

**Portfolio Action Plans**

**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The development of Portfolio Action plans was agreed by Cabinet in response to the adverse position reported to Cabinet at Q1 with a view to urgently bringing budgets back into line.
- 1.2 The action plans include the acceleration of savings plans from future years and delivery is being managed by the Portfolio Holders.
- 1.3 Action plan items are in addition to £30.4m of additional income and savings already built into the budget for 2023/24. Progress against delivery of existing savings is detailed in full at Section 3 of the Cabinet report.

**2. Update on Portfolio Action Plans**

- 2.1 The table below summarises the total impact of the agreed action plans of £4.85m and the latest position on performance against the agreed actions.

<b>Directorate</b>	<b>Action Plan</b>	<b>Forecast</b>	<b>Variance</b>
Accessible Housing & Resources	-£0.5m	-£0.5m	-
Climate Change & Environment	-£1.3m	-£1.3m	-
Communities & Leader	-£0.2m	-£0.2m	-
Education & Children’s Services	-£1.2m	-£1.2m	-
Health & Wellbeing	-£1.1m	-£1.19m	-£0.09m
Housing & Homelessness & Regulatory Services	-	-	-
Planning & Regeneration	-£0.3m	-£0.3m	-
Transport	-£0.25m	-£0.25m	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>-£4.85m</b>	<b>-£4.94m</b>	<b>-£0.09m</b>

**3.1 Accessible Housing and Resources**

<b>Service Area</b>	<b>Action Plan</b>	<b>Forecast</b>	<b>Variance</b>
Property & Assets (incl. Energy)	-£0.2m	-£0.2m	-
Resources	-£0.3m	-£0.3m	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>-£0.5m</b>	<b>-£0.5m</b>	-

- a) In Property & Assets a financial pressure of £1m emerged at Q1 due to increased energy costs (increases in costs relating to access and maintenance of the electricity grid – ‘network costs’ - and under-budgeted usage). Since Q1 the purchasing of winter energy has taken place, and the price per unit and network costs had reduced, giving a projected pressure of £0.3m.
- b) A mitigating saving has been identified from the early closure of KGVH Amersham of £200k. This is in a consultation period with staff and Members, with a projected closure date of early January 2024.
- c) Resources Directorate have been able to accelerate £300k of Better Buckinghamshire savings that were due for delivery in 2024/25. These can be applied to improve the overall in-year financial position.

**3.2 Climate Change & Environment**

<b>Service Area</b>	<b>Action Plan</b>	<b>Forecast</b>	<b>Variance</b>
Neighbourhood Services	-£1.3m	-£1.3m	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>-£1.3m</b>	<b>-£1.3m</b>	-

- a) Mitigations of £1.3m have been identified linked to additional electricity income from the EfW plant. These relate to under-accrual of estimated final income projections for 2022-23 and finalisation of the implications of the Energy Generator Levy (EGL). Both are on track to be achieved, however there remains a risk to EGL

payment as this is not yet fully confirmed. If this risk were to materialise it could be offset by use of the waste reserve.

**3.3 Communities & Leader**

<b>Service Area</b>	<b>Action Plan</b>	<b>Forecast</b>	<b>Variance</b>
Deputy Chief Executive	-£0.2m	-£0.2m	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>-£0.2m</b>	<b>-£0.2m</b>	-

- a) Over and above existing plans, in-year savings of £200k have been identified, primarily through accelerating agreed future years staffing savings and delivering underspends on one off projects. Savings are on track to be achieved.

**3.4 Education & Children’s Services**

<b>Service Area</b>	<b>Action Plan</b>	<b>Forecast</b>	<b>Variance</b>
Children’s Social Care	-£1.2m	-£1.2m	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>-£1.2m</b>	<b>-£1.2m</b>	-

- a) A series of actions were put in place to help mitigate pressures within Children’s Social Care and whilst many of these have progressed as planned, the financial position within the directorate has worsened as a result of increasing placements costs and increased spend to support young people with complex needs within the community. The service continues to progress with the implementation of the mitigation actions in order to realise the original in year savings of £1.2m. These savings primarily link to:
- Establishing a robust mechanism for agreeing funding responsibility for young people between social care, NHS and education in order to increase opportunities for health funding (773k).
  - The refurbishment of a number of properties to create additional in-house residential capacity in order to reduce the use of high-cost external placements in the current year (360k).

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- Targeted action is being taken to develop the foster carer marketing to support older children and children with more complex needs; including a targeted campaign to try to attract returning foster carers.
- The service is also in the process of completing a line-by-line review to identify further savings that could be delivered to help mitigate the financial pressure.

