

Extract from Audit Committee Minutes 14 January 2013

7. RISK REVIEW OF 2013/14 BUDGET OPTIONS

The Assistant Head of Finance presented the risk assessment of the budget proposals for 2013/14 for the Committee's consideration. In support of the statement relevant Heads of Service had completed risk assessments of their services as part of the MTP Options budget proforma. Other risk work has also been and is being undertaken in relation to the budget proposals regarding whether or how to take a proposal forward.

A Member asked about the impact on relevant staff of the proposal for the Council not to pay professional fees and the removal of essential car allowances (MTP 157 and 188). The Director of Resources stated that there would be an impact on those staff whose job description required them to be members of a professional institution in order to undertake their job. This was not a large number of staff, however. Any officer who took over paying his/her professional fees personally could claim tax relief against those fees. Discussions were taking place with staff and consultations with the trade unions were on-going regarding the essential car allowance. This issue would be considered in respect of risk and therefore it might not be possible to implement any changes by the target date of 1 April 2013. It was noted that car mileage would continue to be paid to all staff using their cars on work related matters if the essential user allowance was removed.

Officers provided information, as summarised below, in response to Members' questions and comments:

- MTP 103: Raising sponsorship to offset costs of NBC events – some opportunities had been identified and it was considered the savings could be achieved but there was a risk that this might not be possible. There would be a risk to events beyond 2015/16 if sponsorship could not be achieved;
- MTP 109: Introducing parking permits for commuters – the costs of opening the car parks on a 24 hour basis had been taken into account and the income figures presented were net;
- MTP 146: Review of National Non-Domestic Rates Discretionary Relief Scheme – consultation was taking place with organisations that would be affected by any changes to the scheme and the organisations were aware of the risks involved;
- MTP 158: Reduction in the training budget – the proposed reductions were in the corporate training budget. There would still be departmental training budgets. The changes would have some impact on staff training, however;
- MTP 166: Savings arising from moving services into LGSS – the savings of £415,000 estimated for 2013/14 excluded transitional costs, which would be funded through the Reserves. There would be a number of efficiency savings which would be funded from the reserves as a one-off. It was noted that a breakdown of savings by service had been reported to the LGSS Scrutiny Inquiry Panel on 20 December 2012;
- MTP 190: Review of CCTV cameras – it was only proposed to stop monitoring a small number of cameras and very careful consideration would be given as to which cameras they would be.

With regard to a number of items identified in the report Members asked that the following notes be added to the key consequences/risks of delivering the proposals, as summarised below:

- MTP 45: End support to Ground Works Scheme – that projects may not be completed and that the organisation might cease to function;
- MTP 103: Raising sponsorship to offset costs of NBC events – that the figure for 2013/14 appears to be achievable but that the figures for subsequent years be considered in the light of what is actually achieved in 2013/14;
- MTP 146: Review of National Non-Domestic Rates Discretionary Relief Scheme – that the impact on the viability of charities and the services they provide be indicated.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted with the addition of the notes requested by Members in the preamble above in relation to the key consequences/risks of delivering the proposals.