

Report to: **Hub Committee**

Date: **7 March 2023**

Title: **Month 10 Revenue Budget Monitoring
2022/2023**

Portfolio Area: **Performance & Resources – Cllr C Edmonds**

Wards Affected: **All**

Urgent Decision: **N** Approval and clearance obtained: **Y**

Date next steps can be taken: **N/A**

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RECOMMENDATION

That the Hub Committee RESOLVES to NOTE the forecast income and expenditure variations for the 2022/23 financial year and the overall projected deficit of £35,000 (0.5% of the total Budget £7.770 million). This is very close to a break-even position.

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 This report enables Members to monitor income and expenditure variations against the approved budget for 2022/23 and provides a forecast for the year end position.
- 1.2 The gross service expenditure budget for 2022/23 was set at £24 million (£7.770 million net). This report identifies a projected deficit of £35,000 which is 0.5% of the overall Budget set for 2022/23 of £7.770 million. This is a slight improvement from the overall budget monitoring position reported at Month 8, when a deficit of £85,000 was forecasted due to an increase in Investment Income.

2. Background

2.1 Regional and national context

2.2 The Covid-19 pandemic has drawn into sharper focus the financial challenges faced by Local Authorities which have existed for some years. There remains outstanding a number of Local Authority Government reviews into Local Authority funding to reset the way local Councils are funded and the mechanism for the distribution of funding.

2.3 Financial Monitoring arrangements

2.4 The Council's financial procedure rules require that reports must be made on budget monitoring on a regular basis to the Hub Committee as part of the Council's arrangements for budget management.

3. Outcomes/outputs

3.1 **Budget overview** - Table 1 below provides an analysis of the projected variances against budget.

TABLE 1: 2022/23 BUDGET FORECAST

	2022/23 Budget expenditure /(income)	Budget variations		£000	Note
	£000	%	£000		
APPROVED BUDGET				7,770	
Reductions in expenditure/additional income					
Customer Service & Delivery					
Recycling income	(325)	74%	(240)		A
Garden Waste income	(245)	12%	(30)		B
Trade Waste income	(15)	200%	(30)		C
Savings on staff and Member travel and expenses	91	33%	(30)		D
Housing benefit overpayment recoveries	n/a	n/a (no budget)	(60)		E
Place and Enterprise					
Employment Estates income	(378)	8%	(30)		F
Homelessness prevention costs	93	65%	(60)		G
Other Comprehensive Income & Expenditure					
Investment Income	(25)	2240%	(560)		H
Sub total of variations				(1,040)	
Increases in expenditure/ reductions in income					

Customer Service & Delivery					
Pay award	90	267%	240		I
ICT Support Contracts	483	10%	50		J
Waste contract inflation	80	144%	200		K
Additional waste contract costs	1,650	22%	370		L
Waste, recycling and cleansing contract – increase in number of properties	2,476	4%	110		M
Place and Enterprise					
Car Parking Income	(1,147)	10%	110		N
Governance & Assurance					
Planning income	(473)	37%	175		O
Other Comprehensive Income & Expenditure					
Sub total of variations				1,255	
Application of Government Grants					
Homelessness Prevention Grant	n/a	n/a (no budget)	(180)	(180)	P
PROJECTED OUTTURN				7,805	
PROJECTED DEFICIT FOR 2022/23				35	

There is projected to be an overall deficit of £35,000 when compared against the Revenue Budget set for 2022/23.

Notes

- A. **Recycling income** – income is currently anticipated to exceed the 2022/23 target by £240,000 in 2022/23, which equates to 74% of the annual income budget of £325,000.
- B. **Garden waste income** – income is currently anticipated to exceed the 2022/23 target by £30,000 which equates to 12% of the annual income budget of £245,000.
- C. **Trade waste income** - income is currently anticipated to exceed the 2022/23 target by £30,000 which equates to 200% of the annual income budget of £15,000.
- D. **Savings on staff and Member travel and expenses** – following Covid 19, it is currently anticipated that a saving of up to £30,000 could be achieved in 2022/23.
- E. **Housing Benefit overpayment recoveries** – it is currently anticipated that income from Housing Benefit overpayment recoveries of £60,000 will be achieved in 2022/23. The budget was reduced to zero in 2021/22 following the introduction of DWP Real Time Information referrals and the expectation that recovery will reduce year on year as collection becomes more difficult.

