

#### **Purpose**

To provide an update on the financial position as at 31 October 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 31 October 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**

An underspend of £1.381m is forecast for the general fund for the year. The equivalent forecast for the housing revenue account is an underspend of £0.843m. The balances on both funds will remain above the prudent minimum level.

Monitoring of key budgets does not indicate any unusual cause for concern.

Ward/s: All wards

**Cabinet member:** Councillor Waters – Deputy leader and resources

**Contact officers** 

Caroline Ryba, chief finance officer 01223 699292

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#### **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. 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 £4.335m and a forecast variance of an underspend of £1.381m.
- 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
Procurement	(1,745)	Due to outstanding LGSS invoices awaiting final agreement on 2012/13 baseline prior to payment
Chief exec and corporate	(289)	Undercommitment of contingency
Communications and culture	(220)	
City development	(876)	Spend behind profile on building works and additional parking income
Citywide services	(920)	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 P06 £000s	Forecast variance P07 £000s	Forecast variance change £000s	Commentary
Business relationship management	(550)	204	754	Calculation of minimum revenue provision
Chief executive and corporate	(1,055)	(1,240)	(184)	Continuing undercommitment of contingency
Customers, comms and culture	(74)	(65)	9	
Operations:				
City development:	13	(59)	(72)	
Citywide services:	(68)	(3)	65	
Deputy chief executive:	(7)	(8)	(0)	
Neighbourhood housing:	(91)	(141)	(51)	
Neighbourhood services:	(102)	(37)	65	
Planning:	118	153	35	
Property services:	23	25	2	
Strategy, people and democracy	(242)	(211)	31	
Total general fund	(2,035)	(1,381)	654	

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 £5.630m and a forecast variance of an underspend of £0.843m.
- 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	(4,096)	£2.2m payments not allocated awaiting NPS/Norse analysis, and savings in responsive repairs contract
Special services	(550)	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	(691)	Voids and re-lets at higher 'formula' rent.
Service charges	1,094	Delayed billing of leaseholder service charge income.

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

HRA division of service	Forecast variance P06 £000s	Forecast variance P07 £000s	Forecast variance change £000s	Commentary
Repairs and maintenance	70	45	(25)	Not material
Rents, rates, and other property costs	(361)	(367)	(6)	Reduction in Anglia Water charges
General management	(362)	(336)	26	Underspend on uncommitted contingency, reduced costs of property services
Special services	(263)	(361)	(99)	Underspends in sheltered housing & NCAS
Dwelling rents	(72)	(155)	(82)	Low void rates and new lets at Formula Rent
Garage and other property rents	6	10	4	Not material
Service charges - general	446	462	17	Reductions in water charges to tenants
Miscellaneous income	(41)	(40)	0	Not material
Adjustments and financing items	(101)	(101)	0	Increased income from RTB administration
Total housing revenue account	(677)	(843)	(167)	

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	330	1%	GREEN	-4,026	-10%	RED
Housing benefit payments - other tenants	31,564	-201	-1%	GREEN	-2,799	-9%	RED
HRA repairs - tenanted properties	11,569	-3,132	-27%	RED	51	0%	GREEN
HRA repairs - void properties	2,700	-800	-30%	RED	0	0%	GREEN
Multi-storey car parks	-2,868	-125	4%	AMBER	17	-1%	GREEN
HRA rents - estate properties	-58,597	-770	1%	GREEN	-261	0%	GREEN
City hall	1,069	-350	-33%	RED	57	5%	GREEN
Corporate management including contingency	2,708	-205	-8%	RED	-1,115	-41%	RED
Private sector leasing costs	2,752	-101	-4%	AMBER	-215	-8%	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 and maintenance budgets uncommitted as yet
  - Corporate management low call to date on corporate contingency budget
- 15. With respect to the "Forecast RAG", those shown 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 and 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 and improvements the rate of spend on void properties although 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 forecast outturn level of balances is as follows:

Item	£000s
Balance at 1 April 2013	(5,195)
Budgeted contribution to balances 2013/14	(1,587)
Forecast outturn 2013/14	(1,381)
= Forecast balance at 31 March 2014	(8,163)

- 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 forecast outturn level of balances is as follows:

Item	£000s
Balance at 1 April 2013	(27,788)
Budgeted use of balances 2013/14	6,166

Forecast outturn 2013/14	(843)
= Forecast balance at 31 March 2014	(22,465)

