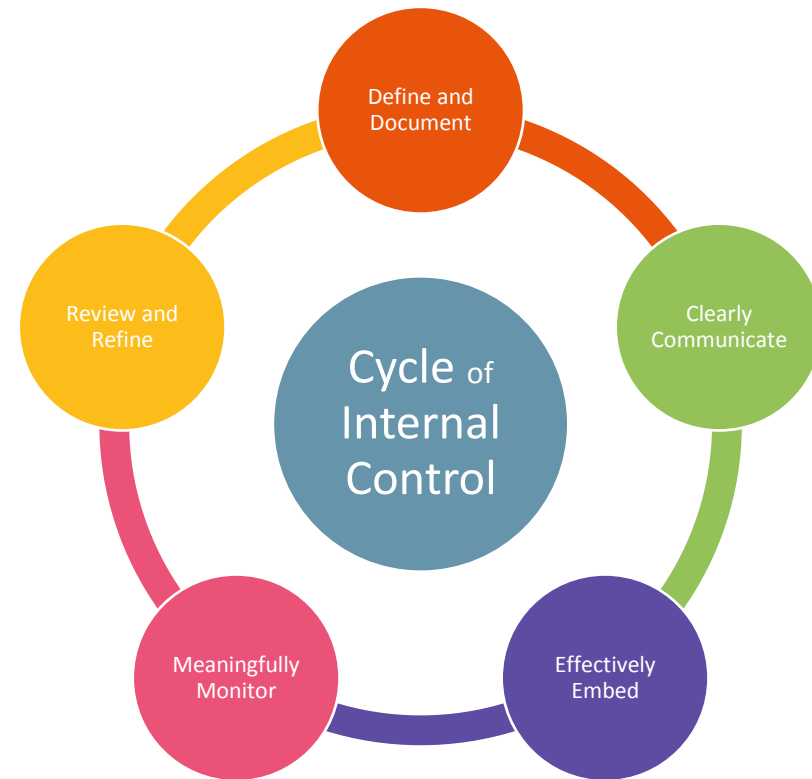


Introduction

1. This report provides the Corporate Governance & Audit Committee with assurances relating to the adequacy of the risk management controls currently in place in the council; that they are up to date, fit for purpose, embedded and routinely applied.
2. The information in this appendix is based around a 'cycle of internal control framework' which consists of five aspects, seen in the diagram opposite.
3. The council's risks arise from a variety of sources, some of which are out of our direct control, whilst others stem from changes in government policy and the shifting needs and make-up of our communities. Such changes bring uncertainties that can pose threats that need addressing but also bring opportunities to exploit. Recently, local authorities have experienced a wide range of significant risks including threats to financial sustainability, workforce resilience challenges, rising demand for statutory services, inflation and seasonal pressures.
4. Risk Management involves identifying the risks and threats that could impact on the ability to meet our objectives, assessing those risks to determine their significance and then putting in place arrangements to manage or mitigate them.
5. Through the arrangements outlined in this report, the council seeks to embed an effective risk and resilience culture across the council, shaped by its values and the behaviour of all its staff and elected members. This responsibility extends to managing risks and how we respond to them with our key partner organisations to ensure they are aware of and are compliant with our Risk Management Policy and Strategy.



Define and Document

6. Policies and Strategies

7. The Risk Management Policy is a formal acknowledgement of the council's commitment to managing risk. The Policy is accompanied by a Risk Management Strategy, which contains details of the arrangements and guidance for managing risk within the council and acts as a reference point for staff and members. Together, these aim to ensure there is an effective, robust, consistent and communicated way of managing risk across the council.
8. The Risk Management Policy and Strategy considered the latest guidance, such as that from ALARM¹, and relevant standards including ISO 31000² and the HM Treasury 'Orange book'. The main outcome from this consideration was that there is no 'one size fits all' approach for developing risk management arrangements and strategies, as organisations differ in their size and complexity.
9. The Risk Management Strategy includes definitions of what 'risk' is:
 - The effect of uncertainty on objectives³
 - [Risk is] a situation involving exposure to danger⁴
 - [Risk is] An uncertain event or set of events which, should it occur, will have an effect on the achievement of objectives; a risk is measured by a combination of the probability of a perceived threat or opportunity occurring and the magnitude of its impact on objectives⁵
10. Risk management is a term used to describe the series of co-ordinated activities designed and operated to manage risk within an organisation and is a central part of that organisation's strategic management. Risk management activities include the identification, evaluation, prioritisation and treatment of risks which are summarised as the Risk Management Process, as seen in the Meaningfully Monitor section of this report.

