



Item

2023/24 GENERAL FUND PROVISIONAL REVENUE CARRY FORWARDS

To:

Councillor Simon Smith, Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources Portfolio

Strategy & Resources Scrutiny Committee 25 March 2024

Report by:

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Wards affected:

Abbey, Arbury, Castle, Cherry Hinton, Coleridge, East Chesterton, King's Hedges, Market, Newnham, Petersfield, Queen Edith's, Romsey, Trumpington, West Chesterton

Key Decision

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report presents details of any anticipated variances from budgets, where resources are requested to be carried forward into the 2024/25 financial year in order to undertake or complete activities which were originally intended to take place in 2023/24.

2. Recommendations

The Executive Councillor, is recommended, following scrutiny and debate at Strategy & Resources Scrutiny Committee:

- a) To agree the provisional carry forward requests, totalling £220,700 as detailed in Appendix A, subject to the final outturn position.
- b) To agree the principle of the learning and development proposal including the creation of a permanent post as detailed in paragraph 3.4 below, and delegate the detailed budget adjustments to vire up to £100k of budget from services to the training and development budget to the Chief Finance Officer or Acting Chief Finance Officer in the 2024/5 financial year.
- c) To agree the virement of £60,000 across portfolios for the creation of the one-year fixed term post within Procurement outlined in paragraph 3.5 below and delegate the detailed budget adjustments to the Chief Finance Officer or Acting Chief Finance Officer in the 2024/5 financial year.
- d) To agree to use the budget headroom resulting from the review of cost apportionment of the shared 3CICT service for the establishment of the permanent post of Strategic Digital Lead as outlined in paragraph 3.6 below.

3. Background

- 3.1 Approval in principle is sought to carry forward unspent budget from 2023/24 into the next financial year, 2024/25. Provisional carry forward requests which have been assessed for reasonableness by the Council's Chief Finance Officer are being presented to the March 2024 Strategy & Resources Committee for approval at Council 23 May 2024, to ensure that officers have the appropriate authority to continue uninterrupted to deliver services and projects that have been delayed for the reasons specified in the appendix to this report.

- 3.2 Final carry forward requests will be presented to the Strategy & Resources Committee 1 July 2024, where the sums involved may differ from the estimates provided in March 2024, which have been provided for approval in principle.
- 3.3 Appendix A sets out the provisional list of items, for the General Fund, for which approval is sought to carry forward unspent budget from 2023/24 to the next financial year, 2024/25.

3.4 Proposal for a New Model for Employee Development

- 3.4.1. This proposal was discussed and agreed in principle at Leadership Team on 20 February 2024. The proposal recommended a new, more effective and efficient centralised delivery model to oversee arrangements for the implementation and ongoing delivery of the Council's employee development programmes aligned to Our Cambridge and the People & Cultural Strategy.
- 3.4.2. Currently 18% of the overall budget allocated corporately with Human Resources for employee development, with the remaining 82% allocated to Groups/Teams within the Council. There has been an ongoing historic underspend on the service budgets.
- 3.4.3. The proposal recommended the utilisation of £55,000 of the underspend from the existing employee development budgets to create a new permanent band 5 Training and Development Officer role within the Human Resources Team so there's a dedicated training operational resource to procure, arrange and deliver some training. In addition, the proposal recommends the utilisation of up to £45,000 of existing employee development budgets for the delivery of corporately managed training and development programmes aligned to Our Cambridge, the Target Operating Model and the People & Cultural Strategy.

3.5 Proposal for creating a Business Analyst for the Procurement Management Contract Project

3.5.1 This proposal was discussed and agreed in principle at Leadership Team on 5 March 2024. The proposal recommends hiring a fixed term Business Analyst with a public sector procurement background for 12 months to support a new project to improve contract management for Cambridge City Council.

3.5.2 The project aims to enhance the council's efficiency in managing contracts and spending, which will lead to cost avoidance. It also aims to add additional resource into the team at the time where the demands will be greater than usual.

3.5.3 There is currently no additional resource to cover the cost of this post. At Leadership Team it was agreed that each Group lead would find the contribution from within their budgets and that a one year virement would transfer the budget to the procurement cost centre.

3.6 Proposal for creating a permanent Strategic Digital Lead post

3.6.1 Over the summer of 2023, work was undertaken to review the ICT cost apportionment between Cambridge City, Huntingdon and South Cambridgeshire. The fixed-term Strategic Digital Lead at CCC successfully negotiated with all parties to reapportion costs based on consumption, creating capacity within ICT budgets to support further change.

3.6.2 It is proposed that £90,000 of this headroom is used to fund the Strategic Digital Lead role on a permanent basis, which is currently a fixed term contract up to December 2025.

3.6.3 The role was initially created in March 2023 as part of the Our Cambridge programme as a pilot to test whether the role was required and what value it could add. This role has demonstrated its value for example the officer was able to use their technical expertise to renegotiate one of our major IT contracts to avoid additional costs of £60,000 per year following a price increase by the supplier. The post would provide ongoing expertise, shared service management of 3CICT and potential cost avoidance going forward if it were made to be a permanent role.

4. Implications

(a) Financial Implications

- 4.1 The financial implications of approving the provisional carry forwards of £220,700 budget from the current year into 2024/25, will result in a reduced budgeted contribution from General Fund reserves for the current financial year, from £4,961,250 to £4,740,550, with a corresponding increase in the contribution to reserves in 2024/25.
- 4.2 A decision not to approve a carry forward request will impact on officers' ability to deliver the service or scheme in question and this could have staffing, equal opportunities, environmental and / or community safety implications.

(b) Staffing Implications

Any direct staffing implications arising from the delay in delivery of workstreams, or the carry forward of resource, will be considered and addressed by officers as part of each individual carry forward approval.

(c) Equality and Poverty Implications

There are no direct equality and poverty implications associated with this report.

(d) Net Zero Carbon, Climate Change and Environmental Implications

There are no direct environmental implications associated with this report.

(e) Procurement Implications

Any procurement implications arising from the delay in delivery of workstreams will be considered and addressed by officers as part of each individual carry forward approval.

(f) Community Safety

There are no direct community safety implications associated with this report.

5. Consultation and Communication considerations

There are no direct consultation and communication implications associated with this report.

6. Background papers

Background papers used in the preparation of this report:

Background information is held in the Council's financial management system.

7. Appendices

- Appendix A – Provisional General Fund Carry Forward Requests

8. Inspection of papers

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact:

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