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 Business Improvement District	28,718 0	52,858 (53,349)	(490) 0

656	656	Expenditure	216	656	0
(656)	(656)	Income	(6)	(656)	0
		National non-domestic rate			
76,489	76,489	Expenditure	54,156	79,732	3,243
(76,489)	(76,489)	Income	0	(79,272)	(2,783)
0	0	Total collection fund	83,084	(30)	(30)

- 30. On council tax, a £490k 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 £80k 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 £460k 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:	15 January 2014
Head of service:	Chief Finance Officer
Report subject:	Revenue Budget Monitoring 2013/14
Date assessed:	12 December 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: 07 (Oct)

## **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	62,475	60,146	(2,329)	13,566	(3,757)
(13,383,981)	(20,942,427)	Finance	(5,972,791)	(5,923,454)	49,337	(20,702,394)	240,033
(3,997)	11,035	Procurement & Service Improvement	1,848,690	103,778	(1,744,912)	(21,415)	(32,450)
(13,370,655)	(20,914,069)	Total Business Relationship	(4,061,626)	(5,759,529)	(1,697,903)	(20,710,243)	203,826
		Chief Executive					
2,466,991	2,234,525	Chief Executive	(994,084)	(1,283,175)	(289,091)	1,022,537	(1,211,988)
(75,624)	( - ) - /	Law & Governance	244,037	301,556	57,519	(103,348)	(27,724)
2,391,367	2,158,901	Total Chief Executive	(750,047)	(981,619)	(231,572)	919,189	(1,239,712)
		Customers, Comms & Culture					
2,484,221	2,498,357	Communications & Culture	1,489,047	1,196,096	(292,951)	2,393,272	(105,085)
(101,033)	(23,766)	Customer Contact	1,354,188	1,426,998	72,810	16,706	40,472
2,383,188	2,474,591	Total Customers, Comms & Culture	2,843,235	2,623,094	(220,141)	2,409,978	(64,613)
		Operations					
(446,178)	, ,	City Development	(2,473,279)	(3,349,354)	(876,075)	(287,038)	(58,649)
9,635,875		Citywide Services	5,038,169	4,118,140	(920,029)	9,673,123	(2,681)
(140)	(140)	Deputy Chief Executive	85,917	81,209	(4,708)	(7,983)	(7,843)
2,322,140	2,333,347	Neighbourhood Housing	661,350	642,960	(18,390)	2,191,964	(141,383)
2,406,508	2,420,620	Neighbourhood Services	1,203,016	1,067,640	(135,376)	2,383,864	(36,756)
1,726,030	1,739,165	Planning	645,988	554,697	(91,291)	1,892,002	152,837
109,732	(112,001)	Property Services	823,710	605,818	(217,892)	(87,302)	24,699
15,753,967	15,828,406	Total Operations	5,984,871	3,721,110	(2,263,761)	15,758,629	(69,777)
		Strategy, People & Democracy					
242,457	-,	Democratic Services	510,647	619,154	108,507	209,871	(38,180)
15,608	- ,	Human Resources	739,115	738,844	(271)	(121,640)	(154,038)
145,922	171,722	Strategy & Programme Management	313,659	283,264	(30,395)	153,236	(18,486)
403,987	452,171	Total Strategy, People & Democracy	1,563,421	1,641,263	77,842	241,468	(210,703)
7,561,854	0	Total General Fund	5,579,854	1,244,319	(4,335,535)	(1,380,978)	(1,380,978)

