underspends are explained below:

Previous forecast over/(under) spend £000s	General Fund Service	Current forecast over/(under) spend £000s	Commentary
179	Finance	182	Following adjustments to payments made by the DWP, and following finalisation of the audit of the 2013/14 Revenues amounts, the previously reported overspend on Benefits subsidy will continue.
(265)	Corporate Management	(262)	The corporate contingency budget is expected to underspend by £250k in 2014/15. Going forward this saving is reflected in the transformation programme for future years.

Previous forecast over/(under) spend £000s	General Fund Service	Current forecast over/(under) spend £000s	Commentary
(94)	City Development:	(220)	Forecast underspend is due to higher than budgeted parking income, also higher profit share from NPS than expected
(145)	Planning:	(136)	Forecast underspend is due to staff charges to capital, CIL management fees and higher income from pre application charging.
(165)	Democratic Services	(127)	This relates to an underspend on salaries within the Committee secretariat which has been taken forward as savings within the transformation programme; and to Government grant received for Individual Electoral Registration.

5. For the year to date an underspend against budget of £2.982m is being reported. This underspend is made up of many debit and credit figures where various income and expenditure lines are ahead of or behind budget profile. Significant variances are explained below. These lines will be monitored closely as the year progresses to identify any potential impact on forecast outturn figures.

General Fund Service	Variance To Date P08 £000s	Commentary
Business Relationship Management	657	The overspend against profile is due to insurance premiums which are still to be allocated across service areas.
Finance	(702)	The net underspend against profile on finance is due to timing differences in respect of payments made / income received / depreciation charged.
City Development:	(1,655)	The current underspend against profile relates to parking recharges to be re distributed, which will take into account County income; works recharges to be distributed; and pension recharges still to be processed.
Citywide Services:	(787)	The underspend on Citywide Services is due to higher than budgeted highways income, Integrated waste management contractual payments running behind schedule, garden waste income being higher than profiled budget and pension recharges not yet applied.
Neighbourhood Housing:	(652)	Submission of invoices does not match profiled budget.
Human Resources	2,447	This relates to pension charges which will be reallocated across service areas in December.
Strategy & Programme Management	(561)	This relates to funding received from DECC for the Greener Communities (Cosy City) project, and second homes money received being greater than budgeted.

Housing revenue account

6. The budgets reported include a £7.7m use of HRA balances, so that the net budget totals zero:

Item	Approved Budget £000s
Gross HRA Expenditure	80,827
Gross HRA Income	(73,120)
Contribution from HRA Balance	(7,707)
Total net HRA budget	0

7. The housing revenue account has been forecast to underspend by £0.834m. This compares to a forecast underspend of £1.160m at the end of October. Significant forecast overspends and underspends are explained below:-

Previous forecast over/(under) spend £000s	HRA Division of Service	Current forecast over/(under) spend £000s	Commentary
129	Rents, Rates, & Other Property Costs	127	Due to unbudgeted costs for NPS.
(609)	General Management	(643)	The majority of the projected underspend is due to: Contingency fund (£97k); audit fee not required as included in LGSS recharge (£105k); budget for software interface may no longer be required (£50k); lower NPS fees at this stage than budgeted for (£74k); and professional advice / fees budget not required (£190k).
(244)	Special Services	(342)	Mainly due to projected underspend on district heating fuel and Community Alarm Service
(691)	Provision for Bad Debts	(607)	Provision increased in anticipation of the effects of full implementation of bedroom tax and universal credit. Delayed implementation of universal credit and better than anticipated rent collection performance have delivered a lesser call on this provision.
99	Dwelling Rents	144	Write-offs included within this figure, partially offsetting the underspend on the bad debt code.
(149)	Garage & Other Property Rents	(153)	Lower than anticipated garage voids rate
358	Service Charges - General	634	Lower income than budgeted for (tenants), partially offset by underspend in Special Services (district heating). Also lower leasehold income than budgeted for.

8. For the year to date an underspend of £4.157m is being reported. This underspend is made up of many debit and credit figures, where various income and expenditure lines are ahead of or behind budget profile.

Significant underspends and overspends to date are explained below. These lines will be monitored closely as the year progresses to identify any potential impact on forecast outturn figures.

