

Bolsover District Council

Executive

30 November 2015

Revised Budgets 2015/16

Report of the Executive Director of Operations

This report is public

Purpose of the Report

- To inform Executive of the outcome of the revised budget process undertaken during October and November 2015.
- To seek approval for the Revised Budgets for the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account and Capital Programme in respect of 2015/16.

1 Report Details

General Fund Revenue Account

- 1.1 The revised budget process is now complete and the proposed revised budget for 2015/16 for the General Fund is attached at **Appendix 1**. The appendix shows the Original Budget for 2015/16 which was agreed in February 2015, the Current Budget, which reflects budget transfers and approved changes during the financial year, and the proposed Revised Budget for 2015/16. The revised budget shows that the Net Cost of Services has increased to £10.060m which is £1.103m above the Original Budget figures. These increased costs reflect the impact of S106 and other expenditure funded by specific grants and reserves which have been incorporated into the current years budget. This additional expenditure is offset by a corresponding increase in funding.
- 1.2 In developing these Revised Budgets the budget managers have been consulted and are in agreement of the budget changes proposed. The Revised Budget has also been developed in the light of a clear objective not to propose any budget changes that have a significant adverse impact on the service provision being delivered to local residents. **Appendix 2** shows the net cost of each cost centre by Directorate.
- 1.3 As a result of the Revised Budget Exercise financial savings amounting to some £1.047m have been identified. These have arisen from three main areas:
 - Across the Council's General Fund expenditure there has been a reduction of expenditure of some £0.342m between the Current and the Revised Budget.
 - There has been a reduction in Debt Charges of some £0.601m. This reduction has arisen from the fact that a capital receipt in excess of £6m was received related to the disposal of Sherwood Lodge. This receipt was secured after the agreement to the 2015/16 budget and as a result the Council has been able to secure a

significant reduction in both its principal repayments and its interest costs which are reflected in the Revised Budgets for 2015/16.

- Finally, the Council has secured an increased income from being a member of the Derbyshire NNDR Pool of £0.256m. While an additional income of £0.2m was originally anticipated from this source this has increased as a result of economic growth, whilst at the time of setting the original budget it was considered likely that some of this funding would need to be allocated to County Wide economic development initiatives.
- While the above set out the major variations they are partially offset by a range of other changes to produce a net saving on the Council's budget of the £1.047m identified above. While some of these savings will be available to assist the position in future financial years not all represent an underlying reduction in the level of the Council's expenditure and further savings will be necessary in order to secure balanced budgets over the period of the coming Medium Term Financial Plan (2016/17 to 2018/19).

1.4. As part of the process of agreeing the Council's financial accounts for the current financial year it will be necessary to allocate this surplus into the Council's Reserves and Balances. It is therefore proposed that we increase the General Fund Balance by a figure of some £0.3m up to a total of £2m. Given the greater level of uncertainty around the funding streams that are available to local government it is appropriate that we hold sufficient funding in the General Fund to enable the Council to manage unanticipated reductions in income or increases in expenditure without these impacting immediately upon the services provided to local residents. The remainder of the surplus will be transferred to the Transformation Reserve where it will be available to fund the Council's priorities of Growth and Transformation. All proposals to utilise either General Fund or Transformation Reserve will be subject to formal Member approval. In addition to the surplus projected to arise in the current year the Council also received Efficiency Grant of some £1.064m. As part of the MTFP approved in February 2015 it was agreed that this be transferred to the Transformation Reserve where it would be available to fund 'Invest to Save' schemes in line with the original conditions of the Efficiency Grant.

1.5. The position in respect of the General Fund Balance and the Transformation Reserve is outlined in the table below:

	General Fund Balance £	Transformation Reserve £
Opening balance 1/4/15	(1,700,000)	(4,897,941)
Commitments for all years, revenue and capital	0	3,094,781
Transfers to reserve in year	(300,000)	(1,811,262)
Estimated closing balance 31/3/16	(2,000,000)	(3,614,422)

Executive should note that the two reserves detailed above effectively represent the level of non earmarked funding that is available to the Council in respect of its General Fund. Given that the General Fund Balance is the funding of 'last resort' designed to protect service delivery in the event of an unexpected income shortfall or expenditure increase this in reality is not funding that is available to spend. The estimated closing balance on the Transformation Reserve of some £3.614m is therefore the funding that is available to support priority Growth and Transformation initiatives on an Invest to Save basis.

- 1.6. The actual surplus for the year will clearly be dependent on the actual financial performance out-turning in line with the revised budgets. On the basis of current evidence there remains a reasonable level of unspent funding in departmental budgets and officers have continued to adopt prudent assumptions with respect to income streams, etc. These all suggest that further savings will be secured at the year end, although this could be offset by restructuring or other cost increases.

Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

- 1.7 The Housing Revenue Account revised budget proposal is set out in **Appendix 3** to this report.

