

Annual Corporate Risk and Resilience Report

July 2024



Introduction

Risk is present in everything we do to improve outcomes and deliver services. Local authorities, our communities and partners experience a wide range of significant risks including: adverse weather conditions, funding uncertainties, safeguarding incidents and cyber-attacks on our digital infrastructure. More recently, pressures from inflation and cost of living, the increased complexity and demand for services, combined with a challenging job market in some sectors have impacted on the council's risk profile – in line with the sector more broadly.

Our Best City Ambition aims to tackle poverty and inequality and improve the quality of life for everyone who calls Leeds home. Central to this, focus is placed on improving outcomes across the three pillars of Health and Wellbeing, Inclusive Growth and Zero-Carbon – all progressed in line with our Team Leeds way of working. Strong risk management arrangements are essential to minimise the risks of failing to achieve the ambition, outcomes and budget. Our policy is to identify, analyse and manage potential threats and opportunities posed by risks, in line with the council values.

The previous annual corporate risk management report was considered by Executive Board on 20th September 2023. Since then, the corporate risk register has continued to be reviewed and updated in accordance with the council's Risk Management Policy and in line with the Best City Ambition outcomes and within the context of the Organisational Plan and Medium Term Financial Strategy. The remainder of this report focuses on the management of the most significant risks currently on the corporate risk register and provides additional focus on our emergency planning arrangements that are essential to help us manage our resilience risks.

This report is supplemented by an annual assurance report on the authority's risk and resilience¹ arrangements considered each year by the council's Corporate Governance and Audit Committee. This report is publicly available and focuses on the policies, procedures, systems and processes in place to manage risk and resilience across all levels within the council and with our partners. The most recent report was approved at the Committee's meeting on 27th November 2023, with the next one scheduled for November 2024.

Council Values and Behaviours and risk

Linked to the ambitions are a series of shared Values and Behaviours covering aspects related to good risk management such as ethical behaviour and the staff code of conduct. Through the risk management arrangements, the council seeks to embed an effective risk and resilience culture across its values, and in the behaviour of all its staff and elected members. It is important that the strategic ambitions and objectives are aligned to the organisation's risk culture and the Values and Behaviours are followed. Where this is not the case, there would be an increased likelihood of risks occurring and their impact being material, for example through loss of public trust and confidence in the council.

The Being Our Best plan was introduced in 2023 for all managers across the council – over 2,000 in total - and helps managers support their staff to be their best. The plan recognises the feedback and concerns about capacity and potential staff burnout as all services deal with the impact of increased demand and complexity, alongside squeezed council budgets and recruitment challenges. Underpinned by our Values and Behaviours, the plan helps all our managers understand what's expected of them as we aim to deliver high quality services, as well as change and innovate to meet the upcoming challenges and make the most of digital opportunities and progress their personal development. The Being Our Best plan is linked to the council's risk management arrangements as none of the corporate risks can be managed and mitigated

¹ "Risk and resilience" is a term used to describe the inter-related areas of risk management, emergency planning and response, and business continuity management.

without effective management skills and knowledge and an awareness of the challenges facing the workforce.

The council became the first local authority to appoint a Freedom to Speak Up Guardian - an independent person who employees can approach to raise any concerns or suggestions they may have about the workplace and how services are being delivered. The Guardian is effectively an early warning indicator that can help identify any risks at an early stage so they can be discussed and treated. Additionally, our staff survey, conducted across the whole workforce, is another way for concerns linked to risks and to the culture of the organisation to be raised. The most recent staff survey was undertaken in 2023, with the next one planned for later in 2024/25. Our staff network groups and relationships with trade unions are also key to engagement to help identify and manage risks.

The national and regional risk environment

A wider assessment of the external environment and potential risk factors is constantly undertaken, including the regional, national and global context. For example, economic shocks, major shifts in public policy and changes in legislation are monitored. Risk Management contacts from the Core Cities² meet four times a year to compare and discuss the risks facing local authorities and to share best practice.

The risk and resilience arrangements take into consideration the National Risk Register (NRR), published by the Cabinet Office. The NRR is the public facing version of the National Security Risk Assessment (NRSA) which is the government's assessment of the most serious risks facing the UK. The NRR and NRSA are used to inform the more local West Yorkshire Community Risk Register. Leeds City Council is represented at both regional (Yorkshire and Humber) and local (West Yorkshire Prepared) risk and resilience forums, which provide good conduits for horizon scanning of changes to risks and threats. Together the NRR, NRSA, West Yorkshire Community Risk Register and the work of the Regional and West Yorkshire Resilience Forums, combined with insight from other professional membership bodies (such as LGA, ADASS, ADCS etc) inform the review and update of the council's corporate risks on City resilience and Council resilience.

