

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

CABINET

Date of Meeting:	29 September 2015
Report of:	Chief Operating Officer (Section 151 Officer)
Subject/Title:	2015/16 First Quarter Review of Performance
Portfolio Holder:	Cllr Peter Groves, Cllr Paul Findlow

1. Report Summary

- 1.1. This report sets out the Council's financial and non financial performance at the first quarter stage of 2015/16 and highlights the latest progress towards achieving the Council's Residents First Outcomes as described in the Council's three year plan 2013 to 2016. Permanent savings of £5m in management costs have been achieved from 2013/14 to 2014/15.
- 1.2. The first quarter review shows how the Council is continuing to build on the positions achieved in the last two years, which demonstrate that the overall financial health, performance, resilience and value for money at Cheshire East Council is strong despite taking £70m out of its cost base since 2011, and freezing Council Tax for the fifth consecutive year. Savings have been consistently achieved through efficiency, removing any duplication of effort, making reductions in management costs, and a planned programme of asset disposals. This approach has protected funding provided to front line services. The Council's strong financial position reflects its enhanced governance, innovative delivery arrangements and effective stewardship of public money.
- 1.3. Following the first quarter review the Council's reserves strategy remains effective, with a modest overspend of £0.9m being forecast. This represents a variance of only 0.4% against the net budget of £246.6m. This is the nearest forecast position to budget ever reported for the Council at this stage in the financial year, and as in previous years work is underway to achieve a balanced position by the end of the financial year.
- 1.4. Cheshire East is the third largest Council in the Northwest of England, responsible for over 500 services, supporting over 370,000 local people. Gross annual spending is over £750m, with a balanced net budget for 2015/16 of £246.6m. The complexity of customer demands and the size of the organisation make it very important to manage performance and control expenditure to ensure the best outcomes for residents and businesses. The Council's response to these issues has seen the development of Alternative Service Delivery Vehicles since 2013. In Quarter One, examples of good performance were:

- Managing the efficient delivery of local and national elections in May
 - Over 78,000 homes and businesses (96%) now covered by fibre broadband
 - Over 2,000 customers now signed up to Fairerpower energy scheme
- 1.5. The attached report, **Annex 1**, sets out further details of how the Council is performing in 2015/16. It is structured into three sections:

Section 1 Summary of Council Performance - brings together the positive impact that service performance and financial performance have had on the 5 Residents First Outcomes in the first quarter of the year.

Section 2 Financial Stability - provides an update on the Council's overall financial position. It demonstrates how spending in 2015/16 has been funded, including the positions on overall service budgets, grants, council tax and business rates, treasury management, centrally held budgets and the management of the Council's reserves.

Section 3 Workforce Development - provides a summary of the key issues relating to the Council's workforce development plan.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 Cabinet is asked to consider and comment on the first quarter review of 2015/16 performance, in relation to the following issues:
- the summary of performance against the Council's 5 Residents First Outcomes (**Section 1**);
 - the projected service revenue and capital outturn positions, overall financial stability of the Council, and the impact on the Council's reserves position (**Section 2**);
 - the delivery of the overall capital programme (**Section 2, paragraphs 170 to 179 and Appendix 4**);
 - fully funded supplementary capital estimates and virements up to £250,000 approved in accordance with Finance Procedure Rules (**Appendix 5**);
 - changes to Capital Budgets made in accordance with the Finance Procedure Rules (**Appendix 8**);
 - treasury management investments and performance (**Appendix 9**);
 - management of invoiced debt (**Appendix 11**);
 - use of earmarked reserves (**Appendix 12**);
 - update on workforce development and staffing (**Section 3**).
- 2.2 Cabinet is asked to approve:
- fully funded supplementary capital estimates and virements above £250,000 in accordance with Finance Procedure Rules (**Appendix 6**);

- supplementary revenue estimates to be funded by additional specific grant (**Appendix 10**).

2.3 Cabinet is asked to recommend that Council approve:

- fully funded supplementary capital estimates and virements above £1,000,000 in accordance with Finance Procedure Rules (**Appendix 7**);
- the establishment of a new earmarked reserve for Early Intervention Initiatives by a transfer of £0.5m from general balances (**Section 2, paragraph 197**)

3. Other Options Considered

3.1. None.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

4.1. The overall process for managing the Council's budget, promoting value for money and complying with its Finance Procedure Rules, ensures that any changes that become necessary during the year are properly authorised. This report sets out those areas where any further approvals are now required.

5. Background/Chronology

- 5.1. The Council's quarterly reporting structure provides forecasts of a potential year-end outturn. The forecasts in this report highlight achievements against outcomes and provide an indication of potential risks at this stage of the year.
- 5.2. At the first quarter stage, the Council's reserves strategy remains effective with a modest forecast overspend of £0.9m (0.4%) against a budget of £246.6m. Portfolio Holders and the Management Group Board continue to focus on managing this position to avoid any impact on the Council's general reserves at year end.

6. Wards Affected and Local Ward Members

6.1. All

7. Implications of Recommendation

7.1. Policy Implications

7.1.1. Performance management supports delivery of all Council policies. The projected outturn position, ongoing considerations for future years, and

the impact on general reserves will be fed into the assumptions underpinning the 2016/19 medium term financial strategy.

7.2. Legal Implications

7.2.1. Although the Council is no longer 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.

7.3. Financial Implications

7.3.1. The Council's financial resources are aligned to the achievement of stated outcomes for local residents and communities. Monitoring and managing performance helps to ensure that resources are used effectively and that business planning and financial decision making are made in the right context of performance – to achieve better outcomes from an appropriate cost base.

7.4. Equality Implications

7.4.1. This report is a backward look at Council activities in Quarter 1 and predicts the year end position. Any equality implications of the issues and activities being reported on will be managed by the relevant service.

7.5. Rural Community Implications

7.5.1. The report provides details of service provision across the borough.

7.6. Human Resources Implications

7.6.1. This report is a backward look at Council activities in Quarter 1 and predicts the year end position. Any HR implications of the issues and activities being reported on will be managed by the relevant service.

7.7. Public Health Implications

7.7.1. This report is a backward look at Council activities in Quarter 1 and predicts the year end position. Any public health implications of the

issues and activities being reported on will be managed by the relevant service in consultation with the Public Health Team.

7.8. Other Implications (Please Specify)

7.8.1. None

8. Risk Management

- 8.1. Performance and risk management are part of the management processes of the Authority. Risks are captured both in terms of the risk of underperforming and risks to the Council in not delivering its objectives for its residents, businesses, partners and other stakeholders. Risks identified in this report will be used to inform the Corporate Risk Register.
- 8.2. 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 2015/16 budget - and the level of general reserves – have been factored into the 2015/16 financial scenario, budget and reserves strategy.

9. Contact Information

Contact details for this report are as follows:-

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