

Bolsover District Council

Executive Committee

5th September 2016

Strategic Risk Register and Partnership Arrangements

This report is public

Report of the Executive Director - Operations

Purpose of the Report

- To update Members concerning the current position regarding Risk Management and Partnership Arrangements and to seek approval for the revised Strategic Risk Register as at 30th June 2016, as part of the suite of Finance, Performance and Risk reports.

1 Report Details

Background

- 1.1. The Council's Strategic Risk Register has been developed in the light of a consideration of the strategic and operational risks which have been identified by Elected Members and Officers as part of the Council's risk, service management and quarterly performance arrangements.
- 1.2. In its approach to Risk Management the Council is seeking to secure a number of objectives and to operate in line with recognised best practice. In order to appreciate the importance of Risk Management it is useful to reiterate these objectives:
 - To improve the way in which the Council manages its key risks so as to reduce the likelihood of them happening, and to mitigate their impact in those cases where they do materialise. This is a key element in protecting service delivery arrangements, the financial position and the reputation of the Council.
 - To strengthen the overall managerial arrangements of the Council. From a Governance perspective the effective operation of Risk Management is a key element of the managerial framework operating within an authority.
 - Effective Risk Management is a key component in ensuring that organisations are able to achieve their objectives, and that key projects proceed in line with plan.
 - The identification of the risks attached to existing service delivery, or to a project or new initiative allows a fully informed decision to be made, and

helps ensure that all appropriate measures to mitigate (or reduce) the risk are in place from the outset.

- Finally, an appreciation of the risk environment within which the Council operates assists in determining an appropriate level of financial reserves, whilst ensuring the organisation has a good awareness of its overall risk exposure.

2. The Strategic Risk Register

2.1. The revised Strategic Risk Register as at 30th June 2016 is set out in **Appendix 1** for consideration by Executive. The intention is that this review of the Register will secure the following objectives:

- Identify any newly emerging risks which need to be added to the Register and removing any risks that have been resolved to maintain a focus on current risks.
- To revisit risk scores assessments and ensure that appropriate mitigation remains in place.

2.2. In overall terms a key theme which emerges from the Strategic Risk Register is one of an ongoing requirement to maintain our current performance in respect of service delivery, performance and governance. This objective needs to be secured against a background of both declining and less certainty concerning financial resources. Allied to the financial position local authorities are faced with significant legislative change impacting upon Housing, Planning, the welfare system, devolution and finance. These developments are anticipated to entail some significant changes in the manner in which our services to local residents are delivered with the level of change required clearly having the potential to disrupt service provision.

2.3. During the recent round of Quarterly Performance meetings the three key issues raised concerned the impact of the referendum decision that Britain would leave the European Union, the pace of legislative change and the ability to recruit and retain appropriately qualified staff. While previous versions of the Council's Strategic Risk Register had mentioned this as a potential issue, following the referendum there are perceived risks regarding the loss of EU funding both directly on the Council and on partner organisations serving the area of the District. The outcome of the vote has also resulted in a significant level of political change which may further impact through legislative change in a range of areas including finance (Consultation on NNDR reform), while the Housing and Planning Act could impact on a number of services. The pace and scale of legislative change was already resulting in uncertainty which has been exacerbated by the vote in favour of leaving the European Community. Given that the risks / issues arising from the vote to leave the European Union are effectively the same as those associated with legislative change and change arising from the national political agenda these are covered by the same Strategic Risk (Risk 1) as outlined in Appendix 1. Finally, the issue of the loss of key staff and the difficulties being experienced in finding suitable replacements continues to be a

widespread concern expressed by managers. While a limited number of services are experiencing significant problems it is clear that all areas of work are now finding it difficult to attract suitable candidates at a time when we are facing increased staff turnover. This issue already featured within the Strategic Risk Register and is detailed as Item 3 within Appendix 1.

- 2.4. In order to develop the understanding of risk together with a culture of risk management throughout the organisations a series of training sessions for senior managers which covered the issue of Risk Management have been held in both the summer of 2014 with further training in the Autumn of 2015. Likewise, as part of the Budget Scrutiny Meeting on 14th September 2015 there was a presentation to Members concerning Risk Management.

Partnership Arrangements.

- 2.5. The Council has recently reviewed its arrangements resulting in Executive agreeing in January 2016 to a revised Risk Management (Including Partnership Working) Strategy. The approach proposed in that document is that a range of strategic partnerships will be reported on and monitored as part of the Council's quarterly report in respect of Risk. These will be complementary to the existing reports prepared by the Partnership Team in respect of the Partnerships it co-ordinates. The Partnership Team provides to Executive twice on year a Partnership Funding and Performance Monitoring report which sets out the range of partnerships it works directly with. While the Partnership Team co-ordinate the Council's work with these external organisations it should be noted that many of these have been assessed as being of relatively limited risk, with officers adopting a 'light touch' approach in developing appropriate working relationships.
- 2.6. While there will invariably be an overlap between the two reports this report will focus on what might be termed as the Council's strategic partnerships. These are as follows:
- The relationship with the North Midlands authorities (Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire) and Sheffield City Region in progressing the economic development and devolution agenda.
 - The strategic alliance with North East Derbyshire District Council which is central to the transformation agenda of delivering services at lower costs whilst enhancing service resilience.
 - Shared Services arrangements with Chesterfield, Derbyshire Dales, North East Derbyshire and the Chesterfield Royal Hospital which help secure cost effective arrangements in a number of specialist service areas.
 - Arrangements with Derbyshire County Council amongst others to secure aligned services across the public sector in areas such as health and economic development.
 - The Community Safety Team and associated statutory partners including the Police.

