



## **HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - INFORMATION ITEM - 13<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2024**

**SUBJECT: ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT 2023/2024 BUDGET MONITORING  
REPORT (PERIOD 7)**

**REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT**

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### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To inform members of projected revenue expenditure for the Economy and Environment Directorate for the 2023/2024 financial year. Service Divisions include Regeneration and Planning Division, Infrastructure Services Division, Public Protection Division and Community and Leisure Services Division.

### **2. SUMMARY**

- 2.1 The report summarises the most recent budget monitoring projections for 2023/2024 based on the latest available financial information.
- 2.2 The attached appendices outline more detailed budget monitoring figures for each of the Council Fund Services outlined in paragraph 1.1 above that fall within the remit of this Scrutiny.

### **3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee Members are requested to note the contents of this report and the detailed budget monitoring pages that follow in respect of the Infrastructure Services Division, Public Protection Division and Community and Leisure Services Division which all fall within the remit of this Scrutiny.

### **4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 The Council Budget is based on the achievement of both expenditure and income targets. To ensure that these are met, and the Council's financial integrity is maintained Directors are required to review income and expenditure trends.

### **5. THE REPORT**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

- 5.1.1 The report outlines the revenue budget position for each of the service Divisions that form part of the Economy and Environment Directorate based on the most current financial information available. Projected outturn figures for the financial year are compared with the budget to show the anticipated under/overspends. More detailed budget monitoring figures are shown in

the appendices 1A to 1C.

- 5.1.2 The table 1 below summarises the present budget monitoring position, with an overall Directorate overspend of £1.877m, but exclusive of ring-fenced budgets is projecting an overspend of £1.435m. Appendices 1A to 1C provide more detail on the budget variation projections for each Service Division, that falls within the remit of this Scrutiny.

TABLE 1	Estimate 2023/24 £'m	Revised Estimate 2023/24 £'m	Anticipated Outturn 2023/24 £'m	Variance 2023-24 £'m
Regeneration and Planning Division	3.713	3.713	3.840	(0.127)
Infrastructure Division	25.200	25.200	25.879	(0.679)
Public Protection Division	10.409	10.409	10.203	0.206
Community and Leisure Services Division	28.259	28.259	29.539	(1.280)
Directorate General	0.195	0.195	0.192	0.003
<b>NET DIRECTORATE</b>	<b>67.776</b>	<b>67.776</b>	<b>69.653</b>	<b>(1.877)</b>
Home to School Transport - ring fenced over spend				0.899
Social Services Transport – ring fenced under spend				(0.457)
Cemeteries Task and Finish – ring fenced under spend				
<b>NET DIRECTORATE under spend (excluding ring fenced budgets)</b>				<b>(1.435)</b>

## 5.2 INFRASTRUCTURE DIVISION

- 5.2.1 Infrastructure is overall reporting an overspend of £0.679m. When adjusting for the budget variations in relation to Home to School Transport (£0.899m overspend) and Social Services Transport (£0.457m underspend) which will be ring fenced and appropriated back to the Service Directorates, the net overspend is £0.237m.
- 5.2.2 Highway Services is reporting a net overspend of £0.205m. The main reason for the overspends are additional Statutory Maintenance (£0.598m) along with a shortfall in income (£0.072m) partially offset by salary savings due to delays in filling vacant posts (£0.304m), reduced Street Lighting costs (£0.2m) Gully Cleansing (£0.050m) along with Land Reclamation Maintenance (£0.1m). At present winter maintenance costs are difficult to predict but it is assumed the full budget of £1.16 million will be spent.
- 5.2.3 EPG (Engineering Projects Group) is reporting an overspend of £0.074m. This is due in the main to reduced income levels (£0.5m) partially offset by savings on salaries (£0.435m).
- 5.2.4 Transportation Engineering overall is projecting a net underspend of £0.002m after adjusting for the agreed use of the reserves.
- 5.2.5 Passenger Transport is reporting a net breakeven position.
- 5.2.6 Home to School Transport is presently projecting an overspend of £0.899m due in the main to additional contractor costs.
- 5.2.7 Social Services Transport is projecting underspend of £0.457m including £0.198m on salaries, £0.286m for service operators. There is risk of operator failure leading to increased cost in future although this is partly an in-house operator function rather than private contractor.
- 5.2.8 At this stage Network Contracting Services (NCS) is anticipating an underspend of £0.031m due in the main to salary savings (£0.289m) and reduced tipping costs (£0.068m), offset by

additional contractor costs (£0.148m) and reduced income (£0.192m), the income will be monitored closely during the year.

