

Appendix 5 – Strategy, Workforce and Localities

Lead Members:

- Governance and Communications: Cllr Bill Revans
- Resources and Performance: Cllr Liz Leyshon
- Transformation and Human Resources: Cllr Theo Butt Philip

Executive Director: Alyn Jones

Service Directors:

- Partnership and Localities: Sara Skirton
- Strategy and Performance: Sara Cretney
- Governance, Democratic and Legal Services: David Clark
- Workforce (interim): Dawn Bettridge

2023/24 net budget £26m, favourable outturn variance £0.9m, £0.8m favourable movement from month ten.

Strategy, Workforce & Localities – key explanations, actions, & mitigating controls

Partnership and Localities

The outturn position for the service is £0.5m underspend this is a favourable movement of £0.5m from the reported position at month 10.

The service has seen a reduction in employment costs due to holding positions vacant, unbudgeted income and an underspend against grant income for the establishment of the Local Community Networks. These savings were part offset by the service bearing a one-off cost to honour a grant payment of a legacy council.

Strategy and Performance

The overall outturn position for the service is £0.3m underspend, this is an unfavourable movement of £0.3m from the position reported at month 10. The change from month 10 results from several factors such as additional staff savings offset by lower internal recharges, and reduced income from Land Charges.

There is ongoing analysis work on Land Charges income, reviewing both income and expenditure budgets. The Land Charges service is moving to Planning in 2024/25.

Workforce

The outturn position for Workforce is £1.1m underspend. Further savings within staffing and training budgets accounts for the favourable movement of £0.4m to the position reported at month 10.

The underspend in Human Resources & Organisational Development relates to savings within staffing through in year vacancy management, in-year reduction of expenditure relating to Pathway to Employment placements, reduction in software costs and increased income from traded services and grants.

With the focus in the first year of Somerset Council being on essential induction, statutory and mandatory training and maximising the use of the apprenticeship levy to upskill employees resulted in £0.5m underspend in Learning and Development.

Governance, Democratic & Legal Services

The outturn position for Governance, Democratic & Legal Services is £1.0m overspend. This is a favourable movement of £0.2m to the position reported at month 10 and is a result of further staffing savings.

Democratic Services £0.3m underspend is from vacancies not appointed to ahead of the restructure planned for 2024/25, reduced expenditure in other areas and increased income.

Legal Services £1.7m overspend is due to the reliance on locum and agency lawyers to fill establishment positions because of recruitment challenges, principally in respect of the childcare team. The service is developing a strategy to aid successful permanent recruitment going forward.

An underspend of £0.2m in Information Governance (IG) is due to in year savings within staffing through vacancies.

An underspend of £0.2m in Elections relates to reduced expenditure, and the release of some budgets not required in 2023/24.