

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Cabinet

Date of Meeting:	21 st July 2015
Report of:	Chief Operating Officer (Section 151 Officer)
Subject/Title:	2014/15 Final Outturn Review of Performance
Portfolio Holders:	Cllr. Peter Groves, Finance and Assets Cllr. J Paul Findlow, Performance

1.0 Report Summary

- 1.1. This report sets out the Council's continuing improved performance for 2014/15, 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 Final Outturn shows how the Council is continuing to build on the position for last year. The 2013/14 Accounts were signed off by the Council's external auditors, without qualification, and demonstrated that the overall financial health, performance, resilience and value for money at Cheshire East Council is strong despite taking £50m out of its cost base from 2011/12, and freezing Council Tax for the fourth consecutive year. The Council Tax freeze has been maintained for 2015/16.
- 1.3. 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.
- 1.4. At the end of 2014/15 the Council's reserves strategy remains effective with an underspend of £0.7m being produced. This represents only a 0.3% variance from a budget of £253.8m.
- 1.5. Cheshire East is the third largest Council in the Northwest of England, responsible for over 500 services, supporting over 370,000 local people. Annual spending is more than £750m, with a balanced net budget for 2014/15 of £253.8m. 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.
- 1.6. The Council's response to these issues has seen the development of Alternative Service Delivery Vehicles in 2013 and 2014. This will result in the Council publishing its first set of Group Accounts for 2014/15 to

consolidate the accounts of the Council with the accounts of the wholly or partly owned companies of the Council.

1.7. In addition to its strong financial performance the Council can also reflect on a large number of operational successes throughout 2014/15. Some highlights include:

- § Creating a wholly owned company to provide Transport Services and benefit from a more commercial approach.
- § Significant investment to develop the local economy including roads and broadband infrastructure.
- § Pushing ahead with construction of Crewe Lifestyle Centre.
- § Moving forward the University Technical College scheme.
- § Exploring options to develop Macclesfield Town Centre.
- § Continuing to have over 93% of Schools classified as Good or Outstanding.
- § Creation of an Alternative Service Delivery Vehicle to provide a range of professional services such as Building Control and Structural Appraisal.
- § Maintaining the highest recycling rates in the North West.
- § Implementation of the Care Act.
- § Achieving a record number of adopters and being recognised for a national award.

1.8. The attached report, **Annex 1**, sets out further details of how the Council has performed in 2014/15. It is structured into three sections:

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

Section 2 Financial Stability - provides an update on the Council's overall financial position. It demonstrates how spending in 2014/15 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.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Cabinet is asked to consider and comment on the final outturn review of 2014/15 performance, in relation to the following issues:

- the summary of performance against the Council's 5 Residents First Outcomes (**Section 1**);
- the 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 196 to 207 and Appendix 4**);
- fully funded supplementary capital estimates and virements up to £250,000 in accordance with Finance Procedure Rules (**Appendix 5**);
- reductions to Capital Budgets (**Appendix 8**);
- treasury management investments and performance (**Appendix 9**);
- the Council's invoiced debt position (**Appendix 11**);
- use of earmarked reserves (**Appendix 12**);
- the workforce development and staffing update (**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 creation of earmarked reserves of £4.9m as set out in **Appendix 12**.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 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.

4.0 Wards Affected

- 4.1 All

5.0 Local Ward Members

- 5.1 All

6.0 Policy Implications

- 6.1 Performance management supports delivery of all Council policies. The final 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.

7.0 Implications for Rural Communities

- 7.1 The report provides details of service provision across the borough.

8.0 Financial Implications

- 8.1 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.

9.0 Legal Implications

- 9.1 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.

10.0 Risk Management

- 10.1 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.
- 10.2 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 2014/15 budget - and the level of general reserves – were revised throughout the year and factored into the 2015/16 financial scenario, budget and reserves strategy that was approved by Council in February 2015.

11.0 Background and Options

- 11.1 The Council's quarterly reporting structure provides forecasts of a potential year-end outturn. This report highlights achievements against outcomes and provides confirmation that the Council's finances are well managed and controlled.
- 11.2 Portfolio Holders and the Corporate Leadership Board have focussed on managing finances during the year to avoid any impact on the Council's general reserves at year end. At the financial year end, the Council's reserves strategy remains effective with a small underspend of £0.7m (0.3%) against a budget of £253.8m.

12.0 Access to Information

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

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