

Strategic Risk Register - Summary

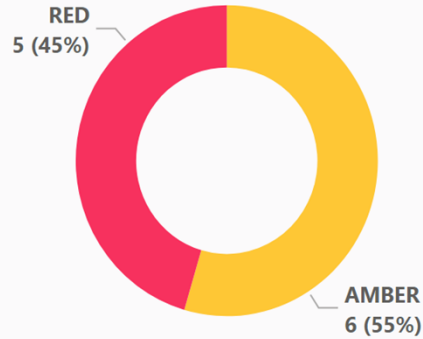
Strategic Risk

- Select all
- Yes
- No

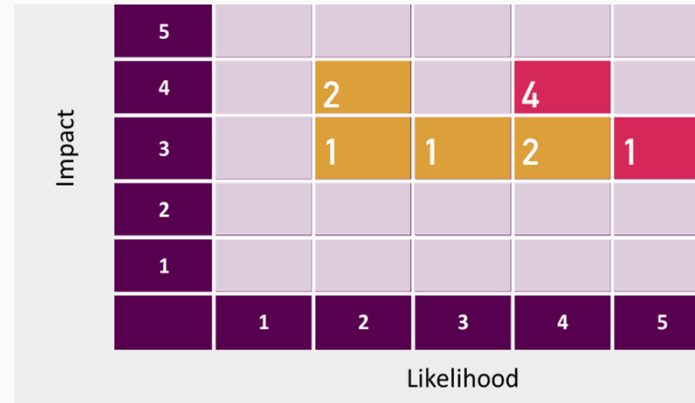
- BfFC
- DCASC
- DEGNS
- DOR

[View detail](#)

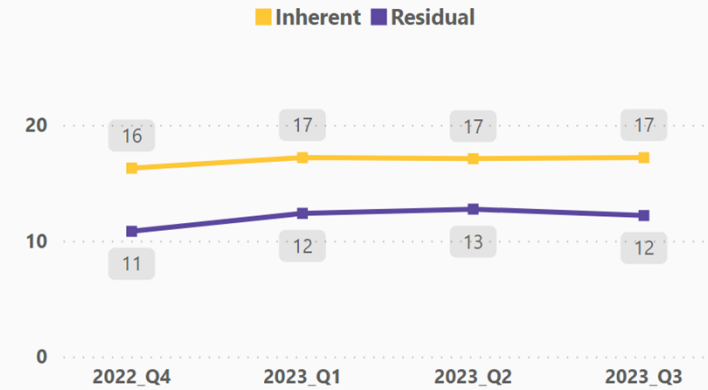
Count of Risk by Status



Risk Distribution



Rolling 4 Quarter Risk Score by Type



Risk	22/23 Q4 Residual	23/24 Q1 Residual	23/24 Q2 Residual	23/24 Q3 Residual	Current RAG
Strategic Risk: BfFC - Lack of local special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) placement provision to meet current and future levels of demand	16	16	16	16	🔴
Strategic Risk: Companies Risk – That the council fails to have in place appropriate oversight and scrutiny of its companies.	8	8	8	8	🟡
Strategic Risk: Cyber - Risk of loss from cyber attack	16	16	16	16	🔴
Strategic Risk: Failure to adapt to the impacts of climate change (Climate adaptation)	12	12	12	12	🟡
Strategic Risk: Failure to deliver zero carbon commitments (Climate mitigation)	12	12	15	15	🔴
Strategic Risk: Failure to implement the Tackling Inequality Strategy within the Borough	12	12	12	6	🟡
Strategic Risk: Failure to respond to a major incident health hazard or manage a significant outbreak of communicable disease	9	12	9	9	🟡
Strategic Risk: Failure to retain and recruit staff	12	12	12	12	🟡
Strategic Risk: Failure to safeguard vulnerable adults and children	9	16	16	16	🔴
Strategic Risk: Information Governance - Failure to protect personal data	8	8	8	8	🟡
Strategic Risk: Unable to deliver a balanced budget as a result of cost of living increases, demand pressures and achieving income targets.	5	12	16	16	🔴



Risk:
 Strategic Risk: BfFC - Lack of local special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) placement provision to meet current and future levels of demand

Register:
 BfFC
 Risk owner:
 Grady, Brian

16
 Current Score

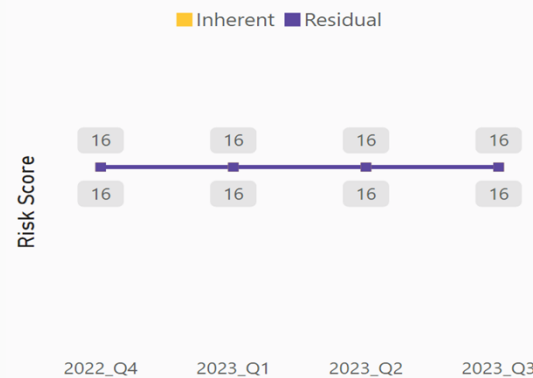
Cause

Risk that the needs of children with SEND cannot be met in Reading -and/or 'Out of Borough' placements will be required, leading to costs exceeding budget and poorer outcomes for the children in question.

Potential Impact

Risk that the needs of children with SEND cannot be met in Reading and/or Out of Borough placements will be required, leading to costs exceeding budget and poorer outcomes for the children in question.

Trends - Risk Scores



Risk Scoring

Risk Type	2022 Q4	2023 Q1	2023 Q2	2023 Q3
Impact (Inherent)	4	4	4	4
Likelihood (Inherent)	4	4	4	4
Inherent	16	16	16	16
Impact (Residual)	4	4	4	4
Likelihood (Residual)	4	4	4	4
Residual	16	16	16	16

Specific Actions Required

Title	Date for completion	Status
1 40 more Additionally Resourced Provision places in South Planning Area	29/06/2024	In progress
2 'High needs block' deficit management plan to be implemented	29/06/2024	In progress
3 110 more 'Additionally Resourced Provision' places across Reading	31/08/2024	In progress
4 10 more local specialist school places for children with SEND (Social, Emotional & Mental Health) through improved local provision	31/08/2024	In progress
5 Continue to improve transition to adulthood planning and post 16 placements for children with SEND by closer working with Adult Social Care. SEND Strategy Steering Group	30/01/2024	In progress
6 Strategic Asset Review outputs to be reviewed with Council to secure special schools on community school sites to meet the needed 244 projected places.	09/02/2024	In progress
7 Options for special school delivery to be implemented	01/09/2024	In progress
8 New special school provision of up to 244 places to be available	31/08/2025	In progress
9 40 more 'Additionally Resourced Provision' places in North and East Planning Area	01/01/2025	In progress

Background Information

The Local Authority (LA) has a statutory responsibility to provide sufficient school places for pupils, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). Brighter Futures for Children (BfFC) works in partnership with Reading Borough Council (RBC) and other stakeholders to discharge this duty. There is a national and local shortage of resources and placements for children within SEND, in addition to an increase in demand for support and services. Following a steady increase in the number of Educational Health and Care Plan's (EHCP) since 2018 there has been a sharper increase in EHCP's in 2022/2023, which has been at a higher rate than the increase in the population of children and young people, meaning that a higher proportion of pupils now have an EHCP. Following the period of the pandemic more

children and young people are being identified as having SEND, including in the early years, particularly increased levels of speech, language and communication needs and social and emotional mental health needs. There has also been an increase in children with autism. Collectively these needs have resulted in the increase in EHCP's, the number of which rose at a higher rate in the last year than previous years.

Demand for EHCPs is rising. As of November 2023, there are 1959 Children and Young People (CYP) aged 0-25 with EHCPs for whom BfC is responsible. This represents an increase in EHCPs of 12% since January 2023. If EHCP numbers continue to rise at this rate, we anticipate there being 2194 EHCP plans by September 2024. This projected increase is supported by data collected by the Early Years (EY) team, who have already identified 44 children due to start Reception in September 2024 who are either already in the Educational Health Care Needs Assessment (EHCNA) process, or for whom evidence is being gathered ahead of an EHCNA request being made.

Based on current data from the SEN2 EHCP forecast 2022-23 in Reading on average 46% of CYP with an EHCP aged 0-25 have their needs met in mainstream provision. This leaves 54% of children with an EHCP in Reading placed in: alternative provision (AP) (4%), independent non-maintained special schools (INMSS) (5%), maintained special schools (MSS) (37%) and additionally resourced provisions (ARPs) (8%).

Based on projected EHCP numbers for September 2024, from September 2024, Reading would need 1184 places for CYP with EHCPs outside of mainstream settings. From September 2024, **if** all proposed ARPs open, and **if** Hamilton school increases its intake to 64 children, there will be 800 places available for children in ARPs (408) and MSS (392). New all-through INMSS provision is currently being explored, with a possible 140 places in total for which Reading children would be given priority from September 2024.

