

CABINET

23 AUGUST 2022

REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING - ROUND 1 2022/23

Report from: Katey Durkin, Chief Finance Officer

Author: David Reynolds, Head of Revenue Accounts

Summary

This report presents the results of the first round of the Council's revenue budget monitoring process for 2022/23. The Council's summary position is presented at Table 1, with sections 4-8 providing the detail for each service area.

- 1. Budget and policy framework
- 1.1. Cabinet is responsible for ensuring that income and expenditure remain within the budget approved by Council.
- 2. Background
- 2.1. At its meeting on 24 February 2022, the Council set a total budget requirement of £351.982million for 2022/23. Since the budget was approved, additional grant funding has been received, primarily related to Council Tax Support for Energy Bills. These additions take the Round 1 budget requirement to a total of £372.130million.
- 2.2. This report presents the results of the first round of revenue budget monitoring, summarising reports that have been considered by directorate management teams based on returns submitted by individual budget managers. In preparing these forecasts, budget managers have taken account of last year's outturn, items of growth or savings agreed as part of the budget build, actual income and expenditure for the year to date, and most importantly, their knowledge of commitments and service requirements anticipated for the remainder of the financial year.

3. Summary Revenue Budget Position 2022/23

3.1. The forecast outturn for 2022/23 represents a pressure of £12.566million.

| Table 1 – | Council's | Summary | / Position |
|-----------|-----------|---------|------------|
|-----------|-----------|---------|------------|

| Directorate | 2021/22 Outturn £000's | Budget 2022/23 £000's | R1 Forecast £000's | R1 Forecast Over/(Under) £000's |
|---|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Budget requirement: | | | | |
| Children and Adult Services | 259,067 | 264,627 | 275,810 | 11,183 |
| Regeneration, Culture and Environment | 57,783 | 62,312 | 62,620 | 308 |
| Business Support Department | 10,105 | 11,958 | 13,018 | 1,060 |
| Business Support Centralised Services: | | | | |
| Interest & Financing | 6,720 | 12,315 | 12,315 | 0 |
| Levies | 1,614 | 1,626 | 1,642 | 17 |
| Medway Norse Joint Venture | (1,023) | (578) | (578) | 0 |
| Additional Government Support Grant Expenditure | 24,347 | 19,870 | 19,870 | 0 |
| Budget Requirement | 358,613 | 372,130 | 384,697 | 12,566 |
| Funded by: | | | | |
| Council Tax | (137,333) | (138,087) | (138,087) | 0 |
| Retained Business Rates & Baseline Need Funding | (59,900) | (66,124) | (66,124) | 0 |
| New Homes Bonus | (986) | (1,979) | (1,979) | 0 |
| Dedicated Schools Grant | (93,824) | (100,946) | (100,946) | 0 |
| Other School Grants | (4,191) | (3,932) | (3,932) | 0 |
| Adult Social Care Grants | (13,911) | (17,198) | (17,198) | 0 |
| CSC Grants | (64) | (1,067) | (1,067) | 0 |
| Public Health Grant | (17,581) | (18,075) | (18,075) | 0 |
| Use of Reserves | 0 | (4,853) | (4,853) | 0 |
| Additional Government Support Ringfenced Grant Income | (25,503) | (19,870) | (19,870) | 0 |
| Additional Government Support Non- ringfenced Grant Income | (8,912) | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total Available Funding | (362,206) | (372,130) | (372,130) | 0 |
| Net Forecast Variance | (3,593) | 0 | 12,566 | 12,566 |

4. Children and Adults

4.1. The Directorate forecast is a pressure of £11.183million, with details of the forecasts in each service area within the Directorate set out in the tables below.

| Adult Social Care | 2021/22 Outturn £000's | Budget 2022/23 £000's | R1 Forecast £000's | R1 Forecast Over/(Under) £000's |
|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Assistant Director Adult Social Care | (2,770) | (2,892) | (2,974) | (82) |
| Locality Services | 75,259 | 76,990 | 78,203 | 1,213 |
| Business Operations & Provider Services | 3,631 | 3,950 | 4,268 | 318 |
| Specialist Services/Principal Social Worker | 2,058 | 1,817 | 1,986 | 169 |
| Total | 78,178 | 79,865 | 81,483 | 1,619 |

Adult Social Care is forecasting an overall pressure of £2.767million with management action of £1.149million bringing down the reported overspend to £1.619million. As in recent years the overspend largely relates to placement costs in Locality Services.

