



Audit and Governance Committee

Date:	27 September 2022
Reference number:	N/A
Title:	Risk Management Group Update
Cabinet Member(s):	N/A
Contact officer:	Maggie Gibb, Head of Business Assurance (& Chief Internal Auditor)
Ward(s) affected:	N/A
Recommendations:	Members are recommended to note the report.
Reason for decision:	summarise why the recommended option is preferred

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide an update on the Risk Management Group (RMG) meeting held on 5 September 2022.
- 1.2 The Council's Risk Management Framework including the Terms of Reference for the Risk Management Group was approved by the Audit and Governance Committee in June 2021.

2. Content of report

- 2.1 The Deputy Chief Executive (DCE) attended the meeting along with the Service Directors for Partnerships, Policy and Communications, Legal and Democratic Services, Major Projects and Service Improvement. The Head of Finance for the DCE directorate was also in attendance.
- 2.2 The DCE directorate has a well-established Risk Escalation Framework, with risk being a standing item at the senior leadership team meetings. All Risk Escalation

Frameworks are due for review and update during Q3 of 2022/23 to ensure they remain fit for purpose.

2.3 The key risk themes were as follows:

- **UKR-10 Future accommodation options for Ukraine Guests** - IF future accommodation options for Ukraine guests are not planned and communicated in advance of the initial six month sponsorship term, then sponsors and guests will be unable to plan effectively and demand for temporary accommodation may increase.
- **DCE-SI-08 Managing the demand for Community Support Provision** - IF the Welfare/Economic impacts of COVID and cost of living crisis continue to develop THEN there will be an increasing Financial Vulnerability issues faced by residents which is likely to result in increasing demand for Community Support / Local Emergency Support (LES) provision and if not effectively managed and resourced could result in increased demand and costly intervention from other LA support services.
- **DCE-Si-10 Utilisation of Government Grants**- IF there are not robust procedures to ensure effective utilisation of Government Grants THEN a significant financial risk will develop within the Community Support Service which will impact on its ability to provide the necessary support required.
- **DCE-SI-13 - Engagement with the Opportunity Bucks programme** - IF there is insufficient senior-level support for the programme across the Council and partners, and collective resources are not used to drive and deliver the programme in target areas, including the alignment of existing initiatives THEN the impact of the programme will be reduced, outcomes for residents in these areas will not be sufficiently improved and demand on Council and partner services will continue to increase.
- **DCE-MP-01 - External Companies Governance** - IF we don't have proper Governance arrangements in place and transparent reporting THEN this could lead to adverse financial implications and reputational damage.
- **DCE-LD-17 – Democratic and Electoral Services – Elections Act 2022** – IF there is any further delay in guidance/statutory instruments on the Elections Act changes THEN there is a high risk that some/all of the new requirements cannot be delivered to the standard electors deserve due to the need to train staff and allocate sufficient resources.

IF there is insufficient awareness of the new requirement for electors to show an acceptable form of ID at the polling station from May 2023 THEN there is a high risk

that electors are disenfranchised. No elections are due locally in May 2023, but Parliamentary Elections can now be called at any time of the Government's choosing which places significant pressure to deliver the 5/6 parliamentary constituency elections in Buckinghamshire within the very short 25 day timescale. There is a high risk of increased difficulties recruiting sufficient staff for polling duties due to increased responsibilities arising from Voter ID and the handling of postal votes at polling stations. There is a high risk of increased volumes of overseas registrations and absent votes placing greater pressure on the electoral core team during the already very short election timetable.

IF there is insufficient awareness of the changing voting and candidacy rights of European Citizens from June 2023 THEN there is a risk of increased pressure on electoral services and polling staff arising from newly disenfranchised electors attempting to vote. IF there is insufficient awareness of the strengthened laws on intimidation, undue influence, postal vote handling by electors and campaigners THEN there is a risk of electoral offences being committed.

- 2.4 The risks were discussed in detail, as well as the mitigating actions being challenged by the RMG.
- 2.5 Risks which had been de-escalated or closed were included in the report from the DCE directorate.
- 2.6 The Group considered the latest version of the Fraud Risk Register and were advised that it was broadly similar to the previous year. The risks had been reviewed and actions updated by the Fraud Team, and this will be subject to a "deep dive" review once the new Audit, Assurance and Fraud Manager is appointed.
- 2.7 The Group also considered the latest version of the Strategic Risk Register which had been discussed by CMT the previous week. The cost of living crisis and energy price rises were highlighted and work was ongoing with CMT to scope the level of risks this posed.
- 2.8 A "horizon scanning" paper was presented to RMG which included new and emerging risks for discussion, including displaced persons, inflation and the introduction of care costs cap.
- 2.9 The emerging risks document is updated on a regular basis by the Corporate Risk Lead and is discussed with the Risk Champions.

3. Other options considered

- 3.1 This should include information on the pros and cons of each option.



4. Legal and financial implications

4.1 None.

5. Corporate implications

None

6. Local councillors & community boards consultation & views

6.1 N/A.

7. Communication, engagement & further consultation

7.1 N/A.

8. Next steps and review

8.1 The next meeting of the Risk Management Group is to be held on 7 November 2022.

9. Background papers

None