Corporate Risks

Defining a corporate risk

Corporate risks are those of significant, cross-cutting strategic importance that require the attention of the council's most senior managers and elected members. While all members of staff have responsibility for managing risks in their services, each of the corporate risks has one or more named 'risk owner(s)': members of the Corporate Leadership Team (the Chief Executive and directors) and Executive Board portfolio holders who, together, are accountable for their management. The Executive Board as a whole retains ultimate responsibility.

Corporate risks can be roughly split into two types: those that could principally affect the city and people of Leeds and others that relate more to the way we run our organisation internally. An example of a 'city' risk includes major flooding or a breach in the safeguarding arrangements that help protect vulnerable people; these are often managed in partnership and system-wide working with a range of other organisations. An example of a more internal 'council' risk is a major, prolonged failure of the ICT network. The council's organisational plan sets out how we will mobilise our internal resources – our people, money, digital capabilities, land and buildings, communications and engagement. Should any of the internal council risks arise, this would affect our ability to deliver the plan. Some risks clearly impact on both the city and the council – a major disruptive event in the city being a current example.

² 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 great city regions to create a stronger, fairer economy and society.

How corporate risks are assessed and managed

Each corporate risk has a current rating based on a combined assessment of how likely the risk is to occur – its probability - and its potential impact after considering the controls already put in place. When evaluating the impact of a risk we consider the range of consequences that could result; effects on the local community, staff, the services we provide, any cost implications and whether the risk could prevent us meeting our statutory and legal requirements.

A consistent '5x5' scoring mechanism – seen at annex 1 of this report - is used to carry out this assessment of probability and impact which ensures that the risks are rated in the same way. Target ratings are also applied for each risk based on the lowest probability and impact scores deemed viable to manage the risk to an acceptable level given the amount of resources available to deal with it. These are used to compare the gap between 'where the risk is now' based on a reasonable worst-case scenario, to 'how low do we aim for the risk to go' and so help determine whether additional actions are needed to manage the risk down to the target level.

The greater the risk, the more we try to do to manage it if it is in our control and if that would be the best use of resources. The council takes a balanced approach, recognising that the cost and time involved in managing the risk down to nothing may not always be the best use of public money and we factor this in when establishing the target rating and developing our risk management action plans.

Risks are reviewed and updated regularly through horizon scanning, benchmarking and in response to findings from inspections and audits, government policy changes and engagement with staff and the public. The LCC Policy Network, made up of officers engaged in analysis and policy development, is a useful source of such insight.

Managing risk is the responsibility of everyone, is at the heart of the council's culture and values and has to be reflected in the behaviours of staff and elected members. This helps ensure that risk decision making is both open and transparent.

Current corporate risks

The risk map seen at Figure 1 (page 8) summarises the risks on the corporate risk register at July 2024 and their current 'reasonable worst-case scenario' ratings based on combined probability and impact scores.

This report provides a summary assurance on how each of the corporate risks currently rated as 'Very High' and 'High' – i.e. those of the highest significance - are managed, and signposts to where further information can be found. An overview of the risks covered in this report is provided at Table 1 (page 9), detailing their full descriptions and risk owners. Further details about how the risks are scored can be seen in Annex 1 of this report.

Whilst the number of risks on the Corporate Risk Register have generally remained the same in recent years (circa 25), the number of risks rated as "Very high" has increased from seven in 2017 to thirteen in 2024. This increase reflects the challenging position facing the council and local authorities in general.

Risk Management Framework

The council’s risks are identified, assessed and managed using six steps:



These iterative steps enable us to:

- Understand the nature and scale of the risks we face.
- Identify the level of risk that we are willing to accept.
- Recognise our ability to control and reduce risk.
- Recognise where we cannot control the risk.
- Take action where we can and when it would be the best use of resources. This helps us make better decisions and deliver better outcomes the people of Leeds and our staff.

The steps are applied across the organisation through the Leeds Risk Management Framework: at strategic and operational levels and for programmes and projects. The adoption of the framework and compliance with it has helped to embed a risk management culture within the organisation. This report considers the strategic level: the arrangements in place to manage the council’s corporate risks.

Active membership and participation with professional risk management organisations such as ALARM³ and the Institute of Risk Management are also help us identify new and emerging risks as well as changes to existing risks facing the council and the city.

