

PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT

TITLE OF REPORT: SECOND QUARTER REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2024/25

REPORT OF: THE SERVICE DIRECTOR - RESOURCES

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND IT

COUNCIL PRIORITY: SUSTAINABILITY

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to inform Cabinet of the summary position on revenue income and expenditure forecasts for the financial year 2024/25, as at the end of the second quarter. The forecast variance is a £550k decrease in the net working budget of £20.139million, with an ongoing impact in future years of an £11k decrease. There are also requests to carry forward £317k of unspent budget to fund specific projects and initiatives in the next financial year. Explanations for all the significant variances are provided in table 3.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee comment on the recommendations to Cabinet which are:

- 2.1. That Cabinet note this report.
- 2.2. That Cabinet approves the changes to the 2024/25 General Fund budget, as identified in table 3 and paragraph 8.2, a £550k decrease in net expenditure.
- 2.3. That Cabinet notes the changes to the 2025/26 General Fund budget, as identified in table 3 and paragraph 8.2, a total £306k increase in net expenditure. These will be incorporated in the draft revenue budget for 2025/26.
- 2.4. That Cabinet approve the debt write-offs detailed in paragraphs 8.16 and 8.17.

3. REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1. 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.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1. Budget holders have considered the options to manage within the existing budget but consider the variances reported here necessary and appropriate.

5. CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT MEMBERS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

5.1. Consultation on the budget monitoring report is not required. Members will be aware that there is wider consultation on budget estimates during the corporate business planning process each year.

6. FORWARD PLAN

6.1. The report contains a recommendation on a key decision that was first notified to the public in the Forward Plan on the 19th July 2024.

7. BACKGROUND

7.1. Council approved the revenue budget for 2024/25 of £19.933million in February 2023. As at the end of Quarter Two, the working budget has increased to £20.139million. Table 1 below details the approved changes to this budget to get to the current working budget:

Table 1 - Current Working Budget

	£k
Original Revenue Budget for 2024/25 approved by Full Council	19,933
Quarter 3 2023/24 Revenue Budget Monitoring report – 2024/25 budget changes approved by Cabinet (March 2024)	410
2023/24 Revenue Budget Outturn Report – 2024/25 budget changes approved by Cabinet (June 2024)	634
Community Governance Review Terms of Reference report - additional budget required for the use of the Association of Electoral Administrators consultancy service to assist with delivering the Community Governance Review – approved by Council (July 2024)	20
First Quarter Revenue Monitoring 2024/25 report - 2024/25 variances approved by Cabinet (September 2024)	(858)
Current Working Budget	20,139

7.2. The Council is managed under Service Directorates. Table 2 below confirms the current net direct resource allocation of each Service Directorate and how this has changed from the budget allocations published in the Quarter One revenue monitoring report.

Table 2 – Service Directorate Budget Allocations

Service Directorate	Original Budget 2024/25	Changes approved at Quarter One	Other Budget Transfers	Current Net Direct Working Budget
	£k	£k	£k	£k
Managing Director	972	(1,350)	0	(378)
Customers	4,468	(2)	0	4,466
Enterprise	9	(35)	0	(26)
Housing & Environmental Health	2,086	76	0	2,162
Legal & Community	2,613	(50)	11	2,574
Place	6,763	447	(11)	7,199
Regulatory Services	1,011	67	0	1,078
Resources	3,075	(11)	0	3,064
TOTAL	20,997	(858)	0	20,139

8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1. Service Managers are responsible for monitoring their expenditure and income against their working budget. Table 3 below highlights those areas where there are forecast to be differences. An explanation is provided for each of the most significant variances, which are generally more than £25k. The final columns detail if there is expected to be an impact on next year's (2025/26) budget:

