



GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2021/22 - POSITION AS AT 30th SEPTEMBER 2021

Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the General Fund Revenue Budget of the Council as at 30th September 2021. The report includes a narrative description of the most significant variances from the profiled latest budget and details any actions required to address these. Appendix A to this report shows the value of the most significant variances for all of the Council services by Committee and provides a brief explanation for each variance. In addition to the budget areas identified in the supporting Appendix of the report the Council has separately received funding from the Contain Outbreak Management Fund and a progress update report will be presented to the Environment Health & Housing Committee later in the year as delivery against the scheme continues.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Council operates a system of Revenue Budget Monitoring which revolves around the production of detailed monthly monitoring reports for budget holders. Significant variances from the expected budget position at the point of monitoring, both for expenditure and income, are summarised in monitoring reports which are periodically reported to each Programme Committee for information purposes. This report therefore details the findings and issues emerging from budget monitoring carried out to 30th September 2021.
- 1.2 It should be noted that work continues on improving budget profiling across the Council in order that budget profiles more accurately reflect the spending pattern of individual budgets across the financial year. This serves to enhance budget monitoring and focus attention on true variances rather than budget profiling issues. This is a continuous process with budget holders so that the improved profiling continues to refine the budget monitoring system.
- 1.3 Council approved the 2021/22 budget at its meeting on 4th March 2021. Subsequently on 29th July 2021 the Finance and Democracy Committee approved the financial outturn position for 2020/21. The impact of those approvals, including savings and growth items approved at the Council budget meeting, along with slippage from 2020/21 as approved by the Finance and Democracy Committee, are now reflected in the financial ledger. Therefore, this report monitors expenditure and income against the updated approved budgets for 2021/22.

2. Budget Rightsizing Exercise

- 2.1 For a number of years the Council has carried out an annual budget rightsizing exercise to analyse underspends which have occurred over the last 3 financial years and to adjust current and future year budgets to better reflect the level of resource requirement in the context of current financial constraints. This process will be repeated during 2021/22 and the resulting changes to budgets will be reflected in later updates to the Councils Financial Forecast.

3. Conclusions

Last year and this year has seen particular volatility in expenditure and income levels as the impact of the covid restriction measures on the financial position of the Council for 2021/22 and possibly beyond, together with the

potential for future general reductions in central government funding from 2021/22 onwards, requires that the Council continue the approach to continually seek opportunities to achieve savings and efficiencies to enable a balanced budget position and financial stability.

Regular budget monitoring reports are an integral part of the Council's financial monitoring framework and these reports will be available on the Council's website.

External pressures outside the Council's control are impacting on all local authorities. Instructions remain in place that officers should not commit to any unnecessary expenditure and should seek to maximise efficiencies wherever possible.

Finance staff work continuously with budget holders across the Council and are heavily reliant upon budget-holders to be able to understand and quantify the potential impact of in-year hotspot variances within their areas of responsibility.

We are at the mid-point of the 2021/22 financial year and much uncertainty exists with respect to the remainder of the year. Therefore, it is not possible to draw any firm conclusions on the in-year financial position. The financial risks facing the Council, as set out in the MTFFS to Council in March 2021 remain alongside the significant additional risks presented by the pandemic. Instructions issued by Management Team that budget holders remain prudent are still in place, and the overall financial position of the council will be captured in the next update of the financial forecast in the Medium Term Financial Strategy which will be presented to members in the forthcoming committee cycle.

