TO:- Cabinet

Councillor Roger Lees BEM ,Councillor Victoria Wilson ,Councillor Rita Heseltine ,Councillor Kath Perry MBE ,Councillor Robert Reade ,

Notice is hereby given that a meeting of the Cabinet will be held as detailed below for the purpose of transacting the business set out below.

Date: Tuesday, 02 July 2024
Time: 14:00
Venue: Council Chamber, Community Hub, Wolverhampton Road, Codsall, South Staffordshire, WV8 1PX

D. Heywood
Chief Executive

A G E N D A

Part I – Public Session

1	Minutes	**1 - 2**
	To approve the minutes of the meeting of Cabinet from 4 June 2024.	
2	Apologies	
	To receive any apologies for non-attendance.	
3	Declarations of Interest	
	To receive any declarations of interest.	
4	Outturn Report (Subject to Audit)	**3 - 18**
	Report of the Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer and Finance Manager and Deputy 151 Officer	
5	Updated Risk Management Strategy	**19 - 46**
	Report of the Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer	

RECORDING
Please note that this meeting will be recorded.

Minutes of the meeting of the **Cabinet** South Staffordshire Council held in the Council Chamber Community Hub, Wolverhampton Road, Codsall, South Staffordshire, WV8 1PX on Tuesday, 04 June 2024 at 14:00

Present:-

Councillor Rita Heseltine, Councillor Roger Lees, Councillor Kath Perry, Councillor Robert Reade, Councillor Victoria Wilson

1   **MINUTES**

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of Cabinet of 30 April 2024 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

2   **APOLOGIES**

There were no apologies.

3   **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

4   **REVISION TO THE STAFFORDSHIRE LEADERS BOARD**

RESOLVED: that Members agree the revised of the Terms of Reference of the Staffordshire Leaders Board to allow the inclusion of Stoke on Trent City Council.

5   **COUNCIL PLAN 2020-2024 OUTTURN**

RESOLVED: that Members review and note the Council Plan 2020 - 2024 Outturn.

6   **INTEGRATED PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT (IPM) REPORT - 2023/24 QUARTER 4/YEAR END**

RESOLVED: that Members review and note the IPM Report - 2023/24 Quarter 4/End.

The Meeting ended at: 14:17

CHAIRMAN

SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET – 2 JULY 2024

OUTTURN REPORT (SUBJECT TO AUDIT)

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE (S151) AND FINANCE MANAGER (DEPUTY S151)

LEAD CABINET MEMBER – COUNCILLOR ROGER LEES, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

PART A – SUMMARY REPORT

1.1   SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

1.1   Cabinet are asked to formally note the Outturn Report for 2023/24, subject to external audit examination.

1.2   This report is in update to the Integrated Performance Management Report which detailed the provisional 2023/24 outturn for the Council, subject to final checks and technical adjustments.

2.1   SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

POLICY/COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Council Plan objectives?	
	Yes	It reports progress against Council Plan targets
	Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) been completed?	
	No	This report does not impact on equality issues
SCRUTINY POWERS APPLICABLE	No – A comprehensive IPM report (to include Performance and Risk alongside Finance) has been presented to O&S on 28th May 2024.	
KEY DECISION	No	
TARGET DATE	Cabinet Weekly Briefing 4 June 2024 Cabinet 2 July 2024	
FINANCIAL IMPACT	Yes	The report details the outturn position for the Council subject to External Audit
LEGAL ISSUES	Yes	Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 requires the Council to make arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs.
OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES	Yes	Strong finances are an integral part of the Council's strategy and act as a guard against most inherent strategic risks.
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	No	All Wards

3   INFORMATION

3.1   The main changes to the outturn position compared to that included within the Integrated Performance Management Report are:

- Minor changes to Service outturns further to the receipt of late invoices which required accruing.
- Conclusion of closure of the Collection Fund further to which technical amendments have been made to the Earmarked Reserve for Fairer Funding. There is no impact on the General Fund as a result of these changes.
- Confirmation of CLT approval of Earmarked Reserve balances.

3.2   The Appendix to this report details a net draw on General Fund Reserves in year of £0.342m. This represents a £1.429m improvement against the approved budget which had assumed a £1.772m draw. This will leave £8.330m remaining in the General Fund Reserves of the Council.

3.3   It is proposed that Cabinet note the Outturn figures presented which will be incorporated in the published draft Statement of Accounts which will be subject to audit by Azets in the coming months.

4   IMPACT ASSESSMENT – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Not applicable

5   PREVIOUS MINUTES

Not applicable

6   BACKGROUND PAPERS

None applicable

7.   APPENDICES

• Appendix – Provisional Outturn.

8.   RECOMMENDATIONS
8.1.   It is recommended that Cabinet note the outturn published in the Statement of Accounts (draft) and the changes since the previously reported provisional outturn.

Report prepared by:

John Mayhew, Finance Manager

2023/24: Quarter 4 – Outturn

Budget Heading	Annual Budget	Provisional Outturn	Provisional Variation	Earmarked Reserve Impact	General Fund Impact	RAG
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	
Business Enterprise & Community Infrastructure	1,441	896	545	(150)	695	🟩
Community Services	5,233	5,020	213	(173)	386	🟩
Corporate Services	4,129	4,195	(66)	(31)	(35)	🟩
Digital Transformation & Estate Management	1,760	1,802	(42)	57	(99)	🟧
Regulatory Services	845	783	62	8	54	🟩
Welfare Services	1,296	1,487	(191)	(42)	(149)	🟧
Total Service Expenditure	**14,704**	**14,183**	**521**	**(331)**	**852**	🟩
Enterprise Zone	5,028	6,282	(1,254)	(1,254)	0	🟩
Capital Financing and Treasury	(672)	(1,198)	526	238	288	🟩
Unit 4e – Rebuild and Financing post fire/ Other Direct Revenue Financing	0	706	(706)	(645)	(61)	🟩
Total Expenditure	**19,060**	**19,973**	**(913)**	**(1,992)**	**1,079**	🟩
Enterprise Zone	(5,028)	(6,282)	1,254	1,254	0	🟩
Retained Business Rates & RSG	(5,150)	(8,322)	3,172	2,822	350	🟩
Council Tax Requirement	(5,361)	(5,530)	169	169	0	🟩
Services Grant	(90)	(95)	5	5	0	🟩
New Homes Bonus	(660)	(659)	(1)	(1)	0	🟩
Collection Fund Smoothing Reserve	(1,000)	(1,000)	0	0	0	🟩
Total Funding	**(17,289)**	**(21,888)**	**4,599**	**4,249**	**350**	🟩
(Surplus)/Deficit	**1,771**	**(1,915)**	**3,686**	**2,257**	**1,429**	🟩

|	
RED	Not on target and / or the level of risk (of not meeting target) is high and needs urgent remedial action
AMBER	Not fully on target but not significantly off target and / or the level of risk (of not meeting target) is manageable but requires close monitoring
GREEN	On target and / or the risk (of not meeting target) is low and under control

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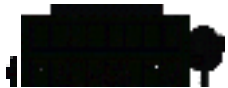
2023/24 Quarter 4 (Outturn) - Executive Summary

- This appendix sets out a **provisional** outturn position and is subject to change following the external audit of the council's accounts.
- The total projected position for the Council is a positive variance of £3.686m. The main area of variance is within total funding and this largely relates to additional Business Rates income/Collection Fund surplus from previous years. £0.350m of this surplus will be transferred into General Fund Reserves and the remainder into the Collection Fund Reserve.
- There is a positive variation of £0.521m against Service Area expenditure before the use of Earmarked Reserves. After the use of Earmarked Reserves, there is a saving of £0.852m. Increased interest rates have also continued in quarter 4 resulting in additional treasury income of £0.529m compared to the annual budget.
- Significant Variations within service areas include:

  £308k pressures - Estates and Assets - one-off revenue costs associated with Wombourne & 4E redevelopment.

