POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE - 7 NOVEMBER 2022 PART I – NOT DELEGATED

10. BUDGET MONITORING REPORT TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2022 (DoF)

1. Budget Monitoring Summary

- 1.1 Budget monitoring report is a key tool in scrutinising the Council's financial performance and is designed to provide an overview to all relevant stakeholders. It is essential that the council monitors its budgets throughout the year to ensure that it is meeting its strategic objectives within its resource limits and, where necessary, corrective action is taken. A key principle of budgetary control is to align the budget holders' financial responsibilities and their management responsibilities.
- 1.2 This report shows the expected financial position over the three year medium term based on the Council's actual financial performance at the end of period four (30 September 2022) set against the latest budget.

1.3 Revenue Summary

1.3.1 The latest net expenditure approved budget for 2022/23 is £14.396m. The forecast year end position for 2022/23 at Period 6 is estimated to be £14.954m giving an unfavourable variance of £0.557m.

1.3.2	The table below shows how the forecast	yearend position has been constructed:
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Revenue Budget 2022/23	£000		
Original Net Revenue Budget			
Carry Forward from 2021/22 (Yearend report June 2022)	0.652		
Variances Previously Approved			
Latest Approved Budget			
Variances to budget reported at Quarter 2 – (to be approved)			
Forecast Total Net Expenditure 2022/23	14,954		

1.3.3 The main variances are shown in the table below:

	Description	£000
1	Kerbside Recycling Full budget on Kerbside Recycling longer required. £23,000 transferred to Playing Fields & Open Spaces to facilitate urgent repairs and replacements following annual inspection. £5,575 transferred to Trade Refuse, £13,345 transferred to Garden Waste, £225 transferred to Clinical Waste, £20 transferred to Animal Control, £5265 transferred to Street Cleansing and £24,510 transferred to Waste Management to cover the 8.8% increase in cost of the transport contract. £60,000 Increased income from Pearce Recycling from the sale of recycling.	(136)

	Total Variance	557		
	Other Variances below £40k	(62)		
10	2021/22 Pay Award 2022/23 Salary increase is still under negotiation pending result of membership ballots by Unions - minimum payment is likely to be £1,925 per person and 4.04% increase on Local Fringe Weighting.	580		
9	Three Rivers House Increase in Electricity budget required - Based on projection from Laser Energy who procure electricity on our behalf	40		
8	Executive Head of Service Budget transferred from Housing Service Needs, Environmental Heath - Residential Team and CSC following restructure	96		
7	Customer Experience Budget transferred from Watersmeet and CSC following restructure	82		
6	Corporate Management Increase in budget required for Bank Charges and Credit/Debit Card Commission due to higher levels of activity			
5	ICT Client £130,000 budget required for software licences as can no longer be capitalised, to be offset by New Homes Bonus reserve. Offset by a saving of £50,000 on Migration to Cloud as internal resources are being used instead of the expected external.	(50)		
4	Decriminalised Parking Reduced income of £14,500 on PCN's issued due partly to reduced use of TRDC car parks following the pandemic. Reduced income of £29,000 as use of TRDC car parks have not returned to pre pandemic levels, due to behaviour change of commuters/work patterns. £32,740 inflationary rise of year 5 of parking contract, future years currently being negotiated.	76		
3	Homelessness General Fund Full Budget no longer required due to reduced usage of nightly lets and efficient use of our own temporary accommodation	(41)		
2	Housing Service Needs Budget transferred to executive Head of Service following restructure	(72)		

1.4 Capital Summary

- 1.4.1 The latest approved budget for 2022/23 is £18.767 million. Services have identified a variance of (£0.344) million, due to savings and rephrasing. The forecast yearend position for 2022/23 provided by the services is now £18.423m.
- 1.4.2 The table below shows how the forecast yearend position has been constructed:

Capital Investment Programme 2022/23	£000		
Original Budget	7,038		
Rephasing from 2021/22	11,337		
Variances Previously Approved			
Latest Approved Budget (Council February 2022)			
Variances to budget reported at Quarter 1 (to be approved)			
Forecast Capital Expenditure 2022/23	18,423		

