

STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL
COMMUNITY SERVICES AND LICENSING COMMITTEE
THURSDAY, 30 NOVEMBER 2023

Report Title	Community Services and Licensing Budget Monitoring Report Q2 2023/24			
Purpose of Report	To present the 2023/24 forecast outturn position against the revenue budgets and Capital Programme that the Committee is responsible for, in order to give an expectation of possible variances against budget.			
Decision(s)	The Committee RESOLVES to note the outturn forecast for the General Fund Revenue budget and the Capital Programme for this Committee.			
Consultation and Feedback	Budget holders have been consulted about the budget issues in their service areas. The feedback has been incorporated into the report to explain difference between budgets and forecast income and expenditure.			
Report Author	Adele Rudkin, Accountant Email: adele.rudkin@stroud.gov.uk			
Options	None			
Background Papers	None			
Appendices	Appendix A - Committee Budget Detailed Breakdown			
Implications (further details at the end of the report)	Financial	Legal	Equality	Environmental
	Yes	Yes	No	No

1 Background

- 1.1 This report provides the second monitoring position statement for the financial year 2023/24. The purpose of this report is to notify members of any known, significant variations to budgets for the current financial year, highlight any key issues and to inform members of any action to be taken if required.
- 1.2 Due to the volume of information contained in the report, it would be helpful where members have questions on matters of detail if they could be referred to the report author or the appropriate service manager before the meeting.

2. Summary

- 2.1 The monitoring position for the Committee at 30 September 2023 shows a **projected net revenue underspend of (£189k)** against the latest budget.
- 2.2 The Capital programme is showing a forecast spend of £5.557m against a revised budget of £5.557m.

- 2.3 Table 2 shows the capital spend and projected outturn for the Community Services & Licensing Committee for 2023/24.

3. Revenue Budget Position

- 3.1 Council approved the General Fund Revenue budget for 2023/24 in February 2023 including budget proposals of the administration.
- 3.2 The latest budget for Community Services and Licensing Committee, taking into account the adjustments for carry forwards, is £5.030m (Original Budget was £4.400m) This considers any MTFP adjustments, carry forwards and re-profiling of corporate maintenance budgets. The recently agreed pay award (£1,925 or 3.88%) which is funded from reserves as set aside by Strategy & Resources Committee.
- 3.3 The outturn position is mainly attributable to those items outlined in Table 1, with an explanation of the significant variations that have arisen (a significant variation is defined as being +/- £20,000 on each reporting line).
- 3.4 Appendix A provides a more detailed breakdown on the Committee's budget.

Table 1 – Community Services and Licensing Revenue budgets 2023/24

Community Services Committee	Para Refs	2023/24 Original Budget (£'000)	2023/24 Revised Budget (£'000)	2023/24 Forecast Outturn (£'000)	2023/24 Reserve Transfers (£'000)	2023/24 Outturn Variance (£'000)
Community Safety	3.5	160	200	(169)	350	(19)
Cultural Services - Arts and Culture	3.6	493	500	466	(3)	(37)
Cultural Services - Community Health & Wellbeing	3.7	176	553	773	(221)	(1)
Cultural Services - Sports Centres	3.8	372	370	162	(52)	(259)
Customer Services	3.9	438	447	529	(78)	4
Grants to Voluntary Organisations	3.10	350	360	439	(80)	(1)
Licensing	3.11	(20)	(20)	(34)	17	3
Public Spaces	3.12	1,496	1,669	1,661	0	(8)
Revenues and Benefits	3.13	816	832	958	0	126
Youth Services	3.14	118	120	122	0	3
Community Services and Licensing TOTAL		4,400	5,030	4,908	(67)	(189)

Table contains roundings.

3.5 Community Services - £350k reserve transfer

(Angela Gillingham xtn 4452, angela.gillingham@stroud.gov.uk)

Careline - £350k reserve transfer

Funding of £350k (GCC) has been awarded to implement a new Careline system in 2024/25, this will be a reserve transfer as part of the Capital programme for next financial year.