  £455k surplus - relating to planning income, additional PPA agreements and part year staffing of new posts agreed via RPP. This was amplified by the receipt of significant planning Application fees towards the end of the year.

  £529k surplus – Investment Income due to higher than budgeted interest rates

  £380k surplus - Refuse Collection - Inflation added to contract less than budget leading to in-year betterment and delay in purchase of additional vehicle leading to significant savings. An Earmarked Reserve has been approved to assist in resourcing additional staffing requirements ahead of the future tender.

Additional detail is provided within the specific sections for individual service areas below.

Integrated Performance Management

2
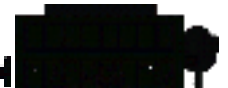
2023/24: Quarter 4 – (Outturn) Digital Transformation & Estate Management

	Annual Budget	Forecast Outturn	Forecast Variance	Impact on ER	Impact on GF	RAG
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	
Community Hub	533	468	64	31	33	
Customer Interaction	364	306	57	(7)	64	
Digital Services	1,950	1,845	105	(4)	109	
Estates & Assets	(1,087)	(817)	(270)	37	(308)	
Total Digital Technology and Service	**1,760**	**1,803**	**(43)**	**57**	**(101)**	

| Revenue Budget	RAG	Comments
Community Hub		Additional rental incomes offset pressures against utility budgets
Customer Interaction		Projected saving against budget arising due to combination of staffing vacancies and additional income from room hire and hire of premise for filming.
Digital Services		Saving relates to vacancies against establishment. The adverse forecast variation reported relates entirely to planned expenditures which will be fully funded by Earmarked Reserves for the purposes intended.
Estates & Assets		Delays to construction projects at 4E and Wombourne have incurred some revenue costs. Reduced revenue income due to sale of Heathmill (£29k) is offset corporately by the benefit of a capital receipt of £425k. Increased utility bills and repair budgets have also impacted adversely on the budget. Occupancy levels are currently holding but economic challenges may have impact and this area will continue to be closely monitored.

3

2023/24: Quarter 4 – (Outturn) Community Services

	Annual Budget	Forecast Outturn	Forecast Variance	Impact on ER	Impact on GF	RAG
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	
Baggeridge Country Park	115	125	(10)	0	(10)	🟧
Leisure Services	815	849	(34)	(215)	181	🟩
Landscape & Bereavement	(247)	(149)	(98)	0	(98)	🟧
Street Scene	1,272	1,331	(61)	(51)	(10)	🟩
Recycling	(131)	(310)	179	0	179	🟩
Refuse Collection	3,360	3,126	234	92	142	🟩
Climate Change	49	47	2	0	2	🟩
Total Community Services	**5,233**	**5,020**	**213**	**(173)**	**386**	

4

| Revenue Budget	RAG	Comments
Baggeridge Country Park	🟧	Variance within employee related costs is due to the pay award and premises variance is largely due to an increase in utility costs.
Leisure Services	🟩	The cost of the pay award has been greater than the 5% budgeted for Leisure, but the service has mitigated this with vacancies and secondment of staff. Membership numbers are performing well and income targets in their entirety are being met with membership offsetting income losses in other areas. Joint Use recharges from schools for use of Leisure Centres have increased but this cost is covered by Earmarked Reserves including the use of the Pay and Price Earmarked Reserve.
Landscape & Bereavement	🟧	Crematoria Income (Essington) will be received later than previously budgeted. Pre-purchase burial plots performing well and are currently forecast to offset part of this pressure.
Street Scene	🟩	Unfunded adverse variation relates to impact of inflation award on pay net of vacancies. The Earmarked Reserve funded element relates to the cost of employing a tree inspector.
Recycling	🟩	Savings of £234k are due to increased income from sale of recycled materials (plastics, papers, etc), bulky waste collections & reduced gate fees. Offset by reduced benefit of recycling credits £113k as MRF tonnage has been less than budgeted.
Refuse Collection	🟩	Inflation added to contract less than budget leading to in-year betterment. (12% budgeted, actual 9%) and delay in purchase of additional vehicle. In addition, salary savings (£80k) and savings on a budget for an additional vehicle that BIFFA will not require in 2023/24 (£100k) are more than offsetting other pressures in relation to latest projections of BIFFA charges and unachievable income targets in relation to bin changes.
Climate Change	🟩	No significant variations to report.

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Localities⁺
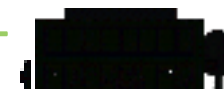
2023/24: Quarter 3 (Outturn) Corporate Services

	Annual Budget	Forecast Outturn	Forecast Variance	Impact on ER	Impact on GF	RAG
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	
Accountancy & Financial Services	632	625	7	(9)	16	
Pay & pensions	592	775	(183)	0	(183)	
Corporate Finance	479	447	32	(21)	53	
Corporate Leadership Team	686	672	14	8	6	
Communications	163	130	33	(2)	35	
Community Safety	98	82	16	16	0	
Elections	360	374	(14)	(19)	5	
Human Resources	439	429	10	6	4	
Policy	113	105	8	(2)	10	
Member Support	567	555	11	(9)	20	
Total Corporate	**4,129**	**4,195**	**(66)**	**(31)**	**(35)**	

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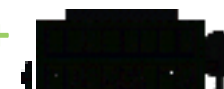| Revenue Budget	RAG	Commentary
Accountancy and Financial Services		No significant variations to report. Additional staffing costs incurred funded through an Earmarked Reserve to alleviate Transactional Services pressures.
Pay & Pensions		No significant variations to report – current variation relates to vacancy management adjustment with anticipated salary savings being achieved across the Council.
Corporate Finance		Earmarked Reserve relating to Redmond Fund released to Revenue.
Corporate Leadership Team		Saving relates to recruitment gap between S151 officers.
Communications		£33k saving on Review magazine due to move to digital. This more than offsets additional spend on Apprentice and costs of pay award.
Community Safety		Net savings primarily relate to delays in acquiring CCTV. Earmarked Reserve will be set aside to fund expenditure as it is occurred.
Elections		Earmarked Reserve being used to fund additional staffing resources. Other one-off costs in relation to the purchase of polling booths in readiness for future elections can be claimed back against those elections as and when they occur.
Human Resources		Net variations against HR budgets, primarily due to contractual costs of Midland HR and apprentice costs can be funded via Earmarked Reserve.
Policy		No significant variations to report
Member Support		Vacancy gap saving.

