COLCHESTER	Scrutiny Panel			Item 11
Report of	Assistant Director Policy and Corporate	Author	Darren Brown ∕ি 282891	
Title	Financial Monitoring Report – Ap	oril to Septe	mber 2018	
Wards affected	Not applicable			

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report gives the Panel the opportunity to hold Service Managers and Portfolio Holders accountable for their budgets. The financial position is summarised as follows:-
 - The General Fund is showing a net underspend against services of £337k as at period 6. This includes a net underspend on expenditure of £16k and more income of £321k.
 - The current forecast outturn position for the General Fund is a net overspend of £288k.
 - The Housing Revenue Account is showing a net underspend of £535k as at period 6, and is forecast to be on budget at the year-end.
- 1.2 Further more detailed work will be undertaken during Quarter 3 to ensure forecast outturn positions are robust, and any resulting necessary action to mitigate any forecast budget variance will be considered. In addition, SMT continues to monitor the budget position on a monthly basis. The next report to the Panel will consider the draft outturn position, with the 9 month position being reported to Governance & Audit Committee in March.

2. Action required

2.1 The Panel is asked to consider the financial performance of General Fund Services and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for the first six months of 2018/19, and to note the forecast budget overspend of £288k on the General Fund.

3. Reason for scrutiny

- 3.1 Monitoring of financial performance is important to ensure that:
 - Service expenditure remains within cash-limited budgets.
 - Potential variances at year-end are identified early so that remedial action can be taken to recover the position or 'recycle' any surplus budgets.
 - Performance targets are being met.
- 3.2 This report also gives the committee the opportunity to hold Service Managers and Portfolio Holders accountable for their budgets.

4. Background

4.1 This report reviews the Council's overall position based on profiled income and expenditure for the six months to 30 September 2018, and also shows a projection of the outturn figures for the full year. All the information presented in respect of General Fund Services shows the position based on net 'direct costs'. The review of the Housing Revenue Account is different in that it shows all costs, both direct and indirect.

Summary Position

- 4.2 The projected outturn for the General Fund is currently a net overspend of £288k. The Housing Revenue Account forecast outturn position is currently to be on budget.
- 4.3 The General Fund position is set out in more detail in the following paragraphs and the HRA position explained in paragraphs 4.21 to 4.25. Budgets carried forward from 17/18 are now included in the schedules within this report, and as such will be monitored as part of the overall position.

General Fund – Position to 30 September 2018 Service Budgets

4.4 Appendix A shows the current budget variances and forecast outturn variances by Service Group. The net position shows a variance against profiled budget for General Fund Services (excluding Benefits, NEPP & JMC) of £337k (favourable). This comprises total expenditure being £16k lower than expected and total income being £321k higher than expected. Appendix B breaks these variances down by subjective group.

Income

4.5 Income to the Council is above targets in a number of areas to date, but most notably in Domestic Waste, Parking and Planning. The main shortfall to date relates to Sport & Leisure, although this is currently forecast to reduce in the second half of the year. As one of our main risk areas, income will continue to be closely monitored by officers on a monthly basis.

Expenditure

- 4.6 There are underspends against profiled budgets in most services areas, which can be a result of profiling of budgets as well as timing of expenditure.
- 4.7 Benefits payments are not shown in Appendix A & B to avoid distorting the reported position for Service Groups. It is currently projected that this area will be underspent by £100k at year end, when the final subsidy claim is paid. Furthermore, NEPP and JMC variances are not included in the Appendix A & B totals, given these areas are ring-fenced and are reported to the relevant joint committee.

Outturn Forecast / Risk Areas

4.8 This is the second review this year of the 2018/19 budget position, and the current forecast outturn is a net overspend of £288k.

	£'000	
Service budgets	488	See paras. 4.9 – 4.10 and Appendix C
Technical Items – Pay Award	(100)	See para 4.14
Adjustment		
Technical Items – HB	(100)	See para 4.15
Overpayments		
Potential net overspend	288	

Service Budgets

4.9 The following table sets out the forecast outturn for all service areas, with outturn variances. This shows a net forecast overspend of £488k. As the table shows, this is primarily relates to £336k in Environment (Recycling & Fleet), £100k in Customer, and £79k in respect of company related budgets shown within Policy & Corporate.

