

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

6th December 2016

BUDGET SCRUTINY WORKING GROUP - PROPOSALS

Chair of Scrutiny Group	Councillor Jane Potter
Relevant Head of Service	Jayne Pickering, Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Resources and Judith Willis, Head of Community Services
Ward(s) Affected	No specific ward relevance.
Non-Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 Budget scrutiny has formed a key part of the work of the Committee in recent years but Members felt that this process could be improved. The Budget Scrutiny Working Group was therefore established by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at the start of the 2016/17 municipal year to scrutinise the Council's budget in more detail.
- 1.2 The Budget Scrutiny Working Group will review a range of matters which may vary between meetings. Where recommendations are made at a meeting about a particular subject these will be recorded in a report and presented for Members' consideration at the earliest opportunity.
- 1.3 This report details the background to a recommendation proposed at the latest meeting of the Budget Scrutiny Working Group concerning arrangements for internal recharges between Council departments.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to RECOMMEND that a review of the recharge process be undertaken to ensure that these are accurately recorded in future; and to RESOLVE that the report be noted.

3. KEY ISSUES

Background

- 3.1 During meetings of the Budget Scrutiny Working Group Members have discussed arrangements for landscaping Council open spaces, such as the parks and golf course. This is currently undertaken by the Council's Environmental Services Team which recharges the Leisure Services team for the works.
- 3.2 The group recognises there are benefits to Council departments working together. However, Members were concerned to learn that over time the methodology for recharging of works had not been regularly reviewed and therefore may not capture all work undertaken. The group had concerns about the financial costs involved as well as the administrative implications.

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- 3.3 Officers have advised the group that there is an Officer working group which had been tasked with reviewing the recharge framework including landscaping recharges from Environmental Services to other Council services. The group welcomes this work as a positive first step.
- 3.4 However, the group has been advised by Officers that there are other recharging arrangements which remain complex. In particular, the Council's external auditors have raised concerns about the complexity of the recharging process between Redditch Borough Council and Bromsgrove District Council for shared service arrangements.
- 3.5 In this context the group is proposing that a review of the Council's recharging process should be undertaken with a view to ensuring that all recharges in future are accurately recorded in a simplified manner. The group discussed the use of timesheets to provide a robust method of capturing time spent on a task or project and would propose that this option is explored as part of the review.

Financial Implications

- 3.6 The group believes that a simplified recharging process which has been thoroughly reviewed will operate more efficiently for the Council. There is also the possibility that if the process is simplified savings may be made in terms of administration of the recharging process.

Legal Implications

- 3.7 No specific legal implications have been identified.

Service / Operational Implications

- 3.8 The group is not anticipating that a review of the recharging process would impact on service delivery at an operational level.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.9 No specific customer, equalities or diversity implications have been identified.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

No specific risks have been identified.

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