Report to Cabinet Item

12 April 2017

Report of Chief finance officer

Subject Revenue budget monitoring 2016-17: Period 11

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Purpose

To provide an update on the provisional financial position as at 28 February 2017, the forecast outturn for the year 2016-17, and the consequent forecast of the general fund and housing revenue account balances.

Recommendation

To note the financial position as at 28 February 2017 and the forecast outturn 2016-17.

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 £1.255m. The housing revenue account budget is forecast to underspend by £3.100m.

Ward/s: All wards

Cabinet member: Councillor Stonard – Resources and business liaison

Contact officers

Justine Hartley, Chief finance officer 01603 212440 Hannah Simpson, Group accountant 01603 212561

Background documents

None

Report

- 1. Council approved budgets for the 2016-17 financial year on 23 February 2016.
- 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 £0.451m to 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	16,120
Non-domestic rates	(4,870)
Revenue support grant	(2,756)
Council tax precept	(8,494)
Total general fund budget	0

4. The general fund has been forecast to underspend by £1.255m at year end compared to a forecast underspend last month of £1.096m. Key forecast variances from budget are set out below:

Forecast outturn P10 £000s	General fund service	Forecast outturn P11 £000s	Commentary
(345)	Business services	(369)	Additional grant income not yet allocated related expenditure (£245k) and movement in bad debt provision (£81k).

Forecast outturn P10 £000s	General fund service	Forecast outturn P11 £000s	Commentary
493	Finance	554	 Variance mainly due to: reduction of £200k in forecast interest income from housing company as planned loan not made £50k reduction in expected interest income from investments £44k higher MRP charges than budgeted additional debit card charges of £60k £88k housing benefits audit repayment and higher than budgeted bad debt provision. £100k reduction in forecast retained business rates offset by £187k higher transfer-in from the Section 31 reserve than budgeted.
(119)	Human resources	(124)	Vacant posts and current training spend less than budgeted.
(170)	Strategy and programme management	(174)	Vacant posts and higher than budgeted second homes income.
(306)	City development	(365)	 Variance mainly due to: rent reviews taking place on asset properties, increasing the forecast income bus shelter income higher than budgeted staff savings NORSE profit share higher than amount accrued
(378)	Citywide services	(634)	Variance mainly due to: unbudgeted smoothing mechanism receipt relating to waste contract vacant posts repairs costs less than budgeted waste income higher than budgeted.
105	Neighbourhood housing	140	Variance mainly relates to private sector leasing. Current expenditure on rental forecasted to be lower than budgeted (£281k) due to less rental properties being available, resulting in lower than expected forecast income from rents and fees £369k.
(102)	Neighbourhood services	(108)	Variance mainly due to salary underspends and movement in bad debt provision.

5. The general fund shows an underspend against budget to date of £8.778m. This underspend to date is made up of multiple debit and credit figures where various income and expenditure lines are ahead of or behind budget profile. Significant overspends and underspends to date are:

General fund service	Variance to date P11 £000s	Commentary
Business services	(1,478)	 (£615k) relating to additional government grants received and other grants received ahead of profile or related expenditure. (£548k) behind profile on contingency budget to date. Remainder due to timing differences on income and expenditure against the budget profile.
Finance	(2,884)	Variance between profiled and actual housing benefit expenditure and subsidy payments.
Customer contact	(348)	Variance mainly due to timing mismatch between transformation challenge grant funding received and related expenditure being incurred.
City development	(1,917)	 Current underspend mainly due to: income from bus lane enforcement and on-street yet to be paid over to county; Highways grant income received but not yet spent or returned (section 38); bus shelter income received higher than budgeted for staff savings; additional rental income above budget due to rent reviews; additional grants and income from county not budgeted for.
Property services	(526)	Centralised repairs and maintenance costs running behind profile.
Citywide services	(931)	Vacant posts and timing differences related to allocation of contract and repairs costs and waste contract smoothing mechanism.
Neighbourhood services	(258)	Staffing underspends and movement in bad debt provision.

6. Since setting the 2016-17 budget, additional amounts of grant income have been confirmed during the course of the year. In Period 11 an additional £2k of council tax annexe discount grant has been confirmed. This grant is ringfenced to meet the costs of council tax administration and will be applied in line with the terms of the grant.

