

Report to: **Audit Committee**

Date: **6 September 2022**

Title: **Strategic Risk Update**

Portfolio Area: **Governance and Assurance**  
**Cllr Neil Jory (Leader of Council)**

Wards Affected: **All**

Urgent Decision: **N** Approval and clearance **Y**  
obtained:

Date next steps can be taken:

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**Recommendations:**

**That the Audit Committee:**

- 1. REVIEW the Strategic Risk Register (Appendix A) and make recommendations to Council on any further action the Committee concludes should be considered**

**1. Executive summary**

- 1.1. In accordance with the Risk & Opportunity Management Strategy adopted on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2018 by West Devon Borough Council, this report forms the required bi-annual update to Audit Committee Members.
- 1.2. The Strategy sets out the roles and responsibilities for various Council Committees and officer groups. The Audit Committee is to "Provide independent assurance to the Council on the effectiveness of the Council's risk and opportunity management, internal control and overall assurance framework".
- 1.3. This report aims to provide the Committee with the information required in order to provide that assurance to the Council. Included is a copy of the current strategic risk (Appendix A).

**2. Background**

- 2.1. The Council at its meeting on 4 December 2018 resolved to adopt the Risk & Opportunity Management Strategy and in September 2021, Council adopted its Plan for West Devon.
- 2.2. The strategic risk register considers those risks which currently provide the greatest threat to achieving our strategic priorities.

### **3. Key Updates to the Strategic Risk Register since the last update**

- 3.1. Following a review of the Strategic Risk profile since the last update to Audit Committee, we have taken the following action.
- 3.2. Removed the following risks since the last update to Audit Committee:-
  - 3.2.1. Organisational Commitment to Change. It is considered that Council (both elected Members and Officer teams) have demonstrated a significant commitment and openness to change over the past few years. We no longer consider this an active threat to delivering our priorities.
  - 3.2.2. Covid-19 Impact on Services. While Covid is clearly still in circulation, we have all been taking steps to learn to live with the virus. This impact of Covid-19 will now be included within existing risks regarding Inadequate Staffing Resource and Business Continuity.
- 3.3. Added the following risks:-
  - 3.3.1. Cost of Living. The Council's response will require us to prioritise resources to ensure we do all we can to support our residents and this may well require amendments to our current Plan for West Devon delivery plan.
  - 3.3.2. Homes for Ukraine. Prior to the Invasion of Ukraine and subsequent launch of the Homes for Ukraine scheme, West Devon was already taking steps to address the housing crisis. We have a significant number of Ukrainian families within West Devon and this presents challenges for us in the coming months that we need to resource and respond to.
- 3.2. The risk register as at August 2022 is set out at Appendix A to this report.

### **4. Options available and consideration of risk**

- 4.1. Members should note that, while risk is assessed collectively within SLT, the judgements in relation to the scores are inevitably subjective and Member challenge of officer conclusions is therefore welcomed.
- 4.2. If the Committee deems necessary, Members may make recommendations to Council on amendments to the register(s) or refer the highest scoring 'red' risks to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for further detail and investigation.

### **5. Proposed Way Forward**

- 5.1. It is suggested that the Committee's attention is focussed on those risks with the highest score i.e. the risks with a score of 16 and over.
- 5.2. SLT will continue to monitor the Strategic Risks and a further update will be brought to Audit Committee in six months' time

## 6. Implications

Implications	Relevant to proposals	Details and proposed measures to address
Legal / Governance	Y	The Audit Committee has a role in keeping under review and recommending to Council improvements in relation to effective risk management.  There are no direct legal implications arising from the report although a strategic focus on risk and opportunity management is good practice. Any specific legal implications are to be considered in individual risk assessments.
Financial	Y	The report includes a number of risks which will impact on the Council's financial position. Effective corporate risk and opportunity management can help protect the Council from budget variances.
Risk	Y	Members should note that while risk and opportunity is assessed collectively within SLT, the judgements in relation to the scores are inevitably subjective and Member challenge of the officer conclusions is therefore welcomed.
Climate Change - Carbon / Biodiversity Impact	Y	There are no direct carbon/biodiversity impacts arising from the recommendations as this will be factored into individual risk assessments where appropriate.
<b>Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications</b>		
Equality and Diversity	N	Factored into individual risk assessments where appropriate. Equalities Impact Review of the Risk Management Policy in place.
Safeguarding	N	Factored into individual risk assessments where appropriate.
Community Safety, Crime and Disorder	N	Factored into individual risk assessments where appropriate.
Health, Safety and Wellbeing	N	Factored into individual risk assessments where appropriate.
Other implications	N	N/A

### Supporting Information

#### **Appendices:**

Appendix 1: Strategic Risk Register August 2022

#### **Background Papers:**

Risk & Opportunity Management Strategy adopted 4<sup>th</sup> December 2018

### Approval and clearance of report

Process checklist	Completed
Portfolio Holder briefed	<b>Yes</b>
SLT Rep briefed	<b>Yes</b>
Relevant Exec Director sign off	<b>Yes</b>
Data protection issues considered	<b>Yes</b>