



Report to Policy Committee

Author/Lead Officer of Report: Philip Gregory,
Director of Finance and Commercial Services

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Report of: *Philip Gregory, Director of Finance & Commercial Services*

Report to: *Strategy & Resources Committee*

Date of Decision: *26th June 2024*

Subject: *2023-24 Final Outturn Budget Monitoring Report*

Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) been undertaken? Yes No

If YES, what EIA reference number has it been given? *(Insert reference number)*

Has appropriate consultation taken place? Yes No

Has a Climate Impact Assessment (CIA) been undertaken? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

If YES, give details as to whether the exemption applies to the full report / part of the report and/or appendices and complete below:-

“The (report/appendix) is not for publication because it contains exempt information under Paragraph (insert relevant paragraph number) of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).”

Purpose of Report:

This report presents the Council’s final outturn position for 2023/24

Recommendations:

The Committee is recommended to:

Note the updated information and management actions on the 2023/24 Revenue Budget Outturn as described in this report.

Background Papers:

[2023/24 Revenue Budget](#)

Lead Officer to complete: -		
1	I have consulted the relevant departments in respect of any relevant implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist, and comments have been incorporated / additional forms completed / EIA completed, where required.	Finance: Philip Gregory, <i>Director of Finance and Commercial Services</i>
		Legal: <i>Robert Parkin, Assistant Director, Legal Services</i>
		Equalities & Consultation: <i>Adele Robinson, Equalities and Engagement Manager, Policy, and Performance.</i>
		Climate: n/a
<i>Legal, financial/commercial and equalities implications must be included within the report and the name of the officer consulted must be included above.</i>		
2	SLB member who approved submission:	<i>Philip Gregory, Director of Finance and Commercial Services</i>
3	Committee Chair consulted:	<i>Cllr Zahira Naz, Chair of the Finance Committee</i>
4	I confirm that all necessary approval has been obtained in respect of the implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist and that the report has been approved for submission to the Committee by the EMT member indicated at 2. In addition, any additional forms have been completed and signed off as required at 1.	
	Lead Officer Name: <i>Philip Gregory</i> <i>Jane Wilby</i>	Job Title: <i>Director of Finance and Commercial Services</i> <i>Assistant Director Finance & Accounting</i>
	Date: 24 th May 2024	

1.0 PROPOSAL

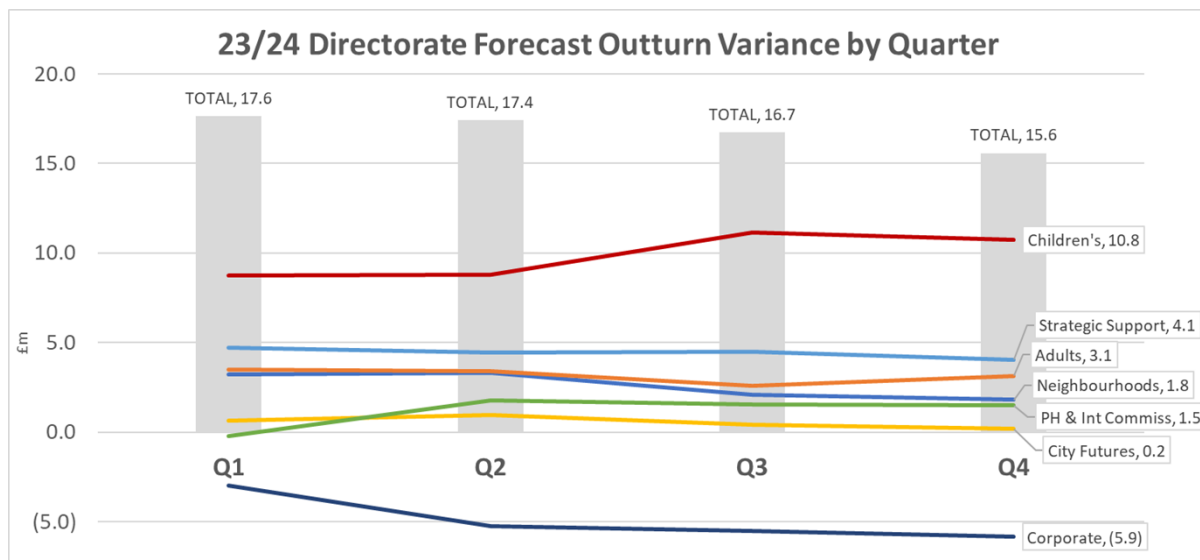
1.1. This report provides an update on the final outturn position for Sheffield City Council's revenue budget for 2023/24.