This means that there will be 940 places available in INMSS/ARP/MSS for Reading children, but a projected need of 1184 places, leaving a shortfall of 244 places.

Participation in the DfE Delivering Better Value programme established a future demand and financial forecast based on data from 2020 to 2023. This identified an unmitigated forecast of financial pressure, which, if not mitigated, would lead to an accrued budget pressure of £97,598,000 by 2027/28. The pressures are being driven through the significant increase in Education health and Care Plans from April 2022, and the increased demand pressures leading to more INMSS places being used, in the absence of other more cost-effective school places being available. Planned mitigations reduce the projected budget pressure to £50,000,000 by 2030. Further special school places are needed to reduce the budget pressure further.

Existing Controls in Place

- The local area SEND Strategy 2022-27 sets out partnership actions to identify and respond to needs of children with SEND at the earliest opportunity and in the most efficient way and develop the appropriate range of provision to meet need. Joint partnership steering group for the strategy is overseeing action plan and monitoring progress.
- New free special school opened in Wokingham September 2023, providing 75 places for Wokingham and Reading children, as a joint partnership between Reading and Wokingham Councils. 17 places have been secured for Reading children as part of the phased opening.
- An additional 90 places have been secured from local schools to deliver Additionally Resourced Provision from September 2023.
- Plans for a further 170 places in Additionally Resourced Provision from April 2024 in place.

- Brighter Future for Children and RBC have undertaken work to appraise options, including RBC owned assets and school sites to secure more mainstream and specialist school places for children with SEND for January 2024, September 2024, and September 2025.
- Two independent special school providers have established additional local provision in the past nine months, which is helping meet immediate need for places for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. Exploring options with other providers to establish provision in the area for 2023/24 continues.
- Regular High Needs Block meetings monitor the spend in this area and inform forecasting. Monitoring occurs monthly.
- Recruitment to key Delivering Better Value posts completed. New SEND advisory and support service commenced January 2024.
- Strategic Asset Review completed, identifying opportunities for special schools on community school sites to meet the needed 244 projected places.



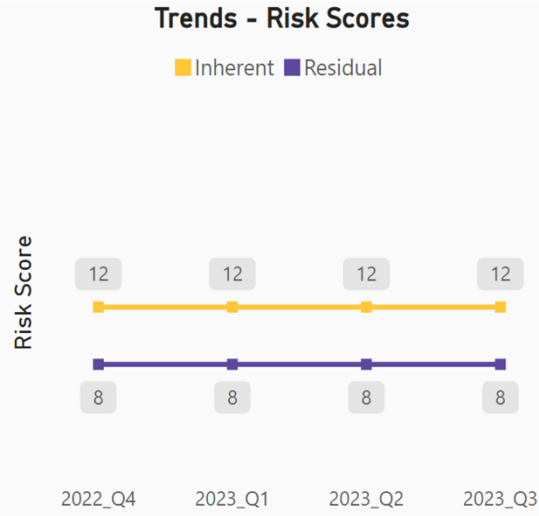
Risk:
Strategic Risk: Companies Risk – That the council fails to have in place appropriate oversight and scrutiny of its companies.

Register:
 DOR
 Risk owner:
 Graham, Michael

8
Current Score

Cause
 Corporate mismanagement.

Potential Impact
 Risk that the Council fails to have in place appropriate oversight and scrutiny of its companies (Reading Transport Ltd, Brighter Futures for Children Ltd, Homes for Reading Ltd and Reading Hampshire Property Partnership Ltd) and is unaware of risks to those companies (pension fund deficits, General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) compliance, loan repayments etc) and is impacted by an unplanned exposure relating to those companies. The risks could be financial, legal or reputational.



Risk Scoring

Risk Type	2022 Q4	2023 Q1	2023 Q2	2023 Q3
▲				
Impact (Inherent)	4	4	4	4
Likelihood (Inherent)	3	3	3	3
Inherent	12	12	12	12
Impact (Residual)	4	4	4	4
Likelihood (Residual)	2	2	2	2
Residual	8	8	8	8

Specific Actions Required

	Title	Date for completion	Status
1	Reading Transport Limited: Seeking to ensure greater consistency of Council / Company oversight through review of respective Company Articles and governance.	31/03/2024	In progress
2	The Council has commissioned an independent review of the business model for Homes for Reading Ltd in light of possible changes to the local government borrowing regime.	31/01/2024	In progress
3	Review of Reading Hampshire Property Partnership	31/01/2024	Not started
4	Council is reviewing the Articles of Association for Reading Transport Ltd.	31/03/2024	In progress
5	Brighter Futures for Children - Contract Review	29/06/2024	In progress

Background Information

The Council owns, or has a significant interest, in a number of companies either as shareholder or member. Whilst these companies do operate services for specific reasons, they have to be managed within a comprehensive governance framework to ensure there is effective oversight by the Council. This will allow the Council to properly discharge its duties as shareholder or member.

Existing Controls in Place

- The Council commissioned a review of the governance and performance of Reading Transport Ltd (RTL). As a result, new appointments were made to the Board for non-executive directors. A new independent non-executive Chair has also been appointed. In place 2021/2022
- Regular Contract Management Group meetings occur with Brighter Futures for Children Ltd (BFfC). The financial reporting has greatly expanded and provides greater visibility of financial risks. Overspend related to Looked After Children is supported by relevant panel meetings with high-cost placements to be signed off by the Reading Borough Council Chief Executive. Process and meetings in place.
- There are contract governance arrangements in place with Brighter Futures for Children to monitor company performance, including monthly financial reporting and bi-monthly (once every 2 months).



Risk:
Strategic Risk: Cyber - Risk of loss from cyber attack

Register:
DOR
Risk owner:
Chalmers, Martin

16
Current Score

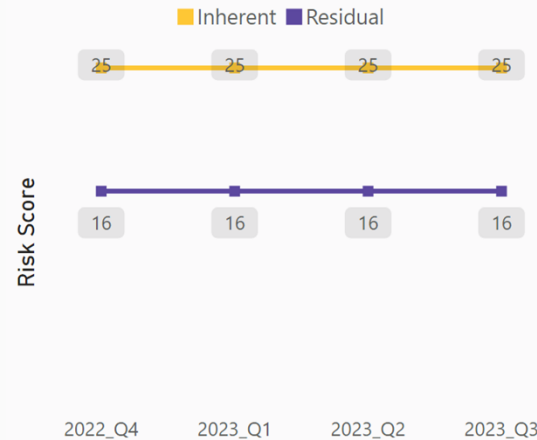
Cause

Attack by hostile nation states, criminals or activists. Likelihood remains high. The continuing evolution of the threat environment means that the likelihood will remain high, notwithstanding the sitions is exerting downward pressure on likelihood, this is balanced by worsening of the threat environment. (See first ever Government Cyber Security Strategy to step up Britain’s defence and resilience - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)).

Potential Impact

Loss of service, loss of reputation, legal challenges, recovery costs.

Trends - Risk Scores



Risk Scoring

Risk Type	2022 Q4	2023 Q1	2023 Q2	2023 Q3
Impact (Inherent)	5	5	5	5
Likelihood (Inherent)	5	5	5	5
Inherent	25	25	25	25
Impact (Residual)	4	4	4	4
Likelihood (Residual)	4	4	4	4
Residual	16	16	16	16

Specific Actions Required

Title	Date for completion	Status
1 Conduct Local Government Cyber Assessment Framework assessment and develop remediation plan	31/03/2024	In progress
2 Agree and implement policy and approach to enforcing mandatory training	31/03/2024	In progress
3 Achieve Cyber Essentials Plus certification	29/09/2024	In progress
4 Preparedness for cyber attack to be assessed as part of 2023/24 business continuity plan refresh. A project focused on this is being mobilised.	29/03/2024	In progress
5 Agreeing planned cyber attack rehearsal	31/03/2024	Not started

Background Information

The continuing evolution of the threat environment - not least owing to the war in Ukraine and Middle East - means that the likelihood will remain high, notwithstanding the significant set of actions in place. As evidence of this, in May 2023, we intercepted 2.3m attempted attacks via email (77% of incoming email) and blocked over 5,000 attempts by users to access web links that led to malicious sites.

The high impact of cyber incidents has been demonstrated by incidents such as the Haringey and Redcar & Cleveland ransomware attacks (the latter having been assessed as having had total business impact of £6m).