Emergency planning and business continuity

The corporate risk register includes several risks of a resilience nature i.e. those relating to major incidents and emergencies that could affect the safety of the citizens, communities and businesses of Leeds. This section of the report provides additional information on how Leeds City Council plays a vital role in preparing for and responding to major incidents.

The council’s Resilience and Emergencies Team (RET) have the responsibility of ensuring that our legislative duties under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 are met. These duties are:

³ ALARM is a not-for-profit professional membership association that supports risk and insurance professionals.

- Assess the risk of emergencies occurring and use this to inform contingency planning.
- Put in place emergency plans.
- Put in place business continuity management arrangements.
- Put in place arrangements to make information available to the public about civil protection matters and maintain arrangements to warn, inform and advise the public in the event of an emergency.
- Share information with other local responders to enhance co-ordination.
- Co-operate with other local responders to enhance co-ordination and efficiency.
- Provide advice and assistance to businesses and voluntary organisations about business continuity management.

The council's emergency planning approach follows the four phases of emergency management:



Emergency Plans

Leeds City Council has fourteen core plans to respond to the High and Very High risks outlined within the West Yorkshire Community Risk Register, these are: Severe Weather; Flooding; Reception Centre; Recovery and Site Clearance; Mass Fatality; Utility Failure; Mass Casualties; Reservoir Inundation; Chemical and Environmental Hazards; CBRN (chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear) Response; Fuel Disruption; Outbreak Response; Pandemic Influenza, and Exotic Notifiable Animal Diseases.

The plans are produced in consultation with the council services and partners that have a role and responsibility in responding to the activation of any plan.

Warning and Informing

Leeds' citizens, communities and businesses face a range of emergencies. To provide information on preparing for and dealing with emergencies, the RET maintains the Emergencies webpage on Leeds.gov. The council uses a wide range of communication methods to engage with the general public and city stakeholders on warning and informing of incidents, including social media channels and signposting to alerts provided by partners such as the MET Office and Environment Agency.

Business Continuity Management

In April 2024 the Resilience & Emergencies Team commenced the process of undertaking a reviewed Business Impact Analysis (BIA) for all services authority wide. This will ensure that criticality has been assessed comprehensively and in the current context. This process will inform the production of new Business Continuity Plans, which will focus on critical areas of the business and ensuring they can continue in the face of a disruption. It is anticipated that this process will continue through to Winter 2024.

Training and Exercising

All Emergency and Business Continuity plans follow a programme of review, training and exercising. The Local Resilience Forum produces an annual training and exercising programme, summarised in the following section. As part of these exercises the robustness of our local plans can be tested.

West Yorkshire Prepared

[West Yorkshire Prepared](#) is the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) for West Yorkshire. A LRF is a multi-agency forum consisting of key emergency responders, including local authorities, “blue light” services as well as other supporting agencies. Established under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, which came into effect in order to ensure the UK is better prepared to cope with potential risks, LRFs require their multi-agency partner organisations to work together to prepare, respond and recover from different major incidents. In West Yorkshire, the LRF is co-chaired by police, fire and local authority colleagues recognising the importance of its multi-agency operation. The Leeds’ Director of Strategy and Resources is one of the co-chairs.

West Yorkshire Prepared produces an annual report which acknowledges the hard work, wider collaboration and achievement of the forum over the previous twelve months. The most recent report covering the 2022/23 municipal year can be seen [here](#).

The Annual Report includes details of the sub-groups within West Yorkshire Prepared which include those for Risk and Capabilities; Business Continuity; Training, Exercising and Development; Severe Weather and Warning and Informing. Leeds City Council is represented at the LRF and its sub-groups.

