

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	City Growth and Resources
DATE	31 July 2019
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Council Financial Performance – Quarter 1, 2019/20
REPORT NUMBER	RES/19/309
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CHIEF OFFICER	Jonathan Belford
REPORT AUTHOR	Lesley Fullerton
TERMS OF REFERENCE	1.2

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide the financial position of the Council as at Quarter 1 (30 June 2019) and the full year forecast position for the financial year 2019/20, including:
- General Fund and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) revenue and capital accounts; and associated Balance Sheet; and
 - Common Good Revenue Account and Balance Sheet.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:-
- (a) Note the positive cash position that has been achieved for the General Fund and HRA to the end of Quarter 1 as detailed in Appendix 1;
 - (b) Note the Common Good financial performance to the end of Quarter 1 as detailed in Appendix 3;
 - (c) Note that the revenue budgets for the General Fund, HRA and Common Good are on target to achieve a balanced position for 2019/20 as detailed in Appendix 2;
 - (d) Note that the capital expenditure for the General Fund will result in a lower level of borrowing at the end of financial year 2019/20 than had been budgeted; and for the Housing Capital programme the initial estimate is that the budgeted funding requirements will be achieved, as detailed in Appendix 2;
 - (e) Approve the incentive scheme for new foster carers as detailed in sections 3.11 and 3.12 of this report;
 - (f) Approve the release of the Earmarked Reserves to support the uncommitted General Fund balance and Common Good cash balance respectively, as detailed in section 3.13 of this report; and

- (g) Approve the virements for Housing Capital budgets as detailed in Appendix 2.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 This report focuses on both the financial performance for the year to 30 June 2019 and the forecast financial position for the full year for the Council's General Fund, Housing Revenue Account and Common Good.
- 3.2 The information contained in this report is based upon having received the unqualified audit opinion from the Council's external auditor, KPMG, and this provides assurance that the Council can rely on the balance sheet to start the year.
- 3.3 The performance for the year to date has so far been a positive one with net expenditure largely in line with budget for this stage of the year and core funding ahead of budget targets for the first quarter.
- 3.4 The forecast to the end of the year, where a balanced position is expected, the General Fund revenue forecast takes account of several key assumptions, including:
- a lowering of staff costs through continued control of staffing vacancies and turnover, and using where appropriate the voluntary schemes the Council has in place;
 - no change in demand for out of authority placements for children;
 - achievement of income targets from a range of new and increased fees and charges that will only be realised across the whole of the year; and
 - a continuing strong emphasis on managing costs.
- 3.5 The Council retains a contingency budget to address unexpected and unplanned expenditure which could arise as a result of the identified contingent liabilities coming to fruition or from risks included on the corporate and operational risks registers. The CMT and senior management teams routinely review the risk registers and the Chief Financial Officer tracks the contingent liabilities.
- 3.6 For the General Fund Capital programme it is a significant year, when major projects are due to be completed and will become operational. The financial impact of the Capital Programme on the revenue budget has been fully incorporated into the budgets, but it is too early in the year to be certain of the financial benefit that will be generated by The Event Complex Aberdeen (TECA). It will be later this year before benefits are known and evidence is available, so at this early stage in the year a prudent approach has been taken to those benefits for 2019/20.
- 3.7 Now that the annual accounts for 2018/19 have been closed, this leads to the profile for the Capital Programme to be reviewed and adjusted. At this stage, we are anticipating that the Capital Programme will be lower than budget primarily due to the timing of expenditure, which will reduce the requirement for

borrowing during the financial year. Project progress is monitored through the Capital Programme Committee.

- 3.8 The Housing Revenue Account is forecasting to be on budget and the associated Housing Capital Programme has incorporated the first of the new build housing projects, at Wellheads, Dyce. Work at Summerhill will be adjusted in quarter two and further changes will be incorporated into the Programme during the year. These additional homes are generating a new income stream to fund the investment and satisfy a demand for housing.
- 3.9 The Common Good budget is also on track to deliver to budget. The decision taken by Council in August 2017, to provide funding from the Common Good to support the redevelopment of the Aberdeen Science Centre is also expected to be drawn down during this financial year. The Council expects cash balances to be in line with expectations as at 31 March 2020.