Existing Controls in Place

Organisational controls

- Security governance provided by Information Governance Board, which reviews policy and strategy relating to cyber security, and also monitor reports of security incidents to identify corrective action. Assistant Director Legal & Democratic Services has been appointed as cyber security champion for Corporate Management Team (CMT), and a similar role is played in Council by the Lead Member for Corporate & Customer Services.
- Staff awareness and training is critical. Training (including annual refresher training) has been made mandatory by both the Council and Brighter Futures for Children (BFfC). In place and ongoing.
- Cyber insurance in place (and ongoing purchase)
- Assessment of security strategy and policy to be conducted against new Local Government profile of Cyber Assessment Framework being conducted by Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities Future Councils programme (as part of our grant award).

Controls focused on resistance to attack

- Improved defences against attack from Internet via email and internet are now in place.
- External certification of cyber countermeasures against Cyber Essentials Plus framework - work to address gaps identified by internal review is in progress, with the most significant actions relating to work (by both IT and business teams) on certain legacy applications. Following an internal audit report that raised questions over remediation plans, an external review has been conducted. There were no major new issues arising from this review. However, we have moved the target date for Cyber Essentials assessment back by 6 months to reflect the revised timing of the implementation of some business applications on which achievement of the criteria depend, and also to allow time for a full audit of business and web applications (meeting recently introduced requirements of the standard) in progress. See 'Specific Actions' - Planned for 2024/25

Controls focused on recovery from attack

- Cyber incident response plan and cyber incident “playbooks” to reflect learning from recent attacks on the public sector and the latest guidance from the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC).
- Preparedness for cyber-attack to be assessed as part of 2023/24 business continuity plan refresh. See 'Specific Actions'
- Cyber resilience planning and rehearsal - Limited exercise run in Legal & Democratic Services; wider exercise to be planned as part of the 23/24 business continuity plan refresh. See 'Specific Actions'
- Conduct independent assessment of security improvement plans and threat monitoring to ensure we have robust plan to achieve Cyber Essentials Plus certification.



Risk:
Strategic Risk: Failure to adapt to the impacts of climate change (Climate adaptation)

Register:
 DEGNS
 Risk owner:
 Townsend, Keith

12
 Current Score

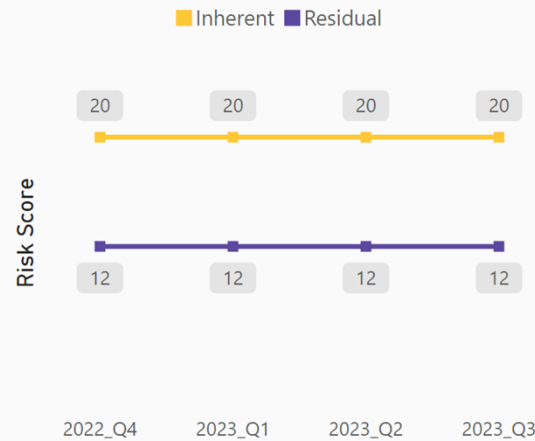
Cause

Inadequate planning and preparedness and long-term planning to adapt to the impacts of climate change.

Potential Impact

Climate change impacts (hotter drier summers, warmer wetter winters, and more extreme weather events) have a range of negative social, economic and environmental consequences, up to and including loss of life, as well as amplifying other risks (e.g. to public health, economic security, service continuity, infrastructure and supply chains). Action to adapt can reduce impacts, though the likelihood of such impacts occurring remains high, and generally rising in the coming decades, in the context of global warming which is 'baked in' as a result of historic emissions.

Trends - Risk Scores



Risk Scoring

Risk Type	2022 Q4	2023 Q1	2023 Q2	2023 Q3
Impact (Inherent)	5	5	5	5
Likelihood (Inherent)	4	4	4	4
Inherent	20	20	20	20
Impact (Residual)	3	3	3	3
Likelihood (Residual)	4	4	4	4
Residual	12	12	12	12

Specific Actions Required

Title	Date for completion	Status
1 Business continuity plans to take account of climate impacts and changes to working practices which may be needed to protect staff and service users	31/03/2024	In progress
2 Ensure the Local Plan review updates adaptation policies if required	30/11/2024	In progress
3 Complete corporate climate change adaptation plan for the Council	31/03/2024	In progress
4 Continue to roll-out Carbon Literacy training to priority cohorts of senior officers and members throughout 2024	31/03/2024	In progress

Background Information

Key climate impacts for which the Council needs to prepare are:

Flood Risk: The Council is responsible for surface water flooding and produced a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy in 2015.

Heatwave risk: Various local agencies, including the Council and National Health Service (NHS), participate in the Berkshire Heatwave Plan and England Heatwave Plan.

Extreme weather events: The Council has a variety of roles as infrastructure owner, service provider, community leader and first responder which may involve it taking some level of responsibility prior to/during/after extreme weather events.

Existing Controls in Place

- **Flood Risk:** The Council is responsible for surface water flooding and produced a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy in 2015. Action has been taken in all but one of 6 'hotspots' identified and plans for works at the remaining site (Stone Street) have been approved. Flash flooding from extreme rainfall events is likely to be an increasing but unpredictable risk. The Environment Agency is responsible for fluvial flooding and we are working with the Agency to address our main fluvial flood risks from the Thames, though the Agency's decision not to proceed with the Reading & Caversham Flood Alleviation Scheme raises questions about how to address the inherent flood risk which remains. Statutory responsibility: Lead Local Flood Authority responsibility sits with Environment and Commercial Services (Sam Shean). Procedures in place: Emergency Planning Officer will open rest centres if major flooding occurs due to extreme rainfall under direction taken from Thames Valley Police Command. A sandbag policy is in place.
- **Heatwave risk:** Various local agencies, including the Council and National Health Service (NHS), participate in the Berkshire Heatwave Plan and England Heatwave Plan. A new 'Heat Health Planning Advice' alert was introduced in 2023 and the Council has played its part in responding to these alerts. Heatwave plans were tested in the 2022 heatwaves during which there were a significant number of excess deaths. As the severity and frequency of hot weather events increases, however, more action will be needed to protect vulnerable people and infrastructure.
- **Adverse Weather and Health Plan:** This new plan was launched by UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) in 2023 and creates new responsibilities for Local Authorities and others in responding to adverse weather events which may impact on public health. Reading Public Health and Emergency Planning are working on this activity.
- **Extreme weather events:** Service business continuity plans are in place to help prepare for such events, but it will be important to ensure that these reflect the changing risk profile associated with climate change and extreme weather.
- **Climate impact assessment in decision-making:** A protocol for climate impact assessment in Committee reports is now in place and being used by report authors - this includes tests to ensure that decisions are taking account of key climate impacts.
- **Planning policy and new development:** The Reading Local Plan includes policies on climate change adaptation (CC3) and flood risk (EN18) designed to ensure that new development is resilient to climate impacts. The Local Plan monitoring process should enable assessment of how well these policies are being applied, and the Local Plan review starting this year provides an opportunity to revisit policies which may support resilience to climate impacts. See specific action 2.
- **3rd National Adaptation Plan (NAP 3):** Was published in July 2023 and provides an updated view of the key climate related risks and vulnerabilities facing the UK at national level (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/third-national-adaptation-programme-nap3#:~:text=The%20NAP3%20sets%20out%20the,under%20the%20Adaptation%20Reporting%20Power>). It also emphasises the need for Local government to ensure that local services are resilient to local climate impacts. We are expecting further clarification on what is expected by Local Government in terms of Resilience Planning.
- **A programme of accredited Carbon Literacy training** is being rolled out to priority cohorts of senior officers and members to help embed awareness of climate risk and response across the organisation - as of November 2023, almost 75% of the target cohort of officers have completed or booked for the training, and 50% of the priority cohort of members have completed the training.



Risk:
Strategic Risk: Failure to deliver zero carbon commitments (Climate mitigation)

Register:
DEGNS
Risk owner:
Townsend, Keith

15
Current Score

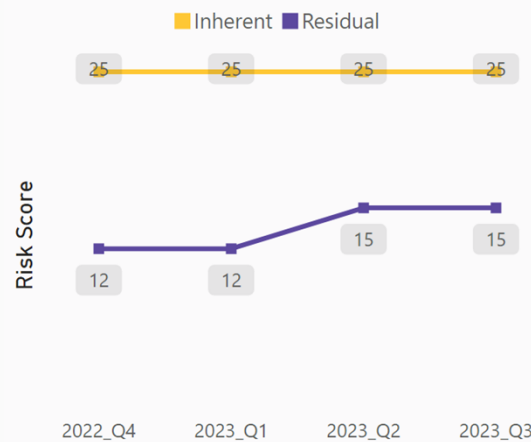
Cause

1. Lack of clear policies and plans in place to deliver 2. Insufficient investment of Council resources in delivery; 3. Lack of partner/resident engagement and ownership of climate action; 4. Inadequate government funding and policy support for delivery

Potential Impact

The main direct impacts on the Council are (i) practical in the sense that if the Council is not seen to be leading by example, the success of its efforts to persuade other partners and residents to cut their emissions will be reduced and (ii) reputational, in that the Council may be accused of not delivering on its promises, noting that some of the action required to deliver a net zero Reading by 2030 is beyond the Council's control. The 'impact' score is therefore based on this rather than the ultimately catastrophic impacts which will arise in the long-term from unmitigated climate change (see also 'Failure to adapt to climate change' risk card).

