

Appendix 4 – Revised Approach to Corporate Risk Reporting

- 1.1. The council's risk management framework previously required for six monthly reports to committee on the Corporate Risk Register. Reviews with risk owners took place each February and September, with our reports being presented to CET, SLT, Cabinet Briefing, and Performance Scrutiny in the months that follow. Our February review is shared with Governance and Audit for their information, and the September review is tabled with them each November (following input from CET, SLT, Cabinet and Scrutiny) so that members may be assured that the council's risk management processes are working.
- 1.2. At November's meeting of the Governance and Audit Committee, officers were challenged to consider 'a more iterative approach' to monitoring Corporate Risk, some members feeling that six months between having sight of the risk position was too long. A lot can happen in six months, particularly with the current financial climate. It was suggested that members would not need to see the whole register, only a snap-shot of current scores and trends, as is presented in our summary currently. The suggestion was that this would be included for information only within the papers of each Governance and Audit committee.
- 1.3. The difficulty with the suggestion is that work would still need to take place to update the register, and capacity is severely stretched. However, by distributing the workload throughout the year, it is felt that this request will free-up some time within the team during what have previously been 'pinch-points' in February and September.
- 1.4. Considering the suggestion therefore, the only way it could be achieved is by either i) circulating by email; or ii) tabling at a meeting with CET the risk summary to quickly check the position of each risk. The email approach would be preferable from the perspective of time, but there is also value in tabling this work for discussion. The best approach, therefore, will be to alternate between the two

approaches between updates. For thirteen risks this should not be an onerous task. Where there is significant movement in a risk, risk owners can then provide a timely update for the body of the main register, without having to wait for the six-monthly review.

1.5. The advantage of doing this exercise regularly in this way is two-fold:

- i) It gives risk owners an opportunity to think about the present position of their risks with more frequency, and informs other risk owners as to any significant changes that may impact their portfolios.
- ii) It should mean that there would be less time needed to update the register as a whole during the February and September reviews, as updates will have been made throughout the year. This applies to both risk owners and our designated risk lead within the Strategic Planning and Performance Team, who presently has weeks of meetings planned with risk owners to inform each review.

How frequently?

2.1. During 2024, the Governance and Audit Committee will meet:

Jan 31	Mar 6	Apr 24	Jun 12	Jul 24	Sep 25	Nov 20
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Its meetings are frequent but irregular, which poses a challenge. Having only taken CET through an update exercise in March or June, we would then be required to repeat the task straight away in April and July. It is felt that this would add little value to our process and become onerous.

2.2. The alternative would be to stagger our updates to more of a quarterly pattern where Governance and Audit receive:

Jan 31: Risk Summary	Apr 24: Full Risk Register	Jul 24: Risk Summary	Nov 20: Full Risk Register
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(For information)	(For information)	(For information)	(Tabled for discussion)
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This frequency of the summary may be a compromise for committee members to accept, but it is a balance that needs to be struck with officer capacity, CET time, and not devaluing the exercise of risk management itself.

- 2.3. Crucially this being a new approach to pilot, we should review how it has worked and the appropriateness of frequency at the end of 2024 to 2025.

What does this mean for reporting?

- 3.1. Checking-in with CET on a more regular basis ahead of Governance and Audit meetings should mean that there is no longer a need for in-depth reviews of the risk register twice yearly. We would expect the information to be more current throughout the year.
- 3.2. As indicated in the table above, the full register would still be available to be shared with committees twice annually (albeit not the product of an in-depth review as it is currently). However, we are not proposing to change the present tabling of the full risk register for discussion. It would still be presented twice yearly to CET, SLT, Cabinet Briefing, and Performance Scrutiny; and once annually to Governance and Audit to support their role with seeking assurance around the process of risk management (in addition to sharing the full register with them for information in April). The January and July risk summaries would also be shared with all the above committees for their information, and should help inform Forward Work Plans and the call-in of specific risks of interest (such as finance, for example).

Conclusion

- 4.1. Accepting the above changes, our new risk timetable will look as follows:

Dec/Jan: CET give input by email to confirm content of Risk Summary, or detail any changes needed to main register.	Jan: Risk Summary circulated for information to SLT, Cabinet, Scrutiny and Governance and Audit.
Mar: CET meet to confirm content of Risk Register, or detail any changes needed.	Mar/Apr: Full Risk Register tabled with SLT, Cabinet Briefing and Performance Scrutiny. Circulated for information to Governance and Audit.
Jun / Jul: CET give input by email to confirm content of Risk Summary, or detail any changes needed to main register	Jul: Risk Summary circulated for information to SLT, Cabinet, Scrutiny and Governance and Audit.
October: CET meet to confirm content of Risk Register, or detail any changes needed.	Oct / Nov: Full Risk Register tabled with SLT, Cabinet Briefing and Performance Scrutiny; and with Governance and Audit for assurance.

- 4.2. The final change that would be needed to facilitate this altered programme is to the way in which we presently record changes to the register. Previously this has been done in a section at the start of each risk. For this to become a more iterative risk register with more frequent updates, it would be simpler to simply keep an ongoing log of changes, presented alongside the register when it is tabled.
- 4.3. The final word needs to be on risk with this approach. As with any database, the register will only be as good as the human effort that is put into it. This altered approach to risk management will put more responsibility on risk owners to take the time to ensure that their risks are up-to-date, particularly when carried out as a desk-top exercise, rather than through face-to-face discussion and prompting.