

Subject:	Corporate Risk Register Update Quarter 1 2024/25 (January - March)	Status:	For Publication	
Report to:	Audit and Accounts Committee	Date:	25 th September 2024	
Report of:	Director of Resources	Lead Member:	Resources	
Key Decision:	<input type="checkbox"/> Forward Plan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	General Exception	<input type="checkbox"/>	Special Urgency <input type="checkbox"/>
Equality Impact Assessment:	Required:	No	Attached:	No
Biodiversity Impact Assessment:	Required:	No	Attached:	No
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1. RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 That the Audit and Accounts Committee note the Council’s Corporate Risk Register as detailed in this report.
- 1.2 That members note the risk consequence, mitigation action and level of risk as detailed in Appendix 1.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Quarter 1 (Q1) Corporate Risks Register Update is reporting for months April, May and June 2024.
- The report includes updates for the Council’s 9 Corporate Risks.
- Overall, the Council’s performance is strong but the financial pressures for the Rossendale Leisure Trust and the Council are creating cost pressures which the Council must monitor closely as the financial year progresses.
- The report concluded 2 Corporate Risks rated as ‘red’ on the RAG status.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Council details its approach to managing risk in its Risk Management Strategy. This was updated in March 2016.
- 3.2 The strategy details the Council’s risk monitoring and reporting framework. The Council has identified 9 Corporate Risks and these are monitored via the quarterly performance management reporting schedule using a RAG rating dashboard to report the risk status. These are reported to both the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet.
- 3.3 If a potential issue was identified during the periodic monitoring of the risk, the responsible officer would be required to identify the risk and note the actions needed to mitigate the level of risk.

4. DETAILS

- 4.1 The Council has reviewed and continues to monitor the Corporate Risk Register.
- 4.2 The Councils Corporate Risks are categorised at the end of Q1 as follows:

	Quarter 1 2024/25
Low	4
Medium	3
High	2

4.3	Corporate Risk 1	Likelihood	Impact	Overall	Status
	Stability of the Medium Term Financial Strategy	B	1	B1	RED

The Council's 2023/24 outturn performed better than the estimated position detailed within the February 2023 Medium-Term Financial Strategy. This has slightly improved the Council's reserve balances however, based on the February 2024 Medium-Term Financial Strategy significant savings/income generation are required for the Council to maintain the minimum level of reserves by the end of the current forecast. The Council has a continued freeze on non-essential expenditure and officers continue to review and maximise income generation opportunities. All vacant posts are evaluated by the Corporate Management Team prior to recruitment.

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The Empty Homes scheme is drawing to a close and will cease to have an impact on the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy. Officers have continued to deliver and manage the scheme closely.

4.4	Corporate Risk 9	Likelihood	Impact	Overall	Status
	Financial Sustainability of Council Owned Leisure Assets	A	2	A2	RED

An external assessment has been carried out on the financial sustainability of Council-owned leisure assets by Grant Thornton.

The assessment made a number of recommendations that were agreed by Full Council in May 2023. This is now a focus of action.

5. RISK

5.1 The Council's Corporate Risk Register continues to be monitored by the Corporate Management Team on a regular basis.

6. FINANCE

6.1 Financial implications and risks arising are identified within this report.

7. LEGAL

7.1 There are no immediate legal considerations attached to the recommendations within this report.

8. POLICY AND EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Effective risk management is very important to the council, and the council is committed to improving on an on-going basis how it manages and mitigates risk. A very important part of this process is robust and transparent scrutiny and taking timely, corrective action to improve risk management.

9. REASON FOR DECISION

9.1 The Corporate Risk Register is dynamic. The updates to the risks demonstrate active mitigation of the existing risks. The Committee will want to explore the implications of each corporate risk in the appendices.

Background Papers	
Q1 Corporate Risk Register	Appendix 1

Corporate Risk Register

Risks are those things which might present a barrier to us delivering the things we have undertaken to achieve. Each year the Council reviews the potential risks it is facing and looks at what it might do to minimise the occurrence of such risks. This information is then regularly monitored and reviewed.

We profile our risks using a matrix (shown below) which is based on our making two judgments about each potential risk faced by the Council. The definition of the likelihood and impact can be found in the Council’s Risk Management Strategy 2016.