11. Legislation and Guidance

12. The council's risk management arrangements support the authority's compliance with the statutory requirement under the Accounts & Audit Regulations 2015 to have 'a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of that body's functions and the achievement of its aims and objectives; ensures that the financial and operational management of the authority is effective; and which includes arrangements for the management of risk.'

¹ ALARM is a risk management organisation that develops industry leading best practice for those managing risk and insurance

² In 2018, the International Organization for Standardization issued updated risk management guidelines (ISO 31000).

³ ISO 31000 Risk Management – Guidelines (2018)

⁴ Oxford Dictionaries

⁵ Managing Successful Programmes (OGC)

13. Key plans and documents

14. Underpinning the Risk Management Policy and Strategy are the following key plans and documents:

- Corporate and directorate risk records are maintained on the council's Risk Management SharePoint site (RMS). The RMS was developed in-house as a low cost replacement for specialist risk management software that's licence period ended in 2019. The records held on RMS are an essential information tool for documenting the risks, their ownership, assessment and how they are being managed. The details of each risk held on the RMS include: risk title and description, ownership responsibilities, current risk rating (based on probability and impact scores), the sources of the risk, the consequences (impact) should the risk arise, existing controls in place to manage the risk and any further actions required to treat the risk. The format of the risk information on the site helps ensure that a consistent level of information is provided to explain what the risk is and how it is being managed.
- Financial risks are included within both the corporate and directorate risk registers with updates also provided to Executive Board and Full Council through the budget reports and to Executive Board through Medium-Term Financial Strategy reports.
- The risks of a resilience nature i.e. ones that would require an emergency response should they arise, take into consideration the National Security Risk Assessment (the Assessment), published by the Cabinet Office. The Assessment identifies and assesses the most serious risks facing the UK and is used to determine the common consequences of these risks occurring. The Assessment is produced using a rigorous and tested methodology that incorporates best practice to provide a common framework for understanding risk. The Assessment supports operational risk management, planning and responses in all tiers of the UK resilience system and also serves as a framework for strategic risk management decision making. The [National Risk Register](#) is the public facing version of the National Security Risk Assessment and contains risks including terrorism, cyber-attack, systems failures and various types of adverse weather. The Assessment and the National Risk Register are used to inform the more local West Yorkshire Community Risk Register, and together these inform the review and update of the resilience risks on the council's corporate risk register.

15. Roles and responsibilities

16. The council's Intelligence and Policy Team leads on the authority's corporate risk management function. This responsibility includes keeping the council's Risk Management Policy and Strategy up to date, maintaining the Corporate Risk Register, co-ordinating the quarterly updates and reporting of corporate and directorate risk registers, facilitating risk management workshops and providing training and guidance. The range of risk reports for internal stakeholders are detailed in the Clearly Communicate and Meaningfully Monitor sections of this report.

The roles and responsibilities for risk management within the council, as documented in the Risk Management Policy and Strategy, are:

Entity	Roles and responsibilities
Elected Members	
Executive Board, Council Leader and Deputy Leader	<p>Ultimate responsibility for ensuring that the council has effective risk management arrangements lies with the Executive Board. Executive Board approve the risk management policy, strategy and framework and receives an annual update on this work from the Director of Strategy and Resources which includes a summary of how the corporate risks are being managed. Executive members also have a key role in identifying the risks associated with the delivery of the council's priorities and to discuss these with the relevant director(s).</p> <p>The Board provides appropriate challenge to strategic decision-making and ensures that satisfactory consideration is given to the risk management implications of strategic priorities and all major business change proposals.</p> <p>The Council Leader has responsibility for setting, supporting and monitoring the council's policies and procedures for risk management. As with all executive delegations to officers, the portfolio holder may require, or the director may choose, to refer a risk and resilience matter to the Executive Board.</p>
Corporate Governance and Audit Committee	<p>The Corporate Governance and Audit Committee is responsible for reviewing the adequacy of the council's governance arrangements, including risk management. The Committee receives an annual assurance report on our risk management arrangements from the Director of Strategy and Resources and uses this to monitor, review and scrutinise these arrangements and their implementation. Furthermore, the Committee can provide challenge on the arrangements to manage specific risks and reviews the Risk Management Policy and Strategy.</p> <p>The Committee approves the Annual Governance Statement which incorporates arrangements in relation to risk and resilience.</p>
Scrutiny Boards	Scrutiny Boards ensure that risk management is given appropriate consideration within their areas of responsibility and can also bring potential risks to the attention of the appropriate Director.
Elected Members	All Elected Members have a responsibility to understand the council's risk management arrangements and the strategic risks facing the authority. Elected Members are responsible for properly considering the risk