| | | - | |
|------------------------------|----------|----------|--------------|
| Service Area | Budget | R1 | R1 Forecast |
| | 2022/23 | Forecast | Over/(Under) |
| | (£000's) | (£000's) | (£000's) |
| Disability Services | 45,799 | 46,488 | 689 |
| Mental Health Services | 8,294 | 8,327 | 33 |
| Older People Services | 16,483 | 17,030 | 547 |
| Staffing - Locality Services | 6,413 | 6,358 | (55) |
| Total Locality Services | 76,990 | 78,203 | 1,213 |

In Disability services the main pressures are around Physical Disability residential/nursing and supported living placements which have all seen increases in number of placements and the cost of those placements while Learning Disability placements remain fairly in line with number of placements budgeted and allow for further demographic growth throughout the year. The forecast also reflects the cost of 38 weeks SEN residential placements budgeted to be recharged to the Dedicated Schools Grant. The forecast includes £600,000 management action agreed to this point in respect of additional savings expected to be achieved during the remainder of 2022/23.

In the Older People forecast the number of residential/nursing placements is in line with budgeted numbers however there have been increases in weekly fees rates above budgeted levels. There has been a significant reduction in the number of service users with homecare packages, from 682 budgeted, to now 583 in place as at Round 1. This is assumed to be due to the ongoing capacity issues facing the home care market. The net impact is an overspend on Older People forecast to be £547,000.

It should be noted that there are a number of individuals awaiting care packages where we are unable to source care at present. This represents an underlying risk to the forecast, although how this will impact on 2022/23 remains unclear at present.

| Children's Services | 2021/22 Outturn £000's | Budget 2022/23 £000's | R1 Forecast £000's | R1 Forecast Over/(Under) £000's |
|---|------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Children's Care Management | 781 | 990 | 1,047 | 57 |
| Head of Safeguarding & Quality Assurance | 2,805 | 2,925 | 2,924 | (1) |
| Virtual Head | 434 | 443 | 487 | 44 |
| Children's Care Improvement | (610) | 854 | 914 | 61 |
| Children In Care | 41,814 | 37,118 | 43,565 | 6,448 |
| Children's Social Work Team | 7,137 | 6,829 | 7,996 | 1,166 |
| Business Support | 1,574 | 1,726 | 1,710 | (17) |
| Early Help, Youth, Mash & Adolescents | 5,662 | 6,087 | 5,784 | (303) |
| Total | 59,598 | 56,973 | 64,427 | 7,454 |

The Children's Services forecast is an overspend of £7.454million. The forecast on placements and client related expenditure shows an overspend of £7.302million which can be spilt into key variances.

Firstly, the variance on agreed placements is £5.954million and continues to arise from higher than budgeted placement numbers and unit costs for Residential, Supported Accommodation, Independent Fostering Agency along with the use of unregistered and unregulated placements. The forecast also reflects the cost of 38 weeks SEN residential placements budgeted to be recharged to the Dedicated Schools Grant.

Secondly there is forecast shortfall of £1.903m against the various savings programmes being undertaken throughout 2022/23. This is mitigated by underspends against of a number of expenditure budgets resulting in a reported under delivery against the savings schemes of $\pounds1.348$ million for 2022/23.

The division is forecasting to overspend on supplies and service budgets with the biggest areas of overspend being advertising $\pounds45,000$; computer and office equipment $\pounds58,000$ and Interpreter fees of $\pounds49,000$.

The division is forecasting to underspend by £169,000 on staffing despite an agency vacancy rate of 25% and having agreed for five temporary posts above the budgeted structure to ease the workload pressures within specific departments. There do, however, remain pressures across the division in recruitment to permanent posts.

