Appendix C

Medium Term Financial Strategy – Financial Risk Analysis

Impact of the outcome of the Spending Review

Risk is that the impact of the funding cuts has a significantly greater impact on the authority's financial position than currently envisaged as a result of the unknown factors.

This is unknown at this stage, but very prudent assumptions have been made in respect of the impact. The effects on the Authority's financial position will be kept under constant review so that remedial action can be taken at the earliest opportunity.

Business Rates Retention Scheme

Risk is that each district council does not collect the level of income indicated which would then filter through to a reduction to the funding level indicated and therefore would become a budget pressure in future years.

Risk that the Government's safety net level in the new arrangements is not directly linked to the level of business rates collectable and as such has been set too low.

From notifications of each district's business rates, the projected position for 2014/2015 is indicating a small surplus over the government's assessment of business rates income, provided the level of business rates notified is actually collected in the year.

These risks will be mitigated by the regular monitoring of the actual positions on collection with each of its district councils, to identify issues and to take corrective action where possible. This action will complements funding that the Authority has earmarked in a separate reserve to address this risk should it arise.

Council Tax Support Scheme

Risk is that the new Council Tax Benefit schemes are determined by each district council so the Authority has little real influence over the schemes which could impact on the collectable income. This will become transparent when the surplus/deficit position on the Collection Fund is reported by each district.

Risk is that the Government Council Tax Support Grant is not sufficient to meet the gap created by implementation of the new schemes.

These risks will be mitigated by the regular monitoring of the actual positions on collection with each of its district councils, to identify issues and to take corrective action where possible. This action will complement funding that the Authority has earmarked in a separate reserve to address this risk should it arise.

Inflation

Risk is that pay and price increases may exceed the levels provided for within the MTFS.

This is very unlikely to occur due to the realistic provisions made:
- Prudent provision has been made for all employees' pay awards;
- The government's previous guidance is that they expect public sector pay to be restricted in light of the latest economic downturn;
- Average forecasts for CPI and RPI are 2.6% and 3.70% respectively;
- Expenditure in respect of most of the budget heads can be either influenced or controlled.

Debt Charges

Risk is that Debt Charges will be greater than budgeted.

This is very unlikely to arise due to:
- the current level of variable rate debt is low in comparison to the fixed-rate level of debt;
- the impact of any interest rate changes is negligible in context of the overall financial position of the Authority;
- the economic outlook is that base rates are likely to remain low over the course of the coming year and the Treasury Management Strategy can be adjusted to minimise the impact of any significant increases;
- no new borrowing is currently programmed to be required.

Investment Interest

Risk is that income generated will not match budget provision

This is unlikely to arise in relation to investment income as a prudent rate of return has been included in the budget which reflects the investments made to date, the prevailing market conditions and the economic forecasts for the year ahead.

Other sources of income are small in the context of the overall budget.

Contingencies

Risk is that the contingency provision will be insufficient to meet the needs identified.

This is unlikely to occur due to:
- prudent estimates included for each category of contingency provision;
- specific contingencies are created for all known spending pressures;
- the total contingency provision is deemed sufficient in the context of the net revenue budget;
- past experience suggests an underspending against the contingency provision.

Risk Management

Risk is that all risks have not been identified and that major financial consequences may result.

This is very unlikely to occur due to:
- existence of the Bellwin Scheme;
- a corporate risk profile in place, which is regularly and formally reviewed, and action is taken to mitigate and manage risks;

- Authority risk management action plans developed;
- comprehensive self and external insurance arrangements in place;
- an adequate self insurance fund.

Financial Planning

Risk is that a major liability or commitment currently exists but has not been taken into account in the financial planning of the Authority.

This is unlikely to arise due to:

- the existence of a comprehensive Medium Term Financial Strategy process with regular updates during the year;
- benchmarking and networking with other senior finance staff in other Authorities who are likely to identify similar liabilities.

Revenue Budget - Budgetary Control

Risk is that the budget will be overspent in the year.