The Council’s Risk Matrix

Likelihood	A					
	B					
	C					
	D					
	E					
	F					
		5	4	3	2	1
	Impact					

Likelihood

How likely is it that the risk may occur (rated A-F, A being the most likely)

Impact

How serious might the consequences of the impact be (rated 1-5, 1 being the highest consequence).

Therefore, a risk rated A1 is the highest risk rating and a risk of F5 is the lowest risk rating.

Risk RAG (Red, Amber and Green) rating status indicators

Risk Status	Status description
GREEN	The likelihood and impact of the risk is low
AMBER	The likelihood and impact of the risk is medium
RED	The likelihood and impact of the risk is high

Risk 1 – Sustainability of the Medium Term Financial Strategy

Responsible Officer - Kimberly Haworth

Description

The Council's latest Medium Term Financial Strategy update published February 2022 indicates an underlying funding gap of c£600k per annum from 2023/24 onwards. The Council must take appropriate action in order to balance its annual expenditure against its available annual income and other revenue resources. The Council has a legal obligation to publish an annual balanced budget; this means its budget expenditure must equal its available income and any available reserves. Council reserves are limited and equate to only circa 3 years given the anticipated funding gap. Therefore additional income must be identified or annual costs reduced in future years. The current cost of living crisis may also add to the pressure on the Medium Term Financial Strategy through pay award, utility costs, contract inflation and Council Tax/NNDR collection rates.

Risk Consequence

If the Council is not able to prepare a balanced budget there would be legal ramifications, but would ultimately impact on the level of services the council is able to deliver to Rossendale residents and would result in major reputational damage.

Initial risk assessment RAG status (without mitigation)

Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Status
B	2	B2	RED

Mitigation

The Medium Term Financial Strategy does not indicate a significant narrowing of the gap in the next four years. New income generating opportunities will need to be identified to generate additional revenue, along with improved efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery. Departments across the council will need to be challenged to become more effective.

Risk assessment RAG status (after mitigation)

Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Status
C	2	C2	AMBER

Q1 Update

The Council's 2023/24 outturn performed better than the estimated position detailed within the February 2023 Medium-Term Financial Strategy. This has slightly improved the Council's reserve balances however, based on the February 2024 Medium-Term Financial Strategy significant savings/income generation are required for the Council to maintain the minimum level of reserves by the end of the current forecast. The Council has a continued freeze on non-essential expenditure and officers continue to review and maximise income generation opportunities. All vacant posts are evaluated by the Corporate Management Team prior to recruitment.

Q1 risk assessment RAG status (current)

Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Status
B	1	B1	RED

Risk 2 – Major Disaster affecting the Delivery of Council Services

Responsible Officer - Clare Law

Description

The Council has statutory duties under the Civil Contingencies Act (2004) and to carry out emergency planning and business continuity management activities to minimise the impact of a civil emergency or business interruption on people living, working and visiting the borough.

Risk Consequence

Failure to have robust contingency plans in place could result in the failure to deliver Council services, such as, the collection of residential and trade waste, burial services and payment of suppliers and benefits.

Initial risk assessment RAG status (without mitigation)

Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Status
C	1	C1	AMBER

Mitigation

A robust Council Emergency and Business Continuity Plan is in place. Service continuity plans are updated and tested regularly through a quarterly Emergency Planning meeting. The plans are embedded with the Corporate Management Team as critical working documents to support the continued delivery of essential council services. All managers have a copy of the overall plan and their service plan and keep them under review. The Council is a member of Lancashire County Council Local Resilience Forum. Officers attend meetings and undertake regular training exercises. The council plans are available on the Resilience Direct website. Mutual aid agreements are in place with all Local Authorities across Lancashire.

Risk assessment RAG status (after mitigation)

Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Status
C	2	C2	AMBER

Q1 Update

The Council's Local Emergency Plans have been reviewed and staff continue to work with Lancashire County Council to update the Lancashire Flood Plan. Work is ongoing to update the rest centre information and contacts in partnership with Lancashire County Council's Emergency Planning Team. The Council is represented at Local Resilience Forum meeting, along with other partners and agencies, to ensure the Lancashire response to major incidents is robust. Staff also participated in multiagency testing of the emergency plan and arrangements for the Council's local control of major accident hazard (Comah) site in Rossendale.

The Council's Emergency Planning Team continue to meet on a quarterly basis to review internal plans and processes in preparation for local emergencies.

