## REVENUE BUDGET 2008/09 - BUDGET MONITORING REPORT

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## Summary and Recommendation:

The report provides the Executive with an indicative forecast year-end result at 31 ${ }^{\text {st }}$ March 2009.

## Recommendation

a. That Members note the Revised Revenue Budget of $£ 13,983,780$ to reflect adjustments of transfers from reserves along with the correction of the treatment of $£ 500,000$ budget relating to Renovation Grants - this is a capital programme item, and has been confirmed as part of the audit of the 2006/07 and 2007/08 Financial Statements.
b. That Members note the estimate forecast budget position at the year-end of a net underspending of $£ 1,459,933$ against the revised net Revenue Budget of $£ 13,983,780$. This consists of three elements:
(1) $£ 389,398$ of underspending required to meet commitments which will fall due in 2009/10;
(2) $£ 390,000$ of the underspending relating to activities supported by earmarked reserves and will be required in 2009/10; and
(3) $£ 680,535$ of underspending which are uncommitted and can be returned to general fund revenue balances at year end.

The majority of the uncommitted underspending relates to Finance and MIS, Regeneration, and Policy and Performance.
c. That Members note the initial carry forward requests for approval to 2009/10 which will be confirmed when the provisional outturn figures are reported to the Executive meeting in May. Corporate Team are preparing working papers to support carryforward requests as part of Closure improvements. Scrutiny of the accounting records 2008/09 continue as part of Closure of Accounts 2008/09 activity.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide a revenue budget forecast of the position at the year end, based on the actual position at $28^{\text {th }}$ February 2009 (Period 11) and managers' projections.
1.2 The forecast at the year-end is of a net expenditure position of $£ 12,524 \mathrm{k}$ (previous report $£ 12,472 \mathrm{k}$ ) compared to a revised budget of $£ 13,984 \mathrm{k}$. This would result in a net underspending across all services of $£ 1,460$ k ( $£ 1,140 \mathrm{k}$ reported previously), a proportion of which is committed. Executive will recall that the original net Revenue Budget approved by Council in February 2008 was updated in November 2008 to reflect the agreed funding from earmarked reserves to fund specific activities, this report again updates the use of funding from earmarked reserves.
1.3 The report outlines the significant variances against the Revenue Budget in paragraphs 2.7 to 2.13.
1.4 The monitoring report has been prepared by the Accountancy section, working with budget managers. This dialogue has improved significantly since mid-February, as the work in relation to Accounts Closure 2006/07 and 2007/08 drew to a close. More focus will now be placed upon reviewing the ledger to support Closure of Accounts 2008/09 over the period $31^{\text {st }}$ March $-29^{\text {th }}$ April.

## 2. BUDGET MONITORING FORECAST AT $31^{\text {ST }}$ MARCH 2009

2.1 Budget monitoring is a live and an on-going process. Budget managers receive monitoring reports each month, and working with Accountancy, provide forecasts as to the likely position at the year-end. Forecasts are updated as the actual position is confirmed, and assumptions regarding the remainder of the year are revised in line with experience and new information, where appropriate as part of a dynamic process.
2.2 The Original Net Revenue Budget agreed at Council in February 2008 was $£ 13,974 \mathrm{k}$. This has been revised to reflect the drawing down of earmarked reserves since $1^{\text {st }}$ April 2008 for specific purposes, totalling $£ 527 \mathrm{k}$, including $£ 100 \mathrm{k}$ relating to involvement of Deloitte in the production of the 2007/08 accounts, $£ 343 \mathrm{k}$ for expenditure funded from earmarked LABGI grant, and a reduction of $£ 500 \mathrm{k}$ as a result of the (provisional) transfer of the Renovation Grants to Capital. The Revised Net Revenue Budget for 2008/09 is therefore, $£ 13,984 \mathrm{k}$.
2.3 The Executive received a report at its February meeting which considered the actual position and year end projections at the end of the third quarter (month 9). The forecast at the year-end indicated an underspending of $£ 1,140 \mathrm{k}(8.4 \%)$ against the full year budget. This has been revised, as would be anticipated, during the fourth quarter.
2.4 Current projections indicate a year-end position of $£ 12,524 \mathrm{k}$, compared to the Revised Budget of $£ 13,984 \mathrm{k}$, resulting in a forecast underspending of $£ 1,460 \mathrm{k}$, a proportion of which is committed. This amounts to a net increase in underspend of $£ 320 \mathrm{k}$ compared to the Quarter Three forecast.
2.5 Appendix A summarises the budget position by main service heading at $28^{\text {th }}$ February 2009 and the forecast at the year-end. Members will remember the revised and extended format, introduced at the previous meeting showing the budget, actual and projections in relation to gross expenditure and income. This represents a step-change in budget management and should result in better resource management as the relationship between income and expenditure in delivering and enabling services to achieve corporate objectives will be more clearly apparent.
2.6 The main areas of budget variance are as follows:-
2.7 Customer Services - forecast net underspend of $£ 94 \mathrm{k}$ (£84k previously reported)