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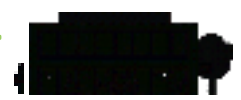
2023/24: Quarter 4 (Outturn) – Business Enterprise & Community Infrastructure

	Annual Budget	Forecast Outturn	Forecast Variance	Impact on ER	Impact on GF	RAG
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	
Building Control	36	35	1	0	1	🟩
Land Charges	(9)	(8)	(1)	0	(1)	🟩
Development Control	255	(418)	673	40	633	🟩
Planning Enforcement	209	223	(14)	(15)	0	🟩
Local Plan	494	469	25	30	(5)	🟩
Economic Development	278	262	16	(3)	19	🟩
Localities	178	149	29	(19)	48	🟩
UKSPF	0	184	(184)	(184)	(0)	🟩
Total Business Enterprise and Community Infrastructure	**1,441**	**896**	**545**	**(150)**	**695**	

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2023/24: Quarter 4 (Outturn) – Business Enterprise & Community Infrastructure

Revenue Budget	RAG	Commentary
Building Control		No significant variations to report
Land Charges		No significant variations to report
Development Control		Extremely strong performance in the third and fourth quarters have seen a significant boost to both planning application income levels and pre-planning application income levels contributing an additional £530k over and above budgetary expectations. Mid-year recruitment to approved new posts has also contributed to projected year-end saving against budget.
Planning Enforcement		Maternity cover and specialist consultancy funded from Earmarked Reserves.
Local Plan		Maternity and vacancy savings contributing to projected savings against budget.
Economic Development		Savings arising due to vacancies
Localities		Un-committed budget for consultancy costs
UKSPF		No significant variations to report – all spend is fully grant funded

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2023/24: Quarter 4 (Outturn) – Regulatory Services

	Annual Budget	Forecast Outturn	Forecast Variance	Impact on ER	Impact on GF	RAG
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	
Emergency Planning	48	47	1	(1)	1	
Environmental Health	540	503	37	10	28	
Internal Audit	96	82	13	0	13	
Legal Shared Service	161	150	11	(1)	12	
Total Regulatory Services	**845**	**783**	**62**	**8**	**54**	

| Revenue Budget	RAG	Commentary
Emergency Planning		No variations to report
Environmental Health		Notwithstanding the additional costs incurred for planned, Earmarked Reserve funded posts, there have been significant increases in licensing income receipts in year, especially with regards liquor licenses.
Internal Audit		No variations to report
Legal Shared Service		No variations to report

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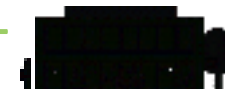
2023/24: Quarter 4 (Outturn) – Welfare Services

	Annual Budget	Forecast Outturn	Forecast Variance	Impact on ER	Impact on GF	RAG
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	
Revenue Services	368	440	(72)	(150)	78	🟩
Benefit Services	741	1,023	(282)	(50)	(232)	🟧
Homelessness	0	(173)	173	165	8	🟩
Housing Operations	187	197	(11)	(8)	(3)	🟩
Total Welfare Services	**1,296**	**1,487**	**(191)**	**(42)**	**(149)**	🟧

Revenue Budget	RAG	Commentary
Revenue Services	🟩	Staffing vacancies leading to small projected saving in-year. Costs incurred from Analyse Local as commission for investigating businesses underpaying business rates can be funded through the Fairer Funding Reserve (as ultimately it is the funding element of the budget that will benefit)
Benefit Services	🟧	The value of housing benefit overpayments has reduced due to the volume of benefit payments reducing as a result of Universal Credit migration and improved data sharing with DWP. This means less subsidy is received from central government resulting in a pressure to the budget. However, the overall debt level is reducing each month.
Homelessness	🟩	Projected saving is represented by unspent grant receipts for Homelessness and Prevention of Domestic Abuse. These will be carried forward into 2024/25 as per grant conditions.
Housing Operations	🟩	New posts created from vacancies in Revenue and Benefit budgets.

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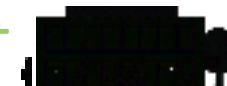
2023/24: Quarter 4 (Outturn) – Capital Budget

Capital Scheme	2023/24 Budget £'000	Spend to date £'000	Commentary	RAG
Corporate Services Commercial Asset Strategy	15,076	4,875	Budget includes:- • Wombourne EP development – completion Spring 24 • Restoration of Unit 4E Four Ashes following fire damage (funded via insurance claim) – completion Spring 24 • Landywood EP decarbonisation improvements – completion Spring 24 • Hub driveway upgrade – Completion Autumn 23 • Contingency for existing projects £250k	
Digital Technology and Estate Management Digital Technology and Service Transformation	305	95	Budget includes; workstation replacement for Agile working, purchase of Civica licenses and other Digital Services requirements including vSan switches and hosts	
Welfare Services Disabled Facilities Grant	2,034	724	Better Care Fund allocations to fund necessary adaptations	
Community Services Street Scene Fleet	166	76	Budget includes; street cleansing vehicle and slippage due to delay on procurement of grounds maintenance vehicle	
Waste Bags	10	0	Budget for purchase of recycling bags as required	
Leisure Centre Equipment Renewal Programme	179	161	Budget for replacement of cardiovascular, resistance and indoor cycling equipment. Purchase of equipment at Wombourne Leisure Centre has been made. Purchase of indoor cycles at Penkridge Leisure Centre currently outstanding.	

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Capital Scheme	2023/24 Budget £'000	Spend to date £'000	Commentary	RAG
Leisure Centre Investment Scheme	1,030	172	Budget includes; leisure centre investment across all centres. Currently works at Codsall Leisure Centre are outstanding. The spend to date figure allows for retention monies that will become due following a period of review of the works for suitability and quality.	
Leisure Centre Air Conditioning	28	16	Budget is for air conditioning replacement across centres. Within 2022/23, an air conditioning unit was purchased at Wombourne Leisure Centre. Timing of expenditure can be linked to the leisure investment fund works.	
Business Enterprise and Community Infrastructure Regional Housing Board	127	0	South Staffordshire Council contribution to South Staffordshire Warmer Homes project	
S106 Payments – Affordable Housing	0	75	This relates to S106 Lime Tree Road, Bilbrook final tranche 25% £75k (total grant £300k), fully funded from S106 developer contributions	
	19,056	6,165		

Other Notes

Moved financial year as part of MTFS	**2024/25 Budget £'000**	
Refuse Vehicles new contract	3,046	New contract was due to start 1st April 2025. Hence budget was moved to 2024/25 to allow for any vehicles to be supplied in advance of the contract. Accounting standards dictate that embedded leases (vehicles supplied as part of overall contract) must be capitalised.
Waste Bins	790	
	3,836	New contract due to start 1.4.25

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14

SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE COUNCIL		
CABINET 2 JULY 2024		
UPDATED RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY		
REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE (AND SECTION 151 OFFICER)		
LEAD CABINET MEMBER – Councillor Rita Heseltine, Cabinet Member for Regulatory Services		

PART A – SUMMARY REPORT

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

1.1   In January, C.Co were commissioned by the council to undertake a review of the Risk Management Strategy and processes across the authority. As a result of this, an updated Risk Management Strategy has been produced and this is attached in Appendix 1 for endorsement following approval at Audit and Risk Committee on 27 June 2024.

2. SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

POLICY/COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Council Plan objectives?	
	Yes	Financial Sustainability
	Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) been completed?	
	No	There is no requirement for an EqIA as there will be no different impacts on specific groups.
	Has a Data Protection Impact Assessment been completed?	
	No	No personal data is involved in the approval of this strategy.
SCRUTINY POWERS APPLICABLE	No	Decision of Audit and Risk Committee
KEY DECISION	No	
TARGET COMPLETION/ DELIVERY DATE	27th June 2024	
FINANCIAL IMPACT	No	There are no financial impacts arising from the approval of this strategy. RM.
LEGAL ISSUES	No	Audit and Risk Committee has responsibility for approval of the risk management policy and strategy. LF
STRATEGIC RISK	Yes	The approval of an updated Risk Management Strategy will have a positive impact on all Strategic Risks across the council.

OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES including climate impacts and health impacts if applicable	The approval of an updated Risk Management Strategy underpins the delivery of all council services and ensures that the council is considering risk and mitigations in all actions that it takes.	
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	No	

PART B – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

3.   INFORMATION

3.1   The updated draft Risk Management Strategy can be found in Appendix 1 of this report. The main updates are set out below.

3.2   The objectives and key benefits have been updated to reflect the latest risk reporting so that there is a consistent message about risk management:

3.3   Section 4 of the document increases the focus on risk appetite compared to the previous version. It is important that the council understands its risk appetite in order to decide how best to mitigate and manage risks.

3.4   C.Co have developed a risk hierarchy which sets out the relationship and positioning of the different types or risk – strategic, operational, service and project risks. This enables movement of the risks between registers where appropriate as it explains how to assess which level the risk should be reported at:

Projects may be undertaken across all parts and all levels of the organisation.
All project governance should be managed in the same way and include a risk assessment and appropriate capture of key risks, controls and actions. It will be for projects' Senior Responsible Officers (SRO) to determine the degree of capture and with the Project Board to determine if risks are to be escalated to service, operational or strategic risk registers.

Strategic Risks

Strategic risks threaten the ability of the Council to achieve the objectives and priorities that it has set out in its Council Plan.

Strategic risks generally cover multiple Council services; impact multiple stakeholders including residents and strategic partners; require significant resources to resolve; and threaten the reputation and/or credibility of the Council.

Operational Risks

Operational risks have the potential to threaten disruption to day-to-day business operations. These risks may have a financial impact, affect business continuity, reputation, and/or regulatory compliance.

Generally, these risks will impact at least two service areas (generally frontline and back office)

Service Risks

Service risks are the threats being managed on a daily basis in the routine delivery of discreet services. It is not necessary to maintain a register for these risks, but senior service leads should be alive to likelihood and potential impacts of those risks and escalate, when appropriate, to operational and strategic registers through the governance structure.

↔ Point of escalation/de-escalation

3.5   C.Co's review of the previous version of the Risk Management Strategy highlighted that there was a lack of documented roles and responsibilities which can create reduced accountability. The updated strategy includes stronger language along with clear governance routes with more responsibility given to risk owners and leads that are closer to the threat. A member and officer 'risk champion' has also been recommended. Extended Leadership Team have decided that the officer role should instead be named a 'risk co-ordinator' and this is currently being advertised internally as a development opportunity.

3.6   C.Co have recommended a 6-step process, increasing the steps from 5 per the latest risk reporting. The additional step is that of 'allocating accountability and responsibility'.

3.7   Both the risk matrix and likelihood/impact descriptors will remain the same as in the previous version. However, there is a recommended update to the monetary values included in the risk impact as set out below:

- Catastrophic Impact – Increase from £200k to £1m
- Major Impact – Increase from £100k to £500k
- Moderate Impact – Increase from £50k to £250k
- Minor Impact – Increase from £10k to £100k
- Insignificant Impact – Increase from £5k to £10k

3.8 New templates have been developed for risk registers and these will be used create new operational and strategic risk registers. Reporting templates (to be incorporated into the new Integrated Performance Management) have also been updated and will now include strategic risks together with the highest scoring operational risks. This will allow members to have visibility of all significant risks and prompt conversations about the escalation or de-escalation of any.

3.9 Lastly, the updated strategy makes clear the importance of training on risk management across the council and sets out the commitment to this.

4. IMPACT ASSESSMENT – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

4.1   There are no further impacts to those set out in the summary above.

5. PREVIOUS MINUTES

5.1   No previous minutes are relevant to this report.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

No relevant background papers.

7. APPENDICES

Updated Risk Management Strategy Report – Appendix 1 – Draft Risk Management Strategy

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1   It is recommended that members of Cabinet endorse the updated Risk Management Strategy following approval at Audit and Risk Committee on 27 June 2024.

Report prepared by: Rebecca Maher, Finance Director (Section 151 Officer)

South Staffordshire Council

(Draft)
Risk Management Strategy

February/March 2024

www.sstaffs.gov.uk

APPENDIX 1 – RISK STRATEGY REPORT

1. **Introduction**

2. **Why risk management is important**

3. **Risk Management Strategy: objectives and principles**

4. **Risk Appetite**

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APPENDIX 1 – RISK STRATEGY REPORT

1. Introduction

Risk management underpins all parts of our daily lives and decision-making. From choosing to insure our homes and vehicles, taking an umbrella just in case right through to making decisions related to our work that requires resource management, political decision-making and compliance with policy and legislation.

Effective risk management is a key characteristic of a strong, high performing organisation. It allows us to identify and plan for known threats to the delivery of community, corporate and service delivery priorities.

This document supersedes the 2019 Risk Strategy and follows an extensive and independent review of the Council's risk management control processes, its application in day-to-day delivery and an understanding of wider organisational awareness.

Risk management and this Strategy provide a proactive, management tool to help and support the Council to achieve the ambitions set out in its Council Plan 2024.

Risk can be defined as **'the possibility of loss, damage or any other undesirable event'** or…

'the effect of uncertainty on objectives, whether positive or negative'.

Risk Management is the process by which we aim to reduce the **likelihood** of a risk happening and/or minimise the **impact** of such an event if it did.

Accepting that it is rare for risk to be entirely eliminated, Risk Appetite is defined as 'how much risk the organisation is willing to tolerate in pursuit of its strategic objectives' and therefore helps to determine the level of control and further mitigating actions that are required.

Risk, risk management and risk appetite are covered in more detail throughout this Strategy document.

