

Risk Management Update – Strategic Risk Profile Quarter 2 2022/23

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 2 (Q1) 2022/23 (1 July to 30 September 2022)

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 Q2 2022/23 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 risks
- Strategic opportunities for the Council

6 December 2022

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3 Q2 risk management overview

- 3.1** Midlothian Council has delivered a wide range of services to the people of Midlothian throughout Quarter 2 2022/23 (1 July to 30 September 2022) whilst operating within challenging circumstances as the county recovers from a global pandemic.
- 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's group and Corporate Management Team (CMT).
- 3.3** Changes this quarter include the introduction of a new risk – Cost of Living Crisis – and an increase in the risk of Growing Council from Medium in Q1 22/23 to High in Q2 22/23. This is in recognition of the current and ongoing financial challenge that the Council faces alongside the pressures of a growing council.

Cost of Living Crisis

- 3.4** The Council agreed to establish a [Cost of Living Crisis Task Force](#) at its meeting on 28 June 2022. The UK is currently facing an unprecedented storm of increasing prices, bills and tax. The 40 year high inflation rate of 9% is the main driver of the cost of living crisis which has outstripped wage and benefit increases.
- 3.5** One key aspect of the 'cost of living crisis' is the rapid rise in energy costs. In the year to April 2022, domestic gas prices increased by 95% and electricity prices by 54%. Furthermore, on 1 April 2022 the new price cap came into force, leading to default tariffs increasing from £1,277 to up to £1,971 per year. Prepayment customers have seen an increase of £708 from £1,309 to up to £2,017.
- 3.6** Increases in food and drink prices are also exacerbating the 'cost of living crisis'. Food and non-alcoholic drink prices were 6.7% higher in the year to April 2022, which is up from 5.9% in March and the highest rate of increase since June 2011. Several factors have led to food and drink price rises including supply chain challenges, rising wholesale costs and labour shortages. The Russian invasion of Ukraine has also affected food prices on international markets.
- 3.7** The impact on households is already being noted with 87% of adults in the UK reported an increase in their cost of living in April 2022 ([Office for National Statistics; Francis-Devine et al, 2022](#)). The price rises will impact low-income households the hardest as a larger proportion of their bills are on energy and food. The Resolution Foundation estimates an extra 1.3 million people will fall into absolute poverty in 2023, including 500,000 children.




- 3.8** The Cost of Living Crisis Task Force is chaired by the Council Leader and its membership includes cross party representation, the Council's Corporate Management Team, Group Manager Communities, Lifelong Learning and Employability and Director of Public Health. Since its establishment a number of mitigating actions have been implemented including:
- allocation of LACER funding to support those most vulnerable
 - identification of 15 'trusted partners' to distribute funding in communities to those most affected by the crisis to support food, fuel, wash and dry costs and establish re-heatable food initiatives
 - appointment of a strategic evaluation partner to create a poverty profile
 - Midlothian Strategic Poverty Prevention Group established by the Community Planning Partnership
 - Child Poverty self-evaluation underway with the Improvement Service
 - appointment of a new Child Poverty chair and lead

3.9 The current risk assessment is Medium for Q2 22/23.

Strategic Risk Profile Summary

- 3.10** The SRP is split into three sections:
- Strategic issues
 - Strategic risks
 - Opportunities

STRATEGIC ISSUES - SUMMARY

Strategic issues	Likelihood	Impact	Score	Evaluation Q1	Q4 21/22
COVID 19	4	4	16	High	 Critical
The Change Programme	5	5	25	Critical	 Critical
Financial Stability	5	5	25	Critical	 Critical

COVID-19

- 3.11** The risk evaluation was reduced from Critical to High in Q1 22/23 and remains as high for Q2 22/23. The Council continues to monitor and risk assess as appropriate. Whilst the rate of infection and case numbers are decreasing overall across the country, services continue to see the impact of COVID related absences with positive cases and isolation, which impacts on service delivery. In July 2022 the Council's recording of COVID related absence also changed to be included as part of normal sickness absence.














The Change Programme







- 3.12** The Change Programme remains at Critical having been increased to this evaluation in Q4 21/22. The financial challenges of the underlying budget gap pose a significant challenge for benefits realisation. Council agreed to a solution to balance the 2022/23 budget, however the increased costs associated with delivering change and transformation require longer term financial solutions. Work is ongoing to develop the next Medium Term Financial Strategy and 5 year Strategic Plan which will inform the future direction of the programme.

