

Regulation, Audit and Accounts Committee

8 March 2021

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.

Risks relating to a lack of compliance in systems and processes, recruitment and retention, H&S awareness and accountability, failure to improve corporate leadership, governance and culture, and mental and physical wellbeing (inc. emotional resilience) of staff have all reduced in significance due to the effectiveness of mitigating actions. The risk to the financial sustainability of council services has also reduced due to the approval of the 21/22 budget. This risk is now focussed on the 22/23 budget and is being monitored regularly. The risk description has been amended, removing reference to HMIC FRS and Ofsted as an additional financial pressure for 22/23. The risk of failing to deliver the HMIC improvement plan has been reintroduced onto the corporate risk register, re-escalated from the FRS risk register.

Risk Management Lunch 'n' Learn sessions continue to be delivered as a webinar and has now been made available for staff in Districts and Boroughs at nil cost. 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. To support staff in better managing their risks, a Risk Management Process Checklist has been produced and added to the WSCC Risk Management SharePoint site.

Recommendation

- (1) The Committee is asked to review the information detailed in the report, the current Corporate Risk Register and provide comment as necessary
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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 #7 – Non-compliance and lack of standardisation in some systems and processes
 - Severity decreased from 12 to 8
 - Likelihood reduced
 - To reflect effectiveness of mitigating actions
- Corporate risk #11 – Recruiting and retaining staff
 - Severity decreased from 16 to 12
 - Likelihood reduced
 - To reflect effectiveness of mitigating actions
- Corporate risk #22 - Financial sustainability of council services
 - Severity decreased from 16 to 12
 - Likelihood reduced
 - 21/22 balanced budget approved
 - Risk now focussed on 22/23 budget, tolerated, and monitored regularly. Reference to HMIC FRS and Ofsted removed from risk description as an additional financial pressure for 22/23
- Corporate risk #50 - Lack of H&S awareness and accountability
 - Severity decreased from 16 to 9
 - Likelihood reduced
 - To reflect effectiveness of mitigating actions
- Corporate risk #60 – HMIC Improvement Plan
 - Re-escalated from FRS risk register
 - To enable senior leaders to monitor progress in the wake of the closure of the Independent Advisory Panel
- Corporate risk #65 – Corporate leadership, governance, and culture
 - Severity decreased from 12 to 8
 - Likelihood reduced
 - To reflect effectiveness of mitigating actions
- Corporate risk #71 - Mental and physical wellbeing (and emotional resilience) of staff
 - Severity decreased from 16 to 8
 - Likelihood reduced
 - To reflect effectiveness of 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
CR39a	Cyber-security	25	25
CR58	Failure of social care provisions	25	25
CR68	Services will fail to deliver existing work plans due to COVID-19 response	25	25
CR69	Children's services will fail to deliver an acceptable provision to the community	20	20
CR70	Lack of capacity to deal with strategic and organisational issues	16	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. 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
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

- 2.6 Capital Programme risks are reported through their respective programme board. There is ELT representation on these 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 provide support to projects and programmes, and their risk registers.
- 2.7 The Risk Management Lunch 'n' Learn sessions will continue to be 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. To support staff in better managing their risks the Corporate Risk Manager has produced a Risk Management Process Checklist, which has been communicated to all staff and added to the WSCC Risk Management SharePoint site.

- 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
 - Review of SRF risks against TMG risk register
 - 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

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