5.2.9 Engineering General are projecting a small underspend of £0.008m, this is in the main due to reduced Postage, Printing and Computer costs.

### 5.3 PUBLIC PROTECTION

5.3.1 Public Protection is presently projecting an underspend of £0.206m on their overall revenue budget details below.

5.3.2 Environmental Health is currently projecting a net underspend of £0.113m. The main variances are: -

- Community Safety Wardens is forecasting an underspend of £0.068m due in the main to delays in filling vacant posts.
- Health Division is predicting a net underspend of £0.010m after taking into account the agreed use of reserves for the software upgrade.
- Community Safety Partnership is predicting a small underspend of £0.005m due to delays in filling a vacant post.
- Enforcement is forecasting an underspend of £0.028m mainly due to salary savings (£0.026m), reduced fees (£0.016m) along with some additional income (£0.010m) partially increased contract costs and (£0.026m).
- Pollution Control are predicting a net overspend of £0.059m due in the main to additional Fencing costs (£0.061m) and increased cost of equipment linked to testing (£0.061m) partially offset by savings due to vacant posts (£0.038m). At this stage it is unlikely this will be required to fund any shortfall in the purchase/compensation Capital grant received from WG to fund the acquisition and payment of compensation for the houses at Hafodyrynys, as this was practically completed in 2020/21. Hafodyrynys Compensation/Acquisition has been funded by a ring-fenced reserve of £268k (from prior to 2020/21 grant) and an RCCO in 2020/21 of £34k (from 2020/21 grant). There are also a number of other ongoing issues in respect of air quality, pollution, and contaminated land and these are being closely monitored as any increases in this area would impact on the overall financial position.
- Food Team is predicting an underspend of £0.064m due to staff costs (£0.079m) offset by reduced income levels (£0.018m).
- Emergency Planning is predicting a small overspend of £0.002m.

5.3.3 Trading Standards are projecting a net overspend of £0.050m, due in the main to increased kennelling costs (£0.086m) after an enforcement action partially offset by reduced salary costs (£0.038m).

5.3.4 Core and Democratic costs are projecting a small overspend of £0.001m.

5.3.5 Licensing are projecting an overspend of £0.004m due in the main to reduced income levels (£0.028m) partially offset by salary costs (£0.022m). The income levels are volatile and will be monitored during the course of the year.

5.3.6 Registrars are projecting a net £0.005m underspend mainly due a temporary increase in ceremony numbers and associated income. This is after the applied use of reserves for the new Wedding Ceremony Software.

5.3.7 CCTV services are projecting an underspend of £0.044m due in the main to reduced salary costs (£0.018m) along with reduced PSBA/Telecom line charges (£0.029m) partially offset by additional cost for contractor payments (£0.005m) and a slight reduction in income (£0.006m).

5.3.8 Catering Services are projecting a net underspend of £0.100m. The underspend is due in the main to reduced property costs (£0.039m), reduces computer costs (£0.049m), software maintenance (£0.021m) and Kitchen Equipment (£0.026m) partially offset by increased

transport costs including vehicle hire (£0.023m). Any income will be monitored during the year especially as WG committed to a phased role out of FSM for all Primary pupils.

## 5.4 COMMUNITY and LEISURE SERVICES

5.4.1 The Community and Leisure Division is presently projecting overall a net overspend of £1.280m, this overspend is noted below.

5.4.2 Waste Management (Managed by Head of Infrastructure) is overall presently reporting an underspend of £0.158m due in the main to: -