HRA Division of Service	Variance To Date P08	Commentary
Repairs & Maintenance	(3,270)	There are 2 main reasons for this variance: i) The valuation and invoice process creates an artificial delay between the work being completed on site and the final stage of the invoice amount being posted to the ledger; and ii) Due to the responsive nature of some budget lines within this group it is extremely difficult to accurately profile a years work in advance and some budget line spend is behind profile due to work not being required as predicted.
Rents, Rates, & Other Property Costs	1,906	Water rates accounted for as one annual amount (although actually paid in 10 instalments) – budget profile assumes 10 instalments
General Management	(1,842)	Overall underspend projected, as per comments on previous table. Also pension recharges are yet to be distributed across service areas
Special Services	(1,067)	Mainly district heating spend not matching anticipated spending profile – profiles to be updated for period 9
Service Charges - General	645	Overall income to be lower than budget, so also high variance to date.

Risks

9. A risk-based review based on the size and volatility of budgets has identified a 'Top 10' of key budgets where inadequacy of monitoring and control systems could pose a significant threat to the council's overall financial position. These are shown in the following table.

Key Risk Budgets	Budget £000s	Forecast Variance	Forecast Var %	Forecast RAG
Housing Benefit Payments - Council tenants	36,254	-165	0%	GREEN
Housing Benefit Subsidy - Council tenants	-35,514	961	-3%	GREEN
Housing Benefit Payments - Other tenants	32,280	-2,119	-7%	RED
Housing Benefit Subsidy - Other tenants	-32,923	1,817	-6%	RED
HRA Repairs - Tenanted Properties	12,408	112	1%	GREEN
HRA Repairs - Void Properties	2,630	0	0%	GREEN
Multi-Storey Car Parks	1,797	-25	-1%	GREEN
HRA Rents - Estate Properties	-58,916	145	0%	GREEN
Corporate Management including Contingency	1,340	-246	-18%	RED
Private Sector Leasing Costs	2,570	-133	-5%	RED

10. The red/amber status of items in the 'forecast RAG' column is explained below. In all cases the forecasts are for underspends and so although these are rated as red / amber because they are forecast to vary from budget by more than 5% (red) or 3% (amber) they do not pose a significant threat to the delivery of the council's budget at the current time.

Key Risk Budgets	Comment
Housing Benefit Payments and Subsidy - Other tenants:	Reduced value of payments than planned for but offset by reduced subsidy to fund these payments.
Corporate Management including contingency	Contingency budget not anticipated to be needed. Remaining balance will be transferred to reserves at year end.
Private Sector Leasing Costs:	PSL rental costs currently lower than anticipated

- 11. The 2014-15 budgets approved by council were drawn up in the expectation of reduced resources as announced by the coalition government. There are risks to the current and medium term financial position from:
 - Reductions in government grant the localisation of business rates and of council tax reductions has increased the risks to the council's financial position arising from economic conditions and policy decisions.
 - Changes in policy if further 'empowerment' of local authorities is not matched by devolved resources
 - Delivery of savings the budget incorporates both savings measures already in place, and those planned for implementation during the year. If these savings are not achievable in full, overspends will result. With appropriate approvals these may be mitigated through provision made in the corporate contingency, up to the level of that contingency
 - Identification of further savings work is continuing on developing proposals for additional savings to bridge the medium-term budget gap. If these proposals fall short, or are not implemented fully and in a timely manner, further budget shortfalls will result.
- 12. Forecast outturns are estimates based on management assessments, formulae, and extrapolation. They may not adequately take account of variables such as:
 - Bad debts budget reports show gross debt, i.e. invoices raised. While
 allowance has been made in the budget for non-collections, the current
 economic climate may have an adverse influence on our ability to collect
 money owed. This may be reflected in higher provisions for bad debt, as
 may the impact of welfare reforms such as the so-called 'bedroom tax'.
 - Seasonal factors if adverse weather conditions or a worsening economic climate depress levels of trade and leisure activities in the city, there may be a negative impact on parking and other income.

 Housing repairs and improvements – the rate of spend on void properties, though closely managed, is heavily influenced by void turnaround, since transfers can create a chain of voids involving significant repair costs.

Financial planning

- 13. Overall levels of overspend and underspend will have an ongoing impact on the budget for following years and the size and urgency of savings requirements.
- 14. Net overspends and underspends will be consolidated into the general fund and housing revenue account balances carried forward to 2015-16. These are reflected in periodic updates to the *Medium term financial strategy* and *Housing revenue account business plan*.