Q1 risk assessment RAG status (current)

Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Status
C	2	C2	AMBER

Risk 3 – Incident resulting in Death or Serious Injury or HSE Investigation

Responsible Officer - Clare Law

Description

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974), the Council has a duty of care towards the health, safety and wellbeing of its employees and others who may be affected by our work. In the event of a RIDDOR reportable accident, there is a risk of a Health and Safety Executive investigation and potential for a civil claim for damages.

Risk Consequence

Failure to comply with current legislation and demonstrate compliance may result in harm to staff and others, financial loss and enforcement action.

Initial risk assessment RAG status (without mitigation)

Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Status
D	2	D2	AMBER

Mitigation

The Council has health and safety policies and procedures including a Health and Safety Incident Reporting Procedure in place along with a safe working culture. Actions need to be completed to address and implement a consistent approach across the Council in order to secure compliance.

Risk assessment RAG status (after mitigation)

Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Status
E	2	E2	GREEN

Q1 Update

The Health and Safety Policy has completed its annual review and work has continued to implement the Health and Safety Action Plan, and reducing the risks from premises' compliance requirements. Liaison with insurers and Internal Audit has ensured external scrutiny of health and safety arrangements.

The programme of workplace inspections for 2024/25 has been developed. The Health and Safety Executive have inspected arrangements for pesticides, which were found to be compliant. 27 health and safety reports were received during Q1, none of which were reportable under the RIDDOR Regulations. Incidents are reported via JCC and are discussed within the Operations Health & Safety Committee meetings to evaluate the actions taken and lessons learnt.

Q1 risk assessment RAG status (current)

Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Status
D	2	D2	AMBER

Risk 4 – Changes to Government policy on the delivery of the Council’s services**Responsible Officer - Rob Huntington****Description**

Like all local authorities the Council is a statutory body that is subject to changes being consulted upon and or implemented by central government that might affect how we operate and serve our residents/businesses.

Risk Consequence

The risk that the Council fails to react and be prepared for any changes being proposed or implemented by central government.

Initial risk assessment RAG status (without mitigation)

Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Status
E	2	E2	GREEN

Mitigation

The Council is a member of the Local Government Association and District Councils Network who keep us informed of government policy and consultations and lobby on behalf of councils to mitigate the impact of any change. The Council is also signed up to receive daily emails from Local Government Information Unit who provide daily government news and other Local Government Information Unit policy briefings. The Chief Executive and Leader of the Council meets regularly with our two MPs. The Council’s Corporate Management Team monitor and assess government’s position on funding to be distributed to local authorities and other Government announcements that impact funding.

Risk assessment RAG status (after mitigation)

Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Status
E	2	E2	GREEN

Q1 Update

The Council is a member of both the Local Government Association and District Councils Network. The Corporate Management Team and Policy and Performance Officer receive regular policy bulletins and updates in relation to legislation and Government Departments. A weekly policy/horizon scanning bulletin is shared to the Senior Leadership Team and cascaded to officers where relevant.

‘Horizon Scanning and Policy’ is an agenda item on the Corporate Management Team’s weekly meeting to promote ongoing discussions in relation to recent policy announcements, funding opportunities and other relevant information from government departments, to determine if any action required is required.

Staff attend various webinars and meetings in relation to their service area and the Chief Executive regularly attends the North West Chief Executive, and Lancashire Chief Executive meetings, both having representation from the Local Government Association.

Q1 risk assessment RAG status (current)

Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Status
E	2	E2	GREEN

Risk 5 – Sustainable Workforce

Responsible Officer - Clare Law

Description

There is a requirement to have a sustainable workforce to deliver the Council services to residents and customers.

Risk Consequence

Failure to have a fully resourced, trained staff could result in the failure to deliver statutory and non-statutory service in a safe and professional manner to residents and customers.

Initial risk assessment RAG status (without mitigation)	Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Status
	D	3	D3	AMBER

Mitigation

The Council has robust HR policies and procedures, an agreed Authorised Establishment, performance management framework and Service Area Business Continuity Plans in place to mitigate any staffing challenges such as loss of staff due to the impact of an epidemic or pandemic. HR will work with managers to develop workforce succession planning. The Council provides an attractive benefit package including final pension scheme, flexible working, generous annual leave, a purchase leave scheme, free onsite parking, family friendly policies, discounted gym memberships and a cycle scheme to attract and retain staff.

Risk assessment RAG status (after mitigation)	Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Status
	E	3	E3	GREEN

Q1 Update

The number of employee leavers remains within the 15% national target (equating to 7 employees per reporting quarter). People and Policy continue to work with service managers to recruit to long-term vacant posts.

