Report to Cabinet Item

Report of Chief finance officer

Subject Revenue budget monitoring 2017/18 – Period 6

8

Purpose

To update Cabinet on the provisional financial position as at 30 September 2017, the forecast outturn for the year 2017/18, and the consequent forecast of the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account balances.

Recommendations

- 1) To note the financial position as at 30 September 2017 and the forecast outturn 2017/18:
- 2) To note additional unbudgeted grants awarded for 2017/18.

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 underspend by £0.557m. The Housing Revenue Account budget is forecast to underspend by £1.643m.

Ward/s: All wards

Cabinet member: Councillor Kendrick – Resources

Contact officers

Karen Watling, chief finance officer 01603 212440 Adam Drane, finance business partner 01603 212567

Background documents

None

Report

- 1. Council approved budgets for the 2017/18 financial year on 21 February 2017.
- 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
 - 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 £0.688m from reserve balances as allowed for in the Medium Term Financial Strategy) so that the net budget totals zero:

Item	Approved Budget £000s
Net Budget Requirement	16,152
Non-Domestic Rates	(5,452)
Revenue Support Grant	(1,671)
Council Tax Surplus (prior years)	(297)
Council Tax precept	(8,732)
Total General Fund budget	0

4. The General Fund has been forecast to underspend by £0.557m at year end. Key forecast variances from budget are set out below:

Forecast	General	Forecast	Commentary
Outturn	Fund	Outturn P6	
P5 £000s	Service	£000s	
(312)	Human Resources	(282)	Lower than budgeted pension liability costs for former employees. The payment value was amended following the triennial valuation of the pension scheme. In addition, there are vacant posts within service area.

Forecast Outturn P5 £000s	General Fund Service	Forecast Outturn P6 £000s	Commentary	
353	Finance	208	Net overspend forecast on Housing Benefit of £155k. This is due to government policy changes which have resulted in a reduction to the amount of housing benefit subsidy claimable on short term leased or self-contained licensed accommodation where the local authority is the landlord. The impact of the changes has been partially offset by the Flexible Homelessness Support Grant of £129k. Additionally higher debit card charges forecast than budgeted (£40k). The reduction in forecast overspend from Period 5 is due to higher forecast interest income from the planned loan to the Council's Housing Company.	
(283)	Citywide Services	(403)	Lower than budgeted pension liability costs for former employees. The payment value was amended following the triennial valuation of the pension scheme. In addition, there are vacant posts within the service area following the recent restructure.	

- 5. The 17/18 budgets included £3.312m of transformation savings/income. Current forecasts indicate that £0.245m of those savings are at risk and these have been included in the overall forecast outturn shown above. Currently unbudgeted savings related to the pension deficit payments, additional income and salary underspends are offsetting these and reducing the forecast to an underspend of £0.557m. All transformation items are closely tracked and actions taken by managers to address shortfalls. The high value items with reduced forecasts are all reflected in the table above.
- 6. In terms of the actual expenditure and income that has gone through the Council's General ledger, the General Fund shows an underspend against profiled budget to date of £0.467m. This variance to date is made up of multiple debit and credit figures where various income and expenditure lines are ahead of or behind budget profile. The main variances at P6 relate to invoices not being received and processed in line with the expected profile.
- 7. When setting the 17/18 budget an allowance was made for an expected increase in our pension deficit contributions following the transfer of revenues and benefits staff back into the Council. Due to the timescales required for the actuaries to calculate the impact, the Norfolk Pension Fund has confirmed no additional amount will be invoiced in 17/18 with the impact instead to be reflected in our 18/19 pension deficit payment charge. The impact is that

overall the Council's general fund contribution to the pension deficit will be £258k lower in 2017/18. As the cost is distributed across the service areas, it is currently showing as a number of small underspends in all areas.

