

## Scrutiny Report

Scrutiny Committee: Communities  
Meeting Date – 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2025



### **2024/25 General Fund Budget Monitoring Report Communities – (Month 7) to end of October 2024**

Chair of Committee: Cllr Gwil Wren

Executive Member(s): Cllr Federica Smith-Roberts

Local Member(s) and Division(s) affected: All

Executive Director: Maria G Christofi -Interim Chief Finance Officer (S151)

#### **Executive Summary**

This report is the General Fund Revenue Budget Monitoring Report for Communities up to and including October 2024 (Month 7).

The full General Fund Revenue Monitoring Report was presented to Corporate and Resources Scrutiny Committee on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> January 2025.

#### **Recommendations:**

Scrutiny is asked to consider the following:

1. If there are any general comments or observations that they would wish to consider making to the Executive on the report.

2. If the actions set out in the report are appropriate and if there are any further actions that scrutiny would wish to include in the report.

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## Main report and supporting information.



### Background and purpose of report

1. There are no implications from this report. Scrutiny Members are asked to note the information and recommend any actions to Executive Committee

### Report

Lead Member for Communities, Housing Revenue Account, Culture and Equalities & Diversity: Cllr Federica Smith-Roberts

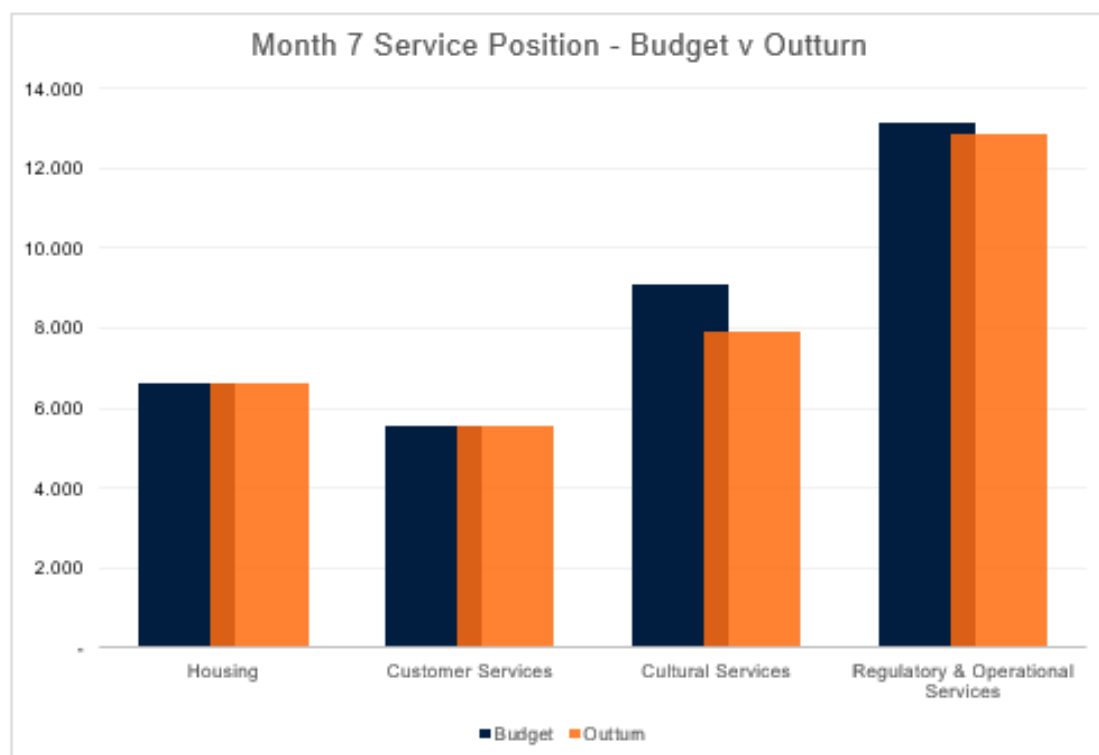
Lead Member for Adults Services, Housing and Homelessness: Cllr Sarah Wakefield

Executive Director: Chris Hall

Service Directors:

- Housing: Kirsty Larkins
- Culture: Elizabeth Dawson
- Customers: Jan Stafford
- Regulatory and Operational: Sarah Dowden

- **Chart 1: Budget versus forecast outturn graph**



**Table 1: 2024/25 Community Services as at the end of October 2024 (Month 7)**

- 2024/25 net budget £34.412m, forecast underspend of £1.466m, a decrease of £0.106m since Quarter 2.
- 2023/24 net budget £37.4m, outturn underspend of £3.9m.

