

Renewal & Recreation - Variations as at 31 March 2012**1. Adult Education Dr £110k**

This represents a provision that has been set aside in the R & R redundancy earmarked reserve to meet some of the potential costs that may arise as a result of the staffing reorganisation within the Adult Education Service. Funding from the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) is being reduced by at least 25% between the period of 2012 to 2014. This potential loss of income alongside the Council's significant financial pressures over the coming years, has prompted the radical review of the Adult Education Service. The staffing proposals set out in the consultation document will result in savings of approximately £345k for 2012/13 if implemented from 1st September 2012 and £459k in a full year.

2. Building Control Dr £7k

At the end of the financial year there was a shortfall of income of £277k. This was partly offset by the charging account surplus of £75k carried forward from 2010/11 and partly offset by savings achieved as a direct result of management action taken during the year. Savings of £195k were made by holding 3.5fte posts vacant and by reducing running expenses. Overall there was a net overspend of £7k for building control which has been offset by savings made in other divisions within the Portfolio.

3. Land Charges Cr £6k

A shortfall of income of £18k was more than offset by savings made by a part year vacancy that occurred during the year. The net effect was an underspend of £6 which offset the overspend within building control. It should be noted that £112k was drawn down from the central contingency to offset the full year effect of loss of income as a direct result of the Government withdrawing the statutory personal search fee.

4. Planning Dr £58k

Income from non-major planning applications is £77k below 2010/11 income and is £308k below the 2011/12 budget. The final income variance for non-major applications is £19k more than was projected at the end of January.

Income received for major applications for 2011/12 was £294k, which is £6k below budget and £58k more income than was received in 2010/11. For information, £393k was received for major applications during 2009/10 and £236k for 2010/11. £24k more income was received during February and March than previously projected.

In total, income from planning applications was £314k below budget for 2011/12, compared to the January projection of £357k.

Legal costs relating to planning appeals that have been lost total in 2011/12 total £49k and these costs have been offset by savings made elsewhere in the R & R Portfolio budget rather than drawing down from the central contingency sum held at the centre.

Management action taken during the financial year including holding 8 fte posts vacant totals Cr £277k.

Income from pre-application planning meetings exceeded the budget by £28k.

Summary of Planning variations	Variation £'000
Effect of holding 8 FTE's vacant within Planning	(246)
Shortfall of income from planning fees	314
Miscellaneous income	(28)
Net underspend on supplies and services	(31)
Appeals and Legal Costs	49
Total variation	58

5. Renewal Cr £206k

The £206k underspend on Renewal is due to a number of variances. The first totals £51k and is due to a part year effect of a member of staff taking early retirement. To offset the shortfall in planning income, spend against the portfolio holder initiatives budget was restricted providing an in year saving of £77k and there were other minor variances totalling £3k. Due to delays in the Government's response to the consultation on its draft National Planning Policy Framework, officers have not been able to fully implement its changes to meet the framework and the budget has therefore underspent by £75k. A carry forward request will be submitted to the Executive to carry forward £60k of this underspend in order to continue to meet the requirements of the Local Development Framework (LDF).

The carry forward of £60k of the LDF monies is required to ensure there is a robust evidence base to the plan making process and to undertake the consultation and other activities required by planning legislation and regulations. The Government only published its planning reforms at the end of March 2012, together with new planning regulations. While the LDF Advisory Panel agreed work in 2011/12 to support any proposed new system as well as the current framework some work was delayed to avoid abortive work and use resources effectively. In 2012/13 technical assessments will be required, alongside detailed work for the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, and the drafting of the Local Plan and viability work to support a borough level Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

6. Culture Cr £34k

There is a £152k underspend on grant funding received for the Field Studies Centre, which is the result of a sundry creditor of £78k for the repayment of the 2010/11 grant not having to be repaid, a provision to repay grant for travel allowances was not fully required resulting in a 66k underspend and a surplus of £8k on the grant received in 2011/12 not being fully spent.

A report was agreed at Executive on the 1 February 2012 to set up an earmarked reserve of £100k which can be used as a contribution towards the costs of the special celebrations in 2012/13.

There is an overspend of £24k on the grant payment to Bromley Mytime. This is as a result of the RPIX applied to the grant being higher than the amount added in to the LBB budget as part of the estimate process.

There is a minor £6k underspend on running expenses.

7. Libraries & Museums Cr £42k

There is a net underspend of £42k within this service area which is mainly due to works that needs to be carried for the shared library service that could not be completed until April. £24k relates to the costs involved in merging three library book stacks into one, and £16k is for IT works that were completed at the the new shared library office in Bexley during April. A request to carry forward £40k of the library underspend will be submitted to Executive in order to meet the outstanding commitments for the shared back office.

8. Town Centre Management & Business Support Cr £18k

There is an underspend £14k on staffing due to an in year vacancy and other minor variations on running expenses budgets of £4k.