

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire and Rescue Authority Finance and Resources Committee

# **REVENUE MONITORING REPORT – TO 31 AUGUST 2008**

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

**Date:** 24 October 2008

### **Purpose of Report:**

To report to Members on the financial performance of the Service in the year 2007/08 to the end of August 2008. This report analyses significant variances against the original budget.

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### 1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Budget monitoring is a key aspect of financial management for the Authority. Regular reporting of spending against budget to Members is a check that spending is within available resources and, if necessary, allows for financial resources to be re-assigned to meet changing priorities.
- 1.2 The format of the statement has changed this year, following work undertaken by the Finance Department to simplify the presentation of financial data and focus attention on those areas of the budget with the greatest risk of over or under spending. Additional information is now included, so that Members can see the level of unspent grant which has not yet been allocated to fund revenue expenditure.

### 2. REPORT

### 2.1 SUMMARY

- 2.1.1 The budget monitoring statement for August 2008 is showing an underspend to date of -£1,069k.
- 2.1.2 The projected out turn variance for the year is a -£1,308k underspend, however, the forecasted outturn is very much an estimate at this early stage in the year, and will be revised in the light of new information as the year progresses.
- 2.1.3 The underspend to date of -£1,069k and the projected underspend of -£1,308k are made up of several key variances. All variances greater than 10% of the profiled budget are marked with an "X" in Appendix A, although explanations of variances are only given where variances are over £10k.
- 2.1.4 A predicted underspend of this magnitude is significant at this time of the year as it represents approximately 2% of the revenue budget. However, as with all headline figures, this does not reveal the whole picture.
- 2.1.5 The expenditure pattern to date falls largely into three categories:
  - i) Staffing budgets;
  - ii) Non-pay budgets;
  - iii) Externally influenced or uncontrollable budgets.
- 2.1.6 The pattern of this underspending shows that £693k of the predicted underspend (65%) relates to staffing and £282k (26%) relates to the externally driven element of the pensions budget. This leaves the balance of £94,000 (9%) relating to non-pay budgets. As £54,000 of this relates entirely to capital financing and £20,000 to increased income, it is clear where the focus of management attention needs to be and this is in the area of staffing budgets.

2.1.7 The detail of the staffing budget underspend is given in Section 3 below. however a summary of these variances and actions is given in the following table.

Area of Variance	Description	Amount	Action
Wholetime Pay	Development pay gap	-32,000	Authority may wish to consider a reduction in the base. To create an assumed position for development pay.
	Externally funded posts	-110,000	A reduction in the base may be required
	Supervisory manager shortfall	-182,000	Selection process for Supervisory Managers now taking place
	Unfilled new posts	-60,000	Proposals already in place to fill posts
	Reduced Bank Holiday	-54,000	No change to base but represents available funds for virement
	Other (derived from above)	-36,000	Derivative of above.
	Pay contingency unallocated	-86,000	None. Actual Pay award lower than budget
Non-Uniformed Pay		-133,000	A review of non- uniformed vacant roles is required
Total		-693,000	

2.1.8 Whilst the above underspends have largely been unavoidable it does nevertheless leave the Authority in a position where some of the available revenue budget could be vired to other areas where there is either budget pressure or where it can be productively used.

2.1.9 To this end it is suggested that approval is given to the following virement proposals:

Project	Reason
One off costs to upgrade WAN (£100,000)	Initial trials successful and will potentially save £117k per annum ongoing if extended to the wider environment
Service desk implementation by contract staff (£65,000)	Improved utilisation of IT staff and assets. Also adoption of ITIL standards. Would have been worked on by vacant post.
Internet web-site "one off" costs (£30,000)	Longer term project but could be accelerated to 2008/9.
Redecoration of HQ (£100,000)	Last done in 1999 and maintenance budget will not cover this
Implementation of Sharepoint Phase II (£60,000)	Internal capacity not available to get the full business benefits from this platform
Transfer expenditure from capital reserve to revenue (£170,000)	No requirement to spend from the reserve which could be retained for other purposes