Staff vacancies in Copeland Direct (£29k) and efficiency savings resulting from the introduction of the Allpay cash collection system (£57k), and supplies for Head of Customer Services (£8k)

### 2.8 Revenues and Benefits - forecast net overspend of $£ 51 \mathrm{k}$ ( $£ 158 \mathrm{k}$ underspend previously reported)

Housing Benefits and Council Tax Benefits is showing a forecast overspend of $£ 136 k$ ( $£ 133 \mathrm{k}$ underspend). Detailed reconciliations of the Academy (Revenues system) and the accounting ledger to the end of January indicate that the forecast projected Housing Benefit subsidy for the full year has been high and it has been revised downwards to be prudent. The ratio of subsidy to payment (net of housing benefit overpayments) has been revised downwards from 98.75\% to 98\% for the whole year. Work continues to reconcile Academy and the accounting ledger as part of closure of accounts activities.

Staffing is forecasting an under spend of $£ 101 \mathrm{k}$ as a result of vacancy management. There are a number of other small forecast overspends totalling $£ 15 \mathrm{k}$ and relating to Local Housing allowance and shared service arrangements.
2.9 Finance and Management InformationSystems - forecast net underspend of $£ 475 \mathrm{k}$ ( $£ 365 \mathrm{k}$ underspend previously reported)

Key variances contributing towards this are:-

- Forecast underspend in relation to Concessionary Fares of $£ 213 \mathrm{k}$, based on actual usage to $31^{\text {st }}$ January and forecast to the year end. This has increased since the last report by $£ 94 \mathrm{k}$. This forecast was reported in detail to OSC (Young People and Healthy Communities) on $2^{\text {nd }}$ April 2009.
- Interest from Treasury Management income is greater than budget by $£ 147 \mathrm{k}$. This was previously reported. The Council benefited from a significant over-collection of NNDR income during 2007/08 which was repaid during the autumn of 2008. This has generated a windfall in interest earned and will benefit reserves at the year end.
- Forecast underspend of $£ 136 \mathrm{k}$ on Accountancy Services due to in the main to income received of $£ 141 \mathrm{k}$ from Cumbria County Council in respect of the District's share of the income they have earned from the levying of the minimum discount from $2^{\text {nd }}$ homes Council Tax. This had not been built into the 2008/09 budget, and represents a windfall in 2008/09. The 2009/10 budget includes provision for this source of income.
- Forecast underspend of $£ 62 k$ against Management Information Systems due to vacancies ( $£ 32 \mathrm{k}$ ), and a reduction in mainframe software and communications costs (£20k) following the introduction of new server arrangements. Both are reflected in the 2009/10 base budget.


### 2.10 Legal and Democratic Services - forecast net overspend of $£ 81 \mathrm{k}$ (£61k overspend previously reported)

This mainly relates to a decline income from housing searches of $£ 95 \mathrm{k}$, reflecting the down turn in the housing market, offset by a number of underspends across a range of other budget lines, including Civic and Mayoral, Elections and Licensing.

A contribution of $£ 10 k$ to earmarked reserves will be required to fund future elections, and this was reflected in the Budget proposal 2009/10 approved by Full Council in February.
2.11 Leisure and Environmental Services - forecast net under spend of £141k (£47k previously reported)

Enforcement is showing a forecast net underspend of $£ 31 \mathrm{k}$ and this is in relation to income from fines being greater than originally forecast. The original budget estimate was prudently calculated.

Open Spaces is showing an underspend of $£ 84 \mathrm{k}$ due to increased work in the external market. The previous report indicated an underspend of $£ 7 \mathrm{k}$, and the improvement in forecast as a result of the identification and correction of accrual journals from 2007/08

Environmental Health is forecasting an underspend of $£ 30 \mathrm{k}$ due to savings from vacancy management.