Entity	Roles and responsibilities
	implications during decision-making and policy approval, particularly where the decision may have resource implications, an impact on the authority's strategic priorities or propose a service change.
Council staff	
Corporate Leadership Team ⁶	<p>The Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) has responsibility for ensuring that there are appropriate arrangements in place to manage risks, both those within their respective directorates and with a cross-cutting or wider impact.</p> <p>Members of CLT are collectively responsible for ensuring that all strategic risks are effectively managed by reviewing the corporate risk register each quarter, whilst individual directors take ownership of specific risks.</p>
The Director of Strategy and Resources	The Director of Strategy and Resources has specific responsibility for providing assurances to the Executive Board and the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee on the adequacy of our risk management arrangements. In addition, the Director of Strategy and Resources holds delegated authority to approve changes to the Risk Management Policy and Strategy on behalf of the Executive Board and acts as the 'officer risk management champion.'
Directorate Management Teams (including Senior Managers)	Directorate Management Teams ⁷ includes ensuring that the risk and resilience arrangements are in place within their services. This includes arrangements for identifying and managing risks in relation to projects, programmes and partnerships within the service in accordance with the council's Risk Management Policy and contributing to the regular updating and review of risk registers at corporate, directorate and service levels. They also ensure risks are escalated to the appropriate level of risk register where they can be effectively managed and that proportionate risk assessments are contained within reports requiring a decision. Senior managers are also responsible for identifying the risk management training needs of their staff.
Strategy and Performance Service	Central responsibility for Risk Management falls under the Strategy and Performance (Intelligence and Policy Team), as seen at point 16 above.

⁶ Corporate Leadership Team consists of the council's Chief Executive and Directors, supported by Chief Officers with statutory roles including the Director of Public Health, Chief Financial Officer (Section 151) and City Solicitor.

⁷ Directorate Management Teams consist of the relevant Director and Chief Officers and meet regularly to discuss issues affecting the directorate and its services. Other staff e.g., Heads of Service may be required to attend DMTs for specific items.

Entity	Roles and responsibilities
	The Intelligence and Policy Manager is the Deputy Chair of the West Yorkshire Prepared Risk and Capabilities sub-group. Further details about West Yorkshire Prepared can be seen in the Effectively Embed section of this report.
All staff	All staff have a duty to consider the risks to the achievement of their day-to-day objectives and the council's outcomes and priorities. Staff should ensure that any risks which they cannot manage or that have a wider impact are escalated to their managers.

17. The Risk Management Strategy includes details of the roles and responsibilities required for each risk, as seen in the table below:

Role	Responsibilities
Risk Management	
Risk owner	The person who is responsible and accountable for the risk. This should be someone with knowledge of the risk area and sufficient seniority to enable them to allocate resources to manage the risk and to ensure that actions required to treat it are completed.
Delegated risk owner	The risk owner may allocate someone else, of appropriate seniority and who is perhaps closer to the service to which the risk relates, to oversee the risk on their behalf. The delegated risk owner reports progress in managing the risk to the owner.
Key contact	A person responsible for the day-to-day management of the risk and who reports to the delegated owner.

18. Corporate risks are owned by the relevant Director, with delegated ownership usually allocated to a Chief Officer. Directorate risks are usually owned by the relevant Chief Officer, with delegated ownership allocated to a Head of Service or senior officer. In some circumstances, the Director may choose to be the risk owner.

19. Financial risks are included within both the corporate and directorate risk registers with updates also provided to Executive Board and Full Council through the budget reports, and to Executive Board through the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) reports. An annual assurance report of the financial management and planning arrangements was reviewed by this committee on 28th November 2022, the report providing assurance that the council has in place effective and robust arrangements for financial management and treasury management. This 2023 financial management and planning arrangement annual report is on the same agenda as this report.