2.1.10 The full Revenue Budget Monitoring Statement is given as Appendix A to this report.

### 2.2 SIGNIFICANT VARIANCES

2.2.1 Wholetime Operational Pay: is showing an underspend to date of -£474k. The underspend has arisen in several areas: the wholetime operational pay budget is based on the approved establishment of 571, assuming that all employees are paid at competent rates of pay. There are currently a number of employees who are paid at development rates of pay and this has resulted in an underspend to date of -£32k. During the period up to August 2008, the average number of employees in post has been 568.5 including 4.5 seconded posts which are supported by external funding. These latter posts may have been covered by employees acting up, but there has not been an additional 4.5 posts employed, resulting in an underspend to date of -£110k.

As from October 2008 the establishment strength will be at 570.65, however until August 2008, the position has been that of a surplus of firefighters and a shortage of supervisory and middle managers. This has caused a saving to date estimated at -£182k. There is a further saving of -£54k this year resulting from the fact that the Easter bank holidays do not fall within the financial year.

The budget for 2008/2009 includes funding for several new initiatives – ie: a full time addition to the staffing pool, support for learning and development and additional operational support officers. The addition to the staffing pool is not yet in post, resulting in an underspend to date of -£25k and the selection

process for the additional operational support officer posts will commence by early November - this has resulted in an underspend to date of -£35k. Even when these posts are appointed to, there will not be a corresponding increase in the establishment at this stage.

The estimated outturn underspend of -£709k assumes that no additional firefighter trainees are appointed over and above the intake in August 2008. The external funding for seconded posts will continue to the end of the financial year, giving an additional underspend of -£155K. The support for the trade union officer, will result in an additional under spend of -£34k, if the project does not commence before the end of the financial year. In addition if the number of employees in development remain the same for the remainder of the financial year this will result in an additional underspend of -£45k. No assumptions have been made for retirements between now and the financial year end, but if there are any retirements, this will further increase the underspend.

- 2.2.2 Admin and Support Staff: is showing an underspend to date of -£133k. The underspend has arisen due to a number of posts being vacant during the first half of the year. Partially offsetting this is the cost of several temporary staff who have been appointed to either cover the established post or to support sections with one off projects. The forecast underspend of -£206k assumes that some of the vacancies will be filled during the year.
- 2.2.3 <u>Staff Training</u>: is showing an overspend to date of £33k, but is expected to be contained within budget for the year. The overspend has arisen in two areas: 100% course fees have been paid for bursary students, but 50% reimbursements via payroll deductions will occur throughout the year; the short courses and conferences budget is overspent to date but will be monitored throughout the year and pulled back into line with the budget as necessary.
- 2.2.4 Employees Other Pension Costs: is showing an underspend to date of -£282k, which is mainly due to the ill health retirements element of the budget. The budget was based on an assumption of three upper and three lower tier ill health retirements in the year. The forecast outturn underspend of -£191k is based on there being no ill health retirements up to August 2008, one known retirement in October 2008, and a possible additional two by the end of the financial year. These will all be upper tier retirements.
- 2.2.5 <u>Premises Repairs and Maintenance</u>: is showing an overspend to date of £42k. The overspend has arisen due to several large projects being completed in the first quarter. These include the replacement of the gates at Ashfield and Carlton fire stations, the gym at Bingham and an office refurbishment at Central. Reactive building repairs only will be carried out after completion of these projects, and the budget will be closely monitored.
- 2.2.6 <u>Premises Repairs and Maintenance Contract Work</u>: is showing an overspend to date of £29k. A programme of contracted planned maintenance is now in place. The forecast outturn overspend of £17k, reflects that the programme of works is to be extended and this will be addressed in the 2009/10 budget process.

