

Report to:	Audit and Governance Committee	Date of Meeting:	Wednesday 7 September 2022
Subject:	Corporate Risk Management		
Report of:	Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services	Wards Affected:	(All Wards);
Portfolio:	Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services		
Is this a Key Decision:	No	Included in Forward Plan:	No
Exempt / Confidential Report:	No		

Summary:

The Corporate Risk Register is presented to each meeting of the Audit and Governance Committee. Since the last Committee meeting in June 2022, the Corporate Risk Register has been reviewed and updated.

The ownership of the content of the Corporate Risk Register lies with the Strategic Leadership Board.

No new risks have been added to the Corporate Risk register this quarter.

Three risks have de-escalated to the relevant service risk registers this quarter where they will continue to be assessed and monitored. These risks are:

- Gaps in understanding of community needs
- Failure to manage historic records effectively
- Significant impact on Service Delivery for Planning and Sefton LA

The financial sustainability risk has been updated to reflect the latest position on the economic environment which remains dynamic at present.

Some of the risks have been re-scored, in accordance with the revised assessment guidance included in the Corporate Risk Management handbook which was approved by the Committee in December 2020.

A review of the Corporate Risk Handbook originally planned for June 2022 Committee has now taken place and is included in the paper for Members to consider. A further review will be required to take place following the completion of the risk appetite work.

Although there has been substantial work undertaken over the past six years to embed risk management across the Council there continues to be work required to ensure that it is consistently and effectively embedded.

A presentation on one of the risks within the Corporate Risk Register will be provided to Members at September meeting.

Meetings have been held with Officers and Members to develop the Council's Risk Appetite. We are expecting the formal draft definition of the Council risk appetite to be drafted later in September which will be refined before providing it to the Committee in December 2022.

Recommendation(s):

(1) Consider the updated Corporate Risk Register, noting the nature of the major risks facing the Council, and the controls and planned actions in place to mitigate these.

(2) Approve the revised Corporate Risk Management Handbook

Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

A robust system of risk management will assist the Council in meeting its identified objectives.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: (including any Risk Implications)

None.

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs - There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. However, the Council benefits from the work of the section in reducing the impact and likelihood (and so the cost) of risk.

(B) Capital Costs - There are no direct capital costs arising from the report.

Implications of the Proposals:

Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets):	
There are no direct resource implications.	
Legal Implications:	
There are no legal implications.	
Equality Implications:	
There are no equality implications.	
Climate Emergency Implications:	
The recommendations within this report will	
Have a positive impact	Y
Have a neutral impact	N

Have a negative impact	N
The Author has undertaken the Climate Emergency training for report authors	Y

The report provides a summary of the risks identified and managed that will impact on the delivery of the Council's purpose. The Corporate Risk Register includes a Climate Change Emergency risk with actions to mitigate its impact and likelihood.

Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose:

Protect the most vulnerable: Positive
Facilitate confident and resilient communities: Positive
Commission, broker and provide core services: Positive
Place – leadership and influencer: Positive
Drivers of change and reform: Positive
Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: Positive
Greater income for social investment: Positive
Cleaner Greener; Positive

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services (FD.6921/22) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD.5121/22) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

(B) External Consultations

None

Implementation Date for the Decision

Immediately following the Committee / Council meeting.

Contact Officer:	David Eden
Telephone Number:	0151 934 4053
Email Address:	david.eden@sefton.gov.uk

Appendices:

The following appendices are attached to this report:

- Corporate Risk Register September 2022
- Corporate Risk Management Handbook September 2022

Background Papers:

None

1. Introduction/Background

- 1.1 Risk Management is defined as 'systematic application of principles, approach and processes to the task of identifying and assessing the risk and the planning and implementing of risk responses.'
- 1.2 The Risk Management Strategy included in the Corporate Risk Management Handbook, which is presented to the Audit and Governance Committee on an annual basis for approval, states that
 - 1.2.1 "Risk Management is to be an integral part of the planning and decision-making processes of the Council and that the Strategy is intended to ensure that Risk Management is embedded in the overall planning process.
 - 1.2.2 Risk management is a central part of Council's strategic management and its corporate governance. Effective risk management makes sound business sense and is a good management tool as it helps to ensure that the corporate strategic objectives, in this case Sefton 2030, are achieved. The focus of good risk management is the identification and treatment of risks that could affect the delivery of these objectives.
 - 1.2.3 Risk management should be a continuous and developing process which runs throughout the Council's activities. A systematic approach to identifying and analysing risks is an integral part of all management processes and day-to-day working, rather than a separate initiative."
- 1.3 The responsibilities for risk management within Council are detailed in the Constitution within the Financial Procedural Rules. Selected extracts include:

