

ISSUES/PROPOSALS

Risk Management Strategy

6. To simplify Risk Management, the existing and separate Risk Management Strategy and Risk Management Toolkit have been combined into a single Risk Management Strategy which is now included as Appendix A to this report.
7. One of the key changes has been to ensure that the risk management process now clearly links risk to the Corporate Plan and Service Objectives.
8. Roles and Responsibilities have been redefined to establish ownership of risk across the whole council including elected members.
9. As previously stated, the Committee's role is defined as undertaking to:
 - a) Monitor the effective development and operation of risk management in the Council; and
 - b) Understand, scrutinise, and endorse the Council's risk management strategy and monitor the Council's risk appetite.
10. Future actions centre around further defining risk appetite across services and embedding a culture which embraces risk at all levels as part of its 'business as usual'.
11. In addition the Council's Risk Management e-learning module will be updated to reflect the updated Risk Strategy and Risk Management process and to provide ongoing access to a live support and training tool for all staff.
12. Having made the changes outlined in this report and as detailed in Appendix A, the updated strategy is now considered to be aligned to the council's corporate objectives and is far more focused on being a strategy that can be implemented in such a way that clearly links risks and objectives across all service areas.

Corporate Risk Register

13. To help facilitate the understanding of the Council's key risks, the Corporate Risk Register is reported to the Audit and Standards Committee for scrutiny and challenge.
14. The Corporate Risk Register continues to be reviewed on at least a quarterly basis by the Senior Management Board (SMB), who also continue to monitor any cross cutting or strategic risks contained in service plans.
15. The Corporate Risk Register relates to key and cross cutting corporate issues and strategic risks contained in service plans. Corporate or service level risks scoring 18 or higher are reported to the SMB and are identified in the Corporate Risk Register attached at Appendix B.

16. Risks scoring 20 or higher will be reported to Cabinet as part of the regular Joint Finance and Performance Report.
17. It has been agreed for the Audit and Standards Committee to focus on one or two key risks at each of their meetings, which is in line with good practice ensuring all risks are covered within an acceptable cycle of meetings.
18. The Committee has previously reviewed:
 - a) CR01 – Sustainable Budget;
 - b) CR02 – The Harlow Offer;
 - c) CR03 – Housing Mix;
 - d) CR04 – Lack of adequate Council Housing;
 - e) CR05 – Inability to fulfil Community Leadership role; and
 - f) CR08 – Information Governance and Data Compliance.
19. It is proposed the Committee examines CR06 – Lack of Resources and Capacity, Council and key partners. The narrative from the risk register for this risk is presented in Appendix C.
20. The Corporate Risk Register continues to be scrutinised on a regular basis by the SMB and provides a mechanism for Committee challenge by presenting an update at each meeting.

IMPLICATIONS

Place (Includes Sustainability)

As contained within the report.

Author: Jane Greer, Head of Community Wellbeing on behalf of Graeme Bloomer, Head of Place

Finance (Includes ICT)

Whilst there are no direct financial implications resulting from the approval of the strategy, the application of the Risk Management Strategy itself across all service areas does create a framework which, when applied correctly will both identify and manage risks including those which may have a financial impact if not recognised and managed effectively.

Author: Simon Freeman, Head of Finance

Housing

As contained within the report.

Author: Andrew Murray, Head of Housing

Community Wellbeing (Includes Equalities and Social Inclusion)

As contained within the report.

Author: Jane Greer, Head of Community Wellbeing

Governance (Includes HR)

Having a robust Risk Strategy enables the Council to understand and manage the risks that are inherent to the work undertaken. It further forms part of the governance of the Council ensuring accountability and responsibilities of those making decisions to ensure that risks are captured and reported on.

Author: Amanda Julian, Legal Services Manager on behalf of Colleen O'Boyle, Interim Head of Governance

Appendices

Appendix A – Draft Risk Management Strategy

Appendix B – Key Corporate Risks

Appendix C – CR06 – Lack of Resources and Capacity, Council and Key Partners

Background Papers

None.

Glossary of terms/abbreviations used

SMB – Senior Management Board