Trends - Risk Scores



Risk Scoring

Risk Type	2022 Q4	2023 Q1	2023 Q2	2023 Q3
Impact (Inherent)	5	5	5	5
Likelihood (Inherent)	5	5	5	5
Inherent	25	25	25	25
Impact (Residual)	3	3	3	3
Likelihood (Residual)	4	4	5	5
Residual	12	12	15	15

Specific Actions Required

Title	Date for completion	Status
1 New capital bids required to continue decarbonisation of capital assets (buildings and fleet)	29/02/2024	In progress
2 Climate training roll out to priority cohorts (officers and members) to continue through 2024.	29/02/2024	In progress
3 Implement engagement plan for review of climate strategy with partners and produce new Strategy for 2025-30	30/11/2025	In progress

Background Information

This risk relates primarily to the Borough-wide target of net zero by 2030 which the Council can influence but not control in its entirety (delivering the corporate net zero by 2030 target is a separate risk in the Directorate of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services (DEGNS) Directorate Risk Register, currently rated 'Amber'. A major factor is the prevailing government policy and funding position which, as Reading's climate emergency declaration made clear, would need to change significantly to enable the 2030 target to be met. Thus far, this has not been the case to the extent required. Failure to deliver the Council's net zero commitments will ultimately contribute to

catastrophic climate change impacts although the 'contribution' of greenhouse gas emissions from Reading will ultimately be indistinguishable from that of other jurisdictions. Recent policy announcements and changes to the Government's Net Zero Strategy have led to a dilution of some key policy commitments at national level which will make it harder to meet the extremely challenging target of a net zero Reading by 2030.

Existing Controls in Place

Action is broken down in relation to 'cause' categories listed above as follows:

1. Lack of clear policies and plans in place to deliver:

- Reading Borough Council (RBC) worked with partners to develop the Reading Climate Emergency Strategy 2020-25 - includes action plans for all key policy areas (endorsed by Strategic Environment, Planning & Transport (SEPT) Committee November 2020). Implementation ongoing and review of Strategy for the period 2025-30 is underway.
- Reading Borough Council produces its own Corporate Carbon Plan to set out its pathway to net zero and action required (adopted by Strategic Environment, Planning & Transport Committee November 2020). In place and delivery ongoing.
- Annual Reports on progress with both the Climate Strategy and Carbon Plan are presented to Strategic Environment, Planning & Transport (SEPT) Committee on the anniversary of their publication. In place - latest Annual Reports were published November 2023.
- A mandatory section of Committee Reports requires report authors to assess the environmental and climate impacts of decisions, using a climate impact assessment tool and accompanying guidance where appropriate. In place - periodic audit of compliance completed Q4 2022-23 and remedial action underway.

2. Insufficient investment of Council resources in delivery:

- The Council's capital programme includes significant investment designed to directly or indirectly support net zero goals, including investment in public transport, energy efficient housing, sustainable waste management practices, and carbon reduction measures in the Council's own buildings and fleet. However, these capital funds (principally the low carbon capital programme and the fleet replacement programme) expire in the next year or two, and further provision will need to be made to manage this risk. Efforts have also been made to secure external grants to support installation of low carbon measures (e.g., successful application to Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (TVB LEP) for Civic Offices decarbonisation, application to Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) pending for Hexagon decarbonisation).
- While the Council's revenue budgets for dedicated work on climate change are modest in isolation, efforts are being made to ensure that climate action is embedded in all services and service plans through provision of support such as guidance and training for officers. A programme of Carbon Literacy training for senior officers and elected members is now underway with almost 75% of the priority cohort of officers trained or booked for training, and 50% of the priority cohort of members trained. Guidance and training in place.

3. Engagement of partners and residents: Emissions from the Council's direct operations represent just 1.2% of the total for Reading, and it can influence an estimate 30% of Borough emissions overall. Securing ownership of climate action from organisations, businesses and residents is therefore vital. Some of these partners come together in the Reading Climate Change Partnership (RCCP) which is hosted by the Council. The Council is working with partners to build ownership of key actions via a review of the

Climate Emergency Strategy which is now underway with a view to updating the Strategy for the period 2025-2030. Reading Climate Change Partnership Board initiated this review in January 2023, an outline engagement plan agreed October 2023, and a tender process to secure external support for engagement process design and delivery is underway. A Reading Leaders' Summit is proposed for early 2024 to galvanise commitment to the principles of the Climate Emergency Strategy

Developed engagement plan for review of the Climate Strategy with Partners December 2023

4. Inadequate government funding and policy support for delivery

- While Government policy is aligned to net zero, the national target of 2050 remains less ambitious than the local target of 2030. As such, some policies are not fully aligned, and while Government has made significant funding available it is not of the scale required to support net zero by 2030. Furthermore, most funding streams are extremely competitive and/or over-subscribed. The Council therefore works through representative bodies to lobby for more generous financial support and a more ambitious policy framework to enable net zero by 2030. Regular engagement with representative bodies who have influence over government i.e., Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning and Transport (ADEPT) Climate Board continues, and this lobbying is an ongoing task.

The annual progress report on the Reading Climate Change Strategy in November 2023 highlights that while progress was being made with Borough-wide emissions reduction (which have been cut by 51% since 2005, the 8th largest reduction out of 374 UK local authorities), the pace of the reduction needs to increase significantly to achieve 'net zero by 2030'. Some of the Borough-wide action needed to achieve net zero is beyond the Council's control, but the wider community understandably looks to the Council to lead by example. In this regard the Council is broadly on track to meet its own corporate Carbon Plan target of an 85% reduction in emissions by 2025 (en-route to net zero by 2030) - achieving a 73.9% cut since 2008/09. Further investment will, however, be needed to meet the net zero by 2030 target. Monitoring and reporting on an annual basis is in place.

An internal audit of the Council's climate action programme was concluded in February 2022 giving 'reasonable assurance' - this made a number of recommendations to improve accountability for delivery of the Council's net zero commitments which are in the process of being implemented, including:

- Clear identification of responsible teams/officers for actions in the Reading Climate Emergency Strategy where Reading Borough Council (RBC) is listed as a delivery partner, with these actions being better reflected in the Service Plans of relevant services - this work was completed in September 2022 and guidance was issued to Assistant Directors' on how to reflect climate action in Service Plans from 2023-24 - this has been updated and re-issued for the 2024-25 Service Plans.
- Clearer articulation of timescales and accountability for various actions in the corporate Carbon Plan - this was completed in November 2022 and, again, guidance has been issued to relevant Assistant Directors on reflecting these actions in Service Plans from 2024-25
- Improved support and training for officers and services to embed climate action in their work - a climate module is included in staff induction, guidance on climate assessment in Committee Reports has been produced, and sessions on climate have been included in Team Talk and Senior Leadership Group meetings. A more comprehensive 'Carbon Literacy' training offer for members and managers is underway. See 'specific action' 2.

Reading's Climate Emergency Declaration made clear that additional powers and resources would be needed from central government to enable delivery of 'net zero by 2030' - to date, these have not been forthcoming to the extent required and this remains probably the biggest risk to delivery of the Council's commitments.



Risk:
Strategic Risk: Failure to implement the Tackling Inequality Strategy within the Borough

Register:
 DOR
 Risk owner:
 Handford, Gavin

6

Current Score

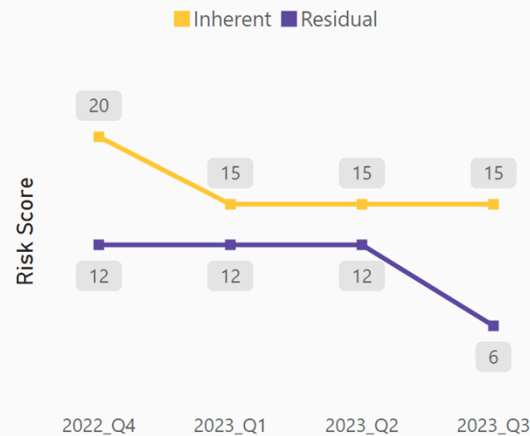
Cause

Lack of resources, focus and coordination of internal teams, deficit of community infrastructure to support local delivery, lack of effective community engagement leading to inappropriate interventions and lack of support.