Financial Sustainability

- 3.13** Scottish Government grant settlements fall short of the resources needed to sustain core services. This core funding shortfall, combined with inflation pressures, pay awards and demographic pressures arising from a continued increasing ageing population of over 75's, increasing population of 0-15 age group and at a time when there are rising customer expectations poses a significant challenge for the Council.
- 3.14** The scale of the financial challenge continues to be reported to Business Transformation Steering Group and Council (with the most recent financial position on [15 November 2022](#)). Discussions on proposals to inform the Medium Term Financial Strategy are ongoing. Balancing the budget for future years will require cross party support and agreement to identify sustainable solutions. Due to the current uncertainty and lack of a revised Medium Term Financial Strategy this issue remains Critical.

STRATEGIC RISKS – SUMMARY

Strategic Risks	Likelihood	Impact	Score	Evaluation Q2	Q1 22/21
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
Early Years Expansion (1140 Hours)	4	5	20	High 	High
Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry	4	4	16	High 	High
UK decision to leave the EU	4	5	20	High 	High
Growing Council	4	4	16	High 	Medium
<i>Cost of Living Crisis*</i>	3	5	15	Medium 	N/A – new risk for Q2
National Care Service	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

Governance and standards	3	4	12	Medium		Medium
Employee performance	3	4	12	Medium		Medium
Emergency planning and business continuity	3	4	12	Medium		Medium
Legal and Regulatory compliance	3	3	9	Medium		Medium
Internal control environment	3	3	9	Medium		Medium
Corporate policies and strategies	2	3	6	Low		Low

*New risk for Q2

STRATEGIC RISKS – RATED CRITICAL/HIGH

Climate Change

- 3.15** The Council developed a Climate Change Action Plan as part of its Climate Change Strategy approved by Council in August 2020, as well as making the commitment to achieve Carbon Neutral by 2030.
- 3.16** The Carbon Neutral by 2030 strategic board is developing the overall cross Council response to the Council's statutory requirements. There are a range of projects underway which will contribute to the overall ambition but development of the programme and these projects is identifying that there is a significant financial investment that is required to be made to retrofit buildings, fleet replacement and change working practices.
- 3.17** The current financial resource and staffing capacity across the Council is insufficient and poses a critical risk to delivery. This is also impacted by the financial sustainability challenge that is articulated in this report.
- 3.18** A review of the current Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan is being undertaken and an update will be provided to Council in Q3/Q4 2022/23. The risk evaluation continues to remain Critical in Q2.

Early Years Expansion (1140 hours)

- 3.19** 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.
- 3.20** This risk evaluation continues to remain High.

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry (SCAI)

- 3.21** The SCAI risk remains High. The inquiry is currently taking evidence in relation to Section 21 submissions re foster care. To date Midlothian Council have not been called to give evidence. File reading continues.

UK decision to leave the EU

- 3.22** The last two quarters have demonstrated that 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) in Q1 and also through progress reports on programmes to Council i.e. the delivery of the A701 and increased school build costs. The current Capital Programme is subject to a reprioritisation review and will be reported to Council in Q3/Q4 22/23.
- 3.23** A report was commissioned on the economic impacts of EU Exit and report with its findings and recommendations was presented to BTSG in Q2 and Council in Q3 for adoption. The findings will also inform the refresh of the Economic Strategy. This risk evaluation remains High.

Growing Council

- 3.24** In Q2 22/23 this risk has increased from Medium to High. 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 and rent freeze response that could risk the delivery of the house building programme
 - 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.
- 3.25** Work is ongoing to review the Learning Estate Strategy and a reprioritisation of the Capital Programme.

STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITIES

Shawfair

- 3.29** 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.

Easter Bush

- 3.30** 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. An funding application has been submitted to the UK Government's Levelling Up fund to close the funding gap, with the results to be announced in Q3 2022/23.

City Deal

- 3.31** 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. In 2021, the chairing of the City Deal programme was formally handed over from Fife Council to Midlothian Council for the 2022 calendar year.

Creating a world class education system

- 3.32** The Centres of Excellence model is a core part of the Council's strategy to create a world-class education system in Midlothian. Funding has been approved by Scottish government to create a STEM centre of excellence as a replacement for Beeslack High school. Research is being carried with the University of Edinburgh to establish the impact of new school buildings on educational attainment.

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 2 2022/23 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 2 2022/23)

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.