**AUDIT COMMITTEE – 22 NOVEMBER 2016**

**PART I – DELEGATED**

**5. FINANCIAL AND BUDGETARY RISKS**

(DoF)

1. **Summary**

# 1.1 This report enables the Committee to monitor the Council’s financial and budgetary risks.

2. **Details**

2.1 The Audit Committee’s terms of reference include the consideration of the effectiveness of the authority’s risk management arrangements. A key element of this is the monitoring of budgetary and financial risks, which officers report on a monthly basis. Appendix 1 shows the latest position of the risks monitored by this Committee.

3. **Options/Reasons for Recommendation**

3.1 The recommendation enables the Committee to consider the financial and budgetary risks facing the Council, to note the latest position and comment on the officers assessment of the likelihood and impact of a risk occurring.

4. **Policy/Budget Implications**

4.1 The recommendations in this report are within the Council’s agreed policy and budgets.

5. **Legal, Equal Opportunities, Staffing, Environmental, Community Safety, Customer Services Centre, and Website Implications**

5.1 None specific.

6. **Financial Implications**

6.1There are no changes to the budget agreed by Members as a result of this report.

7. **Risk Management Implications**

7.1 There are no risks associated with the decision members are being asked to take.

8. **Recommendation**

8.1 That the Committee considers the financial and budgetary risks facing the Council, notes the latest position and comments on the officers assessment of the likelihood and impact of a risk occurring.

Report prepared by: Bob Watson - Head of Finance

**APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 – Financial & Budgetary Risks

| **Risk No.** | **Type of Risk** | **Comment** | **Risk Impact** | **Risk Likelihood** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 7 | The Medium term financial position worsens. | In that the general fund balance falls below the minimum prudent threshold and capital funding is insufficient to meet the capital programme. This appears as item no.8 in the Council's strategic risk register. | IIII | D |
| 8 | Revenue balances insufficient to meet estimate pay award increases | The medium term planning period takes into account a 1% increase for the period 2016/17 to 2018/19 | II | D |
| 9 | Revenue balances insufficient to meet other inflationary increases | Other than contractual agreements, budgets have been cash limited where possible. | II | D |
| 10 | Interest rates resulting in significant variations in estimated interest income | The interest rate has a significant impact on the proceeds from capital receipts that are invested in the money market. The volatility of the global economy continues to place uncertainty on the investment strategy. | II | D |
| 11 | Inaccurate estimates of fees and charges income | See Key Budget Indicators shown in the latest Budget Monitoring report | V | E |
| 12 | Revenue balances insufficient to meet loss of partial exemption for VAT | If the council's expenditure on functions for which it receives income that is exempt for VAT purposes exceeds 5% of its total vat able expenditure, then the Council may lose its ability to recover VAT on all of its exempt inputs. Further letting of office space at Three Rivers House will increase this risk | II | E |
| 13 | The estimated cost reductions and additional income gains are not achieved | Savings identified by the Strategic Service Review Working party is monitored as part of the budget monitoring process | IV | E |
| 14 | The Council is faced with potential litigation and other employment related risks | The Council has no outstanding litigation cases. | III | E |
| 15 | The amount of government grant is adversely affected | The grant settlement for 2016/17 and provisional settlements for 2017/18 and 2018/19 have been factored into the MTFP. The Council decided to accept the Government’s offer of a four year settlement at the Policy & Resources Committee on 6 October 2016. ***The risk has therefore been downgraded.*** | III | D |
| 16 | Localising support for council tax | The introduction of universal credits and the localising of support for Council Tax will substantially alter the administering of Housing and Council Tax Benefits | II | E |
| 17 | Right to Buy Receipts & VAT Shelter Receipts | Under the housing stock transfer with Thrive Homes Limited (THL) the Council is entitled to use its share of the proceeds to fund the capital programme. The level of activity on these income streams are outside the Council's control. | IV | E |
| 18 | Fluctuations in Business Rates Retention | The Council is legally obliged to cover the first 7.5% loss on its pre-determined baseline level. | IV | C |
| 19 | Failure to deliver the South Oxhey Initiative to desired outcomes and objectives | This is a key project. This appears as item no.7 in the Council's strategic risk register. | IV | D |
| 20 | Failure of ICT systems | The Council's integrated Financial Management System (FMS) is held on an ICT platform. If this were to fail then potentially there will be a loss of functionality occurring during any downtime. [ Risk now included as per Audit Committee's request in June 2016] | III | E |

Note: The serial numbers relate to the Council’s risk register and serials 1-6 do not relate to finance or budgetary risks.

**Matrix Key**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | **Impact** | | | | |  |  |
|  |  | **I** | **II** | **III** | **IV** | **V** | **Likelihood** | **Impact** |
| **Likelihood** | **A** |  |  |  |  |  | A equal to/or > 98% | V - Catastrophic |
| **B** |  |  |  |  |  | B = 75% - 97% | IV = Critical |
| **C** |  |  |  | **18** |  | C = 50% - 74% | III = Significant |
| **D** |  | **8,9,10** | **7,15** | **19** |  | D = 25% - 49% | II = Marginal |
| **E** |  | **12,16** | **14, 20** | **13,17** | **11** | E = 3% - 24% | I = Negligible |
|  | | | | | |  |  |