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2. Why Risk Management is important

2.1 The international Framework for Good Governance, first published in July 2014, identifies risk management as one of its seven pillars of good governance. Specifically, and in addition to acting in the public interest, "achieving good governance in the public sector requires":

Managing risks and performance through robust internal controls and strong public financial management.

2.2 Effective risk management can deliver a number of organisational benefits:

- **Improved strategic management and decision-making**
  - Greater ability to deliver against Plans, Priorities and Objectives
  - More informed decision-making
- **Improved operational management and customer service**
  - More informed, operational decision-making
  - Reduction in interruptions to service delivery
  - Minimised impact of the consequences of a risk event having occurred
  - Improved health and safety of those employed, and those affected, by the Council's delivery of services
  - Minimal service disruption to customers and a positive impact on the reputation of the Council overall.
- **Improved financial management**
  - Better informed financial decision-making
  - Enhanced financial control
  - Reduction in the financial costs associated with the impact of service interruption, litigation.

2.3 Risk management is also important because it helps the Council meet a number of legal requirements:

- The Accounts and Audit Regulations (2015) makes the Council "responsible for ensuring that the financial management of the body is adequate and effective and that the body has a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of that body's functions and which includes effective arrangements for the management of risk."

- The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 states that "Employers must, so far as reasonably practicable, conduct their activities so as to ensure that people other than their employees, for example, members of the public, are not exposed to risks to health and safety."

- The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 sets out that the Council has a duty that it has "an accurate and shared understanding of the risks they face so that planning has a sound foundation and is proportionate to the risks."

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3. Risk Management Strategy: objectives and principles

3.1 The Council's Risk Management Strategy is designed to promote and apply best practice in identifying, evaluating, controlling and communicating risks to ensure that any residual risks are at an acceptable level.

3.2 Acknowledging that it is not possible to eliminate risk absolutely, the Council actively promotes and applies this best practice at all levels and to all its activities, including its work with external partners.

Objectives

3.3 South Staffordshire Council has six key objectives that guide our approach to Risk Management:

1. Adopt a strategic approach to risk management in order to make well-informed decisions.
2. Integrate risk management into how we run Council services and deliver key projects.
3. Support a culture of well measured risk taking throughout the Council including setting risk ownership and accountabilities.
4. Accept that even with good risk management and our best endeavours things can go wrong. We will learn lessons where this happens.
5. Ensure that the Council continues to meet all statutory and best practice requirements in relation to risk management.
6. Ensure that risk management continues to be a key and effective element of our corporate governance.

Benefits

3.4 By delivering against the objectives of our approach to Risk Management, the Council will deliver the following benefits:

- Integrate risk management into the day-to-day workings of the Council and project management.
- Integrate the management of risk into the management of finances, performance and throughout decision-making protocols.
- Balance risk and reward in relation to business cases, projects and commercial decision making and investment decisions.
- Manage risk in accordance with best practice and apply the Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle at a regular frequency.
- Anticipate and respond to changing social, environmental and legislative requirements.
- Prevent injury, damage and losses and reduce the cost of risk.
- Raise awareness of the need for risk management by all those involved with the delivery of council services.

3.5 These objectives and the associated benefits will support the following outcomes:

- Improved strategic management:
  - Greater ability to deliver against corporate objectives and targets
  - Improved decision making, planning and prioritisation
- Improved operational management:
  - Plans in place to respond to incidents when they occur
  - Better service delivery

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- Improved financial management:
  - Better informed financial decision making
  - Greater financial control
  - Minimising waste and improving Value for Money
- Improved customer service:
  - Service disruption to customers, and other key stakeholders, minimised.

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4. Risk Appetite

4.1 Accepting that it is rare for a risk to be entirely eliminated, risk appetite is defined as 'how much risk the organisation is willing to tolerate in pursuit of its strategic objectives'. Understanding appetite for the organisation or activity being undertaken is a critical consideration in determining the management and mitigation of any risks that are present.

4.2 South Staffordshire Council categorises its risk appetite across five distinct levels:

1. Zero/Minimal – avoiding risk altogether
2. Cautious – preferring ultra safe/low risk options
3. Balanced – preferring safe/relatively low risk options
4. Enquiring – willing to consider all potential options
5. Entrepreneurial – innovating, exploring options that carry greater risk but potentially higher reward.

4.3 Generally, as with most organisations, a balanced approach to risk taking would apply. However, it is normal, and perfectly acceptable, across different disciplines to have a variation in risk appetite. For example, Legal and Finance would be more likely to operate at the zero or cautious end of the scale, reflecting the need for legislative and regulatory compliance; whereas Economic Development may operate with a more enquiring or even entrepreneurial appetite, investing to achieve a greater reward or return, but accepting a higher degree of risk in doing so.
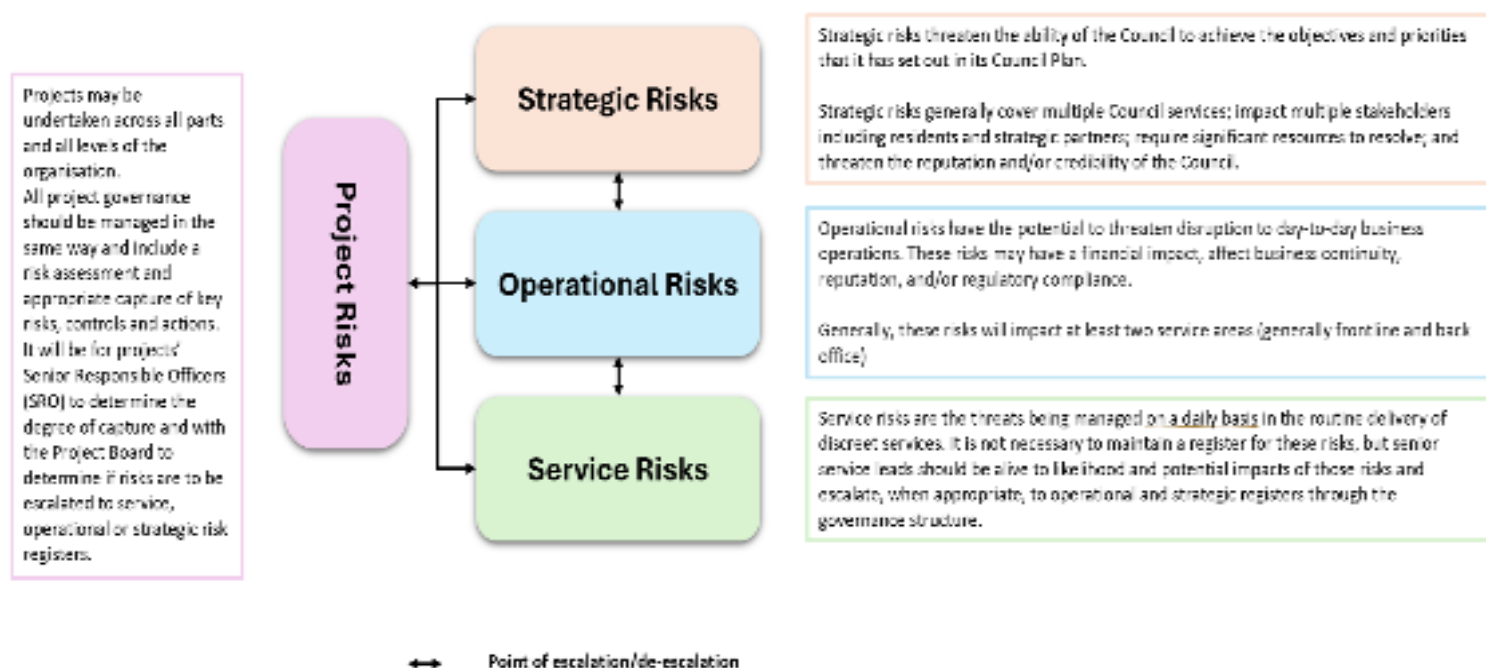
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5. Strategic, Operational, Service & Project Risks