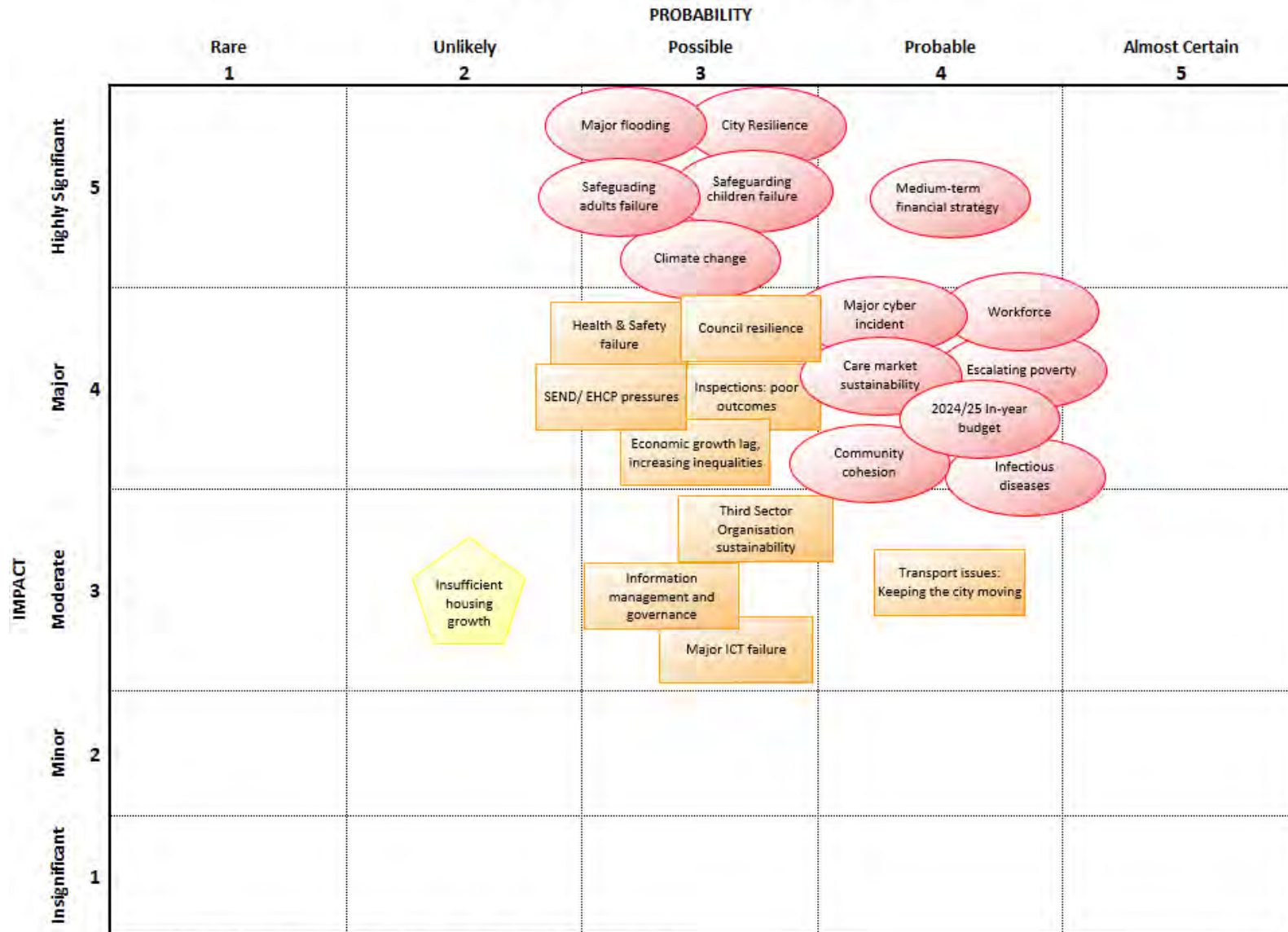
Training and exercising are an essential part of the work undertaken by West Yorkshire Prepared to ensure all partners are trained and appropriately prepared for a wider range of emergency incidents that may occur in the region. The 2023/24 municipal year saw many exercises take place as well as incidents that required a multi-agency response. Exercises and incidents of note included:

- **Forward Control Point Training:** A workshop based learning on multi-agency command at a Forward Control Point (a Forward Command Point is generally a fixed location from which a commander operates and provides operational resource command, incident information collection and situational awareness).
- **Tactical⁴ and Strategic⁵ Coordinating Group Training:** Workshop based learning for Tactical and Strategic Commanders responding to a major incident. These sessions included the opportunity to partake in a mock Tactical and Strategic Control Groups and utilise the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (JESIP) and the Joint Decision Making (JDM) model.
- **Multi Agency Capabilities Event (MACE):** A convention styled event, showcasing over forty emergency responder agencies and organisations from across Yorkshire. The event was organised in response to the Manchester Arena Inquiry, which recommended that members of the emergency services should be aware of the specialist capabilities of every other emergency service.

⁴ Tactical Coordinating Group (TCG – also known as silver - co-ordinates the overall response. They carry out and follow the policy and guidelines from the strategic group by: Disseminating decisions from Strategic level. Translating decisions into deployment instructions.

⁵ The purpose of a Strategic Co-Ordinating Group (SCG) is to take overall responsibility for the multi-agency management of an incident and establish a strategic framework within which lower levels of command and co-ordinating groups will work.