Leisure and Environmental Management and Administration is forecasting an underspend of $£ 39 \mathrm{k}$ due to savings from vacancy management. There is likely to be a request to earmark $£ 40 \mathrm{k}$ of the underspending to support the free swimming initiative for under 16's for the following two financial years. This will be confirmed in the provisional outturn report.

In addition, there may be a request for earmarking some underspendings to support specific project activity in 2009/10 for Cultural activities, Environmental Health and Open Spaces.

Waste Services however, is showing a forecast overspend of $£ 31 \mathrm{k}$ due to a number of variances, the larger item being the impact of increased fuel prices earlier in the year.

### 2.12 Policy and Performance - forecast net underspend of £264k (£260k underspend previously reported)

Human Resources is forecasting an underspend of $£ 233 \mathrm{k}$ ( $£ 251 \mathrm{k}$ ) due to:-

- Underspending against the Corporate Development training budget of $£ 125$ k due to programme slippage. $£ 70 \mathrm{k}$ will be required in 2009/10 to effectively complete the training programme. It is envisaged that $£ 50 \mathrm{k}$ of the underspend is required for continue delivering the Learning and Development Plan. This will be confirmed in provisional outturn report.
- Staff vacancies in Human Resources have also resulted in a forecast underspend of approximately $£ 90 \mathrm{k}$.
- Saving on miscellaneous expenses of $£ 11 \mathrm{k}$ within Head of Policy budget, and,
- Vacancies within Process Improvement Team (£13k).

Executive will receive a report at the May meeting which will set out the proposed Job Evaluation Scheme to be considered for recommendation to Council in June. The expenditure forecast for Policy and Performance assumes that the budget to meet the annual cost of implementation of Job Evaluation of $£ 450 \mathrm{k}$ will be included as a provision in the accounts i.e. as expenditure in 2008/09, to meet the costs of implementation which, if
agreed, would occur in 2009/10. The financial implications of the JE proposal will be reported in the report to May Executive and if any amendment is required to the provision, it will be reflected in closure of accounts workings.

### 2.13 Regeneration - forecast net under spend of $£ 637 \mathrm{k}$ (£286k previously reported)

The key variances are as follows:-

- Admin Buildings - a $£ 36 \mathrm{k}$ overspend is forecast due to the overstatement of PFI grant in the 2008/09 base budget. This has been corrected in the 2009/10 budget approved by Full Council in February.
- Building Control - a $£ 105 \mathrm{k}$ overspend is forecast overspend due to incorrect assumptions regard the original budget fee based. This has been corrected in the 2009/10 budget approved by Full Council in February.
- Public Buildings - £96k forecast underspend due to increased rental income of $£ 36 \mathrm{k}$ and an overstatement of the expenditure budget required for general repairs of $£ 60 \mathrm{k}$. Again, the overstatement of budget has been corrected in the 2009/10 budget approved by Council in February.
- Housing Strategy has programmed to underspend by £80k in relation to consultants, to meet commitments in 2009/10. The programme of work carried out by the team has accelerated during the year as vacancies were filled.
- The forecast underspending on the budget associated with the Regeneration Delivery Plan was indicated in the previous report. The Regeneration Delivery Budget will be funded from earmarked reserves and the base budget for 2008/09 assumed $£ 770 \mathrm{k}$ of the reserves would be fully spent during the year. However, the Regeneration Delivery Plan was agreed at Executive in August, and in effect, the pattern of expenditure has shifted. $£ 459 \mathrm{k}$ will be spent before $31^{\text {st }}$ March and the underspending of $£ 311 \mathrm{k}$ against earmarked reserves will be required to be carried forward. This has been assumed in the 2009/10 budget agreed at Council in February. Executive in May will receive a report updating Members of the progress of the Regeneration Delivery Plan.
- LABGI Grant income received during 2008/09 will be required to support activity in 2009/10. This is detailed elsewhere on the Executive agenda today. This grant income totals $£ 199 \mathrm{k}$.