Table 3 - Summary of significant variances

Budget Area	Working Budget £k	Forecast Outturn £k	Variance £k	Reason for difference	Carry Forward Request £k	Estimated Impact on 2025/26 £k
All Directorates 2024/25 Staff Pay Inflation	683	625	(58)	Underspend variance indicates estimated impact of the nationally agreed pay awards for 2024/25 for Local Government Officers, Chief Officers and Chief Executives. The outcome was an increase of £1,290 to all salary scale points with annual remuneration in 2023/24 of below £51,515 and a 2.5% increase to all scale points above this. The assumption in the budget was an increase of 4% to all salary scale points.	0	(58)
Managing Director Treasury Investments Interest Income	(2,500)	(2,800)	(300)	Increase in estimated interest income receivable is a combination of interest rates falling by less than estimated during the quarter and higher cash balances available for investment than anticipated. Estimates for future years will be updated when the Investment Strategy for 2025 – 2035 is finalised in January 2025.	0	0
Customers Directorate Staffing Costs – IT Services	858	764	(94)	Working budget total includes £69k of budget carried forward from 2023/24 to finance the temporary recruitment of a help desk officer and a Senior IT Analyst to backfill officers working on projects. The Senior IT Analyst has been recruited and will start in January, while the helpdesk officer post is still vacant despite advertising for the role. It is requested to carry forward £52k to fund the salary costs of the two posts expected to fall in next year. The remainder of the forecast underspend is due to other posts being vacant during the year for longer than anticipated, where recruitment has not been successful.	52	0
Customers Careline Service Telephone Lines Upgrade	142	115	(27)	Forecast underspend relates to the carry forward budget of £32k to upgrade the current ISDN phone lines to SIP (Session Initiation Protocol) lines. Phase 1 of the project has been partially completed and invoiced. Progress has since been delayed due to technical issues. As a result, a carry forward of the unspent budget is requested to complete the project in 2025/26.	27	0

Budget Area	Working Budget	Forecast Outturn	Variance	Reason for difference	Carry Forward Request	Estimated Impact on 2025/26
	£k	£k	£k		£k	£k
Customers Careline Service call handling and service desk system solution	59	0	(59)	<p>A permanent investment budget of £59k was approved to cover increased costs associated with the procurement of a new call handling system (£34k) and a service desk solution (£25k). For the service desk solution, the Digital Transformation Team has successfully developed an in-house system, saving £25k in 2024/25. The service desk solution budget will be transferred to the Digital Transformation Team for 25/26 to provide Netcall support for other transformation projects.</p> <p>Procurement of the new call handling system will commence in January 2025, with no associated costs expected to fall in 2024/25. Any saving achieved on the budget required in future years will be dependent on the outcomes of the procurement process.</p>	0	0
Customers Business Rates Review	36	10	(26)	<p>A company was appointed last year to review the Council's business rates tax base and identify where businesses may have been missed or where circumstances have changed that would result in increased business rates income. The cost to the Council is 10% of the increase in rateable value resulting directly from the consultants' findings. They have since notified the Valuation Office (VO) of a large number of changes, but there has been a delay in the VO processing these changes. The company will not invoice the Council until the VO have processed the changes. It is estimated that around £10k will be invoiced this year. It is therefore requested to carry forward the remaining £26k to fund costs falling in 2025/26. The expenditure incurred from undertaking the review will be offset by corresponding increased business rates income charged to the Collection Fund.</p>	26	0

Budget Area	Working Budget	Forecast Outturn	Variance	Reason for difference	Carry Forward Request	Estimated Impact on 2025/26
	£k	£k	£k		£k	£k
Customers Net housing benefit expenditure	331	405	+74	Increase in the estimated shortfall of housing benefit subsidy to fund corresponding housing benefit payments is attributed to the Council's reliance on nightly paid units (mainly hotels) to accommodate homeless households. For homeless households placed in temporary accommodation, the eligible amount of Housing Benefit Subsidy is capped at less than the value of the related housing benefit payment. As noted below, the impact on the General Fund in this year will be offset by a corresponding transfer from the refugee earmarked reserve.	0	0
Housing & Environmental Health Temporary Accommodation						
Expenditure	80	289	+209	Increase in expenditure on temporary accommodation is indicative of the Council's reliance on nightly paid units (mainly hotels) to accommodate homeless households when there are no other available accommodation options. Where homeless households are not eligible to receive housing benefit, the cost of their placement is funded entirely by the Council. The increase in activity has therefore meant an increase in the net cost to the Council.	0	0
Contribution from Housing Benefit clients	(70)	(249)	(179)		0	0
Net Cost	10	40	+30		0	0
Grant Income Contributions	0	(23)	(23)	£13k of the 2024/25 Rough Sleeping Initiative grant, together with a £10k contribution from Herts County Council, have been allocated towards the cost of temporary accommodation in this financial year.	0	0
Contribution from Earmarked Reserve	0	(81)	(81)	The total forecast additional cost of £81k (£30k increase in net cost and £74k housing benefit subsidy shortfall reported above less additional grant contributions of £23k) can be mitigated by the transfer of grant income held in the refugee earmarked reserve, in recognition of the financial impact of refugees leaving their bridging accommodation and not having settled accommodation to go to.	0	0
Housing & Environmental Health Housing Stock Condition Survey	40	0	(40)	Due to resourcing issues within the Service, the survey will not be undertaken in this financial year. It is requested to carry forward both the unspent £20k carry forward budget and the £20k base budget allocated in 2024/25, as the survey is anticipated to be more expensive than original estimates. An officer has recently been recruited that will lead on delivering the stock condition survey.	40	0