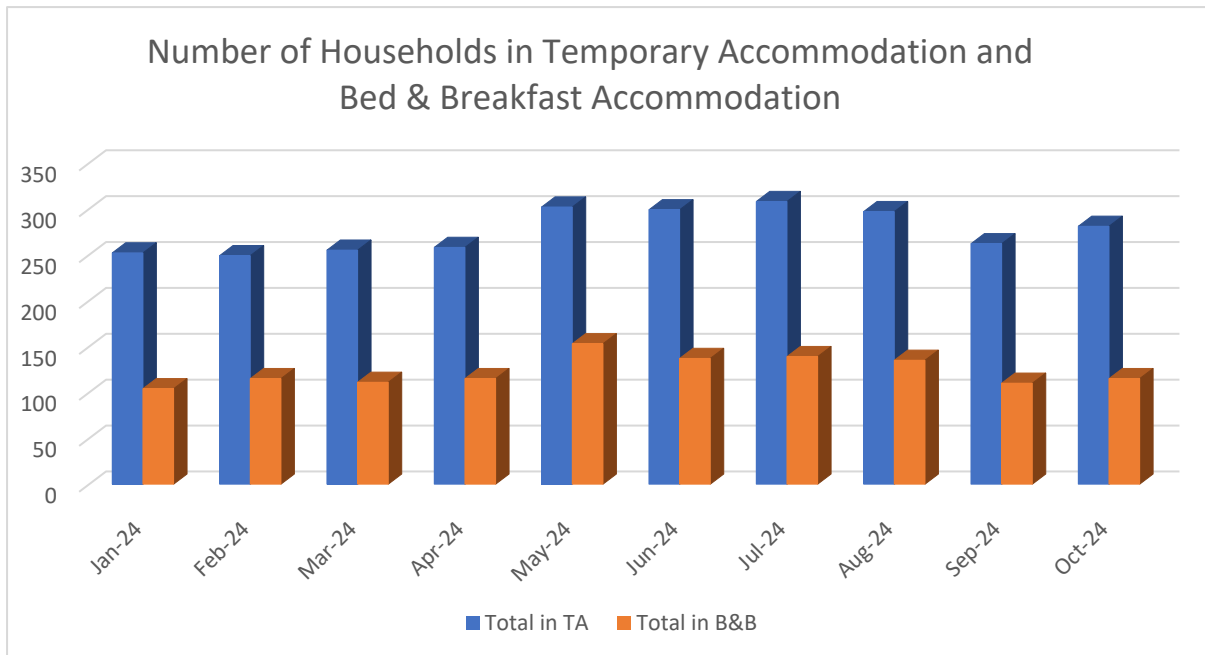
Service Area	Current Expenditure Budget £m	Current Income Budget £m	Current Net Budget £m	Full Year Projection £m	Month 7 Variance £m	Overspend / (Underspend)	RAG Status	Ongoing Pressure £m	One-off Pressures £m	Movement From Month 6 £m
<b>Housing</b>										
Service Director - Housing	0.146	-	0.146	0.115	(0.031)	Underspend	Green	-	-	0.001
Housing Strategy	0.407	(0.285)	0.122	0.242	0.120	Overspend	Red	-	0.120	(0.000)
Housing Options	10.828	(5.545)	5.283	5.693	0.410	Overspend	Red	-	0.410	0.014
Housing Enabling	0.682	(0.143)	0.539	0.438	(0.101)	Underspend	Green	-	-	(0.000)
Private Sector Support/ DFG's (SIP)	1.353	(0.823)	0.530	0.132	(0.398)	Underspend	Green	-	-	(0.037)
Displaced Person Service	1.069	(1.069)	-	-	-	On-budget	Green	-	-	-
<b>sub total</b>	<b>14.485</b>	<b>(7.865)</b>	<b>6.620</b>	<b>6.620</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>On-budget</b>	<b>Green</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>0.530</b>	<b>(0.022)</b>
<b>Customer Services</b>										
Customer Services	6.619	(0.721)	5.898	5.898	-	On-budget	Green	-	-	-
Somerset Lifeline	2.237	(2.600)	(0.363)	(0.363)	-	On-budget	Green	-	-	-
<b>sub total</b>	<b>8.856</b>	<b>(3.321)</b>	<b>5.535</b>	<b>5.535</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>On-budget</b>	<b>Green</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Cultural Services</b>										
Service Director - Cultural Services	0.146	-	0.146	0.146	-	On-budget	Green	-	-	-
Library Service	4.954	(0.738)	4.216	4.216	-	On-budget	Green	-	-	-
Heritage Service	1.749	-	1.749	1.749	-	On-budget	Green	-	-	-
Leisure - Sports Centre	2.864	(0.494)	2.370	1.170	(1.200)	Underspend	Green	-	-	-
Museums	0.044	(0.003)	0.041	0.012	(0.029)	Underspend	Green	-	-	0.008
Theatres	2.587	(1.975)	0.612	0.612	-	On-budget	Green	-	-	-
Visitor Centres	0.262	(0.404)	(0.142)	(0.022)	0.120	Underachievement	Red	-	0.120	0.120
Tourism	0.111	(0.010)	0.101	0.024	(0.077)	Underspend	Green	-	-	-
(wellbeing) Community Grants	0.021	(0.001)	0.020	0.020	-	On-budget	Green	-	-	-
<b>sub total</b>	<b>12.738</b>	<b>(3.625)</b>	<b>9.113</b>	<b>7.927</b>	<b>(1.186)</b>	<b>Underspend</b>	<b>Green</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>0.120</b>	<b>0.128</b>
<b>Regulatory &amp; Operational Services</b>										
Registration	1.985	(2.047)	(0.062)	(0.062)	(0.000)	Overachievement	Green	-	-	-
Environmental Health	4.516	(0.328)	4.188	3.955	(0.233)	Underspend	Green	-	-	-
Bereavement Services	1.035	(2.444)	(1.409)	(1.401)	0.008	Underachievement	Amber	-	0.008	-
Harbours	0.066	(0.028)	0.038	0.037	(0.001)	Underspend	Green	-	-	-
Ports	0.230	(0.148)	0.082	0.022	(0.060)	Underspend	Green	-	-	-
Street Cleansing	5.766	(0.872)	4.894	4.534	(0.360)	Underspend	Green	-	-	-
Open Spaces	5.879	(2.542)	3.337	3.557	0.220	Overspend	Red	-	0.220	-
Public Conveniences	0.558	(0.474)	0.084	0.092	0.008	Overspend	Red	-	0.008	-
(wellbeing) Community Safety	0.012	-	0.012	0.005	(0.007)	Underspend	Green	-	-	-
CCTV	0.841	(0.594)	0.247	0.288	0.041	Overspend	Red	-	0.041	-
Licensing	0.759	(1.058)	(0.299)	(0.367)	(0.068)	Overachievement	Green	-	-	-
Resorts	0.388	(0.204)	0.184	0.240	0.056	Overspend	Red	-	0.056	-
Coroners	1.344	-	1.344	1.464	0.120	Overspend	Red	-	0.120	-
Operational Support	0.689	(0.103)	0.586	0.586	-	On-budget	Green	-	-	-
Scientific Services	0.437	(0.414)	0.023	0.024	0.001	Overspend	Amber	-	0.001	-
Markets	0.230	(0.335)	(0.105)	(0.110)	(0.005)	Overachievement	Green	-	-	0.000
<b>sub total</b>	<b>24.735</b>	<b>(11.591)</b>	<b>13.144</b>	<b>12.864</b>	<b>(0.280)</b>	<b>Underspend</b>	<b>Green</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>0.454</b>	<b>0.000</b>
<b>Community Services Total</b>	<b>60.814</b>	<b>(26.402)</b>	<b>34.412</b>	<b>32.946</b>	<b>(1.466)</b>	<b>Underspend</b>	<b>Green</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1.104</b>	<b>0.106</b>