Potential Impact

Skills and income deficit is not addressed, leading to current inequalities being exacerbated: Low pay/worklessness, children living in poverty, poorer physical and mental health outcomes, increased isolation and marginalisation of residents impacted.

Trends - Risk Scores



Risk Scoring

Risk Type	2022 Q4	2023 Q1	2023 Q2	2023 Q3
Impact (Inherent)	5	5	5	5
Likelihood (Inherent)	4	3	3	3
Inherent	20	15	15	15
Impact (Residual)	4	4	4	3
Likelihood (Residual)	3	3	3	2
Residual	12	12	12	6

Specific Actions Required

	Title	Date for completion	Status
1	New Education Strategy being drawn up by Brighter Futures for Children reflecting the need to boost aspiration and attainment.	31/01/2024	In progress
2	Refresh Voluntary and Community Sector Action Plan	31/01/2024	In progress
3	Approve Place Based Partnership Action Plans	16/02/2024	In progress

Background Information

The most recent national analysis of deprivation (Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2019 & 2021 census) highlighted that within Reading there are some areas that are within the bottom 5% in the country for education, skills, and training, and income deprivation affecting both children and older people. These pockets of substantial deprivation exist within broader areas of the borough which are within the bottom 10% and 20% of areas of the country for overall deprivation. The Tackling Inequality Strategy details how the Council will support and work with residents to enable them to have a more financially sustainable future built on improving education, skills and employment opportunities. A key element of the Strategy is the two Place-Based Pilots within the Church and Whitley wards.

It is not expected that the Government will undertake another Indices of Multiple Deprivation analysis until at least 2024/2025.

The reduced risk score for Q3 2023 is because the first monitoring report on the Tackling Inequality Strategy is being presented to Policy Committee in January 2024 and most actions are being flagged as green at this point.

Existing Controls in Place

- Social Inclusion Strategy (now the Tackling Inequality Strategy) and Action Plan approved in January 2023.
- Social Inclusion funding agreed for 2022/23-2024/25
- Social Inclusion Board (Chaired by Chief Executive), with senior stakeholders from Directorate of Economic Growth & Neighbourhoods Services (DEGNS), Brighter Futures for Children (BFFC), Public Health and Directorate of Resources (DoR). Board meets six weekly. The Board covers: Development and co-ordination of the broader Social Inclusion agenda, commissioning work to address skills and education, using a place-based approach to address the barriers to education, provide oversight on key work programmes such Voluntary & Community Sector action plan, Community Health Champions, Volunteering for Reading road map. Detailed work programme presented to Policy Committee in October 2022. Actions are picked up by the new posts.
- Place-Based Pilots and sponsors agreed and activity underway, with regular reports to Social Inclusion Board
- Delivery meetings and local engagement occurring monthly.
- New Social Inclusion and Voluntary & Community Sector (VCS) Partnership Manager appointed to focus on developing the strategic partnership with the Voluntary & Community Sector and coordination / visibility of activity taking place across the Council.
- Community Project Officer posts recruited to (up to 2025)
- Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) strategic action plan agreed, with VCS Compact adopted in 2023. Action plan being reviewed with VCS.
- Closing the Gap – Phase 1 of the prospectus for £1.3m 3yr Commissioning framework with the Voluntary & Community Sector completed. Covering three priorities: Getting out and staying out of Poverty; Building Community Wellbeing and Resilience; and Voluntary & Community Sector Infrastructure. Phase 2 commissioned to increase capacity for Debt and Money Management advice and support, targeted peer support for autistic, learning disability, and deaf communities.
- A range of potential projects has been developed for the Place Based Partnerships (PBP) for consideration by the sponsors and Social Inclusion Board. These projects have been identified by services, partners and community groups. The projects are evaluated against the key priorities for PBPs. In addition, existing service activity is being captured within the action plan to improve coordination of delivery and identify areas for additional focus in line with the priorities.



Risk:
Strategic Risk: Failure to respond to a major incident health hazard or manage a significant outbreak of communicable disease

Register:
 DCASC
 Risk owner:
 White, Martin

9
 Current Score

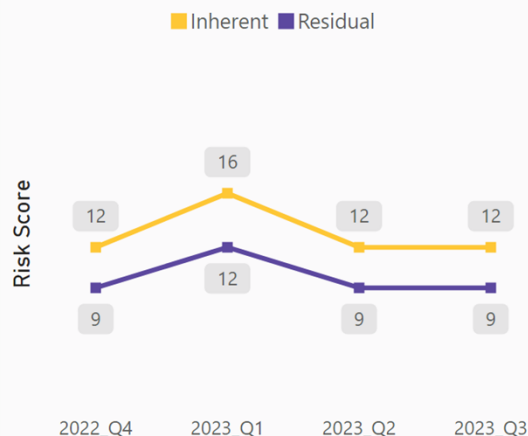
Cause

Lack of public health protection specialist staff capacity to respond and manage the situation.

Potential Impact

Death or injury. Reputational Damage. Insurance claims. Legal challenges.

Trends - Risk Scores



Risk Scoring

Risk Type	2022 Q4	2023 Q1	2023 Q2	2023 Q3
Impact (Inherent)	4	4	4	4
Likelihood (Inherent)	3	4	3	3
Inherent	12	16	12	12
Impact (Residual)	3	4	3	3
Likelihood (Residual)	3	3	3	3
Residual	9	12	9	9

Specific Actions Required

Title	Date for completion	Status
1 Update the Pandemic Flu Plan and review procedures. Once complete the residual risk will reduce.	29/02/2024	In progress
2 Undertake a pandemic influenza exercise. Once complete the residual risk will reduce.	29/02/2024	In progress
3 Director of Publish Health Annual Report to be presented to the Corporate Management Team for initial discussion . Once complete the residual risk will reduce.	31/01/2024	In progress
4 Appointment of a Director of Public Health with strategic oversight of health protection and emergency planning functions. Interim currently in place until April 24. Once in place the risk status will be tolerable.	31/03/2024	Not started
5 Mechanism to be put in place for linking Public Health risks identified within the Local Resilience Forum back to the Council to ensure they are addressed. The new Thames Valley LRF Resilience Project will help resolve shortfalls	29/09/2024	In progress

Background Information

Local authorities' statutory responsibilities for Public Health are set out in the Health and Social Care Act (2012). Regulation 8 imposes a duty on local authorities to provide information and advice to certain persons and bodies within their area in order to promote the preparation of, or participation in, health protection arrangements against threats to the health of the local population, including infectious disease, environmental hazards and extreme weather events. This also encompasses Regulation 6 which requires local authorities to provide or make arrangements to secure the provision of open access sexual health services in their area including HIV. Each area should have or be part of a Health Protection Partnership which enable horizon scanning for risks and processes for mitigation and response. Pandemic Influenza has been the highest

risk to health in the UK and therefore each area should have a Pandemic Influenza plan in place that is widely understood, exercised and annual review of business continuity planning. These structures are not in place and therefore we are not meeting our mandatory requirements on health protection. There is also fragmentation as the Public Health Team currently has no oversight of emergency planning in terms of joined up working on preparedness, response, and recovery of major incidents.

Section 30 of the 2012 Act requires each upper-tier local authority, acting jointly with the Secretary of State, to appoint a director of public health whose role is integral to the duties for health improvement and health protection. Currently there is an Interim Director of Public Health in post across Berkshire West Local Authorities pending a Local Government Association review of the structure.

The peak in risk at the beginning of Q1 was due to the lack of Public Health Protection capacity within Berkshire West shared Team and Reading Team. Now recruited interim posts to both teams, hence risk reduced.

