

Finance and Resources Committee

10.00am, Thursday, 25 January 2024

Corporate Services Directorate: Revenue Budget Monitoring 2023/24 – Month Eight position

Executive/routine
Wards

Routine
All

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 It is recommended that the Finance and Resources Committee notes:
 - 1.1.1 Corporate Services Directorate is forecasting an underspend of £1.092m for services delivered by the Directorate in 2023/24.
 - 1.1.2 measures will continue to be progressed to fully deliver approved savings targets and to offset budget pressures to achieve outturn within the approved revenue budget for 2023/24.
 - 1.1.3 the ongoing risks to the achievement of a balanced revenue budget projection for services delivered by Corporate Services Directorate.

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2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 Corporate Services Directorate is forecasting a favourable variance of £1.092m for services delivered by the Directorate in 2023/24, based on the eight-month revenue budget monitoring position. Measures will continue to be progressed to fully deliver approved savings targets and to offset budget pressures to achieve outturn within the approved revenue budget.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Council's Financial Regulations require submission of quarterly monitoring reports on service financial performance to the Finance and Resources Committee.

4. Main report

- 4.1 Corporate Services Directorate revenue budget for 2023/24 is £86.305m. This includes a range of Council-wide contracts - for example the Council's ICT contract, external audit fee and Scotland Excel membership. The Directorate provides services directly delivered to the public, including Customer Contact services, Benefits processing and Registration Services. Professional support services are provided for Finance and Procurement services, Human Resources, Legal services, Strategic Policy support and Corporate Communications.
- 4.2 This budget monitoring report also includes financial performance of the Chief Executive's Office.
- 4.3 The period eight forecast is an underspend of £1.092m. This is a favourable movement of £0.488m from the position reported to Finance and Resources Committee on 21 November 2023. The movement principally reflects a reduction in the forecast of 2023/24 expenditure required to implement the recommendations of the Independent Review into Whistleblowing and Organisational Culture.

- 4.4 An analysis of the budget and forecast by Corporate Services Directorate Divisions and for the Chief Executive's Office is shown in Appendix 1.
- 4.5 The forecast underspends for Finance and Procurement and Strategy and Policy services continue to reflect one-off underspends on employee costs and are stated after the forecast achievement of employee turnover savings target.
- 4.6 The forecast underspends for Human Resources and Legal and Assurance services reflect a reduction in forecast expenditure required to implement recommendations of the Independent Review into Whistleblowing and Organisational Culture. This is due to recruitment to vacancies taking longer than planned. The full budget is anticipated to be required in future years. This will be kept under review.
- 4.7 The approved 2023/24 revenue budget requires Corporate Services Directorate to achieve incremental savings of £1.785m.
- 4.8 All approved savings remain on track for full delivery and are assessed as 'Green.'
- 4.9 At this stage in the financial year, the principal financial risks identified for Corporate Services Directorate services are:
- 4.9.1 Council approved investment of £2 million to support delivery of the HR system replacement. The Project Board tracks and manages delivery of the project. Until the replacement system is fully implemented, there remains a risk as to project delivery within the allocated financial resources.
- 4.9.2 Smart Cities savings target – ICT enabled business cases continue to be progressed to achieve savings of £0.2m. Until business cases are fully developed and implemented, there remains a risk as to achievement of the savings target.
- 4.9.3 ICT licences – negotiations continue to be progressed with the Council's ICT partner. Until negotiations are fully concluded, a risk of additional cost remains.
- 4.10 All current and emerging risks will be subject to ongoing tracking and development of mitigation measures where required for the remainder of 2023/24.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 Continuing work to identify mitigating measures through workforce and discretionary expenditure controls to manage financial risks and take timely remedial action, where adverse variances become apparent.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 This report forecasts financial outturn for Corporate Services Directorate to be £1.092m less than the approved revenue budget for 2023/24.

7. Equality and Poverty Impact

- 7.1 There are no equality, human rights (including children's rights) and socio-economic disadvantage implications arising as a consequence of this report.

8. Climate and Nature Emergency Implications

- 8.1 There are no Climate and Nature Emergency implications arising as a consequence of this report.

9. Risk, policy, compliance, governance and community impact

- 9.1 Whilst the report provides a forecast of financial outturn of £1.092m less than the approved revenue budget for Corporate Services Directorate based on financial performance and conditions existing on 30 November 2023, there remains a risk that changing circumstances and events will result in budget pressures emerging in the remaining months of 2023/24.
- 9.2 All current and emerging risks will be subject to ongoing tracking, development of mitigation measures and review for the remainder of 2023/24.
- 9.3 Financial performance will be tracked by Corporate Services Management Team and service management teams each month to identify and mitigate emerging financial risks.
- 9.4 There are no health and safety, governance, compliance or regulatory implications arising from this report.

10. Background reading/external references

- 10.1 [Corporate Services Directorate: Revenue Budget Monitoring 2023/24 – Month Five position](#), Finance and Resources Committee, 21 November 2023.
- 10.2 [Independent Review into Whistleblowing and Organisational Culture – next steps](#), City of Edinburgh Council, 10 February 2022.

11. Appendices

- 11.1 Appendix 1 – Corporate Services Directorate and Chief Executive's Office Revenue Budget Monitoring 2023/24 - Month Eight position

Appendix 1

Corporate Services Directorate and Chief Executive's Office

Revenue Budget Monitoring 2023/24

Month Eight position

Forecast Revenue Outturn by Division

	Revised Budget	Projected Outturn	Projected Variance	Adverse / Favourable
	£'000	£'000	£'000	
Customer and Digital Services	58,822	58,822	0	-
Finance and Procurement Services	7,667	7,507	(160)	Fav
Human Resources	5,724	5,604	(120)	Fav
Legal and Assurance	9,654	9,176	(478)	Fav
Strategy and Communications	4,196	3,802	(394)	Fav
Service-wide costs.	242	302	60	Adv
Total Net Expenditure	86,305	85,213	(1,092)	Fav
Chief Executive's Office	233	233	0	-