



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: *Housing Committee*

Date of Decision: *20th 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“The (report/appendix) is not for publication because it contains exempt information under Paragraph (insert relevant paragraph number) of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).”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

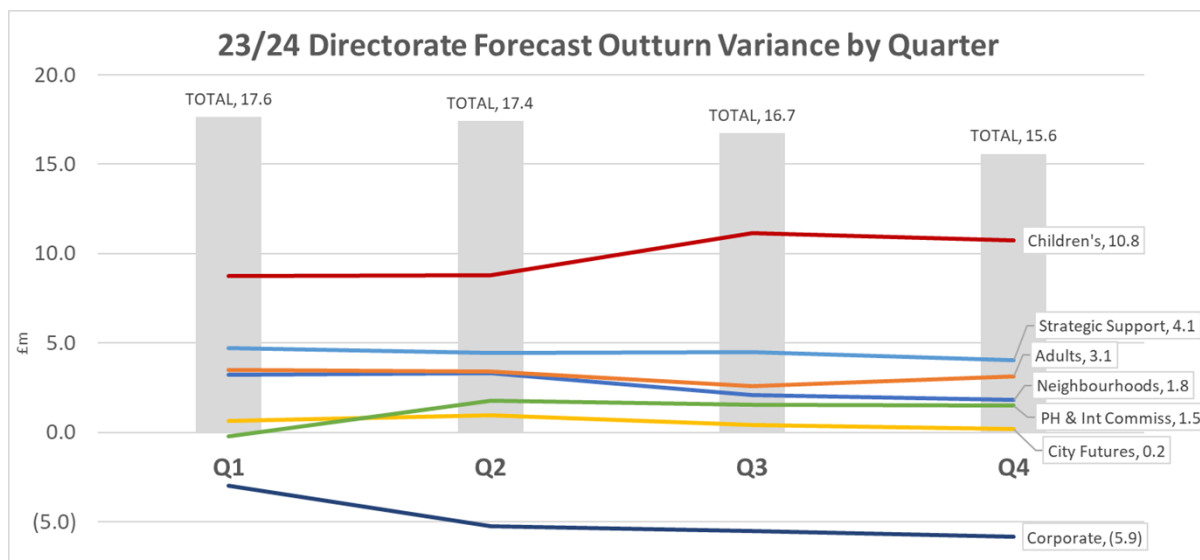
1.1. This report provides an update on the final outturn position for Sheffield City Council's revenue budget for 2023/24.

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	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:

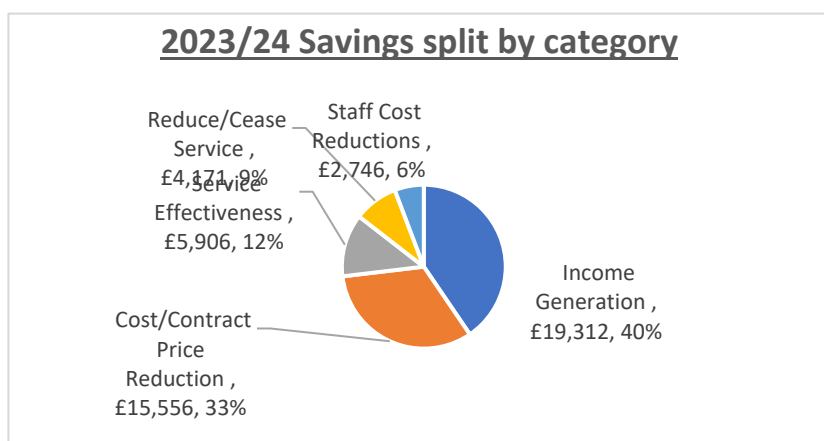
General Fund Budget Implementation Plans (in £m)

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.

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.