Housing revenue account

7. The budgets reported include a £16.3m use of HRA balances, so that the net budget totals zero:

Item	Approved budget £000s
Gross HRA expenditure	60,372
Gross HRA income	(44,091)
Contribution from HRA balance	(16,281)
Total net HRA budget	0

8. The housing revenue account has been forecast to underspend by £3.100m at year end compared to a forecast underspend last month of £2.587m. Key forecast variances from budget are set out below:

Forecast outturn	HRA division of	Forecast outturn	Commentary	
P10 £000s	service	P11 £000s		
(2,975)	Repairs and maintenance	(3,548)	Overall variance reflects a reduction in forecast responsive repairs works (in line with recent years' outturns) and savings from renegotiated contracts. Key individual variances include: • major/minor repairs forecast based on current activity levels (£900k); • stair lift repairs forecast reflecting reduced number of repairs (£79k); • underspend on cavity insulation (£130k) and drainage (£90k) • central heating servicing based on activity to date (£218k); • asbestos removal estimate based on current activity (£215k); • asphalt balconies major work covered under capital projects therefore less revenue expenditure required (£80k); • fire prevention work carried out when identified, rather than planned (£70k); • no internal wall insulation planned for 2016 (£180k); • estate repairs forecast based on reduced number of repairs (£115k) • lower than budgeted demand for estate tidiness works (£150k) • lower than anticipated amount of improvements for elderly and disabled tenants (£113k) • minimal requirement for work on unadopted roads (£100k) • less requirement for garage repairs than originally anticipated (£55k) • lower current spend on void properties (£275k) due to increase in number of properties eligible for capital whole house upgrades • higher than budgeted tenant contributions relating to repairs (£322k). The movement in forecast variance from P10 is due to reduction in expected spend; mainly on cavity insulation, maintenance of unadopted roads and drainage.	
35	Rents, rates and other property costs	184	Anglian Water 16-17 statement received March 2017 forecast adjusted in line with statement. This is partially offset by increased service charges.	
(283)	General management	(116)	 Key variances include: vacant posts (£75k); lower repairs and rates on area offices (£50k) due to changes in accommodation use. 	

Forecast outturn P10 £000s	HRA division of service	Forecast outturn P11 £000s	Commentary
(283)	Special services	(555)	District heating gas forecast adjusted to reflect lower expenditure to date this year.
805	Depreciation and impairment	806	Actual depreciation calculated for the year.
(283)	Provision for bad debts	(283)	Based on Q3 bad debt provision calculation on outstanding rent arrears forecast to the year end.
359	Dwelling rents	398	Rental income forecast to be lower than budget due to delays on new-build projects.
(10)	Service charges - general	(107)	P11 updated forecast based on new service charges that came into effect October 2016. Service charges for water forecasted at an additional (£165k).

9. The housing revenue account shows an underspend against budget to date of £5.803m. 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. Significant overspends and underspends to date are:

HRA division of service	Variance to date P11 £000s	Commentary
Repairs and maintenance	(4,589)	These variances have arisen due to invoice delays which is usual for work of this nature. Also reflects overall reduced year-end forecast (see detail in previous table).
General management	(452)	Reduced rates on area offices (£30k), government grant received ahead of profile (£25k) and staff vacancies. Remainder due to smaller profiling differences split over a number of cost centres and the forecast underspends (see detail in previous table).
Special services	(882)	District heating gas and fuel oil costs less than profile (£382k). Sheltered housing gas costs also less than profile (£200k). Reduced sheltered alarm contract costs (£88k). Remainder due to small timing differences between actuals and profile.
Service charges - general	(267)	Annual leasehold service charges applied in October, but leasehold contribution to capital not processed until year end.

Risks

10. A risk-based review based on the size and volatility of budgets has identified 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	Forecast
Key Risk Budgets	£000s	Variance	Var %	RAG	Variance	Var %	RAG
Housing Benefit Payments & Subsidy	-30	-3,160	10368%	RED	335	-1098%	RED
HRA Repairs - Tenanted Properties	11,848	-3,548	-30%	RED	-2,715	-23%	RED
HRA Repairs - Void Properties	2,639	-804	-30%	RED	-233	-9%	RED
Multi-Storey Car Parks	-1,442	6	0%	GREEN	33	-2%	GREEN
City Hall	1,067	-138	-13%	RED	-64	-6%	GREEN
HRA Rents - Estate Properties	-59,223	58	0%	GREEN	278	0%	GREEN
Corporate Management including Contingency	-2,804	-974	35%	RED	-296	11%	RED
Private Sector Leasing Costs	-286	80	-28%	GREEN	133	-47%	RED

