



Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

Meeting and date: Overview and Audit Committee, 13 March 2024

Report title: Corporate Risk Management

Lead Member: Councillor Gary Hall, Health, Safety and Corporate Risk

Report sponsor: Graham Britten, Director of Legal & Governance

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Action: Decision

Recommendations:

1. That the status of identified corporate risks at Annex C be reviewed and approved.
2. That comments be provided to officers for consideration and attention in future updates / reports.

Executive summary:

This report provides an update on the current status of identified corporate risks. Risk registers are maintained at project, departmental and directorate levels. Corporate risks are those that have been escalated from these levels for scrutiny by the Strategic Management Board (SMB) because of their magnitude, proximity or because the treatments and controls require significant development.

Officers draw on a range of sources to assist with the identification and evaluation of corporate risks. For example, membership of the Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum (TVLRF)'s Strategic Coordinating Group (SCG) facilitates active monitoring of a range of risks with the potential for impacts on local communities and services.

Involvement with the Local Resilience Forum directly links officers into national Government agencies and departments such as the UK Health Security Agency and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. This allows the sharing of intelligence and information with those who are making decisions at the very highest levels.

The TVLRF SCG enables its partners to jointly develop combined responses to civil emergencies, and strategic consequence management. This multi-agency partnership approach helps target activity directly to the needs of the public.

The Corporate Risk Register was last reviewed by the Overview and Audit Committee at its 8 November 2023 meeting. Since then, it has been subject to review by the Performance Monitoring Board (PMB), at which all the directorate and departmental risk registers are reviewed, and by SMB at its monthly meetings. Also, Lead Members

have been consulted during the evaluation process for risks falling within their portfolios of responsibility.

Since the last Overview and Audit Committee meeting, no changes to the risk scores or RAG status' for the current corporate risks have been made, nor any new risks added. However, the Corporate Risk Register has been updated to reflect:-

- In relation to the Workforce Availability / Stability risk:
 - ongoing progress with recruitment of Wholetime and On-Call firefighters and measures being taken to attract candidates from under-represented groups;
 - the Government's laying before Parliament of [regulations](#) as to how Minimum Service Levels (MSLs) will be applied to Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) in England. These cover emergency response, control room, national resilience functions, and urgent Protection and Prevention interventions. The regulations state that during strikes, FRSs will be expected to crew 73% of usually available fire engines and other vehicles.
- The impact of the Government's Local Government Finance Settlement 2024 to 2025 on the financial stability risk. The most significant announcement for the Service, was that the core referendum principle for all fire and rescue authorities would be held at 3%, which is lower than the £5 flexibility available to the Service in the previous two years. The risk is to remain at amber RAG status due to the ongoing volatility of business rates funding (forecast to be c. £500k per annum lower than originally expected), as well as uncertainty of the future of significant amounts of grant funding such as the USAR grant, pensions grant and the minimum funding guarantee.
- Regarding the climate change related risk, the activation of TVLRF Emergency Response Arrangements in January 2024 due to fluvial and groundwater flooding across parts of the Thames Valley. BFRS assets were deployed into Berkshire to assist with evacuations.
- Continuing progress in relation to the Values and Culture Risk, including:
 - Review / updating of the Service's Vision and Values;
 - Evaluation of the findings of the recent [independent review](#) of the culture at South Wales Fire and Rescue Service (SWFRS) to determine whether there are any implications for BFRS. SWFRS has subsequently been subject to an intervention by the Welsh Government resulting in the appointment of four independent commissioners to take over the role and powers of the fire authority: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-politics-68217579>
 - Preparation of the next staff / culture survey which is planned to launch on 8 April 2024.

The current distribution of corporate risks relative to probability and potential impact is shown at Appendix 1.

Changes to the corporate risk ratings over the last 12 months are shown at Appendix 2.

Detailed assessments of identified corporate risks are shown in the Corporate Risk Register at Appendix 3.

The next Overview and Audit Committee review is provisionally scheduled for 17 July 2024 (subject to confirmation at the 12 June 2024 Fire Authority annual meeting), preceded by review at the 18 June 2024 SMB meeting.

Financial implications:

No direct financial implications arising from the presentation of this report. It is envisaged that the further development of the Authority's corporate risk management framework will be undertaken from within agreed budgets.

Risk management:

The development, implementation and operation of effective corporate risk management structures, processes and procedures are considered critical to assure continuity of service to the public, compliance with relevant statutory and regulatory requirements and the successful delivery of the Authority's strategic aims, priorities and plans.

Legal implications:

None directly arising from this report. Any legal consequences associated with the crystallisation of individual risks are detailed in the Risk Register report at Appendix 3.

Within the role description of a Lead Member is a requirement 'to attend the Overview and Audit Committee, at its request, in connection with any issues associated with the portfolio which is the subject of scrutiny'.

Privacy and security implications:

None directly arising from the presentation of this report. However, potential risks to privacy and security together with mitigating actions are captured within applicable risk evaluations.

Duty to collaborate:

The potential to share corporate risk intelligence with neighbouring fire and rescue services and other relevant agencies will be considered. Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority already participates in the multi-agency Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum which produces a Community Risk Register which is among the sources used to identify potential risks to the Authority.

Health and safety implications:

Development of the framework does not impact directly on the legal compliance to health and safety, however if risks are not appropriately identified or evaluated then this may present Health and Safety risks.

Environmental implications:

None directly arising from the presentation of this report. However, potential environmental implications together with mitigating actions are captured within applicable risk evaluations.

Equality, diversity, and inclusion implications:

No direct implications from the presentation of this report. However, risks to achieving the Authority's equality, diversity and inclusion objectives or compliance with relevant statutes or regulations are identified assessed and managed via this process and are currently monitored within the HR Risk Register. Equality Impact Assessments are undertaken on strategies, change, procedures and projects.

Consultation and communication:

Senior managers and principal officers are key stakeholders in the development of the corporate risk management framework and have an active role in this at every stage as well as in ongoing identification, evaluation and monitoring of corporate risks. The Lead Member for Health, Safety and Corporate Risk is also be involved in the development of the framework with particular responsibility for determining the reporting arrangements for the Authority.

Background papers:

The current Corporate Risk Management Policy was approved at the 24 March 2021 Executive Committee:

<https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2021/03/ec-240321-item-5.pdf/>

Fire Authority Members were last updated on the status of the Authority's Corporate Risks at the 8 November 2023 Overview and Audit Committee meeting:

<https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2023/10/overview-and-audit-committee-8-november-2023-item-14-corporate-risk-management.pdf/>

Appendix	Title	Protective Marking
1	Distribution of Corporate Risks as at 20 February 2024.	None
2	12 Month View of Changes to Corporate Risks	None
3	Corporate Risk Register Report	None