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

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

1.7.6. **The Council identified £4m to support** As part of 2023-24 budget setting, the Council identified a £4m fund that would be used to support programmes of transformational change in the organisation, expedite the delivery of savings plans or support where delivery of savings has become "stuck". The "BIG"

transformation activity for the year 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:

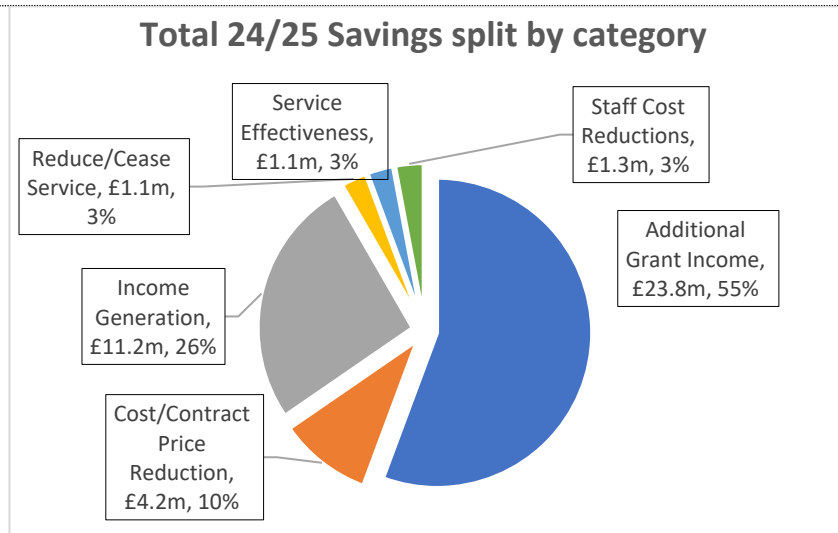
23/24 Transformation Spend	£m
Adult Social Care	2.1
Education & Skills	0.5
Future Sheffield	0.7
Housing	0.4
HR	0.2
IT	0.2
Grand Total	4.2

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 Council's 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. Housing Committee - General Fund Overspent by £2.6m & Housing Revenue Account overspent by £5.2m

1.8.1. The Housing General Fund is overspent by £2.6m against budget.	Full Year £m	Final Outturn	Budget	Variance
Housing General Fund		10.4	7.7	2.7
Regeneration And Development (Housing Growth - General)		0.7	0.8	(0.1)
Total		11.1	8.5	2.6

The majority of the overspend in the Housing General Fund relates to homeless temporary accommodation and the loss the Council incurs as a result of Government subsidy rules.

1.8.2. **An increase in demand for Supported Accommodation & Housing Benefit Regulations have created a budget problem for the Council**

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 £2.8m as a result of the legislation relating to temporary homelessness accommodation. The Council is essentially bridging the gap between the amount the accommodation costs, in this case using hotels and B&Bs, and the amount we are able to recover via housing benefits from DWP, "subsidy loss".

In 2023/24 the Council lost £4.9m in 23/24 in relation to the shortfall. There is no budget to support the cost, but the position has been mitigated by the use of prior year Homelessness grants totalling £1.7m. Use of this funding could create pressures on staffing budgets in the next 2 years, but teams are looking for ways to resolve this. This particular mitigation is a one-off and is not an option for future years. Urgent action must be taken to reduce the loss incurred by the Council in this area.

1.8.3. **The Housing Solutions team are developing short- and long-term strategies to deal with the problems**

Ultimately, we need to stop using hotels and B&Bs as Temporary Accommodation for a variety of reasons, not just because of the financial cost. The service is developing a Temporary Accommodation strategy that will set out our approach, and options including commissioning models or recommendations for policy decisions.

The situation has arisen post lockdown and following the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act in 2017 coupled with the shortage of affordable housing in the city and a limited range of options, our use of hotel and B&B accommodation has reached an unsustainable and unaffordable level. The increase in Homelessness is a national issue and there are now more than 100,000 households in Temporary Accommodation which is the highest level for 20 years.