2023-24 Q4 Financial Position by Directorate

1.2. The final outturn position for 2023-24 showed the Council's revenue budget overspent by £15.6m, approximately 3.1% of the net revenue budget.

Full Year £m	Final Outturn	Budget Variance	% Var to budget	
Neighbourhood Services	153.4	151.6	1.8	1.2%
Adults	148.6	145.5	3.1	2.2%
Children's	143.7	133.0	10.8	8.1%
City Futures	44.2	44.0	0.2	0.4%
Strategic Support	16.4	12.3	4.1	32.9%
Public Health & Integrated Commissioning	12.2	10.7	1.5	14.0%
Corporate	(503.0)	(497.2)	(5.9)	
Total	15.6	(0.0)	15.6	

1.3. The position reported quarterly by directorate showed mainly a consistent picture and stable forecast. The children's directorate worsened by £2m, neighbourhood services improved by £1.4m and corporate budgets consistently mitigated persistent overspends. In 22/23, the Council's overspend improved by over £14m from the first quarter's forecasts to final outturn. This was mainly due to additional income received rather than underlying improvements in budgets and cost reductions. The underlying budget issues still remain, and this is reflected in the final outturn position for 23/24.



Directorate	Outturn Variance by Quarter £m 2023/24			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Neighbourhoods	3.2	3.3	2.1	1.8
Adults	3.5	3.4	2.6	3.1
Children's	8.7	8.8	11.2	10.8
City Futures	0.6	1.0	0.4	0.2
Strategic Support	4.7	4.4	4.5	4.1
PH & Int Commission	(0.2)	1.8	1.6	1.5
Corporate	(3.0)	(5.2)	(5.5)	(5.9)
TOTAL	17.6	17.4	16.7	15.6

1.4. Overspends were due to a combination of factors. Approved Budget Implementation Plans (“BIPs”) did not fully deliver within the year alongside underlying cost and demand pressures that were partially offset by one-off items. These “one-offs” included grant income, draws from specific reserves or provisions and income from central government or external sources.

Full Year Variance £m	One-off	BIPs	Trend	Total Variance
Neighbourhood Services	(4.4)	2.9	3.4	1.8
Adults	(11.0)	3.5	10.6	3.1
Children's	(4.8)	3.6	12.0	10.8
City Futures	(0.2)	0.4	(0.0)	0.2
Strategic Support	(0.7)	0.1	4.7	4.1
Public Health & Integrated Commissioning	(0.3)	0.0	1.8	1.5
Corporate	0.0	0.0	(5.9)	(5.9)
Total	(21.5)	10.5	26.6	15.6

1.5. In 2021/22, the Council set aside £70m of reserves to manage the financial risks associated with delivering a balanced budget position. Overspends against general fund budgets in 2021/22 and 2022/23 have meant we have drawn almost £40m from this reserve to date. A further £12.5m was identified from our collection fund and transferred to this reserve as part of the budget setting process. The 2023/24 final outturn results in a further draw of £15.6m from this reserve. This leaves us £27.6m to manage the risks associated with managing delivery of 2023/24 budgets.