Neighbourhood Wardens – (£36k) salary saving

A Senior Warden post remains vacant while the service is undertaking a restructure. This position is currently being filled on an interim basis by one of the existing wardens and any vacancies will be filled later in this financial year. This amount has been factored into the overall corporate vacancy saving figure reported to Strategy & Resources Committee.

3.6 Cultural Services – Arts & Culture – (£37k) underspend

Kevin Ward, kevin.ward@stroud.gov.uk

A detailed exercise was undertaken at budget setting to reflect the national cost-of-living crisis for utility prices for the 2023/24 budget. In April 2023 a new Utilities contract was signed with a notable reduction in rates for both gas and electric, initiating a favorable forecast variance for the rest of this financial year.

Air source heat pumps are being installed in December at several sites including the Museum in the Park.

3.7 Cultural Services – Community Health & Wellbeing – (£221k) reserve transfer

(Angela Gillingham xtn 4452, angela.gillingham@stroud.gov.uk)

Funding received last financial year from the Integrated Locality Partnership & Integrated Care Board, is to support the delivery on their two priorities; Children and Young People's Mental Health & Dementia, Frailty and Carers. The funding has been used to increase staff hours to support the delivery of the Health & Wellbeing Plan and Physical Activity Action Plan 2022-2025. Examples of what this funding has achieved is the creation of a group called Connect-Ed for young people diagnosed with disordered eating in Dursley, reading well book collections into primary and secondary schools in Stroud District and setting up choose2move Dance and Yoga classes for residents who don't feel confident to attend mainstream classes.

3.8 Cultural Services – Sports Centres – (£259k) underspend/additional income

(Darren Young 01453 540995, darren.young@stroud.gov.uk)

(Angela Gillingham xtn 4452, angela.gillingham@stroud.gov.uk)

The main variance is made up of two parts, firstly the proposed additional income of £127k and forecast savings of £120k on the Utilities contract.

A noticeable upward trend on pool-based activities has led to a projected favourable variance which does not seem to be affected by the cost-of-living crisis.

A detailed exercise was undertaken at budget setting to reflect the national cost-of-living crisis for utility prices for the 2023/24 budget. In April 2023 a new Utilities contract was procured with a notable reduction in rates for both gas and electric, initiating a favourable forecast variance for the rest of this financial year.

The air source heat pumps are due to be installed at Stratford Park Leisure Centre very soon, consideration has been given to allow for the closure of the Sports Centre in the forecast for this period.

A corporate maintenance saving (£25k) is forecast due to Salix grant monies supporting works that normally have been funded through the planned maintenance budget. The Salix schemes to replace the boiler plant and remove the mains gas supply at The Pulse and Stratford Park Leisure Centre makes the combined heat and power unit redundant.

It has recently been announced that The Pulse has been successful in bidding for £165k grant funding from the Swimming Pool Support Fund, central government funding. The funding is available to support the heating, maintenance and running costs which have increased significantly in recent months/years. Due to the timing of this announcement this funding is not included in the Q2 position, but will be included in future reports.

Community run Wotton Pool was also successful in receiving £10k in grant funding. Stratford Park Leisure Centre was not eligible for this fund.

3.9 **Customer Services – £78k reserve transfer**
(Liz Shellam, ten 4234, liz.shellam@stroud.gov.uk)

Members will recall that two fixed term contract posts (2 years) were agreed at budget setting last financial year to be funded from reserves. Additionally, as part of the agreed Contact Centre Vision, two new posts have been created to allow us to centralise customer contact. The budget has been reviewed as part of the 2024/25 budget setting process.

3.10 **Grants to Voluntary Organisations – £80k reserve transfer**
(Angela Gillingham xtn 4452, angela.gillingham@stroud.gov.uk)

This funding from reserves was agreed to resource activity that is supporting Stroud residents in the cost-of-living crisis. Small voluntary community hubs are leading the response in their neighbourhoods, additional support and guidance will be provided to them by more experienced organisations in their locality. This will be provided by GL11 Community Hub, The Keepers Community Hub and Stroud Town Council's Community Development team. This extra resource will be overseen by a newly formed partnership of organisations who have an investment in the Community Hubs network and by the SDC Cost of Living Working Group.