## **GENERAL FUND SUBJECTIVE SUMMARY**

Approved	Current		Budget	Actual	Variance	Forecast	Forecast
Budget	Budget		To Date	To Date	To Date	Outturn	Variance
17,944,197	17,040,552	Employees	10,157,014	10,146,033	(10,981)	16,764,988	(275,564)
9,004,053	8,561,731	Premises	5,993,497	5,668,429	(325,068)	8,413,148	(148,583)
304,809	304,809	Transport	177,821	102,428	(75,393)	227,194	(77,615)
14,580,752	17,233,177	Supplies & Services	9,332,017	8,173,157	(1,158,860)	15,622,747	(1,610,430)
8,125,351	7,959,662	Third Party Payments	4,013,000	202,585	(3,810,415)	7,703,197	(256,465)
70,822,508	95,737,508	Transfer Payments	59,002,332	56,516,083	(2,486,249)	88,912,384	(6,825,124)
3,271,443	3,271,443	Capital Financing	6,565,184	6,216,064	(349,120)	4,377,490	1,106,047
(22,298,418)	(22,132,729)	Receipts	(13,691,273)	(13,395,422)	295,851	(22,359,785)	(227,056)
(87,934,587)(	120,706,541)	Government Grants	(74,380,486)	(70,829,424)	3,551,062	(113,920,768)	6,785,773
1,551,696	1,551,696	Centrally Managed	1,254,890	167,582	(1,087,308)	1,551,697	1
16,315,252	16,757,574	Recharge Expenditure	1,125,411	1,223,172	97,761	16,813,159	55,585
(24,125,202)	(25,578,882)	Recharge Income	(3,969,553)	(2,946,368)	1,023,185	(25,486,430)	92,452
7,561,854	0	Total General Fund	5,579,854	1,244,319	(4,335,535)	(1,380,978)	(1,380,978)

**Budget Monitoring Report** 

Year: 2013/14 Period: 07 (Oct)

## HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT STATUTORY SUMMARY

	(1)	0	Total Housing Revenue Account	(21,168,229)	(26,799,060)	(5,630,831)	(843,358)	(843,358)
	(150,000)	(150,000)	Interest Received	0	0	0	(150,000)	0
	(731,895)	(731,895)	Amenities shared by whole community	0	0	0	(731,895)	0
	9,817,561	10,644,971	Adjustments & Financing Items	(18,172)	50,314	68,486	10,543,841	(101,130)
	Ó	Ó	Miscellaneous Income	Ó	(23,531)	(23,531)	(40,338)	(40,338)
(	10,026,307)	(10,026,307)	Service Charges - General	(6,623,881)	(5,529,681)	1,094,200	(9,564,286)	462,021
`	(2,193,735)	(2,193,735)	Garage & Other Property Rents	(1,202,453)	(1,464,657)	(262,204)	(2,183,905)	9,830
(	58,596,560)	(58,596,560)	Dwelling Rents	(35,617,516)	(36,309,446)	(691,930)	(58,751,070)	(154,510)
	941,000	941,000	Provision for Bad Debts	470,500	0	(470,500)	941,000	0
	22,077,640	, ,	Depreciation & Impairment	0	163	163	22,077,640	0
	5.536.370		Special Services	2,864,702	2,313,883	(550,819)	5,189,688	(361,389)
	11,285,925		General Management	3,467,967	3,226,238	(241,729)	10,017,934	(335,748)
	6,655,661	, ,	Rents, Rates, & Other Property Costs	6,473,267	6,016,458	(456,809)	6,288,352	(367,309)
	15,384,339	15.474.466	Repairs & Maintenance	9,017,357	4,921,199	(4,096,158)	15,519,682	45,216
	Budget	Budget		To Date	To Date	To Date	Outturn	Variance
	Approved	Current		Budget	Actual	Variance	Forecast	Forecast

## HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT SUBJECTIVE SUMMARY

(1)	0	Total Housing Revenue Account	(21,168,229)	(26,799,060)	(5,630,831)	(843,358)	(843,358)
13,048,140	13,048,140	Capital Financing	0	0	0	13,048,140	0
15,019,000	15,846,410	Rev Contribs to Capital	0	0	0	15,846,410	0
(2,101,429)	(1,583,728)	Recharge Income	(307,013)	Ó	307,013	(1,583,728)	0
(239,476)	(239,476)	Government Grants	(139,692)	(192,347)	(52,655)	(228,483)	10,993
(72,041,452)	(72,041,452)	Receipts	(44,317,886)	(44,163,957)	153,929	(71,933,906)	107,546
3,628,341		Capital Financing	0	139,116	139,116	3,628,341	0
5,350,612	5,842,774	Recharge Expenditure	1,110,060	865,744	(244,316)	5,845,797	3,023
347,169		Third Party Payments	57,651	2,879	(54,772)	345,224	(1,945)
4,166,356	4,033,884	Supplies & Services	1,679,002	833,473	(845,529)	3,885,132	(148,752)
117,214	117,214	Transport	68,362	100,607	32,245	140,682	23,468
26,425,447	24,667,247	Premises	16,858,202	11,947,653	(4,910,549)	23,960,053	(707,194)
6,280,077	6,333,477	Employees	3,823,085	3,667,772	(155,313)	6,202,979	(130,498)
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.