Budget Area	Working Budget	Forecast Outturn	Variance	Reason for difference	Carry Forward Request	Estimated Impact on 2025/26
	£k	£k	£k		£k	£k
Housing & Environmental Health Environmental Health Apprenticeship	100	0	(100)	Unspent staffing budget at the end of the prior financial year was approved to be carried forward to fund the costs of a proposed 4-year Environmental Health Officer Apprentice post. Due to staffing pressures within the Environmental Health service, the recruitment process has not yet started. Recruitment will now begin in the new financial year to get an apprentice in place before the start of the new academic year. It is therefore requested to carry forward the unspent budget to the next financial year 2025/26.	100	0
Legal & Community Directorate Staffing Costs – Policy & Communities	61	49	(12)	Underspend variance is due to vacancies held during the year in the safeguarding team. It is requested that the forecast unspent budget is carried forward to finance the anticipated pressure in delivering the Healthy Hub service in the next financial year, with the contribution from Hertfordshire County Council lower than the estimated cost of staffing.	12	0
Regulatory Building Control expenditure	67	97	+30	The building control fee regulations preclude the charging of a fee for works benefitting a disabled person, as such the charge falls to the Local Authority where the works are to be undertaken. The process is demand led and with the current level of activity continuing the experience of the last two years, adjustment to the ongoing budget expectation is necessary. An increased level of fee exempt Building Control applications for which the Council must reimburse the fee to Hertfordshire Building Control was identified as a financial risk when the budget was approved in February.	0	30
Regulatory Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Points Project	60	0	(60)	Installation of EV charging points as part of Phase 1 of the project is expected to be early in the new calendar year, with additional EV charging points installed and operational at Letchworth Garden Square multi-storey car park. This means that the delivery of Phase 2, which involves identifying and evaluating potential locations for EV charging points across the District in consultation with Herts County Council, will not now happen before the end of the financial year. It is therefore requested that the unspent budget is carried forward to finance project delivery in the next financial year.	60	0

Budget Area	Working Budget £k	Forecast Outturn £k	Variance £k	Reason for difference	Carry Forward Request £k	Estimated Impact on 2025/26 £k
Regulatory Specialist Planning Advice	81	21	(60)	The working budget total includes the investment proposal of £60k ongoing annually for the provision of specialist planning advice on the provision of green space, landscaping and / or trees, approved by Council in February 2024. A decision has since been made to create a new permanent post to meet this need and, while the recruitment process will begin in January 2025, costs are not anticipated before the end of the financial year.	0	0
Regulatory Planning Control – Expenditure on consultants	16	46	+30	Overspend variance represents the estimated consultant costs required to provide evidence for an appeal against a Planning Committee decision. The hearing is anticipated in January / February. Costs associated with a challenge to a decision of the Council was highlighted as a financial risk when the budget was approved in February 2024.	0	0
Regulatory Planning Control – Planning applications income	(1,115)	(915)	+200	Forecast underachievement of planning income is indicative of a lower number of minor applications, which is a trend nationally. Larger applications are also now subject to the master planning process, with fee income from subsequent reserved matters applications therefore being deferred.	0	0
Total of explained variances	(1,071)	(1,647)	(576)		317	(28)
Other minor balances	21,210	+21,236	+26		0	17
Overall Total	20,139	+19,589	(550)		317	(11)