Impact on Balances

15. The prudent minimum level of general fund reserves has been assessed as £4.496m. The budgeted and forecast outturn's impact on the 2013/14 balance brought forward, is as follows:

Item	£000s
Balance at 1 April 2014	(8,313)
Budgeted use of balances 2014/15	(541)
Forecast outturn 2014/15	(869)
= Forecast balance at 31 March 2015	(9,723)

- 16. The general fund balance is therefore expected to continue to exceed the prudent minimum.
- 17. The prudent minimum level of HRA reserves has been assessed as £3.067m. The budgeted and forecast outturn's impact on the 2013/14 balance brought forward, is as follows:

Item	£000s
Balance at 1 April 2014	(25,129)
Budgeted use of balances 2014/15	7,707
Forecast outturn 2014/15	(834)
= Forecast balance at 31 March 2015	(18,256)

18. The housing revenue account balance is therefore expected to continue to exceed the prudent minimum.

Collection fund

19. The collection fund is made up of three accounts – council tax, the business improvement district (BID) account, and national non-domestic rates (NNDR).

- Council tax is shared between the city, the county, and the police and crime commissioner based on an estimated tax base and the council tax rates agreed by each of the preceptors. Any surplus or deficit is shared in the following financial year.
- The BID account is operated on behalf of the BID company, to collect their income from the BID levy. Any surplus or deficit is passed on the BID company.
- NNDR income is shared between the city, the county, and central government. Since "localisation", any surplus or deficit is also shared, rather than as formerly being borne wholly by the government.
- 20. There are particular risks attached to NNDR, which are:
 - Appeals the impact of any appeals will fall on the collection fund, and therefore in part on the city. Although the Valuation Office has a large backlog of appeals, the value of the appeals is not known, nor the likelihood of success, nor the timing of the appeal being determined.
 - NNDR billable changes in the NNDR billable, e.g. demolition or construction of new billable premises, will impact on the amount billable. Assumptions of growth may also be affected by changes in the larger economic environment.
 - NNDR collectable arrears and write-offs (e.g. where a business goes into administration) will also impact on the collection fund.
- 21. These risks are monitored and mitigated through normal revenues operations.
- 22. A summary of the collection fund is provided below:

Approved Budget £000s	Current Budget £000s	Collection Fund Summary	Actual To Date £000s	Forecast Outturn £000s	Forecast Variance £000s
		Council tax			
53,797	53,797	Expenditure	37,911	53,797	0
(53,797)	(53,797)	Income	19	(53,797)	0
		Business Improvement District			
656	656	Expenditure	491	666	10
(656)	(656)	Income	(214)	(655)	1
		National Non-Domestic Rate			
77,698	77,698	Expenditure	63,227	76,830	(868)
(77,698)	(77,698)	Income	(78,403)	(74,842)	2,856
0	0	Total Collection Fund	23,031	1,999	1,999

- 23. On council tax, actual income is not posted from the council tax system into the finance system until year-end. The actual year-end surplus or deficit will be taken into account in considering distribution of balances between the preceptors (city, county, and police).
- 24. The council operates the BID account on behalf of the BID company, so no surplus or deficit will fall on the council's accounts.

25. If a deficit materialises on the NNDR account, this will roll forward and be distributed in the 2015/16 budget cycle; the city's share would be 50%. Additional (section 31) grant may be received in the general fund to offset all or part of any shortfall in business rate income due to additional reliefs granted by government.

Integrated impact assessment



Report author to complete	
Committee:	Cabinet
Committee date:	
Head of service:	Chief finance officer
Report subject:	Revenue Budget Monitoring 2014/15
Date assessed:	19/12/14
Description:	This is the integrated impact assessment for the Revenue Budget Monitoring 2014/15 report to cabinet

		Impact		
Economic (please add an 'x' as appropriate)	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Comments
Finance (value for money)				The report shows that the council monitors its budgets, considers risks to achieving its budget objectives, reviews its balances position, and is therefore able to maintain its financial standing
Other departments and services e.g. office facilities, customer contact				
ICT services				
Economic development				
Financial inclusion				
Social (please add an 'x' as appropriate)	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Comments
Safeguarding children and adults				
S17 crime and disorder act 1998				
Human Rights Act 1998				
Health and well being				

		Impact		
Equality and diversity (please add an 'x' as appropriate)	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Comments
Relations between groups (cohesion)	\boxtimes			
Eliminating discrimination & harassment				
Advancing equality of opportunity				
Environmental (please add an 'x' as appropriate)	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Comments
Transportation				
Natural and built environment				
Waste minimisation & resource use	\boxtimes			
Pollution				
Sustainable procurement				
Energy and climate change				
(Please add an 'x' as appropriate)	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Comments
Risk management				The report demonstrates that the council is aware of and monitors risks to the achievement of its financial strategy.

Recommendations from impact assessment
Positive
None
Negative
None
Neutral
None
Issues
The council should continue to monitor its budget performance in the context of the financial risk environment within which it operates.