REVENUE MONITORING 2021/22 - Period 6 to September 30th 2021 (Variances in excess of £5K)

Appendix A

Key

BLUE	Variance currently showing but expected to be on target at year end
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FINANCE & DEMOCRACY COMMITTEE / CORPORATE CROSS CUTTING BUDGETS

Service Area	Detailed Description	Full Year Budget £	Budget as at Period 6 £	Actual & Commitments as at Period 6 £	Variance as at Period 6 £	FAV / ADV	Alert	Budget Holder Comments
All Council services	Employee costs including basic pay, pension, NI, and overtime, plus agency costs	9,929,509	5,014,755	4,913,569	-101,186	FAVOURABLE	BLUE	The budget forecast which was approved by Council in March 2021 assumes Employee Cost Savings (including vacancy savings arising from delays in the recruitment to vacant posts) of £300,000 per annum from 2021/22 onwards. The actual level of savings achieved in relation to direct employee costs for the current year to date shows a level of savings in excess of this. However, the figures shown here do not include the in-year employee pay award which is yet to be agreed which will reduce the favourable variance currently indicated. This budget will be kept under review during the remainder of the financial year and may be adjusted as part of the budget right-sizing exercise.
Human Resources	Training Exps - qualifications	15,000	7,500	0	-7,500	FAVOURABLE	GREEN	On site and travel-to training has been reduced / not available due to COVID restrictions March to August, courses and events will be increased with outcomes from appraisals which are also six month behind. It is likely that not all the budget will be required but too early to estimate an underspend figure at this stage.
Mayoralty	Mayoral Chauffeur/Assistant	19,485	9,747	3,915	-5,832	FAVOURABLE	GREEN	There have been reduced Mayoral engagements during the year due to covid restrictions and consequently lower expenditure has been incurred to date, but this is now starting to return to normal. The budgets will be adjusted as necessary as part of the budget right-sizing exercise.
Council Tax Collection Costs	Council Tax Costs Recovered	-200,000	-100,000	7,369	107,369	ADVERSE	RED	Court action has ceased during the pandemic but has commenced again in October. It is expected that part of the loss of income will be offset by specific government covid grant for this purpose and the budgets will be adjusted as necessary as part of the budget right-sizing exercise.
Bank Charges	HSBC Bank - Card Processing	62,500	31,250	36,863	5,613	ADVERSE	RED	Anticipated overspend due to an increased number of customers being encouraged to pay by card due to Covid. This budget will be kept under review during the remainder of the financial year and may be adjusted as part of the budget right-sizing exercise.
Lytham Institute	Covid-19 Business Support Grant	0	0	-12,000	-12,000	FAVOURABLE	GREEN	Additional one-off unbudgeted Restart Grant in 2021/22 which will contribute to the in year running costs.
Computer Services	Purchase of Computer Equipment	280,138	140,069	62,979	-77,090	FAVOURABLE	BLUE	An underspend is currently recorded against the profiled budget, however with a core infrastructure and network transformation project and associated license costs in response to the challenges of end of life platforms and enablement of hybrid working underway we expect variances to normalise in the next period. A parallel and essential modernisation project to telephony ahead of the decommission of the PSTN lines is being scoped and due to commence before the end of the calendar year which will enable full internet dialling and direct routing of calls through video and voice platforms. These commitments also pick up business continuity, ongoing network hardening and security works, Town Hall WIFI replacement and meeting room improvements enabling a modern, secure and fit for purpose network in line with the ICT Strategy.
	Computer - Telephone Charges	20,000	10,000	4,033	-5,967	FAVOURABLE	BLUE	
	Computer - Program Licence Chgs	144,000	72,000	47,778	-24,222	FAVOURABLE	BLUE	
	Computer - Development Costs	174,456	87,228	16,271	-70,957	FAVOURABLE	BLUE	

REVENUE MONITORING 2021/22 - Period 6 to September 30th 2021 (Variances in excess of £5K)

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TOURISM AND LEISURE COMMITTEE

