

# Audit and Risk Committee

8 March 2021

<b>Report title</b>	Covid-19 Risk Register and Strategic Risk Register	
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<b>Report to be/has been considered by</b>	Strategic Executive Board	25 February 2021

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## Recommendations for noting:

The Audit and Risk Committee is asked to note:

1. The Council's Covid-19 risk register which details the risks faced by the Council as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, as at Appendix 1.
2. The latest summary of the Council's Strategic Risk Register, as at Appendix 2.
3. The verbal update on the Covid Risk 4 – Safeguarding Children from the Deputy Director for Social Care.

## 1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 To keep members of the Audit and Risk Committee aware of the new and emerging risks the Council faces as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and to update the Committee with regards to impacts on the Council's existing strategic risks.

## 2.0 Background

- 2.1 The Council is no different to any organisation and will always face risks in achieving its objectives. Sound risk management can be seen as the clear identification and management of such risks to an acceptable level.
- 2.2 As with all other local authorities the Council has had to adapt the ways in which it has worked to address Covid-19, not only in terms of ensuring the City's vulnerable residents have been supported alongside its businesses but also in its governance arrangements. The Council's approach to governance during Covid-19 has been very clearly set out and shared with Councillors, the key aspects include:
- A new officer structure to deal with Covid -19 - this has allowed for focus to be applied to key work streams coming out of the pandemic.
  - A new approach to decision making – following the introduction of full lockdown in March 2020 and a further lockdown in November 2020 the Council instigated a decision-making approach that ensured the focus has been on protecting the vulnerable and supporting businesses.
  - All decisions made have been tracked and recorded on detailed spreadsheets with records of whether they need to be made through the urgent decision process or through delegated powers – this has included the following:
    - Clear records being kept of the financial pressures as a result of Covid-19 including loss of income and additional spend
    - Clear evidence-based approach to explain why decisions have been made, using performance data
    - Communication implications of any approach taken and the need to ensure that the message is received by all communities
  - A Covid-19 risk register has been produced interfacing with the Council's strategic risk register to ensure that the Council has been aware of and taken account of the key Covid-19 risks in an ever-changing situation.

At all times the approach of the Council has been informed and shaped by advice from the Director of Public Health and key partners to ensure that the Council has had the most effective response possible to the pandemic. As part of the governance process key areas of concern have been able to be fed to a regional and national level.

- 2.3 This report updates the Committee on both the Covid-19 risk register and the Strategic risk register. At the time this report was prepared, the risks and issues associated with the Covid-19 pandemic were again, changing daily.
- 2.4 Both the Council's Covid-19 and Strategic risk registers were last presented to the Committee in December 2020. As previously reported to Committee, the Covid-19 global pandemic has had a significant impact on the risks faced by the Council. In addition, the Council's response to the pandemic has resulted in a significant change to Council services being delivered and the way in which those services are being delivered. This unprecedented environment has resulted in decisions being taken at speed, in accordance with the information available at time, government guidance, direction and relevant legislation.
- 2.5 The purpose of this report is to highlight the new significant risks that the Council now faces, along with details of the steps being taken to mitigate those risks.
- 2.6 Both the Covid-19 and the Strategic risk registers do not include all the risks that the Council faces. They represent the most significant risks that could potentially impact on the achievement of the Council's objectives. Other risks are captured within directorate, programme, project or partnership risk registers in line with the Council's corporate risk management framework.
- 2.7 A detailed summary of the Council's Covid-19 risk register is included at Appendix 1 of this report which sets out the status of the risks as at February 2021. A summary of the Council's pre-existing strategic risk register which includes the impact of the global pandemic is attached at Appendix 2. These risks are reviewed on an on-going basis and can be influenced by both external and internal factors and as such, may fluctuate over time.

### **3.0 Progress**

- 3.1 Both the Covid-19 Risk Register and the Strategic Risk Register will be updated as required and presented at approximately quarterly intervals to the Committee. The Committee also takes the opportunity to 'call in' individual risks for further review from time to time. At the last meeting, the Committee requested more information with regards to Covid-19 risk 4 – Safeguarding Children to be called in for the March 2021 meeting. The Deputy Director for Social Care will be attending the meeting to provide a verbal update on this risk.

### **4.0 Financial implications**

- 4.1 There are no financial implications associated with the recommendations in this report as Councillors are only requested to note the risk register summaries. Financial implications may arise from the implementation of strategies employed to mitigate individual risks, but these will be evaluated and reported separately if required. [GE/23022021/I]

## **5.0 Legal implications**

5.1 Although there may be some legal implications arising from the implementation of the strategies employed to mitigate individual risks, there are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations in this report. [Legal code: TS/24022021/W]

## **6.0 Equalities implications**

6.1 Although there may be equalities implications arising from the implementation of the strategies employed to mitigate individual risks, there are no direct equalities implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

## **7.0 All other implications**

7.1 Although there may be implications arising from the implementation of the strategies employed to mitigate individual risks, there are no direct implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

## **8.0 Schedule of background papers**

8.1 None.

## **9.0 Appendices**

9.1 Appendix 1: Updated Covid-19 risk register.

9.2 Appendix 2: Updated Strategic risk register.