| Directorate Management Team | 2021/22 Outturn £000's | Budget 2022/23 £000's | R1 Forecast £000's | R1 Forecast Over/(Under) £000's | |
|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| Directorate Management Team | 633 | 767 | 710 | (58) | |
| Total | 633 | 767 | 710 | (58) | |
| The Directorate Management Team is forecast to underspend by £58,000, due to less use of | | | | | |
| interim staffing and the now permane | nt Departme | ntal Manageme | ent Team (DMT |) structure. | |

| Education | 2021/22 Outturn £000's | Budget 2022/23 £000's | R1 Forecast £000's | R1 Forecast Over/(Under) £000's |
|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|
| School Organisation & Student Services | 1,691 | 1,300 | 1,564 | 263 |
| Psychology & Special Educational Needs | 33,420 | 33,366 | 33,030 | (336) |
| School Improvement | (159) | 31 | (176) | (208) |
| Special Educational Needs & Disabilities Transport | 6,932 | 6,394 | 8,644 | 2,250 |
| Inclusions | 2,771 | 2,770 | 3,073 | 303 |
| School Online Services | (45) | 32 | 41 | 9 |
| Education Management Team | 18 | 15 | 19 | 4 |
| Early Years Sufficiency | 16,644 | 16,622 | 16,859 | 238 |
| Total | 61,272 | 60,532 | 63,054 | 2,523 |

Education is forecast to overspend by £2.523million. the overspend on the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) is £7.728million and the forecast assumes the overspend will be transferred into the DSG reserve.

The main areas of overspend for the general fund are £2.250million on SEN transport due to the increase in demand and inflationary uplifts of 6%; £187,000 on mainstream transport due mainly to the additional costs incurred to transport pupils to the temporary new school site, $\pounds 50,000$ on the attendance advisory service; additional Medway test and admission costs of $\pounds 84,000$.

A pressure of £7.728million is forecast on the DSG due to the ongoing pressure on the High Needs (HN) Block with significant increases in costs being driven by the number of children with Educational Health and Care Plans (EHC Plans) in Medway combined with a lack of special school and resource unit places locally continues to drive high-cost independent school places and out of area placements. As at 31st March 2022 the HN DSG reserve was reporting a £20.456m deficit and based on the round one forecast, this deficit will increase to £28.184m by March 2023 when the projected 2022/23 in year overspend of £7.728million is transferred into the reserve.

| Partnership Commissioning & Business Intelligence | 2021/22 Outturn £000's | Budget 2022/23 £000's | R1 Forecast £000's | R1 Forecast Over/(Under) £000's |
|---|------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Adults Commissioning | 272 | 323 | 323 | 0 |
| Children's Commissioning | 1,411 | 1,514 | 1,467 | (47) |
| C&A Performance & Intelligence | 508 | 519 | 509 | (10) |
| Total | 2,191 | 2,355 | 2,298 | (57) |

The Partnership Commissioning & Business Intelligence forecast to underspend by £57,000, largely due to an underspend on the Young Peoples Wellbeing Service resulting from an overpayment in 2021/22 being recovered in 2022/23. Along with a small underspend on the C&A Business and Intelligence team.

| Public Health | 2021/22 Outturn £000's | Budget 2022/23 £000's | R1 Forecast £000's | R1 Forecast Over/(Under) £000's |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Public Health Management | 1,703 | 1,201 | 1,367 | 166 |
| Public Health Commissioning | 5,165 | 5,758 | 5,815 | 57 |
| Business Development | 207 | 304 | 297 | (7) |
| Drug and Alcohol Action Team | 1,761 | 1,974 | 1,915 | (59) |
| Health Improvement Programmes | 3,417 | 3,435 | 3,262 | (173) |
| Stop Smoking Services | 381 | 438 | 436 | (2) |
| Supporting Healthy Weight | 1,356 | 1,336 | 1,354 | 18 |
| Total | 13,991 | 14,446 | 14,446 | 0 |

Public Health services are forecast to budget. Activity above budgeted levels is being funded through the use of Public Health reserves or through specific grants, further analysis will be provided as we move through the year.

| Schools Retained Funding & Grants | 2021/22 Outturn £000's | Budget 2022/23 £000's | R1 Forecast £000's | R1 Forecast Over/(Under) £000's | | |
|---|------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| Finance Provisions | 234 | 1,562 | 2,323 | 761 | | |
| Hr Provisions | 402 | 677 | 399 | (277) | | |
| School Grants | 42,567 | 47,452 | 46,669 | (783) | | |
| Total | 43,204 | 49,690 | 49,392 | (298) | | |
| Schools Retained Funding & Grants is forecast to underspend by £298,000, with the | | | | | | |

underspend principally relating to schools historic pensions and redundancy costs.