<u>Budget contingency reserve</u>	<u>£m</u>
Opening reserve balance	70.0
2021/22 overspend	19.8
2022/23 overspend & budget drawdown	19.5
2023/24 overspend	15.6
Additional contribution 2024/25	(12.5)
Reserve balance c/f	27.6

1.6. 2023-24 Q4 Financial Position by Committee

1.6.1. The major budget risk areas are in Childrens & Adults Social Care, SEN Transport and in Homelessness services:

Full Year £m	Outturn	Budget	Variance
Adult Health & Social Care	155.5	152.8	2.7
Communities Parks and Leisure	55.6	55.9	(0.2)
Economic Development & Skills	11.2	11.4	(0.2)
Education, Children & Families	147.4	134.7	12.7
Housing	11.1	8.5	2.6
Strategy & Resources	(463.9)	(462.8)	(1.1)
Transport, Regeneration & Climate	33.0	32.9	0.1
Waste & Street Scene	65.8	66.7	(0.9)
Total	15.6	(0.0)	15.6

1.6.2. Most of the overspend is due to underlying cost and demand pressures in services. We estimate that £26.7m is embedded in the baseline costs but is somewhat mitigated by one-off income, provisions and grants:

Full Year Variance £m	One-off	BIPs	Trend	Total Variance
Adult Health & Social Care	(11.3)	3.5	10.5	2.7
Communities Parks and Leisure	0.0	0.0	(0.3)	(0.2)
Economic Development & Skills	0.1	0.0	(0.4)	(0.2)
Education, Children & Families	(4.8)	3.6	13.9	12.7
Housing	(1.7)	0.2	4.2	2.6
Strategy & Resources	(3.4)	2.8	(0.4)	(1.1)
Transport, Regeneration & Climate	0.0	0.1	(0.1)	0.1
Waste & Street Scene	(0.5)	0.3	(0.7)	(0.9)
Total	(21.7)	10.5	26.7	15.6

1.6.3. Balancing the General Fund 2023/24 budget was only possible because the Council identified £47.6m of savings:

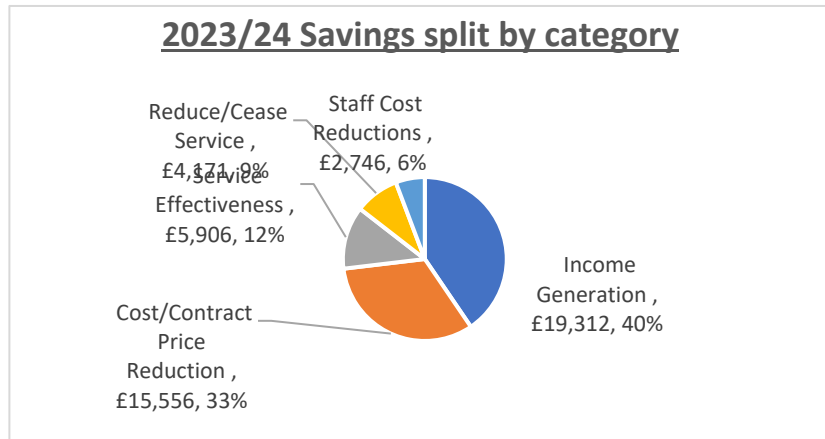
General Fund Budget Implementation Plans (in £m)

Committee	Total Savings	Savings Delivered in Year	In Year Gap	Savings Deliverable Next Year (Slippage)	Undeliverable Savings
Adult Health & Social Care	31.6	28.0	3.5	3.5	0.0
Communities, Parks & Leisure	2.0	1.9	0.1	0.1	0.1
Economic Devt & Skills	0.5	0.5	0.0		0.0
Education, Children & Families	6.9	3.4	3.5	0.3	3.2
Housing	0.6	0.5	0.2		0.2
Strategy And Resources	4.1	1.4	2.8	2.6	0.1
Transport, Regen & Climate	0.8	0.7	0.1		0.1
Waste And Street Scene	1.1	0.8	0.3		0.3
Grand Total	47.6	37.2	10.5	6.5	4.0
		78.2%	22.1%	13.7%	8.4%

The final delivery position of savings showed a £10.5m shortfall against the £47.6m target. This represents a delivery rate of 78% against target with a further 14% set to be delivered in the following year, 8% undeliverable, primarily in Children's services.