Some of the immediate measures in place to contain the problem include:

- **Voids** – working with the recently established team in housing to ensure we are utilising our stock to maximum effectiveness,

- Investigating **private sector** capacity and alternative delivery models to better use private sector rental as interim housing options
- Introduction of temporary **new management** resource in the housing solutions team focussing on strengthening process and challenge
- Recruiting **additional temporary staff** to deal with backlogs of cases and increasing the number of staff in the prevention team,
- Encouraging **partnering** of exempt supported accommodation providers with registered providers and social landlords to maximise claim eligibility.
- Commissioned end-to-end independent **process reviews** of placements to ensure rapid re-housing is taking place and challenging the robustness process and placement decisions,
- Reviewing, and moving on, **longer term placements in temporary and supported accommodation** to provide more cost-effective options to those at immediate risk of hotel accommodation,
- Developing business cases to strengthen the bolster resource in the **claims review team**,
- Working with **other Authorities** to understand potential localised solutions within the sub-region.

In the longer term, other actions are also underway:

- Current construction costs have made planned new TA schemes unaffordable in their current form. **Value engineering** work on capital investment opportunities for Temporary Accommodation are underway to find ways to make investments financially viable.
- Becoming more **creative** with our acquisition approach including repurposing alternative accommodation or leasing opportunities
- Working with **partner organisations**, including the South Yorkshire Housing Partnership to expand housing that is available
- Focus towards improving earlier **prevention** levels and focus on prevention activities including supporting residents to maintain tenancies and better targeted support.
- Our work with the **Royal Foundation** offers greater opportunities and access to resources with the aspiration to eliminate family homelessness.

- 1.8.4. **There is further demand risk to Housing General Fund budgets** The Home Office are accelerating decisions on backlogs of asylum cases, and this is likely to start being felt in the next month. This will mean more people will be presenting as homeless following positive decisions in addition to the usual flow. This would result in a higher than usual number of people who have No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) with negative decisions. Partner organisations are signposting to Supported Exempt Accommodation (SEA). Both are likely to add pressures to the use of hotels and SEA. We are working with Migration Yorkshire and Home Office to try and understand the scale of the issue and what the impact will be and looking for any alternative options.

1.8.5. The Housing Revenue Account is overspent by £5.2m

Full Year £m	Final Outturn	Budget	Variance	Q3 Variance	Movement
Net Income – Dwellings	(161.1)	(161.6)	0.4	0.8	(0.4)

Other income	(8.3)	(7.4)	(0.9)	(0.4)	(0.5)
Repairs & Maintenance - Responsive repairs	55.1	47.4	7.7	5.7	2.0
Repairs & Maintenance - Other	1.2	1.9	(0.6)	(0.5)	(0.1)
Depreciation	26.4	26.4	(0.0)	0.0	(0.0)
Tenant Services			0.0		
-Council Tax	2.1	1.9	0.2	0.0	0.2
-Disrepairs	5.2	4.0	1.2	0.9	0.3
-Other	53.9	56.0	(2.2)	(1.1)	(1.0)
Interest on borrowing	13.0	13.6	(0.7)	(0.7)	0.0
Contribution to Capital Programme	12.6	17.8	(5.2)	(4.8)	(0.4)
Total	(0.0)	0.0	(0.0)	(0.0)	(0.0)

The account position worsened by £0.4m from Q3 to final outturn. This is explained mainly by poor performance in repairs and maintenance (£1.5m worsening) and increases in disrepair costs.