5. Regeneration, Culture and Environment

5.1. The Directorate forecast is an overspend of £308,000. Details of the forecasts in each service area are set out in the tables below.

| Communications & Marketing | 2021/22 Outturn £000's | Budget 2022/23 £000's | R1 Forecast £000's | R1 Forecast Over/(Under) £000's |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Communications & Marketing | (8) | 21 | 50 | 30 |
| Total | (8) | 21 | 50 | 30 |

The service is forecast to overspend by £30,000, there are two main reasons. Firstly, a pressure relating to producing Medway Matters due to increased printing and distribution costs, and secondly, a pressure in respect of lower than budgeted internal design fee income.

| Culture & Community | 2021/22 Outturn £000's | Budget 2022/23 £000's | R1 Forecast £000's | R1 Forecast Over/(Under) £000's |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Sport, Leisure, Tourism & Heritage | 3,609 | 3,751 | 3,998 | 247 |
| Cultural Services | 1,894 | 2,060 | 2,006 | (54) |
| Planning | 1,335 | 1,291 | 1,538 | 247 |
| South Thames Gateway Partnership | 127 | 135 | 135 | 0 |
| Strategic Housing | 5,048 | 5,843 | 5,710 | (132) |
| Libraries & Community Hubs | 3,753 | 3,925 | 3,943 | 18 |
| Culture & Community Support | 73 | 103 | 109 | 6 |
| Total | 15,837 | 17,108 | 17,439 | 331 |

The Culture & Community division forecast is a net overspend of £331,000.

The Sport, Leisure, Tourism and Heritage (SLTH) forecast is a pressure of £247,000. This is largely due a predicted shortfall on Leisure Centre income as income budgets take longer to recover from the impact of the pandemic than the budget has allowed for. This pressure will be reviewed as we move through the year and more data becomes available.

The other area of significant pressure is the Planning Service which is reporting a pressure of $\pounds 247,000$. The two main factors are a forecast pressure of $\pounds 154,000$ relating to the use of consultants for legal and specialist planning work and a shortfall against the Planning Performance (PPA) income target representing a pressure of $\pounds 131,000$, this income target was increased significantly in previous budget builds and has proved difficult to achieve in previous years. These pressures are offset by $\pounds 39,000$ additional income from Capital Accounts reflecting the time planning staff are working on the Future Hoo project.

There is a forecast underspend relating to strategic housing of £132,000 which primarily relates to the cost of homelessness, however the cost of living crisis represents a risk to this area of expenditure.

The remainder of services are forecast broadly to budget.

| Deangate Golf | 2021/22 Outturn £000's | Budget 2022/23 £000's | R1 Forecast £000's | R1 Forecast Over/(Under) £000's |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Deangate Golf | 37 | 41 | 41 | 0 |
| Total | 37 | 41 | 41 | 0 |
| This service is forecast to budget. | | | | |

| Director's Office | 2021/22 Outturn £000's | Budget 2022/23 £000's | R1 Forecast £000's | R1 Forecast Over/(Under) £000's |
|-------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Director's Office | 1,152 | 1,210 | 1,121 | (89) |
| Total | 1,152 | 1,210 | 1,121 | (89) |

The Director's Office is forecast to underspend by £89,000 due to NNDR savings of £25,000 on Public Conveniences following the granting of 100% Public Toilet Rate Relief on all of the buildings, the Gaming festival breaking even delivering an underspend of £50,000 compared to the budget and staffing savings of £15,000.

| Front Line Services | 2021/22 Outturn £000's | Budget 2022/23 £000's | R1 Forecast £000's | R1 Forecast Over/(Under) £000's |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Front Line Services Support | 646 | 745 | 725 | (20) |
| Highways | 6,195 | 5,695 | 5,835 | 140 |
| Parking Services | (3,331) | (4,540) | (3,996) | 544 |
| Environmental Services | 25,559 | 29,086 | 27,993 | (1,093) |
| Integrated Transport | 6,900 | 7,275 | 7,185 | (90) |
| Regulatory Services | 709 | 1,151 | 962 | (189) |
| Greenspaces | 4,945 | 5,101 | 5,178 | 78 |
| Total | 41,623 | 44,514 | 43,882 | (632) |

The Front Line Services division forecast is a favourable variance of £632,000.

Highways is reporting a pressure of £140,000. There are significant pressures on the utilities budgets for Medway Tunnel of £134,000 and Street Lighting Columns of £411,000 as a result of expected price increases in October. However, this is mitigated by the forecast Street works income of £312,000, predominately due to permit scheme income for significant broadband works being undertaken by BT and City Fibre which is expected to last until 2023.