Service Area	Detailed Description	Full Year Budget £	Budget as at Period 6 £	Actual & Commitments as at Period 6 £	Variance as at Period 6 £	FAV / ADV	Alert	Budget Holder Comments
Fairhaven Cafe	Café Rent	-16,750	-8,375	0	0	ADVERSE	RED	The Café has been closed during the first half of the financial year as works was completed as part of the Fairhaven Restoration Project. The rent concession will be adjusted as part of the budget right-sizing exercise.
Fairhaven Lake and Gardens	Adventure Golf	-160,000	-120,000	-164,778	-44,778	FAVOURABLE	GREEN	Extra income due to good weather and competitor product not available in Spring due to covid restrictions. New business, so forecasting not based on historical data.
	Watersport Activities	-41,222	-30,916	-2,313	28,603	ADVERSE	RED	Water sports centre not open until September due to timescales of HLF project
	Combined Tickets/Other Fees	0	0	-6,265	-6,265	FAVOURABLE	GREEN	New golf / boat ticket introduced in May 2021 to split out combi ticket from golf only ticket to provide additional data.
Management of the Arts & Heritage Assets	Support to Arts	14,000	7,000	0	-7,000	FAVOURABLE	BLUE	Normal annual budget £4k. An additional one off £10k virement has been put against this code for match funding should a Coastal Explorers project application to Arts Council England (ACE) be successful, which will be communicated mid December 2021. Previous bid to the Big Lottery Fund for Coastal Explorers was unsuccessful.
Lytham Festival	Lytham Festival Income	-64,000	-64,000	0	64,000	ADVERSE	RED	The cancellation of the Lytham Festival (outdoor music event) due to restrictions on public gatherings has caused the loss of income from ticket sales. The budgets will be adjusted as necessary as part of the budget right-sizing exercise.
Fylde Tourism	1940's Lytham Wartime Festival	35,000	35,000	250	-34,750	FAVOURABLE	GREEN	The 1940's Lytham Wartime Festival was cancelled due to covid restrictions and therefore no expenditure has been incurred, nor income generated, in respect of this event. There is a net favourable variance of £16k. The budgets will be adjusted as necessary as part of the budget right-sizing exercise.
	Income - 1940's Lytham Wartime Festival	-18,000	-18,000	0	18,000	ADVERSE	RED	The 1940's Lytham Wartime Festival was cancelled due to covid restrictions and therefore no expenditure has been incurred, nor income generated, in respect of this event. There is a net favourable variance of £16k. The budgets will be adjusted as necessary as part of the budget right-sizing exercise.
	Kite Festival	30,000	30,000	26,494	-3,506	FAVOURABLE	GREEN	Reduced festival expenditure due to covid. There is a net adverse variance of £7k overall with the kite festival with the reduction of income below. The budgets will be adjusted as necessary as part of the budget right-sizing exercise.
	Income - Kite Festival	-20,000	-20,000	-9,340	10,660	ADVERSE	RED	Reduced income opportunities due to covid - reduced number of stalls / smaller fairground and limited sponsorship opportunities. There is a net adverse variance of £7k. The budgets will be adjusted as necessary as part of the budget right-sizing exercise.

REVENUE MONITORING 2021/22 - Period 6 to September 30th 2021 (Variances in excess of £5K)