Figure 1: Corporate Risk Map at July 2024



New risk included on the Corporate Risk Register: SEND/EHCP pressures (rating 4.4)

Key:

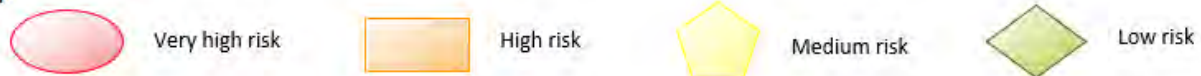


Table 1: Overview of significant corporate risks

Risk area	Description	Accountability (Risk owners)		Current Rating
		Senior officer	Executive Board Member	
Medium-term financial position	The council cannot balance its Medium-Term Financial Strategy	Mariana Pexton, Director of Strategy and Resources	CLr D Coupar: Executive Member for Resources	Very High
In-year budget	The council's financial position goes into significant deficit in current year resulting in reserves being less than minimum specified by council's risk-based reserves policy.	Mariana Pexton, Director of Strategy and Resources	CLr D Coupar: Executive Member for Resources	Very High
Workforce	Workforce resource not in place to deliver the service to the required standard	Mariana Pexton, Director of Strategy and Resources	CLr D Coupar: Executive Member for Resources	Very High
Major cyber incident	Risk to citizens, council and city as a result of digital crime, process failure or people's actions in relation to a major cyber incident	Mariana Pexton, Director of Strategy and Resources	CLr D Coupar: Executive Member for Resources	Very High
Escalating poverty	The impact of poverty in the city escalates due to factors such as inflation, fuel, food and energy prices increases	James Rogers, Director of Communities, Housing & Environment	CLr M Harland: Executive Member for Communities, Customer Services and Community Safety	Very High
Care market sustainability and viability	Without a thriving care market in the city, there is a risk that people in need of care services are not able to access them when needed or that services are not of sufficient quality	Caroline Baria, Director of Adults & Health	CLr S Arif: Executive Member for Adult Social Care, Active Lifestyles and Culture	Very High
Community cohesion	Failure to identify and address the barriers to community cohesion and increased tensions in Leeds	James Rogers, Director of Communities, Housing & Environment	CLr M Harland: Executive Member for Communities, Customer Services and Community Safety	Very High
Infectious diseases	Preparedness for new and emerging infectious diseases of concern and outbreaks	Victoria Eaton, Director of Public Health	CLr S Arif: Executive Member for Adult Social Care, Active Lifestyles and Culture	Very High
City resilience	Risk of significant disruption in Leeds (major incident in the city)	Mariana Pexton, Director of Strategy and Resources	CLr D Coupar: Executive Member for Resources	Vert High
Safeguarding children	Risk of harm, accident or death to a child linked to failure of the council to act appropriately according to safeguarding arrangements	Julie Longworth, Director of Children and Families	CLr H Hayden: Executive Member for Children and Families	Very High
Safeguarding adults	Failure a) of staff in any council directorate to recognise and report a risk of abuse or neglect facing an adult with care and support needs in Leeds, and b) of staff adult social care to respond appropriately, in line with national legislation and safeguarding adults procedures	Caroline Baria, Director of Adults & Health	CLr S Arif: Executive Member for Adult Social Care, Active Lifestyles and Culture	Very High
Major flooding	Major flooding, especially north of the city centre station, occurs in Leeds that has a significant impact on homes, business, land and infrastructure	Martin Farrington, Director of City Development	CLr M Rafique: Executive Member for Climate, Energy, Environment and Green Space	Very High