Parking Services is forecasting a pressure of \pounds 544,000, predominately due the income not returning to the pre pandemic levels as the public adopt different travel habits such as home working. The parking income pressure is forecast to be \pounds 676,000 and is across both on & off street parking as detailed overleaf.

| Area | Pressure £ |
|--|------------|
| ON ST PARKING Fees | 33,479 |
| ON ST PARKING PCN | 127,307 |
| ON ST PARKING Residential Park permits | 8,382 |
| ON ST PARKING Visitor Vouchers | 171,290 |
| OFF ST PARKING Fees | 99,029 |
| OFF ST PARKING Season Tickets | 195,814 |
| OFF ST PARKING PCN | 40,879 |
| TOTAL FORECAST INCOME PRESSURE | 676,180 |

There are a range of further pressures including additional security costs for Multi Storey Car Parks of £55,000, NNDR costs of £40,000, computer software of £35,000 and bank charges of £20,000 however these are mitigated by savings on staffing of £106,000, grounds maintenance and cleaning works of £48,000 and a range of other supplies and services of £22,000.

Environmental Services is reporting an underspend of £1.093million. The Waste Disposal services is reporting a saving of £636,000 which is essentially down to the Materials Recycling Facility (MRF) and the favorable commodity prices currently being achieved of £782,000 and the small net saving in the diversion of our waste from Landfill to incineration of £13,000. These Savings have been mitigated by a net pressure in the disposal costs of our organic waste and other waste disposal of £159,000. The Waste Collection Service is

forecast to realise a £131,000 saving as the recharge to parking services was not factored into the 2022/23 budget build realignments. Additional Income of £182,000 has been forecast in respect of the cross boundary usage of Household Recycling Facilities from Kent County Council (KCC). Further establishment savings of £28,000, Premises & Transport savings of £3,000, income Savings of £28,000 and supplies & services pressures of £15,000 have been forecast across the service.

Integrated transport is reporting an underspend of £90,000. The Traffic Management service has forecast additional Income from Street Closures of £124,000, which have been partly offset by some essential street closure related costs of £53,000. An underspend of £111,000 in relation to Medway Concessionary Fares Budget as it has been anticipated that there will be a reduction in the number of Journeys which will more than offset any expected additional fuel costs. A number of minor operational and supplies and services pressures the most significant of which relate to the contract uplift for the School Bus Service, additional publicity and subscription costs and additional essential traffic signal maintenance costs.

Regulatory Services is reporting an underspend of £189,000. This is largely due to underspends on staffing budgets due to vacant posts although offset by increased costs in relation to utilities and fuel.

Greenspaces is reporting a pressure of £78,000. Income generated from rents & wayleaves and grounds hire is still struggling to recover from the effects of the COVID pandemic and there is a resulting pressure of £38,000 anticipated on utilities costs due to expected price increases in October.

| Regeneration | 2021/22 Outturn £000's | Budget 2022/23 £000's | R1 Forecast £000's | R1 Forecast Over/(Under) £000's |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Medway Norse | 128 | 0 | 80 | 80 |
| Property & Capital Projects | 1,392 | 982 | 1,299 | 317 |
| Regeneration Delivery | 638 | 689 | 720 | 32 |
| Valuation & Asset Management | (3,393) | (2,859) | (2,628) | 231 |
| Economic Development | 222 | 466 | 472 | 6 |
| Skills & Employability | 155 | 141 | 144 | 2 |
| Total | (858) | (581) | 86 | 667 |

The Regeneration division forecast is a net pressure of £667,000.

The Medway Norse Core Contract is reporting a pressure of £80,000.

Property & Capital Projects are reporting a pressure of £317,000, there are two main areas of pressure, firstly unachievable miscellaneous Receipts income targets which result in a pressure of £293,000 and an overspend relating to Kingsley house which has been historical underfunded.

Value & Asset Management is reporting a pressure of £231,000. This is comprised of;

- A £275,000 pressure relating to the Pentagon Centre where Ellandi our Managing Agents are reporting expenditure in excess of our current budget allocation
- A £36,000 underspend relating to the commercial property service due to additional income of £58,000 offset by some additional operational costs.

