

Risk Management Update – Strategic Risk Profile Quarter 4 2023/24

Report by Derek Oliver, Chief Officer Place

Report for Information

1 Recommendations

Audit Committee is recommended to:

- Note the current risk landscape and organisational response to the most significant risks in Quarter 4 (Q4) 2023/24 (1st January to 31st March 2024).

2 Purpose of Report/Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide Audit Committee with:

- An update on the risk responses Midlothian Council has implemented during Q4 2023/24 to respond to the current risk climate
- Assurance that Midlothian Council took a proportionate and planned approach to prepare and respond to the current risk climate
- The risk evaluation of current strategic risks and opportunities for the Council

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3 Q4 Risk Management Overview

3.1 Midlothian Council has delivered a wide range of services to the people of Midlothian throughout Quarter 4 2023/24.

3.2 The Council continues to manage and review risks recorded within the Strategic Risk Profile. The work required to maintain the necessary corporate oversight over the broader strategic landscape continues through the Risk and Resilience Chief Officer group and Corporate Management Team (CMT).




3.3 Audit Committee should note that there were no new risks added from the previous Quarter. Updates on actions taken are included in the full strategic risk profile (Appendix B).

3.4 Strategic Risk Profile (SRP)

The SRP is split into three sections:

- Strategic issues
- Strategic risks
- Opportunities

3.5 STRATEGIC ISSUES - SUMMARY

Strategic issues	Likelihood	Impact	Score	Evaluation Q4	Q3 23/24
The Change Programme	5	5	25	Critical 	Critical
Financial Sustainability	5	5	25	Critical 	Critical
National Care Service	3	5	15	Medium 	Medium

3.6 The Change Programme

The Change Programme remained evaluated at Critical throughout 2023/24. The financial challenges of the forecasted budget gap pose a significant challenge for benefits realisation. Council agreed to a Transformation Blueprint in June 2023 which is a 5-year transformation plan.

3.7 Financial Sustainability

The scale of the financial challenge continues to be reported to the Business Transformation Steering Group and Council.



















3.8 National Care Service

The first stage of the Bill has been delayed and it had been anticipated that an update would be available around December 2023. This has since been moved to March 2024.

3.9 COVID-19

The risk evaluation has remained low for the last 12 months and, consequently, this strategic issue has now been removed from the profile. The Council continues to monitor and risk assess as appropriate, with its wider impacts assessed and controlled through relevant strategic risks. The risk of pandemic is captured within the Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Management Strategic Risk.

3.10 STRATEGIC RISKS – SUMMARY

Strategic Risks	Likelihood	Impact	Score	Evaluation Q4	Q3 23/24
Climate Change	5	5	25	Critical 	Critical
Financial Sustainability in future years	5	5	25	Critical 	Critical
The Long-Term Change Programme	5	5	25	Critical 	Critical
Legal and Regulatory compliance	5	5	25	Critical 	Medium
Early Years Expansion (1140 Hours)	4	5	20	High 	High
UK decision to leave the EU	4	5	20	High 	High
Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry	4	4	16	High 	High
Growing Council	4	4	16	High 	High
Cost of Living Crisis	3	5	15	Medium 	Medium
Asset Management	3	5	15	Medium 	Medium
Cyber Security	3	5	15	Medium 	Medium
Health and Safety	3	5	15	Medium 	Medium
Care at Home	3	4	12	Medium 	Medium
Employee performance	3	4	12	Medium 	Medium
Emergency planning and business continuity	3	4	12	Medium 	Medium
Governance and standards	2	4	8	Low 	Low
Internal control environment	2	3	6	Low 	Low
Corporate policies and strategies	2	3	6	Low 	Low

3.11 STRATEGIC RISKS – RATED CRITICAL/HIGH

3.12 Climate Change

The Council has developed a final draft of a Climate Change Action Plan in Q4. This is the next stage of progressing with the Climate Change Strategy, approved by Council in August 2020. Councillors will

be presented with a briefing on the Climate Action Plan in Q2 24/25 as committed to through the Transformation Blueprint.

3.13 Financial Sustainability in future years

The scale of the financial challenge continues to be reported to Business Transformation Steering Group and Council.

3.14 The Long-Term Change Programme

The Change Programme remained at Critical throughout 22/23 and 23/24. The financial challenges of the underlying budget gap pose a significant challenge. Council agreed to a Transformation Blueprint in June 2023 which is a 5-year transformation plan.

3.15 Legal and Regulatory compliance

Significant resourcing pressures have impacted on risk evaluation. Work is ongoing with the Scottish Information Commissioner and National Records of Scotland to develop and deliver improvement plans.

3.16 Early Years Expansion (1140 hours)

Following the Scottish Government's decision to increase the number of free early learning and childcare hours to 1140, the Council has continued to plan with its partners. The two key strands to the successful implementation are the recruitment and training of staff and the physical increase in estate capacity. These challenges are being considered in the wider context of the plan, in which the capacity and expansion of all funded providers (council, private and voluntary settings as well as childminders) combine to deliver the requirements.