Risk area	Description	Accountability (Risk owners)		Current Rating
		Senior officer	Executive Board Member	
Climate change	Failure to adapt to and mitigate more extreme weather conditions brought about by climate change, resulting in an adverse impact on Leeds (its people, communities, infrastructure, economy and natural environment)	James Rogers, Director of Communities, Housing & Environment	CLLr M Rafique: Executive Member for Climate, Energy, Environment and Green Space	Very High
Transport: Keeping the city moving	Failure to adequately maintain and manage the current transport infrastructure to keep the city moving.	Martin Farrington, Director of City Development	CLLr J. Pryor: Executive Member for Economy, Transport and Sustainable Development	High
Council resilience	Risk of significant disruption to council services and failure to effectively manage emergency incidents (major incident in the council)	Mariana Pexton, Director of Strategy and Resources	CLLr D Coupar: Executive Member for Resources	High
Economic growth lag	Growth in Leeds businesses is slower and less inclusive than the national and international economy, leading to lower wages, fewer jobs and poorer citizens and communities	Martin Farrington, Director of City Development	CLLr J. Pryor: Executive Member for Economy, Transport and Sustainable Development	High
Inspections: poor outcome	Poor or inadequate outcome from a service/delivery based inspection	All Council Directors	All Executive Board portfolio holders CLLr D Coupar: Executive Member for Resources	High
SEND/EHCP pressures	Pressures from increased demand and complexity of SEND and potential impact on EHCP processes'	Julie Longworth, Director of Children and Families	CLLr H Hayden: Executive Member for Children and Families	High
Health and safety	Risk of a health & safety failure resulting in death, injury, damage or legal challenge	Mariana Pexton, Director of Strategy and Resources	CLLr D Coupar: Executive Member for Resources	High
Major ICT failure	Risk that council services are disrupted due to frequent and / or prolonged ICT failures	Mariana Pexton, Director of Strategy and Resources	CLLr D Coupar: Executive Member for Resources	High
Information management	Risk of harm to individuals, partners, organisations, third parties and the council as a result of non-compliance with Information Governance legislation and industry standards	Mariana Pexton, Director of Strategy and Resources	CLLr D Coupar: Executive Member for Resources	High
Cost of living impact on Third Sector Organisations	There is a risk that Third Sector Organisations will not be able to deliver due to reduced funding and increased demand	James Rogers, Director of Communities, Housing & Environment	CLLr M Harland: Executive Member for Communities, Customer Services and Community Safety	High

Financial management corporate risk assurance

Risk overview

The council's current and future financial position is subject to many risks, notably not addressing the financial pressures in a sustainable way so that the revenue budget cannot be balanced and the council's financial position going into significant deficit. The financial position – for both revenue and capital - remains challenging: against a backdrop of uncertainty on Government funding, inflation and cost of living pressures have significant implications for the council's finances and continued increasing levels of demand and of complexity. In particular, external placements for Children Looked After, and the significantly higher costs of those placements, has placed a strain on council budgets both nationally and in Leeds. Failing to deliver a balanced budget that addresses these issues both in the short and medium-term will ultimately require the council to consider even more difficult decisions that could have a far greater impact on front-line services, including those that support the most vulnerable.

The council faces an additional risk relating to a national backlog on the audit and closure of the 2022/23 accounts. Should the planned milestones for this work not be met by 30 September 2024, the external auditors would apply a "Backstop" and this would likely raise a Statutory Recommendation for the matter to be discussed at Full Council.

Key controls in place to manage the risk

- **Roles and responsibilities** - financial management within the council is delivered by colleagues who report to and are accountable to the Chief Officer - Financial Services (the Section 151 Officer), with clear accountability and training of all budget holders.
- **Strategic financial planning** – focussing on the annual funding settlement from government and wider reform of local government funding.
- **Budget preparation and setting** – revenue and capital budget planning, both for the current budget year and over the medium term. Budget proposals are subject to scrutiny and public consultation and are submitted to Full Council for approval in February. The [2024/25 Revenue Budget and Council Tax report](#) (item 13), includes a section on the Management of Key Risks (Part 10).
- **In-year budget monitoring** – financial management and monitoring continues to be undertaken on a risk-based approach where financial management resources are prioritised to support those areas of the budget that are judged to be at risk. Both revenue and capital budgets are continually monitored and reported regularly to senior managers and members, including regular public reports to Executive Board meetings.
- **Closure of accounts** – timely accounts without audit qualification ensure we can properly account for resources used during the year and fully understand the council's financial standing.
- **Audit inspections** – providing elected members and the public with independent assurance that the accounts reflect a true and fair view of the council's financial position.
- **Engagement** – the council value of 'spending money wisely' is part of the organisational culture and, along with the other shared Values and Behaviours, forms part of staff appraisals and is a constant feature of communications and engagement.
- **Fraud and corruption:** The council has a zero-tolerance stance on fraud, bribery and corruption and is committed to addressing these risks to protect public funds. Controls include fraud awareness training and a whistleblowing hotline.

Further actions planned

Whilst the council continues to make every effort to protect the front-line delivery of services, the position remains difficult to manage financially. Nationally, many local authorities are facing inherent pressures due to demand and demography, especially for statutory services. There is a continued focus on dealing with the financial implications from the economic impact of pay and price inflation and the loss of income for services the council provides. In response to the budget position, a freeze on recruitment, agency and overtime spend and a freeze on non-essential spend will continue in 2024/25 along with the continued key messages about balancing budgets, absorbing pressures, monitoring and early warning about challenges.

Work continues to review the highest cost / spend areas and all services are continuing to explore opportunities to secure in-year savings and maximising income. Asset reviews are underway to ensure the council has the right numbers and mix of assets.