Service	Forecast outturn					
	Expenditure	Income	Net			
	£'000	£'000	£'000			
EMT	1	-	1			
Community	(54)	26	(28)			
Customers	195	(95)	100			
Environment	439	(103)	336			
Policy & Corporate (incl. CDC)	(25)	104	79			
Total all services	556	(68)	488			

- 4.10 Appendix C sets out details of all forecast variances against service budgets at the yearend totalling £488k. To provide some context on the scale of the variances shown in Appendix C, a percentage value has been included within the comments which shows the proportion of the relevant budget that it represents. For example, an underspend due to vacant posts or the vacancy factor would be expressed as a proportion of the total employees budget for that area.
- 4.11 Cabinet have allocated funding of £1.95million for Strategic Priorities, and further details are shown on a separate report on this agenda. Where expenditure is planned to be incurred in the current financial year, budgets have been introduced and are assumed to be spent. Therefore these are not contributing to the forecast outturn variation shown within this report.
- 4.12 There are other risks, both positive and negative, to the outturn position that are not currently shown in the forecast. These and other areas will be closely monitored over the coming months and if appropriate the outturn forecast will be revised.

Corporate / Technical Items

- 4.13 The budget includes a number of corporate and technical budget areas such as net interest earnings, the provision to repay debt, pension costs and some non-service specific grants. It is currently assumed that the outturn for these areas will be in line with the budget.
- 4.14 The 2018/19 budget included an assumption of 2% for pay inflation. Given the actual pay award agreed was 1.5%, the resultant saving of circa £100k has been removed from service budgets and is now being held in our technical budget.
- 4.15 The budget includes an amount for the recovery of housing benefit overpayments, which is where claimants have been overpaid and we recover the money. We are forecasting more income to be recovered than estimated in the budget.

Summary position and action proposed

- 4.16 The forecast outturn shows a potential net overspend of £288k. There are a number of factors which are contributing to this position, with the main ones being:-
 - Less income due to economic factors, e.g. Recycling & Fleet
 - Less income caused by external delays e.g. Northern Gateway
 - More expenditure due to demand e.g. Recycling & Fleet
 - One-off costs associated with futures reviews

- Increased income from the recovery of housing benefit overpayments
- 4.17 The impact of budget reviews should be viewed alongside the forecast outturn for the year. Outturn reviews in previous years have been undertaken to ensure that budgets reflect best estimates and do not contain "contingencies". This does mean that services have less scope to absorb unforeseen budget pressures and any requests for new spending that may arise in-year.
- 4.18 As part of work to produce the 2019/20 detailed budgets consideration is being given to the extent to which some of the issues in the current year are likely to continue, or are one-off pressures.
- 4.19. The forecast position has been reported to Cabinet as part of the 2019/20 budget update. For planning purposes, the assumption remains that the final outturn will be delivered on budget and it should be noted that balances remain above the agreed minimum level by £0.3m.
- 4.20 Senior Management Team and Budget Group continue to monitor the budget position on a monthly basis and an updated forecast outturn will be produced to assess the impact on balances as part of the final 2019/20 budget report. This will be reported to the Panel in January. The 9 month position will be reported to Governance and Audit Committee in March.

Housing Revenue Account

4.21 The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is a ring-fenced account which is affected by a number of variable factors. At the end of September 2018, the HRA is showing a net underspend of £535k compared to the profiled budget for the same period. This is primarily due to lower expenditure on Premises costs of £145k and Supplies & Services costs of £105k, and £228k more income than budgeted.