3.10 Summary of Appendices

1. The financial statements reflect the income and expenditure of the General Fund and Housing accounts for the period to 30 June 2019 and, where the impact of statutory accounting adjustments can be calculated, these have been reflected in the financial statements as required by International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS). The position at 30 June 2019 is positive as expenditure is broadly in line with budget and income is ahead of budget, due to the profile of income from Scottish Government and positive Council Tax collection levels – in the first quarter 30% of the total Council Tax has been collected.

The Balance Sheet figures at 30 June 2019 shows the positive impact of the Council's cash position and an overall increase in net worth of the Council to £1.4 billion. The figures shown include statutory adjustments where these have been made, and where this is not possible the figure as at 31 March 2019 has been used.

2. This provides an overview of the forecast outturns for revenue and capital across the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account and Common Good. These financial statements provide a comprehensive summary of where the Council expects to be at the end of the financial year. These initial forecasts indicate that all revenue accounts are expected to be on budget, with the General Fund continuing to experience cost pressures while managing these across the whole portfolio of services. Capital investment is forecast to be in excess of £200 million for the year, which will be funded by a mixture of Scottish Government Capital Grants, contributions from other partners and borrowing, as well as a substantial contribution from revenue to support the Housing Capital programme.
3. This presents the Common Good position as at 30 June 2019 and provides an overview that shows net expenditure in line with budget for the period.

4. This provides information on the Group Entities. The forecast for the year indicates that there are no material areas of concern in relation to these entities for 2019/20.

3.11 As can be seen by the description in Appendix 2 the Council continues to face significant cost pressures in relation to looking after children. The adopted strategy is to shift demand to resources that enable children to remain within their family and community, using resources which provide best value for the Council. This means increasing the use of and support to kinship carers and to grow the Council's foster carers, rather than paying the higher cost of private foster care agencies. As part of a wider recruitment drive to stimulate this shift research indicates that incentivising existing foster carers to introduce new foster carers to the Council could yield around 10 new carers annually. Approval is therefore being sought from this committee to introduce a pilot scheme for Council foster carers that offers an incentive of £150 per successful introduction.

3.12 It is therefore recommended that an incentive scheme for Council foster carers, to successfully introduce new foster carers, is approved as follows: For the period until 31 March 2022, £150 is paid to foster carer(s) per successful introduction of new foster carers, and that this will be paid following the completion of the registration process. It will be funded by avoiding paying private foster carer agency fees.

3.13 During the quarter the Council has been advised that two previous decisions can be revised:

- In June 2016 the Finance, Policy & Resources Committee agreed to set aside £20,000 for the purchase of a youth bus for the Torry Community Centre. Due to operational issues this is not now practical. The sum is earmarked against the Council's General Fund Reserve and it is recommended that this sum is now released into the uncommitted General Fund balance, strengthening the balance sheet position.
- In December 2017 the Finance, Policy & Resources Committee agreed to allocate £75,000 from the Common Good for the external cleaning of the Music Hall. Aberdeen Performing Arts has advised that they are able to carry out external cleaning within a budget of £40,000, therefore they are able to release £35,000 of this allocation. The sum is earmarked against the Common Good and it is recommended that this sum is retained as an uncommitted cash balance in the Common Good.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The full year financial position is provided in Appendix 2 to this report and the revenue positions are summarised below:

Revenue	2019/20 Budget £'000	2019/20 Forecast (Surplus) Deficit exc. Group	/	Variance (Under) / Over Budget £'000
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		£'000	
General Fund	0	0	0
HRA	(500)	(500)	0
Common Good	2,043	2,043	0

4.2 The capital position can be summarised as follows:

Capital	2019/20 Budget £'000	2019/20 Forecast Expenditure £'000	Variance (Under) / Over Budget £'000
General Fund	215,749	161,447	(54,302)
HRA	51,158	51,158	0

4.3 The 2019/20 capital budgets have been updated to reflect the projects final financial positions in 2018/19 and reprofiled across the remainder of the project's life. Details of key variances can be found in Appendix 2.

