



WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

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Council name	West Oxfordshire District Council
Name and date of Committee	Audit and General Purposes Committee: Thursday 17 February 2022
Report Number	Agenda Item No. 7
Subject	Corporate Risk Register Updates and Updated Risk and Opportunity Management Strategy
Wards affected	ALL
Accountable member	Councillor Michele Mead, Leader of the Council Email: michele.mead@westoxon.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Giles Hughes, Chief Executive Tel: 01993 861658 Email: giles.hughes@westoxon.gov.uk
Summary/Purpose	To update the Committee on the changes to the Council's corporate risk register at the end of Quarter Two of 2020/21 and put before members a revised Risk and Opportunity Management Strategy for approval.
Annexes	Annex A - Corporate Risk Register 2021/22 (Quarter 03) Annex B – Proposed Risk and Opportunity Management Strategy
Recommendation	(a) That the corporate risk register be noted (b) That the Risk and Opportunity Management Strategy at Annex B be approved
Corporate priorities	To provide assurance to the Committee that risks to the Council are being managed and appropriate actions are being taken to mitigate risk in accordance with the Council's priority to meet the current and future needs and aspirations of residents and to provide efficient and value for money services, whilst delivering quality front line services.
Key Decision	No
Exempt	No
Consultees/ Consultation	The Risk and Opportunity Policy has been shared with statutory officers, Executive Directors and Group Managers

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. Risk and Opportunity Management is the process used to identify, evaluate and manage the whole range of business risks and opportunities facing an organisation. It is vital to ensure the effective operation of the Council and delivery of its Corporate Plan.
- 1.2. A risk can be defined as the potential of something happening which may have a negative impact on the Council's ability to deliver services, projects and achieve its objectives. Conversely, an opportunity will enhance the Council's ability to achieve and effectively deliver, however there are often risks inherent in pursuing opportunities. By being alert to this and putting in place mechanisms to manage both the risks and opportunities effectively, the Council will be in a better position to continue to deliver services, remain viable, continue to innovate and use resources more efficiently.
- 1.3. Risk management is not necessarily about being 'risk averse', it is about being 'risk aware'. Risk is ever present and some element of risk taking is inevitable if the Council is to achieve its priorities and objectives. Effective risk management is about making the most of opportunities and about achieving defined objectives once those decisions are made. By being risk aware the Council is in a better position to avoid threats and take advantage of opportunities.
- 1.4. Whilst historically the Council has managed strategic risks to varying degrees, little attention has been placed on the management of opportunities, furthermore a recent audit identified some inconsistencies in approach around the management of risk, specifically around operational and project risks. It is for those reasons that a new approach, coupled with robust reporting and management procedures are presented to the Audit Committee for approval by way of the Risk and Opportunity Management Strategy.

2. RISK REGISTER

- 2.1. The register has been reviewed with a number of risk removed as either no longer relevant, or managed to a sufficient level of risk and passed back to the appropriate Business Manager as an operational risk.
- 2.2. Further to the new Risk and Opportunity Management Strategy, there will need to be further work to ensure significant risks and opportunities identified by Group and Business Managers are escalated for inclusion in the Corporate Register. This is work on-going and will be reflected in future registers reported to this Committee.
- 2.3. The current version of the Corporate Risk Register is attached at Annex A. The main changes, including the removed risks, are:
- 2.4. **WO030 The Council fails to manage its trees and vegetation:** Risk removed. This is no longer considered a corporate risk but will continue to be monitored at an operational level.
- 2.5. **WO012 The Council fails to comply with relevant information management legislation including GDPR and Transparency Agenda:** Removed. This is no longer considered a corporate risk but will continue to be monitored at an operational level.

- 2.6. **WO008 Cyber security WO009 Data Security:** These have been rewritten to reflect their significance. The overall level of risk has reduced with the introduction of various controls detailed in the middle column. However, the current level of risk has increased as new threats have emerged. The final column show the actions that are currently ongoing to meet these threats.
- 2.7. **WO003 If services delivered by other public sector organisations are reduced, this may result in extra demands on the Council:** Removed. This is not considered to be a risk at the current time.
- 2.8. **WO019 If Contractors do not comply with health and safety requirements, this could lead to financial and reputational implications:** Removed. This is no longer considered a corporate risk but will continue to be monitored at an operational level.
- 2.9. **WO027 If the number of appeals reaches a threshold, penalties and Government intervention will be triggered:** Removed. This is no longer considered a corporate risk but will continue to be monitored at an operational level.
- 2.10. **WO07 If there is severe weather the Council may be unable to deliver key services:** Removed. Managed to an acceptable level.
- 2.11. **WO025 If superfast broadband is not delivered within timescales then resident expectations will not be met:** Removed. Project complete.
- 2.12. **WO011 If major public events or incidents are not controlled or dealt with, this could lead to financial and reputational consequences:** Removed. This is no longer considered a corporate risk but will continue to be monitored at an operational level.
- 2.13. **WO031 If the Government does not provide adequate funding, the Council may not fulfil new expectations following exit from the EU:** Removed. This is not considered to be a risk at the current time.
- 2.14. **WO034 If health and safety procedures and risk assessments are not in place or being followed, there could be injuries or impact on health and wellbeing of staff and visitors:** Removed. This is no longer considered a corporate risk but will continue to be monitored at an operational level.
- 2.15. **WO005 & WO017 If the Council does not deliver a balanced Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)/If unavoidable budget pressures exceed provision within the MTFS:** These have been merged and now appear as the new risk WO037.
- 2.16. **WO004 If local transport infrastructure deteriorates then access to services and employment will also be reduced:** This has been closed and replaced with WO038 to focus on transport issues surrounding the proposed improvements to the A40 corridor and planned development at Salt Cross Garden Village.
- 2.17. **WO028 If the Council fails to successfully implement the Local Plan and New National Planning Framework:** This has been closed and replaced with the new risk WO039, delivering the Local Plan housing requirements.

- 2.18. **WO010 If Contractors fail to meet their obligations under key contracts.** This has been closed and replaced with two new risks, WO040 (Waste and Recycling Services) and WO041 (Leisure Services).

3. RISK AND OPPORTUNITY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

- 3.1. As mentioned above, robust risk and opportunity management is vital to ensuring good governance and to the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan. With that in mind officers have been working on a comprehensive review of existing policies, with a view to ensuring that risks and opportunities are effectively managed at all levels of the Council (and Publica).
- 3.2. To deliver comprehensive risk and opportunity management, and to ensure compliance with current audit recommendations, it is necessary for the Council to adopt a revised approach that captures how it manages both risks and opportunities across all levels and activities. This is encapsulated in the revised strategy document attached at Annex B. Members will note that in order to bring detail to the strategy and to ensure that all staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities, Publica have developed a Risk and Opportunity Management Guide. This document, which is attached to the Council Strategy as Annex A, seeks to supplement the Council's Strategy by setting out in detail the processes and procedures to be followed, bringing the management of risks and opportunities to life by using examples and setting clear requirements.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1. There are no direct financial implications.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1. None.

6. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 6.1. None.

7. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 7.1. Members could decide not to adopt the revised Strategy.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1. The following documents have been identified by the author of the report in accordance with section 100D.5(a) of the Local Government Act 1972 and are listed in accordance with section 100 D.1(a) for inspection by members of the public:

- Previous version of Strategic Risk Register.

- 8.2. These documents will be available for inspection at the Council Offices at Woodgreen, Witney during normal office hours for a period of up to 4 years from the date of the meeting. Please contact the author of the report.