5.1 As outlined in the diagram below, the Council's risk management framework is split into strategic, operational, service and project risks. All four types of risk are linked, through the framework hierarchy, and individual risks can be escalated or de-escalated based on the likelihood of occurrence or potential impact should they become issues.

5.2 Generally, the following definitions apply:

- Strategic risks – are the those that threaten the delivery of the Council's strategic objectives as set out in the Council Plan
- Operational risks – are those that impact the delivery of operational/directorate plans
- Service risks – are those that impact day to day business as usual delivery. They may not require a risk register, but are controlled through rules, process and/or ICT system fail safes.
- Project risks – need to be considered on an individual basis and, depending on the size of that project, may impact strategic and/or operational objectives and plans. All projects should be managed through a consistent system of governance that includes risk identification and management.

5.3 Movement (up or down) between risks registers needs to be clearly governed and should form part of the regular risk reporting to the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) and the Audit & Risk Committee.

Projects may be undertaken across all parts and all levels of the organisation.
All project governance should be managed in the same way and include a risk assessment and appropriate capture of key risks, controls and actions.
It will be for projects' Senior Responsible Officers (SRO) to determine the degree of capture and with the Project Board to determine if risks are to be escalated to service, operational or strategic risk registers.

Project Risks

Strategic Risks

Strategic risks threaten the ability of the Council to achieve the objectives and priorities that it has set out in its Council Plan.

Strategic risks generally cover multiple Council services; impact multiple stakeholders including residents and strategic partners; require significant resources to resolve; and threaten the reputation and/or credibility of the Council.

Operational Risks

Operational risks have the potential to threaten disruption to day-to-day business operations. These risks may have a financial impact, affect business continuity, reputation, and/or regulatory compliance.

Generally, these risks will impact at least two service areas (generally frontline and back office)

Service Risks

Service risks are the threats being managed on a daily basis in the routine delivery of discreet services. It is not necessary to maintain a register for these risks, but senior service leads should be alive to likelihood and potential impacts of those risks and escalate, when appropriate, to operational and strategic registers through the governance structure.

↔ Point of escalation/de-escalation

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6. Roles & Responsibilities

Risk management is part of all stakeholders' roles and responsibilities. The definitions associated with each role within the process have been determined on the basis of:

- **Empowerment** – ensuring that individuals are equipped to manage risks based upon their professional knowledge and expertise, at the right level of the organisation and within the overall process
- **Responsibility** – risks are owned and led by the most appropriate person, with a clear understanding of the expectations placed upon them
- **Accountability** – that individual role holders are held accountable for the effective delivery/management of those risks within their control.

Group	Role	Responsibilities
Cabinet	Has overall ownership of the Council's Risk Management Strategy and effective oversight of risk registers and risk management.	• To monitor the Council's Strategic Risk Register and significant operational risks and gain appropriate assurances that risks are being effectively managed and that the organisation is safe.
Audit & Risk Committee	Under the terms of the Council's Constitution, the role of the Audit and Risk Committee is to provide independent assurance on the adequacy of the risk management framework, the internal control environment and the integrity of the financial reporting and annual governance processes	• To promote risk management and its benefits in the context of delivery of the Council Plan. • To receive regular reports on and challenge the operational approach to risk management. • Where relevant, to hold risk owners to account for their risks. • Where warranted, to commission deep dives into the management of individual risks. • To review and approve, for signature, the Annual Governance Statement. • To make recommendations on improvements to the Council's wider control environment and associated risks.
Corporate Leadership Team (CLT)	To determine overall risk appetite and be collectively accountable for the Council's comprehensive corporate Risk Management	• To determine the appropriate level of corporate risk appetite,

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Group	Role	Responsibilities
	Strategy and ensuring that robust arrangements for the identification, management and mitigation of risk is in place.	for agreement with Audit & Risk Committee. • To challenge and review the effectiveness of the Risk Management Strategy and associated arrangements. • To hold risk owners and/or leads to account for the management of strategic and operational risks. • To receive regular monitoring reports on strategic and significant operational risks. • To decide when operational risks become strategic risks and vice versa • To agree the closure of redundant strategic and/or operational risks • To determine where further mitigating actions are required. • To ensure effective training is in place and delivered for officers and Members
Risk Owner (Accountable Person)	To be the accountable person, to those charged with governance, for those risks assigned to them.	• To challenge, review and monitor their risks in dialogue with the Risk Lead. • To be accountable to CLT, Audit & Risk Committee or other forum, as appropriate, for the identification, reporting and on-going management of assigned risks. • To identify when operational risks should be escalated, via CLT, to the strategic risks • To champion risk management as a positive, proactive tool within their area(s) of responsibility.

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Group	Role	Responsibilities
Risk Lead	Reporting to the Risk Owner but with responsibility for the day-to-day management of the risk(s) associated with their area of responsibility. Further, ensuring that monitoring, controls reviews and the completion of further mitigating actions is completed within approve timescales.	• To undertake agreed actions in order to mitigate their assigned risks. • To commit to reporting progress to agreed standards and within appropriate timescales to the accountable officer. • To operate as risk owner in the absence of the designated risk owner.
Project Managers	To develop, review and update project risk registers in accordance with the Council's project management approach.	• To develop and maintain a Project Risk Register. • To escalate risks where necessary.
Team Managers		• To include risk management and relevant operational risk registers as a standing agenda item on all team meetings. • To facilitate the time, for officers under their supervision, to undertake appropriate training
All Staff	To understand the importance of risk management in the context of their role.	• To undertake risk awareness/management training as mandated by management. • To understand their individual contribution to mitigating the Council's exposure to relevant risks. • Participate in the identification, assessment and management of risk. • Report incidents, accidents, 'near misses' and other concerns.
Internal Audit	To provide independent assurance, through the delivery of a risk-based Plan, as to the effectiveness of risk management and the controls in place to mitigate key risk areas.	• To provide independent assurance on the Council's control environment including its management of risk. • To periodically provide assurance on the management of risk across the Council

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Risk Champions/Coordinators

The Institute of Risk Management identifies risk champions as an officer and/or, in a Local Authority setting, an elected Member of the Council who do not have risk management as a primary responsibility. Champions are an extension of the risk management function and can communicate risk information and influence risk culture and behaviours.