**3.5 Health & Wellbeing**

<b>Service Area</b>	<b>Action Plan</b>	<b>Forecast</b>	<b>Variance</b>
Adult Social Care	-£1.1m	-£1.19m	-£0.09m
<b>Total</b>	<b>-£1.1m</b>	<b>-£1.19m</b>	<b>-£0.09m</b>

- Health and Wellbeing are currently on track to overachieve their action plan.
- The allocation of Public Health funding to meet eligible prevention spend has been agreed and actioned (£500k).
- Star chambers deep dive into all service budgets (including staffing) have been carried out. £100k of the £200k target has been delivered so far, and the forecast is expected to overachieve by £50k.
- Changes to the implementation of the Dynamic Purchasing Vehicle have produced in-year savings of £277k against a target of £200k.
- A stretch target on over-delivering of savings on voids, focussed on supported living and extra care beds, was agreed to deliver a £200k saving. An additional £100k on voids is currently being delivered. It is forecast that £60k will be delivered by filling voids in Extra Care beds between now and the end of March.

**3.6 Housing & Homelessness & Regulatory Services**

<b>Service Area</b>	<b>Action Plan</b>	<b>Forecast</b>	<b>Variance</b>
Housing & Regulatory	-£m	-£m	
<b>Total</b>	<b>-£m</b>	<b>-£m</b>	

- Housing & Homelessness & Regulatory Revenue is reporting an adverse variance due to increased pressures on temporary accommodation. This is due to increasing

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length of stay of households in B&B due to lack of affordable housing to move on to, and above-inflation per night for B&B accommodation.

- b) Savings of £1.15m from mitigating actions are already included in this forecast. These actions focus on moving the most expensive households out of B&Bs into cheaper Council or Registered provider owned temporary accommodation.
  - 52 rooms in the new Bridge Court accommodation in High Wycombe are now occupied, mainly with larger households.
  - We have worked with Registered Providers to reduce the length of time their cheaper temporary accommodation units remain empty once a household leaves.
- c) These actions have resulted in the number of households in B&B accommodation reducing from 66% in April to 40% in September, and the average cost per night for B&Bs reducing from £119 to £99 per night over the same period.
- d) To alleviate the pressure further in future years we are purchasing further council-owned temporary accommodation, including Harrington House which was purchased in June.

**3.7 Planning & Regeneration**

<b>Service Area</b>	<b>Action Plan</b>	<b>Forecast</b>	<b>Variance</b>
Planning & Regeneration	-£0.3m	-£0.3m	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>-£0.3m</b>	<b>-£0.3m</b>	-

- a) To contribute towards the council-wide pressures identified in Quarter 1, Planning & Regeneration identified £300k of savings it is implementing:
  - £100k staffing savings from bringing forward a mini service review in planning. This is being delivered by holding staffing vacancies.
  - £200k from the pipeline feasibility fund, by reducing funding available for projects not yet started.
- b) Since Quarter 1 the Planning & Regeneration portfolio has seen a reduction in Planning Income levels largely due to the impact of the economy on small and large planning applications, which has given rise to a financial pressure of £1.3m. Further mitigating actions totalling £800k are now also being delivered (in addition to the £300k of savings above) to reduce this pressure to £0.5m. These include:

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- £400k savings from reducing the number of High-Cost Interim staff by terminating contracts early, and not backfilling roles.
- £100k windfall energy contract rebate, originally intended to fund a staffing post, which will be held vacant.
- £300k use of reserves, for Local Plan and Climate Change, to fund staff working on those projects.

**3.8 Transport**

<b>Service Area</b>	<b>Action Plan</b>	<b>Forecast</b>	<b>Variance</b>
Highways & Technical Services	-£0.25m	-£0.25m	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>-£0.25m</b>	<b>-£0.25m</b>	-

- a) Mitigations of £0.25m linked to £0.045m acceleration of LED streetlighting update and £0.2m potential closure of Hampden House Car Park, the latter being subject to a formal Member Decision. In-year, savings on Hampden House Car Park closure would be £0.053m and the balance of £0.147m would need to be covered through other mitigations within this service directorate. The future year saving on this car park is expected to be £0.23m. These savings are on track to be achieved.

**4. Further Mitigations**

- a) Education and Children’s Services are urgently developing further mitigations including reducing the scheme of delegation and targeting spend on transport, equipment, staffing and placement costs. Enhanced scrutiny is being put in place including bi-weekly budget boards and targeted actions aimed at mitigating the position to control spend and accountability focused on senior officers.

**5. Additional Risks**

- a) It should be noted that the Council holds corporate contingencies to manage risk, and a balance of £15.5m remains available to be used if necessary.