

Report to: Audit and Governance Committee
Date: 28th November 2023
Title: Strategic Risk Register Quarterly Review
Report of: Chief Internal Auditor
Ward(s): All
Purpose of report: To report to Committee the outcomes of the quarterly review of the risk register by Corporate Management Team
Officer recommendation(s): To receive and note the update to the Strategic Risk Register
Reasons for recommendations: The Council is committed to proper risk management and to regularly updating the committee with regard to the Strategic Risk Register.
Contact Officer(s): Name: Jackie Humphrey
Post title: Chief Internal Auditor
E-mail: Jackie.humphrey@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk
Telephone number: 01323 415925

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Strategic Risk Register is a high level document that records the key risks facing the council: those risks that would prevent the authority from achieving its overall strategies and objectives.
- 1.2 Maintaining the Strategic Risk Register is a vital part of the governance arrangements of the authority and, as such, it is overseen by the Corporate Management Team who review it on a quarterly basis.
- 1.3 The risk register shows the risk, a description of the risk, the risk score if no action is taken (original risk score), the internal controls put in place to mitigate the risk and the risk score after these controls are in place (current risk score).
- 1.4 The risk register is brought to the committee when any changes have been made to it following review by the Corporate Management Team and after an election.

2 Process

- 2.1 The Strategic Risk Register is the top level of the risk management process. Whilst the Strategic Risk Register is considered quarterly at the Corporate Management Team, this is a simply a review of the register itself.
- 2.2 There are many different risks and pieces of work that feed into the Strategic Risk Register. These are managed and monitored on a day to day basis within the relevant sections and departments.
- 2.3 The quarterly meeting of the Corporate Management Team to discuss the Strategic Risk Register allows the relevant Director/Assistant Director to provide feedback on risks in their area. This information is then used to consider changes that may need to be made to the Strategic Risk Register.

- 2.4 The Corporate Management Team will also carry out “horizon scanning” at these meetings: considering issues that are arising and considering whether they need to be included in the register.

3 October 2023 Review

- 3.1 The Strategic Risk Register was taken to Corporate Management Team on 18th October 2023 for the quarterly review.
- 3.2 The Corporate Management Team reviewed the risk scores for all the risks and considered that the scores should remain at their current levels based on the cost of living crisis and issues with recruitment.
- 3.3 Consideration was also given to a risk raised by the Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee. This is the risk around the outstanding audits of accounts by the external auditors and the possibility that Government will allow Modified opinions be given to clear the backlog. The Director of Finance and Performance (Chief Finance Officer/S. 151 Officer) clarified that it was still too early to record a risk and a decision has still yet to be made on a national level. When a decision has been made then the risks associated with that decision will be considered.
- 3.4 It was also considered that a further control should be added with regard to Homelessness. This was added to two risks, SR_002 Changes to the economic environment makes the council economically less sustainable and SR_003 Unforeseen socio-economic and/or demographic shifts creating significant changes of demands and expectations.
- 3.5 Under each risk the following internal control has been added:
Close monitoring of housing need costs. Build added capacity to prevention resources. Continue to engage with DLUHC and other local government networks. Lead the debate at a national level.
- 3.6 The Strategic Risk Register can be seen at Appendix A.

4. Financial appraisal

- 4.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

5. Legal implications

- 5.1 This report is for noting only and therefore the Legal Services team has not been consulted on the content of it.

6. Risk management implications

- 6.1 If the Council does not have an effective risk management framework that is subject to proper oversight by Councillors it will not be able to demonstrate that it has in place adequate means to safeguard Council assets and services, and it could be subject to criticism from the Council’s external auditor or the public.

7. Equality analysis

- 7.1 An equalities impact assessment is not considered necessary because the report is for information only and involves no key decisions.

8. Appendices

8.1 Appendix A - Strategic Risk Register

9. Background papers

9.1 None

Jackie Humphrey

Chief Internal Auditor