11. The red/amber status of items in the forecast RAG column is explained below.

Key risk budgets	Commentary
Housing benefit payments and subsidy	Variance to date due to timing differences between expenditure and subsidy receipts.
	Year-end variance due to unbudgeted £88k housing benefits audit repayment and higher forecast bad debt provision.
HRA Repairs - tenanted properties and void properties	In-year variance mainly due to lower than budgeted responsive repair demand to date and invoicing delays.
p. opera.ee	Year-end variance reflects a reduction in forecast responsive repairs works (in line with recent years' outturns) and savings from renegotiated contracts. Further detail provided in HRA variance table (point 8).
City Hall	In-year variance mainly due to repairs and maintenance costs running behind profile (£127k).
Corporate management including contingency	Due to higher grant income receipts than budgeted (£245k). Year to date variance also due to only £13k contingency spend up to period 11.
Private sector leasing	Current expenditure on rental forecasted to be lower than budgeted (£281k) due to less rental properties being available, resulting in lower than expected forecast income from rents and fees £369k.

- 12. The 2016-17 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.
- 13. 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 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

- 14. 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.
- 15. Net overspends and underspends will be consolidated into the general fund and housing revenue account balances carried forward to 2017-18. These are reflected in periodic updates to the *Medium term financial strategy* and *Housing revenue account business plan*.

Impact on Balances

16. The prudent minimum level of general fund reserves has been assessed as £4.273m. The budgeted and forecast outturn's impact on the 2015-16 balance brought forward, is as follows:

Item	£000s
Balance at 1 April 2016	(12,158)
Budgeted contribution to balances 2016-17	(451)
Forecast outturn 2016-17	(1,255)
= Forecast balance at 31 March 2017	(13,864)

- 17. The general fund balance is therefore expected to continue to exceed the prudent minimum.
- 18. The *Medium term financial strategy* assumes that the reserves are further built up in 2016-17 ahead of drawing them down in future years to offset known and anticipated grant reductions and ensure a balanced budget.
- 19. The prudent minimum level of HRA reserves has been assessed as £5.968m. The budgeted and forecast outturn's impact on the 2016-17 balance brought forward, is as follows:

Item	£000s
Balance at 1 April 2016	(26,190)
Budgeted use of balances 2016-17	16,281
Forecast outturn 2016-17	(3,100)
Reduced revenue contribution to capital (see below)	(3,857)
= Forecast balance at 31 March 2017	(16,866)

- 20. The forecast revenue contribution to capital outlay has been reduced due to lower capital expenditure in year. Resources will be carried forward to fund future HRA spend.
- 21. The housing revenue account balance is therefore expected to continue to exceed the prudent minimum.
- 22. The HRA reserve balance will continue to be used to fund capital expenditure in 2016-17 and 2017-18. This will bring resources down closer to the recommended minimum balance and reduce the requirement to borrow, which incurs greater costs.

Collection fund

- 23. 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.
- 24. 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. 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.
- 25. These risks are monitored and mitigated through normal revenues operations.
- 26. A summary of the collection fund is provided below:

Approved	Current	Collection fund summary	Actual to	Forecast	Forecast
budget	budget		date	outturn	variance
£000s	£000s		£000s	£000s	£000s
		Council tax			
59,380	59,380	Expenditure	53,818	59,340	(41)
(59,380)	(59,380)	Income	0	(59,340)	41
		Business Improvement District			
656	656	Expenditure	634	654	(2)
(656)	(656)	Income	(25)	(654)	2
		National non-domestic rate			
79,138	79,138	Expenditure	69,238	75,845	(3,293)
(79,138)	(79,138)	Income	2,536	(75,845)	3,293
0	0	Total collection fund	126,201	0	0

- 27. 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).
- 28. The council operates the BID account on behalf of the BID company, so no surplus or deficit will fall on the council's accounts.
- 29. Any deficit reported on the NNDR account will roll forward and be distributed in the 2017-18 budget cycle.
- 30. Additional (section 31) grant is received in the general fund to offset all or part of any shortfall in business rate income due to additional reliefs granted by government. All such grant monies received are transferred to an earmarked reserve and held to be offset against deficits in the years that they impact on the revenue accounts.

Integrated impact assessment



Report author to complete	
Committee:	Cabinet
Committee date:	
Head of service:	Chief finance officer
Report subject:	Revenue budget monitoring 2016-17
Date assessed:	22/03/17
Description:	This is the integrated impact assessment for the revenue budget monitoring 2016-17 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 and harassment				
Advancing equality of opportunity				
Environmental (please add an 'x' as appropriate)	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Comments
Transportation				
Natural and built environment				
Waste minimisation and 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: 2016-17 Period: 11 (February)