Existing Controls in Place

- Continue to support COVID vaccine rollout and use data to consider where hesitancy exists. This is progress in Reading and targeted work was undertaken during COVID to reach communities where there was reduced take up.
- Focus of vaccine uptake should also include all immunisation programmes from newborn work with Integrated Care Partnerships, Primary Care Networks and higher education settings for Measles, Mumps & Rubella catch up awareness through to shingles and pneumonia in the elderly. This should be a focus on the Health Protection Annual report to the Health and Wellbeing Board. Interim health protection principal (6-month contract) whose workplan includes working with the System Partners to drive the uptake rates. Work ongoing long term.
- Recruited to an interim post for a Consultant in Public Health (Health Protection) in the Berkshire West Team.
- Recruitment of Public Health Specialist (Health Protection) to deliver against actions outlined. Essential aspects of this are:
 - In partnership with Public Health colleagues in Wokingham and West Berkshire, we have re-established the Berkshire West Health Protection Board, which meets regularly to monitor the risks. Meets quarterly. Ingrid Slade chairs.
- Establish a robust structure for dealing with Health Protection, from preparedness through response to recovery. A full review of these structures are underway. Good structures were established during COVID across Reading and these have served well in supporting additional need such as settlement of Afghanistan nationals and Ukraine refugees. A partnership needs to be established, building on this success, so there is a forum for bringing together Public Health, social care, emergency planning, housing and screening and immunisations to meet Public Health statutory requirements around health protection and resilience, to plan, exercise and mitigate risk and establish a clear process should response be required.
- Create a Health Protection Board to focus on all Infectious diseases, mandatory requirement under the Health & Social Care Act 2012. A proposal on the establishment of a Health Protection & Resilience partnership is being developed, following a review and mapping of existing processes. In place for Berkshire West, shared with Wokingham and West Berkshire.
- Staffing capacity - there is a need for additional staffing support - health protection specialist required. A job description has been developed with the intention of filling this role on a Full Time Contract for 12 months from non-recurring funding, to help establish working practices, update plans and put in place systematic exercising. 2 interim posts in place. Recruitment complete and post filled.
- Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum is being supported by a Consultant colleague from Wokingham. Currently the Public Health representatives sit on the Local Resilience Forum executive and co-chair the Local Health Resilience Partnership.

- Closer alignment of health protection to emergency planning has occurred. These disciplines sit closely together in an incident, and the need to ensure the public health aspects are considered. This is in place through existing local and regional forums for incidents.
- Flu (resulting in staff absence) is a consideration in all Business Continuity Plans. Work is shared between Business Continuity and Public Health
- Service delivery and risk assessments pertaining to business continuity plans in relation to pandemic flu to form part of the annual health protection exercise across the Council (They sit with Services/Directorate.) The impact of flu is lack of staff which has been considered in Business Continuity Plans.



Risk:
Strategic Risk: Failure to retain and recruit staff

Register:
DOR

Risk owner:
Cook, Kathryn

12
Current Score

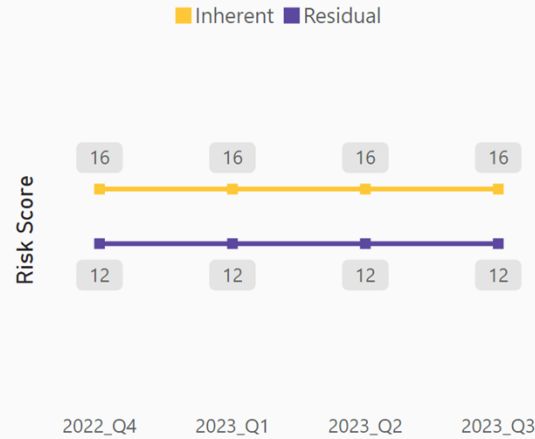
Cause

For some areas there is a national shortage of skilled staff (e.g. Social Workers, Occupational Therapists, local government lawyers and financial professionals, Planners etc). In other areas, local government salaries and the impact of the cost of living crisis may mean that the Council is not able to keep pace with salaries being offered in the private sector (e.g. Surveyors, IT professionals and Drivers) and staff may leave for higher paid jobs in other sectors.

Potential Impact

Failure to meet demand. Statutory duties not met. Negative impact on staff motivation and stress related illness.

Trends - Risk Scores



Risk Scoring

Risk Type	2022 Q4	2023 Q1	2023 Q2	2023 Q3
▲				
Impact (Inherent)	4	4	4	4
Likelihood (Inherent)	4	4	4	4
Inherent	16	16	16	16
Impact (Residual)	3	3	3	3
Likelihood (Residual)	4	4	4	4
Residual	12	12	12	12

Specific Actions Required

Title	Date for completion	Status
1 Delivery of year one of the three year Inclusion and Diversity Strategy and plan which will ensure all employees feel included and supported at work, changes to recruitment practices, Inclusivity & Diversity, capability building	31/12/2026	In progress
2 Further development of the Council's approach to apprenticeships including targeting some apprenticeships at care experienced people and focussing recruitment in more deprived parts of the Borough	28/03/2025	In progress
3 Developing closer links to the University in order to attract appropriate recruits, particularly in relation to hard to fill roles.	28/03/2025	In progress
4 A communications campaign to continually promote the benefits available to staff is underway (e.g. Employee Assistance Programme, benefits platform and discounts with retailers and gym memberships, lease cars scheme, pensions etc).	31/03/2024	In progress
5 BFFC : A recruitment and retention proposal is currently underway to convert the high number of agency into permanent hires	01/03/2024	In progress
6 Deployment of the new approach to work experience following a successful trial in 2023 - providing opportunities for school children to understand the opportunities available in local government and gain work experience	29/11/2024	In progress
7 Development of an engagement framework for the council to ensure an engaged workforce - includes the development of staff groups and the staff awards	28/03/2025	In progress

Background Information

There is an on-going shortage of skilled staff in the employment market for some key local government professions (e.g., Social Workers, Occupational Therapists, local government lawyers and financial professionals) and therefore recruitment in these areas is difficult. We compare our data with other local authorities and national recruitment statistics.

Existing Controls in Place

Reading Borough Council

- Resourcing Team well established to ensure proactive approach and success of permanent and all other types of recruitment. Time to fill (advert to start date) has reduced to an average of 57 days (Nov 2023). Success rate of recruitment is currently 82% (Nov 2023). Whilst fill rates are high for most jobs, there are a small number of jobs where considerable challenges recruiting have been experienced. These difficulties are experienced on a national level by most local authorities and include jobs such as experienced solicitors and social workers. Our results in recent months have been encouraging with a number of hard to fill roles recruited to, including experienced Solicitors, Social Workers, Occupational Therapists, and roles in our Care teams. The Human Resources Team continue to work with services to help improve recruitment and retention. This has included applying market supplements to Social Worker roles and projects to promote roles in our Adult Social Care, Legal Teams as well as an apprenticeship drive planned for February.
- Apprentice and work experience programmes provide access to a pool of younger and less experienced and skilled staff who can be internally developed to fill hard-to-recruit positions in the future.
- Access to pool of appropriately qualified temporary staff via agency contract. The contract continues to perform well, meeting the vast majority (95% by spend) of our temporary staffing needs and kept off-contract usage to a minimum.
- Staff Surveys were run in 2021 and 2022 to provide insight into how staff feel about the Council as an employer and an opportunity to build on and maintain positive results and address areas for improvement. The 2023 staff survey was launched in June 2023 (closed on 14/7/23). Questions asked were identical to previous surveys (to enable tracking of responses over time) and were supplemented with a small number of additional questions to inform our Inclusion and Diversity Strategy. Detailed results were shared with Corporate Management Team (CMT) on 12th September 2023 and a Corporate Action Plan produced. Results have been shared with Executive Directors and their teams to enable more local issues to be addressed.
- The Team Reading Programme is embedded to support delivery of the People Strategy which aims to achieve a highly skilled, high performing and motivated workforce. Programme governance has recently been changed reflecting the important role of service 'voice' in a newly constituted Team Reading Stakeholder Group. Items for decisions are remitted to CMT.
- Work to build our Inclusion and Diversity Strategy and Plan (which will support both recruitment and retention) is now complete and will launch in January 2024. The strategy is supported by a three-year action plan with quarterly reviews with the Chief Executive.
- Leadership Development Programme underway to ensure managers deliver high quality, inspiring leadership and role model the Team Reading Leadership Behaviours. The next programme is expected to run in autumn 2024.
- Monthly reporting of Human Resources performance metrics to Corporate Management Team (CMT) and monthly to Directorate Management Teams (DMT's), to identify areas of good practice that can be shared, and areas that require improvement so that these can be addressed.

- A communications campaign to continually promote the benefits available to staff is underway (e.g., Employee Assistance Programme, benefits platform and discounts with retailers and gym memberships, lease cars scheme, pensions etc).
- The Council is part of national pay bargaining so has limited scope to increase pay, but market supplement payments can be awarded for particularly hard to fill posts which present recruitment/retention challenges. Local Government Association (LGA) negotiate on RBC behalf. This is a rolling year on year process.

Brighter Futures for Children

- A number of mitigations are in place to stabilise the high turnover of social workers and to convert agency staff to permanent hires within the Together for Families Team. This includes improving recruitment of qualified social workers through a 'grow your own' programme; and improving retention through providing targeted support, bespoke training for managers, introducing career pathways, and addressing concerns highlighted from exit interviews such as high caseloads etc. Processes in place.
- The Human Resources Task & Finish Group has led this targeted intervention (from July 2022) and data shows that all vacancies are now filled with either permanent or agency hires, and the high turnover of social workers has ceased.