Income

- 1.8 Rental income is shown as £0.261m lower than the current budget which is mainly due to the level of void properties being higher than anticipated. Income for special services is lower than the current budget by £0.022m. The Council has seen a reduction in contributions towards expenditure of £0.037m as a result of new contractual service payments agreed with Derbyshire County Council for Supporting People. This is an ongoing reduction which will also be reflected in future budgets.

Expenditure

- 1.9 The HRA expenditure is mainly within budget showing a reduction in expenditure of £0.350m against the Current Budgets. The main changes are a recommended reduction in Repairs and Maintenance budgets of some £0.125m, together with a reduction in the provision for bad debts accounts for £0.100m.
- 1.10 Taking account of the proposed budget changes detailed above, the HRA is anticipated to deliver a surplus in the current financial year of £0.010m, which is £0.005m lower than the current budget for 2015/16. That will leave a working balance at the year end of £1.891m.

Capital Programme

- 1.11 The Council's capital programme is detailed in **Appendix 4**. It has been updated from the Original Budgets to the Revised Budgets to reflect approvals within the year, slippage from 2014/15 and the profiling of expenditure on the individual schemes following changes approved by Members. As part of the revised budget process officers have taken a view of the likely level of spend in the current financial year and have adjusted the recommended budget accordingly. This reflects the work that has been undertaken to provide more accurate details as to whether work will be undertaken in 2015/16 or in future financial years.

- 1.12 The changes that are shown in the Revised Capital Programme Budgets require that the financing is adjusted accordingly to meet the anticipated spend. There are no issues to report with regard to the financing of the 2015/16 capital programme.

2 Conclusions and Reasons for Recommendation

- 2.1 This report proposes Revised Budgets for the current financial year (2015/16) in respect of the Council's three main accounts. In respect of the Council's General Fund a significant level of potential underspend has been identified, whilst the Housing Revenue Account is proceeding in line with the previously Approved Programme. While in the case of the Capital Programme a significant level of expenditure is now anticipated to take place during next financial year rather than in the current year this is not considered to amount to a fundamental change in the Programme. On the basis that the actual outturn position reflects the Revised Budget this will represent a good achievement for the Council demonstrating effective financial management and an ability to continue to operate effectively against the background of the austerity agenda.
- 2.2 By bringing forward Revised Budgets at this stage in the year Members are made aware of the Council's financial position, whilst by formally agreeing Revised Budgets any efficiency savings can be secured for future reallocation.

3 Consultation and Equality Impact

- 3.1 There are no consultation and equality impact implications arising directly from this report.

4 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 4.1 This report is intended to update Members concerning the Council's financial performance in respect of the current financial year (2015/16). As such it is monitoring against previously agreed budgets and there is no requirement to consider any other options at this stage. This report is, however, effectively the starting point for the work on next years budget (2016/17) and upon the Medium Term Financial Plan covering the period to March 2019. As part of the agreement to those future years budgets Members will have a range of options for consideration.

5 Implications

5.1 Finance and Risk Implications

- Financial issues are covered through this report. In addition to the issues which have been previously considered it should be noted that the preparation of the 2015/16 Revised Budget is a key part of the process in developing the budgets in respect of both 2016/17 and future financial years. Having undertaken this work Officers are now in a good position to develop the expenditure budgets for future financial years which are necessary in order to deliver both the Council's Corporate Plans and its service plans. Further work on the budgets for future years is now dependent upon receiving the detailed financial settlement in respect of Bolsover District Council which will follow on from the Chancellor's Autumn Statement. Whilst the headline details of the Autumn Statement will be

available on 25th November 2015, the detail at individual local authority level is not anticipated until mid December 2015.

- With respect to risk it should be noted that the risk of not achieving a balanced budget is outlined as a key risk within the Council's Strategic Risk Register. On the basis of the information provided within this report it is reasonable to assume that the Council has continued to manage this risk effectively during the current financial year.

5.2 **Legal Implications including Data Protection**

There are no legal issues arising directly from this report.

5.3 **Human Resources Implications**

There are no human resource implications arising directly out of this report.

6 **Recommendations**

- 6.1 That Executive approves the Revised General Fund operational budget for 2015/16 as set out in **Appendix 1** and detailed in **Appendix 2**.
- 6.2 That Executive approves the Revised HRA operational budgets for 2015/16 as set out in **Appendix 3**.
- 6.3 That Executive approves the Revised Capital Programme for 2015/16 as set out within **Appendix 4**.

7 **Decision Information**

Is the decision a Key Decision? (A Key Decision is one which results in income or expenditure to the Council of £50,000 or more or which has a significant impact on two or more District wards)	No
District Wards Affected	None Directly
Links to Corporate Plan priorities or Policy Framework	Providing our customers with excellent service. Transforming our organisation.

8 **Document Information**

Appendix No	Title
1	General Fund Summary
2	General Fund Detail
3	HRA
4	Capital
Background Papers (These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when preparing the report. They must be listed in the section below. If the report is going to Cabinet (NEDDC) or Executive (BDC) you must provide copies of the background papers)	
Budget Working Papers	
Report Author	Contact Number
Chief Accountant	2458