The level of sickness absence has improved when compared to Q4. Long term sickness in Q1 is at 1.31 days lost per FTE, there are 7 staff on long term sick. The main reason for long term sickness is 'other musculo-skeletal' a total of 101 days lost followed by 'stress, anxiety and depression' which equated to a loss of 67.5 days. Short-term sickness in Q1 is at 1.46 days lost per FTE. The main reason for short term sickness absence is 'stress, anxiety and depression', a total of 64.5 days lost. Followed by 'other musculo-skeletal', a total of 36.5 days lost and 'back and neck problems' 32.5 days lost.

Over 90% of long-term sickness has been in Operations due to 'other musculo skeletal' and 'back and neck problems'. People and Policy continue to work with Operations to monitor sickness and the impacts of an aging workforce in relation to musculo skeletal absences.

The Council has introduced paid physiotherapy sessions to mitigate long-term absence and has increased the number of referrals made to Occupational Health for medical advice to support regular attendance at work.

Both long term and short term sickness is monitored on a monthly basis, regular formal absence review meetings are carried out with staff to review their sickness absence and support their support their return to work and regular attendance at work. The process for staff returning to work has been refreshed and managers are required to complete comprehensive Return to Work Interviews with staff and identify any additional support required to mitigate future absences.

Q1 risk assessment RAG status (current)	Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Status
	E	3	E3	GREEN

Risk 6 – Insufficient data and cyber security

Responsible Officer - Andrew Buckle

Description

Cyber security presents one of the most challenging areas for both the public and private sectors. With the proliferation and severity of attacks constantly increasing this represents a major threat.

Risk Consequence

Cyber-attack resulting in a complete loss of all systems coupled with malware being spread across the entire network. Data breach resulting in information loss causing reputational damage and resulting in a financial penalty due to non-compliance with statutory requirements such as General Data Protection Regulation, Payment Card Industry Data Security.

Initial risk assessment RAG status (without mitigation)

Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Status
C	1	C1	AMBER

Mitigation

To protect against a data breach the Council, host all council data in Tier 3 Data Centres located in different geographical regions and are backed up daily. The Council's Data Centres hold the following accreditations: ISO27001:2013 and the Payment Card Industry Data Security. The Council adopts a Risk Insight approach to determine the threat Landscape and more importantly its evolution. The Council has received notification of meeting the Public Services Network which means the Councils' infrastructure met all the security requirements to allow connection to the Public Services Network. A cyber security training is to be provided for all staff.

Risk assessment RAG status (after mitigation)

Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Status
D	1	D1	AMBER

Q1 Update

In preparation of the General Election, The Council added additional security measures to prevent a cyber-attack or disruption.

The Council has worked with Express to ensure the electoral process went ahead with no issues and to prevent any disruption to the electoral process that could undermine confidence in the integrity of an election. As per the National Cyber Security Centre recommendations, the Council implemented the following:

- Strong passwords for all active directory accounts, this greatly reduces the chance that an account is compromised.
- Setting up two-step verification (also known as multi-factor authentication) on an account makes it considerably more secure. It means that even if an attacker knows your password, they cannot access your account.
- Additional backups taken including verification of restore points.
- Dedicated ICT focal point to cover the elections.

Q1 risk assessment RAG status (current)

Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Status
D	1	D1	AMBER

Risk 7 – Poor communications and public relations

Responsible Officer - Clare Law

Description

Good communication and public relations is essential to inform, maintain and develop relationships with residents, customers and partners to provide effective and efficient Council services.

Risk Consequence

Failure to communicate and respond to issues as they develop and inadequately or inappropriately communicating could lead to a major loss of reputation for the Council on a local, regional and national level. A loss of reputation can damage staff morale, trust between the Council and residents and impair the relationship between the Council and its partners meaning projects and services delivery is damaged.

Initial risk assessment RAG status (without mitigation)

Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Status
B	1	B1	RED

Mitigation

Communication methods are in place to support face to face, mail or electronic communications with a developed website and social media channels to provide 24/7 communication service. The Council has an experienced public relation and communications function to support officers to deal with communications in a timely manner and promote the work of the Council.

Risk assessment RAG status (after mitigation)

Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Status
D	1	D1	AMBER

Q1 Update

Viva PR has continued to deliver the agreed communications plan including updates to the Council's website.

