

Questions from Councillors

Responses to questions requiring a written response

WQ1

Written question asked by Councillor Andrew Rule of the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Growth and the City Centre at the meeting of the City Council to be held on 9 November 2020

Following my last Council question regarding a breakdown by service line of how the Council's COVID overspend is budgeted, could the Portfolio Holder now provide a breakdown of how actual spend by service line compares against the budgetary information provided previously?

Councillor Sam Webster replied as follows:

There are significant additional and new costs of dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic for local public services provided by Nottingham City Council. Since the start of the pandemic, councils have been required to submit to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) a monthly return outlining these costs. This return asks for a comparison to the budget prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, and estimate how much additional money the Council has spent, and plans to spend due to pressures caused by COVID-19, irrespective of how it is funded and this is shown in the table below. The mid-year actual position alone doesn't give the complete position due to some technical finance adjustments being performed only at year end.

Table 1 : MHCLG 7th Covid-19 return detailing additional expenditure and forecast spend due to pressures caused by Covid-19	
Service Area	Full financial year 2020/21 £m
Adult Social Care – additional demand	0.019
Adult Social Care - supporting the market	5.382
Adult Social Care - workforce pressures	2.898
Adult Social Care - Personal protective equipment (PPE)	5.263
Adult Social Care - other	0.011
Adult Social Care sub total	13.573
Children's Social Care – workforce pressures	0.650
Children's Social Care – residential care	2.849
Children's Social Care – care leavers	0.935
Children Social Care - other	0.045
Children's Social Care sub total	4.479
Education - SEND	1.515
Education - other	0.031
Education sub total	1.546
Highways and Transport	0.354
Public Health - Testing, contact tracing and outbreak planning	5.827
Public Health - other	0.201
Public Health sub total	6.028

Housing – homelessness services	0.180
Housing – rough sleeping	0.597
Housing - other (excluding HRA)	0.000
Housing sub total (excluding HRA)	0.777
Cultural & related - Sports, leisure and community facilities	0.139
Cultural & related - other	0.128
Cultural & related sub total	0.267
Environment & regulatory - cremation, cemetery and mortuary services	1.140
Environment & regulatory – waste Management	0.982
Environment & regulatory - other	0.231
Environment & regulatory sub total	2.353
Planning & development	0.124
Finance & corporate - ICT & remote working	0.237
Finance & corporate - revenue & benefits	4.193
Finance & corporate - other	1.262
Finance & corporate sub total	5.692
Other - shielding	0.907
Other - PPE (non-Adult Social Care and HRA)	1.750
Other - unachieved savings/delayed projects	11.291
Other - Domestic Abuse Services	0.105
Other - excluding service areas listed above	5.790
Other sub total (includes Shielding)	19.843
TOTAL ESTIMATED SPENDING PRESSURE (General Fund)	55.036
Additional Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Pressures:	
HRA - workforce pressures	0.098
HRA - supplies and materials including PPE	0.450
HRA - other	1.430
HRA total	1.978

(Submitted to MHCLG in November 2020, based on period 6 monitoring)

WQ2

Written question asked by Councillor Andrew Rule of the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Growth and the City Centre at the meeting of the City Council to be held on 9 November 2020

Could the Portfolio Holder define what is meant by non-essential spend and provide examples, in his view of the top 10 (by value), of non-essential spend incurred by the Council in the financial year 2019/20?

Councillor Sam Webster replied as follows:

In 2017/18 the Council implemented a range of management actions and spending controls to mitigate potential overspends and these remain in place today. These have included a range of measures such as reducing contingency balances, reviews

of earmarked reserves, reduced revenue contribution to the capital programme, vacancy controls, stop to non-essential spend, reductions to maintenance spend and restrictions on hospitality, training, travel and conferences.

Budget Managers are accountable for delivering their services within budget and are responsible for ensuring that the spending controls are adhered to. Expenditure within the Finance system records the type of expenditure but the categorisation between essential or non-essential spend will be different depending on the service, for example training for one area may be non-essential but for another service essential in a particular circumstance. Budget Managers continue to forecast monthly and the Interim Budget as approved by Full Council on 5 October reset the 2020/21 Budget which included reducing budgets for services where there are underspends to ensure a balanced position for 2020/21.