



Report of: Executive Member for Finance, Performance and Community Safety

Meeting of:	Date	Ward(s)
Executive	28 September 2017	All

FINANCIAL MONITORING 2017-18 MONTH 4

1. SYNOPSIS

- 1.1 This report presents the forecast outturn position for 2017-18 as at 31st July 2017. Overall, there is a forecast gross General Fund overspend of £9.4m. This is a significantly worse position than previous years and reflects the difficulty the council's budget faces coping with service pressures and ever dwindling government funding. Whilst there are no easy budget choices remaining, action is required to bring this overspend down, otherwise the Council's reserves will be dangerously low going into 2018-19.
- 1.2 The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is forecast to break-even over the year.
- 1.3 It is forecast that £132.5m of capital expenditure will be delivered in 2017-18.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. To note the forecast revenue outturn for the General Fund (**Table 1**) of a gross overspend of £9.4m, including corporate items. (**Paragraph 3.1**)
- 2.2. To note the actions to reduce the forecast gross General Fund overspend, and that any remaining overspend at year-end will be covered by drawing down from the corporate contingency budget in the first instance. (**Section 4, Paragraph 3.2 and Table 2**)
- 2.3. To note the breakdown of the forecast General Fund outturn by key variance at **Appendix 1** and by directorate at **Appendix 2**.
- 2.4. To note that the HRA forecast is a break-even position. (**Section 5, Table 1**)

- 2.5. To note the latest capital position with forecast capital expenditure of £132.5m in 2017-18. (**Section 6, Table 3 and Appendix 3**)

3. REVENUE POSITION: SUMMARY

- 3.1. A summary position of the General Fund and HRA is shown in **Table 1**, a breakdown by key variance at **Appendix 1** and a breakdown by directorate at **Appendix 2**.

Table 1: 2017-18 General Fund and HRA Month 4 Forecast

	Forecast Over/(Under) Spend (£000)
<u>GENERAL FUND</u>	
Resources	47
Chief Executive's Department	0
Core Children's Services (Excluding Schools)	5,470
Environment and Regeneration	1,555
Housing and Adult Social Services	934
Public Health	0
DEPARTMENTAL TOTAL	8,006
Corporate Items	1,377
GROSS OVER/(UNDER) SPEND	9,383
<u>HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT</u>	
NET (SURPLUS)/DEFICIT	0

- 3.2. Any overspend at year-end will be covered by drawing down from corporate contingency budgets in the first instance. Prior year and current year contingency budgets total £6.7m. If the forecast gross overspend remained at £9.4m, this would leave £2.7m to fund from other sources, including general balances. Departments are implementing management actions to dampen the level of the General Fund overspend in 2017-18 but further management actions are required to start to bring the level of the overspend down. After seven years of Government cuts there are no easy management actions to take.
- 3.3. The Council, in comparison to others in London, has limited available reserves to cope with this financial pressure. It is important that all steps possible are taken during the financial year to bring spending back at least to the level of the corporate contingency budgets and ideally below. The estimated unallocated reserves that will be available to use at year end, not including the corporate contingency budgets, are shown in **Table 2** below:

Table 2: Unallocated Reserves 2017-18

	2017-18 £m
Housing Benefit Reserve	6.2
General Fund Balances (excluding schools)	8.6
Redundancy Reserve (residual balance from 2016-17)	0.3
Total	15.1

4. GENERAL FUND

Resources Department (+£47k)

- 4.1. The Finance and Resources Department is forecasting a gross overspend of £1.2m which after management actions set out below is a forecast net overspend of (+£47k), with the key variances behind this set out in **Appendix 1**.
- 4.2. The most significant pressure on the department is on the commercial property income budget (+£1.3m). Commercial property income is expected to reach the target for it set in the Medium Term Financial Strategy by 2019, however this income given the time needed to execute commercial projects is heavily weighted to 2019 giving a cashflow pressure in 2017/18.
- 4.3. The management actions being taken to contain the overspend are:
 - 4.3.1. Eliminating the administrative buildings maintenance contingency for the year and limiting the planned programme of repairs to only urgent items (-£0.8m)
 - 4.3.2. Holding posts vacant across the department (-£0.25m)
 - 4.3.3. Audit of contractor payments (-£0.1m)
 - 4.3.4. Increasing the income forecast from the Assembly Hall for the rest of year (-£0.06m)

Chief Executive's Department (Break-Even)

- 4.4. The Chief Executive's Department is forecasting a break-even position over the financial year.

Children's Services - General Fund (+£5.47m), Schools (Break-Even)

- 4.5. The Children's Services Department is forecasting a (+£5.47m) General Fund overspend, the largest of any council service but not inconsistent with other similar councils. The key variances behind the General Fund net overspend are set out in **Appendix 1**.
- 4.6. Management actions being undertaken are as follows:
 - 4.6.1. Vacancy management across services;
 - 4.6.2. Review high cost packages and personal budgets;
 - 4.6.3. Wider review of Children Look After placements, cost drivers and commissioning arrangements;

- 4.6.4. Review housing benefit collection arrangements;
- 4.6.5. Review dispersal arrangements for Unavoidable Asylum Seeking Children – placing young people in other authorities where dispersal scheme is in operation;
- 4.6.6. Loss of £3m Dedicated Schools Grant funding mitigated by recycling early childhood transformation and childcare subsidy savings, disapplication from DSG funding regulations and funding identified through line by line DSG review; and
- 4.6.7. Reviewing contract arrangements and viability between the Council, Greenwich Leisure and relevant school bodies for Holloway Pool.