1.4.3 The forecast variances to agreed budget are shown in the table below:

Description	£000
Business Application Upgrade No spend forecasted this financial year. £60K to be moved to ICT Managed Serv- Project costs for project resources related to on premise hardware upgrades from Windows 2012 to 2019 and £124,500 for future years. Forecasted spend for future years, reduced to £20K annually with £70K also to be moved to ICT Managed Serv- Project Costs for project resources in 2023/24 & 2024/25.	(184)
ICT TRDC Licence Costs Budget no longer required as Licence costs are a revenue expense	(130)
ICT Managed Serv Project Costs Budgets transferred from Business Application Upgrades and ShS-Hardware Replacement Program to deliver a range of shared and TRDC specific projects.	60
Garage Improvements Budget Transferred to Trowley Rise Project to facilitate Verge Hardening	(57)
Trowley Rise Project Budget Transferred from Garage Improvements to facilitate Verge Hardening project at Trowley Rise	57
Other Variances	(90
Total Capital Variance	(344

1.5 **Reserves Summary**

1.5.1 The potential effect of both the revenue and capital variances upon on each reserve at summary level is shown in the table below. A list of reserve balances is shown at Appendix 7.

Description	Balance at 1 April 2022 £000	Movement £000	Balance at 31 March 2023 £000
Capital Reserves	(4,694)	(1,369)	(6,063)

Total	(20,978)	382	(20,596)
General Fund	(5,364)	1,643	(3,721)
Economic Impact Reserve	(2,334)	463	(1,871)
Earmarked Reserves	(8,586)	(355)	(8,941)

2. Details

2.1 Revenue Budget

- 2.1.1 The Council's latest approved services budget (excluding corporate budgets) is £12.195m. The forecast outturn is now estimated to be £12.753 million which results in a service variance of £0.558m.
- 2.1.2 The table below compares the original budget, latest budget, the forecast year end position and the variance against each Committee. It also shows spend to date up to the end of Period 6 (30 September 2022). The position of each cost centre and an explanation of the main variances for each committee are set out in the detailed committee monitoring reports at Appendices 1 to 3.

	2022/23	Revenue /	Account – G	eneral Fund	Summary
		(A)		(B)	(B – A)
	Original Budget	Latest Budget	Net Spend to Date	Year end Forecast	Variance
Committee	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Leisure, Environment and Community	4,555	5,316	(1,327)	5,223	(93)
Infrastructure, Housing and Economic Development	1,436	1,643	(854)	1,583	(60)
Policy & Resources	4,996	5,236	1,711	5,947	711
Total Service Budgets	10,987	12,195	(470)	12,753	558
Corporate Costs (Interest Earned/ Paid), Parish Precepts and Transfer to Reserves	2,201	2,201	1,464	2,201	0
Net General Fund	13,188	14,396	994	14,954	558

2.2 **Revenue Reserve Position**

2.2.1 The effect of all Period 6 variances on the Council's General Fund Reserve over the medium term is shown in the table below:

		2022/23		2023/24	2024/25
Movement on General Fund Balance	Original £000	Latest Budget £000	Forecast £000	Latest £000	Latest £000
Balance at 1 April	(5,364)	(5,364)	(5,364)	(3,721)	(2,488)
(Surplus)/Deficit for Year	340	1,548	1,643	1,233	1,265
Closing Balance at 31 March	(5,024)	(3,816)	(3,721)	(2,488)	(1,223)

- 2.2.2 A prudent minimum general fund balance of £2.000m is considered appropriate. The general fund balance is forecast to fall below this minimum level over the medium term. The Council's budget setting process for 2023/24 will take into account the expected call on the General Fund Reserve with measures taken to address this to ensure that balances remain above the risk assessed level.
- 2.2.3 The Council also has the Economic Impact Reserve which is held to manage the impact of economic fluctuations. The reserve will be used in 2022/23 to fund the shortfall on the SLM management contract income as a result of the impact of COVID-19 on the leisure contract and the reprofiling of the management fee. The forecast for the Economic Impact Reserve is set out in the following table:

		2022/23			2024/25
Movement on Economic Impact Reserve	Original	Latest Budget	Outturn	Latest	Latest
_	£000	£000	£000	£000	£
Balance at 1 April	(2,334)	(2,334)	(2,334)	(1,871)	(1,871)
COVID-19 Impact for Year		0	463	0	0
Closing Balance at 31 March	(2,334)	(2,334)	(1,871)	(1,871)	(1,871)

2.2.4 After taking account of the Economic Impact Reserve, the Council's unrestricted reserves position is forecast to remain above the £2.0m risk assessed level across the MTFP at £3.094m at 31 March 2025.

