

Appendices: Nil



NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT

Report Title	Financial Monitoring Period 9 Audit Committee Queries Update Report
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AGENDA STATUS: PUBLIC

Audit Committee Meeting Date:	16 May 2016
Policy Document:	No
Directorate:	Finance Directorate LGSS
Accountable Cabinet Member:	Cllr Mike Hallam

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To present Committee with additional information and answers to queries raised at the Audit Committee on the 14th March 2016.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To consider the contents of this finance report.
- 2.2 To consider whether Committee requires any additional information in order to fulfil its governance role.

3. Issues and Choices

3.1 Report Background

- 3.1.1 A Finance and Performance report is presented to Cabinet quarterly (including the outturn report) which are then brought to the first available Audit Committee meeting following their production.
- 3.1.2 At it's meeting on the 14 March Audit Committee raised queries requesting further information on:
- The number of interim staff and vacant positions currently held at the Council

- The forecast overspends at period 9 on the General Fund Revenue budgets key Service Areas for Asset Management (FA01), Planning Policy and Heritage (RG04), and Housing Options and Advice (HS05).

3.2 Issues

3.2.1 Interim Staff and Vacant Positions held

3.2.2 The information is being compiled and will follow at a later date.

3.2.3 Detail behind Forecast Overspends at Period 9 on General Fund Revenue Budgets

3.2.4 Below is the extract from the Appendix 1 Financial Monitoring report that went to the 14 March Committee on which the queries were made.

December 2015						
Ksa	Service Area	Revised Budget £000's	Forecast £000's	Forecast Variance £000's	RAG Status	Notes on Forecast Variances
FA01	Asset Management	1,016	993	(22)	G	Forecast overspends due to late implementation of a restructure and interim cover of vacant posts £86k, in addition to £29k on Lift Maintenance due to unplanned works and breakdowns. This is offset by savings of £139k on NNDR Rebates which is planned at present to help towards predicted overspend on Planning Appeals against KSA PE03
RG04	Planning Policy & Heritage	629	548	(80)	G	Mainly relates to Holding Senior Planning Officer Post vacant for the remainder of the year and other smaller salary savings on other vacancies within the area
HS05	Housing Options & Advice	735	834	99	A	Mainly due to additional cost for Agency Staff £76k offset by savings in Housing Strategy and Wellbeing.

Asset Management (FA01)

3.2.5 The restructure of the Major Projects and Enterprise and Asset management Teams was formally launched on 22 January 2015 and was due to be completed on 25 February 2015. There was a delay due to final consultations and the new structure was fully implemented in June 2015 bringing about additional costs. The overspend position came about when interim cover was brought in during May 2015 to cover the vacated Corporate Asset Manager post. The interim's cost was forecast until year end March 2016 as the role was extended beyond the initial 6 months. The position has been through the recruitment process twice now in 2015/16 both being unsuccessful. There was also a small honorarium granted to an officer who was taking on some additional duties over this period. The options going forward are being investigated by the Director of regeneration Enterprise and Planning.

Planning Policy & Heritage (RG04)

3.2.6 The Senior Planning Officer post was held vacant to help minimise the potential overspend in the planning service because of the costs of defending recent planning appeals.

Housing Options and Advice (HS05)

3.2.7 The Housing Strategy and Wellbeing service was restructured and recruited to over the 2015/16 financial year after the appointment of the Head of Service. Until permanent staff could be recruited, the service was managed by an interim Housing Options and Advice Manager and Senior Housing Options Advisers. Other interim staff were also needed in order to cover vacant frontline Housing Options Officer and Outreach Worker roles. The overspend position in this area was managed within the overall Housing service budget by prioritising recruitment in key areas and limiting the financial impact of interim cover.

3.3 Choices (Options)

3.3.1 None

4. Implications (including financial implications)

4.1 Policy

4.1.1 There are no specific policy implications arising from this report.

4.2 Resources and Risk

4.2.1 Ongoing monitoring of the Council's budget and capital programme enables early intervention and appropriate remedial action, thus mitigating risks to the Council's financial viability and to its reputation.

4.3 Legal

4.3.1 There are no specific legal implications arising from this report.

4.4 Equality

4.4.1 There are no specific equalities implications arising from this report.

4.5 Consultees (Internal and External)

4.5.1 None at this stage.

4.6 How the Proposals deliver Priority Outcomes

4.6.1 Regular reporting of the Council's financial position helps to ensure the proper stewardship of the Council's resources. Active financial management contributes to the delivery of value for money services, enabling public money to be used to maximum benefit.

4.7 Other Implications

4.7.1 Not applicable

5. Background Papers

None

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