3.11 **Licensing - £17k reserve transfer**
(Rachel Andrew xtn 4401, rachel.andrew@stroud.gov.uk)

This reserve transfer is directly linked to COMF monies proposed to be carried forward to 2024/25 to fund supporting commercial business, licensed premises, and the event sector, to bounce back safely post pandemic.

3.12 **Public Space Service – (£69k) underspend**
(Angela Gillingham xtn 4452, angela.gillingham@stroud.gov.uk)

This is an in-year salary saving due to a re-structure within the Community services team, all vacancies have now been filled. This amount has been factored into the overall corporate vacancy saving figure reported to Strategy & Resources Committee.

3.13 **Revenues & Benefits – £126k unachieved income/underspends**
(Simon Killen 01453 754013, simon.killen@stroud.gov.uk)

Additional budget was actioned as part the budget setting process for 2023/24 for the shortfall on housing benefit subsidy claims. However, a significant variance of £163k has been forecast, which relates to supported and temporary accommodation. There is a higher rent allowable in supported accommodation, where the cost of housing is significantly higher than the amount allowable under housing benefit, this cannot all be claimed back through housing benefit subsidy and part of the cost is borne by the local authority. This will continue to be monitored and the situation is subject to change throughout the year as housing benefit claims change and are difficult to predict.

Unbudgeted grant income from DWP has been received supporting the Housing Benefit Award Accuracy Initiative. Concentrated work to undertake activity related to HB Full Case Reviews, Housing Benefit Matching Service referrals, Self-Employed Earnings Reviews and the correct recording of case information on IT systems.

3.14 Youth Services – (£49k) underspend

(Angela Gillingham xtn 4452, angela.gillingham@stroud.gov.uk)

This transfer is in relation to in-year staff vacancies within the team. Recruitment is underway with a view to appointing over the next few months. This amount has been factored into the overall corporate vacancy saving figure reported to Strategy & Resources Committee.

4. Capital

Table 2 below shows the 2023/24 Capital Programme for this Committee.

Table 2 – Capital Outturn forecast

Community Services Capital Schemes	Para Refs	2023/24 Original Budget (£'000)	2023/24 Revised Budget (£'000)	2023/24 Forecast Outturn (£'000)	2023/24 Outturn Variance (£'000)
Community Buildings Investment	4.1	100	0	0	0
Decarbonisation SPLC/MIP/The Pulse	4.2	5,400	5,356	5,356	0
Stratford Park Lido	4.3	0	201	201	0
Stratford Park Tennis Courts		128	0	0	0
Community Services Capital Schemes TOTAL		5,628	5,557	5,557	0

4.1 Community Buildings Investment

Terms for a new lease have been offered to Kingshill House Ltd and are being reported to Strategy Resources on 23 November for approval. If approved, the council will take responsibility for the roof and structure of the building under the terms of the new lease. This change will place a greater obligation on the council to meet repair costs and these must be included within appropriate budgets. The existing £100k earmarked in the capital budget will be used to carry out priority works and investigations in 2024/25 to continue to protect the structure and fabric of the building. As freeholder owner of this listed building the responsibility to maintain Kingshill House would fall to the district council if a new lease wasn't agreed.

4.2 Decarbonisation – Sports Centres

Members will recall that Salix funding was secured (<https://www.salixfinance.co.uk/>) to decarbonise the three sites (The Pulse, Stratford Park Leisure Centre and the Museum in the Park). The project is progressing and remains on programme and will be completed by 31st March 2024 in line with the requirements of the funding agreement. The total grant sum is £4,690,518 with the council contributing the requisite 12% sum of £609,549. Preliminary works started in 2022/23 with the mainstay of the project completed in this financial year.

4.3 Stratford Park Lido

A conditions survey has been commissioned so that the scope of the requirements of the capital investment are fully understood. The results are expected in September which will enable us to decide how we progress the project on this facility alongside a clearer understanding of the spend profile this financial year.

5. IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising from this report as it reports on previous financial activities and expected forecasts.

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5.2 Legal Implications

There are no specific legal implications arising from the recommendation of this report.

One Legal
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5.3 Equality Implications

There are not any specific changes to service delivery proposed within this decision.

5.4 Environmental Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.