This is very unlikely to occur due to:

- monthly budget monitoring procedures;
- quarterly Revenue Budget Budgetary Control reviews undertaken, reported to the Authority and corrective action agreed or set in train;
- Financial Procedure Rules relating to delegated budgets provide for virements and carry forward of under / over spending to be used / met in the following financial year;
- clear budget management responsibilities in place;
- demonstrable track record.

Capital Programme Implications

Risk is that funding will not be available as planned or that over spending may occur.

This is unlikely to happen due to:

- prudent level of capital receipts retained;
- quarterly Capital Programme Budgetary Control reviews undertaken through the Asset Management Group, reported to the Authority and corrective action agreed or set in train;
- Revenue Contribution to Capital, Fire Capital Grant and prudential regime gives added flexibility in terms of financing the Capital Programme.

Reductions to the Revenue Budget

Risk is that planned reductions to the Revenue Budget will not occur or are unachievable.

This is unlikely to occur due to:

- the reductions to budgets planned have all been subject to due diligence and there are no significant barriers to implementation;
- the budgetary control processes that are in place will identify any shortfall and remedial action will be taken;

- contingencies exist to safeguard against the non-realisation of some of the efficiency reductions.

Availability of Other Funds

Risk is that the Authority could not call on any other funds to meet unforeseen liabilities.

This is very unlikely as the Authority has a range of other funds which, whilst earmarked, are not wholly committed, which could be used in an emergency.

Appendix D

Statement of General Balances

		£'000
Balance as at 1st April 2014		**3,872**
Comprising:		
General Fund Reserve	3,720	
DSO Surplus	152	
Estimated Balance as at 31st March 2015		**3,872**

Appendix E

Statement of Earmarked Reserves and Provisions

Title and Purpose of Earmarked Reserve / Provision	**Estimated Opening Balance (1/04/14)**	**Estimated Movement in 2014/2015**	**Estimated Closing Balance (31/03/15)**
	£000	**£000**	**£000**
Insurance Reserve Reserve held to protect the Authority from unexpected volatility from changes in legislation that could be retrospective, unknown exposures that may arise in the future, and to cover a possible shortfall in the eventual settlement in respect of MMI.	865	0	865
Development Reserve Reserve created to fund medium term and long term capital and revenue developments.	6,783	-2,876	3,907
Early Retirements Reserve Reserve to cover future compensatory added years payments associated with an early retirement during 2002/2003. This ensures no ongoing revenue implications.	31	-3	28
PFI Smoothing Reserve Reserve established to smooth the impact of the PFI scheme on the Authority's revenue budget over the 25 year life-span of the scheme.	6,254	304	6,558
Contingency Planning Reserve Reserve to enable appropriate contingency arrangements to be put in place to ensure continued service delivery.	1,930	0	1,930
Budget Carry Forward Reserve Reserve established to fund the slippage of specific items of revenue expenditure.	655	-393	262
New Dimensions Reserve Reserve to be used to provide for any adverse effect of potential changes in grant arrangements and to provide resources to support delivery of the Urban Search and Rescue response.	644	0	644

Title and Purpose of Earmarked Reserve / Provision	Estimated Opening Balance (1/04/14)	Estimated Movement in 2014/2015	Estimated Closing Balance (31/03/15)
	£000	£000	£000
Community Safety Reserve Reserve to deliver community safety initiatives in future years.	250	0	250
Civil Emergency Reserve Reserve to enable the Authority to respond to a catastrophic event, locally or nationally.	200	0	200
Carbon Management Plan Reserve Invest to Save on specific carbon management initiatives with the aim of reducing revenue costs.	280	-280	0
Organisational Change Reserve Reserve covers expected costs following a review of the organisational changes required for the Authority to operate more effectively.	7,613	-2,000	5,613
Medium Term Planning Reserve Reserve established to plan for future grant reductions and the effects of localisation of business rates retention.	700	0	700
Total	**26,206**	**-5,248**	**20,958**