The council's Executive Board will be receiving a range of financial reports in the current municipal year including those on the Capital Programme and the Treasury Management Strategy, with a further update to the authority's rolling 5-year Medium-Term Financial Strategy scheduled for September 2024.

Progress on the external audit position was reported to Corporate Governance and Audit Committee in June and can be seen [here](#) (items 10 and 11).

Escalating poverty corporate risk assurance

Risk overview

The council and partners across the city have been recognised for the work undertaken on reducing poverty for many years. Despite this, poverty and financial exclusion have continued to worsen in Leeds and across the UK. In the wake of the pandemic, the situation further intensified by the cost-of-living crisis, exacerbated by global and national supply chain issues, which were impacted by demand on the workforce, energy, fuel, and production of raw materials for food and transport. As lockdown rules were eased and as the world economy began to re-open businesses saw huge demand for goods, which in turn led to global shortages and price increases.

Longstanding barriers including lack of awareness or understanding, and digital exclusion are further compounding the situation and are preventing people from reaching services. With more households experiencing hardship for the first time, and many already below the poverty line facing destitution and desperation, the wide-ranging citywide support offer must be both maintained and enhanced to support Leeds residents and prevent further escalation.

Key controls in place to manage the risk

The council set out a proposal to create a breakthrough priority with the aim of "working together across sectors to harness the capacity and capability in the city, its communities and those with lived experience to develop a city solution to welfare provision and addressing the cost-of-living crisis – with a specific focus on food, fuel, housing and digital inclusion". Building on both the existing citywide support infrastructure and learning from the pandemic emergency response, strategic and operational groups have been meeting since September 2022 to coordinate actions to mitigate as far as possible the impacts of the cost-of-living crisis through a proactive, collaborative approach on key issues relating to food, fuel, housing and digital. The groups all have senior representatives from the council, health, third sector and other key partners. Full details are included in the 'Cost of Living Update' Executive Board Reports that have been produced on a quarterly basis from October 2022.

The council's Financial Inclusion Team works closely across council services and alongside national and local partners such as the Department for Work and Pensions, Advice Agencies, Leeds Credit Union, Leeds Food Aid Network as well as many third sector organisations, to run initiatives and schemes that reduce the impacts of poverty and strengthen the financial resilience of residents and communities in the city. The team is responsible for the Money Information Centre¹ website and printed resources, the Leeds Poverty Factbook and the Cost-of-Living Dashboard.

Further actions planned

Developing a city solution to welfare provision and on addressing the cost-of-living crisis: this work is reflected in the 'Understanding and Addressing the Cost-of-Living Crisis' report to July Executive Board, with recommendations including "To approve the establishment of a strategic, cross cutting, welfare group with the aim of taking a proactive approach to addressing issues Leeds residents face relating to the cost-of-living crisis".

More information

- The Leeds Poverty Factbook helps us to understand and document the levels of poverty in Leeds; inform policies and assist in the City's anti-poverty agenda. The Fact Book contains national and locally sourced data and information to help define and analyse the different themes of poverty.
- Regular reporting to Executive Board on the work undertaken around the Cost of Living. The most recent report from April 2024 can be seen [here](#) (Item 7).
- Leeds Money Information Centre: [Welcome to the Money Information Centre \(leeds.gov.uk\)](https://www.leeds.gov.uk/money-information-centre)

To access this information please visit [Leeds Observatory – Financial Inclusion](#)

¹ The Leeds Money Information Centre is a free, confidential and impartial help and advice on a range of money related matters such as debt, money, energy and utilities.

Workforce corporate risk assurance

Risk overview

Workforce planning is about understanding the resources required to deliver the Best City Ambition and organisational plans. This means having the right people with the requisite skills in the right place, at the right time to deliver the services the council has responsibility for. Changes to the labour market in recent times has resulted in some sectors experiencing skills shortages. Additionally, what people are looking for from their role and employer is also changing. If we fail to plan for our future workforce requirements, we may encounter difficulties recruiting to critical roles, in particular front line, which will in turn impact on service delivery. Supporting employees is crucial to ensure we maximise the capacity that is available, this includes supporting staff health and wellbeing to enable high performance and attendance across the organisation. The Be Your Best development programme will continue to support leaders and managers in this area particularly in relation to performance management.

Key controls in place to manage the risk

The [People strategy 2020 to 2025](#) sets out our vision to be the Best Place to Work and covers recruitment, development, career progression and council culture and values.

The Be Your Best Manager programme supports new managers to develop their knowledge in relation to areas such as Equality, Diversity and inclusion (EDI) to ensure all colleagues are supported to be their best.