Position to date

- 4.22 Premises related costs are showing an underspend of £145k as at the end of September 2018. Overall, there is a net overspend of £5k on Repairs and Maintenance, which primarily relates to the timing of expenditure on repairs and maintenance of pumping stations, Homeless Persons Units and other delegated areas. There are underspends of £64k on Grounds Maintenance budgets, £37k on Council Tax on void properties and £23k on Utility and Water costs which relate to the timing of expenditure.
- 4.23 Supplies & Services costs are underspent by £105k at the end of September. There is a general underspend across most budget headings, which primarily relate to the timing of expenditure, the main factor being IT costs of £30k.
- 4.24 We have received £228k more income at the end of September 2018. This reflects the net impact of less rental & service charge income being lost from dwellings and garages than assumed within the budget, through a combination of voids and the level of Right to Buy sales.

Forecast Outturn

4.25 The HRA forecast outturn is to be on budget. Any underspend that occurs in the year will be used to fund a greater proportion of our Housing Capital Programme through an increased Revenue Contribution to Capital, thus minimising new borrowing and maximising our available headroom.

5. Standard References

5.1 Having considered consultation, publicity, equality, diversity and human rights, community safety, and health and safety implications, there are none that are significant to the matters in this report.

6. Strategic Plan references

6.1. The priorities within the Strategic Plan are reflected in the Medium Term Financial Forecast. This makes assumptions regarding government grant and Council Tax income, and identifies where necessary savings will be found in order to achieve a balanced budget. The 2018/19 revenue budget was prepared in accordance with the Strategic Plan's priorities, in the context of the Council facing growing financial pressures. Budget monitoring enables the financial performance against these priorities to be assessed.

7. Financial implications

7.1. As set out above.

8. Risk management implications

8.1. Risk management is used throughout the budget cycle, and this is reflected in the strategic risk register. The 2018/19 revenue budget report that was approved by Council in February 2018 detailed a number of potentially significant risk areas that had been identified during the budget process. In addition, Assistant Directors identify a number of both positive and negative risk areas during the year.

Background Papers

None

Appendix A

Period 6 – Current Budget Variances and Forecast Outturn Variances by Service Area

	Pos	sition to d	ate	Forecast Outturn			
Area	Spend	Income	Net	Spend	Income	Net	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	
Corporate & Democratic Core	(10)	(0.1)	(0.4)				
	(10)	(24)	(34)	-	-	-	
Total	(10)	(24)	(34)	-	-	-	
Executive Management Team							
EMT	3	-	3	1	-	1	
Total	3	-	3	1	-	1	
Community							
Assistant Director	(1)		(1)				
Cultural Services	(1)	4	(1)	(5)	- 4	(1)	
Community Zones	(156)	35	(121)	(63)	12	(51)	
Community Development	(150)	8	(121)	13	11	24	
Colchester Museums	(30)	13	<u>(+2)</u> 10	13	(1)		
Subtotal	(223)	60	(163)	(54)	26	(28)	
Colchester & Ipswich Museums	4	(28)	(24)	25	(11)	14	
Total	(219)	32	(187)	(29)	15	(14)	
Customer							
Assistant Director	(4)	_	(4)	_	_	_	
Customer Business	(29)	(34)	(63)	(42)	-	(42)	
Local Taxation & NNDR	(31)	(30)	(61)	(24)	(45)	(69)	
Customer Solutions	49	-	49	58	(44)	14	
Customer Experience	103	1	104	203	(6)	197	
Subtotal	88	(63)	25	195	(95)	100	
Benefits - Payments & Subsidy	921	2,174	3,095	-	(100)	(100)	
Total	1,009	2,111	3,120	195	(195)	=	
Environment							
Assistant Director	(1)		(1)	-			
Recycling & Fleet	57	(30)	27	390	(55)	335	
Car Parking	3	13	16	4	-	4	
Licensing & Food Safety	13	(82)	(69)	36	(64)	(28)	
Environmental Health Services	14	(28)	(14)	3	(19)	(16)	
Electoral Services	(11)	(3)	(14)	-	-	-	
Land Charges	(14)	27	13	(5)	43	38	
Building Control	(3)	(15)	(18)	11	(8)	3	

