



AGENDA ITEM: 9

SUMMARY

Report for:	Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting:	30 January 2013
PART:	1
If Part II, reason:	

Title of report:	Quarter 3 Outturn Report 2012/13
Contact:	Cllr Nicholas Tiley, Portfolio Holder Finance & Resources Sally Marshall, Corporate Director (Finance & Governance) Author: James Deane, Group Manager (Financial Services)
Purpose of report:	To provide details of the forecast outturn position as at the end of Quarter 3, 2012/13.
Recommendation:	That Committee note the forecast outturn position
Consultees:	Budget managers
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	DCLG – Department of Communities and Local Government F&R – Finance & Resources GF – General Fund H&C – Housing & Communities HRA – Housing Revenue Account LDF – Local Development Framework LGPS – Local Government Pension Scheme LSTF – Local Sustainable Transport Fund OSC – Overview and Scrutiny Committee PWLB – Public Works Loan Board SPE – Strategic Planning & Environment

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Finance and Resources (F&R) Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) on the Council's forecast outturn for 2012/13 as at 31 December 2012. The report covers the following budgets:
- General Fund
 - Housing Revenue Account (HRA)
 - Capital Programme
- 1.2 Revenue analysis within this report is based on the variance between forecast outturn and the budget approved by Full Council in February 2012. Capital analysis is based on variance between forecast outturn and the revised capital budget approved by Cabinet in June 2012.

2. General Fund Revenue Account

- 2.1 The General Fund (GF) revenue account records the income and expenditure associated with all Council functions except management of the Council's own housing stock, which is accounted for within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) (see Section 6).
- 2.2 Appendix A shows that General Fund Service Expenditure is forecast to be under budget by £1.45m at year-end (6.3%). This underspend is augmented by a forecast £180k over-achievement of interest receipts. The net impact is a £1.63m swing on the use of working balances – from a budgeted draw down from balances of £305k, to a forecast contribution to working balances of £1.325m.
- 2.3 Appendix A separates expenditure into controllable and non-controllable categories in order to focus scrutiny on those areas where Officers are able to influence the outturn position, i.e. the controllable.
- 2.4 The majority of non-controllable costs result from year-end accounting adjustments, e.g. depreciation charges, which are required to show the true value of resources used to provide the Council's services, but which do not result in a cash charge to taxpayers. As these costs will not be known until year-end, the forecast outturn for all areas is shown as on budget.
- 2.5 The following sections provide an analysis by Scrutiny area of the forecast controllable budget variances contributing to the forecast General Fund Service Expenditure variance of £1.532m.

3. Finance & Resources

3.1 The table below shows the provisional outturn position for the F&R OSC by type of expenditure/income:

	Controllable Budget £'000	Forecast Outturn £'000	Forecast Variance £'000
Finance & Resources			
Employees	11,655	11,488	(167)
Premises	2,316	2,111	(205)
Transport	48	41	(8)
Supplies & Services	4,694	4,711	16
Third-Parties	264	253	(12)
Transfer Payments	56,788	56,788	0
Income	(63,657)	(64,116)	(459)
	12,109	11,275	(834)

3.2 The forecast outturn position for F&R is £834k (6.8%) under budget.

3.3 Material variances within each category of expenditure are explained below.

Employees – £167k under budget (1.4%)

- £150k underspend within Financial Services. £119k arises from:
 - vacancies within the Transactional Finance Team (including the Team Leader post), which are being carried pending review of the resource impact of the implementation of Government Procurement Cards (£89k)
 - reduced hours following return from maternity leave (£30k)

The remaining £31k is a net saving arising from a part year vacancy within the Financial Planning and Analysis Team.

- £47k underspend relating to maternity leave within Revenues and Benefits (Team Leader - £24k) and within Commercial Assets and Property Development (Team Leaders in Building Services and the Valuation Estates Unit - £23k).
- £41k underspend arising within Partnership and Citizen Insight and Performance Policy and Projects as a result of two vacancies being filled on a lower grade (Social Enterprise and Commissioning Officer and Improvement and Transformation Officer - £18k and £23k respectively).
- £21k underspend within Democratic Services relating primarily to an Admin Officer vacancy within Central Admin.
- £110k net overspend within Performance Policy and Projects arising from the ICT restructure.

