Report to Cabinet Item

13 November 2013

Report of Chief finance officer

Subject Revenue budget monitoring 2013-14: Period 06

9

Purpose

To update cabinet on the financial position as at 30 September 2013, the forecast outturn for the year 2013-14, and the consequent forecast general fund and housing revenue account balances.

Recommendation

To note the financial position as at 30 September 2013 and the forecast outturn 2013-14

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 financial implications of this report are set out in the text.

Ward/s: All wards

Cabinet member: Councillor Waters – deputy leader and resources

Contact officers

Caroline Ryba, chief finance officer 01223 699292 Mark Smith, finance control manager 01603 212561

Background documents

None

Report

- 1. Council approved budgets for the 2013/14 financial year on 19 February 2013.
- 2. The attached appendices show the year-to-date and forecast outturn 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. The budgets reported include the resources financing the council's net budget requirement (which includes a £1.587m contribution to balances as called for by the Medium Term Financial Strategy) so that the net budget totals zero:

Item	Approved Budget £000s
Net Budget Requirement	20,617
Non-Domestic Rates	(5,194)
Revenue Support Grant	(7,861)
Council tax precept	(7,562)
Total General Fund budget	0

- 4. The general fund shows an underspend to date of £3.461m and a forecast variance of an underspend of £2.035m.
- 5. The underspend to date reported is made up of many debit and credit figures where various income and expenditure lines are ahead of or behind budget profile. Significant overspends and underspends to date are:

Service	Over/(Under) £000s	Commentary
Finance	(525)	CT + NNDR Pool Income higher in first few months & reducing in subsequent months therefore a budget re-profile is to be carried out.
Procurement	(2,235)	Due to outstanding LGSS invoices awaiting final agreement on 2012/13 baseline prior to payment
City Development	1,297	Due to NPS Norwich Ltd. fee invoices awaiting allocation to other services
Citywide Services	(1,174)	Due to timing of contract payments not matching budget profiles.

6. A summary of forecast variances (compared to the previous periods') are set out below with brief commentary.

General Fund Service	Forecast Variance P05 £000s	Forecast Variance P06 £000s	Forecast Variance Change £000s	Commentary
Business Relationship Management	(663)	(550)	113	Additional interest & investment income and recovery of benefit overpayments
Chief Executive & Corporate	(1,080)	(1,055)	24	Uncommitted contingency sums, reduced by allocation of pay award funding
Customers, Comms & Culture	(146)	(74)	72	
Operations:				
City Development:	275	13	(262)	Additional income expected not being met
Citywide Services:	(124)	(68)	56	
Deputy Chief Executive:	(7)	(7)	(0)	
Neighbourhood Housing:	39	(91)	(129)	
Neighbourhood Services:	(167)	(102)	65	
Planning:	50	118	68	
Property Services:	2	23	21	
Strategy, People & Democracy	(256)	(242)	14	Mainly staffing savings
Total General Fund	(2,077)	(2,035)	41	

7. Forecast variances will continue to receive further scrutiny through the course of the financial year.

Housing Revenue Account

8. The budgets reported include a £15m contribution from HRA balances towards the Housing capital programme 2013/14, so that the net budget totals zero:

Item	Approved Budget £000s
Gross HRA Expenditure	61,881
Gross HRA Income	(55,715)
Contribution from HRA Balance	(6,166)
Total net HRA budget	0

- 9. The Housing Revenue Account shows an underspend to date of £7.399m and a forecast variance of an underspend of £0.677m.
- 10. The underspend to date reported is made up of many debit and credit figures, where various income and expenditure lines are ahead of or behind budget

profile, including many still influenced by "accrual" sums brought forward to cover obligations accounted for in the last financial year, and others where the budget profile does not properly reflect the timing of income and expenditure. These will be further scrutinised and where appropriate amended. Significant underspends to date are:

Service	Underspend £000s	Commentary
Repairs	(5,141)	£2.2m payments not allocated awaiting NPS/Norse analysis, and savings in responsive repairs contract
General Management	(321)	Caused by vacancies and many budgets not being spent proportionately throughout the year
Special Services	(393)	Savings on grounds maintenance contracts (460k), fuel (184k) & NCAS call system maintenance (96k)
Provision for Bad Debts	(470)	Pending processing of Q1 and Q2 provisions
Dwelling Rents	(632)	Voids and re-lets at higher 'formula' rent.