20. Democratic Oversight

21. The corporate risk register continues to house those risks of significant, cross-cutting importance that require the attention of the council's most senior managers and elected members. Each of the corporate risks has named risk owners - a lead portfolio member and a member of the Corporate Leadership Team, who are jointly accountable for their management. The Executive Board as a whole retains ultimate responsibility. Full details of the CLT and Democratic accountability for the corporate risks can be seen in Table 1 of the [Annual Corporate Risk and Resilience Report](#) to Executive Board (agenda item 9).
22. The Annual Corporate Risk and Resilience Report to Executive Board includes summary assurances for all corporate risks rated as 'High' or 'Very High'. The assurances include details of what the risks are, the main controls in place to manage them, any further work required and signposting to additional relevant information and reports. The Annual Corporate Risk and Resilience Report is also reviewed by the Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board and is on the agenda for their meeting on 11th December 2023.
23. In addition to the democratic accountability, further oversight is provided via this annual report on the Risk and Resilience⁸ arrangements to the Corporate Governance & Audit Committee. From this report, the Committee gains assurance that the arrangements are fit for purpose, up to date and routinely complied with.

Clearly Communicate

24. Guidance and information

25. The main source of risk management information and guidance within the council is the Risk Management InSite page. As well as containing a copy of the Policy and Strategy, the Insite page contains links to related documents (including the Annual Risk Report to Executive Board), guidance notes (e.g., 'What are risks?'), Frequently Asked Questions, key contacts and relevant external risk websites including that of the National Risk Register.
26. As seen in point 14 above, details of all corporate and directorate level risks are maintained on the Risk Management SharePoint site. Access to the site is administered by Intelligence and Policy and is granted to risk owners, key contacts and members of Internal Audit.
27. The latest corporate risk map continues to be published internally on InSite and externally through the leeds.gov website (on the [Managing our risks](#) page), with the annual report to Executive Board on the council's most significant risks also publicly available.

⁸ In previous years, the Committee received separate annual assurance reports on Risk Management and Business Continuity Management

28. Training

29. Risk Management training is available and is tailored to suit the needs of the service requesting it. The scope of the training usually includes what risk is, the benefits of risk management, how to identify and assess risks, options for treating risks, how to develop and maintain a risk register and risk reporting arrangements. One to one training sessions are also available on how to use the Risk Management System to administer corporate and directorate risks. As detailed in the Review and Refine section of this report, the development of an e-learning training package for risk management is a recommendation from Internal Audit's recent review of the council's risk management arrangements.
30. The Risk Management Strategy recognises the importance for elected members and staff develop a knowledge and general understanding of risk management. The Risk Management InSite pages includes details of who to contact to arrange training, advice and guidance.
31. During the past year, risk management training has been provided to the Climate, Energy and Greenspaces Extended Leadership Team, Corporate Governance and Audit Committee and Highways and Transport Group Leaders. Risk workshops also include an element of risk management refresher training.
32. Risk management workshops continue to be offered to council services. The objectives of the workshops involve the identification, assessment and treatment options for the risks facing a service, project or business initiative. Over the past year, risk workshops have been delivered to The Climate, Energy and Greenspaces Leadership Team and the Economic Development Team, with further sessions planned for the council's Insurance Team and City Development Operations and Active Leeds functions.

33. Leadership

34. The Risk Management Policy is endorsed by both the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive, demonstrating the 'tone from the top' about the key role that risk management plays within the council.
35. As detailed in the roles and responsibilities section of this report, members of Executive Board and the Corporate Leadership Team receive risk management reports during the year, and they can request updates on specific risk and resilience matters from the Intelligence and Policy Team or relevant directorate leads. In Spring 2023, all Executive Board Members were offered the opportunity to have a one to one briefing with the Intelligence and Policy Manager on the corporate risks, prior to the finalisation of the Annual Corporate Risk Report.

Effectively Embed

36. Stakeholder engagement

37. Key internal risk and resilience stakeholders have been identified (please refer to the roles and responsibilities tables seen earlier in this report) and are recorded across in a series of documents and reports:

- Risk Management Policy and Strategy.
- Corporate and directorate risk records maintained on the RMS site.
- Risk registers reported to Directorate Management Teams and CLT.
- The Annual Corporate Risk Report to Executive Board.

38. Stakeholder engagement is via a range of methods that demonstrate both a 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' approach as follows:

39. At the start of the quarterly internal reporting cycle, meetings take place between the staff with responsibility for administering the risk updates across all council directorates. The agenda for these meetings covers any issues arising from the risk management process, horizon scanning of risk topics in the news, and sharing best practice on how risks are administered and reported.