6. Housing Revenue Account

| Housing Revenue Account | 2021/22 Outturn £000's | Budget 2022/23 £000's | R1 Forecast £000's | R1 Forecast Over/(Under) £000's |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Housing Revenue Account | 113 | (202) | (110) | 92 |
| Total | 113 | (202) | (110) | 92 |

The Housing Revenue Account forecast is a pressure of £92,000. This is due to an under recovery of rental income relating to a reduction in funding for pull cords for tenants from the General Fund budget and a loss of income on void properties. There is also a shortfall in other income due to a reduction in income collected from leaseholders service charges. There is also a pressure related to an increase in the cost of gas and electricity.

These pressures in income are offset to some extent by underspends on Estate services due to forecast savings on responsive cleaning and tree services, along with an underspend on staffing costs in Tenancy Services due to vacancies.

7. Business Support and Centralised Services

7.1. The Business Support Services forecast is an overspend of £1.060million, while the Centralised Services forecast is an overspend of £17,000, bringing the overall forecast to an overspend of £1.076million. The details of the forecasts in each service area are set out in the tables below.

| Corporate Management | 2021/22 Outturn £000's | Budget 2022/23 £000's | R1 Forecast £000's | R1 Forecast Over/(Under) £000's |
|----------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Corporate Management | 959 | 1,476 | 1,337 | (139) |
| Total | 959 | 1,476 | 1,337 | (139) |

The Corporate Management forecast is an underspend of £139,000. An underspend of £29,000 in pension payments to KCC, £136,000 underspend relating to staffing budgets (where the budget to offset the increase of all staff to £10 per hour minimum is held for BSD) and additional unbudgeted income and grants of £60,000 offset by pressures on external audit fees and subscriptions of £18,000 and a £68,000 pressure on treasury expenses based on the outturn in previous years.

| Finance & Business Improvement | 2021/22 Outturn £000's | Budget 2022/23 £000's | R1 Forecast £000's | R1 Forecast Over/(Under) £000's |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Internal Audit & Counter Fraud | (43) | (1) | (28) | (28) |
| FBI Divisional Management Team | 0 | 259 | 259 | 0 |
| FBI - Finance | 3,747 | 3,625 | 4,123 | 498 |
| FBI - Information | 823 | 1,739 | 1,537 | (202) |
| FBI - Organisational Culture | (23) | (34) | 218 | 253 |
| Total | 4,504 | 5,588 | 6,109 | 521 |

The Finance & Business Improvement division forecast is an overspend of £521,000.

The Finance forecast (which includes Accountancy, Revenues, Benefits and Debt) is a pressure of £498,000, primarily driven by the Benefits Subsidy forecast. While most new claimants for benefits are now made through Universal Credit, administered by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), local authorities continue to administer existing Housing Benefit claims that have not been transferred to the DWP, and new applications for pensioners, temporary accommodation and specified accommodation. The government pays

local authorities to administer Housing Benefit through a subsidy scheme, and while 100% subsidy is received for most ongoing benefit claims, the types of claim for which local authorities continue to administer new claims for do not attract 100% subsidy, representing a growing issue for the Council's budget. Combined with an anticipated reduction in the level of Housing Benefit Overpayments the team will be able to collect in the year due to the cost of living crisis, this subsidy shortfall is projected to result in a pressure of £410,000. This however compares relatively favourably with the 2021/22 outturn position which was a pressure of £456,000.

The Revenue & Benefits Service forecast is a pressure of £200,000. There is a net pressure on staffing of £32,000 as external resources are being used to support the delivery of a range of government schemes including the energy rebate and Household Support Fund. A shortfall of income of £167,000 is projected, arising from grants (broadly in line with the 2021/22 outturn) and the income budgeted from other local authorities will not be achieved following the end of the shared management arrangement with Gravesham.

Underspends of £91,000 and £21,000 are forecast on accountancy services, driven by vacancy savings.

The Organisational Culture forecast (which includes HR, Payroll and Council Plan service areas) is an overspend of £253,000. This is primarily driven by undeliverable income targets which across the service amount to £203,000. A pressure of £30,000 arises from the increasing cost of the Jobs Go Public Platform with the remainder of the pressure relating to staffing costs.

The Information forecast (which includes Technology, Customer Experience and Digital) is an underspend of £202,000 primarily driven by ICT savings and the result of a realignment exercise as part of the delivery of the FBI Divisional savings target.