11. A summary of forecast variances (compared to the previous period's) are set out below with brief commentary.

HRA Division of Service	Forecast Variance P04 £000s	Forecast Variance P05 £000s	Forecast Variance Change £000s	Commentary
Repairs & Maintenance	33	70	37	
Rents, Rates, & Other Property Costs	(383)	(361)	22	Reduction in Anglia Water charges
General Management	(441)	(362)	79	Underspend on uncommitted Contingency, reduced costs of property services
Special Services	(238)	(263)	(25)	Underspends in Sheltered Housing & NCAS
Dwelling Rents	(46)	(72)	(26)	Low void rates and new lets at Formula Rent
Garage & Other Property Rents	12	6	(6)	
Service Charges - General	449	446	(3)	Reduced water rates recovery
Miscellaneous Income	(40)	(41)	(0)	
Adjustments & Financing Items	(101)	(101)	0	Increased income from RTB sales admin
Total Housing Revenue Account	(755)	(677)	79	

12. Forecast variances will continue to receive further scrutiny through the course of the financial year.

Risks

13. 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	Current Variance	Current Var %	Current RAG	Forecast Variance	Forecast Var %	Forecast RAG
Housing Benefit Payments - Council tenants	39,258	690	2%	GREEN	-2,522	-6%	RED
Housing Benefit Payments - Other tenants	31,564	101	0%	GREEN	-2,799	-9%	RED
HRA Repairs - Tenanted Properties	11,569	-4,225	-37%	RED	50	0%	GREEN
HRA Repairs - Void Properties	2,700	-575	-21%	RED	0	0%	GREEN
Multi-Storey Car Parks	-2,868	-92	3%	GREEN	23	-1%	GREEN
HRA Rents - Estate Properties	-58,597	-691	1%	GREEN	-177	0%	GREEN
City Hall	1,069	-294	-27%	RED	52	5%	GREEN
Corporate Management including Contingency	2,737	-199	-7%	RED	-1,145	-42%	RED
Private Sector Leasing Costs	2,752	-127	-5%	AMBER	-254	-9%	RED

- 14. The red status of the "Current RAG" column are:
 - HRA Repairs delays in allocating payments, being dealt with by NPS/Norse.
 - City Hall repairs & maintenance budgets uncommitted as yet
 - Corporate Management low call to date on corporate contingency budget
- 15. With respect to the "Forecast RAG", those shows as red are:
 - Housing Benefits lower than expected growth owing in part to welfare benefit reforms but offset by reduced benefit subsidy entitlements. Norwich and LGSS Norwich staff are working closely with LGSS Northampton Borough Council to share & improve knowledge and understanding of the financial impacts of benefits and subsidies.
 - Corporate Management the size of the forecast underspend represents a lack of commitment of the contingency budgets to date, which is not a material issue
 - Private Sector Leasing Costs the forecast underspend will be offset by reduced forecast rent income.
- 16. The 2013/14 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.

- 17. Forecast outturns will be 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 & 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

- 18. 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
- 19. Net overspends and underspends will be consolidated into the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account balances carried forward to 2014/15.
- 20. These are reflected in periodic updates to the Medium Term Financial Strategy and Housing Revenue Account Business Plan.

Impact on Balances

21. The prudent minimum level of General Fund reserves has been assessed as £4.353m. The budgeted outturn, updated to reflect the final 2012/13 outturn, is as follows:

Item	£000s
Balance at 1 April 2013	(5,195)
Budgeted use of balances 2013/14	(1,587)
Forecast outturn 2013/14	(2,035)
= Forecast balance at 31 March 2014	(8,817)

- 22. The General Fund balance is therefore expected to continue to exceed the prudent minimum.
- 23. The prudent minimum level of HRA reserves has been assessed as £2.967m. The budgeted outturn, updated to reflect the final 2012/13 outturn, is as follows:

Item	£000s
Balance at 1 April 2013	(27,788)
Budgeted use of balances 2013/14	6,166
Forecast outturn 2013/14	(677)
= Forecast balance at 31 March 2014	(22,299)

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

Collection Fund

- 25. 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.
- 26. The "localisation" of NNDR brings added volatility and risk to the council's resources, and for this reason the Collection Fund is now being brought into the monthly budget monitoring system.
- 27. 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.
- 28. These risks are monitored and mitigated through normal Revenues operations.
- 29. A summary of the Collection Fund is provided below:

Approved	Current	Collection Fund Summary	Actual To	Forecast	Forecast
Budget	Budget		Date	Outturn	Variance
53,349 (53,349)	53,349 (53,349)	Council tax Expenditure Income	29,379 0	52,828 (53,349)	(520) 0
	, ,	Business Improvement District		(, ,	
656	656	Expenditure	201	656	0
(656)	(656)	Income	(6)	(656)	0
		National Non-Domestic Rate			
76,489	76,489	Expenditure	47,488	79,736	3,247
(76,489)	(76,489)	Income	(48,222)	(79,272)	(2,783)
0	0	Total Collection Fund	28,840	(56)	(56)

- 30. On Council tax, a £520k surplus is currently forecast. If achieved, this will roll forward and be distributed in the 2014/15 budget cycle; the city's share would be about £83k extra.
- 31. The council operates the BID account on behalf of the BID company, so no surplus or deficit will fall on the council's accounts.
- 32. On the NNDR account, a £464k deficit is currently forecast. This is being further investigated. If a deficit materialises, this will roll forward and be distributed in the 2014/15 budget cycle; the city's share would be about £46k less.