The role of the risk champion/coordinator can vary but could include:

- Providing feedback on an employee's or Member's view of the risk management process

- Supporting identification and reporting of risk

- Ability to identify blockers

- Communicating the risk management vision to staff

- Acting as a subject matter expert in certain disciplines

- Acting as a "translator" between risk management and operational service delivery and/or political decision-making

- Building a risk-aware culture within the organisation including appropriate education

- Providing guidance on the best way to implement risk management in specific areas of the business and at what pace.

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7. Arrangements for Managing Risk

7.1 Building upon our 2019 Risk Strategy, the Council has evolved its process for managing risk into a new six-step process that reinforces South Staffordshire as a learning organisation and increases individual and collective accountability for the management of risk.

1. Step 1 is the **identification and recording** of risks. An initial judgement on where in the risk hierarchy a new risk will sit will need to be taken based upon the broad definitions in section 4 and taken through the appropriate governance route as identified within the roles and responsibilities section.

   Risks should be captured in the agreed format and include an assessment of the cause and effect of the risk together with a consideration of the gross risk score. The gross risk score is an assessment of the probability and impact of a risk occurring with no controls in place.

2. Step 2 (New 2024) is the **allocation of accountability and responsibility**. Identifying risk ownership and using reporting and governance mechanisms to hold individuals to account is a positive way of raising risk profiles, empowering the development of controls or further mitigating actions and ultimately contributes to lowering the organisation's exposure to risk.

   To reinforce the importance of risk management, to provide clear accountability and to ensure risk is managed at the appropriate level it is proposed that a risk owner and a risk lead is identified for all strategic and operational risks.

3. Step 3 **analyse and assess the risk** should be undertaken using a standardised process and moderated at the appropriate level of the organisation. Analysing in this way provides a degree of consistency, a more meaningful picture of risk exposure and clear identification of wider dependencies/interdependencies. More details on the process of scoring and reporting risks is detailed within section 8.

4. Step 4 **responding to the risk** is about how the risk owner/risk lead identify current controls, develop/action further mitigation to reduce the risk to a level that is acceptable to the organisation.

   Responding to risk is not necessarily about removing the risk altogether but managing to an acceptable level. Sometimes the options to managing risk are referred to as the 4Ts:

   Transfer – move the management or impact of the risk, through insurance, as an example.
   Tolerate – accept the risk as is because further control may be too costly or difficult to achieve.
   Treat – devise strategies, controls and mitigations to reduce the risk to an acceptable level
   **Terminate** – cease the activity that is exposing the organisation to the risk.

5. Step 5 is **monitor and report**. The monitoring and reporting of risks is a critical step in keeping the organisation safe, informing effective decision-making and supporting the organisation to achieve its ambitions and objectives. Reporting should be standardised across all risks and should enable those charged with governance to understand the wider

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risk landscape, not just one part of it. The Council has now enhanced its strategic risk reporting by including a summary of the highest scoring operational risks.

6. Step 6 **integrating learning** is about ensuring that we reflect, develop an understanding of what is working well, what can be improved and using challenge as a positive management tool to support wider, individual, risk strategies.

   It is also about identifying where specific training and/or support needs to be directed and providing commitment to make this happen.

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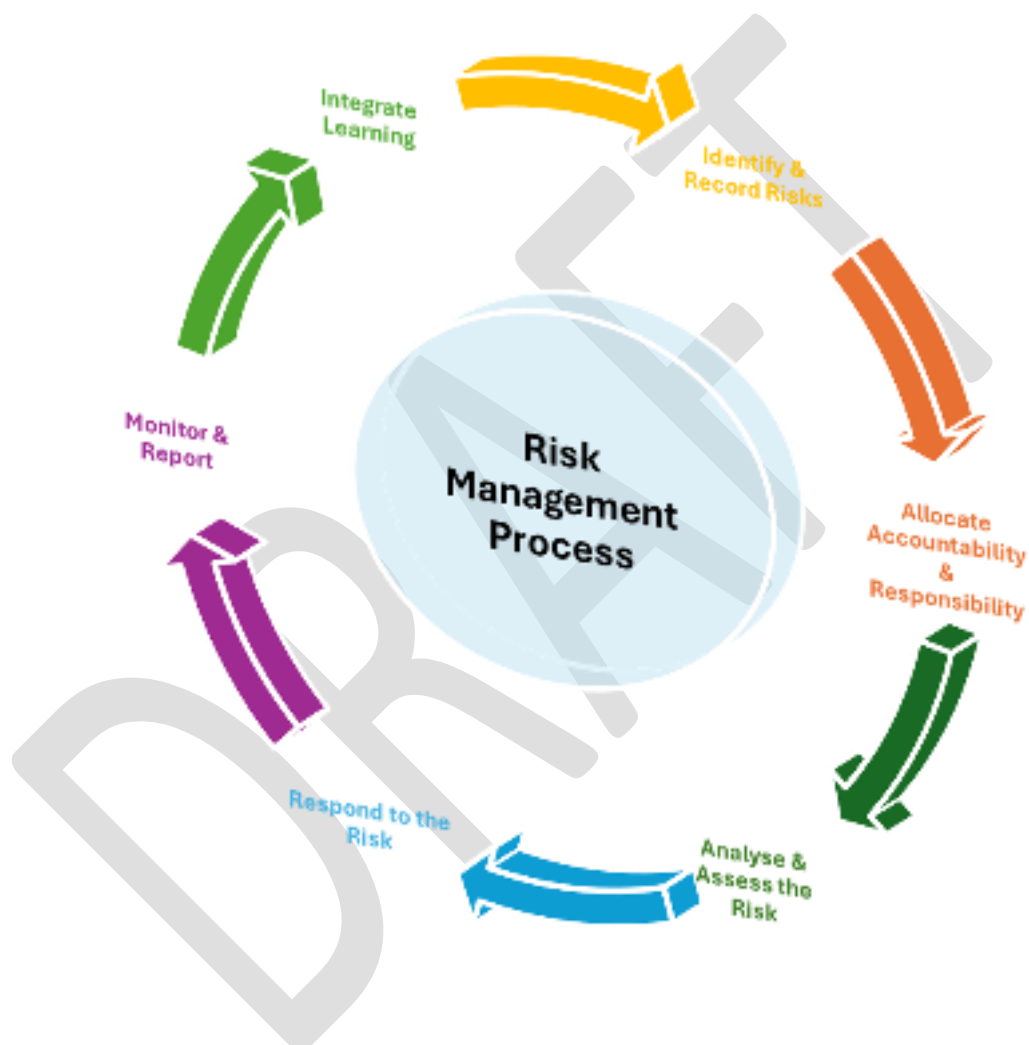
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8. Risk Monitoring

8.1 Having identified the risk and those responsible for managing it (our risk owners and risk leads), it is then important to determine the level of risk that the Council is exposed to. Answers to this will determine if risks are strategic, operational, service and/or project. To do this we use a 5 x 5 matrix to assess the likelihood of a risk becoming an issue and the impact that it would have on the organisation. As part of this process, we identify three risk scores:

- **Gross Risk** – this is the level of risk exposure with no controls in place
- **Net Risk** – this is the level of risk taking into account the current associated controls/mitigations
- **Target Risk** – is the level of risk the Council would like to mitigate to and may consider the delivery of any further mitigating actions.