Premises – £205k under budget (8.9%)

- £248k net underspend within Asset Management relating to a number of sites, but primarily to reduced maintenance expenditure within the Civic Centre following the decision to vacate the building as part of the PSQ project.

Supplies and Services – £16k over budget (0.3%)

- £101k underspend within Financial Services linked to reduced banking charges under the new bank contract (£31k), and reduced External Audit fees (£70k) following the appointment of Ernst & Young as the Council's auditors.
- £46k underspend relating to Member Support and Members' expenses, specifically a reduction in printing costs and subscriptions (£26k) and a reduction in the level of allowances claimed by Members (£20k).
- £181k overspend within Revenues and Benefits. This includes a £77k pressure for the purchase of IT licenses, which, pending approval of the capital expenditure by Capital Strategy Steering Group, could be reclassified as capital and removed as a revenue pressure. There is also a £40k pressure arising from consultancy fees on the Liberata project and a £64k pressure relating to the purchase of software to support the transition to Council Tax Support (although this will be grant funded so does not impact upon the wider bottom line position-please see income section below).

Income – £459k over achievement (0.7%)

- £189k overachievement within Asset Management relating to increased rental income following numerous rent reviews.
- £20k increased income from Cemeteries.
- £85k surplus within Revenues and Benefits relating to unbudgeted grant income from DCLG to assist with software to support the transition to Council Tax support (referred to above).
- £45k surplus within Partnerships and Citizen Insight relating to an insurance settlement for Dacorum Sports Trust (following a fire at the Little Hay Golf Course). However, this has been off-set by an increased grant payment to the Trust.

4. Strategic Planning & Environment

4.1 The table below shows the provisional outturn position for the SP&E OSC by type of expenditure/income:

	Controllable Budget £'000	Forecast Outturn £'000	Forecast Variance £'000
Strategic Planning & Environment			
Employees	8,281	8,084	(233)
Premises	844	827	(17)
Transport	1,537	1,445	(92)
Supplies & Services	5,938	5,875	(63)
Third-Parties	64	103	39
Income	(9,927)	(10,143)	(216)
	6,737	6,155	(582)

4.2 The forecast outturn position for SPE is £582k (8.6%) under budget.

4.3 Material variances within each category of expenditure are explained below.

Employees – £233k under budget (2.8%)

- £133k underspend within Environmental Services: £113k underspend in Clean Safe and Green arising from a vacant supervisor post, and two new starters employed at lower spinal points and without the contracted overtime originally budgeted. £20k underspend in the Vehicle Repair Shop relating to a post that was scheduled to be filled by an apprentice, but which will not now be filled. The post has been deleted from the proposed 13/14 budget.
- £108k net underspend within Development Management and Planning linked to a number of vacancies, which have been partially off-set by the use of agency staff: £58k in Building Control, £19k Development Control and £31k Planning Conservation.

Transport - £92k under budget (5.9%)

- £78k within Environmental Services due to fuel prices currently tracking below the anticipated inflation rates assumed in the budget (£17k within Clean Safe and Green and £61k within Waste and Recycling).

Supplies and Services - £63k under budget (1%)

- £60k net overspend within Strategic Planning and Regeneration: £156k overspend for Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) initiatives in support of a behavioural change programme in Maylands Business Park to encourage the use of local public transport (£116k of this cost is funded by unbudgeted grant income received in year). Set against this overspend is an underspend of £97k relating to the Dacorum Look No Further Project.
- £30k overspend within Environmental Services (Clean Safe and Green) for new equipment to improve the level of service and customer satisfaction.
- £200k underspend within Development Management and Planning. This was included in the budget to cover a potential liability arising from an outstanding legal case. However, a provision was created as part of the year-end process, which effectively means that this £200k was paid for from the Service's 2011/12 budget, and this 2012/13 budget will not be required.