Integrated impact assessment



Report author to complete	
Committee:	Cabinet
Committee date:	13 November 2013
Head of service:	Chief Finance Officer
Report subject:	Revenue Budget Monitoring 2013/14
Date assessed:	3 October 2013
Description:	This is the integrated impact assessment for the Revenue Budget Monitoring 2013/14 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)				
Eliminating discrimination & harassment				
Advancing equality of opportunity				
Environmental (please add an 'x' as appropriate)	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Comments
Transportation				
Natural and built environment	\boxtimes			
Waste minimisation & resource use				
Pollution				
Sustainable procurement				
Energy and climate change				
(Please add an 'x' as appropriate)	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Comments
Risk management		\boxtimes		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: 2013/14 Period: 06 (Sep)

GENERAL FUND SERVICE SUMMARY

Approved	Current		Budget	Actual	Variance	Forecast	Forecast
Budget	Budget		To Date	To Date	To Date	Outturn	Variance
		Business Relationship Management					
17,323	17,323	Business Relationship Management	54,500	52,371	(2,129)	13,629	(3,694)
(21,315,762)	(21,312,354)	Finance	(4,279,320)	(4,803,940)	(524,620)	(21,808,406)	(496,052)
(3,997)	3,535	Procurement & Service Improvement	1,840,354	(485,005)	(2,325,359)	(46,587)	(50,122)
(21,302,436)	(21,291,496)	Total Business Relationship	(2,384,466)	(5,236,574)	(2,852,108)	(21,841,364)	(549,868)
		Chief Executive					
2,466,991	2,263,605	Chief Executive	(852,931)	(1,081,223)	(228,292)	1,154,427	(1,109,178)
(75,624)	(75,624)	Law & Governance	209,796	298,840	89,044	(21,832)	53,792
2,391,367	2,187,981	Total Chief Executive	(643,135)	(782,383)	(139,248)	1,132,595	(1,055,386)
		Customers, Comms & Culture					
2,484,221	2,498,357	Communications & Culture	1,337,944	1,074,325	(263,619)	2,374,851	(123,506)
(101,033)	. , ,	Customer Contact	1,182,405	1,214,424	32,019	4,330	49,676
2,383,188	2,453,011	Total Customers, Comms & Culture	2,520,349	2,288,750	(231,599)	2,379,182	(73,829)
		Operations					
(76,251)	141,538	City Development	(2,169,799)	(872,735)	1,297,064	154,472	12,934
9,635,875	9,675,804	Citywide Services	4,341,375	3,167,210	(1,174,165)	9,607,867	(67,937)
(140)	(140)	Deputy Chief Executive	74,896	70,906	(3,990)	(7,564)	(7,424)
2,322,140	2,333,347	Neighbourhood Housing	554,697	540,780	(13,917)	2,242,576	(90,771)
2,406,508	2,420,620	Neighbourhood Services	1,042,630	937,152	(105,478)	2,318,780	(101,840)
1,726,030	1,739,165	Planning	571,270	452,933	(118,337)	1,856,792	117,627
109,732	(112,001)	Property Services	736,592	421,777	(314,815)	(88,901)	23,100
16,123,894	16,198,333	Total Operations	5,151,661	4,718,022	(433,639)	16,084,024	(114,309)
		Strategy, People & Democracy					
242,457	248,051	Democratic Services	441,051	546,349	105,298	216,344	(31,707)
15,608	- ,	Human Resources	640,352	748,452	108,100	(162,711)	(195,109)
145,922	171,722	Strategy & Programme Management	272,177	254,119	(18,058)	156,712	(15,010)
403,987	452,171	Total Strategy, People & Democracy	1,353,580	1,548,920	195,340	210,345	(241,826)
0	0	Total General Fund	5,997,989	2,536,735	(3,461,254)	(2,035,218)	(2,035,218)