Although the Partnerships outlined above are very different in terms of scope and working arrangements they all have in place formal governance arrangements between the partners, supported by appropriate internal governance arrangements which cover performance, finance and risk. Appropriate approvals have been agreed through the Council's formal committee arrangements, with partnership issues and developments being considered as is required within this Council's constitution. The arrangements in place are intended to be both risk based and proportionate to the risk exposure of the Council.

3 Conclusions and Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1 The Strategic Risk Register is intended to highlight those areas where the Council needs to manage its risks effectively. One of the key purposes of this report is to set out the risks that have been identified (see Appendix 1) and to encourage both Members and Officers to actively consider whether the Strategic Risk Register and supporting Service Risk Registers appropriately cover all of the issues facing the Council. The section of Partnerships serves to highlight the extent of these working arrangements, together with the mechanisms which are in place for their successful management.

Reasons for Recommendation.

- 3.2 To enable Executive to consider the risks identified within the Strategic Risk Register / Partnership Arrangements in order to assist in maintaining effective governance arrangements, service and financial performance.

4 Consultation and Equality Impact

Consultation

- 4.1 There are no issues arising from this report which necessitate a formal consultation process.

Equalities

- 4.2 There are no equalities issues arising directly out of this report.

5 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 5.1 Under the relevant good practice and to facilitate the development of robust managerial arrangements the Council is required to prepare a Strategic Risk Register as part of its risk management framework. This report is in part intended for Members and Officers to consider whether the Council has adopted an appropriate approach to its management of risk and partnerships. Given that this report is part of the approach to help ensure the effective management of risk / partnerships there is not an alternative to the presentation of a formal report.

6 Implications

6.1 Finance and Risk Implications

Financial

There are no additional financial implications arising out of this report at this stage. While where appropriate additional mitigation measures have been identified and implemented during the course of preparing the Strategic and Operational Risk Registers, the cost of implementing this mitigation will be met from within previously agreed budgets.

Risk

Risk Management Issues are covered throughout the body of the main report.

6.2 Legal Implications including Data Protection

There are no legal or data protection issues arising directly out of this report.

6.3 Human Resources Implications

There are no human resource issues arising directly out of this report.

7 Recommendations

- 7.1 That Executive approves the Strategic Risk Register as at 30th June 2016 as set out in Appendix 1.

8 Decision Information

Is the decision a Key Decision? (A Key Decision is one which results in income or expenditure to the Council of £50,000 or more or which has a significant impact on two or more District wards)	No
District Wards Affected	None directly.
Links to Corporate Plan priorities or Policy Framework	Robust Governance (including Risk Management) arrangements underpin the effective operation of the Council and its ability to secure all of the Corporate Plan priorities.

9 **Document Information**

Appendix No	Title
1	Strategic Risk Register as at 30 th June 2016.
Background Papers (These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when preparing the report. They must be listed in the section below. If the report is going to Cabinet (NEDDC) or Executive (BDC) you must provide copies of the background papers)	
Report Author	Contact Number
Executive Director – Operations	2431

STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER SUMMARY AS AT: 30th June 2016

	Risk	Consequences	Risk Score (Likelihood Impact) x	Risk Score (Likelihood Impact) Taking into Account Current Controls x	Risk Owner / Lead Officer
1	Government Legislation / impact of EU referendum vote / adverse external economic climate has an accelerating impact on Council (poor grant settlement), or upon the local economy, to which Council is unable to adopt an appropriate change of Strategic direction. An increase in policy announcements / legislative changes has been seen following the May 2015 election.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unable to deliver a package of services that meet changing local needs and aspirations. • Reduced influence over delivery of local services. • Unable to effectively support local communities. • Increased demands on Council services at a time when Council resource base is reducing. 	4,4, 16	3,4 12	SAMT / Political Leadership
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council is outward looking and actively works to understand proposed changes and the approaches that might be adopted to mitigate against these. • The Council has effective political and managerial arrangements in place to manage change. • Appropriate levels of financial reserves / investment funding are maintained to fund strategic shifts in service delivery. • Effective engagement with staff to ensure they embrace necessary change. 					