	Pos	sition to d	ate	Forecast Outturn		
Area	Spend	Income	Net	Spend	Income	Net
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Subtotal	58	(118)	(60)	439	(103)	336
Parking Partnership (NEPP)	17	(113)	(96)	199	(306)	(107)
Total	75	(231)	(156)	638	(409)	229
Policy & Corporate						
Assistant Director	20	-	20	6	-	6
Finance	(8)	-	(8)	(1)	-	(1)
ICT and Communications	54	(1)	53	(10)	-	(10)
People and Performance	15	6	21	14	(1)	13
Governance	(13)	(1)	(14)	(10)	-	(10)
Place Strategy	(56)	(7)	(63)	(40)	-	(40)
Planning	22	(88)	(66)	(16)	(50)	(66)
Housing	95	(117)	(22)	1	-	1
Garden Communities	-	-	-	-	-	-
Subtotal	129	(208)	(79)	(56)	(51)	(107)
Company Related:-						
Client – Commercial Company	8	-	8	-	24	24
Corporate Asset Management	1	(18)	(17)	36	(5)	31
Commercial & Investment	(20)	(86)	(106)	21	91	112
Sport & Leisure	(50)	136	86	(26)	45	19
Total	68	(176)	(108)	(25)	104	79
Total (excl. Benefits, NEPP & JMC)	(16)	(321)	(337)	556	(68)	488
Total (all)	926	1,712	2,638	780	(485)	295

Current Budget Variances and Forecast Outturn Variances by Subjective Group

	Po	sition to c	late	For	ecast Out	turn
	Actual	Budget	Variance	Actual	Budget	Variance
Subjective	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure						
Employees	11,836	11,571	265	23,090	23,011	79
Premises Related	4,054	4,225	(171)	7,402	7,295	107
Transport Related	1,150	1,198	(48)	2,852	2,864	(12)
Supplies & Services	4,101	4,145	(44)	8,113	7,824	289
Third Party Payments	2,417	2,503	(86)	4,368	4,275	93
Transfer Payments	118	50	68	100	100	0
Capital Financing Costs	0	0	0	110	110	0
Total	23,676	23,692	(16)	46,035	45,479	556
Income						
Government Grant	(1,369)	(1,327)	(42)	(1,562)	(1,554)	(8)
Other Grants &						
Reimbursements	(1,961)	(1,773)	(188)	(3,724)	(3,604)	(120)
Customer & Client						
Receipts	(10,124)	(10,016)	(108)	(20,403)	(20,463)	60
Income-Interest	(60)	(77)	17	(153)	(153)	0
Inter Account Transfers	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	(13,514)	(13,193)	(321)	(25,842)	(25,774)	(68)
Net	10,162	10,499	(337)	20,193	19,705	488

Forecast Outturn Variances

Service Area	Variance			Comment
	Spend £'000	Income £'000	Net £'000	
Executive Management Team				
EMT	1	-	1	Small overspend on employee costs (0.09%).
Community Services				
Cultural Services	(5)	4	(1)	£5k underspend forecast on vacant post (3.5%) which is offset by less income from advertising and sales (3.9%).
Community Zones	(63)	12	(51)	The majority of the forecast underspend relates to savings of £85k (3.17%) on staff costs, mainly on pension costs as a result of staff opting out of the scheme. The underspend is partially offsetting £10k of voluntary redundancy costs with no budget. There is a small overspend within Zones/Sweepers on new stand pipes and additional asbestos clearance (2.9%). The underspend is also offsetting Mayor's signage costs with no budget and a small budget pressure in HWCP due to bridge works. Less income in Market offset by more income in HWCP shop sales (10%). Also less income at the Crematorium which relates to Memorial Garden and Book of Remembrance sales (1%).
Community Development	13	11	24	Small underspend offset by savings target currently forecast as not being met. Further overall £3k overspend for Lion Walk following the transition of the service to Age Concern and payment of grant to support new offer to residents and existing members.
Colchester Museums	1	(1)	-	Small overspend on development and £9.5k (2%) shortfall on admissions is offset by unbudgeted solar panels income of £10k.