In 22/23, less than 65% of savings targets were delivered. Whilst we are improving upon overall delivery performance, we are still falling short of targets.

The majority of the savings targets fell into the income generation category; the majority of these were delivered. The shortfall was in cost reduction targets and service effectiveness.



1.6.4. Inflation is continuing to fall; from April 2023 CPI at 7.8% to 3.2% April 2024. Whilst we are seeing some stabilisation in the cost base, the fall in inflation does not mean that our costs will now reduce, higher costs are now embedded in baseline expenditure. There is an increased demand for services alongside cost pressures in social care, home to school transport and homelessness services.

1.7. Key Committee Overspends:

1.7.1. **Adult Health and Social Care overspent by £2.7m** The main area of overspend in the service sits in staffing budgets. The high cost of packages of care put in place during covid increased our baseline costs and this carries into 23/24. Work to review packages of care has continued throughout 23/24 which has helped to reduce baseline costs in Homecare. This work and one-off funding has mitigated the position again this year leaving a £0.9m overspend in the purchasing budgets. However, there remains an underlying pressure of around £10.5m, a significant aspect of which is within Learning Disabilities. Undelivered 23/24 savings will need to be resolved through the Recovery Plan for 2024/25. This was presented to Committee 31 January 2024 detailing how underlying issues, which are estimated at around £17m including additional staff pressures, will be addressed. Further updates will be provided to Adult Health and Social Care Committee in 24/25.

1.7.2. **Education, Children and Families overspent by £12.7m** The key overspends in the service relate to placements with external residential placements a particular issue resulting in an overspend of £6.5m. The average cost of an external residential placement has increased to £6.2k per week (£5.2k March 23) but due to a limited number of places in the city, placements for the most complex children can cost much more. Actions are being taken to ensure that costs for placements are being met by all elements including education and where possible health. Contributions from health toward placements was £0.7m in 23/24. High-cost placements are also being reviewed.

The savings proposal for £1.6m to increase 'family care' placements was undelivered this year. Whilst active marketing campaigns are in place, the number of young people in family care at March 24 was 1,180 (compared to 1,171 at March 23). Nationally this has been an issue since the pandemic as older foster carers decided to exit the market and there has not been the like for like recruitment of new

foster carers. Overall looked after children numbers have remained stable with increased demand being met, where possible, through kinship placements.

Further demand in home to school transport costs has resulted in a £3.5m overspend against budgets this year. Since March 2023, the overspend has increased due to a further 179 children now requiring transportation to school. Sheffield City Council are now supporting 2,444 children with transportation to school; an increase of around 1,000 children in 4 years, and demand is forecast to continue to increase. An overarching SEND review, including Home to School Transport, is currently underway with partners IMPOWER. Outcomes from the review will bring about longer-term changes to reduce pressures but the underlying cost base will be difficult to reduce due to the rising demand for the service.

Integrated Commissioning budgets overspent by £2m due to the unachieved saving from 2022/23 relating to leveraging additional funding from Health partners.

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- 1.7.3. **Homelessness support in temporary and exempt accommodation cost the Council £8.4m this year** The Government does not fully subsidise all housing benefit payments made by the Council even though it sets the rules that determine the amount the Council has to pay. In 2022/23, the Council incurred a loss of £5.9m as a result of the legislation relating to temporary homelessness and supported accommodation. The Council is essentially bridging the gap between the amount the accommodation costs to procure and the amount we are able to recover via housing benefits.

In 2023-24, this has cost the Council £4.9m for temporary accommodation and £3.5m for supported accommodation. The shortfalls are split between the Housing General Fund and Strategy and Resources budgets respectively.

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- 1.7.4. **The Housing Revenue Account overspent by £5.2m** Persistent overspends in the repairs and maintenance service have reduced the contribution made from the Housing Revenue Account in 2023/24 from a target of £17.8m to £12.6m. A high number of cases and addressing compliance issues have contributed to the overspends alongside high use of subcontractors and the impact of increased supply chain costs across the board due to inflationary uplifts.