Budget Monitoring Summary Year: 2014/15 Period: 08 (November)

GENERAL FUND SERVICE SUMMARY

Approved Budget	Current Budget		Budget To Date	Actual To Date	Variance To Date	Forecast Outturn	Forecast Variance
		Business Relationship Management					
2,717,718	2,652,417	Business Relationship Management	1,589,068	2,246,498	657,430	2,584,628	(67,789)
(20,186,020)	(20,170,990)	Finance	(6,515,367)	(7,217,228)	(701,861)	(19,989,326)	181,664
33,733	(355,794)	Procurement & Service Improvement	1,632,593	1,520,666	(111,927)	(326,275)	29,519
(17,434,569)	(17,874,367)	Total Business Relationship Management	(3,293,706)	(3,450,063)	(156,357)	(17,730,973)	143,394
		Chief Executive & Corporate					
0	0	Chief Executive	165,248	75,380	(89,868)	(61,145)	(61,145)
(1,079,432)	(673,209)	Corporate Management	(2,232,108)	(2,375,656)	(143,548)	(935,277)	(262,068)
(1,079,432)	(673,209)	Total Chief Executive & Corporate	(2,066,860)	(2,300,276)	(233,416)	(996,422)	(323,213)
		Customers, Comms & Culture					
2,525,619	2,325,357	Communications & Culture	1,342,478	1,078,925	(263,553)	2,264,596	(60,761)
(116,196)	(141,175)	Customer Contact	1,639,866	1,218,478	(421,388)	(185,971)	(44,796)
2,409,423	2,184,182	Total Customers, Comms & Culture	2,982,344	2,297,402	(684,942)	2,078,625	(105,557)
		Operations					
(965,936)	(954,804)	City Development	(2,679,730)	(4,335,097)	(1,655,367)	(1,175,079)	(220,275)
9,978,887	10,006,606	Citywide Services	5,282,442	4,495,278	(787,164)	10,064,330	57,724
0	0	Deputy Chief Executive	106,020	61,189	(44,831)	2,809	2,809
2,654,201	2,661,895	Neighbourhood Housing	1,311,457	659,491	(651,966)	2,619,088	(42,807)
2,229,016	2,332,505	Neighbourhood Services	1,139,181	1,037,485	(101,696)	2,298,802	(33,703)
1,743,316	1,743,036	Planning	757,770	327,890	(429,880)	1,607,469	(135,567)
125,419	252,319	Property Services	1,074,966	916,990	(157,976)	207,728	(44,591)
15,764,903	16,041,557	Total Operations	6,992,106	3,163,227	(3,828,879)	15,625,149	(416,408)
		Strategy, People & Democracy					
303,787	229,444	Democratic Services	638,884	674,417	35,533	102,062	(127,382)
(4)	(, ,	Human Resources	804,535	3,251,425	2,446,890	(490)	4,610
35,892	95,447	Strategy & Programme Management	381,646	(179,606)	(561,252)	51,223	(44,224)
339,675	319,791	Total Strategy, People & Democracy	1,825,065	3,746,236	1,921,171	152,795	(166,996)
0	(2,046)	Total General Fund	6,438,949	3,456,526	(2,982,423)	(870,826)	(868,780)

GENERAL FUND SUBJECTIVE SUMMARY

Forecast	Approved Budget		Current Budget	Budget To Date	Actual To Date Date	Variance To Outturn	Forecast Variance
0	0		0	(313)	(313)	(469)	(469)
17,366,808	17,429,262	Employees	11,863,262	12,337,780	474,518	17,161,895	(267,367)
8,577,187	8,522,187	Premises	6,206,494	6,993,008	786,514	8,444,593	(77,594)
314,000	313,998	Transport	178,376	130,386	(47,990)	281,837	(32,161)
15,884,736	16,005,344	Supplies & Services	10,243,559	8,796,158	(1,447,401)	15,558,545	(446,799)
7,784,578	7,427,772	Third Party Payments	3,612,187	3,308,223	(303,964)	7,376,630	(51,142)
94,462,444	94,462,444	Transfer Payments	66,919,028	65,996,681	(922,347)	91,980,747	(2,481,697)
3,685,062	3,685,062	Capital Financing	6,788,703	6,546,859	(241,844)	3,416,994	(268,068)
0	15,030	Rev Contribs to Capital	0	0	0	0	(15,030)
(55,000)	0	Savings Proposals	0	0	0	0	0
(23,185,762)	(22,831,002)	Receipts	(14,894,171)	(16,154,548)	(1,260,377)	(23,010,317)	(179,315)
(118,033,744)	(118,117,443)	Government Grants	(83,303,567)	(82,389,217)	914,350	(115,754,965)	2,362,478
1,304,093	1,304,093	Centrally Managed	870,431	89,738	(780,693)	1,401,701	97,608
17,496,584	17,552,192	Recharge Expenditure	2,143,139	1,352,267	(790,872)	17,447,347	(104,845)
(25,600,986)	(25,770,985)	Recharge Income	(4,188,492)	(3,550,494)	637,998	(25,175,365)	595,620
0	(2,046)	Total General Fund	6,438,949	3,456,526	(2,982,423)	(870,826)	(868,780)