40. Regular meetings take place between the Intelligence and Policy Manager and the Senior Head of Audit, Corporate Governance and Insurance to share information on:

- Emerging themes from Internal Audit reviews and reports regarding control weaknesses / failures and risks arising.
- Feedback to Internal Audit on any new risks/risk areas identified and any changes to existing risks.
- Specific risk and resilience work carried out, including risk workshops, plan exercises and training delivered.
- Insurance aspects relevant to corporate and directorate management

41. Regular meetings take place between the Intelligence and Policy Manager and the Resilience and Emergencies Team Manager to review and discuss work including:

- Organisational resilience preparedness.
- Items to include in the routine risk and resilience reports to directorates, CLT, committees and boards.
- Exercising and testing the organisations emergency response and business continuity plans.
- Consideration of information to be cascaded to the council e.g. updates from West Yorkshire Prepared and the National Risk Register.

42. At the start of the quarterly reporting cycle, the Intelligence and Policy Manger meets with the Customer Relations Manager and the Deputy Head of Shared Services (Contact Centre) to discuss any emerging concerns and themes from their work areas that may require escalation for discussion and reporting at directorate or CLT level. These discussions include the identification of possible new risks. An example of a new risk identified via these meetings is the Contact Centre telephony switchover, scheduled for March 2024.
43. Directorate Management and service team meetings provide the main opportunities to discuss risk management aspects relevant to their functions such as new and emerging threats, feedback from external partners and the consideration of any lessons learned from recent incidents.
44. External risk stakeholders include West Yorkshire Prepared, the region's multi agency partnership. Stakeholders within this partnership include representatives from West Yorkshire local authorities, West Yorkshire Police, Fire and Rescue Service, Yorkshire Ambulance Service, the British Transport Police, the military and utilities and health partners. At strategic level, Leeds City Council is represented by the Director of Strategy and Resources and at operational level by the Intelligence and Policy Manager who is Deputy Chair of the Risk and Capabilities sub group.
45. The aims of the Risk and Capabilities sub group are to identify, assess and prioritise risks that will enable West Yorkshire Prepared and associated groups to deliver appropriate programmes of work aimed at treating the risks originating from hazards and threats which may impact West Yorkshire. West Yorkshire Prepared meetings take place quarterly.
46. As detailed in the Meaningfully Monitor section (points 68 and 69 on Benchmarking), in summer 2023, the council's Intelligence and Policy Team co-ordinated a comparison of the risks on the Core Cities⁹ Strategic Risk Registers. One of the outcomes from this review was a desire from Core Cities risk contacts to meet (virtually) on a bi annual frequency to discuss risk management topics facing local authorities. The terms of reference for this group will be discussed at the first meeting, scheduled for 23rd November 2023. The meetings will provide an opportunity for wider local government stakeholder engagement on risk management.
47. The Intelligence and Policy Manager is a member of professional bodies: The [Institute of Risk Management](#) and [ALARM](#)¹⁰, both of which include risk management within their remit. Through actively participating in continuing professional development, such as attending seminars and conferences hosted by ALARM, the Intelligence and Policy Manager keeps informed of developments in risk and resilience matters. Along with the Director of Strategy and Resources and colleagues from the council's Resilience and Emergencies Team, the Intelligence and Policy Manager attends the West Yorkshire Prepared annual symposium.

⁹ Core Cities UK is an alliance of 11 cities - Belfast, Birmingham, Bristol, Cardiff, Glasgow, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle, Nottingham and Sheffield. Its mission is to unlock the full potential of our city regions to create a stronger, fairer economy and society.

¹⁰ ALARM is a risk management organisation that develops industry leading best practice for those managing risk and insurance.

48. Clear systems and processes in place

49. Systems for risk management are well established across the council, supported by reporting timetables, and are very much “business as usual” within services. Details of the timetables are made available to staff via the routine risk management meetings (point 39 above) and the Resilience and Emergencies Teams site.

50. Risk updates are administered via the Risk Management System SharePoint site (see Define and Document, point 14), with each individual corporate and directorate risk having its own page on the site. Relevant staff are required to update the risks with progress comments and any changes to the risk details as required e.g. changes in ownership, rating, controls and actions. The Review and Refine section of this report includes the outcomes from a survey undertaken with RMS users.