## Community Services - key explanations, actions & mitigating controls

### Housing

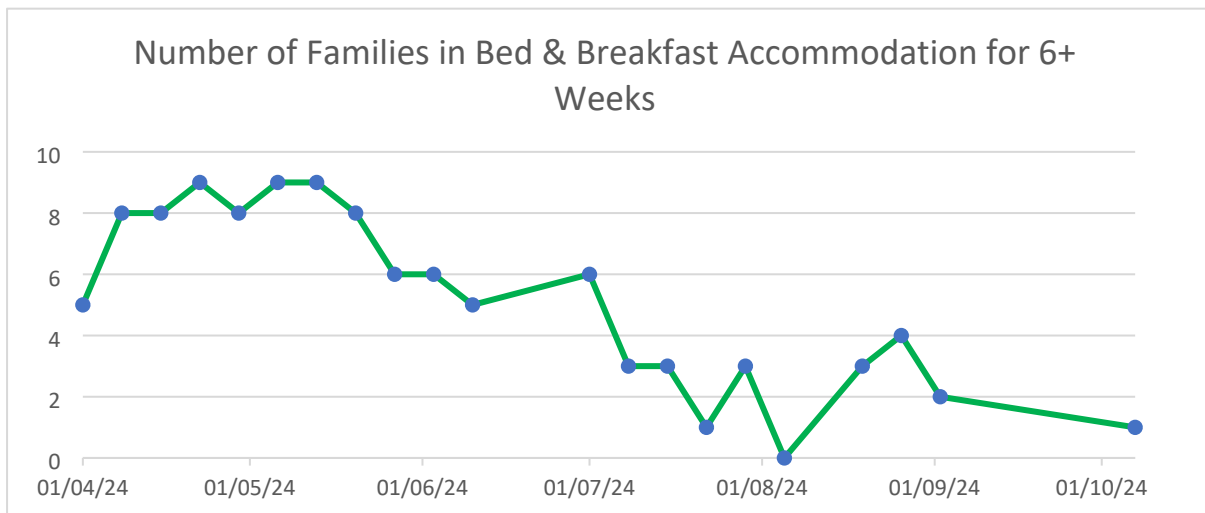
The General Fund Housing Service is currently forecasting a balanced outturn position for 2024/25.