- 2.2.7 <u>Direct Transport Costs</u>: is showing an underspend to date of -£33k. This heading within the monitoring statement contains the budget for fuel which, whilst not yet showing a significant overspend, is likely to be overspent by the end of the year given the increases in fuel prices over the last few months. It is estimated that with a level of usage consistent with that in 2007/08, the fuel budget of £295k will overspend by £69k by the end of the year if the price of fuel remains at its current level.
- 2.2.8 <u>Car Allowances and Travel</u>: is showing an overspend to date of £15k. The budgets within this heading generally overspent in 2007/08, and a base budget review was conducted for some headings, although not for others. It is difficult to estimate the forecast outturn in this area, as travel costs will possibly be reduced by the self rostering scheme, and the implementation of some outcomes of the Learning and Development Review. At this stage it is estimated that the detachments travel budget will overspend by £90k and the home to base travel budget will overspend by £47k by end of the financial year. Offsetting these to some extent is the training travel budget and the other travel budgets which are estimated to underspend by -£103k by year end resulting in an estimated outturn overspend of £34k. Further detailed work will be undertaken during the budget process to ensure that these budgets more closely reflect expected levels of activity.
- 2.2.9 <u>Insurance Costs</u>: is showing an overspend to date of £8k. The premiums budget includes £43k, for the provided car scheme which has yet to commence, and is not anticipated to before the end of the financial year. However, offsetting this underspend is the overspend on the existing insurance premium of £16k resulting in a net underspend of -£27k. The existing insurance premium overspend will be addressed during the 2009/10 budget process.
- 2.2.10 Office Equipment, Furniture and Expenses: is showing an underspend to date of -£33k. This is made up of underspends to date on office equipment (-£19k), stationary (-£12) and postages (-£6k). At this stage, the budget is expected to be fully spent by year end.
- 2.2.11 <u>Catering, Subsistence and Accommodation:</u> is showing an overspend to date of £23k, comprising £8k catering purchases, £4k subsistence and £3k spoilt meals.
- 2.2.12 Operational Equipment: is showing an underspend to date of -£62k. This is a volatile, frontline budget. Orders have now been placed for operational equipment for the new appliances. Additional funding was allocated for 2008/09, for the purchase of specialist rescue confined space equipment £25k. The order for this is equipment has now been placed, and a partial delivery has been received. The reminder of the equipment is expected to be delivered by the end of the financial year, and no variance has been reported at this stage. The thermal cameras budgeted for this year were, in fact, purchased in 2007/08. However, the resulting underspend of -£50k, will be used to offset the anticipated overspend of £30k on Personal Protective Equipment for flood rescue, and the additional purchase of three defibrillators £15k, for co-responding vehicles. An order has now been placed for £28k, for

the purchase of the intrinsically safe radios, and delivery is expected by the end of November 2008.

The Integrated Clothing Project has now commenced, and all of the helmets have been delivered. The initial kit will be delivered in September, and the final delivery is expected by the end of the financial year. Protective clothing purchases have been made prior to the commencement of the project, which is also reflected in the actual to date. The project will cost £860k, and this will be funded from the earmarked reserve of £800k, and from the 2008/09 budget. At this stage the budget is expected to be fully spent by the end of the year, and no variances have been reported.