Risk Scoring Matrix

Risk	Impact				
Likelihood	Insignificant (1)	Minor (2)	Moderate (3)	Major (4)	Catastrohpic (5)
Almost Certain (5)	5	10	15	20	25
Probable (4)	4	8	12	16	20
Likely (3)	3	6	9	12	15
Possible (2)	2	4	6	8	10
Rare (1)	1	2	3	4	5

Key to risk management action level	Tolerable Risk/Low Priority	Medium Priority	High Priority

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8.2 Risk analysis and scoring relies, to a certain extent, on a subjective assessment of that risk, drawing on knowledge, experience and professional judgement. However, to assist with this process a summary of key likelihood and impact considerations are provided below:

Likelihood

Score	Description	Characteristics
5	Almost Certain	• Is expected to occur in most circumstances • Will undoubtedly happen, possibly regularly such as annually • Is imminent
4	Probable	• Will probably occur in most circumstances • Will probably happen, but not on a regular basis • Has occurred previously
3	Likely	• Could occur in certain circumstances • May happen occasionally • Has happened in other locations, has impacted other local authorities and/or partners
2	Possible	• May occur only in exceptional circumstances • Not expected to happen, but is possible • Not known in this particular activity or scenario
1	Rare	• Is never likely to occur • Very unlikely this will ever happen

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Impact

Score	Description	Characteristics
5	Catastrophic	Risks which can have a catastrophic effect on the operation of the Council or service. This may result in critical financial loss, severe service disruption or a severe impact on the public, for example: • Unable to function without aid of Government or other external Agency. • Inability to fulfil obligations. • Medium to long-term damage to service capability. • Severe financial loss - supplementary estimate needed which will have a catastrophic impact on the Council's financial plan and resources are unlikely to be available (>£1m uninsured loss). • Death. • Adverse national publicity - highly damaging, severe loss of public confidence. • Litigation certain and difficult to defend. • Breaches of law punishable by imprisonment.
4	Major	Risks which can have a severe effect on the operation of the Council or service. This may result in major financial loss, major service disruption or a significant impact on the public, for example: • Significant impact on service objectives. • Short to medium-term impairment to service capability. • Major financial loss - supplementary estimate needed which will have a major impact on the Council's financial plan (>£500k uninsured loss). • Extensive injuries, major permanent harm, long-term sick. Major adverse local publicity, major loss of confidence. • Litigation likely and may be difficult to defend. • Breaches of law punishable by fines or possible imprisonment
3	Moderate	Risks which have a noticeable effect on the services provided. Each one will cause a degree of disruption to service provision and impinge on the budget, for example: Service objectives partially achievable. Short-term disruption to service capability. Significant financial loss - supplementary estimate needed which will have an impact on the Council's financial plan (>£250k uninsured loss). Medical treatment required, semi-permanent harm up to one year. Some adverse publicity, needs careful public relations. High potential for complaint, litigation possible.

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Score	Description	Characteristics
		Breaches of law punishable by fines only.
2	Minor	Risks where the consequences will not be severe and any associated losses will be minor. As individual occurrences, they will have a negligible effect on service provision. However, if action is not taken, then such risks may have a more significant cumulative effect. For example: • Minor impact on service objectives. • No significant disruption to service capability. • Moderate financial loss - can be accommodated at service level (>£100k uninsured loss). • First aid treatment, non-permanent harm up to one month. • Some public embarrassment, no damage to reputation. • May result in complaints/litigation. • Breaches of regulations/standards.
1	Insignificant	Risks where the consequences will not be severe and any associated losses will be relatively small. As individual occurrences, they will have a negligible effect on service provision. However, if action is not taken, then such risks may have a more significant cumulative effect. For example: • Minimal impact, no service disruption. • Negligible impact on service capability. • Minimal loss - can be accommodated at service level (<£10k uninsured loss). • No obvious harm/injury. • Unlikely to cause any adverse publicity, internal only. • Breaches of local procedures/standards.

8.3 To support the management of risk, and to provide a consistency of approach across all risks being managed, the Council has developed a standard template for all of its risk registers. The revised registers include a link to the Corporate Plan objectives being threatened by the risk and clearly identify risk accountability with the inclusion of both risk owners and risk leads. The layout is shown below:

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Strategic Risk Register

Risk Register Completed:
Date of Revision:

Risk Title	Risk No.	Corp Plan Priority	Risk Owner	Risk Lead	Risk in Full	Cause	Effect	Gross score			Current Mitigating Controls	Current			Planned Risk Actions	Target score		
								Likelihood	Impact	Total Score = L*I		Likelihood	Impact	Total Score = L*I		Likelihood	Impact	Total Score = L*I
										0				0				0
										0				0				0
										0				0				0
										0				0				0
										0				0				0

Owner Key:

Lead Key:

8.4 At appropriate levels of the risk hierarchy, see section 4.3, the reporting of risk to those charged with governance needs to be clear, should be a call to action, not just for information, and any agreed actions should be tracked from meeting to meeting.

Particularly for the Leadership team and Audit & Risk Committee, it is important the highest scoring operational risks are also reported alongside strategic risks. This information may allow a wider understanding of those risks impacting operational delivery but contained within directorate or service areas.

Given that an escalation of an operational risk in likelihood and/or impact may result in an additional strategic risk, it is proposed that the highest scoring operational risks will be included within a revised reporting template. An example is shown below:

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Reporting Template

Strategic Risks

Risk Name:		Risk Owner:	
Corporate Priority(ies):		Risk Lead:	
Risk Ref:	Last Updated:	Committee:	

Risk Description:	Risk Scoring	
	Likelihood	0
	Impact	0
	Overall	0
	Direction of Travel	

Interdependencies (Potential Impacts):

Key Mitigating Controls:

Further Mitigating Actions:	Milestone Dates:

DoT Key:
Worsening
Improving
Neutral

Highest Scoring Operational Risks

Risk Name:		Risk Owner:	
Corporate Priority(ies):		Risk Lead:	
Risk Ref:	Last Updated:	Committee:	

Risk Description:	Risk Scoring	
	Likelihood	0
	Impact	0
	Overall	0
	Direction of Travel	

Risk Name:		Risk Owner:	
Corporate Priority(ies):		Risk Lead:	
Risk Ref:	Last Updated:	Committee:	

Risk Description:	Risk Scoring	
	Likelihood	0
	Impact	0
	Overall	0
	Direction of Travel	

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9. Training & Development

9.1 Risk management cuts across everything that the Council does. Organisational development and training should encompass risk awareness, as a minimum. More detailed risk management training should be carried out for those who are or likely to be risk owners and risk leaders.

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