Service Area		Variance		Comment
	Spend £'000	Income £'000	Net £'000	
Colchester and Ipswich Museums (CIMS)	25	(11)	14	 CIMS is a ring fenced budget. There is a forecast underspend of £12k (0.68%) on staff. This is a mixture of savings from vacant posts (such as CIMS manager vacancy) and maternity leave savings, which are offset by additional casual staff costs plus the vacancy factor. Business Rates budget pressure of £14k (20.76%), mainly due to charges for MRC that is no longer occupied by Museums and is awaiting sale. Additional general expenses costs of £39k for new CMS to replace MODES, which is partially offset by small savings on equipment and a deep store costs in Heckworth. £2k (0.2%) additional grant from Arts Council towards Training Museums and £10k (7%) more Retail income.
Customer Services				
Customer Business	(42)	-	(42)	Underspend on employee costs are due to a receipt of DWP grant funding for a temporary post before recruitment has taken place leaving a temporary vacancy (3%).
Local Taxation & Business Rates	(24)	(45)	(69)	Underspend on employee costs are due to a receipt of DWP grant funding for a temporary post before recruitment has taken place leaving a temporary vacancy (7%). £45k extra income on court fees is forecast.
Customer Solutions	58	(44)	14	 Additional costs have occurred due to service needs including security at the Hub (£22k) and new IT equipment (£15k). Exceeding the budget on Print and postage costs (£21k) however the overall costs in this area are reducing year on year. Additional income is forecast from a DWP reimbursement of redundancy costs (£35k) and security recharges (£8k).

Service Area		Variance		Comment
	Spend £'000	Income £'000	Net £'000	
Customer Experience	203	(6)	197	Forecast overspend on Employee costs are due to redundancy and pension strain payments paid out of 'in-year' budget following the Customer Futures 2 review.
Benefits – Payments & Subsidy	-	(100)	(100)	Forecasting £100K additional income for the collection of Housing Benefit overpayments.
Environmental Services				
Recycling and Fleet	390	(55)	335	Employee overspends are forecast due to not having had sufficient vacant posts yet this year to achieve the budget target for vacancies (2.92%.) Clear sacks and caddie stock levels are high and although purchasing for recycling kit is expected to slow down a £170k overspend is forecast (77%) but this will be monitored against demand. Recycling activity has increased and resulted in £90k (13.7%) more income from recycling credits being forecast. This has been partially offset with a forecast shortfall on Trade income (5%). Following market fluctuations in material sales values and resulting additional contractor costs associated with sorting materials, net income derived from the sale of materials will reduce.
Parking	4	-	4	Additional security costs relating to closing St Johns car park at night.
Licensing and Food Safety	36	(64)	(28)	Employee overspends are forecast due to not having had sufficient vacant posts yet this year to achieve the budget target for vacancies (3%.) Due to Court Cases in progress Legal Fees are forecast to overspend (116%) Licencing Income is forecast to exceed the target (9.9%) of which £40k relates to Private Hire Vehicle Licensing.

Service Area		Variance		Comment
	Spend £'000	Income £'000	Net £'000	
Environmental Health Services	3	(19)	(16)	Following the introduction of the Redress Penalty Scheme by PSH, £10k more income has been forecast (100%).
Land Charges	(5)	43	38	A £43k shortfall of Search Fees income is forecast by year end (12.40%).
Building Control	11	(8)	3	Employee overspends are offset by ACM grant funding.
North Essex Parking Partnership (NEPP)	199	(306)	(107)	NEPP budgets are ring-fenced and are expected to operate within budget, with any surplus or deficit being transferred to the Decriminalised Parking Reserve at year-end.
Policy & Corporate (incl. CDC)				
Assistant Director Policy & Corp	6	-	6	Forecast overspend relates to agency costs to cover vacant Assistant Director post, slightly offset by reduced hours for PA post (3.6%).
Finance	(1)	-	(1)	Small forecast underspend on employee costs (0.10%).
ICT and Communications	(10)	-	(10)	Underspend forecast mainly due to vacant posts (0.5%).
People & Performance	14	(1)	13	Overspend forecast on employee costs due to redundancy cost (1.8%). Small unbudgeted income from Unison for collecting company subscriptions through payroll (100%).
Governance	(10)	-	(10)	Underspend forecast on employee costs due to vacant posts, offsetting agency costs to cover maternity (1%).
Place Strategy	(40)	-	(40)	Underspend forecast on employee costs due to vacant posts following review, offsetting redundancy costs (4.9%).