2.3 Investment Portfolio

- 2.3.1 The Council's Property Investment Board was allocated up to a total of £20.000m in 2017 to invest in acquiring property with a specific remit of achieving a 5% return (yield) on the investment. The table below shows those properties that the Council has acquired, the 2022/23 receivable rent, and the resulting yield.
- 2.3.2 The total rent due is forecast to be £1.001m which will achieve an average yield of 5.53%, above the 5% target.
- 2.3.3 The governance of property investments is covered in the Property Investment Strategy.

Investment Property	2022/23 rent	Total cost of property	Yield	Comments
	£000	£000	%	
Nottingham	(189)	4,469	4.23%	Acquisition of freehold interest located in the city centre of Nottingham let to commercial tenants, for a combined rental of £227,600pa on a 10 year lease from Feb 2018 which is subject to upward only rent reviews in Feb 2023. With effect from the Feb 2023, Barclays Bank Plc rent has been negotiated and agreed at £145,000 pa. This will be to lease end Feb 2028. Due to financial difficulties which a number of high street brands have encountered, one tenant company are now under a Company Voluntary Agreement (CVA). Effective from the 2/9/20 to 8/4/2023, paying only a concessionary rent of £12,000 pa as oppose to the contracted rent of £60,000 pa. Additional rent may be charged quarterly, based on the difference between 11% of quarterly turnover and the quarterly concessionary rent. Turnover certificates are provided quarterly.Q1 22/23Turnover rent has now been included in projection

The Grapevine Total	(187) (999)	0 14,378	0.00% 5.53%	the ex-public house site 'The Grapevine'. Loan facilities provided by TRDC to Three Rivers Homes Ltd comprises of £5.182M with an interest payment plus accrued interest amounting to £187k. Average Yield
				A joint venture development with Watford Community Housing on
Lincoln Drive (South Oxhey)	(159)	2,740	5.79%	The purchase of a Temporary Accommodation hostel at Lincoln Drive, South Oxhey. This comprises of 20 units with a mixture of 1, 2 and 3 bedrooms. This represents the net rent after the deduction of the management fee payable to Watford Community Housing which includes voids and the provision for bad debts. Management costs have increase wef April 22 by 4.1%
Norwich	(464)	7,169	6.47%	Acquisition of a freehold interest located in the city centre of Norwich. Let to commercial sitting tenants for 20 year lease from December 2007. The rent due for 2022/23 is £0.464m. The rent is reviewed annually in line with RPI, with a collar and cap arrangement of 3% and 5% respectively.

2.4 Capital Programme

- 2.4.1 The Council's capital programme has been designed to support and enhance its core services and priorities. The Council's Medium Term Capital Investment Programme is shown by scheme by each Committee at Appendix 4 and includes variances and commentary from officers.
- 2.4.2 The latest approved budget is £18,767m. The forecast outturn for capital expenditure by Services at Period 6 is £18.423m. This provides a favourable variance of (£0.344m).
- 2.4.3 The table below shows the 2022/23 original budget, latest budget, forecast outturn, spend to date and variance for Period 6.

Committee	Original Budget £000	Latest Budget £000	Spend to Date £000	Year end Forecast £000	Variance £000
Leisure, Environment and Community	3,718	4,082	673	4,112	30
Infrastructure, Housing and Economic Development	1,633	1,851	396	1,842	(9)
Policy & Resources	1,687	2,011	211	1,646	(365)
Total Service	7,038	7,944	1,280	7,600	(344)
Major Projects:					
South Oxhey Initiative	0	352	351	352	0
Property Investment	0	10,471	9	10,471	0
Total Capital	7,038	18,767	1,640	18,423	(344)

- 2.4.4 As at the end of Period 6, the total spend totalled £1.640m and represents 8.74% of the latest budget.
- 2.4.5 The capital programme is mainly supported by three income streams; capital receipts (derived from the sales of assets), grants and contributions, and the use of reserves. In addition the Council may prudentially borrow to fund its capital programme. Decisions on borrowing (amount and duration) will be taken when the need arises. Funding of the capital investment programme over the medium term is shown at Appendix 6.