- 1.8.6. **A key variance is rent loss of £1.3m from vacant properties** £1.3m of the variance relates rent loss from vacant properties including an undelivered BIP saving to implement measures to improve void rent loss. A multi-functional voids team is now in place to address this. This was offset a lower bad debt provision than budget due to better performance on rental arrears.
- 1.8.7. **Other income is (£0.9m) higher than anticipated** The service has benefitted from additional interest of £468k due to prevailing interest rates, and additional income from leaseholder charges
- 1.8.8. **Repairs and maintenance costs are £7.1m over budget** There are overspends in responsive repairs of over £7.7m. Key variances include overspends of £7.1m in subcontractor costs due to workflow increases in voids and working at height, £2.1m on equipment and materials, £2.2m agency costs partially offset by £0.7m underspend on employees, offset by (£3.4m) capital income recharges mainly relating to firestopping, voids and working at height. The total overspend is compounded by the unachieved BIP shown in 1.11.12. Increased expenditure in the service has prevented any progress against delivery of this BIP.
- New leadership in the service is in place with a keen focus on investigating root cause analysis of expenditure trends and activity drivers impacting teams and costs. The analysis work is closely aligned with support and advice from finance colleagues.
- 1.8.9. **Tenant Services is underspent by (£2.1m)** There are a variety of overspends in tenant services largely offset by lower recharges. Estate & Environment (tipping and transport) £482k and Furnished Accommodation £470k, offset by underspends across Neighbourhoods services (£643k), additional capital management fee income (£346k), Tenancy enforcement team (£374k), Housing employability (£360k), Fire safety team (£312k) and additional Yorkshire Water commission (£299k), plus other unspent centrally held funds.
- 1.8.10 **Disrepair claims are continuing to cause overspends** Legal fees on disrepair cases are still high and creating overspends to budget partly due to an unachieved BIP. An improvement plan is in place to reduce claims and further cost escalations.
- 1.8.11 **Capital financing costs are lower than budget** HRA capital financing costs i.e., the interest payable on debt are lower than budget by (£700k) due to a delayed need for borrowing to finance the housing capital programme.

1.8.12 Budget Savings (BIPS) £m

Service	Financial RAG	Total Savings	Savings Delivered in Year	In Year Gap	Savings Deliverable Next Year	Undeliverable Savings
HOUSING GENERAL FUND	Red	0.2		0.2		0.2
	Green	0.3	0.3	0.0		0.0
HOUSING GENERAL FUND Total		0.4	0.3	0.2		0.2
REGENERATION & DEVELOP	Green	0.2	0.2	0.0		0.0
REGENERATION AND DEVELOPMENT Total		0.2	0.2	0.2	0.0	
HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT	Red	5.6	1.4	4.2	1.0	3.2
	Green	17.2	17.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
HOUSING REVENUE ACC Total		22.8	18.6	4.2	1.0	3.2
Grand Total		23.5	19.1	4.4	1.0	3.3

Of the £23.5m savings targets in place for 2023/24, £19.1m were reported to be delivered. The £0.2m saving in the Housing General Fund relates to temporary accommodation which given the context of current budget pressures is not achievable this year.