- 8.2. Cabinet are asked to approve the differences highlighted in the table above (a £550k decrease in spend), as an adjustment to the working budget (recommendation 2.2). Cabinet are also asked to note the estimated impact on the 2025/26 budget, a £306k increase in budget, including requests to carry forward unspent budget totalling £317k for specific projects next year, which will be incorporated in to the 2025/26 budget setting process (recommendation 2.3).
- 8.3. The original approved budget for 2024/25 (and therefore working budget) included efficiencies totalling £699k, which were agreed by Council in February 2024. Any under or over delivery of efficiencies will be picked up by any budget variances (table 3 above). However, there can be off-setting variances which mean that it is unclear whether the efficiency has been delivered. Where this is the case, this will be highlighted. The forecast at Quarter One was a net underachievement of £64k. The current forecast at the end of Quarter Two is a net underachievement of £264k. The increase at Quarter Two relates to the forecast shortfall in planning income, as highlighted and explained in table 3. The approved efficiency had anticipated additional planning income from the increase to statutory planning fees from 1st April 2024.

8.4. The working budget for 2024/25 includes budgets totalling £1.456million that were carried forward from the previous year. These are generally carried forward so that they can be spent for a particular purpose that had been due to happen in 2023/24 but was delayed into 2024/25. At Quarter One, it was forecast that £70k of the budget carried forward will not be spent in this year. At Quarter Two, it is forecast that £355k of budget carried forward will not be spent in this financial year. The £285k movement in the forecast at Quarter Two relates to:

- Temporary IT Staff. £52k of the £69k budget carried forward will not be spent in this year, as highlighted in table 3.
- Business Rates review. £26k of the £36k budget carried forward is forecast to be unspent, as explained in table 3.
- Careline telephony upgrade. £27k of the £32k budget carried forward will not be spent, as itemised in table 3.
- Electric Vehicle charging points. The £60k carry forward budget will not be spent this year, as explained in table 3.
- Housing Stock Condition Survey. The £20k carry forward budget will not be spent this year, as explained in table 3.
- Environmental Health apprenticeship. The £100k budget carried forward will not be spent, as highlighted in table 3.

All the unspent carry forward budget reported at Quarter 2 is requested to be carried forward again to 2025/26.

8.5. Six corporate 'financial health' indicators have been identified in relation to key sources of income for the Council in 2024/25. Table 4 below shows the performance for the year. A comparison is made to the original budget to give the complete picture for the year. Each indicator is given a status of red, amber, or green. A green indicator means that they are forecast to match or exceed the budgeted level of income. An amber indicator means that there is a risk that they will not meet the budgeted level of income. A red indicator means that they will not meet the budgeted level of income.





8.6. At the end of Quarter One, four of the indicators were green and two of the indicators were red. At Quarter Two, three of the indicators are green and three are red. Explanation for the additional red indicator at Quarter Two, in respect of Planning Application fees income, is included in table 3 above.

Table 4 - Corporate financial health indicators

Indicator	Status	Original Budget £k	Actual to Date £k	Projected Outturn £k	Variance £k
Leisure Centres Management Fee Income	Red	(1,130)	(319)	(778)	+352
Garden Waste Collection Service Subscriptions	Green	(1,029)	(1,072)	(1,029)	0
Commercial Refuse & Recycling Service Income	Red	(1,282)	(703)	(1,242)	+40
Planning Application Fees (including fees for pre-application advice)	Red	(1,186)	(1,050)	(986)	+200
Car Parking Fees	Green	(1,948)	(1,015)	(1,948)	0
Parking Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs)	Green	(573)	(272)	(573)	0

- 8.7. Table 5 below indicates current activity levels, where these drive financial performance, and how these compare to the prior year to indicate the direction of current trends. As performance against the planning applications fee income budget is generally determined by the number of large applications resolved in the year (rather than the total number of applications received), and this distinction is not captured in the data available, this indicator is omitted from table 5.

Table 5 - Corporate financial health indicators – activity drivers

Indicator	Activity Measure	Performance Q2 2024/25	Performance Q2 2023/24	Percentage Movement	Direction of Trend
Leisure Centres Management Fee	Number of Leisure Centre visits in quarter	860,742	833,863	+3.2%	
Garden Waste Collection Service	Number of bin subscriptions at end of quarter	TBC	28,275	TBC	TBC
Commercial Refuse & Recycling Service	Number of customers at end of quarter	976	1,004	-2.8%	
Car Parking Fees	Car park tickets sold / average ticket price sold during quarter	578,764 / £1.77	578,109 / £1.67	+0.1% / +6.6%	
Parking Penalty Charge Notices	Number of PCNs issued during quarter	7,864	7,962	-1.2%	