123 The Council's approach to Risk Management is that it should be embedded throughout the organisation at both a strategic and an operational level, through integration into existing systems and processes.

124 The Section 151 Officer develops the strategy and supporting framework on behalf of Executive Directors and Heads of Service. The Audit and Governance Committee scrutinise the risk management process ensuring the Council's risks are managed effectively.

125 Executive Directors and Heads of Service are responsible for ensuring the Risk Management Strategy is implemented and that the full risk management cycle operates within their Service.

128 Executive Directors and Heads of Service are responsible for ensuring risk management is carried out at both an operational and strategic level in accordance with the agreed guidance and procedures.

129 Executive Directors and Heads of Service will take account of, and address, corporate risks and inform the Chief Internal Auditor of any service risks that should be considered significant enough to rise to the corporate risk register level.

130 Service and operational risk registers, and associated actions, should be reviewed on a regular basis (at least quarterly) as part of the performance management process.

- 1.4 Whilst the process of risk management is routinely undertaken within the Council in a number of areas, both at a strategic level and operationally, it is recognised that there is still scope, to develop a more integrated risk management approach. This report seeks to continue the process of formalising a system of robust Corporate Risk Management and embedding this further into the organisation. The Corporate Risk Management Handbook outlines that there should be three tiers of risk registers in place across the organisation which are identified through the scoring of the risks:
- Corporate Risk Register (CRR)– risks scored at 16 plus and these are the key risks affecting the Council
 - Service Risk Registers (SRR)– risks scored between eight and 15 which are owned and managed by the Head of Service.
 - Operational Risk Registers (ORR) – risks scored at seven and below which are owned and managed by Service Managers.
- 1.5 An updated CRR is presented at each meeting of this Committee for Members to consider. The ownership of the content of the Corporate Risk Register lies with the Strategic Leadership Board. The CRR has been shared with and reviewed by senior officers to ensure that the risk register reflects the most significant risks facing the Council. The completion of a risk register also demonstrates that the Council has set out an approach to mitigate the risks that have been identified. The updated CRR is set out at Appendix A, using the revised scoring approved by Members in December 2020, for noting by the Committee.
- 1.6 The SRR are owned and should be reviewed by the (Assistant Directors (previously known as Heads of Service) on a quarterly basis and provided to the Risk and Audit team for information. The completed Service Risk Registers are used by Audit as an agenda item in the formal quarterly meeting with the Assistant Directors and are also used for the monthly budget meetings that are held by Finance with the Service Management teams.
- 1.7 The Operational Risk Registers are owned and revised by Service Managers. Members may remember that the Risk and Resilience Team assisted by the Internal Audit Team completed an exercise in 2018/19 to fully implement this tier of risk registers across the organisation facilitating the completion of over 70 risk

registers. This exercise was completed in March 2019. The Risk and Resilience Team, assisted by the Internal Audit Team, work with the individual teams to facilitate regular reviews of the risk registers which will help to embed risk management at the centre of the Council's activities.

2. Key Developments

2.1 External operating environment

2.1.1 The external operating environment has evolved significantly over the past quarter with a number of external events occurring. These events can affect existing risks by potentially increasing the impact and/or likelihood as well as create new risks which could potentially detrimentally impact on the achievement of the Council's strategic objectives

2.1.2 Some of the events that have occurred include

- UK inflation continuing to increase at a rate substantially greater than originally planned impacting on organisations and individuals
- Substantially increased energy costs for organisations, business and individuals during the next six months
- Supply chain issues continuing
- Bank of England interest rate increases raising rates than originally perceived and potentially at a faster rate
- Heightened cyber security risks remaining
- Changes in the UK Government leadership
- Bank of England forecast of a UK recession starting in Q4 2022/23

A number of these risks are now reflected in the narrative and scoring of the Corporate Risk Register.