Risk:
Strategic Risk: Failure to safeguard vulnerable adults and children

Register:
DCASC
Risk owner:
Ross, Susan

16
Current Score

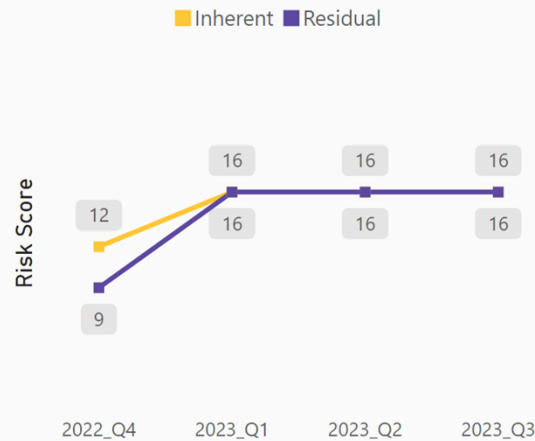
Cause

Significant workforce pressures resulting in inadequate risk assessment and management, lack of or poor safeguarding response, failure to provide adequate health and safety measures.

Potential Impact

Harm, injury or death of person(s) to whom adult and children's social care has a duty
Potential of legal claim for negligence, corporate manslaughter
Reputational damage
Media coverage
Young people experience serious harm and negative long term impacts

Trends - Risk Scores



Risk Scoring

Risk Type	2022 Q4	2023 Q1	2023 Q2	2023 Q3
Impact (Inherent)	3	4	4	4
Likelihood (Inherent)	4	4	4	4
Inherent	12	16	16	16
Impact (Residual)	3	4	4	4
Likelihood (Residual)	3	4	4	4
Residual	9	16	16	16

Specific Actions Required

Title	Date for completion	Status
1 Adults: Establish and recruit to a Safeguarding Lead role acting at a Senior Level. Interim role in place covering some of the role. First attempt at recruitment in September failed, plan to re advertise in January 24.	31/01/2024	In progress
2 Adults: Develop a Safeguarding Improvement Plan to improve quality, pathways and address waiting times. ED seeking external support to progress this due to workforce challenges to be in place by January 24	31/01/2024	In progress
3 Adults: Move the Safeguarding function to the Advice & Wellbeing Hub to streamline the customer journey. Plan is well advanced, however will be introduced in phased manner once the backlog has been addressed.	31/03/2024	In progress
4 BFFC: Ensure that work regarding extra-familial harm, exploitation and the prevention of serious violence is informed by and connects to the work of Social Inclusion Board	31/01/2024	In progress

Background Information

All deaths and serious injuries as a result of abuse or neglect are reported to West Berkshire Safeguarding Adult Board (WBSAB) which Reading Borough Council is the lead agency under the requirements of the Care Act 2014. The Safeguarding Review Panel (SAR Review Panel) which is a subcommittee of the Board considers all such cases in order to determine where a Safeguarding Adult Review (SAR) is required and reports its findings to the Board. All agencies represented on the Board have a duty of co-

operation under the Care Act to cooperate with any such review and to consider and act on the learning from reviews to improve practice and take mitigating action to ensure such failures to safeguard are reduced and lessons are learnt. Any serious harm, injury or death of a child is referred to BWSCP (Berkshire West Safeguarding Children's Panel), through any of the partnership agencies (social care, health, police or education). For Brighter Futures for Children (BFFC) a Serious Incident Notification (SIN) is made to Ofsted, a Rapid Review (RR) follows, and a decision is made by the National Safeguarding Panel (NSP) if a Child Serious Practice Review (CSPR) should be undertaken or if local learning would suffice to ensure learning is adequate and risk is mitigated. CSPR's are published and local learning reviews are shared with the wider partnership to ensure actions are taken to mitigate risk and learning positively impacts on practice.

Safeguarding Adults Reviews are published by the Board and reported onto the Quality Care Commission who regulate Adult Social Care Statutory Service whether provided directly by the Council or commissioned from external agencies.

Key aim is to safeguard vulnerable adults and children and supporting adults and children who have been subject to the neglect or abuse or exploitation.

Adult context (Updated June 2023):

There have been a number of staff in the Adult safeguarding team that have recently left leaving capacity gaps - some additional resources have been secured and further are being sought. It should be noted that there is a heavy reliance on agency workers currently (August 23).

Consequently, there is a backlog of work which is being actively monitored and risk assessed. It must be noted that the number of safeguarding referrals have been increasing month on month.

Susan Ross is responsible for Adult Social Care safeguarding and Maria young for children's safeguarding.

In BFFC there has been an increase in the number of children referred into the service with more complex needs that require safeguarding with immediacy and often care proceedings to be initiated. The workforce is mainly newly qualified social workers, and a great reliance is therefore placed on adequate supervision and management oversight, which increase work pressures. The number of children subject to Child Protection Plans, proceedings and 'Looked After' have increased and service delivery is therefore mostly at the higher end of complexity and intensity.

Existing Controls in Place

Adult Social Care and Health

- All Directorate staff and relevant other officers receive mandatory training to assess safeguarding risks. Staff and Managers have regular refresher training which is mandatory, and these are reporting on completion to 'Workforce Board' and Directorate Management Team (DMT) on a quarterly basis. Due to staff turnover and the frequency of staff refresher training, employees are continually required to update their knowledge.
- Supervision policy has been improved to ensure that staff receive 1-1 supervision from their managers where safeguarding is discussed, and practice support is available. Ongoing support is provided through the Safeguarding Adults Team.
- Open safeguarding episodes are reviewed and reported weekly to DMT and managers in the teams have oversight and support from senior managers.

- RBC follows the local policies and procedures, as set out by West Berkshire Safeguarding Adults Board.
- All referrals received are screened, risks assessed, and prioritisation decisions made. Process for this is in place.
- All learning from Safeguarding Adults Reviews is used to improve practice across Adult Social Care and multi-agency partners. As new reviews / cases occur the Principal Social Worker is responsible for implementing appropriate processes and sharing information across the service.
- Inspection findings from the Care Quality Commission (CQC) are acted on in services provided directly by the Council or by external Providers where services are commissioned and/or supported. Procedures and staffing are in place to manage situations as they arise. Monitoring of providers occurs through Commissioning arrangements, to ensure that identified improvements occur.
- Directorate of Communities and Adult Social Care (DCASC) provides safeguarding and quality oversight of care settings and where Serious Concerns (SC) are identified and holds Providers to account for improvements required and quality assures care quality through the contractual relationships which are commissioned. Process in place.
- Restructure: In July 2023 removed the responsibilities of lead safeguarding responsibilities. Created new role of 'Strategic Safeguarding Lead' this produced focused strategic leadership of safeguarding across the whole of Directorate of Communities and Adult Social Care (DCASC).
- Vacant Posts: Additional resources have been secured and further are being sought. It should be noted that there is a heavy reliance on agency workers currently (August 23). Advertising of posts is continual.
- Council must implement the Regulation 28 recommendation letter from the coroner inquest in June 2023. This must be complete by end of October 2023. Dedicated independent reviewer supporting Adult Social Care with work. As at August 2023 this is reportedly on track.

Brighter Futures For Children (BFfC)

- Risks relating to children's services are managed by Brighter Futures for Children, who have their own risk management arrangements. Service delivery when children are at significant risk is governed by statute and is highly regulated and inspected through Ofsted. Most of the risk management is set out in guidance and statute, with local guidance and practice expectations set out locally, in accessible format.
- An extra familial risk / contextual safeguarding pathway for adolescents has been established to provide support for young people who would otherwise have been subject of a Child Protection Plan (CPP). In 2022 /2023, cross council activity was embedded to enhance support available for adolescents at risk, a new monitoring system was implemented (E-TAC) where young people are robustly monitored and where the family becomes part of the support network around the child.
- The leadership of Community Safety and Brighter Futures for Children (BFfC), continue to deliver partnership actions with Thames Valley Police (TVP), the Berkshire, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Integrated Care System, and the Berkshire West Adolescent Risk group to ensure an effective safeguarding response to the risks of extra-familial harm, exploitation and serious violence.
- All staff receive mandatory training to assess safeguarding risks when commencing employment, with regular refresher training which is mandatory and reported to the BFfC Board and Senior Leadership Team on a quarterly basis.
- Supervision is crucial to provide clear guidance and decision making for children open to the service. A recent audit was undertaken to identify barriers to frequent (monthly supervision) and has identified a number of actions that will support robust managerial oversight, set out within supervision on children's records. A weekly and monthly performance data report supports the monitoring of compliance to a supervision policy and the quality of supervision is part of the Quality Assurance timetable.
- Quality Assurance and Impact Committee (QAIC) scrutinise the service delivery and performance of the service on a monthly basis, and risk identified is addressed subsequently. External auditors also report on findings that allows for internal and external scrutiny of the safeguarding practice.