The Housing Options service has seen an increase in the numbers approaching the service and the number of cases which the Council has a responsibility to provide relief or main duty accommodation. This continued demand for temporary accommodation within the last ten months is demonstrated as follows:



Actions are being progressed by the service to mitigate the need for Bed & Breakfast accommodation, and we are striving towards reducing the necessity of temporary staffing following the restructure and streamlining processes within the service.

Despite seeing an increase in demand on Bed & Breakfast accommodation, the service is endeavouring to remove this as a long-term option for families, demonstrated as follows:



The Housing Options service is forecasting an overspend of £0.410m, an increase of £0.014m from Quarter 2. Earmarked Reserves ringfenced for this service area may offset additional pressures within 2024/25.

Savings on permanent staffing budgets within the Housing Enabling and Housing Director services have offset pressures, derived from historical income budgets unable to be achieved, within the Housing Strategy service.

## Cultural Services

For the financial year 2024/25 cultural services are forecasting an underspend of £1.186m, a decrease of £0.128m since Quarter 2. This is due to a reduction in income being achieved in the Visitor Centres against the budget.

### Mitigations

**Table 2: Service Management Actions included in the forecast outturn**

Service Management Actions	Quarter 2	Month 7	Movement	Comments
	£m	£m	£m	
Housing	0.022	0.022	-	Housing overspends now absorbed by the service
<b>Total Management Actions</b>	<b>0.022</b>	<b>0.022</b>	<b>-</b>	

**Table 3: Mitigating Actions Identified, not yet included in the forecast outturn**

In-Year Mitigation Proposed	Quarter 2	Month 7	Movement	One-Off Mitigation	Ongoing Mitigation	Comments
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	
<b>To be Mitigated</b>	<b>0.574</b>	<b>0.574</b>	<b>-</b>			<b>Overspend in Cultural Services, and Regulatory &amp; Operational Services</b>
Cultural Services	-	(0.120)	(0.120)	(0.120)	-	The Executive Director for Community Place and Economy has directed that Services hold any underspends across the service to mitigate pressures seen within Cultural Services
Regulatory & Operational Services	-	(0.454)	(0.454)	(0.454)	-	The Executive Director for Community Place and Economy has directed that Services hold any underspends across

In-Year Mitigation Proposed	Quarter 2	Month 7	Movement	One-Off Mitigation	Ongoing Mitigation	Comments
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	
						the service to mitigate pressures seen within Regulatory & Operational Services
<b>Total Mitigations Identified to be Actioned</b>	-	<b>(0.574)</b>	<b>(0.574)</b>	<b>(0.574)</b>	-	
<b>Still to be Mitigated</b>	<b>0.574</b>	-	<b>(0.574)</b>			<b>To be reduced to a balanced position by Month 8</b>

### Performance of agreed MTFP savings proposals

Community Services have 36 agreed savings proposals for 2024/25 totalling £2.866m. Whilst budgets have been adjusted to reflect the savings these are monitored throughout the year to ensure that these are achieved, or alternative substitute savings are sought to offset any unachievable savings. Full details of the savings proposals are included in **Appendix A**.

As at the end of October 4% totalling £0.115m of the savings have been achieved. 84% of the savings totalling £2.412m have been identified as on track, to achieve these savings services will need to cease and income through Fees and Charges needs to be achieved. 12% of the savings totalling £0.339m have been identified as at risk or unachievable. The unachievable savings are in the main due to income generation through and agreed savings prior to amalgamating 5 authorities into one. Where savings are unachievable Community Services are exploring alternative savings or reducing expenditure to ensure that these are achieved. Finance will continue to work with the service to monitor all the agreed savings' proposals closely.