

**CABINET MEMBER FOR SAFE AND ATTRACTIVE NEIGHBOURHOODS
2nd September, 2013**

Present:- Councillor McNeely (in the Chair) and Councillor Astbury (Policy Advisor).

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Goulty.

J29. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest made at the meeting.

J30. HOUSING GENERAL FUND BUDGET MONITORING 2013/14

Consideration was given to a report presented by the Finance Manager in relation to the budget monitoring and financial forecast for the Neighbourhoods General Fund within the Neighbourhoods and Adult Services Directorate to 31st March, 2014, based on actual income and expenditure for the period ending 31st July, 2013.

The latest forecast showed an overall balanced budget against an approved net revenue budget of £2.345M as follows:-

Safer Neighbourhoods (+£13k)

- Staffing cost pressures due to lower than expected staff turnover within Community Protection
- Savings through vacancy management but pressure on income due to reduce EPA applications
- Essential health and safety work on landfill sites

Business Regulation (-£3k)

- Pressures on staffing costs within Health and Safety, Food and Drugs and Animal Health budgets
- Offset by additional income from Dignity contract and savings within Trading Standards due to vacant posts

Housing and Communities (-£4k)

- Forecast underspends on Supplies and Services as a result of the moratorium on non-essential spend

Strategic Housing and Investment Service (+£2k)

- Small shortfall on staffing budget

Central (-£8k)

- Small underspend due to savings on Supplies and Services

To date there had been no spend on Agency or Consultancy within Neighbourhoods' General Fund budgets.

Resolved:- That the report be received and the latest financial projection against budget for 2013/14 noted.

J31. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET MONITORING 2013/14

Consideration was given to a report presented by the Finance Manager, Neighbourhood and Adult Services, on the Housing Revenue Account which was forecasting an outturn on budget with a transfer to working balances (HRA reserves) of £2.438M, a reduction of £161,000 against the approved budget.

Appendix A of the report provided the Budget Operating Statement for 2013/14 showing the various income and expenditure budget lines which made up the net cost of delivering the Service. The latest forecast net cost of Service was £5.974M, together with Revenue contribution to Capital costs and interest received, would result in an overall deficit of £2.438k to be transferred from Working Balances.

Expenditure

Based upon expenditure and commitments to date, total expenditure was forecast to outturn at £73.052M compared to a budget provision of £73.090M, a decrease in spend of £48K. The main variations were:-

Contributions to Housing Repairs

- Repairs and Maintenance – Forecasting an overall slight underspend. The Empty Homes budget was difficult to forecast given it being a responsive service together with a forecast overspend on cyclical works. This was offset by forecast underspends within Responsive repairs, Planned works budgets and fluctuations in overhead costs

Supervision and Management

- Forecast to outturn at £20.073M, overall overspend of £8k due to lower than expected staff turnover

Income

- Total forecast income collectable was £79.016M, an increase of £113k above budget
- Dwelling rental income was projected to over-recover by £86k however non-dwelling rents were forecasted to slightly under-recover due to lower income on way leaves and garage plots
- Income from charges for services and families were forecasting an outturn of £3.589M, an under-recovery of £12k mainly due to reduced income from clients using Sheltered Neighbourhood Centres services as tenants opted out of the laundry charge
- Other fees and charges were forecasting an over-recovery of income of £44k related to additional unbudgeted income in respect of the sale of tenants contents insurance and from utility companies for the use of solar panels

Resolved:- (1) That the latest financial projection against budget for

2013/14 be noted.

(2) That a report be submitted on long term voids.

J32. YEAR END PERFORMANCE MONITORING

The Director of Housing and Neighbourhoods presented the 2012/13 Key Performance Indicator results for the Housing and Neighbourhood Service elements of the Directorate including a comparison for 2011/12.

There were 16 Indicators managed by the Service of which 15 (94%) were rated as on target and 1 (6%) as off target.

There had been a 12% reduction in the number of complaints received, the decline suggesting the Service was learning from the customer experience to improve its Services. There had also been a 47% reduction of complaints progressing to Stage 2 which appeared to reflect the improved investigation of complaints and communication skills.

100% of complaints were responded to within the target timescales compared to 89% in 2011/12.

The report set out details of each of the 16 Indicators.

Discussion ensued with the following comments made:-

- NAS65 Food establishments broadly compliant with the food hygiene law – need to include explanation of what exactly this meant
- NAS76 Rent collected as a percentage of rent owed – the figure shown also included historical rent. Should include information regarding the help and assistance provided to those struggling financially
- NAS34 – Average length of time waiting for major adaptations from assessment to work beginning – there had been a major review of the Service and the budget increased. Consideration should be given to flexible payment options to help reduce the delay
- “Tell Us Once” – consideration should be given to the inclusion of information regarding the cessation of benefits upon a claimant’s death

Resolved:- That the 2012/13 year end position and the improvement in performance from 2011/12 be noted.