GENERAL FUND SERVICE SUMMARY

Approved Budget	Current Budget		Budget To Date	Actual To Date	Variance To Date	Forecast Outturn	Forecast Variance
		Business Services					
1,800,982	1,345,989	Business Services	364,226	(1,113,892)	(1,478,118)	977,369	(368,620)
375,183	386,720	Democratic Services	921,404	953,918	32,514	416,657	29,937
(18,720,042) ((18,720,042)	Finance	(7,183,217)	(10,067,124)	(2,883,907)	(18,165,093)	554,949
0	0	Human Resources	1,101,315	1,057,273	(44,042)	(123,968)	(123,968)
0	0	Procurement and Service Improvement	2,575,673	2,416,122	(159,551)	(64,542)	(64,542)
(16,543,877) ((16,987,333)	Total Business Services	(2,220,599)	(6,753,704)	(4,533,105)	(16,959,577)	27,756
		Chief Executive					
0	0	Chief Executive	226,874	187,210	(39,664)	(52,088)	(52,088)
0	(18,963)	Strategy and Programme Management	454,984	279,145	(175,839)	(192,849)	(173,886)
0	(18,963)	Total Chief Executive	681,858	466,355	(215,503)	(244,937)	(225,974)
		Customers, Comms and Culture					
2,209,128	2,175,019	Communications and Culture	1,805,701	1,763,889	(41,812)	2,149,165	(25,854)
(60,851)	(645)	Customer Contact	1,930,540	1,582,447	(348,093)	(13,376)	(12,731)
2,148,277	2,174,374	Total Customers, Comms and Culture	3,736,241	3,346,336	(389,905)	2,135,789	(38,585)
		Regeneration and Growth					
(1,418,443)	, , ,	City Development	(3,893,382)	(5,810,764)	(1,917,382)	(1,683,800)	(365,041)
0		Environmental Strategy	121,592	105,609	(15,983)	(24,191)	(24,191)
0		Executive Head of Regeneration and	122,673	113,542	(9,131)	(8,654)	(8,654)
1,326,678	1,372,404	9	677,645	657,011	(20,634)	1,362,321	(10,083)
258,661	,	Property Services	1,676,484	1,149,490	(526,994)	629,567	(8,208)
166,896	691,420	Total Regeneration and Growth	(1,294,988)	(3,785,112)	(2,490,124)	275,243	(416,177)
		Strategy, People and Neighbourhoods					
9,789,981		Citywide Services	7,567,443	6,636,430	(931,013)	9,166,961	(634,023)
1,796,364		Neighbourhood Housing	855,252	894,754	39,502	1,832,867	140,251
2,642,359	, ,	Neighbourhood Services	2,185,071	1,927,361	(257,710)	2,539,039	(107,860)
14,228,703	14,140,499	Total Strategy, People and Neighbourhoods	10,607,766	9,458,545	(1,149,221)	13,538,867	(601,632)
0	(3)	Total General Fund	11,510,278	2,732,420	(8,777,858)	(1,254,616)	(1,254,613)

Budget Monitoring Report Year: 2016-17 Period: 11 (February)

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT STATUTORY SUMMARY

Approved Budget	Current Budget		Budget To Date	Actual To Date	Variance To Date	Forecast Outturn	Forecast Variance
15,499,378 5,936,838 11,392,777 5,068,935 22,139,594 334,000 (58,973,202) (2,223,564) (8,343,247) (75,000) 9,966,872	15,499,378 5,936,838 11,370,353 5,091,359 22,139,594 334,000 (58,973,202) (2,223,564) (8,343,244) (75,000) 9,966,872	Garage and Other Property Rents Service Charges - General Miscellaneous Income Adjustments and Financing Items	13,785,892 5,881,170 6,187,510 4,179,356 0 (54,058,774) (2,100,698) (7,956,596) (68,750) (195,950)	9,197,136 6,007,763 5,735,500 3,297,703 25,745 0 (53,894,224) (2,040,554) (8,223,499) (91,448) (163,800)	(4,588,756) 126,593 (452,010) (881,653) 25,745 0 164,550 60,144 (266,903) (22,698) 32,150	11,970,483 6,121,048 11,254,702 4,535,900 22,945,626 51,000 (58,575,484) (2,139,530) (8,449,989) (99,729) 10,009,388	(3,528,895) 184,210 (115,651) (555,459) 806,032 (283,000) 397,718 84,034 (106,745) (24,729) 42,516
(548,381) (175,000)	, ,	Amenities shared by whole community Interest Received	0	0	0	(548,381) (175,000)	0
0	3	Total Housing Revenue Account	(34,346,840)	(40,149,678)	(5,802,838)	(3,099,965)	(3,099,968)

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 and expenditure, and will be refined and improved during the course of the financial year.











