

Audit Committee

26 November 2020



Title	COVID-19 Risk Considerations (UPDATE)		
Purpose of the report	To note		
Report Author	Victoria Statham, Group Head of Corporate Governance		
Cabinet Member	Councillor Sati Buttar	Confidential	No
Corporate Priority	Financial Sustainability		
Recommendations	The Audit Committee notes the updated COVID-19 Risk Management report and Risk Assessment for COVID-19 at Appendix 1.		
Reason for Recommendation	Not applicable.		

1. Key issues

- 1.1 COVID-19 is an example of an emerging risk that was difficult to foresee and its ultimate impact hard to judge. The challenges it presents globally, nationally and across local communities are unprecedented and is continuing.
- 1.2 Spelthorne's positive response efforts in recognising and pursuing issues is acknowledged. Full details of the Council's response were detailed in the Extraordinary Council Meeting report of 21 May 2020 and has been periodically updated. The Country is currently in the second outbreak of COVID-19 and again the Council has reacted with a positive response. The work on recovery continues and it is acknowledged that recovery will be a greater challenge than the response, this is the case for many organisations across the world not just for the Council.
- 1.3 The LGA Peer review of the Council has highlighted the excellent response the Council has made.
- 1.4 The Internal Audit Manager prepared a discussion paper for the Corporate Management Team in April setting out observations, risk considerations and wider/long term implications. Further input has been received from Managers highlighting risks and mitigation measures. This was reported to the Audit Committee in July 2020. The Corporate Management Team recognise the importance of articulating the Council's risks and opportunities relating to COVID-19 in the form of a documented risk assessment, bringing together many of the areas already identified and discussed and therefore this has been updated. This ensures the most significant risks arising (which may also relate directly to the achievement of the Council's corporate priorities and objectives) can be identified, managed, monitored and reported at key phases

of the pandemic crises, supporting organisational resilience. It is acknowledged that risks will continue to emerge and evolve into the longer term and positive opportunities sought.

- 1.5 The updated risk assessment is at Appendix 1 which sets out mitigation measures in place to manage those risks, as well as any further actions underway or for perusal. It includes a RAG (Red/Yellow/Green) risk rating/ranking for each category based on an assessment of likelihood (probability) and impact (severity), to ensure risks are prioritised for action and given due focus in accordance with significance and opportunities highlighted. Risks identified for Spelthorne are largely consistent with themes across the sector and beyond in the pandemic environment. The risk assessment prepared by the Surrey Local Resilience Forum has also been considered.

2. Options analysis and proposal

- 2.1 To note and accept the contents of the updated COVID-19 Risk Assessment including any risk mitigating actions underway or for perusal. The Risk Assessment at Appendix 1 is considered to be an accurate reflection of the relevant risk categories affecting the Authority during these unprecedented times and beyond, as well as mitigation measures, based on our assessment of risk and controls in operation. (Preferred option)

Or:

- 2.2 To recommend amendments to the COVID-19 Risk Assessment for consideration by the Corporate Risk Management Group.

3. Financial implications

- 3.1 Resources required (staff time) to implement actions proposed in the COVID-19 Risk Assessment should be contained within existing budgets as far as possible. There may however be areas where additional resource /time/management support is required in order to implement risk mitigating actions. This will need to be highlighted by the assigned accountable or lead officer in liaison with Accountancy when considering the impact of COVID-19 on Service budgets/Corporate spend.

4. Other considerations

- 4.1 The attached COVID-19 Risk Assessment covers key corporate risks and opportunities (a total of fourteen broad risk categories), some of these relating directly to achievement of corporate priorities and objectives. The most significant risk categories to highlight as part of this review include Financial Sustainability and Resilience, Economic impact and recovery, Insufficient Capacity, Health and Wellbeing and Cyber/ Security Threats. The Lessons Learnt and seeking opportunities exercise will highlight any positive experiences or practices that may be beneficial in the immediate, medium and longer term.
- 4.2 The Risk Assessment gives due consideration to Equality and Diversity implications and any actions arising will continue to be monitored through the risk management process and other action plans.
- 4.3 As the COVID-19 Risk Assessment continues to be developed and refined, it may include accountable and lead officers responsible for progressing

actions, together with target timescales for implementation and an indication of whether the action is open or closed. Ongoing responsibility for coordination and monitoring of this risk assessment going forward can be established.

5. Sustainability/Climate Change Implications

- 5.1 The Risk Assessment gives due consideration to Sustainability and Climate Change implications and any actions arising will continue to be monitored through the risk management process and other action plans.

6. Timetable for implementation

- 6.1 The Risk Assessment will continue to be reviewed and updated periodically, to align with key phases of the virus pandemic and beyond.

Background papers: There are none

Appendices: COVID-19 Risk Assessment (Appendix 1)