

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Cabinet Member for Safe and Attractive Neighbourhoods
2.	Date:	Monday 23 April 2012
3.	Title:	Neighbourhoods General Fund Revenue Budget Monitoring 2012/13
4.	Directorate:	Neighbourhoods and Adult Social Services

5. Summary

This report details the projected year end outturn position for the Neighbourhoods department within the Neighbourhoods & Adult Services Directorate compared to the approved Net Revenue Budget of £3.28m. **The latest forecast shows a projected underspend of (£370k) by the end of March 2012.**

6. Recommendation

That the Cabinet Member receives and notes the latest financial projection based on income and expenditure to the end of February 2012.

7. Proposals and Details

7.1 The table below shows the summary forecast outturn position for the Directorate against the approved Net Revenue Budgets.

SERVICE AREA	Net Budget	Forecast Outturn to 31st March 2012	Variance from Net Budget Deficit/ (Surplus)	% Variation to Net Budget
	£000's	£000's	£000's	%
Asylum	0	0	0	0
Housing Access	343	325	(18)	(5.25)
Housing Choices	243	149	(94)	(38.68)
Safer Neighbourhoods	2,070	1,893	(177)	(8.55)
Business Regulation	309	257	(52)	(16.83)
Neighbourhood Partnerships	276	254	(23)	(8.33)
Neighbourhood Investment	43	36	(7)	0
TOTALS	3,284	2,914	(370)	(11.27%)

All Service areas, with the exception of Asylum which is grant funded, are projecting underspends at year end. The main variations are summarised below:

7.2 Housing Access (£18k)

There are small projected underspends within Adaptations Service (£9k) and Housing Management & Admin (£10k) as a result of vacant posts. In addition there are (£2k) additional savings on other Housing Services due to moratorium on non essential spend. These are partially reduced by a small forecast shortfall of £1k on the Medical Mobility and Community Care budget due to the unmet vacancy factor on this small budget area and a small projected income shortfall of £2k on the Housing Mortgage cost centre due to reducing income from Mortgage Interest.

7.3 Housing Choices (£94k)

This Service Area is projecting an underspend within the Homelessness budget of (£31k) as a result of a post being held vacant since the post holder's secondment to another service area within Housing Choices and savings achieved within supplies & services.

In addition the Lighting of Staircases budget is projecting an underspend of (£63k), mainly as a result of a number of large refunds on utility bills relating to previous years and lower than anticipated costs in the current year.

7.4 Safer Neighbourhoods (£177k)

There is an overall forecast underspend within Community Protection of (£158k) due in part to vacant posts of (£50k) and savings as a result of controlled spending on supplies & services and additional income. This underspend also includes projected savings on transport costs as a direct result of efficiencies achieved due to the merger of Community Protection with the former Neighbourhood Wardens and Enviro-Crime costs centres. Additional underspends are projected within Community Safety (£13k), Domestic Violence (£4k), and Anti-Social Behaviour (£18k) mainly due to controlled spending on supplies & services due to the moratorium and vacant post being held due to restructure. There is a small surplus of (£2k) anticipated on Maintenance of Landfill sites as a result of savings on premises costs.

The Pest Control Service is currently facing a forecast income pressure of £30k from fees and charges, which is being closely monitored and is the main reason behind the overall projected £18k shortfall anticipated in this area.

7.5 Business Regulation (£52k)

Within Business Regulation there are forecast underspends in Health & Safety, Food & Drugs and Bereavement Services totalling (£113k) as a result of vacant posts, tight controls on supplies and services expenditure due to the council wide moratorium and increased fee income. These are offset by projected overspends on Animal Health £1k and Trading Standards of £51k mainly due to the services being unable to meet their vacancy management targets. Licensing budget is also forecasting a projected shortfall of £9k, mainly as a result of pressures on fee income, however this is being closely monitored and may reduce by the year end if additional income targets are achieved.

7.6 Neighbourhood Partnerships (£23k)

The Service is forecasting an underspend due to savings identified within supplies and savings and some small savings achieved due to Maternity Leave. These have offset pressures of meeting the vacancy management target plus additional external audit costs on the Local Ambition programme, leaving an overall (£23k) surplus.

7.7 Neighbourhood Investment (£7k)

The Registered Social Landlords cost centre is projecting a shortfall in income of £1k against budget as the number of landlords in the scheme has reduced in 2011/12. This is being offset by a surplus of (£8k) now being forecast within Neighbourhood Investment as a result of a vacant post.

A full review of the Neighbourhood Investment Team cost centre has been undertaken to ensure that sufficient funding is available to cover all costs incurred as no general fund budget is available for this service in 2011/12. The costs incurred are to be met by Growth/Housing Market Renewal Revenue Programme, New Build Council Housing and Homelessness funding (as a result of work undertaken by this team that links to the Homelessness service). It is anticipated that all costs will be met in this financial year for this service.

During the budget setting process for 2011/12 savings of £790k were identified in respect of Neighbourhood Wardens, Neighbourhood Partnerships, Food Inspection, and Trading Standards. These budget savings are on target to be achieved with the exception of Trading Standards where there are further budget pressures as highlighted above.

7.8 Agency & Consultancy

To date there is no spend on either Agency or Consultancy within Neighbourhoods General Fund Budgets.

7.9 Non-Contractual Overtime

Actual expenditure to the end of February 2012 on non-contractual overtime for Neighbourhood Services was £5,851, as follows:

Safer Neighbourhoods;	
Community Protection	£ 4,695 (includes Out of Hours Service)
Pest Control	£ 1,156

8. Finance

The financial implications for each service area have been outlined in Section 7 above.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

These forecasts are based on financial performance to the end of March 2012. The forecast outturn is dependent on delivery of the planned management actions being achieved and thus effective and tight financial management practices remain essential - monthly budget clinics are held with the Service Directors to facilitate this.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The delivery of the Council's Revenue Budget within the limits determined in March 2011 is vital to achieving the Council's Policy agenda. Financial performance is a key element within the assessment of the Council's overall performance.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

- Cabinet February 2011 – Proposed Revenue Budget & Council Tax 2011/12
- The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)
- Revenue Budget Monitoring Report – February 2012.

The content of this report has been discussed with the Director of Housing and Neighbourhoods and the Director of Finance.

Contact Name:

Mark Scarrott, Financial Services - Finance Manager (Neighbourhoods and Adult Services), Business Partnering, Extn 22007

Email: mark.scarrott@rotherham.gov.uk