FUNDING, RISK AND GENERAL FUND BALANCE

- 8.8. The Council's revenue budget is funded primarily from Council Tax and Retained Business Rates income. The Council was notified by Central Government in February 2024 of the amount of New Homes Bonus, Services Grant and Funding Guarantee Grant it could expect to receive in 2024/25 and planned accordingly.
- 8.9. Council Tax and Business Rates are accounted for in the Collection Fund rather than directly in our accounts, as we also collect them on behalf of other bodies. Each organisation has a share of the balance on the Collection Fund account. The Council must repay in this year its share of the Council Tax deficit for the prior year and will receive in this year its share of the Business Rates Collection Fund surplus for the prior year, as estimated in January 2024. As reported previously, this means a contribution from the General Fund of £24k to the Council Tax Collection Fund and a contribution to the General Fund of £416k from the Business Rates Collection Fund. While the repayment of the Council Tax deficit amount of £24k is included in the funding total in table 7, the business rates surplus will be transferred to reserve and used to mitigate the impact of deficits recorded, and/or changes to the rates retention scheme, in future years. It is also reviewed as part of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy and budget process to assess whether it can be used to support the General Fund budget.
- 8.10. At Quarter Two a surplus position of around £150k on the Council Tax Collection Fund is projected at the end of this financial year. This includes both the £12k improvement in the position for the prior year, compared to the January 2024 estimate, during the final quarter of 2023/24 and the trend has continued during the first half of the current financial year, with an in year projected surplus of £139k.

- 8.11. The current forecast for the Council's share of the Business Rates Collection Fund at the end of this year is an overall surplus position of £330k. The overall position includes an in year forecast surplus of around £700k, which is mainly due to the cost of business rates appeals resolved in this year being lower than originally estimated.
- 8.12. The Council is also subject to a business rates levy from Central Government as it collects more in business rates than the baseline need determined by Central Government. In 2024/25 the Council is a member of the Hertfordshire Business Rates Pool with Hertfordshire County Council and two other Hertfordshire Local Authorities. The Pool was formed with the expectation that this should reduce the business rates levy amount otherwise payable at the end of the year. Based on projected net Business Rates income in 2024/25, as declared to government in January 2024, the Council is estimated to gain by around £0.7million from being part of the pool. The gain to the Council is however not guaranteed and the exact value will depend on the actual level of rates collected by both North Herts Council as well as the two other collection authorities in the Pool. The contribution to the pool required for 2024/25 will therefore not be known until all the pool authorities have declared their business rates income amounts to government following the end of this financial year. In any case, the Council's contribution to the pool will be funded from grant held in reserve and as such will have a net zero impact on the General Fund balance at the end of the year.
- 8.13. The Council receives compensation in the form of a grant from Central Government for business rate reliefs introduced, which goes into our funds rather than the Collection Fund. The final amount of grant the Council can retain depends on the actual level of reliefs applied during the year. The Council currently expects to receive a total grant allocation of £5.282m for reliefs in 2024/25, which includes an amount of £589k received as compensation for the Government's previous decisions to cap the increases in the business rates multiplier. The multiplier compensation is included in the funding total in table 7 below. The rest of the grant received is held in reserve. Some of the amount held in reserve will be used to fund the business rates levy payable for this year, while a further £2.7 million will be used to top up the business rates income charged to the General Fund in 2024/25 to the baseline funding amount anticipated when the budget was set. In addition, as shown in table 7 below, there will be the planned release of £1.727million from the reserve to the General Fund in 2024/25 to bridge the funding gap anticipated when the budget was set.
- 8.14. Table 7 below summarises the impact on the General Fund balance of the position at Quarter Two detailed in this report.

Table 7 – General Fund impact

	Working Budget	Projected Outturn	Difference
	£k	£k	£k
Brought Forward balance (1st April 2024)	(14,057)	(14,057)	-
Net Expenditure	20,139	19,589	(550)
Funding (Council Tax, Business Rates, NHB, Services Grant, Funding Guarantee)	(18,206)	(18,206)	0
Funding from Reserves (including Business Rate Relief Grant)	(1,727)	(1,727)	0
Carried Forward balance (31st March 2025)	(13,851)	(14,401)	(550)