3.17 UK decision to leave the EU

The rate of inflation is impacting on the cost of living crisis for Midlothian residents and posing significant risk to a number of Council Capital Programme work streams. This was reported to the Business Transformation Steering Group (BTSG) and also through progress reports on programmes to Council. A new Economic Strategy will be presented to Council. This risk evaluation remains High.

3.18 Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry (SCAI)

The SCAI risk evaluation remains High as the Inquiry continues.

3.19 Growing Council

In Q2 22/23 the risk evaluation increased from Medium to High and remains High in Q4 2023/24. This is in response to the current financial

challenge as described above and the increased pressure the Council faces with growth. Some current examples of this include:

- Inflationary impact on the delivery of the capital programme
- Cost of living crisis
- Pressure on the care sector as people are living longer and require more care provision
- General population growth places additional demand on infrastructure such as GPs, schools, waste services etc.

3.20 Work is ongoing to review the Learning Estate Strategy and a reprioritisation of the Capital Programme.

3.21 STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITIES

3.22 Shawfair

The Shawfair development, with its new Rail link provides a major incentive for house builders, employers, retail and commercial interests including opportunities to secure a low carbon community through district heating from Zero Waste. The Energy Services Agreement with Shawfair LLP has now been signed and work progresses to deliver the Energy Centre.

3.23 Easter Bush

Fast growing opportunities in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) with opportunities to link with education. Partnership links to schools and university sector at the 'Bush' to promote STEM. The rate of inflation is impacting on the costs of the A701 improvements which will was reported to Council at the end of June 2022. A funding application was submitted to the UK Government's Levelling Up fund to close the funding gap.

3.24 City Deal

Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal - bid for funding to Scottish and UK Governments to accelerate economic growth through investment in infrastructure/ housing/ skills and innovation was agreed by Council in June 2018. Projects continue to be progressed with realisation of regional enhancements and connectivity.

3.25 Creating a world class education system

The Centres of Excellence model is a core part of the Council's strategy to create a world-class education system in Midlothian.

3.26 The Strategic Opportunities section of the SRP will be revised for 2024/25 to include specific project risk profiles.

4 Report Implications (Resource, Digital and Risk)

4.1 Resource

There are no direct resource implications indicated in this report, although individual risks have associated resource implications.

4.2 Digital

None

4.3 Risk

The risks reported in this report are understood with the Council able to demonstrate the current risk controls and actions being taken in response to these.

The report provides an overview of the significant risks faced by the Council during Quarter 4 2023/24 and should act to provide assurance that Midlothian Council took a proportionate and planned approach to prepare and respond to each of these risks.

4.4 Ensuring Equalities (if required a separate IIA must be completed)

There are no direct equalities issues arising from this report.

4.4 Additional Report Implications (See Appendix A)

See Appendix A

Appendices

Appendix A – Additional Report Implications

Appendix B – Strategic Risk Profile (Quarter 4 2023/24)

APPENDIX A – Report Implications

A.1 Key Priorities within the Single Midlothian Plan

This report provides an overview of the Strategic Risk Profile of Midlothian Council at a defined point in time. The issues, risks and opportunities affecting or supporting delivery of the council priorities are set out within the Strategic Risk Profile.

A.2 Key Drivers for Change

Key drivers addressed in this report:

- Holistic Working
- Hub and Spoke
- Modern
- Sustainable
- Transformational
- Preventative
- Asset-based
- Continuous Improvement
- One size fits one
- None of the above

A.3 Key Delivery Streams

Key delivery streams addressed in this report:

- One Council Working with you, for you
- Preventative and Sustainable
- Efficient and Modern
- Innovative and Ambitious
- None of the above

A.4 Delivering Best Value

The Council's commitment to best value and securing continuous improvement can best be delivered when decisions are made against a backdrop of understanding the risks and opportunities before an organisation. This report seeks to provide assurance that the current risk environment is understood and that Midlothian Council is taking appropriate action in response to those identified risks.

A.5 Involving Communities and Other Stakeholders

This Strategic Risk Profile report has been compiled with input from a range of internal key stakeholders.

A.6 Impact on Performance and Outcomes

This report seeks to provide an overview of the challenging risk environment within which the Council is operating at this time. Being in a risk aware position helps to inform current and future decision making, with the intention of enhancing decision making and the associated performance and outcomes which flow from well informed decision making.

A.7 Adopting a Preventative Approach

The Risk Management approach being taken by the Council is founded on a preventative approach to managing risks, where appropriate and more generally to decision making with far greater risk awareness.

A.8 Supporting Sustainable Development

Senior Managers must ensure the sustainability of the Council, which entails identifying, understanding and managing Strategic and Service level risks and opportunities.