GENERAL FUND SUBJECTIVE SUMMARY

Approved	Current		Budget	Actual	Variance	Forecast	Forecast
Budget	Budget		To Date	To Date	To Date	Outturn	Variance
17,944,197	17,011,472	Employees	8,879,189	8,846,011	(33,178)	16,623,380	(388,092)
9,004,053	8,561,731	Premises	5,332,724	5,476,561	143,837	8,327,746	(233,985)
304,809	304,809	Transport	152,418	90,397	(62,021)	222,883	(81,926)
14,580,752	17,262,257	Supplies & Services	7,983,561	6,792,755	(1,190,806)	15,782,232	(1,480,025)
8,125,351	7,959,662	Third Party Payments	3,979,840	173,574	(3,806,266)	7,714,669	(244,993)
63,260,654	88,175,654	Transfer Payments	46,479,456	47,270,320	790,864	82,853,733	(5,321,921)
3,271,443	3,271,443	Capital Financing	6,254,049	2,608,491	(3,645,558)	3,195,906	(75,537)
(22,298,418)	(22,132,729)	Receipts	(12,053,305)	(10,593,574)	1,459,731	(21,547,475)	585,254
(87,934,587)	(113,144,68	Government Grants	(59,647,727)	(56,982,309)	2,665,418	(107,975,858)	5,168,829
1,551,696	1,551,696	Centrally Managed	1,075,620	(119,755)	(1,195,375)	1,551,696	0
16,315,252	16,757,574	Recharge Expenditure	964,638	741,763	(222,875)	16,781,980	24,406
(24,125,202)	(25,578,882)	Recharge Income	(3,402,474)	(1,767,500)	1,634,974	(25,566,109)	12,773
0	0	Total General Fund	5,997,989	2,536,735	(3,461,254)	(2,035,218)	(2,035,218)

Budget Monitoring Report Year: 2013/14 Period: 06 (Sep)

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT STATUTORY SUMMARY

Approved	Current		Budget	Actual	Variance	Forecast	Forecast
Budget	Budget		To Date	To Date	To Date	Outturn	Variance
15,384,339	15,474,466	Repairs & Maintenance	7,685,234	2,544,215	(5,141,019)	15,544,900	70,434
6,655,661	6,655,661	Rents, Rates, & Other Property Costs	6,437,236	5,936,725	(500,511)	6,294,831	(360,830)
11,285,925	10,353,682	General Management	3,001,228	2,680,665	(320,563)	9,992,054	(361,628)
5,536,370	5,551,077	Special Services	2,497,282	2,104,429	(392,853)	5,288,390	(262,687)
22,077,640	22,077,640	Depreciation & Impairment	0	163	163	22,077,640	0
941,000	941,000	Provision for Bad Debts	470,500	0	(470,500)	941,000	0
		Dwelling Rents	(31,021,707)	(31,653,656)	(631,949)	(58,668,584)	(72,024)
		Garage & Other Property Rents	(1,106,517)	(1,133,645)	(27,128)	(2,187,425)	6,310
(10,026,307)	(10,026,307)	Service Charges - General	(4,904,922)	(4,776,532)	128,390	(9,580,794)	445,513
0	0	Miscellaneous Income	0	(20,259)	(20,259)	(40,517)	(40,517)
9,817,561	10,644,971	Adjustments & Financing Items	(15,576)	(37,939)	(22,363)	10,543,773	(101,198)
(731,895)	(731,895)	Amenities shared by whole community	0	0	0	(731,895)	0
(150,000)	(150,000)	Interest Received	0	0	0	(150,000)	0
(1)	0	Total Housing Revenue Account	(16,957,242)	(24,355,835)	(7,398,593)	(676,627)	(676,627)

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT SUBJECTIVE SUMMARY

(1)	0	Total Housing Revenue Account	(16,957,242)	(24,355,835)	(7,398,593)	(676,627)	(676,627)
13,048,140	13,048,140	Capital Financing	0	0	0	13,048,140	0
15,019,000	, ,	Rev Contribs to Capital	0	0	0	15,846,410	0
(2,101,429)	(1,583,728)	Recharge Income	(263,154)	Ó	263,154	(1,583,728)	0
(239,476)	(239,476)	Government Grants	(119,736)	(185,120)	(65,384)	(221,253)	18,223
(72,041,452)	(72,041,452)	Receipts	(37,823,734)	(38,193,077)	(369,343)	(71,844,509)	196,943
3,628,341		Capital Financing	0	163	163	3,628,341	0
5,350,612	5,842,774	Recharge Expenditure	951,480	492,955	(458,525)	5,845,797	3,023
347,169	347,169	Recharge Expenditure	57,078	2,524	(54,554)	345,338	(1,831)
4,166,356	4,033,884	Supplies & Services	1,537,586	684,383	(853,203)	3,865,451	(168,433)
117,214	117,214	Transport	58,596	95,235	36,639	138,904	21,690
26,425,447	24,667,247	Premises	15,305,864	9,589,157	(5,716,707)	24,083,055	(584,192)
6,280,077	6,333,477	Employees	3,338,778	3,157,945	(180,833)	6,171,427	(162,050)
Budget	Budget		To Date	To Date	To Date	Outturn	Variance
Approved	Current		Budget	Actual	Variance	Forecast	Forecast

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.

