- 2.2.13 <u>Community Safety Equipment:</u> is showing an underspend to date of -£27k. Detailed work has been carried out to allocate budgets to various projects within Fire Prevention and to the Districts and these budgets will be closely monitored during the year. A year end underspend is not expected at this stage.
- 2.2.14 <u>Smoke Alarms</u>: is showing nil expenditure to date. The budget is for purchasing smoke alarms when the external grant funding expires during the year. So far this year, £54k has been spent on smoke alarms and there is a balance of £17k of grant funding. At this stage the budget is expected to be fully spent by the end of the year.
- 2.2.15 <u>Capital Financing:</u> underspends in the capital programme in 2007/08 and the decision to fund assets by borrowing rather than leasing has caused an underspend in capital financing charges. An underspend of -£54k is reflected in the capital contingency budget, which is included within non-pay contingencies. This has not been reported in the outturn as an underspend at this stage, as this will be kept under review as the year progresses and decisions are taken about borrowing and leasing. In addition, the underspends in the capital programme last year have resulted in an underspend of -£54k in the operating lease budget, which is shown within Transport.
- 2.2.16 Interest Receivable: is showing a surplus to date of -£20k. This budget is affected by investment interest rates and cash flow timings, both of which are difficult to predict. The majority of the pension top-up grant is received in July each year and this can be invested until it is required. The timing of borrowing however, will depend to some extent upon market conditions which, at the time of writing this report, are very volatile. At this stage, a surplus of -£25k against the budget target is forecast, but this may well change as the year progresses.
- 2.2.17 Government Grants: is showing surplus income of -£7k to date which offsets non-pay expenditure within Supplies and Services.
- 2.2.18 Other income: is showing a deficit to date of £13k. This mainly relates to the donated income generated by the Fire Prevention department. Negotiations are underway with four companies, but currently no firm funding has been agreed. At this stage the estimated outturn deficit is £15k, but this will be kept under review and reported as the year progresses.

- 2.2.19 <u>Contributions from Balances:</u> a contribution from balances is unlikely to be required to support the budget, so a forecast negative variance of £50k is reported.
- 2.2.20 Pay Contingency of £516k comprises £250k for Jobsizing, £15k for Job Evaluation, £25k for Salary Protection, £140k for the Non Uniformed Pay Award, which is currently in arbitration, and the remainder of the firefighters' pay award contingency. The firefighters pay award has now been settled at 2.45% and this has resulted in an outturn underspend of -£86k, as the contingency provided for 3%. At this stage only the firefighters' pay award underspend is reflected as a saving.
- 2.2.21 Non Pay Contingency of £274k comprises £75k for fire safety intervention, £16k for driving to work, £54k for capital, £16k for Fire Safety and £111k for the general contingency. Work is currently being carried out with all budget holders across the Service for the preparation of the 2009/10 budget and three year forecast. The contingencies will be reviewed as part of this process and any updates will be reported in due course.

### 2.3 EARMARKED RESERVES

The Authority holds £2.4m of reserves earmarked for specific projects. Of this sum, the following amounts are likely to be applied to fund projects in 2008/09 in addition to the revenue budget funding:

	Reserve Total	To Be Spent 08/09	Projected Balance
<u>Project</u>	£000s	£000s	£000s
Integrated Clothing Project	800	800	0
Modernisation	110	110	0
Fire Safety Equipment etc	27	27	0
On Fire Fund for Community Projects	200	50	150
IT Systems	23	23	0
Capital and Other One-Off Items	300	170	130
Fire Link Control/ Fire link Transition	200	0	200
LPSA Reward Grant for LAA Objectives	741	207	534
Total	2,401	1,387	1,014

Of these activities, some orders have been placed in respect of the Integrated Clothing Project and Modernisation. As at 30 August, 3 grants totalling £4.5k had been awarded from the On Fire Fund, and staff are in post and funded from the LPSA Reward Grant.

### 3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The financial implications are set out within the body of the report.

## 4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

There are no human resources and learning and development implications arising directly from this report.

### 5. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

An initial equality impact assessment has revealed that there are no specific equalities issues arising from this report.

### 6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

### 7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

#### 8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

Budget monitoring and the regular receipt of financial reports is key to managing one of the most significant risks to the organisation, that of financial risk. The process of budget monitoring is a key risk management control measure as are the management actions which are stimulated by such reporting. Throughout the year, finance department staff work collaboratively with budget holders towards keeping expenditure within budget and improving financial performance.