- Residual Waste is projecting an overspend of £0.015m due in the main to additional salary costs (£0.021m), additional costs of vehicle repairs (£0.115m), vehicle overhead costs (£0.016m) and Vehicle Hire (£0.165m). partially offset by reduced contractor payments (£0.329m) and reduced fuel costs (£0.046m)
- Organic recycling is projecting a £0.064m overspend due in the main vehicle maintenance costs (£0.067m), additional salary costs (£0.020m) additional Agency costs (£0.011m) partially offset by reduced fuel costs (£0.027m) along with vehicle overhead costs (£0.013m).
- CA sites are projecting a £0.028m overspend due in the main to the additional salary costs (£0.013m), additional cleaning (£0.010m), vehicle Repairs and Maintenance (£0.026m), additional agency costs (£0.040m) and additional contractor payments (£0.044m), partially offset by reduced Plant purchases (£0.030m), reduced Fuel costs (£0.050m) vehicle Hire (£0.007m) along with additional income for vehicle sales (£0.015m)
- Waste Transfer Station is projecting a £0.027m underspend due in the main reduces fuel costs (£0.009m), reduced staff costs (£0.009m).
- Dry Recycling is forecasting a £0.022m overspend due in the main to vehicle repairs (£0.117m), additional salary costs (£0.022m), vehicle overhead costs (£0.020m) and additional Agency costs (£0.40m) partially offset by a reduction in fuel costs (£0.084m) together with savings on contractor payments (£0.069m)
- Bulky Waste is projecting a £0.009m overspend due in the main to additional salary costs (£0.012m) along with additional contractor costs (£0.018m) partially offset by reduced fuel costs (£0.006m) reduced services costs (£0.010m) and some additional income (£0.004m).
- Commercial Waste is projecting a £0.030m overspend due in the main to additional bins (£0.005m) along with reduced income forecasts (£0.025m).
- Other Waste is projecting a £0.016m underspend due a Supplies and Services costs being lower than expected.
- Trehir is projecting a £0.028m underspend due to reduced maintenance costs and a reduction in sewage charges.
- Sustainable Waste Management Grant (SWMG) from WG is expected to breakeven.
- HQ staff predicted an underspend of £0.254m which is due in the main to vacant posts (£0.287m), partially offset by additional material costs (£0.022m), protective clothing (£0.011m), stationary costs (£0.020m) and reduced income (£5k).
- Public Conveniences is projecting an overspend of £1k, costs for these buildings are still being generated without any budget provision as this was previously removed as part of the MTFP savings.

5.4.3 Cleansing Services (Managed by Head of Infrastructure) is overall presently reporting a net underspend of £0.265m. This is due in the main to staff vacant posts (£0.289m), reduced contractor costs (£0.062m) and reduced Tipping Charges (£0.013m) partially offset by vehicle repairs (£0.018m), additional agency costs (£0.076m), along with reduced income (£0.018m).

5.4.4 A net overspend of £0.508m is projected for Parks and Countryside, Outdoor Facilities and Cemeteries.

- Cemeteries is reporting a £0.034m overspend, this is due in the main additional agency staff (£0.129m), Private contractor costs (£0.076m) and reduced income levels

(£0.135m) partially offset by some salary savings (£0.026m) Grounds Maintenance and Trees (£0.218m) War Memorial/Cenotaph Maintenance (£0.025m), tipping charges (£0.030m). The overspend in relation to cemeteries is ring fenced and will be funded from the ringfenced reserve.

- Allotments are projecting an underspend of £0.017m due in the main to reduced maintenance and contractor costs.
- Parks are projecting a net £0.648m overspend after taking into account the use of agreed reserves to fund “Ash-Die Back” and Cleaner Greener Schemes. This overspend is due in the main to reduced income levels (£0.308m), increased agency costs (£0.168m), Contractor payments (£0.263m), vehicle hire costs (£0.018m), vehicle repairs and maintenance (£0.018m), Planned plant servicing (£0.015m) and cleansing (£0.020m) partially offset by salary savings (£0.112m), Rights of Way (£0.039m) and Plant and Equipment (£0.033m).
- Playgrounds are reporting a slight overspend of £0.002m.
- Outdoor facilities are reporting £0.045m overspend in the main due to utility costs (£0.014m) additional cleaning costs (£0.010m) along with reduced income levels (£0.020m)
- Countryside is reporting an underspend of £0.0181m in the main due to salary savings (£0.477m) partially offset by additional agency costs (£0.130m) additional projects costs (£0.160m) and reduced income levels (£0.177m).
- HQ is projecting an overspend of 0.013m primarily due to property costs including energy costs (£0.008m), transport costs (£0.010m).