The Corporate Management Team receive a weekly update, which includes horizon scanning and potential risks, and a monthly in person update to CMT.

20 positive press releases have been shared, including stories on the regeneration work resulting in over 107 pieces of media coverage. All of these pro-active positive releases help to promote the Council externally.

Viva PR act as first point of contact for the media and always respond in a timely manner ensuring good working relationships with local and regional media.

Communications training has been delivered to officers and a training session on social media and media relations has been delivered to Members.

Q1 risk assessment RAG status (current)

Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Status
E	1	E1	GREEN

Risk 8 – Non – Delivery of Corporate Programmes

Responsible Officer - Rob Huntington

Description

The Council has agreed the 6 corporate programmes for 2023/24 to support the delivery of Corporate Plan.

Risk Consequence

Failure to deliver the corporate programmes would have a detrimental impact on the delivery of the Council's Valley Plan 2021-25, Our Place, Our Plan, and result in a reputational risk to the Council's commitment to the residents. The failure to deliver the corporate programmes could potentially have a negative impact on the council's revenue budgets (by failure to deliver income generating projects) and delivery of the medium term financial strategy, and the associated economic and social benefits may not be realised.

Initial risk assessment RAG status (without mitigation)

Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Status
C	2	C2	AMBER

Mitigation

Each corporate project has a Project Sponsor (member of the Corporate Management Team), a Project Manager and Finance Officer. Each corporate programme will have a robust project plan and live risk register. The Programme Sponsor will be responsible for the strategic overview of the corporate programme, and the Programme Manager will be responsible for the day-to-day management of the corporate programme. The Council's Programme Board meets quarterly to review the progress of the corporate programmes. The Programme Sponsor will be responsible for highlighting any concerns to the Corporate Management Team throughout the life of the corporate programme.

Risk assessment RAG status (after mitigation)

Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Status
E	2	E2	GREEN

Q1 Update

A revised programme to support the delivery of the Valley Plan 2021-25 (Our Place, Our Plan) has been embedded. The Programme Board now reports on the Council's six overarching programmes, individual projects are monitored at an operational level.

The Corporate Management Team, Programme Sponsors and the Policy and Performance Officer attend Programme Board on a quarterly basis. Programme Managers are invited by exception if required by the Programme Sponsor.

The previous meeting was held on 7th May 2024. Two programmes were reported in the 'red' RAG status. The risks within these programmes are monitored regularly and any issues are reported within the weekly Corporate Management Team meeting.

Q1 risk assessment RAG status (current)

Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Status
E	2	E2	GREEN

Risk 9 – Financial Sustainability of Council Owned Leisure Assets

Responsible Officer – Rob Huntington

Description

National lockdowns due to Covid-19 resulted in Council owned leisure facilities closing for extended periods. During closure no income was received and outside of lockdown periods, income was significantly reduced. The cost of living crisis will have a significant negative impact on utility and salary costs for the Trust. This has impacted the financial sustainability of the Trust.

Risk Consequence

If the Council owned leisure assets are to be sustained in the longer term, the operators of the facilities have little recourse to additional funding to survive other than through the Council. This financial impact was managed in 2021/22 through additional government grants and Council support, however the real impact is likely to be felt in 2022/23, 2023/24 and continues in 2024/25.

Initial risk assessment RAG status (without mitigation)	Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Status
	A	2	A2	RED

Mitigation

A report on the impact of all facilities has been produced by KKP and recommendations to minimise impact have been implemented. Senior Council officers are attending the Trust Board to ensure we work together to minimise costs and an intensive monitoring process is in place. Funding through a Covid-19 specific Sport England Fund has been received though this is limited in its amount and did not cover retrospective losses. Constant monitoring of future business plans and work in partnership to maximise income and reduce costs continues.

Risk assessment RAG status (after mitigation)	Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Status
	A	2	A2	RED

Q1 Update

The Council's Finance team continued to meet with Rossendale Leisure Trust as part of the ongoing financial governance and accountability process put in place to monitor the Trust's finances.

Following the production of the Rossendale Leisure Trust statement of accounts, discussions are ongoing to ensure members understand the current leisure offer. Clarity of the current offer will enable a sustainable medium term financial plan to be developed for Rossendale Leisure Trust by trustees.

It is planned that earlier engagement with Rossendale Leisure Trust will take place ahead of the Council's budget planning process.

Q1 risk assessment RAG status (current)	Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Status
	A	2	A2	RED