- F. **Employment Estates income** – employment estates income is currently projected to be over budget by £30,000 in 2022/23 due to high occupancy rates and regular rent reviews.
- G. **Homelessness Prevention Costs** – homelessness prevention costs are currently anticipated to be underspent by £60,000 in 2022/23.
- H. **Investment income** – investment income is currently anticipated to be up by 2240%, which equates to additional income of £560,000 in 2022/23. The latest forecast is projecting investment income of £585,000 in 2022/23. This follows the recent increases in interest rates as the Bank of England (base rate is currently 4.0%) looks to tackle surging inflation.
- I. **Pay award** - the impact of the proposed employer's pay offer for 2022/23 of £1,925 on all NJC pay points, is significantly higher than the current budget provision of £90,000 (3%). The proposed pay award will result in additional salary costs of approx. £240,000.
- J. **ICT Support Contracts** - There are additional costs in respect of ICT support contracts mainly due to,
- Above inflation increases, e.g. Microsoft Licensing
 - Additional costs for new licenses, laptops and accessories due to an increase in the number of users on our network
 - The acquisition of remote diagnostics software as a result of the increase in remote working
 - Disability Access legislation for the website has required the purchase of tools for monitoring compliance and enhancing access
- K. **Waste contract inflation** - the impact of the current rate of inflation for 2022/23 (12.2%) is significantly higher than the current budget provision of £90,000 (3%). This will result in additional contract costs of £200,000 in 2022/23. Contract inflation is based on the latest published indices for fuel inflation, wage inflation and consumer price index (CPI).
- L. **Waste and Recycling** – there are additional costs in 2022/23 relating to the uplift in the waste and recycling contract sum, effective from 1 July 2022. Further detail is set out in the Hub Committee report of 12 July 2022, 'Waste and recycling services contract update'.
- M. **Waste, recycling and cleansing contract – increase in number of properties** - it is anticipated that there will be an uplift in the waste collection, recycling and cleansing contract costs of £110,000 in 2022/23 to reflect the increase in the number of properties across the Borough over the last two financial years. The number of properties has increased from 26,140 in March 2021 to 26,679 in October 2022. Going forward an annual cost pressure for additional properties of £50,000 has been built into the base budget for 2023/24.

- N. **Car Parking income** – There is a projected loss of car parking income of £110,000 in 2022/23 out of total budgeted income of £1,147,000 (10%). Even though tariffs were increased by 4% in March 2021, Covid continues to have an impact on income. Town centre car parks have not made a full recovery as expected. A shift to online shopping is also thought to have had an impact on car parking income levels. The income target has been reduced in the 2023/24 budget by £150,000.
- O. **Planning income** – a planning income shortfall of £175,000 is currently anticipated for 2022/23. However, this is a volatile area which can be very difficult to forecast given the impact of large applications.
- P. **Homelessness Prevention Grant (Government Grant)**– as set out in the grant conditions, this Government grant is ring-fenced for 2022/23. This will be applied against costs (e.g. salary costs of the homelessness service) incurred in reducing temporary accommodation numbers and complying with the Homelessness Reduction Act.

3. Other items to be considered in the 2022/23 Budget

- 3.1 This monitoring report includes an update on the position regarding the savings and additional income that were identified in the 2022/23 budget setting process, set out in Appendix B.

4. Review of Earmarked Reserves

- 4.1 The Council annually undertakes a review of the level of its Earmarked Reserves as part of the budget setting process. Budgeted contributions to and from Earmarked Reserves were part of the 2022/23 Budget reports. In addition a report on Earmarked Reserves was considered by the Audit and Governance Committee on 22 November 2022.
- 4.2 A schedule of Earmarked Reserves is attached at Appendix A, which shows Earmarked Reserves have a projected balance of £7.778 million at 31 March 2023 currently.
- 4.3 The Council's level of Unearmarked Reserves currently stands at £1.490 million. The deficit of £35,000 would go into Unearmarked Reserves at the year end, in accordance with normal accounting practice. This gives a predicted year end balance at 31 March 2023 of £1.455 million for Unearmarked Reserves.

5. Prudential Indicators

- 5.1 The prudential code indicators were approved in the Capital, Investment and Treasury Management Strategy report to the Council on 5 April 2022. The indicators are monitored during the year through the normal revenue and capital monitoring processes. All Treasury Management limits have been adhered to.

6. Income and Reserves

Income monitoring is an integral part of financial management. Current income forecasts are as follows: Income monitoring is an

integral part of financial management. Below shows the current income (surpluses)/shortfalls already experienced for April 2022 to January 2023. The table also shows the latest 2022/23 projections for the major streams of income.

Service	Deficit/ (Surplus) April – January 2023 £'000	Projected Income 2022/23 £'000	Income Budget 2022/23 £'000	Deficit/ (Surplus) £'000	Deficit/ (Surplus) %
Car Parking	110	(1,037)	(1,147)	110	10%
Planning Applications & Advice	147	(298)	(473)	175	37%
Employment Estates	(20)	(407)	(377)	(30)	(8%)
Garden Waste	(20)	(275)	(245)	(30)	(12%)
Trade Waste	(30)	(45)	(15)	(30)	(200%)
Business Rates Pooling Gain	-	(200)	(200)	-	-
Licensing	-	(114)	(114)	-	-
Interest & Investment Income	(298)	(585)	(25)	(560)	(2240%)
Local Land Charges	4	(95)	(95)	-	-
Recycling Income	(200)	(565)	(325)	(240)	(74%)
TOTAL	(307)	(3,621)	(3,016)	(605)	(20%)

7. Management Actions

- 7.1 The table below sets out the relevant management actions for the revenue expenditure and income variations shown above. It is best practice for the Council to state whether there are any corrective actions that need to be taken for the variances identified in 2022/23.

