

## **Budget Monitoring 2023/24 – Quarter 3 Revenue and Capital Outturn Forecast – Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Board**

### **Report to Cabinet on 19 March 2024**

#### **Background**

1. The Overview and Scrutiny Board met on 7 February 2024 to consider Budget Monitoring 2023/24 – Quarter 3 Revenue and Capital Outturn Forecast. The Cabinet Member for Housing, Finance and Corporate Services, Councillor Tyerman, outlined the submitted budget monitoring report which provided a high level summary of the Council's forecasted revenue and capital expenditure for the 2023/2024 financial year. The report was based on figures as at the end of Quarter 3 which predicated a £0.8m overspend, a £500k reduction on the forecast made at Quarter 2. Work would continue throughout the year to manage a break even position by the end of the financial year.

The Board raised the following points:

- how did Torbay Council's predicted overspend compare to Devon and Plymouth;
- the projected outturn for home to school transport was a £312,000 overspend, was this likely to reduce by the end of the financial year;
- what efforts were being made to ensure that the Council receives a fairer settlement from Government for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC);
- which budget did the legal challenge for UASC come out of;
- what were the current Collection Fund percentages (a written response would be provided to the Board);
- the Capital allocation from the Department for Transport (DFT) seemed low compared to the huge backlog in highways repairs and maintenance, what was the plan for spending the additional money from DFT (a written response would be provided to the Board);
- the cost of living was still impacting on many people, had the levels of collection from those in receipt of Council Tax Support improved and was the Council considering the impact of debt collection on vulnerable households;
- how many high cost children's placements did the Council have and how many were being reviewed to see if they could be moved to suitable cheaper placements;

- over a year, how much did the highest cost placements for children cost;
- there was a reduction in staffing and retention and recruitment how were budgets being driven to make those savings and what was the impact;
- how did Torbay's vacancy rate compare to the national average;
- what was the reason that agency costs were being compared to 2021/2022 and not 2022/2023;
- what was the reason that there had been no draw down on the Community Lead – Affordable Housing Loans and what process would be adopted to consider future need; and
- Disabled Facilities Grants were meant to increase their threshold over £30,000 but have not gone up, how much of a challenge does this give for people needing to make adaptations to their homes.

The Board acknowledged the success of the Investment Portfolio contributing £4.1m to the Revenue Budget despite the current economic climate.

Members requested that future Budget Monitoring Reports include previous quarters in the Budget Summary Position table to enable them to compare variances over the financial year.

The Board requested that in addition to the Capital Programme Monitoring report, the Quarterly Capital Investment Plan report also includes the original estimated cost of the scheme and date it was approved.

The Board noted the forecasted revenue outturn position and mitigating action identified in the submitted report and the current capital schemes.

2. The Board reflected and debated the information provided to them, both in writing and orally and formed the following recommendation to the Cabinet. On being put to the vote, the motion was declared carried unanimously.
3. That the Cabinet be recommended to promote and encourage communities to apply for Community Lead – Affordable Housing Loans.