Income - £216k above budget (2.2%)

- £170k surplus within Strategic Planning and Regeneration. £116k relates to the funds received as part of a successful bid to the Department for Transport for the delivery of Local Sustainable Transport initiatives. This grant partially offsets the £156k overspend described in the Supplies and Services section, above. £54k relates to an overachievement of income by the Maylands Business Centre due to higher than budgeted occupancy rates.
- £168k surplus within Development Management and Planning. £23k relates to planning fees. In addition, at the time of the 2012/13 budget setting exercise, it was anticipated that the Council would lower the fee it charges for Land Searches following further guidance expected from central government. This guidance has not been received, and consequently the Council has not reduced its fees and a £145k surplus is expected for Land Charges.
- £100k surplus within Commercial Assets and Property Development for car parking, probably due to the unusually wet summer months.
- £90k pressure on Building Control fees. This outturn estimate takes into account the recent increase in fees.
- £199k net underachievement within Environmental Services relating to Waste and Recycling. This reflects a reduction in prices of £169k: £60k shortfall due to no longer sorting glass; £36k shortfall on Paper, following a trend of declining tonnage; and a £73k shortfall on plastics following a marked deterioration in prices down to £55 per tonne, from the budgeted £195 per tonne.

In addition, there is an expected reduction in Alternative Financial Model income of around £50k due to the increased cost of removing contamination from green waste. The total expected shortfall of £219k is marginally off-set by strong performance in other areas e.g the recycling of aluminium and steel, where projected income exceeds budget for the year by £20k.

5. Housing & Community

5.1 The table below shows the provisional outturn position for the General Fund (GF) element of the H&C OSC by type of expenditure/income:

	Controllable Budget £'000	Forecast Outturn £'000	Forecast Variance £'000
Housing & Community			
Employees	3,161	3,191	30
Premises	464	399	(65)
Transport	57	49	(7)
Supplies & Services	2,411	2,448	38
Third Parties	24	25	1
Transfer Payments	5	5	0
Income	(4,014)	(4,126)	(112)
	2,107	1,991	(116)

5.2 The forecast outturn position for H&C is £116k (5.5%) under budget.

5.3 Material variances within each category of expenditure are explained below.

Employees - £30k over budget (0.9%)

- £87k overspend within Resident Services caused by increased overtime costs for the Jubilee in Community Cohesion (£14k), a new Manager and additional payments being made to standby CCTV operators within CCTV and Town Centre Management (£21k).

Other contributors include the unbudgeted costs of a Family Intervention Project Officer in Anti-social Behaviour and Neighbourhood Action (£42k), and the costs of Adventure Playgrounds staff to run youth clubs in the evening (£10k). Both of these pressures are offset by grant income that was successfully secured in year.

- £25k saving within Licensing due to a Licensing Officer vacancy.
- £24k saving within Strategic Housing arising from vacancy management (Housing Strategy and Partnership Lead Officer vacancy replaced on a lower scale point and Private Sector Housing Officer and Graduate Officer being previously over budgeted - £14k and £10k respectively).

Premises - £65k under budget (14%)

- £32k under budget within Resident Services due to the revenue impact of slippages in capital projects. There is a £15k underspend due to a delay in the repair of the Old Town Hall roof, and expenditure on security is under by £17k due to slippage in the CCTV capital project.

- £43k underspend within Strategic Housing – the costs of housing the homeless in Bed and Breakfast accommodation have reduced following the implementation of alternative measures (Leys Road for example).

Supplies & Services - £38k over budget (1.6%)

- £10k overspend in Community Cohesion relating to Olympics and Diamond Jubilee.

Income - £112k over achievement (2.8%)

- £44k underachievement on Licensing related income caused by a delayed increase in the fees and charges approved in the 2012/13 budget.
- £60k surplus within Residents Services caused by unbudgeted grant income for the provision of a Family Intervention Project Officer in Anti-social Behaviour and Neighbourhood Action, and the costs of Adventure Playgrounds staff to run evening youth clubs (£50k and £10k respectively). This funding offsets part of the pressure described within the Employees section, above.
- £43k surplus within the Strategic Housing Service relating to the return of a grant initially issued by Housing Solutions to the Dacorum First Credit Union for a social loan initiative. The scheme has now ceased and the unused grant has been returned.

6. Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

6.1 The HRA is a ring-fenced account relating to the Council's Landlord functions, which falls within the H&C Scrutiny area. A guiding principle of the HRA is that revenue raised from rents and service charges must be sufficient to fund expenditure incurred. The forecast outturn position for the HRA is shown at Appendix B.

6.2 The HRA balance at the end of 2012/13 is forecast to be £15.127m, which is £12.754m higher than the anticipated closing balance when the budget was set by Council in February 2012.

6.3 £816k of the £12.754m favourable variance results from a higher opening balance for 2012/13 than had been forecast at the time the budget was set. This resulted from a higher than anticipated underspend within 2011/12.

6.4 Significant variances contributing to the remaining £11.938m variance are:

Dwelling Rents - £250k (0.5%) overachievement

- This reflects a reduction in the income lost through carrying voids. Improvements in the voids management process have hastened the turnaround time and reduced lost income.

Other Repairs/Income - £135k (6.8%) under budget

- £110k relates to reduced payment to Mitie in 2012/13 for their site based overheads. This has arisen due to a prepayment made within 2011/12.

Supervision & Management (General Expenses) - £20k (0.5%) under budget

- £90k net underspend on employee costs. This reflects £160k underspend on permanent staff salaries linked to vacancies created to implement the HRA Procurement project, but to which no appointments have yet been made. This is partially offset by a pressure of £25k arising from agency costs relating to the Procurement project, in addition to a pressure of £40k in Housing Landlord due to creation of posts specific to the New Build programme.
- £45k underspend on consultancy within Landlord Service Development. This is a responsive budget set to enable the service to respond to changes in housing legislation that may occur throughout the year.
- £20k saving on bank charges following a successful project to encourage payments to be made by direct debit rather than by cash.
- £82k pressure on Uninsured Losses arising from a number of long-standing claims being settled this year.
- £30k increase in consultancy costs relating to the Procurement Project.

Supervision & Management (Special Expenses) - £194k (6.1%) under budget

- £50k saving relating to 'Decants for Major Works'. This budget relates to the cost of decanting tenants to other accommodation whilst major works are completed on their property. Expenditure has been reduced due to more efficient use of void properties.
- £30k underspend relating to 'Housing Cleaning Service'. £10k on Supplies and Services, and around £20k on salaries (against a budget of £466k) and £7k on overtime.
- £32k underspend relating to 'Community Alarm System'. Based on trend analysis for 2011/12 and the current year-to-date position the forecast outturn is estimated at £80k, below the budget of £112k.
- £25k underspend relating to the Chilterns Hostel. Small underspend on salaries of £5k. High occupancy rates have resulted in very low expenditure against the Council Tax and NNDR void properties.
- £35k underspend relating to Supplies and Services in 'Supporting People'. This comprises an underspend of £43k against laundry.

Revenue Contribution to Capital - £3.872m (98.22%) under budget

- The Revenue Contribution to Capital reflects that element of revenue surplus which is required to 'top up' capital funds so that investment plans are adequately financed.

Around £1m of this variance arises because the actual 2012/13 opening balance on the Major Repairs Reserve (which is the first source of capital financing) was £1m higher than anticipated at the time the budget was set. This means that £1m less 'top up' is required from revenue surpluses.

The remaining variance is due to minor changes to the HRA investment plans which reduced the in-year costs and meant that lower revenue 'top up' was required.

Interest Payable - £4.317m (27%) under budget

- This relates to the interest payable on the loan of £354m taken to finance the payment to Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) for the transition to Self-Financing. The interest rates of the loans taken from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) could not be finalised until 26 March 2012, after the budget had been set. Therefore, for budgeting purposes a prudent view of the likely rates was taken, and the budget was set to reflect an assumed flat rate of 4.5%.

On the date the loans were booked, the Council was able to secure an average interest rate of 3.3%. The difference between the forecast rate and the actual rate resulted in a saving on the interest payable of £4.317m for 2012/13.