2.5 Key Risk Areas

2.5.1 Resources are allocated in the revenue and capital budgets to support the achievement of The Council's corporate plan. The Council's budget is exposed to risks that can potentially impact on service level provision. The key risks highlighted as part of this quarter's monitoring are;

Inflation

Inflation, as measured by the Consumer Price and Retail Price Indices, continues to rise. The 12 month Consumer Price Index (CPI) reached 9.9% for August 2022 (last available at time of reporting) and the Retail Price Index (RPI) reached 12.3%. Inflation drives costs across the Council's budgets with the most significant impact on pay, fuel and energy costs. Further information on the impact on the Council's budget is set out section 2.6 below.

Leisure Management Contract

An agreement has been reached with the operator to reprofile the management fee due to the Council under the leisure management contract. The reprofiling recognises that activity levels remain below the initial expectations when contract commenced due to a lack of growth during the COVID-19 pandemic. This agreement results in a reduced fee for 2022/23 that will be recovered over the life of the contract. The Leisure Management Contract includes a utilities price mechanism. However, any discussions in relation to additional support for the operator will recognise the existing support that is in place for 2022/23.

Business Rates & Council Tax

Over the last couple of years additional support has been provided to business and those of working age who are entitled to Council Tax Relief Support (CTRS). However these reliefs are not expected to completely mitigate the longer term impacts of COVID-19 on Council Tax and NDR. Any impact on collection rates will feed through the Collection Fund to impact on council spending power in 2023/24.

The table below shows the impact on collection rates in the first four months of this year:

Fund	P6 2022/23 Target	P6 2022/23 Actual	Difference
Council Tax	58.7%	58.6%	-0.01%
Business Rates (NNDR)	58.59%	58.51%	-0.08%

2.5.2 The Council's overall key financial risk matrix is shown at Appendix 7. These are reported and monitored and reviewed by the Council's Audit Committee on a quarterly basis. The latest matrix was presented to the Audit Committee on 22 September 2022.

2.6 **Impact of inflation**

- 2.6.1 The pay award remains the most significant risk to the annual budget and MTFP. The unions submitted the 2022 pay claim, effective from 1 April 2022, which would see individual council employees receive the higher of a £2,000 rise or the current rate of RPI (presently 12.3%). An offer was made by the National Employers Panel on 25 July 2022.
- 2.6.2 The offer included an increase of £1,925 for all employees and an increase in allowances of 4.04% effective from 1 April 2022 plus an increase of one day to all employees' annual leave entitlement from 1 April 2023.
- 2.6.3 This offer was originally rejected by the unions on 3 August 2022 but the membership of the three recognised unions, Unison, GMB and Unite, have now been balloted. UNISON members have voted to accept the pay deal and the results of GMB and Unite consultations are expected at the end of October.

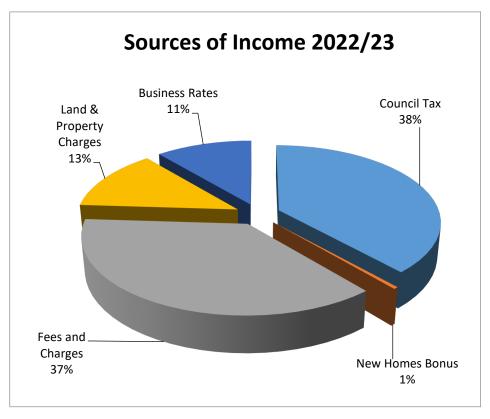
2.6.4 The offer made by the National Employers Panel is significantly above the 2.00% increase allowed within the budget for 2022/23 and represents an increase to the pay budget of 5.72%. A budget variance of £580,465 has been included in this report.

2.7 Use of Reserves

2.7.1 This report includes the use of £0.130m New Homes Bonus Reserve to fund the purchase of ICT software licences in the revenue account. This expenditure and funding have previously been reported in the Capital Investment Programme but has now been brought into the revenue account under proper accounting practice. This has no net impact on the Council's budget

2.8 Council Income

2.8.1 The chart below shows the amount of income for each source as a percentage of total income.



- 2.8.2 Particular income generating items can fluctuate depending on the economic climate, popularity and affordability. The main risks that are considered the most critical and their financial position are shown in the table below. It should be noted that the income receivable from the Planning Services and Parking Enforcement are not linear and are subject to peaks and troughs throughout the financial year.
- 2.8.3 Environmental Services, trade waste is invoiced to customers half yearly in April and October and garden waste for existing customers is charged for in one instalment at the beginning of the financial year.
- 2.8.4 Garage rents are charged on a weekly basis and most are collected by a monthly direct debit. Licensing income relates licences which are issued on a three or five year basis.