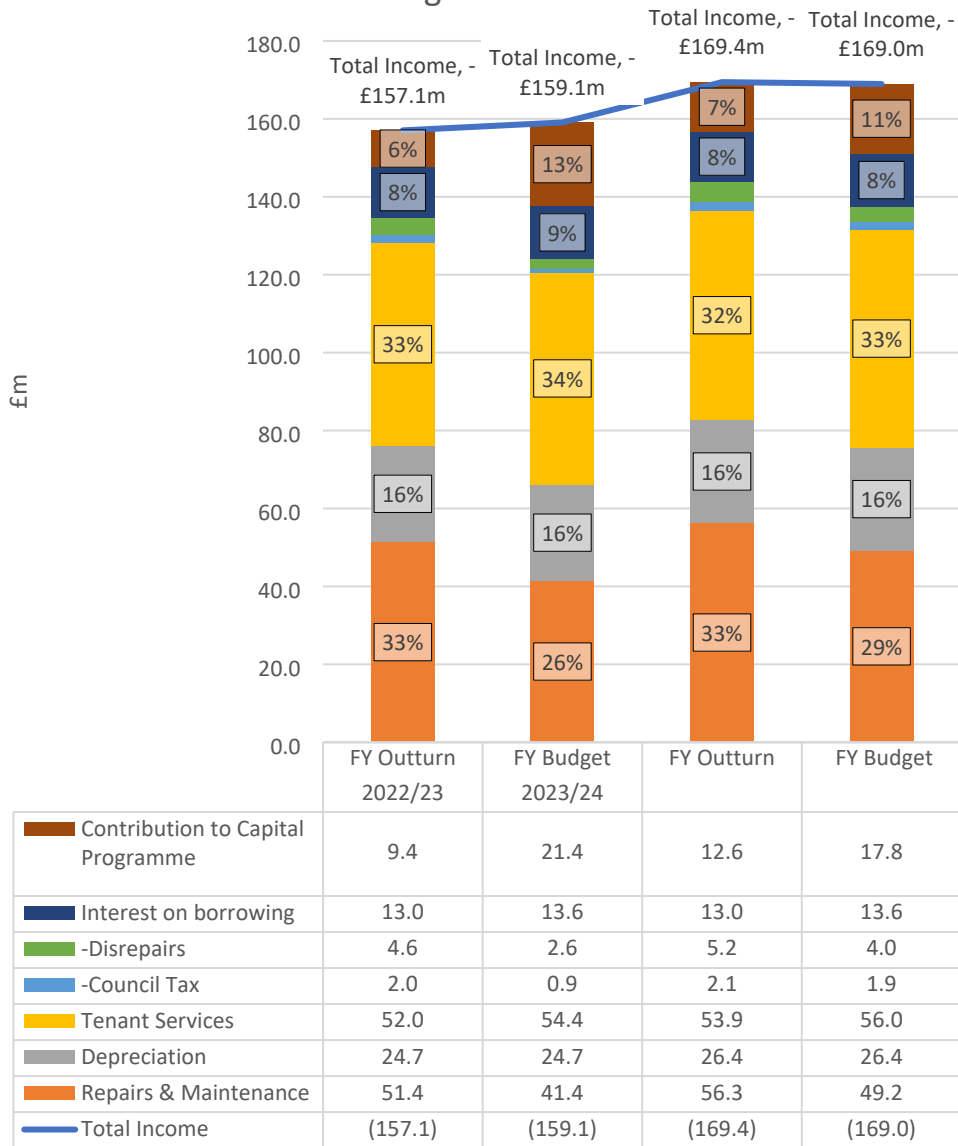
Other red rated savings relate to the HRA, the main shortfall with repairs & maintenance:

Description	Total Savings	Savings Delivered in Year	In Year Gap
Improvement in disrepair management	1.2	0.9	0.3
Improvement in void rent loss	1.8	0.1	1.6
Introduce recharges to tenants for a range of repairs caused by loss, misuse or damage.	0.3	0.1	0.2
Reduction in sub-contractor usage and a review of overheads in RMS	1.5		1.5
Reductions in staff through VER/VS	0.6	0.2	0.4
Review of Community Buildings	0.2		0.2
TOTAL RED HRA BIPS	5.6	1.4	4.2

1.8.13 The below chart shows the breakdown of the HRA in comparison to the prior year.

Uplifts to budgets in disrepairs, council tax, tenant services and most significantly repairs and maintenance should make contributing to the capital programme more achievable this financial year.

Housing Revenue Account



1.8.14 Community heating account underspent by £0.4m

Full Year £m	Outturn	Budget	Variance
Income	(3.5)	(4.0)	0.5
Expenditure	2.9	3.8	(0.9)
Total	(0.5)	(0.1)	(0.4)

The community heating position was better than budget due to reduced gas spend this year.

1.8.15 Overspends in the HRA impact the capital programme

The final outturn position results in a reduced contribution to the future programme. A sustained improvement in revenue budgets in 2024/25 must be delivered to ensure the long-term capital programme and HRA business plan remains affordable.

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.