8. During period 6 an additional amount of grant income has been confirmed. This grant relates to the costs of administering the tax and benefits systems and will be applied to the revenues and benefit service in line with the terms of the grant. Detail of the grant is set out in the table below:

Income	Purpose	Value £000s
New Burdens: Real Time Information Bulk Data Matching Initiative	To meet New Burdens incurred by local authorities as a result of the on-going implementation of the Real Time Information Bulk Data Matching Initiative.	11

Housing Revenue Account

9. The budgets reported include a £10.0m use of HRA balances, so that the net budget totals zero:

Item	Approved Budget £000s		
Gross HRA Expenditure	59,024		
Gross HRA Income	(49,051)		
Contribution from HRA Balance	(9,973)		
Total net HRA budget	0		

10. The Housing Revenue Account has been forecast to underspend by £1.643m at year end. Key forecast variances from budget are set out below:

Forecast	HRA	Forecast	Commentary	
Outturn P5	Division of	Outturn P6		
£000s	Service	£000s		
(69)	Repairs & Maintenance	(1,952)	 £600k forecast underspend relating to major and minor repairs – more works funded from the housing capital programme than originally anticipated. £320k forecast underspend relating to drainage repairs – less works required than originally anticipated. £100k lower than originally anticipated in respect of rechargeable repair write-offs. £711k variance relating to additional leasehold major works contributions offset by £711k variance against financing code. 	

Forecast Outturn P5 £000s	HRA Division of Service	Forecast Outturn P6 £000s	Commentary	
(391)	General Management	(359)	Reduced requirement for grant expenditure as a result of delayed implementation of Universal Credit and forecast lower expenditure on professional fees and area offices than initially anticipated. Lower than budgeted forecast spend on energy performance certificates and car parking permits, plus vacant posts within the service area.	
2	Adjustments & Financing Items	711	Additional leasehold major works capital contribution offset by £711k variance against repairs & maintenance.	

10. In terms of the amounts that are currently showing in the General Ledger, the Housing Revenue Account shows an underspend against profiled budget to date of £3.677m. This underspend to date is made up of many debit and credit figures where various income and expenditure lines are ahead of or behind budget profile, mainly in relation to the repairs and maintenance budgets. The main variances at P6 relate to invoices not being received and processed in line with the expected profile along with leasehold service charges being raised earlier than profiled.

Risks

11. 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.

	Budget	Current	Current	Current	Forecast	Forecast	
Key Risk Budgets	£000s	Variance	Var %	RAG	Variance	Var %	Forecast RAG
Housing Benefit Payments & Subsidy	-160	-33	20%	GREEN	155	-97%	RED
HRA Repairs - Tenanted Properties	10,584	-1,893	-18%	RED	-1,108	-10%	RED
HRA Repairs - Void Properties	2,539	-239	-9%	RED	0	0%	GREEN
Multi-Storey Car Parks	-1,315	-105	8%	RED	-54	4%	GREEN
City Hall	977	-52	-5%	GREEN	-27	-3%	GREEN
HRA Rents - Estate Properties	-57,942	-33	0%	GREEN	-55	0%	GREEN
Corporate Management including Contingency	-2,032	28	-1%	GREEN	-13	1%	GREEN
Private Sector Leasing Costs	-290	56	-19%	GREEN	71	-24%	GREEN

12. The red/amber status of items in the "Forecast RAG" column is explained below.

Key Risk Budgets	Comment
Housing benefit payments and subsidy	Net overspend forecast on Housing Benefit of £155k. This is due to government policy changes which have resulted in a reduction to the amount of housing benefit subsidy claimable on short term leased or self-contained licensed accommodation where the local authority is the landlord. The impact of the changes has been partially offset by the Flexible Homelessness Support Grant of £129k.
HRA repairs – tenanted properties	£600k forecast underspend relating to major and minor repairs – more works funded from the housing capital programme than originally anticipated. £320k forecast underspend relating to drainage repairs – less works required than originally anticipated.

- 13. The 2017/18 budgets approved by Council were drawn up in the expectation of reduced resources as announced by the previous government. There are risks to the current and medium term financial position from:
 - Further 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. In addition, recent Government announcements indicate that further reductions in Government funding are likely.
 - 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.
- 14. 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.
 - 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 & 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

- 15. 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.
- 16. Net overspends and underspends will be consolidated into the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account balances carried forward to 2018/19. These are reflected in periodic updates to the Medium Term Financial Strategy and Housing Revenue Account Business Plan.