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OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Service Area	Detailed Description	Full Year Budget £	Budget as at Period 6 £	Actual & Commitments as at Period 6 £	Variance as at Period 6 £	FAV / ADV	Alert	Budget Holder Comments
Fleet & Plant	Repairs by Commercial Garages	43,400	21,700	15,520	-6,180	FAVOURABLE	GREEN	There are a number of favourable variances in respect of vehicle costs. These budgets will be kept under review during the remainder of the financial year and adjusted as necessary as part of the budget right-sizing exercise.
	Fuel	330,595	165,298	138,223	-27,074			
	Hire of Transport	63,357	31,679	20,724	-10,955			
Car Parking Fees	Car Parking Fees	685,000	445,000	481,232	36,232	FAVOURABLE	GREEN	Due to the good weather and increased staycations over the summer months due to Covid it is anticipated that the annual income will be greater than expected. The budgets will be kept under review and adjusted as necessary as part of the budget right-sizing exercise to reflect this.
Stanner Bank Car Park	Ticket Issuing Machines	0	0	12,491	12,491	ADVERSE	RED	Increased costs associated with maintenance and repair of the barrier system. Further costs likely to be incurred through the rest of the year, especially if there are further instances of vandalism and/or addition of a new CCTV system to cover the barrier.
Fylde Waste Schemes	Bulky Waste Collection	35,000	17,500	0	-17,500	FAVOURABLE	GREEN	No in year expenditure due to there being no current service in operation. These budgets will be kept under review during the remainder of the financial year and adjusted as necessary as part of the budget right-sizing exercise.
	Household Refuse Special Colln	-40,000	-20,000	0	20,000	ADVERSE	RED	No in year income due to there being no current service in operation. These budgets will be kept under review during the remainder of the financial year and adjusted as necessary as part of the budget right-sizing exercise.
	Green Waste Subscription Charge	-545,000	-545,000	-590,760	-45,760	FAVOURABLE	GREEN	Additional customers signed up for 21/22 contributing to additional unbudgeted income. These budgets will be kept under review during the remainder of the financial year and adjusted as necessary as part of the budget right-sizing exercise.
Public Conveniences	Miscellaneous Receipts	-25,000	-15,000	-20,673	-5,673	FAVOURABLE	GREEN	Additional unbudgeted income due to increased number of visitors following lockdown/staycations. These budgets will be kept under review during the remainder of the financial year and adjusted as necessary as part of the budget right-sizing exercise.
Land Charges	Fee Income	-65,000	-32,500	-43,050	-10,550	FAVOURABLE	GREEN	Increased land charge fee income received in year. These budgets will be kept under review during the remainder of the financial year and adjusted as necessary as part of the budget right-sizing exercise.

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ENVIRONMENT, HEALTH & HOUSING COMMITTEE

Service Area	Detailed Description	Full Year Budget £	Budget as at Period 6 £	Actual & Commitments as at Period 6 £	Variance as at Period 6 £	FAV / ADV	Alert	Budget Holder Comments
Covid-19 Support	Unringfenced Covid Grant Support	294,000	147,000	633	-146,367	FAVOURABLE	BLUE	The Government provided un-ringfenced Covid support grant to all local authorities in 2021/22, with Fylde receiving £392k for the year. Of this £33k was allocated to Town and Parish areas to support covid recovery, and to date £50k has been vired to support agency labour costs within Operational Services to ensure continuing service delivery and £15k has been vired to the Cemetery & Crematorium to ensure covid compliance. This budget will be kept under review as part of the ongoing response to the Covid pandemic throughout the remainder of the current financial year.
	Practical Support for Self-isolation/expenditure	0	0	5,750	5,750	ADVERSE	AMBER	Lancashire County Council are providing funding for practical support for self isolation. Officers are continuing to explore options to deliver the requirements of the funding.
	LCC Funding / Practical Support for Self-Isolation	0	0	-73,612	-73,612	FAVOURABLE	BLUE	
Covid-19 Welcome Back Fund	Welcome Back fund - expenditure	243,516	121,758	0	-121,758	FAVOURABLE	BLUE	This budget is specifically held to assist in the economic recovery following the Covid pandemic. Funds are required to be spent before April 2022, with all spending agreed by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. It is expected that the budget will be used in full before the end of the financial year.
	Covid-19 Welcome Back Grant	-243,516	-121,758	0	121,758	ADVERSE	AMBER	This grant funding is specifically held to assist in the economic recovery following the Covid pandemic. Funds are required to be spent before April 2022, with all spending agreed by Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. It is expected that the budget will be used in full before the end of the financial year and the grant is claimed in arrears.
Cemetery and Crematorium	Cremations	-1,140,000	-570,000	-472,261	97,739	ADVERSE	RED	There has been a reduced demand for services from residents outside of the borough. These budgets will be kept under review during the remainder of the financial year and adjusted as necessary as part of the budget right-sizing exercise.