Budget Monitoring Report Year: 2014/15 Period: 08 (November)

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT STATUTORY SUMMARY

Approved Budget	Current Budget		Budget To Date	Actual To Date	Variance To Date	Forecast Outturn	Forecast Variance
15,923,170	15,923,170	Repairs & Maintenance	10,566,874	7,296,815	(3,270,059)	16,020,265	97,095
6,178,443	6,178,443	Rents, Rates, & Other Property Costs	4,042,904	5,949,085	1,906,181	6,305,454	127,011
11,382,720	11,372,054	General Management	5,106,803	3,264,751	(1,842,052)	10,728,906	(643,148)
5,628,948	5,718,660	Special Services	3,340,834	2,274,107	(1,066,727)	5,376,918	(341,742)
21,924,793	21,924,793	Depreciation & Impairment	68,336	(13)	(68,349)	21,924,793	Ó
941,000	941,000	Provision for Bad Debts	470,500	0	(470,500)	333,815	(607,185)
(58,915,983)	(58,915,983)	Dwelling Rents	(40,062,872)	(39,965,284)	97,588	(58,772,043)	143,940
(1,951,186)	(1,951,186)	Garage & Other Property Rents	(1,371,612)	(1,504,270)	(132,658)	(2,104,574)	(153,388)
(9,643,814)	(9,643,814)	Service Charges - General	(7,018,021)	(6,372,647)	645,374	(9,009,476)	634,338
0	0	Miscellaneous Income	0	(48,553)	(48,553)	(72,830)	(72,830)
9,382,073	9,305,073	Adjustments & Financing Items	(98,100)	(105,972)	(7,872)	9,287,116	(17,957)
(700,164)	(700, 164)	Amenities shared by whole community	0	0	0	(700, 164)	0
(150,000)	(150,000)	Interest Received	(100,000)	0	100,000	(150,000)	0
0	2,046	Total Housing Revenue Account	(25,054,354)	(29,211,981)	(4,157,627)	(831,819)	(833,865)

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT SUBJECTIVE SUMMARY

Approved Budget	Current Budget		Budget To Date	Actual To Date	Variance To Date	Forecast Outturn	Forecast Variance
0	0					78,216	78,216
6,467,099	6,472,099	Employees	4,420,752	3,456,034	(964,718)	6,152,841	(319,258)
25,086,833	25,163,833	Premises	16,407,971	14,291,171	(2,116,800)	24,967,931	(195,902)
122,263	122,263	Transport	81,520	83,720	2,200	107,919	(14,344)
3,997,007	3,925,114	Supplies & Services	2,020,820	830,338	(1,190,482)	2,911,925	(1,013,189)
348,001	350,047	Third Party Payments	55,424	55,578	154	350,272	225
5,847,385	5,914,278	Recharge Expenditure	1,568,628	1,058,315	(510,313)	5,997,147	82,869
1,167,846	1,167,846	Capital Financing	68,336	0	(68,336)	1,167,846	0
(71,877,097)	(71,877,097)	Receipts	(49,330,333)	(48,836,624)	493,709	(71,429,315)	447,782
(221,256)	(221,256)	Government Grants	(314,168)	(150,500)	163,668	(150,500)	70,756
(1,021,221)	(1,021,221)	Recharge Income	(33,304)	Ó	33,304	(992,242)	28,979
17,035,000	16,958,000	Rev Contribs to Capital	Ó	0	0	16,958,000	0
13,048,140	13,048,140	Capital Financing	0	(13)	(13)	13,048,140	0
0	2,046	Total Housing Revenue Account	(25,054,354)	(29,211,981)	(4,157,627)	(831,819)	(833,865)

The following graphs show the monthly budget profile and income/expenditure to date for each service (both General Fund and Housing Revenue Account) for the financial year.

The actual income/expenditure reported is influenced by accrual provisions brought forward from the previous financial year, and by any delays in invoicing and/or payment.

Budgets are profiled to show the expected pattern of income & expenditure, and will be refined and improved during the course of the financial year.