Service	Income Stream	2022/23 Original Budget £	2022/23 Latest Budget £	2022/23 Actual to date £	2022/23 Year end Forecast £	2022/23 Variance £
Regulatory Services	Application Fees	(696,420)	(696,420)	(628,140)	(696,420)	0

	Licenses	(200,260)	(200,260)	(146,203)	(200,260)	0
Parking	Penalty Charge Notices	(115,000)	(115,000)	(42,949)	(100,500)	14,500
	Pay and Display	(220,000)	(220,000)	(80,758)	(191,000)	29,000
	Trade Refuse	(794,760)	(794,760)	(379,892)	(751,500)	0
Environmental Protection	Garden Waste	(1,223,200)	(1,223,200)	(1,226,841)	(1,223,200)	0
Environmental Protection	Clinical Waste	(119,328)	(119,325)	(51,774)	(103,500)	15,828
	Cemeteries	(202,480)	(202,480)	(72,860)	(202,480)	0
	Garages	(976,830)	(976,830)	(450,202)	(976,830)	0
	Shops	(210,000)	(210,000)	(130,842)	(210,000)	0
Property Services	Investment Properties	(1,100,000)	(1,100,000)	(529,975)	(1,100,000)	0

2.8.5 Further details on the Council's key budget indicators for revenue service income streams (including volumes and trends) are shown in the detailed Committee Monitoring Reports at Appendices 1 to 3.

2.9 **Debtors (invoicing)**

- 2.9.1 The Council charges its customers for various services by raising debtor invoices. If the debt remains outstanding, then a variety of recovery methods are employed including rearranging the payment terms, stopping the provision of the service or pursing the debt through the legal recovery process.
- 2.9.2 As at the end of Period 6 (September), the total outstanding debt was £0.738 million. This is equivalent to 2.93% of total budgeted income of £25.200 million. Debts less than a month old total £0.0547 million (74.13% of total debt) and it is considered that this sum will be recovered. Outstanding debt over a year old is £0.081 million (10.98% of the total debt) which mainly relate to unpaid rent on Temporary Accommodation. The Council's debt recovery team will continue to chase these debts and initiate payment plans (instalments) wherever possible.
- 2.9.3 The table below shows a summary of the outstanding debt by the three main aged categories.

Aged debt	Services	Under 1 Month	Over 1 Month to year	Over a year	Total
Committee		£	£	£	£
Leisure,	Community Safety Partnership	156,000	55,800	0	211,800
Environment &	Environmental Services	47,585	14,247	8,090	69,922
Community	Leisure	5,793	641	0	6,434
Infrastructure, Housing and	Housing- Temporary Accommodation	4,828	15,293	56,144	76,265
Economic Development	Planning	51,392	12,853	12	64,257
Deliev P	Legal & Property	213,932	9,406	6,248	229,586
Policy & Resources	Insurance	9,465	0	279	9,744
Resources	Others	Month Month to year £ £ 156,000 55,800 ices 47,585 14,247 5,793 641 / 4,828 15,293 51,392 12,853 213,932 9,406 9,465 0 58,382 1,607	1,607	10,371	70,360
Total		547,377	109,847	81,144	738,368

2.10 Treasury Management

2.10.1 The Council has managed its cash flows and adhered to its Treasury Management policy during the period to 30 September. The interest earned on the investments made by the Council supports the funding of the services it provides. The Council set an original budget of £0.090m on short-

term investment interest for 2022/23. The Bank of England base interest rate was 0.75% on 1st April 2022, and was subsequently increased by 0.25% in both May and June 2022 and 0.50% in both August and September 2022. The base rate was therefore 2.25% at the end of the period. The increase in base rate has fed through into increased market returns for short-term deposits, which means it is likely that the income budget of £0.090m will be achieved in 2022/23.