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PLANNING COMMITTEE

Service Area	Detailed Description	Full Year Budget £	Budget as at Period 6 £	Actual & Commitments as at Period 6 £	Variance as at Period 6 £	FAV / ADV	Alert	Budget Holder Comments
Building Control	Inspection Fee - Dwellings	-143,000	-71,500	-124,732	-53,232	FAVOURABLE	GREEN	Increased Building Control fee income received in year due to an increased demand. These budgets will be kept under review during the remainder of the financial year and adjusted as necessary as part of the budget right-sizing exercise.
Development Management	Consultants Fees	25,000	12,500	6,215	-6,285	FAVOURABLE	BLUE	This budget is held to allow for the appointment of specialist consultants to assist in the determination of planning applications. Spend depends on the needs of the service based on the nature and type of applications received. These budgets will be kept under review during the remainder of the financial year and adjusted as necessary as part of the budget right-sizing exercise.
	Advertising	12,000	6,000	11,333	5,333	ADVERSE	RED	This budget is for the publishing of press notices in the local paper required by statute. Spend is related to the nature of applications received and so is largely outside the control of the council. The number of applications received during the year to date is higher than in previous years and this is also reflected in increased application fee income. These budgets will be kept under review during the remainder of the financial year and adjusted as necessary as part of the budget right-sizing exercise.
	Planning Application Fees	-675,000	-337,500	-433,328	-95,828	FAVOURABLE	GREEN	The number of planning application fees received during the year to date is significantly higher than previous years. There will be additional spend against other budgets as a direct consequence and these budgets will be kept under review during the remainder of the financial year and adjusted as necessary as part of the budget right-sizing exercise.
	Pre-Planning Advice Fees	0	0	-9,123	-9,123	FAVOURABLE	GREEN	The number of pre-application submissions made to the council is difficult to predict. All fee income will be indicated as a surplus. These budgets will be kept under review during the remainder of the financial year and adjusted as necessary as part of the budget right-sizing exercise.
Planning Appeals	Planning Appeal Hearing Costs	45,000	22,500	0	-22,500	FAVOURABLE	BLUE	The number of planning appeals held during the year to date has been limited and no awards of costs have been made against the council. A decision on one application for costs is outstanding and will be reported in the next monitoring period. This budget will be kept under review during the remainder of the financial year and adjusted as necessary as part of the budget right-sizing exercise.
Planning Enforcement	Enforcement Costs	35,000	17,500	0	-17,500	FAVOURABLE	BLUE	This budget is held to cover legal action against a particular site. Further action has been placed on hold due to Coronavirus restrictions and having regard to government advice. This budget will be kept under review during the remainder of the financial year and adjusted as necessary as part of the budget right-sizing exercise.
Development Management Team	Consultants Fees	20,000	10,000	0	-10,000	FAVOURABLE	BLUE	This budget is held to address capacity issues in the planning service and will be utilised by the end of the financial year.
Planning Policy	Local Development Framework Costs	30,000	15,000	0	-15,000	FAVOURABLE	BLUE	The costs associated with the examination of the local plan have not yet been received. It is currently anticipated that this budget will be utilised in full by the end of the financial year.
Economic Regeneration	Consultants Fees	150,000	75,000	0	-75,000	FAVOURABLE	BLUE	This budget is to deliver the St Annes Town Centre Masterplan. Consultants have been appointed and are expected to complete the work by April 2022.
St Annes/Pleasure Island/Salters Wharf	LCC - Lancashire Economic Recovery Grant	-108,000	-54,000	0	54,000	ADVERSE	AMBER	The grant has not been received as yet. This funding is held to deliver the Island Masterplan.
	Consultants Fees	120,000	60,000	0	-60,000	FAVOURABLE	BLUE	This budget is held to deliver the Island Masterplan. Consultants have been appointed and are expected to complete the work by April 2022.