Meaningfully Monitor

51. General

52. The need to meaningfully monitor, update and report risks is a key part of the Risk Management Process, as outlined in sections 5 and 6 of the following diagram:



53. Routine reporting takes place on risk management matters as follows:
54. Corporate and directorate risks are reviewed quarterly by the key contacts and risk owners to ensure the risks are kept 'live' and they promptly reflect the controls and actions taken to mitigate or manage them. Intelligence and Policy staff check the details for each risk on the Risk Management SharePoint site to confirm whether they have been reviewed and updated that quarter and follow up any where this does not appear to be the case. The Intelligence and Policy Manager maintains a record of further spot checks undertaken on the risks and the follow up action taken. The risks are reported in the first instance to the relevant directorate management teams, which acts as clearance for the corporate risks to be submitted to Corporate Leadership Team for collective review and discussion.
55. Currently a 'Risk and Resilience' report covering the three areas of risk, emergency planning and business continuity management is reported to each DMT, presenting a comprehensive picture of risk and resilience matters. Any significant emergency planning and business continuity aspects that need to be reported to CLT are done so as part of the 'Major incident' resilience risks included in the report.
56. Risks are usually reported on the same DMT and CLT agendas as performance, facilitating an integrated reporting approach. Many key performance indicators act as an early warning system for risks.
57. Members of Intelligence & Policy currently attend the CLT and DMT meetings to present the reports and answer questions on their content. Representatives from the Intelligence and Policy can also attend Service Leadership Teams to matters of a more operational nature e.g., discussions on new risks and threats facing the service and risk training and workshop requirements and feedback.
58. 'Being open, honest and trusted' is one of the Council Values and this includes the reporting and constructive discussion of risk and resilience at all levels. Decisions are required to be made with proper consideration of risks, including:
- Potential new risks and threats identified are raised and reported to the relevant level for consideration.
 - When risks are increasing in significance, or showing other early warning indicators, they can be escalated to the correct level to enable decisions about how to manage/mitigate them to be made.
 - Lessons learned from significant control failures and 'near misses' can be identified and discussed. One of the recommendations from the recent routine Internal Audit review of the corporate risk management function (detailed in the Review and Refine section of this report) was to formalise 'lessons learned' reviews where risks have materialised internally and externally so that we can identify how they could have been more effectively mitigated through our risk management arrangements.
 - Services and directorates are able to raise matters about areas where improvement is required and report the actions being taken so that a collective discussion can take place to identify any further solutions.

59. Risks identified and mitigated

60. New risks are identified from a variety of internal and external sources including Directorate Management Team meetings, Corporate Leadership Team, from conversations with services, through horizon scanning, and via the Local Resilience Forum. Arrangements are in place for the Contact Centre to act as a barometer for the problems the public is experiencing with council services, and feedback and escalation processes have been established so risks that are identified through this channel are appropriately captured and mitigated.

61. A risk prompt checklist is included as an appendix to every routine risk report for council DMTs. The checklist provides a series of prompts and questions aimed at helping DMTs to identify new risks and threats, and to consider whether they need to be discussed at the DMT meeting or even escalated to CLT.

62. The work of Local Resilience Forum informs the review and update of the council's corporate risks on City Resilience and Council Resilience, derived from the National Security Risk Assessment and the Community Risk Register (point 14 in Define and Document).

63. The guidance and template for council Committee and Executive Board reports for decision making includes the requirement for report authors to detail the key risks relevant to their report and how they are proposed to be managed. The Intelligence and Policy Team reviews these reports at draft stage and are able to provide feedback and suggestions to the authors on the risk information included.

64. Through membership of the Institute of Risk Management and ALARM, the Intelligence and Policy Manager is able to attend seminars and networking events at which new and emerging risks are discussed.

65. Escalation process in place and used appropriately.

66. The internal reporting process outlined in the Risk Policy and Strategy facilitates the raising and discussion of new and emerging risks and threats at service and directorate management teams and encourages the escalation of risks to a higher-level risk register where necessary. All Directors have the opportunity to raise prospective risks to Corporate Leadership Team at any time and through routine quarterly risk reporting. The quarterly risk reports include a prompt asking whether there are any new risks to add and whether any existing risks need to be changed.

67. CLT has the final approval for any new risks proposed for escalation onto the Corporate Risk Register. Should a risk or threat of an urgent nature arise, this can be escalated immediately to the relevant Directorate Management Team and the Corporate Leadership Team for discussion and action as required.