4.7. The schools' dedicated schools grant position is forecast at break-even.

Environment and Regeneration (+£1.555m)

- 4.8. The Environment and Regeneration Department is forecasting a (+£1.555m) overspend. The key variances behind this net overspend are set out in **Appendix 1**.
- 4.9. The management actions being taken to control these pressures are:
 - 4.9.1. Regular monitoring of spend and income trends across the department to enable effective decisions to be taken;
 - 4.9.2. Extensive work being undertaken within Street Environmental Services to control and monitor staff related spend, in particular overtime levels, agency staff and sickness absence;
 - 4.9.3. Vacancy and recruitment management across the department and control over non-essential expenditure; and
 - 4.9.4. On-going work to drive through service changes to deliver the delayed savings.

Housing and Adult Social Services (+£0.934m)

Adult Social Services (+£0.934m)

- 4.10. Adult Social Services is forecasting a (+£0.9m) overspend. The key variances behind this net overspend are set out in **Appendix 1**.
- 4.11. The management actions being taken to control the net overspend are:
 - 4.11.1. Review of savings plans;
 - 4.11.2. Finance training for all budget holders;
 - 4.11.3. Review of all agency staff and establishments in order to reduce staffing pressure; and
 - 4.11.4. Review of all current care packages to ensure projections have been made accurately.

Housing General Fund (Break-Even)

- 4.12. The Housing General Fund is forecasting a break-even position for the financial year.

Public Health (Break-Even)

- 4.13. Public Health is funded via a ring-fenced grant of £26.6m for 2017-18. There is a forecast net break-even position for the financial year.

Corporate Items (+£1.4m)

- 4.14. There is a (+£0.8m) uncontrollable cost due to the Council's statutory duty to provide assistance to all destitute clients who are Non-European Union nationals and can demonstrate need under Section 21 of the National Assistance Act, 1948. This is commonly referred to as No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF).
- 4.15. (+£0.7m) of planned cross-cutting savings, relating to further channel shift and income generating activities across the Council, are now considered unachievable in 2017-18.
- 4.16. There is a (+£0.6m) unbudgeted cost relating to the estimated General Fund cost of the new apprenticeship levy.
- 4.17. These overspends are partially offset by:
- 4.17.1. Net unbudgeted grant income totalling (-£0.3m), for example to compensate for the impact of Government policy on our retained business rates income in 2017-18 and to reimburse previously top-sliced New Homes Bonus funding.
- 4.17.2. A forecast underspend of (-£0.4m) on the corporate levies budget compared to the estimate before the start of the financial year.

5. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT

- 5.1. The HRA is forecast to break-even over the financial year.

6. CAPITAL PROGRAMME

- 6.1. It is forecast that £132.5m of capital investment will be delivered in 2017-18. This is set out by directorate in **Table 3** below and detailed at **Appendix 3**.

Table 3: 2017-18 Capital Programme Month 4 Forecast

Directorate	2017-18 Revised Budget (£m)	2017-18 Capital Forecast (£m)	Forecast Re-profiling (to)/from Future Years (£m)
Children's Services	16.8	16.8	0.0
Environment and Regeneration	27.6	25.7	(1.9)
Housing and Adult Social Services	90.6	89.9	(0.7)
Resources	0.1	0.1	0.0
Total	135.1	132.5	(2.6)

7. IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

- 7.1. These are included in the main body of the report.

Legal Implications

- 7.2. The Council is required by law to balance its budget. This means that the Council must plan to balance its spending plans against resources available to it in any given financial year to prevent a deficit occurring. Members need to be reasonably satisfied that the Council's expenditure is being contained within its budget and that the agreed savings for the financial year will be achieved to ensure that the Council maintains a balanced budget.

The Council has designated the Corporate Director for Resources as the officer with the statutory responsibility for administering the Council's finances set out in section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972.

Environmental Implications

- 7.3. This report does not have any direct environmental implications.

Resident Impact Assessment

- 7.4. The Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and to advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it (section 149 Equality Act 2010). The Council has a duty to have due regard to the need to remove or minimise disadvantages, take steps to meet needs, in particular steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, and encourage people to participate in public life. The Council must have due regard to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding.
- 7.5. A resident impact assessment (RIA) was carried out for the 2017-18 Budget Report approved by Full Council. This report notes the financial performance to date but does not have direct policy implications, so a separate RIA is not required for this report.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – General Fund Revenue Monitoring by variance
Appendix 2 – Revenue Provisional Outturn by Service Area
Appendix 3 - Capital Monitoring

Background papers: None

Signed by



Executive Member for Finance,
Performance and Community Safety

13 September 2017

Date

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