2.11 Staff Vacancy Monitoring

2.11.1 A major risk of non-delivery of service is where key staff leave the Council's employ and there is a delay or difficulty in recruiting suitable candidates to fill the vacant post. The table below summarises the level of vacancies at the end of September 2022 with a detailed analysis by service within appendices 1 to 3.

Committee	No of Vacancies
Infrastructure, Housing and Economic Development	7
Leisure, Environment & Community	7
Policy & Resources	22
Total	36

2.11.2 The percentage of vacant posts at the end of the first quarter is 9.56% when compared against the total number of 362 Council posts. Although there are 36 vacant posts this equates to 34.6 FTE's as some posts are part time. In some cases, vacant posts will be covered by agency staff to ensure service delivery.

3. Options and Reasons for Recommendations

3.1 The recommendations below enable the Committee to make recommendations to Council to agree the allocation of financial resources to delivery Council services.

4. Policy/Budget Reference and Implications

- 4.1 In accordance with the Council's Constitution and Financial Procedure Rules, if the recommendations are accepted, this will amend the Council's budgets for 2022/23, and over the MTFP.
- 4.2 There are no substantial changes to Council policy resulting from this report.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 The following revenue and capital variations have been identified for all service committees at 30 September 2022:

Variance	2022/23 £	2023/24 £	2024/25 £	
Revenue - (Favourable)/ Unfavourable	557,817	577,733	560,533	
Capital - Increase / (Decrease)	(344,174)	(55,000)	14,824	

5.2 The explanations relating to these variations are set out in the main body of this report and supporting appendices.

6. Legal Implications

6.1 There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.

7. Equal Opportunities Implications

- 7.1 Relevance Test
- 10

Has a relevance test been completed for Equality Impact?	Yes
Did the relevance test conclude a full impact assessment was required?	No

7.2 Staffing, Environmental, Community Safety, Public Health, Customer Services Centre, Communications and Website Implications

7.3 There are no relevant implications directly arising from this report.

8. Risk and Health & Safety Implications

- 8.1 The Council has agreed its risk management strategy which can be found on the website at http://www.threerivers.gov.uk. In addition, the risks of the proposals in the report have also been assessed against the Council's duties under Health and Safety legislation relating to employees, visitors and persons affected by our operations. The risk management implications of this report are detailed below.
- 8.2 The Financial and Budgetary risks are set out in Appendix 6 and are also reported to each meeting of the Audit Committee. FIN07, which captures the risk that the medium term financial position worsens, is also reported within the Council's Strategic Risk Register.
- 8.3 The risks set out in Appendix 6 are scored using the matrix below. The Council has determined its aversion to risk and is prepared to tolerate risks where the combination of impact and likelihood scores 6 or less.

9. Recommendation

To Council:

9.1 That the revenue and capital budget variations as shown in the table at paragraph 5.1 be approved and incorporated into the three-year medium-term financial plan.

Data Quality

Data sources:

Council's financial ledger

Data checked by:

Sally Riley, Finance Business Partner

Data rating:

1	Poor	
2	Sufficient	
3	High	✓

Background Papers

Budget papers to Council – February 2022

P4 Budget Management Report – Policy and Resources Committee 12 September 2022

APPENDICES / ATTACHMENTS

- Appendix 1 Leisure, Environment and Community Committee Detailed Monitoring Report
 - Annex A Medium term revenue budget by service
 - Annex B Explanations of revenue variances reported this Period
 - Annex C Medium term capital investment programme
 - Annex D Explanations of capital variances reported this Period
 - Annex E Key Income Streams
- Appendix 2 Infrastructure, Housing and Economic Development Detailed Monitoring Report
 - Annex A Medium term revenue budget by service
 - Annex B Explanations of revenue variances reported this Period
 - Annex C Medium term capital investment programme
 - Annex D Explanations of capital variances reported this Period
 - Annex E Key Income Streams
- Appendix 3 Policy and Resources Committee Detailed Monitoring Report
 - Annex A Medium term revenue budget by service
 - Annex B Explanations of revenue variances reported this Period
 - Annex C Medium term capital investment programme
 - Annex D Explanations of capital variances reported this Period Annex E – Key Income Streams
- Appendix 4 Strategic Finance Medium term revenue budget
- Appendix 5 Funding the capital programme
- Appendix 6 Budgetary risks
- Appendix 7 Reserves Forecast 2022/23