Impact on Balances

17. The prudent minimum level of General Fund reserves has been assessed as £4.161m. The budgeted and forecast outturn's impact on the 2016/17 balance brought forward, is as follows:

Item	£000s
Balance at 1 April 2017	(14,344)
Budgeted contribution from reserves 2017/18	688
Transfer to earmarked invest to save reserve	500
Forecast outturn 2017/18	(557)
= Forecast balance at 31 March 2018	(13,713)

- 18. The General Fund balance is therefore expected to continue to exceed the prudent minimum.
- 19. The prudent minimum level of HRA reserves has been assessed as £5.885m. The budgeted and forecast outturn's impact on the 2016/17 balance brought forward, is as follows:

Item	£000s
Balance at 1 April 2017	(30,383)
Budgeted contribution from reserves 2017/18	9,973
Forecast outturn 2017/18	(1,643)
= Forecast balance at 31 March 2018	(22,053)

20. The Housing Revenue Account balance is therefore expected to continue to exceed the prudent minimum.

Collection Fund

- 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 to 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.
- 22. There are particular risks attached to NNDR, which are:
 - O Appeals the impact of any appeals will fall on the Collection Fund, and therefore in part on the city. The Valuation Office has cleared a large number of appeals which has adversely affected the council's business rates income levels. However, a backlog of appeals remains and 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.
- 23. These risks are monitored and mitigated through normal Revenues operations.
- 24. A summary of the Collection Fund is provided below:

Approved	Current	Collection Fund Summary	Forecast	Forecast
Budget	Budget		Outturn	Variance
£000s	£000s		£000s	£000s
		Council tax		
63,785	63,785	Expenditure	63,785	0
(63,785)	(63,785)	Income	(63,785)	0
0	0	Surplus/(deficit)	0	0
		Business Improvement District		
656	656	Expenditure	656	0
(656)	(656)	Income	(656)	0
		National Non-Domestic Rate		
76,728	76,728	Expenditure	77,454	1,056
(76,728)	(76,728)	Income	(77,784)	(1,056)
330	330	Surplus/(deficit)	330	0
0	0	Total Collection Fund	0	0

- 25. The variances on national non-domestic business rates are due to transitional relief payments. Transitional relief limits the percentage a business rates bill can be increased or decreased each year following revaluation. The transitional relief will apply each year until the full amount is due. The overall impact is an increase in the amount collectible of £1.056m all of which will be paid over to the government, leaving no net impact on the collection fund.
- 26. 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).
- 27. The council operates the BID account on behalf of the BID company, so no surplus or deficit will fall on the council's accounts.
- 28. Any deficit reported on the NNDR account will roll forward and be distributed in the 2018/19 budget cycle.

Integrated impact assessment



Report author to complete	
Committee:	Cabinet
Committee date:	
Head of service:	Chief Finance Officer
Report subject:	Revenue Budget Monitoring 2017/18
Date assessed:	23/10/17
Description:	This is the integrated impact assessment for the Revenue Budget Monitoring 2017/18 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.