2	Failure to deliver a balanced budget in line with the MTFP, at a time when the Council's reserves are limited to 'adequate' levels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact upon ability to deliver current level of services. • Unable to resource acceptable levels of service. • Significant adverse reputational Impact. 	3,4 12	2,4 8	SAMT / Chief Financial Officer / Political Leadership
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council has effective financial and wider management arrangements in place to ensure budget / service delivery arrangements are robust. • The recent settlement has indicated challenging but manageable savings targets. A key risk is that under 'localism' there is less certainty concerning income (NNDR, NHB). • The Council has 'adequate' financial reserves in place to cushion against any loss of income for a period of at least one financial year. 					
3	It becomes increasingly difficult to recruit to key posts or to replace key staff who leave. Staff morale is adversely affected by as a result of pace of change, tightening financial circumstances or external circumstances.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deterioration in services to the public. • Increasing inefficiencies in service provision. • Weakening of Internal Control arrangements. • Increased pressure on other members of staff. 	3,4 12	2,4 8	SAMT / Asst Director HR
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council has effective communication and working with staff as validated by securing 'silver' accreditation at IIP. • There is sufficient funding to bring in agency staff where required to maintain service performance. • At this stage the problematic areas are those where there are national 'shortages'. In the majority of areas it has proved possible to recruit appropriate replacement staff. • Appropriate training budgets are in place to ensure that staff receive necessary training to maintain service quality. • The Council will look at introducing appropriate apprenticeship / training schemes in order to develop suitable staff. 					

4	<p>Delivery of the Council's Agenda is dependent upon effective delivery of both a number of major initiatives / projects and implementing a range of new government reforms whilst maintaining service quality, which may overstretch our reduced organisational capacity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New initiatives are not delivered in a cost-effective manner. • Failure to maintain / improve services in line with local aspirations. • Failure to generate the savings required to balance the budget. • Financial efficiencies weaken Governance / Internal Control arrangements. • Service deterioration / failure arising from capacity issues. 	3,4 12	2,4 8	SAMT / Chief Executive
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council has effective prioritisation and project management arrangements in place to ensure resources are directed at key objectives. • The Council has made efforts to ensure effective use of employees by utilising shared services to protect service resilience, by maintaining appropriate training arrangements and by investing in transformational ICT projects. • The Council has a robust performance management framework that should serve to highlight emerging issues. 					
5	<p>Emergency Planning and Business Continuity arrangements fail to meet required standards when tested by flu pandemic, natural disaster (flood), etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inability of Council to provide services as a consequence of a severe catastrophic external event (e.g. flooding, major terrorist incident, flu pandemic, fire). • Failure of IT infrastructure, leading to inability to effectively operate services and to safeguard income streams. 	3,4 12	2,4 8	SAMT / Director of Transformation

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business Continuity Plans prove ineffective in practice. 			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council works in partnership with a range of partners on its Emergency Planning arrangements to ensure that we operate in line with best practice. There is an annual 'desktop' scenario to test officers understanding of the arrangements and that they are fit for purpose in a realistic 'trial' scenario. All sections have Business Continuity plans in place which identify key risks and mitigation. Corporate IT systems have been tested against Industry standards for Business Continuity. The Council works in partnership with a range of other agencies that should be able to provide support in the event of the Council's own procedures failing to be effective. 				
6	Lack of strategic direction from Members / Corporate Management, external partners change Strategic direction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failure to deliver high quality services which address national and local priorities. Deterioration in Governance Arrangements. Refocus of current services necessary with associated disruption. 	3,4 12	2,4 8	Chief Executive / Political Leadership Team
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are appropriate structured training arrangements in place for both Members and Officers. The Council is an outward looking organisation where both Members and Officers are encouraged to network with peer groups to ensure a developed awareness of the broader environment within which we operate. 				
7	A major operational or failure of data protection risk materialises resulting in a significant impact upon the Council's ability to secure its corporate objectives. Given the efficiency measures that have been introduced to date this is considered to be an	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deterioration in services to the public, potentially a major initial impact upon a local resident or a group of local residents. Significant staff and financial resources required to resolve position, impacting on other services. A major service has its operating capacity significantly impact and is required to introduce major reform in its approach to service delivery. 	3,4 12	2,4 8	SAMT / Assistant Directors

	increasing issue for the Council.				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council has appropriate managerial arrangements in place supported by staff recruitment and training to ensure these risks are effectively managed. Performance is formally managed on a quarterly basis to ensure that any emerging issues re service performance are effectively identified and resolved at the earliest possible opportunity. 				
8	Governance Arrangements including Performance, Finance and Risk Management need to be maintained in order to continue to operate effectively in a rapidly changing environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adverse Impact upon Service Quality. Failure to deliver high quality services which address national and local priorities. Significant adverse reputational impact. 	3,4 12	2,4 8	Chief Financial Officer / Monitoring Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council has appropriate managerial arrangements in place supported by staff recruitment and training to ensure these risks are effectively managed. The Council has an active Standards and Audit Committee which provide independent review of the Governance arrangements in the Council. The Annual Governance Report sets out an evidence based structured assessment of the operation of the Council's governance arrangements. 				