The Budget Implementation Group

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- 1.7.5. **A working group is in place to drive improvements in budget delivery** A senior officer working group was established in 23/24 to help drive delivery of the budget, both General Fund and Housing Revenue Account, challenge delivery of the Budget Implementation Plans (BIPs) and service overspends and make recommendations for the allocation of transformation funding. Jointly chaired by the Director of Finance and Commercial Services and the Chief Operating Officer with nominated core member from each Directorate, the group will continue to work towards improving the Council's financial position in 23/24 and hold service leads to account for performance.

Transformation Funding

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- 1.7.6. **The Council identified £4m to** As part of 2023-24 budget setting, the Council identified a £4m fund that would be used to support programmes of transformational

**support
transformation
activity for the year**

change in the organisation, expedite the delivery of savings plans or support where delivery of savings has become “stuck”. The “BIG” group has provided advice, challenge, and recommendations for allocation of the transformation funding to the Council’s Performance and Delivery Board. The allocations made to programmes within the year were as follows:

23/24 Transformation Spend	£m
Adult Social Care	2.1
Education & Skills	0.5
Future Sheffield	0.7
Housing	0.4
HR	0.2
IT	0.2
Grand Total	4.2

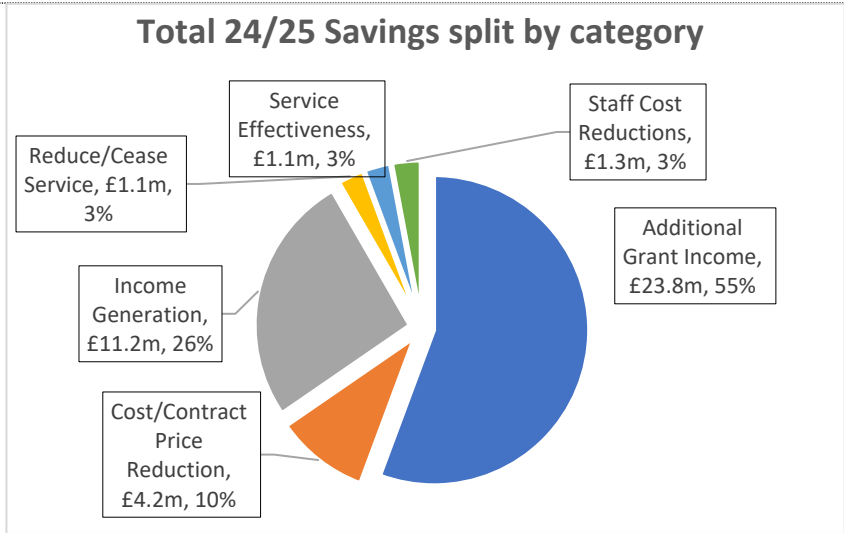
Allocations of funding were made to support delivery of programmes in Adult Social Care, Housing, Children’s services, ICT, HR, and Organisational Strategy to build upon the Future Sheffield programme. These key projects are working to stabilise the organisation and bring budgets back to a steady footing for the future. Each programme of work is being monitored, and progress reported to the Council’s Performance & Delivery board to ensure activity remains on track. Overall performance was reported to finance committee as part of in-year budget monitoring briefings. Relevant policy committees are overseeing progress on programmes in their areas. This will continue into 24/25 with a greater focus on delivery of financial recovery plans with the support of elected members.

Medium Term Financial Analysis (MTFA) & 2024/25 Budget

1.7.7. **By law, the council must set a balanced budget**

The Council is facing a challenging financial position. The Strategy and Resources Committee on 5th September received the Councils Medium-Term Financial analysis, highlighted the financial pressures facing the Council over the coming 4 years and the potential gap of £61.2m in resources. On February 21st 2024, the Strategy and Resources committee recommended the budget to full Council on 6th March.