4.4 Appendix 1 includes a Management Commentary providing information on the 2019/20 financial position, including details of the movement between Reserves.

4.5 The usable reserves have moved as follows:

Usable Reserves	Balance at 31 March 2019 £'000	Balance at 30 June 2019 £'000	Movement £'000
General Fund	(35,054)	(91,297)	(56,243)
HRA	(12,308)	(12,308)	0
Statutory & Other	(11,307)	(11,893)	(586)
Total	(58,669)	(115,500)	(56,830)

4.6 The increase in the General Fund is due to the positive cash position that the Council is in at the end of the first quarter. The income received is greater than expenditure incurred and is due to the timing of Scottish Government Grant and total collection of Council Tax. The surplus at 30 June 2019 is recorded as an increase in Usable Reserves and will be used to fund budgeted expenditure later in the year.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 While there are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report, there are additional reporting requirements due to the London Stock Exchange listing, for example the requirement to notify them ahead of publication of the report.

6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

	Risk.	Low (L), Medium (M), High (H)	Mitigation
Financial	The main financial risk the Council is managing is the increased demand on services.	M	Reviewing all areas of expenditure with a view to only incurring essential expenditure.
	In relation to capital projects there is a risk that following the procurement process tendered costs will vary from that assumed at the time of project approval.	M	Quantification and review of indicative projects costs by suitable qualified staff or external body, where appropriate
Legal	Where actions that impact on the statutory duties of the Council are chosen then there is a risk that the Council will not meet its statutory obligations.	L	Prior to action being taken there would require to be an assessment of the legal implications.
	The potential for identified contingent liabilities to escalate during the year may lead to additional costs that have to be met.	M	Regular review of contingent liabilities by the CFO in conjunction with legal colleagues aims to identify changes and emerging issues.
Employee	There is a risk that changes to budgeted expenditure levels and fiscal restraint will impact on the number of employees working in the Council.	M	Impact assessments can be carried out to identify impact of fewer staff and active management of tasks, including prioritisation and a focus on productivity
Customer	There is a risk that changes to budgeted expenditure levels and fiscal restraint will impact on the customer experience.	M	Prioritisation, a focus on productivity and active management of services using the TOM principles to minimise effects.
Environment	None identified		
Technology	There is a risk that efficiency benefits will not be achieved through digital solutions.	L	The Council has modelled and used industry standards to understand the potential

			for efficiency gains in the organisation. Effective implementation and adoption at a programme and activity level will mitigate the risks.
Reputational	There is a risk that through the reduction of expenditure the Council may be criticised that spending isn't in line with public expectation of service delivery.	M	The Council has continued to address priority spending areas, and to protect people. It is equally accountable for the use of public funds and to ensure that they are managed robustly. There are a wide range of unknown external factors that require to be balanced to deal with the current operating environment. Regular reporting during the year provides an ongoing description of the position the Council is in and the situations it faces.

7. OUTCOMES

Local Outcome Improvement Plan Themes	
	Impact of Report
Prosperous Economy	The Council continues to invest in front-line services across its statutory responsibilities as well as capital infrastructure. Investment in the city will have a positive impact on the economy.
Prosperous People	Robust and effective management of the Council's finances will ensure that services can continue to be provided.
Prosperous Place	Investment will enhance the place by creating a better and more vibrant city in which to live.

This report does not impact on the design principles of the Target Operating Model.

8. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Equality & Human Rights Impact Assessment	Not required
Privacy Impact Assessment	Not required
Duty of Due Regard / Fairer Scotland Duty	Not applicable

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9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

10. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Financial Statement for the period ending 30 June 2019

Appendix 2 – Forecast Financial Position for the year 2019/20

Appendix 3 – Common Good Financial Statement for the period ending 30 June 2019

Appendix 4 – Group Entities Forecast Financial Position for the year 2019/20

11. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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