GENERAL FUND SERVICE SUMMARY

3,096,603 291,867 (19,214,059) (1 0 (15,825,589) (1	3,152,489 291,867 19,300,709) 0	Business Services Business Services Democratic Services	1,210,668	734,667			
291,867 (19,214,059) (1 0 0	291,867 19,300,709) 0	Democratic Services		734 667			
(19,214,059) (1 0 0	19,300,709)		207 5 40	134,007	(476,001)	3,180,229	27,740
0 0	0	Einanco	387,549	452,836	65,287	297,912	6,045
0	_	rillatice	(4,847,010)	(4,981,357)	(134,347)	(19,093,059)	207,650
•	0	Human Resources	636,027	485,685	(150,342)	(282,409)	(282,409)
(15,825,589) (1	U	Procurement & Service Improvement	1,940,801	1,614,246	(326,555)	(74,376)	(74,376)
	15,856,353)	Total Business Services	(671,965)	(1,693,922)	(1,021,957)	(15,971,702)	(115,349)
		Chief Executive					
0	0	Chief Executive	112,972	119,020	6,048	(14,207)	(14,207)
201,843	201,843	Strategy & Programme Management	378,894	308,896	(69,998)	110,162	(91,681)
201,843	201,843	Total Chief Executive	491,866	427,916	(63,950)	95,955	(105,888)
		Customers, Comms & Culture					
2,143,249		Communications & Culture	1,182,765	1,195,859	13,094	2,219,553	39,098
(2,760)	(, ,	Customer Contact	978,708	966,148	(12,560)	30,483	33,243
2,140,489	2,177,695	Total Customers, Comms & Culture	2,161,473	2,162,007	534	2,250,036	72,341
		Neighbourhoods					(400.040)
		Citywide Services	4,601,719	5,047,722	446,003	9,831,423	(402,816)
1,728,634		Neighbourhood Housing	544,929	409,000	(135,929)	1,772,271	43,637
807,037		Neighbourhood Services	438,548	352,804	(85,744)	844,144	(30,716)
12,765,562	12,837,733	Total Neighbourhoods	5,585,196	5,809,525	224,329	12,447,838	(389,895)
		Regeneration & Growth					
(1,994,594) (,	City Development	(1,376,473)	(1,145,468)	231,005	(1,890,222)	(48,532)
0		Environmental Strategy	65,436	56,853	(8,583)	28,610	28,610
0		Executive Head of Regeneration &	75,026	68,351	(6,675)	(10,147)	(10,147)
1,500,637	1,500,637		519,748	506,442	(13,306)	1,449,483	(51,154)
1,211,652		Property Services	544,989	736,513	191,524	1,042,979	62,842
717,695	639,084	Total Regeneration & Growth	(171,274)	222,692	393,966	620,702	(18,382)
0	2	Total General Fund	7,395,296	6,928,217	(467,079)	(557,171)	(557,173)

Budget Monitoring Report Year: 2017/18 Period: 6 (September)

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT STATUTORY SUMMARY

Approved Budget	Current Budget		Budget To Date	Actual To Date	Variance To Date	Forecast Outturn	Forecast Variance
	13,815,288	13,815,288	Repairs & Maintenance	6,910,758	4,707,633	(2,203,125)	11,863,327
(1,951,961)			,			, , ,	
5,789,133	5,789,133	Rents, Rates, & Other Property Cos	sts 3,022,593	2,986,893	(35,700)	5,844,096	54,963
12,115,683	12,115,683	General Management	3,479,370	3,212,871	(266,499)	11,757,025	(358,658)
5,090,423	5,090,419	Special Services	2,081,595	1,885,896	(195,699)	5,105,172	14,753
21,992,115	21,992,115	Depreciation & Impairment	39,600	(2,350)	(41,950)	21,987,115	(5,000)
223,000	223,000	Provision for Bad Debts	0	7,887	7,887	223,000	0
(57,692,382)	(57,692,382)	Dwelling Rents	(30,005,041)	(30,055,844)	(50,803)	(57,721,939)	(29,557)
(2,169,466)	(2,169,466)	Garage & Other Property Rents	(1,049,156)	(1,083,895)	(34,739)	(2,221,758)	(52,292)
(8,373,746)	(8,373,746)	Service Charges - General	(4,699,299)	(5,619,674)	(920, 375)	(8,385,264)	(11,518)
(85,000)	(85,000)	Miscellaneous Income	(42,498)	(76,617)	(34,119)	(100,050)	(15,050)
10,056,112	10,056,112	Adjustments & Financing Items	(97,700)	Ó	97,700	10,767,519	711,407
(586,160)	(586,160)	Amenities shared by whole commun	nity 0	0	0	(586,160)	0
(175,000)	(175,000)	Interest Received	0	0	0	(175,000)	0
0	(4)	Total Housing Revenue Account	(20,359,778)	(24,037,200)	(3,677,422)	(1,642,918)	(1,642,914)
1							

The following graphs show the monthly budget profile and income/expenditure to date for each general fund service 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.











