

MONITORING REPORT FROM DIRECTORS OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

DATE: 23 July 2009

PURPOSE

To update members on activity within the Children's Services Directorates during the period to 30 June 2009.

BACKGROUND

The Children's Services Directorate budget is projected to be overspent by £595k, an increase on the £22k reported last month. The projected overspend is mainly related to increasing numbers of children in care, reflecting a national trend.

SPECIFIC AREAS FOR ATTENTION

Revenue Budget

LA funded Children's Services

Last month's service monitoring report highlighted an increase in special guardianship payments compared with last year and indicated that other budget pressures within Safeguarding relating to increased numbers of children in care were beginning to emerge. Anecdotal evidence suggests this is part of a national trend. Numbers of RBWM children in care in May had risen to 109 compared with 72 at the same time last year.

The cost implications of these developments have become clearer with the internal foster care and residential care budgets already under pressure at the end of the first quarter. Internal foster care placements have increased by around 30% over the last 5 months, adding significantly to overall costs. This increase has also had a knock-on effect on the number of RBWM foster places available. As a result, we have had to place more children in higher cost agency foster care than has previously been the case. Overall, foster care budgets are now projected to overspend by £239k. Residential placements budgets are also again under pressure as a result of a net increase of 3 children in the numbers of children placed since April compared with the previous year. The projected overspend of £298k on residential care is partially offset by other projected underspends elsewhere in safeguarding.

Last month we reported a projected underspend of £48k on the home to school transport budget due to lower contractual inflation than anticipated. This budget has now been reduced by the same amount and taken into savings. Contracts for SEN transport worth around £1.4 million are currently being retendered for the next three year period starting in September 2009, and it is anticipated that this process will result in a further overall cost reduction in 2009-10 and beyond.

MONITORING REPORT FROM DIRECTORS OF ADULT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

DATE: 23 July 2009

PURPOSE

To update members on activity within the Adult and Community Services Directorates during the period to 30 June 2009.

BACKGROUND

The Adult and Community Services Directorate budget is projected to be underspent by £205k which is a decrease of £69k against the £274k underspend reported last month. The overall underspend relates mainly to the impact of demographic changes.

SPECIFIC AREAS FOR ATTENTION

Revenue Budget

The Adult and Community Services budget has been adjusted to take account of the impact of inflation on residential and nursing home fees which is anticipated to be £165k less than originally budgeted for. This amount has now been taken into savings and is no longer included in the reported variance.

The impact of a number of underspends in 2008/9 and current demographic trends would indicate that approximately £100k of the £570k demographic growth allocation for 2009/10 may not be required.

There are continued difficulties with the contract at Queen's Court and an income shortfall of £156k is forecast. The contract is under re-negotiation. This income shortfall is offset by current underspending on nursing spot placements and additional income from service users in residential placements.

There has been a decrease since last month of £58k in the projected overspend of £110k on the provision of external homecare. This is as a result of the implementation of the new contract arrangements which has led to increased block contract capacity and reduced reliance on higher cost spot providers.

The external homecare budget included £255k for the implementation of new arrangements for the delivery of homecare. Last month it was assumed that these changes would take place within the last 6 months of the year. However these changes will now not take place within the current financial year and this budget will not be used in 2009-10. There will however be an overspend of £200k on the internal home salaries budget as a result of this delay in the changes to the service.

MONITORING REPORT FROM DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

DATE: 30th June 2009

PURPOSE

To update members on activity within the Environmental Services Directorate during the period to June 2008.

BACKGROUND

The key issues identified in this month's Budget Monitoring Report are:

- Economic climate continues to affect parking income levels

SPECIFIC AREAS FOR ATTENTION

Revenue

1. Budgets have now been reduced reflecting reduced inflation on contracts of £64k, as reported last month.
2. At this stage in the year the main variance from the Approved Estimate is the potential shortfall in car parking income, especially in the Maidenhead car parks .In view of the current economic climate, income levels are being closely monitored to identify the potential trends for shortfalls.
3. Household waste to landfill is also being carefully monitored, and current indications are that the target of 44,000 tonnes will need a concerted effort to achieve, involving a continuous drive for higher levels of recycling, following the final allocation of free composters and the introduction of a green waste kerbside collection scheme and the successful launch of the Recycle Bank pilot Scheme.
4. The Directorate is diligently looking at all areas where savings could be made to offset any effects of the economy.
5. To ensure that satisfactorily high standards are continuously maintained in the Council's multi story car parks and pedestrian subways, the inspection and monitoring regime has been reviewed. In addition to the existing arrangements, a weekly, very detailed inspection will be undertaken using a checklist that will also include cleanliness and maintenance standards based on a resident, customer and user perspective. Management from the cleaning contractor and the Town Centre Managers will also participate on a regular basis to ensure that problems are identified and addressed effectively and quickly. Regular updates on performance will be included in future Service Monitoring Reports.

MONITORING REPORT FOR RESOURCES DIRECTORATE

DATE: 30 June 2009

PURPOSE

To update members on activity within the Resource's Directorate during the period to June 2009.