The FBI Divisional Management Team forecasts reflects that the £500,000 savings target built into the 2022/23 budget has been delivered through the restructure of the division.

| Legal & Governance | 2021/22 Outturn £000's | Budget 2022/23 £000's | R1 Forecast £000's | R1 Forecast Over/(Under) £000's |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Democratic Services | 578 | 666 | 633 | (33) |
| Members & Elections | 1,582 | 1,700 | 1,748 | 48 |
| Category Management | 115 | 0 | (38) | (38) |
| Legal, Land Charges & Licensing | 2,366 | 2,529 | 3,229 | 700 |
| Total | 4,641 | 4,895 | 5,573 | 677 |

The Internal Audit forecast underspend of £28,000 results from vacancy savings.

The divisional forecast is an overspend of £677,000.

Legal, Land Charges and Licensing are forecast to a pressure of £700,000, primarily driven by a net £506,000 overspend on staffing. There are high levels of vacancies in Legal Services as recruiting and retaining permanent staff continues to be difficult, and the forecast assumes that these posts will continue to be covered by more expensive locum/agency staff throughout the financial year.

The overspend of £48,000 on Members & Elections is due to the unbudgeted cost of the Parish Community Governance Review.

Category Management forecast is an underspend of £38,000 as pressures on income from capital projects (£30,000) and external sources (£18,000) are more than mitigated by underspends on staffing budgets of £86,000 as vacant posts are held.

| Centralised Costs | 2021/22 Outturn £000's | Budget 2022/23 £000's | R1 Forecast £000's | R1 Forecast Over/(Under) £000's |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Interest & Financing | 6,720 | 12,315 | 12,315 | 0 |
| Levies | 1,614 | 1,626 | 1,642 | 17 |
| Medway Norse Profit Share | (1,023) | (578) | (578) | 0 |
| Total | 7,311 | 13,363 | 13,379 | 17 |

Collectively these are forecasting a minor overspend of £17,000 relating to Levies as the Drainage and Fisheries annual levies are both in excess of the budget. At the time of the forecast no projection had been received from Kent County Council in respect of the cost of the Coroners Service and therefore this has been forecast to budget, though this has represented a pressure in previous years.

The Interest & Financing budget funds the cost of borrowing required to support the Council's capital programme, which with the additions made at Council on 21 July 2022 stands at more than £472million, of which almost £256million is funded from borrowing. Interest rates are higher than anticipated when the budget was set, and are projected to continue to rise during 2022/23. We are working to evaluate the impact of rising interest rates however in the absence of a detailed profile of spend across the life of the programme at this stage, it is not currently possible to estimate the pressure this will generate with any accuracy, however we are confident that the pressure will be manageable within the overall budget envelope for 2022/23.

8. Additional Government Support

| Additional Government Support Expenditure | 2021/22 Outturn £000's | Budget 2022/23 £000's | R1 Forecast £000's | R1 Forecast Over/(Under) £000's |
|---|------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| C&A related - Holiday Activities & Food Programme | n/a | 1,137 | 1,137 | 0 |
| Household Support Grant | n/a | 2,262 | 2,262 | 0 |
| Energy Rebate Scheme (Council Tax Support for Energy Bills) | n/a | 15,512 | 15,512 | 0 |
| Homes for Ukraine | n/a | 959 | 959 | 0 |
| Total | n/a | 19,870 | 19,870 | 0 |
| All additional government support grants are currently forecast to be fully spent | | | | |

All additional government support grants are currently forecast to be fully spent.

9. Conclusions

9.1. The first round of revenue budget monitoring for 2022/23 projects an overspend of £12.566million.

10. Risk management

| Risk | Description | Action to avoid or mitigate risk | Risk rating |
|--|--|---|-------------|
| The Council overspends against the agreed budget. | Overspends on budget would need to be met from the Council's limited reserves. | The revenue monitoring process is designed to identify and facilitate management | AI |

| Risk | Description | Action to avoid or mitigate risk | Risk rating |
|------|-------------|--|-------------|
| | | action to mitigate the risk of overspending against the agreed budget. | |

11. Financial implications

- 11.1. The financial implications are set out in the body of the report.
- 12. Legal implications
- 12.1. There are no direct legal implications to this report.
- 13. Recommendation
- 13.1. The Cabinet is asked to note the results of the first round of revenue budget monitoring for 2022/23.
- 14. Suggested reasons for decisions
- 14.1. The Cabinet has the responsibility to ensure effective budgetary control to contain expenditure within the approved limits set by Council.

Lead officer contact

Katey Durkin, Chief Finance Officer, 01634 33 23 55, katey.durkin@medway.gov.uk

Appendices

None

Background papers

None