8.15. The minimum level of General Fund balance is determined based on known and unknown risks. Known risks are those things that we think could happen and we can forecast both a potential cost if they happen, and percentage likelihood. The notional amount is based on multiplying the cost by the potential likelihood. The notional amount for unknown risks is based on 5% of net expenditure. There is not an actual budget set aside for either of these risk types so, when they occur, they are reflected as budget variances (see table 3). We monitor the level of known risks that actually happen, as it highlights whether there might be further variances. This would be likely if a number of risks come to fruition during the early part of the year. We also use this monitoring to inform the assessment of risks in future years. The notional amount calculated at the start of the year for known risks was £1,060k, and at the end of the second quarter a total of £110k has come to fruition. The identified risks realised in the second quarter relate to:

- Costs associated with a challenge to the decision of the Council, as highlighted in table 3 above - £30k.
- Increased level of fee exempt Building Control applications for which the Council must reimburse the fee to Hertfordshire Building Control, as explained in table 3 above - £30k.

Table 8 – Known financial risks

	£'000
Original allowance for known financial risks	1,060
Known financial risks realised in Quarter 1	(50)
Known financial risks realised in Quarter 2	(60)
Remaining allowance for known financial risks	950

DEBT WRITE-OFFS

8.16. In accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations, the write-off of a debt over £10,000 must be approved by Cabinet (paragraph 15.5). A write-off occurs where it is determined that it is not practical or possible to collect the amount owed. It has been determined that an £18k business rates debt should be written off as the debtor is deceased with no estate. Due to the age of the debt, the Council has already made a full allowance for the non-collection of the debt, so there will be no net impact on the General Fund.

8.17. It has also been determined that a £27k Housing Benefit debt should be written-off as the overpayment was due to an error by the Department for Work and Pensions.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1. Finance, Audit and Risk Committee's Terms of Reference (Constitution section 10, paragraph 10.1.5 (f) include "[t]o review the financial performance of the Council in relation to its policy objectives, and budgetary amounts, and to make recommendations to Cabinet (unless legally reserved to Full Council) on any matter arising out of the finance monitoring and review process within the terms of this Committee".

9.2 Section 32 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 places an obligation on local authorities to set a balanced budget for each financial year. During the year, there is an ongoing responsibility to monitor spending and ensure the finances continue to be sound. This means there must be frequent reviews of spending and obligation trends so that timely intervention can be made ensuring the annual budgeting targets are met. This report is therefore made in compliance with the Council's legal requirements and will allow the Cabinet to comply with its responsibilities under the Council's constitution.

9.2. The Cabinet has a responsibility to keep under review the budget of the Council and any other matter having substantial implications for the financial resources of the Council. Specifically, 5.7.8 of Cabinet's terms of reference in the Constitution state that it has remit "to monitor quarterly revenue expenditure and agree adjustments within the overall budgetary framework". By considering monitoring reports throughout the financial year Cabinet is able to make informed recommendations on the budget to Council. The Council is under a duty to maintain a balanced budget and to maintain a prudent balance of reserves.

9.3. The recommendations contained within this report are to comply with the council's financial regulations with attention drawn to significant budget variances as part of good financial planning to ensure the council remains financially viable over the current fiscal year and into the future.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1. Members have been advised of any variations from the budgets in the body of this report and of any action taken by officers.

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

11.1. Good Risk Management supports and enhances the decision-making process, increasing the likelihood of the Council meeting its objectives and enabling it to respond quickly and effectively to change. When taking decisions, risks and opportunities must be considered.

11.2. As outlined in the body of the report. The process of quarterly monitoring to Cabinet is a control mechanism to help to mitigate the risk of unplanned overspending of the overall Council budget.

12. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

12.1. In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, public bodies must, in the exercise of their functions, give due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

12.2. For any individual new revenue investment proposal of £50k or more, or affecting more than two wards, a brief equality analysis is required to be carried out to demonstrate that the authority has taken full account of any negative, or positive, equalities implications; this will take place following agreement of the investment.

13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS

13.1. The Social Value Act and "go local" policy do not apply to this report.

14. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

14.1. There are no known Environmental impacts or requirements that apply to this report.

15. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

15.1. Although there are no direct human resource implications at this stage, care is taken to ensure that where efficiency proposals or service reviews may affect staff, appropriate communication and consultation is provided in line with HR policy.

16. APPENDICES

16.1. None.

17. CONTACT OFFICERS

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18. BACKGROUND PAPERS

18.1. None.