

Item No	Referred from:	FINANCE AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE
6f	Date:	21 JUNE 2023
	Title of item:	REVENUE BUDGET OUTTURN 2022/23

The report considered by Overview & Scrutiny Committee at the meeting held on 21 June 2023 can be viewed here: [Choose agenda document pack - Finance, Audit and Risk Committee 21 June 2023 | North Herts Council \(north-herts.gov.uk\)](#)

RECOMMEND TO CABINET:

- (1) That Cabinet note this report.
- (2) That Cabinet approves a decrease of £918k in the 2022/23 net General Fund expenditure, as identified in table 4 and paragraph 8.1, to a total of £15.820million.
- (3) That Cabinet approves the changes to the 2023/24 General Fund budget, as identified in table 3 and paragraph 8.3, a total £153k increase in net expenditure.

That Cabinet recommends to Council.

- (4) That Council approves the net transfer from earmarked reserves, as identified in table 9, of £5.274million.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) Members are able to monitor, make adjustments within the overall budgetary framework and request appropriate action of Services who do not meet the budget targets set as part of the Corporate Business Planning process.
- (2) Changes to the Council's balances are monitored and approved.

Audio recording – 39 minutes 31 seconds

The Service Director – Resources presented the report entitled 'Revenue Budget Outturn 2022/23', as published as a supplementary document, and highlighted:

- The supplementary agenda pack contained 1 minor difference to the original published report.
- The report related to the revenue for the year 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.
- Paragraph 8.16 and Table 7 highlighted the General Fund Impact, with our main reserves increase which meant greater stability for the future.
- The Q4 spending was lower than forecasted in the Q3 forecast.
- Table 4 summarised significant variances at Outturn and detailed the reasons for differences, with an overall £920K balance. £184K of this related to projects carried over to the 2023/24 budget.
- A reduction of £250K in the amount that was expected to be needed as a contribution to Housing Benefit bad debts was the most significant ongoing change, this was highlighted in the addendum.
- Paragraph 8.3 of the report highlighted the impact of the carried forward budget from the previous year.

- Paragraph 8.4 of the report showed the planned efficiencies for the year, what was forecasted and budgeted, and will assist our forecasting for future years.
- Paragraphs 8.6 to 8.8 showed the key sources of incomes for the Council, with supporting data included in table 6.
- Paragraph 8.18 highlighted the final position of other reserves available to the Council for future spend. This is a combination of funding that the Council has chosen to set aside for specific purposes and funding that can only be spent on specific projects, e.g. based on funding criteria.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Terry Hone
- Councillor Tom Plater
- Independent Person John Cannon

In response to questions the Service Director – Resources stated:

- That parking penalties notices payments had a higher than usual element of Bad Debt provision, and comparisons with previous years would be provided separately to the Committee.
- Parking penalties notices are not issued frivolously and had been chased prior to their write off, any upheld disputes would be credited rather than written off.
- There was a lot of uncertainty regarding Council funding in future years, with retained business rates, core funding and the influence of inflation.
- Council Tax receipts are based on numbers of households and increases allowed by Government, so this revenue is more certain.
- The Leisure Centre Management fee was a reflection of the recovery from the impact of Covid and was expected to stabilise.
- In 2022/23 there was a budget set aside for Covid recovery, and that was not all needed.

Councillor Tom Plater proposed and Councillor Tasmin Thomas seconded and, following a vote, it was:

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