Pressures of £79m have been forecast for Committees budgets resulting from rising demand for services and significant increases in contract and price inflation due to the current economic backdrop. Approximately £49m of these pressures relate to Social Care Services. Through our 2024/25 Business Planning Process, Committees managed to identify almost £8m of savings to help deliver the balanced budget with the majority of savings coming from increased grant income. Delivery of the savings relating to service efficiencies will require steadfast commitment, and targeted resources from the Council to be successful, particularly given persistent core overspends in key services as described in this paper.



In addition to these service savings, increases in Business Rates income and associated grants, uplifts to sales fees and charges where appropriate, additional funding from government (mainly ringfenced to social care) along with the difficult decision to increase Council Tax by 4.99%, has meant we have been able to set a balanced budget for 2024/25.

23-24 Q4 Committee Budget Final Outturn Position

1.8. Strategy and Resources - £1.1m underspent

1.8.1.	The Strategy and Resources Committee budget underspent by £1.1m	Full Year £m	Final Outturn	Budget	Variance
		Housing Benefit	3.7	0.2	3.5
		General Counsel	3.7	2.7	0.9
		Regeneration And Development (Property)	(3.9)	(4.5)	0.6
		People & Culture	6.9	6.6	0.3
		Operational Services (Customer Services; Facilities Management; Transport)	24.0	23.9	0.1
		Policy & Democratic Engagement	8.8	8.6	0.2
		Digital Innovation & Ict	16.3	16.2	0.1
		Corporate Transactions	(524.5)	(524.5)	(0.0)
		Public Health (Public Health Dph)	(0.0)	0.0	(0.0)
		Resources Management& Planning	(0.0)	0.0	(0.0)
		Organisational Strategy P & D	5.5	5.6	(0.1)
		Finance & Commercial Services	20.8	20.7	0.0
		Community Services (Local Area Committees)	2.6	2.6	(0.0)
		Contract Rebates & Discounts	(1.2)	(0.7)	(0.5)
		Central Costs	(48.0)	(47.5)	(0.5)
		Consolidated Loans Fund	21.5	27.4	(5.8)
		Total	(463.9)	(462.8)	(1.1)

- 1.8.2. **An increase in demand for Supported Accommodation & Housing Benefit Regulations have created a budget problem for the Council**
- Exempt accommodation is defined in the Housing Benefit regulations as being accommodation provided by a Council, a Housing Association, a registered Charity, or a voluntary organisation where care or support or supervision is provided by the landlord or is provided on behalf of the landlord.
- Where exempt accommodation is provided by a *Housing Association*, the subsidy rules mean that the Council receives 100% in subsidy in respect of the awards of Housing Benefit that are paid. Where exempt accommodation is provided by a *voluntary organisation or a registered charity* (but not by a Housing Association), the subsidy rules mean that the Council does not receive 100% in subsidy in respect of the awards of Housing Benefit that are paid.
- The Housing Independence Service completed an exercise a few years ago with short term service providers who were not registered social landlords to encourage them to register themselves or partnered them with existing social landlords to act as the official landlord for the service they were providing. Completing a similar exercise with long-term providers and Adult Care and Housing commissioners will help relieve future pressures on Council budgets.
- The subsidy shortfall cost the Council £3m for this type of accommodation in 22/23 and has cost £3.5m in 23/24. This is a complex national issue experienced nationally amongst other Local Authorities. Members in other Local Authorities have directly raised the issues with Government and have sought financial support. This is an option for the Housing Policy Committee to consider about the HB regulations and addressing the costs incurred.