## 3. FINANCIAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS (INCLUDING SOURCES OF FINANCE)

3.1 It is important that active budget monitoring is undertaken at least every month, and significant variations are reported through Corporate Team and Executive, so that timely corrective action can be taken. Robust, responsive budget monitoring is a key tool to support the management of the organisation.
3.2 The financial implication is a projected underspend of $£ 1,460 \mathrm{k}$ (10.4\%) against the revised net revenue budget. Of this underspend forecast, it is anticipated that $£ 780 \mathrm{k}$ ( $53.4 \%$ ) is committed in 2009/10 (see Appendix B).
3.3 The financial implications of the slow-down in the economy, in particular, the budgetary implication of the recent reductions in the bank interest base rate, land charges, and building control income, have been considered in the preparation of the 2009/10 budget.

## IMPACT ON CORPORATE PLAN

4.1 The budget and monitoring process is fully integrated into the planning process of the Council embracing all objectives of the Council.

## List of Appendices

Appendix A - Summary Budget Monitoring Position at $28^{\text {th }}$ February 2009 (Period 11 plus projection to the year-end)

Appendix B - Summary of expected commitments of 2008/09 underspends in 2009/10

List of Background Documents: Management returns regarding accruals and year end projections, and Financial Ledger Reports

List of Consultees: Corporate Team

## CHECKLIST FOR DEALING WITH KEY ISSUES

Please confirm against the issue if the key issues below have been addressed. This can be by either a short narrative or quoting the paragraph number in the report in which it has been covered.

| Impact on Crime and Disorder | None |
| :--- | :--- |
| Impact on Sustainability | None |
| Impact on Rural Proofing | None |
| Health and Safety Implications | None |
| Impact on Equality and Diversity Issues | None |
| Children and Young Persons <br> Implications | None |
| Human Rights Act Implications | None |
| Monitoring Officer comments | No comments |
| S. 151 Officer comments | Scrutiny of the code-base continues as <br> part of the pre-closure of accounts <br> preparations. A provisional outturn <br> report will be presented to Executive on <br> $26^{\text {th }}$ May 2009. |

Is this a Key Decision? No

Appendix A - Summary Budget Monitoring 2008/09 - Forecast at 31st March 2009



| CORPORATE DEPARTMENT | Forecast (Under) / Over spending 2008/09 | Underspending Relating to Commitments to be Funded in 2009/10 | Underspending Relating to Earmarked Reserves 2009/10 commitments | Forecast (surplus) / deficit to transfer to General Fund Balances (Reserves) | NOTES |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | £ | £ | £ | £ |  |
| Chief Executive: | 18,329 | - | - | 18,329 | No commitments |
| Customer Services: | $(43,333)$ | - | - | $(43,333)$ | No commitments |
| Finance and Management Information Systems: | $(474,919)$ |  |  | $(474,919)$ | £212k - Concessionary Travel |
| Legal \& Democratic Services: | 81,485 | - | 10,000 | 91,485 | £10k - contribution to the Elections Fund |
| Leisure \& Environmental Services: | $(140,896)$ | 40,000 | 20,000 | $(80,896)$ | $£ 15 k$ - Crematorium car park sinking fund <br> £5k - CBC car park sinking fund <br> $£ 40 \mathrm{k}$ - Support for free swimming for under 16 's |
| Policy \& Performance: | $(263,827)$ | 70,000 | 49,000 | $(144,827)$ | $£ 70 \mathrm{k}$ is required to be carried forward to meet the commitments from the Corporate Training budget 2008/09. <br> $£ 49 \mathrm{k}$ - Job Evaluation. Reserve funded was identified during budget preparation $08 / 09$ to meet the costs of implementation in 2008/09, related to estimates of pay protection etc. It is unlikely this budget will be utilised before the year end. |
| Regeneration: | $(636,772)$ | 279,398 | 311,000 | $(46,374)$ | $£ 311 \mathrm{k}$ - Regeneration Delivery Plan. This budget is supported by use of earmarked reserves over a three year period. The Executive received a report in August 2008 which set out the utilisation of the earmarked reserve. Actual expenditure on locality working is unlikely to occur before 31st March. The profile of spending will shift into later years. This budget underspend is required to fund the re-profiling of the Plan. A more detailed report will be received by Executive at its meeting in May. <br> £80k - Housing Strategy team - staff training and the filling of vacant posts has meant that the expenditure on professional services has not been as great as was budgeted for, but some of the underspending will be required to meet committed external support. |
|  |  |  |  |  | £199k LABGI funding received in 2008/09 and expenditure plans fall into 2009/10. |