2.2 Corporate Risk Register (CRR)

2.2.1 Since the June 2022 update to the Audit and Governance Committee, the CRR has been reviewed and updated. The main changes include:

2.2.2 There have been no new risks added to the CRR this quarter. The financial sustainability risk has been updated to reflect the latest position on the economic environment which remains dynamic at present. Some of the risks have been re-scored, in accordance with the revised assessment guidance included in the Corporate Risk Management handbook which was approved by the Committee in December 2020.

2.2.3 Three risks have de-escalated to the relevant Service Risk Registers this quarter where they will continue to be assessed and monitored. These risks are:

- Gaps in understanding of community needs
- Failure to manage historic records effectively
- Significant impact on Service Delivery for Planning and Sefton LA

2.3 Service Risk Registers (SRR)

- 2.3.1 The March 2021 update highlighted that the position on the completion of the quarterly updates on the SRR, in line with the requirements detailed in the Corporate Risk Handbook, would be provided to the Committee indicating how many had been updated and shared with the Risk and Resilience Team on a rolling 12-month basis. A copy of the SRR is requested at the same time updates for the Corporate Risk Register are invited to be updated.
- 2.3.2 A total of six SRRs have been provided for 2nd quarter 2021/22 with one being provided late.
- 2.3.3 All of the SRRs (100%) have been provided for 3rd quarter 2021/22 although one was provided late in the process.
- 2.3.4 A total of five SRRs (50%) have been provided for the 4th quarter 2021/22.
- 2.3.5 A total of nine (90%) SRRs have been provided for 1st quarter 2022/23
- 2.3.6 A total of eight (80%) SRRs have been provided for 2nd quarter 2022/23. We are working with two of the Service Areas to improve their SRR.
- 2.3.7 There has been a slight deterioration this quarter in the provision of the SRRs being returned on time. The above findings indicate that the completion of the SRRs, in line with the Corporate Risk Handbook has generally improved over the past three quarters however consistent completion on time remains key to ensuring that there is an effective risk management system within the Council.
- 2.3.8 Focus on work during the next quarter will be on ensuring that the SRRs are updated taking into consideration the risks within the Operational Risk Registers as well as ensuring that there is a 100% response to the quarterly request for an SRR.

2.4 Operational Risk Registers (ORR)

- 2.4.1 The Risk and Resilience team have requested the six monthly reviewed/updated ORRs from risk owners during July 2022. We are slowly receiving the outstanding ORRs. Cross checks will be made to ensure the escalation process for risk is fully embedded and relevant risks are escalating from Operational to Service Registers where appropriate. The Risk and Resilience team are continuing to work with Communities and Education Excellence to further develop ORRs that reflect the structure within these service areas.

2.5 Proposed actions from June 2021

- 2.5.1 In order to address the issues identified with the embedding of risk management in June 2021, all Assistant Directors were engaged, and the following actions identified and agreed in order to improve how risk management is embedded within the organisation. An update on the action is included below in italics:
- 2.5.2 Assistant Directors will consider whether the CRR should be developed further to take account of wider strategic risks facing the organisation. *Three further*

strategic risks were identified in 2021/22 and included in the CRR, with a further two being added in this current financial year.