68. Benchmarking

69. In summer 2023, Intelligence and Policy co-ordinated a review comparing the strategic risks of the UK Core Cities. This review, usually undertaken on a biennial basis, aimed to identify the similarities and differences between the strategic risks on the Core Cities risk registers, how they are described and their ratings. Key findings from the review were:

- Many of the Core Cities risks are similar in terms of their theme and ratings e.g. Finance/budget, Major incident, Workforce/staffing, Cyber-attack, Climate change, Safeguarding etc. Although variances were noted in the way the risks were described, the titles and descriptions were easy to understand. The comparisons relevant to each Leeds City Council directorate's functions were included for information in their most recent routine risk report.
- Three Core Cities have a strategic risk on Corporate Governance failure / failure to meet statutory obligations, whilst Leeds does not. As Leeds has a well embedded Corporate Governance and Audit Committee with representatives from key services in attendance, the need for a similar risk on our corporate risk register may not be required.
- Three Core Cities have a corporate risk on Equalities / failure to achieve equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) across services and the workforce. Leeds' corporate risk register doesn't include a specific risk on equalities as we have previously recognised this as a priority and deal with it via mandatory "Be Your Best" EDI training, facilitated learning, staff appraisals and our shared council values and behaviours. EDI improvement is reported to Executive Board via an annual report, the most recent being July 2023.

Review and Refine

70. Up to date and fit for purpose
71. The Policy and Strategy were recently refreshed, mainly to reflect changes to council terminology, and were approved by the council's Corporate Leadership Team on 31st October 2023. A more substantial review is planned for 2024 to consider the outcomes of a corporate review of policies which, at the time of writing, is still in progress.
72. Risk Management System (RMS) user survey
73. In October 2023, a survey was conducted with RMS users to gauge how effectively they think the system is working in practice and to identify any areas that may require improvement. The survey covered aspects such as how easy or difficult the system was to use (including the Help and Guidance section) and an opportunity to provide feedback and details of any problems encountered using it.
74. Overall, the comments highlight a mix of ease and difficulty in using the RMS, with common concerns related to saving updates and the organisation of information on screen within the system. Users appreciated the ordering of risk updates but still encounter some system usability challenges.
75. The results from the survey showed:
 - 50% of users thought the RMS was 'very easy' or 'easy' to use, with 39% rating it as 'neither easy or difficult' and 11% as 'difficult'. Issues raised about the difficulties experienced related to the use of the 'next review date' field and whether this is something that could be automated, and concerns that sometimes updated information is not saved. Although these results indicate there is more

to do to make the system more user friendly, they compare favourably to a previous survey undertaken in 2015 when risks were administered using specialist risk management software. The results then were: 27% (very easy/easy) and 39% (neither easy or difficult) and 33% (difficult or very difficult to use).

- This year, 67% of RMS users were aware of the Help and Guidance section (compared to 64% in 2015), with 50% finding it ‘very useful’ or ‘useful’ and 50% ‘neutral’. Some users commented that they don’t need to use the Help and Guidance toolkit as they know how to use the system well enough.
- Some users requested that risk update reminders to be automated if possible. These requests will be considered a part of future updates to the RMS, and work has already commenced on a tool called ‘Power Automate’ which may be able to help generate email reminders.

76. Additional solutions being worked on by Intelligence and Policy from the survey findings include changing the order in which risk information is displayed on screen into a more logical sequence, making the titles of information fields clearer and arranging refresher training with users who appear to be finding the system problematic to use.

77. Survey of Internal Control

78. In spring 2023, the council undertook its annual Survey of Internal Control¹¹ to provide assurance in relation to all key systems of internal control by seeking an assessment from operational managers as to whether the arrangements underpinning the Corporate Governance Code and Framework are working as intended.