BACKGROUND

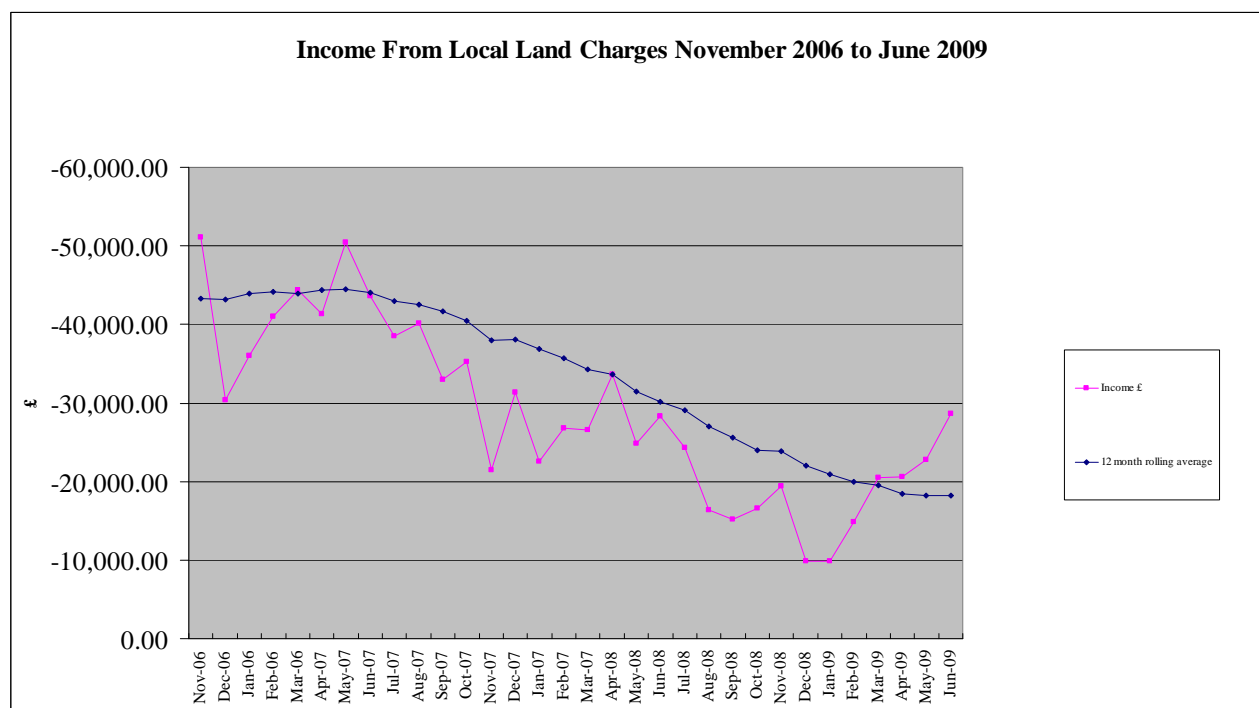
The Resources Directorate reports a projected overspend against approved estimate of £25k overall, the same as last month.

SPECIFIC AREAS FOR ATTENTION

Revenue

The variance of £25k to June 2009 relates to the retention of additional agency staff in the Customer Service Centre to ensure that the increased demand from customers and performance targets are met.

There continues to be an improvement in the local land charges income, although the twelve month rolling average is still at a historically low level. It is unclear how much of the improvement is seasonal, with the Summer months historically showing higher levels of house buying activity, so it is therefore too early to revise expectations.



The Council Tax collection rate was 30.76% to 30th June 2009, which is similar to last year (30.31%) and ahead of target (29.49%). The Business Rates collection was 29.21% to 30th June 2009 is down on last year (33.91%) and the target (31.66%), reflecting a delay in processing RBWM's own payments in relation to the deferral scheme.

The percentage of calls answered in the Customer Service Centre were back on target for the month with 94% (90%) of all calls answered. Average Queue Times for the month were 48 seconds and better than target (50 secs). The average call handling time has decreased to 3 minutes 45 seconds but is still above target (3 minutes 30 seconds). The 5 new members of staff taken on in March are now covering the majority of service area's competently, although they still need training on the more complex services

MONITORING REPORT FOR POLICY, PERFORMANCE & PLANNING DIRECTORATE

DATE: 30th June 2009

PURPOSE

To update members on activity within the Policy, Performance and Planning Directorate during the period to June 2009.

BACKGROUND

The Chief Executive reports a projected overspend of £53k (last month: £10k underspend) against the approved estimate of £6,480k (last month £6,541k).

The approved estimate is £61k lower than reported last month, after the transfer of the Organisational Development Manager to Business Improvement (£55k), the transfer of the Admin Services manager from Adult Services (£42k) and the removal of members' responsibility allowances (£50k) to a permanent savings account.

There was a budget movement of £73k from Performance & Policy to Corporate Management as a result of reclassifying costs that were previously incorrectly included in Consultations. There was no overall increase or decrease to the Directorates budget as a result of this transfer.

SPECIFIC AREAS FOR ATTENTION

Revenue

Overall variances have been affected by the budget transfer of the underspend in members' responsibility allowances (£50k)

Planning income (£10k) and building control income (£10k) are lower as a result of the economic downturn. A new marketing strategy is being developed to hopefully attract more income.

This loss in income has been partly offset by staff vacancies in the building control (-£5k) and development control teams (-£5k). There is also an underspend in Members Services (£9k).

Additional work carried out by the Citizens Advice Bureau during the current economic downturn has added £12k to costs.

There is also an underspend in Members Services (£9k)