- 2.5.3 It is important that to properly embed risk management that risk is an agenda item on the Departmental Management Team in each of the Service Areas on at least a quarterly basis. *Guidance has been provided previously to Assistant Directors on the proposed agenda item and testing of agenda and minutes will be undertaken in October 2022.*
- 2.5.4 The sharing of the SRR with the relevant Cabinet Member will take place on a quarterly basis. Assistant Directors were requested to provide evidence in March 2022 that in the last quarters evidence was provided that the SRR had been shared with the relevant Cabinet Member. *Testing in April/ May 2022 as previously reported to the June 2022 Committee update, noted that there had been progress although it was not a consistent picture across all of the Service areas. Further testing will be undertaken before the end of the 2022/23 financial year to determine the current picture.*
- 2.5.5 The Audit and Governance Committee approved that the Corporate Risk Register should be posted on the intranet Risk and Resilience page with notification to be sent on the intranet news for all staff. *(completed).*
- 2.5.6 An e-learning package on risk management is to be launched across the Council during the next 12 months. *We have engaged a risk management provider to the Council, through the external Insurance Programme, to develop e-learning training content on risk management which was completed by end of November 2021. The e-learning content had been received and it was identified further enhancements were required to ensure that it was tailored for the right audience. We have refined the content and the first part of the e-learning training was finished by the end of June 2022. We are currently road testing the contents with colleagues and are working with Learning and Development colleagues to transfer the content to the e-learning library before wider rollout to Members and colleagues.*
- 2.5.7 The consideration of including the risks associated with the agenda item on Committee papers linked to the appropriate Corporate Objective. *The Executive Director for Corporate Resource and Customer Services has confirmed that the intention is to implement this by the end the 2022/23 financial year after the assessment of the Climate Emergency addition on the header page has been assessed.*
- 2.5.8 Considering including an agenda item on each of the SLB/ELT meeting at the end of the meeting to consider whether any of the content of the agenda/discussions has an impact on the current risk register. *This will be introduced during September 2022 and following introduction support will be provided to assess the impact.*

2.6 Risk Appetite

- 2.6.1 The work started on defining the draft risk appetite statement in March/April 2022 and it was envisaged that draft documents would be ready to be shared in June

2022. The draft risk appetite proposal is currently being considered by management to agree the next steps.

2.7 Corporate Risk Management Handbook

2.7.1 A review of the Corporate Risk Handbook originally planned for June 2022 Committee has now taken place and is included in the paper for Members to consider. A further review will be required to take place following the completion of the risk appetite work.

2.8 Next steps

2.8.1 Following on from the approval of the Sefton Assurance framework is the consideration of implementing the three lines of defence model which outlines Internal Audit's role in assuring the effective management of risk, and the importance for delivering this of its position and function in the corporate governance. By mapping out the assurance activities from the various three lines of defence on each of the Corporate Risks this should provide better "comfort" to Members and Senior Officers that key risks are being managed effectively.

2.8.2 The Internal Audit Team have been undertaking Assurance Mapping for the past 12 months pulling together mainly external and, in some cases, internal sources of assurance that is used to help shape the draft internal audit plan and inform the Annual Chief Internal Auditor's Opinion. Work will continue to take place to refine the approach.

2.9 Summary of the current position

2.9.1 Substantial work has been undertaken to attempt to embed risk management across the Council over the past six years through designing a risk framework, providing training and facilitating the Service and Operational Risk Registers using resources across the Risk and Audit Team. Recent work has been drafting the Sefton Assurance Framework and undertaking Assurance Mapping to inform the Annual Chief Internal Auditor's Opinion and the Annual Internal Audit Plan.

2.9.2 There is clear evidence of engagement by the leadership team in terms of regularly reviewing the CRR. To demonstrate that risk management is embedded at this level engagement should be universal and consistent over time as highlighted in the update. Improvements required include the regular updating of SRRs, considering the outcome of the ORR's when looking at SRR and sharing the SRR with the relevant Cabinet Member.

2.9.3 There has been an improvement in the updating of SRRs over the past three quarters although this is not consistently 100% of all SRRs.

2.9.4 The development of the Council's risk appetite, which is nearly completed, will help to further embed risk management within the Council.

2.9.5 There is further work planned to improve risk management within the organisation through the adoption of Three Lines of Defence model and the Assurance Mapping of key risks.

2.10 Presentation to the Audit and Governance Committee Meeting

- 2.10.1 At the Audit and Governance Committee in December 2019 it was agreed that for each meeting a short presentation would be made by a risk owner on one of the risks from the Corporate Risk Register. The briefing, in line with good practice on risk management, should be on the background to the key risk, the current controls and the actions to mitigate the risk further.
- 2.10.2 A presentation will be provided to Members at the September 2022 meeting on one of the risks from the Corporate Risk Register.