### 9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 That Members note the contents of this report.
- 9.2 That Members approve the virement proposals contained in Section 2 of the report.
- 10. BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR INSPECTION (OTHER THAN PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS)

None.

Frank Swann
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

### MONITORING STATEMENT - 1st APRIL 2008 TO 31st August 2009

### Appendix A

	ANNUAL BUDGET	BUDGET MONTH	ACTUAL MONTH	VARIANCE MONTH	BUDGET YTD	ACTUAL YTD	VARIANCE YTD	FORECAST OUTTURN	FORECAST VARIANCE	VARIANCE ALERT
Employees										
Employees Operational	23,642	1,957	1,911	-46	9,822	9,347	-474	22,932	-709	0
Employees Operational Overtime	296	25	23	-2	98	90	-8	264	-32	0
Employees Control Employees Retained	1,070 3,482	90 317	96 293	7 -24	440 1,137	453 1,104	13 -33	1,077 3,317	7 -165	0 0
Employees Admin & Support	4,772	403	376	-27	2,187	2,053	-133	4,567	-206	0
Staff Training	321	27	5	-21	109	142	33	321		X
Employees Other Direct Costs Employees Other Pension Costs	181 1,242	15 104	18 45	-58	70 557	70 275	-282	181 1,051	-191	0 X
Pensions (year end FRS17)	.,				551	2.0	202	1,001		0
Subtotal Employees	35,006	2,937	2,768	-169	14,420	13,534	-886	33,710	-1,296	• •
<u>Premises</u>										
Premises - Repairs & Maint	518	43	21	-22	215	257	42	518		x
Premises - Repairs & Maint -Contract Work Premises - Utilities	43 266	4 19	7 14	3 -5	18 94	46 104	29 9	60 266	17	X 0
Premises - Other	855	7	6	-5	214	209	-6	855		0
Subtotal Premises	1,682	73	49	-24	542	615	74	1,699	17	<u>.</u>
<u>Transport</u>										
Direct transport costs	1,249	81	36	-45	369	336	-33	1,318	69	0
Car Allowances & Travel Capital Financing - Transport	423 180	35 4	38 6	3 2	142 86	157 88	15 2	457 126	34 -54	X 0
Subtotal Transport	1,851	120	80	-40	597	581	-16	1,901	50	-
Supplies & Services										•
Insurance Costs	509		-4	-4	419	428	8	482	-27	0
Office Equipment, Furniture & Expenses	282	17	4	-14	107	74	-33	282		X
Information, Communications and Technology Equipment	809	81	41	-40	375	385	11	809		0
Telephone Charges Catering, Subsistence & Accommodation	217 148	8 12	12 3	4 -9	65 47	74 70	9 23	217 148		X X
Services from External Providers	175	11	13	1	60	64	4	175		0
Services from External Providers - Treasury	143	40			40		4	143		0
Services from External Providers - Legal Services from External Providers - Medical	142 -5	12	4 -1	-8	12 -2	8 -2	-4 1	142 -5		X X
Services from External Providers - Consultants	80	10	4	-6	36	42	6	80		X
Services from External Providers - Across Bord Regional Management Board	-15							-15		X 0
Operational Equipment	148 887	72	22	-50	293	231	-62	148 887		X
Community Safety Equipment	260	12	15	4	58	31	-27	260		X
Smoke Alarms Other Supplies & Services	48 435	34	13	-21	169	150	-19	48 441	6	X X
										-
Subtotal Supplies & Services  Capital Financing	4,261	268	127	-141	1,639	1,556	-83	4,240	-21	-
										0
Depreciation, Amortisation & Impairment Minimum Revenue Provision	761							761		0
Interest on Finance Leases and Loans Capital Financing - Other	530				47	32	-15	517	-13	X 0
Subtotal Capital Financing	1,291				47	32	-15	1,278	-13	<u>.</u>
<u>Democratic</u>										
Democratic Costs	100	5	4	-1	22	23	1	100		0
Subtotal Democratic	100	5	4	-1	22	23	1	100		-
Income										
Interest Receivable	-220	-18	-37	-19	-92	-112	-20	-245	-25	X
Government Grants Other Income	-83	-4	-8	-5	-57	-7 -43	-7 13	-68	15	X X
Subtotal Income	-303	-22	-46	-24	-148	-162	-14	-313	-10	-
Revenue Financing										
Contributions To / From Earmarked Reserves	-173							-173		X
Contributions from Balances Surplus / Deficit on Collection	-50 -68	-6	-9	-3	-32	-36	-4	-68	50	0 X
Subtotal Revenue Financing	-291	-6	-9	-4	-33	-36	-4	-241	50	<u>.</u>