- 5.4.5 Leisure Centres and HQ are reporting overspend of £0.584m. The main reasons for this are the increased utility costs (£0.237m) in running the centres, increased staffing costs in the centres (£0.092m) along with reduced income levels on the Leisure Centres (£0.170m) and the new Athletics Hub (£0.065m)
- 5.4.6 Community Centres are at present projecting a breakeven position with any reductions in operating costs they hope to utilise to bring forward maintenance on these buildings.
- 5.4.7 Caerphilly Adventures is reporting an overspend of £0.042m. This is due in the main to income levels not being achieved (£0.090m) partially offset by savings in salaries (£0.049m).
- 5.4.8 Sports and Health Development is projecting a small overspend of £0.013m due in the main to a reduced fees due to staffing issues. This is after the agreed use of reserves for a Rugby Officer in Trinity Fields to be part funded by reserves.
- 5.4.9 Vehicle Maintenance and Fleet Management is currently projecting overspend of £0.555m. The Fleet Management and Vehicle Maintenance service has experienced difficulties over the last few years successfully recruiting and retaining qualified and experienced Vehicle Technicians. To ensure vehicles are repaired and maintained in accordance with the Councils Operator’s Licence, the service has had no alternative but to engage the services of third parties to assist in this regard. The hourly labour rate charges by these external providers are significantly more than that the council charges its managed service provider for this facility, consequently this has affected our levels of income and resulted in a significant projected overspend. The service is working through a number of potential solutions to reduce this predicted overspend by the end of this financial year.
- 5.4.10 Building Cleaning (Managed by Head of Infrastructure) is at present reporting a net breakeven position.

## 5.5 Medium Term Financial Plan Savings

- 5.5.1 The following table provides a summary of progress in delivering agreed 2023/24 savings for the Directorate of Economy and Environment: -

Section	Agreed MTFP Savings £'m	Progress against Savings £'m	Variance £'m
<b><u>Economy and Environment</u></b>			
Infrastructure	1.161	1.115	0.045
Public Protection	0.060	0.045	0.015
Community and Leisure	0.254	0.147	0.106
Regeneration and Planning	0.364	0.296	0.068
Director	0.000	0.000	0.000
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1.839</b>	<b>1.603</b>	<b>0.234</b>

5.5.2 Details of the projected unachieved savings for the services that fall within the remit of this scrutiny are detailed below: -

5.5.3 The variance of £0.045m in Infrastructure is due to: -

- £0.040m for the Rail Bus link not achieving a full years worth of savings due to implementation delays.
- £0.005m from various sections mileage reductions not being achieved.

5.5.4 The variance of £0.016m in Public Protection is due to: -

- £0.004m for the CCTV Camera, due to delays in the roll out.
- £0.012m from various sections mileage reductions not being achieved.

5.5.5 The variance of £0.106m in Community and Leisure is due to: -

- £0.005m for the closure of Ty Fry Farm.
- £0.004m from various sections mileage reductions not being achieved.
- £0.005m from increased income from MOT fees.
- £0.075m from increased fee income in Leisure Centres.
- £0.017m from the tapered withdrawal of Caretaker subsidy in Community Centres.

5.5.6 It is expected that the unachieved MTFP savings will be covered by other budget savings in most of the service areas.

## 5.6 Conclusion

5.6.1 Members are advised that Economy and Environment Directorate provides a very diverse range of front-line services to residents and businesses. The overall Directorate has a budget totalling £67,776m, with a projected net overspend of £1.435m (2.12% of total budget). The operational managers will endeavour to ensure that service net expenditure does not exceed the budget available.

## 6. ASSUMPTIONS

6.1 Assumptions linked to this report were detailed in the budget report to Council on 23rd February 2023.

6.2 The projected outturn position is based on actual income and expenditure details to the end of October 2023.

6.3 Forecasts have been made following discussions with Managers based on current information available.

## **7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

7.1 An IIA is not necessary for this Information Only Report.

## **8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 As detailed throughout the report.

## **9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 There are no direct personnel implications arising from this report.

## **10. CONSULTATIONS**

10.1 There are no consultation responses that have not been reflected in this report.

## **11. STATUTORY POWER.**

11.1 Local Government Acts 1972 and 2003 and the Council's Financial Regulations.

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Cllr P Leonard, Cabinet Member for Planning and Public Protection  
Cllr C Andrews, Cabinet Member for Education and Communities

Appendices:

Appendix 1A Budget Monitoring Report - Infrastructure Services Division  
Appendix 1B Budget Monitoring Report - Public Protection Division  
Appendix 1C Budget Monitoring Report - Community and Leisure Services