1.8.3. Shortfalls in income from commercial property have created a £0.6m budget gap	<p>There is a shortfall against budgeted income for Electric Works of £179k due to low occupancy rate. A one-off dilapidation payment of £135k from former tenant Skybet has helped to reduce the income shortfall in 23/24. The property lost key tenants in 2022/23, leaving occupancy at 68%, which hasn't fluctuated since. The level of occupancy required to meet income targets is approximately 85%.</p> <p>The property team are falling short of their fee targets by £160k on property disposals and £73k on acquisitions. There is also a further £238k shortfall in other commercial estate income.</p>
1.8.4. Legal Services has cost the Council £0.9m more than budget	<p>There was a £934k overspend in the General Council budgets against a £2.7m base budget. The reason for the significant overspend was high sickness and vacancy levels in the service that have been supported by use of expensive locum staff.</p>
1.8.5. Shortfalls in 2022/23 BIP delivery have left legacy issues for 2023/24	<p>Savings plans in 2022/23 required significant budget savings relating to operating model changes in the Council's Strategic Support Services directorate. Some of the savings plans were not delivered in 22/23 and have slipped into this financial year. Affected services include Organisational Strategy Performance and Delivery (formally Business Change), Human Resources, General Council (Legal Services), Policy, and Democratic Engagement.</p> <p>The Future Sheffield programme will look to re-base budgets in some of these services over the coming months to ensure resourcing is financially sustainable in the directorate. Allocations from the transformation fund have been made to support this programme of work to right size services to ensure operational and financial resilience for the future.</p>
1.8.6. Interest income from cash balances averaged a 4.9% return on strong balances in 2023/24	<p>High interest rates made positive impact in 2022/23 and further gains above budget have been made into 2023/24. At the Bank of England's last Monetary Policy Committee meeting in May 2024, the interest rate was held at 5.25%, the market implied path is that the bank rate will remain at this level until July 2024 when a fall to 5% is expected. A further drop of 0.5% is anticipated by December 2024 based on current assumptions.</p> <p>The Council has strong cash balances and agile treasury management activity has enabled us to benefit from these favourable market investment rates. The treasury strategy forecast an average return of 4.0%, the actual realised return was an average of 4.9%. Slippage in the capital programme has also reduced the need to externalise borrowing. A total £5.8m improvement against expectations has been reflected in the final outturn and provided some mitigation towards challenges faced in Strategy and Resources committee budgets this year.</p> <p>Looking forward to 2024/25, it is unlikely such a significant gain will be made against treasury budgets given cash balances and rates are expected to normalise.</p>

2. HOW DOES THIS DECISION CONTRIBUTE?

- 2.1 The recommendations in this report are that each Policy Committee notes their 2023/24 final outturn position and takes action on overspends.

3. HAS THERE BEEN ANY CONSULTATION?

- 3.1 There has been no consultation on this report, however, it is anticipated that the budget process itself will involve significant consultation as the Policy Committees develop their budget proposals

4. RISK ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

4.1 Equality Implications

- 4.1.1 There are no direct equality implications arising from this report. It is expected that individual Committees will use equality impact analyses as a basis for the development of their budget proposals in due course.

4.2 Financial and Commercial Implications

- 4.2.1 The primary purpose of this report is to provide Members with information on the City Council's budget monitoring position for 2023/24.

4.3 Legal Implications

- 4.3.1 Under section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003, the Chief Finance Officer of an authority is required to report on the following matters:

- the robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of determining its budget requirement for the forthcoming year; and
- the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves.

- 4.3.2 There is also a requirement for the authority to have regard to the report of the Chief Finance Officer when making decisions on its budget requirement and level of financial reserves.

- 4.3.3 By the law, the Council must set and deliver a balanced budget, which is a financial plan based on sound assumptions which shows how income will equal spend over the short- and medium-term. This can take into account deliverable cost savings and/or local income growth strategies as well as useable reserves. However, a budget will not be balanced where it reduces reserves to unacceptably low levels and regard must be had to any report of the Chief Finance Officer on the required level of reserves under section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003, which sets obligations of adequacy on controlled reserves.

4.4 Climate Implications

- 4.4.1 There are no direct climate implications arising from this report. It is expected that individual Committees will consider climate implications as they develop their budget proposals in due course.

4.4 Other Implications

- 4.4.1 No direct implication

5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 The Council is required to both set a balance budget and to ensure that in-year income and expenditure are balanced. No other alternatives were considered.

6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 To record formally changes to the Revenue Budget.

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