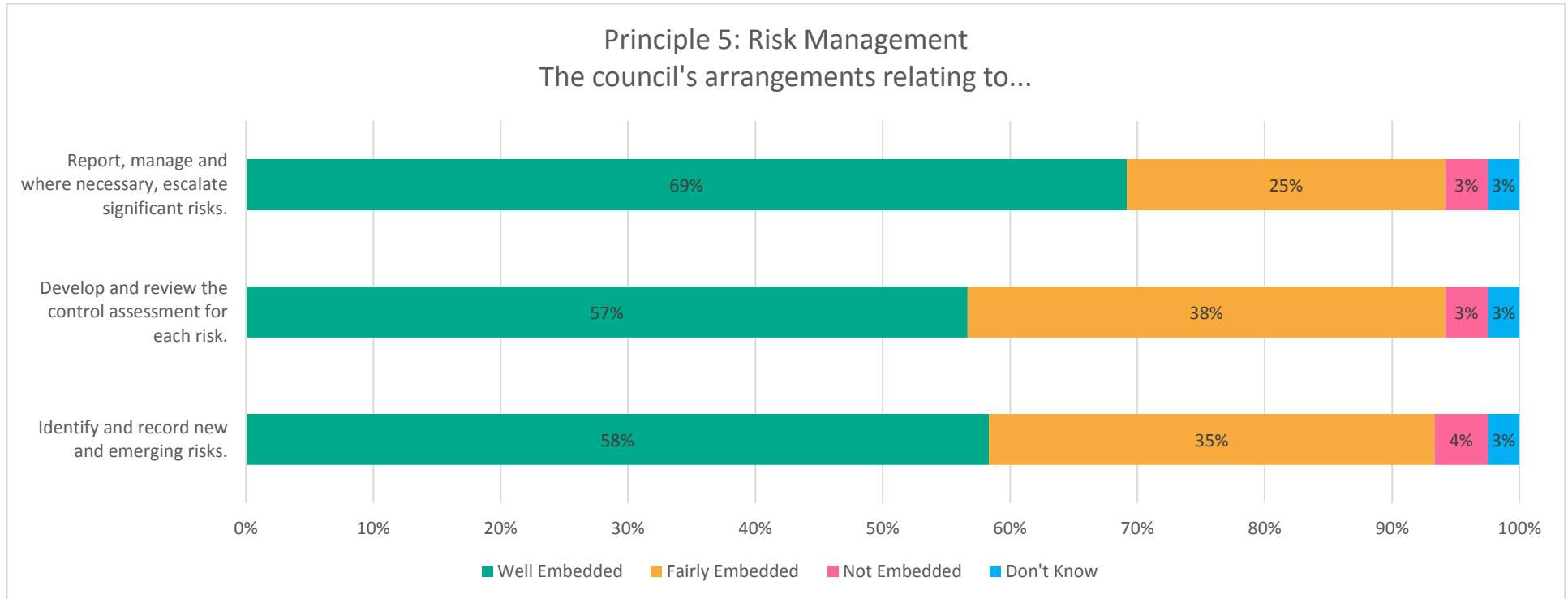
79. The responses to the three questions asked in the survey about the risk management arrangements were:

- 94% of respondents thought the arrangements to report, manage and where necessary, escalate significant risks were “well embedded” or “fairly well embedded”.
- 95% of respondents thought the arrangements to develop and review the control assessment for each risk were “well embedded” or “fairly well embedded”.
- 93% of respondents thought the arrangements to identify and record new and emerging risks were “well embedded” or “fairly well embedded”.

80. The results, whilst generally good and broadly in line with those of the previous year, indicate that there is still scope for improvement. Recent increases in requests for risk training and workshops, such as those delivered or in progress for the Climate, Energy and Greenspaces Service, City Development Operations and Active Leeds Service, the council’s Insurance Team provide opportunities to improve the results.

¹¹ A smart survey conducted amongst senior officers to support the review of internal control underpinning the Council’s Annual Governance Statement

Survey of Internal Control Risk Management Results 2023



81. Reporting arrangements
82. The recent appointment of a new Chief Officer (Strategy and Performance) provided the opportunity to revisit the risk management reporting arrangements to identify and changes and enhancements required. Initial thoughts on how we might change how we report corporate intelligence (including risk management) includes looking at ways information can be visually enhanced and interconnected, whilst still satisfying compliance requirements.
83. Internal Audit review
84. Earlier in 2023, the corporate risk management function was subject to a routine review by the council's Internal Audit service. In addition to the need to formalise 'lessons learned' (seen in point 58 above) the other key recommendations from the review were:
 - The development of a risk management communication plan which should include:
 - Promotion of the refreshed Policy and Strategy
 - The creation of an e-learning package for risk management
 - Re-promotion of roles and responsibilities for risk management
 - The potential to deliver a 'Let's talk' risk management session for the council's Leadership and Management Framework
 - Obtain feedback on the RMS so that any areas of improvement can be addressed (see points 72-76 above).
85. Work has commenced on implementing the recommendations from the review, and progress made against them is being recorded and monitored through Internal Audit's recommendation tracker spreadsheet.