

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

REPORT TO: CABINET

Date of Meeting:	28 November 2011
Report of:	Director of Finance & Business Services / Strategic Director, Places & Organisational Capacity
Subject/Title:	2011/12 Mid Year Review of Performance
Portfolio Holders:	Cllr Michael Jones / Cllr. David Brown

1.0 Report Summary

- 1.1 Cheshire East is committed to continuous improvement and excellence in all that it influences and delivers. This report gives summary and detailed information about its financial and non-financial performance during the first half of 2011/12.
- 1.2 Annex 1 provides an update on the overall Financial Stability of the Council, including the positions on Grants, Council Tax and Business Rates, Treasury Management, Centrally held budgets, and the Management of the Council's Reserves.
- 1.3 Annex 2 provides projections of service financial performance for the 2011-12 financial year. It highlights the key financial pressures which the Council's services are facing, and particularly focuses upon areas of high financial risk to the Council.
- 1.4 Annex 3 provides a summary of the key performance headlines at the end of Quarter One.
- 1.5 The key points to emerge at the half year stage, which are explained in the report are:

Service Revenue Outturn

- The Council is forecasting a £16m overspend against services' budgets.
- Around £6.6m of this can be mitigated by unallocated contingencies, capital financing underspend, surplus grants, and capitalisation of VR costs.
- The Council is seeking to identify further significant remedial actions to address the net £9.4m budget shortfall.

Reserves

- Together with the budgeted contribution to balances, and other items including surplus earmarked reserves, it is estimated that the level of general reserves at 31st March 2012 would be approximately £10.5m, before the impact of any further remedial measures are taken into account. The 2011-14 Reserves Strategy included an original forecast reserves position as at 31st March 2012 of £15m with a risk assessed minimum level of £14.7m.

Capital Programme

- Forecast variance from budget of £16.6m in 2011-12 is largely explained by slippage, with costs being re-phased to future years.

Debt

- Level is broadly in line with position at end of 2010-11 financial year.

Performance

- From the retained former statutory indicators (National Indicators and Best Value Performance Indicators) reported corporately during the first half of the year, 36% of measures were reported as performing below target and agreed tolerances.

2.0 Decision Requested

2.1 Cabinet is requested to note and comment as appropriate on the following financial issues:

- the overall financial stability of the Council, including Grants, in-year collection rates for Council Tax and Business Rates, Treasury Management, and centrally held budgets (Annex 1);
- the impact on the Council's general reserves position as detailed in Annex 1;
- the forecast service revenue and capital outturn positions (Annex 2);
- the Council's invoiced debt position as shown in Annex 2;
- progress on delivering the 2011-12 capital programme, detailed in Annex 2 and Appendix 1;
- Delegated Decisions approved by Directors for Supplementary Capital Estimates (SCE) and virement requests up to £100,000, as shown in Annex 2, Appendix 2a;
- Reductions to approved capital budgets, as shown in Annex 2, Appendix 3.

2.2 Cabinet is requested to note and comment as appropriate on the following performance issues, contained in Annex 3:

- note the successes achieved during the first half of 2011/12, and consider issues raised in relation to underperformance against targets and how these will be addressed.

2.3 Cabinet is requested to approve the following:

- Supplementary Capital Estimates and virement requests over £100,000 and up to and including £500,000 as shown in Annex 2, Appendix 2b.

2.4 Cabinet is requested to ask Council to approve the following:

- a Supplementary Revenue Estimate of up to £860,000 to be met from general reserves to meet one-off costs of the Pay Harmonisation package in 2011-12, as detailed in Annex 1;

- a Supplementary Capital Estimate / Virement of over £1,000,000 as detailed in Annex 2, Appendix 2c.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 The Council is committed to high standards of achievement and continuing improvement. Performance information plays a vital role in ensuring that the Council celebrates its achievements, understands its performance in key areas and addresses issues of under performance. The Council and partners have identified a series of improvement measures to support outcomes for local people as outlined in the priorities and objectives of the Sustainable Community Strategy.
- 3.2 In accordance with good practice, Members should receive a quarterly report on the financial performance of the Council. Finance Procedure Rules set out the requirements for financial approvals by Members, and relevant recommendations are contained in this report.

4.0 Wards Affected

- 4.1 All

5.0 Local Ward Members

- 5.1 All

6.0 Policy Implications including – Carbon Reduction, Health

- 6.1 Performance management supports delivery of all key Council policies including carbon reduction and health. The projected outturn position, ongoing impacts in future years, and the impact on general reserves will be fed into the assumptions underpinning the 2012-13 Financial Scenario and Budget, and Reserves Strategy.

7.0 Financial Implications (Authorised by the Director of Finance & Business Services)

- 7.1 The Council's financial resources are aligned to its priorities and used to deliver priority outcomes for local communities. Monitoring performance helps ensure that resources are used effectively and that business planning and financial decision making are made in the context of performance.

8.0 Legal Implications (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)

- 8.1 Although the Council will no longer be required to report to Government on its performance against measures in the National Indicator Set, monitoring and reporting on performance is essential if decision-makers and the public are to be assured of adequate progress against declared plans and targets.

9.0 Risk Management

- 9.1 Financial risks are assessed and reported on a regular basis, and remedial action taken if and when required. Risks associated with the achievement of the 2011-12 budget and the level of general reserves will be factored into the 2012-13 Financial Scenario and Budget, and Reserves Strategy.
- 9.2 Performance and risk management are part of the key management processes of the Authority. Risks are captured both in terms of the risk of underperforming and the risk to the Council in not delivering its ambitions for the community of Cheshire East.

10.0 Background

- 10.1 Our vision, corporate plans, financial allocations, democratic and organisational structures are all designed to help us achieve the outcomes that matter to the people of Cheshire East. Performance reporting and a focus on improvement are fundamental to achieving our long term ambitions. The report reflects a developing framework to embed performance management culture throughout the organisation.

11.0 Access to Information

- 11.1 The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting:

Name: Lisa Quinn / John Nicholson
Designation: Director of Finance & Business Services / Strategic Director,
Places & Organisational Capacity
Tel No: 01270 686628 / 01270 686611
Email: lisa.quinn@cheshireeast.gov.uk / john.nicholson@cheshireeast.gov.uk