Contingencies	ANNUAL BUDGET	BUDGET MONTH	ACTUAL MONTH	VARIANCE MONTH	BUDGET YTD	ACTUAL YTD	VARIANCE YTD	FORECAST OUTTURN	FORECAST VARIANCE	VARIANCE ALERT
Pay Contingencies Nonpay Contingencies	516 274							430 274	-86	0
Subtotal Contingencies	790							704	-86	
Total Excluding Trading										
Account Surplus / Deficit	44,386	3,375	2,972	-403	17,086	16,143	-943	43,079	-1,307	:
Total Including Trading	44.206	2 204	2,880	-295	47 424	16.065	-1,069	42,998	-1,308	
Account Surplus / Deficit	44,306	3,391	2,880	-295	17,134	16,065	-1,069	42,996	-1,306	•
TRADING ACCOUNTS										
Fire Extinguisher Maintenance										
Income	-285	-24 16	-30 16	7	-89	-123 92	-33 11	-285		X
Expenditure Surplus / (Deficit)		-7	-15	7	81 -8	-30	-22	200 -85		Х
Commercial Training Unit										
Income	-142	-12	-8	-4	-41	-41	_	-142		X
Expenditure Surplus / (Deficit)	119 -23	10 -2	1	-3	49 <b>8</b>	40 -1	-9 <b>-9</b>	119 -23		X
Princes' Trust										
Income	-275		-97	97	-69	-145	-76	-275		X
Expenditure Surplus / (Deficit)	302 27	25 <b>25</b>	19 -78	6 103	118 49	99 -46	-19 <b>-95</b>	302 27		X X
Trading Account Total Surplus / Deficit	<u>-81</u>	16	-92	108	48	-77	-126	-81		X
PENSION ACCOUNT										
Transfer Values Received			-32	-32		-190	-190			
Transfer Values Paid						16	16			
Pension Top Up Grant Paid in Arrears Employee Pension Contributions New Scheme			811 -25	811 -25		-104	-104			
Employee Pension Contributions Old Scheme			-142	-142		-705	-705			
Employer Contributions - Current Service			-276	-276		-1,366	-1,366			
Employer Contributions - New Scheme  III Health Charges			-34	-34		-133	-133			
Pension Enhance -Lump Sum			1	1		699	699			
Annual Pensions - Childrens			1	1		7	7			
Annual Pensions - Widows Annual Pensions - Non Uniformed			22	22		144	144			
Annual Pensions - Non Uniformed  Annual Pensions			427	427		2,540	2,540			
Pension Contributions - Arrears						-2	-2			
Pension Increase Act Payments			175	175		1,050	1,050			
Pension Fund Admin Costs			1	1		1	1			
Pension Account Total			927	927		1,956	1,956		<del>.</del> :	

### GRANT AND EXTERNAL FUNDING

Fire Setters	-28
Arson Task Force	-155
Smoke Alarm Grant	-17
Safe as Houses - Smoke Alarms	-22
Community Fire Safety - Innovation Fund	-31
Resilience Crewing and Training	-70
New Burdens - FireControl & Firelink Project	-712
Fire Prevention Grant	-173
	-1,208