	Budget variations overspend/ (underspend) £000	Management Action
Reductions in expenditure/additional income		
Recycling income	(240)	Additional income of £190,000 has been built into the 2023/24 budget.
Garden waste	(30)	Additional income of £60,000 is included in the 2023/24 budget proposals.
Trade waste	(30)	Additional income of £30,000 has been built into the 2023/24 budget.
Staff and Member travel and expenses	(30)	The £30,000 underspend has been built into the 2023/24 budget.
Housing Benefit overpayment recoveries	(60)	An income target of £40,000 has been built into the 2023/24 budget.
Employment Estates income	(30)	Additional income of £50,000 has been built into the 2023/24 budget.
Homelessness Prevention Costs	(60)	This will be kept under close review in 2022/23.
Investment income	(560)	Additional income of £375,000 has been built into the 2023/24 budget.
Increases in expenditure/reductions in income		
Pay award	240	A budget provision of £360,000 has been built into the 2023/24 budget.
ICT Support Contracts	50	This will be kept under close review in 2022/23.
Waste contract inflation	200	A cost pressure of £345,000 has been built into the 2023/24 budget.
Additional waste contract costs	370	A cost pressure of £400,000 has been built into the 2023/24 budget.
Waste, recycling and cleansing contract uplift – increase in number of properties	110	An annual cost pressure of £50,000 has been built into the 2023/24 budget.
Car Parking Income	110	The income target has been reduced by £150,000 in the 2023/24 budget.
Planning income	175	This will be kept under close review in 2022/23.
Application of Government Grants		
Homelessness Prevention Grant	(180)	Additional income of £180,000 has been built into the 2023/24 budget.

8. Options available and consideration of risk

8.1 Even at this stage it is important to note that these forecasts can change over the remainder of the year to 31 March 2023. Managers can seek out opportunities to reduce any budget shortfalls, whilst considering the risk of any adverse impact on the customer experience.

9. Proposed Way Forward

9.1 Revenue budget monitoring will continue on a regular basis and further reports will be brought to the Hub Committee each quarter.

10. Implications

Implications	Relevant to proposals Y/N	Details and proposed measures to address
Legal/Governance	Y	The Council is required to make arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs. As part of those arrangements, the Council is under a duty to monitor its budgets throughout the financial year and to take appropriate action to deal with any deterioration in the financial position revealed by the regular monitoring.
Financial implications to include reference to value for money	Y	<p><i>The report identifies a projected deficit of £35,000 which is 0.5% of the overall budget set for 2022/23 of £7.770 million. This is very close to a break-even position.</i></p> <p>As part of Grant Thornton's external audit of the Statement of Accounts for 2021/2022, they will assess the arrangements the Council has in place for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.</p> <p>The outcome of Grant Thornton's work in this area will be reported to Members at the Audit Committee meeting on 14 March 2023.</p>
Risk	Y	1) Budget variances – continual monthly budget monitoring at all levels within the Council ensures early identification of variances. Reporting to the Hub Committee provides an opportunity for Members to identify and instigate remedial action where appropriate.

		2) Resource Planning – the Hub Committee takes into account any significant issues when developing the Council’s Medium Term Financial Strategy. These are identified in the Management Actions section of the report (Section 7).
Supporting Corporate Strategy		The budget monitoring process supports all of the Thematic Delivery Plans within the Council’s strategic vision, ‘A Plan for West Devon’.
Consultation and Engagement Strategy		External consultation and engagement has not been undertaken with regard to this report.
Climate Change – Carbon / Biodiversity Impact		A report was presented to Council on 8 th December 2020 ‘Climate Change and Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan update’. In March 2021, Council approved to set up an Earmarked Reserve for £200,000 for the Recovery Plan and Corporate Strategy. Further detail is set out in the Council’s ‘A Plan for West Devon’ strategic vision.
<i>Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications</i>		
Equality and Diversity		None directly arising from this report.
Safeguarding		None directly arising from this report.
Community Safety, Crime and Disorder		None directly arising from this report.
Health, Safety and Wellbeing		None directly arising from this report.
Other implications		None directly arising from this report.

Supporting Information

Appendix A – Schedule of Reserves (Earmarked Reserves and Unearmarked Reserves).

Appendix B – Savings/Additional income schedule

Background Papers:

None