Depreciation - £3.164m (26.3%) under budget

- The reduced depreciation charge reflects the lower valuation of the Council's housing stock as at 31 March 2012, undertaken as part of the year-end process.

7. Capital Expenditure

7.1 The capital programme, in Appendix C, shows variances against the 2012/13 revised budget approved by Cabinet in June 2012.

7.2 Some improvements have been made to the presentation of the capital programme in order to enable more effective scrutiny for both Members and officers. Rather than include the full programme, which tends not to show any change in future years' budgets, the new format focuses on the delivery of live projects, thereby drawing attention to areas where slippage is likely to occur. The full, 5-year capital programme will continue to be monitored, with proposed changes to future years' budgets reported to Members as they arise.

7.3 Changes to the format of the capital programme include:

- Capital projects now split by OSC to provide Members with clearer information;
- Year-to-date expenditure is included as a guide to how robust the forecast outturn position might be;
- Potential slippage is distinguished from potential underspend on each project to identify the accuracy of the initial project costing, and the potential saving arising.

General Fund

7.4 As at 30 September 2012, the forecast capital outturn for the GF is £11.924m against a total budget of £14.940m. The variance of £3.016m comprises forecast slippage of £2.948m and net savings of £68k against original budget. Key components of the variance are analysed by OSC as follows:

7.5 **Finance and Resources** is forecasting a total variance of £162k (2.5%) against a budget of £6.562m. Key contributors are as follows:

Grants to Neighbourhood Centres (line 58) £50k slippage

This budget was approved to provide support for Neighbourhood Centres intending to carry out capital works. Payments are made on the basis of suitable application, and there have been fewer applications than anticipated at the time the budget was set.

Apsley Industrial Estate Box Gutter (line 62) £10k underspend

An alternative solution was found to this problem that avoided capital expenditure.

Hemel Hempstead Sports Centre Railings (line74) £35k slippage

This project will go ahead, but will slip into future years due to the prioritisation of other, larger capital projects relating to the Sports Centre, primarily the sports hall refurbishment.

Canal Fields Footbridge (line 76) £12.3k overspend

Rolling Programme – Hardware and Desktop Refresh (lines 97 & 103) net £56.4k overspend

The original budget was set prior to the initiation of the Dacorum Anywhere project, which has necessitated increased expenditure on laptops to further the Council's flexible working objectives.

Licence Agreements (lines 98 and 99) net £5.4k underspend

Negotiation of improved terms on the Enterprise Agreements (£17.8k) offset the overspend on Software (£12.5k).

ICT Consultancy (line 102) £20k underspend

This consultancy is not required and its removal from the programme will be recommended at the revised budget-setting exercise.

- 7.5 **Housing & Community** is forecasting a total variance of £2.272m (40%) against a budget of £5.649m. Key contributors are as follows:

Affordable Housing Development Fund (line 127) £1.6m slippage

This fund was made available to the Strategic Housing service to enable it to provide grants to Housing Association partners on application. It is unlikely that it will be used within 2012/13 due to a shortage of suitable projects

Hemel Gym refurbishment (line 128) £600k slippage

Around £600k on this project is now expected to slip into 2013/14 due to delays in the sports centre's procurement process.

CCTV System Upgrade (line 134) £12k forecast overspend

Costs have been revised up in response to receipt of further information. This represents a 2.4% increase.

Old Town Hall Refurbishment (line 135) £50k slippage

Slippage due to further investigation of planning restrictions that emerged following initial works to sink a disabled access lift into the basement.

External Electrical Supply to Town Centre (line 136) £33k underspend

- 7.6 **Strategic Planning & Environment** is forecasting a total variance of £582k (21%) against a budget of £2.729m. Key contributors are as follows:

Old Town Environmental Enhancements (line163) £500k slippage

Awaiting County Council development plans to be brought forward.

Play Area Refurbishment programme (line 169) £25k slippage

Further Recycling Facilities for Flats (line 170) £57k underspend

This budget will be reviewed as part of the revised budget-setting process.

HRA

- 7.7 The HRA is currently forecasting to underspend against its major works capital programme by £316k (2%).