Service Area Variance			Comment	
	Spend £'000	Income £'000	Net £'000	
Planning	(16)	(50)	(66)	Underspend forecast on employee costs due to vacant posts following review, offsetting redundancy and agency costs (3.4%). More income forecast at year end on Planning Fee's (4.2%).
Housing	1	-	1	Small overspend forecast due to ECC Pension's charge following Housing Systems Team TUPE to CBH (100%).
Client – Commercial Company	-	24	24	A £24k shortfall is currently forecast against the £286k dividend that is due to be returned to the Council. Colchester Commercial Holdings Limited (CCHL) are looking to mitigate this shortfall by further development management consultancy, growth in corporate event bookings and the development of catering and bar operation at ticketed events.
Corporate Asset Management	36	(5)	31	£10k unbudgeted spend for Colchester Library Licence Fee. Overspend on R&M for Rowan House Lift repair (8.4%) and Town Hall PA system (13%).
Commercial & Investment	21	91	112	Commercial properties have some small unplanned cost pressures including business rates and security although these are offset by some underspends, overall a £9k overspend has been forecast. Income is forecast to be £100k lower than budget due to a delay in the progress of the Northern Gateway site, and this has now been moved forward into 19/20. Some small variances on other properties including Vineyard St have also been forecast.
Sport and Leisure	(26)	45	19	A business rates pressure of £34k as well as a £20k water costs increase on prices and usage (under investigation) have both been forecast. Savings on some employees costs help to offset a cost pressure of £13k mainly due to casuals' superannuation. Supplies and services, including equipment costs also reduced to help

Service Area		Variance		Comment
	Spend £'000	Income £'000	Net £'000	
				offset. An £18k grant expenditure is also off-set by matching income. An income shortfall of £45k is forecast. Lifestyles membership sales continue to perform well, however, the 10% growth forecast for the second half of this year is very challenging given it is ahead already of income levels achieved in 2017/18. All other areas of income are forecasting to be less than target by year end. Aqua Springs is exceeding usage targets, however, the %age of member usage versus casual 'paying' customers has increased resulting in year to date variance of £38k below profile, therefore, the forecast to hit income profiles for the second half of the year is again challenging.

	Current Period - September 2018			Forecast Year-End Position			
September 2018 <u>Account Description</u>	Profiled Budget to Period 6 £'000	Actual to Period 6 £'000	Variance (under) / over £'000	Annual Budget £'000	Projected Outturn £'000	Variance (under) / over £'000	
HRA - Direct & Non-Direct							
EXPENDITURE							
Employees	59	51	(8)	121	121	-	
Premises Related	3,147	3,002	(145)	6,470	6,470	-	
Transport Related	-	[.] 1	Ì Í				
Supplies & Services	339	234	(105)	832	832	-	
Third Party Payments	2,033	2,019	(14)	3,491	3,491	-	
Transfer Payments	56	20	(36)	112	112	-	
Support Services	1,702	1,702	-	3,464	3,464	-	
Capital Financing Costs	-	-	-	15,241	15,523	282	
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	7,336	7,029	(307)	29,731	30,013	282	
INCOME							
Other Grants &							
Reimbursements	(68)	(68)	-	(178)	(178)	-	
Customer & Client							
Receipts	(15,350)	(15,579)	(229)	(29,222)	(29,504)	(282)	
Income-Interest	(1)	-	1	(32)	(32)	-	
Inter Account Transfers		-	-	(110)	(110)	-	
TOTAL INCOME	(15,419)	(15,647)	(228)	(29,542)	(29,824)	(282)	
TOTAL NET - HRA	(8,083)	(8,618)	(535)	189	189	-	

Appendix D