- Quarterly Performance Committees across the wider service, monthly audit work and weekly monitoring meetings provide forums to identify and address any safeguarding risks. These culminate also in learning reviews that are quarterly, to ensure any serious incidents or safeguarding risk or practice concerns are shared and mitigated against.
- BFFC follows the local policies and procedures, as set out by West Berkshire Safeguarding Children's Board (WBSCB) as well as local practice guidance.
- All referrals received are screened, risks assessed, and prioritisation decisions made in Children's Single Point of Access (CSPoA). Process for this is well established and remain subject to dip-sampling and auditing to ensure robust, consistent application of threshold decision making. A Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership (BWSCP) Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) Oversight Board was also established to hold all partners to account for consistent service delivery that meets children's safeguarding needs.
- All learning from Safeguarding Practice Reviews or local learning reviews is used to improve practice across Children's Services and multi-agency partners.
- Inspection findings from OFSTED are acted on and embodied in actions through an Improvement Plan. This Plan is reviewed on a weekly basis in Inspection Preparation meetings as well as through Quality Assurance and Impact Committee (QAIC) and Performance Committees.
- Monitoring of providers occurs through Commissioning arrangements, to ensure that identified improvements occur. Process in place.

Corporate Parenting

- Chief Executive and Director Children Services - led work with the Local Government Association to instigate learning and development regarding the Corporate Parenting duties.
- Mapping across all departments in the Autumn will benchmark all current work supporting Children Looked After and Care Leavers.
- Working with Local Government Association. Relationships in place and occurring.



Risk:
Strategic Risk: Information Governance - Failure to protect personal data

Register:
DOR
Risk owner:
Graham, Michael

8
Current Score

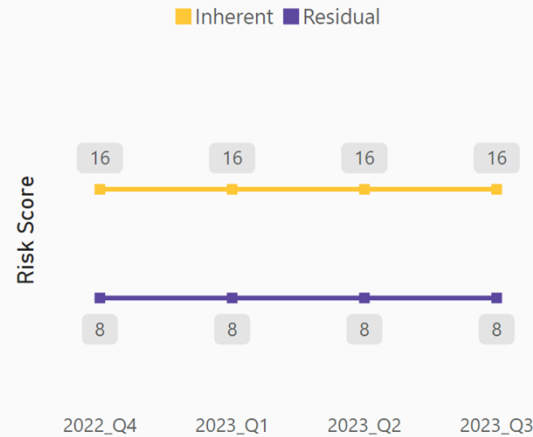
Cause

User error, lack of policy guidance and procedures, failure of system reminders, staff workloads resulting in insufficient care and attention to detail.

Potential Impact

Fines/penalties, reputational damage and service failure. Wasted time and cost involved in responding to service failure.

Trends - Risk Scores



Risk Scoring

Risk Type	2022 Q4	2023 Q1	2023 Q2	2023 Q3
Impact (Inherent)	4	4	4	4
Likelihood (Inherent)	4	4	4	4
Inherent	16	16	16	16
Impact (Residual)	4	4	4	4
Likelihood (Residual)	2	2	2	2
Residual	8	8	8	8

Specific Actions Required

	Title	Date for completion	Status
1	Review of Breach Management Policy commissioned in relation to external suppliers of software systems.	31/01/2024	In progress
2	Records of Processing Activities (ROPA) being further developed by Data Protection Officer and will help to identify Information Asset Owners within Services.	31/03/2024	In progress
3	Cascade of compliance requirements now through the Information Governance Champions Network (IGCN). This is being rolled out from Autumn 2022. Now underway in the Directorate of Adult Care and Health Services (DACHS) and Brighter Futures for Children	30/05/2024	In progress
4	Information Sharing Protocols to be reviewed by Information Governance Champions Network	29/06/2024	In progress
5	Review of Mandatory Training at Corporate Management Team	29/04/2024	In progress

Background Information

Information governance is an important issue for the Council as information is a corporate resource and is essential for the delivery of services to residents. The Council has duties to manage information properly, under the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). In addition, in order to make best use of the information, it should be organised in a way that allows Services to derive maximum benefit from it.

Existing Controls in Place

- Information Governance Board (IGB) set up to oversee delivery of Information Management Strategy and compliance.
- Information Management Strategy agreed at Policy Committee on 7 March 2022.
- Corporate training programme for data protection, raising awareness with staff groups of the need to handle personal data securely and properly. Data Protection Training is mandatory for all staff.
- Oversight from the Audit and Governance Committee on a quarterly basis.
- Face to Face Data Protection refresher training is available for staff as and when needed.
- Subject Access Request policy and Breach Management policy reviewed by Information Governance Board. Further training to be delivered to staff.
- Privacy Notices are being updated for each service area and made available to service users. This is kept under review in Information Governance Champions Network (IGCN).
- Information Sharing Protocols have been centralised (In place) and will be reviewed by IGCN (See Action Point 4).
- The Council now has retention schedules for each directorate. All retention schedules have been updated and will be reviewed through ongoing IGCN programme to ensure they are being actioned. Further work through the IGCN will ensure that the schedules are given greater visibility and to assess level of compliance.
- New Information Governance and Cyber Security modules have been rolled out as mandatory training. Uptake is subject to monitoring at Information Governance Board.



Risk:
Strategic Risk: Unable to deliver a balanced budget as a result of cost of living increases, demand pressures and achieving income targets.

Register:
 DOR
 Risk owner:
 Carter, Darren

16
 Current Score

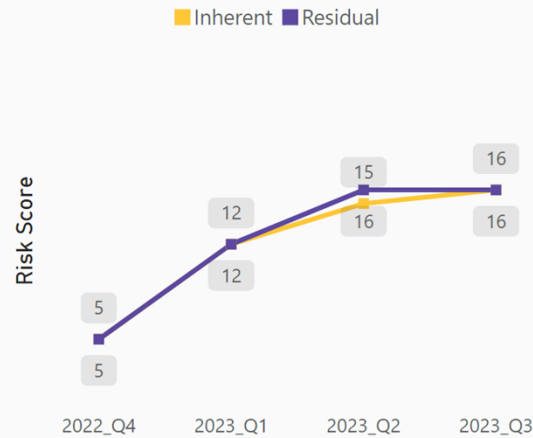
Cause

Overspends, cost of living increase caused by rising rates of inflation and fuel/energy costs, increasing demand and income targets not met.

Potential Impact

Strategic objectives and statutory duties not met. Council unable to set legal budget. Impact on front-line services.

Trends - Risk Scores



Risk Scoring

Risk Type	2022 Q4	2023 Q1	2023 Q2	2023 Q3
Impact (Inherent)	5	3	3	4
Likelihood (Inherent)	1	4	5	4
Inherent	5	12	15	16
Impact (Residual)	5	3	4	4
Likelihood (Residual)	1	4	4	4
Residual	5	12	16	16

Specific Actions Required

Title	Date for completion	Status
1 The detailed budget planning for the 2024/25 budget is underway. This will be ongoing until February 2024 full Council Meeting.	29/02/2024	In progress
2 A review of reserves will be undertaken by the Director of Finance in January 2024 to ensure that they remain adequate.	31/01/2024	In progress
3 Directorates to work up mitigation plans to reduce the forecast overspend for current financial year.	29/02/2024	In progress

Background Information

The economic climate has changed significantly since the Council approved the budget in February 2023. The cost-of-living crisis is generating pay and inflation pressures significantly greater than had been provided for in the budget. We are also seeing significant demand pressures in Children's Social Care as a result of increasing numbers of children in care and increasing complexity of needs. We are also continuing to see pressures on income budgets as they are yet to return to pre COVID levels.

The risk has reduced for Q2 2023 because of the actions being undertaken by DMT's and CMT and the plans that are still being developed.

Existing Controls in Place

- Monthly meetings occur with Corporate Management Team to consider all key financial risks.
- The Quarter 2 performance report submitted to Policy Committee in December 2023 setting out the current forecast for this year.
- Updated Medium Term Financial Strategy report submitted to Policy Committee in December 2023 forecasting a £4.1m budget deficit for 2024/25.
- Provisional settlement from Government received for 2024/25. Limited information currently available for future years.
- Directorates have been requested to work up mitigation plans to reduce the forecast overspend for the current financial year. Request complete.