Regulation, Audit and Accounts Committee

25 September 2020

Quarterly Review of the Corporate Risk Register

Report by Director of Finance and Support Services

Summary

This Committee has responsibility for oversight of the Council's risk management arrangements.

Risk relating to the increasing demand placed on senior officers and the mental and physical wellbeing of WSCC staff due to working from home have been added to the corporate risk register. Risks surrounding a lack of suitably qualified and experienced Approved Mental Health Professionals (AMHP) and further waves of COVID-19 have reduced in significance due to the completion of mitigating actions.

Corporate COVID-19 risks are being captured and monitored/managed by ELT with operational COVID-19 concerns managed within services/workstreams.

Risk Management Lunch 'n' Learn sessions are now being delivered as a webinar and has now been made available for staff in Districts and Boroughs. The follow-on course (Risk Management in Practice) has been designed for face-to-face delivery using a combination of instruction via PowerPoint and syndicate/group work and will involve staff working through the WSCC risk management process using a generic scenario. A one-page process summary/guide has been produced to assist staff as an interim measure.

Recommendations

(1)   The Committee is asked to review the information detailed in the report, the current Corporate Risk Register and provide comment as necessary.

Quarterly update

1   Introduction

1.1   The Committee has responsibility 'to monitor the effective development and operation of risk management in the County Council'. That role, together with a description of the Council's approach to risk management, is set out in the Constitution at Part 4 Section 4. It covers the allocation of responsibilities, including the quarterly review of risk management activity.

2 Background and context

2.1 During the preceding quarter there have been the following changes to the corporate risk register.

- Corporate risk #70 - Increasing demand placed on the senior officers
  - New Risk
- Corporate risk #71 - Mental and physical wellbeing of WSCC staff due to working from home
  - New risk
- Corporate risk #66 - Lack of suitably qualified and experienced Approved Mental Health Professionals (AMHP)
  - Severity decreased from 25 to 20
  - To reflect completed mitigating actions
- Corporate risk #68 - Further waves of the COVID-19
  - Severity decreased from 25 to 20
  - To reflect completed mitigating actions

2.2 The following table summarises risks on the corporate risk register with the current severity graded above the tolerance threshold:

Risk No	Risk	Score - Prev Qtr	Score
CR61	Death/serious injury of a child (Council failing in their duty)	25	25
CR66	Lack of suitably qualified and experienced Approved Mental Health Professionals (AMHP)	25	20
CR68	COVID19 and risk to the delivery of WSCC's services	25	20
CR69	Children's services will fail to deliver an acceptable provision to the community	25	25
CR39a	Cyber-security	25	25
CR58	Failure of social care provisions	25	25
CR22	Financial sustainability	25	25
CR59	Benefits from transformation are not realised	20	20
CR1	No deal Brexit	16	16
CR11	Recruit and retain staff	16	16
CR50	Insufficient health & safety governance	16	16
CR71	Mental and physical wellbeing of WSCC staff due to working from home	New	16

2.3 The corporate risk register continues to be reviewed at least monthly by ELT, with any actions promptly addressed.

2.4 The directorate risk registers have been reviewed at least quarterly by each Director and their management team, with support from the Corporate Risk Manager where required. The Corporate Risk Manager has continued to engage monthly with Executive Directorate teams to discuss corporate and other directorate/service risks, and risk governance.

2.5 Operational COVID-19 risks are considered and managed within the services, either through the production of new risks or applying the ramifications to an existing risk and its assessment. In addition, corporate COVID-19 risks are captured and controlled by the councils COVID-19 response team. The

Corporate Risk Manager presents a summary of risks by themes and workstreams to ELT monthly for consideration.

The table below summarises the key corporate COVID-19 risks.

Risk
Staff Shortage in Adults Services for older people's visits
Community Hubs may not have enough staff capacity to manage an increase in demand, resulting in a failure to deliver essential food and medicine to vulnerable people
Once restrictions are relaxed/lifted and we move into the recovery phase the Council may be able to work through the backlog of BAU events in a timely manner due to volume of activity and social distancing restrictions. This will result in a significant reduction in revenue and reputational damage to the Council
Providers are increasingly unwilling to accept new placements which may cause a reduction in external placements and in-house foster care arrangements. This will lead to children not being looked after, becoming more vulnerable and at risk of harm
Care homes are struggling to maintain an economically sustainable number of residents when experiencing deaths due to COVID-19 (>50% occupancy required). This lack of revenue creates a risk of care home closures which would then require financial intervention by WSCC to prevent this from occurring
Government have issued instructions to highlight the local authority's role within the national Test and Trace Programme (particularly regarding Local Outbreak Plans). Should the government also issue direction to apply restrictions at a local level it will have further significant resource implications for PH and their ability to manage the current requirement and ongoing threat
Advice and guidance on suspected COVID-19 cases has been devolved down to LA's with immediate effect. There's a significant concern that there may be a surge in demand for support, which will lead to a strain on the council's ability to respond/support in a timely manner in order to reduce the impact on our residents.

2.6   Capital Programme risks are reported through their respective programme board. There is ELT representation on this boards ensuring that significant concerns to the successful delivery of the programmes and/or associated projects are discussed, communicated to ELT and reflected in the corporate risk register if required. The Corporate Risk Manager has continued to carry out frequent reviews of the project and programme level risk registers.

2.7   The Risk Management Lunch 'n' Learn sessions are now being delivered as a webinar and the course content has been amended to facilitate this delivery method. This course has now been made available for staff in Districts and Boroughs. The follow-on course (Risk Management in Practice) has been designed for face-to-face delivery using a combination of instruction via PowerPoint and syndicate/group work and will involve staff working through the WSCC risk management process using a generic scenario. Due to current restrictions impacting the delivery of this method of training, the Corporate Risk Manager has produced a one-page process summary/guide to assist staff as an interim measure.

2.8　The quality and currency of information contained in the corporate and directorate risk registers will continue to be reviewed and updated. The Corporate Risk Manager is continuing to challenge whether identified actions will sufficiently address the concerns, and within a suitable timeframe.

2.9　Enduring activities the Corporate Risk Manager is undertaking to ensure continuous improvement and alignment with best practice include:

- Attendance at TMG (chairing when requested) and New Ways of Working group
- Attend the South East Risk Managers Group to share best practice of risk management in the public sector across various local authorities
- Attend appropriate seminars held by professional bodies e.g. Alarm, CMI
- Support projects and programmes to provide assurance and support on robust governance
- Engage and support Executive Directors, Directors, service managers and their teams on capturing and communicating risk
- Attendance at/facilitating various internal boards/meetings and working groups

2.10　At this stage, there will be no additional resources required to facilitate the embedding/management of risk and future actions as current support within the organisation is sufficient. The Corporate Risk Manager is conducting risk workshops and risk training sessions in existing management meetings or during lunchtimes where possible to mitigate resource and scheduling conflicts. However, the 'Risk Management in Practice' course will take place during working hours, and participants will be responsible for ensuring their attendance doesn't significantly impact their role requirement.

2.11　The committee is asked to consider the Corporate Risk Register and provide comment as necessary.

3　Risk implications and mitigations

3.1　The subject of the report is the corporate risk register. It would be contrary to the interests of the Council not to ensure that its risk management processes and registers were not aligned to Risk Management Strategy.

4　Policy alignment and compliance

4.1　Equality duty and human rights assessment. An Equality Impact Report is not required for this decision as it is a report dealing with internal and procedural matters only, although the Council's responsibilities in relation to the public sector equality duty will be one element of the approach to risk management.

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Appendices
Appendix A - Corporate Risk Register

Background papers
None