The annual staff survey helps to identify the issues facing the workforce. The most recent survey in 2023 flagged up issues relating to career progression opportunities, workloads and the need for quality IT equipment and systems.

The financial challenges experienced by the council led to the development of the Medium Term Finance Strategy², which supports longer term planning – including that of the workforce – as we need to consider the resources required to deliver services within budget. A programme of service reviews to achieve efficiency savings has impacted on the make-up of our workforce. Any reductions in staffing have been managed through our Managing Staff Reductions policy, however we have supported the majority of the reductions through voluntary means such as people choosing to reduce their hours through flexible retirement and the voluntary leavers scheme (VLS). A Supporting Futures Toolkit was developed to support individuals who were/are at risk of redundancy because of a service review or would be interested in alternative opportunities to minimise the risk of redundancy. This has provided an opportunity to retain key skills within the workforce.

The council's HR service are working to increase our maturity as an organisation in relation to workforce planning. There is a clear support offer for managers, offering different levels of service from providing information and advice, to hands on support from the team to facilitate workshops or bringing in external independent expertise depending on the size and scale of the service needs.

Alongside the workforce planning stream, managers are supported to help with identifying different entry routes into the organisation and the broader recruitment support. Developing a wide range of entry routes into the organisation will help maximise the diversity of our workforce. This includes running schemes such as the graduate, intern, apprenticeship and T-level programmes. Enabling us to grow our own talent, which if planned can help ensure we have the right skills when we need them.

A full end to end review of our approach to recruitment has been carried out, we are in the process of testing a new recruitment system as part of the replacement under the Core Business Transformation Programme. Action has already been taken to modernise our approach to reflect the current market, including explore innovative ways to recruit and engage with future workforce, further develop our employer brand and help ensure we attract diverse candidates. Tool kits have been developed to support managers to think differently about the way we recruit to ensure we are making the process as accessible as possible and to ensure equality, diversity and inclusion is at the forefront of plans when recruiting. This included things like ensuring panel members selected bring diversity of thought into the process.

Further actions planned

- We continue to support staff wellbeing, with specific mental health programmes in development.
- Work is progressing to support services to respond to their staff survey results, particularly in areas highlighted by results. This work includes the provision of support to managers with issues around workload.
- A new programme of materials will be promoted through our Be Your Best Management Development Programme.

² See Corporate Risk Assurance on Financial management.

Major cyber incident corporate risk assurance

Risk overview

The council's digital infrastructure is under constant attack from malicious sources attempting to disrupt the confidentiality, availability and integrity of our information or bring our systems and applications to a standstill, severely impacting our ability to deliver critical services to the public. Cyber criminals seek to exploit UK public organisations and infrastructure for profit. Their technical sophistication varies from small scale fraud from individuals and gangs to advanced organisations. The world cyber climate also presents threats; following the attacks on Ukraine, the [National Cyber Security Centre](#) (NCSC) called on organisations in the UK to bolster their online defences. Internal threats to cyber security can arise from the inadvertent actions of employees, or from the malicious intent of insiders such as disgruntled or former employees.

Key controls in place to manage the risk

- **People** – Roles and responsibilities are clearly set out, including a Senior Information Risk Owner, Data Protection Officer and a Cyber Assurance Lead (a suitably qualified Cyber Security Professional). Mandatory information management and governance training for elected members and staff includes elements on 'cyber'. The message reinforced that this risk is everyone's responsibility.
- **Policies and processes** – An Information Assurance Policy, setting out the council's approach to managing information security and risk, includes cyber-security within its scope. This is complemented by the Remote Working Policy which includes information security measures for staff working at home or offsite.
- **Technology** – Filtering, blocking, scanning, firewalls, encryptions and access controls help prevent breaches of the council's IT network, council devices and systems. Over the last 12 months the level of cyber alerting, which assists the monitoring of cyber security threats for public sector organisations, has increased. The council network is subject to approx. 5 million system intrusion blocks each month.
- **Assurance and Compliance** – Information Assurance (including aspects of cyber) forms part of the council's Annual Governance Statement which reports on the effectiveness of the council's internal controls, reviews and audits and adopting compliance regimes such as the government's Public Services Network (PSN³) Code of Connection and the Data Protection and Security Toolkit and cyber essentials plus for Health.

Further actions planned

- Continue to follow industry best practice and adopt any future updates from sources such as the Information Commissioners Office and the NCSC⁴.
- An enhanced level of cyber security training for digitally enabled employees is being developed.
- Ongoing work to retain the council's PSN compliance.
- Funding from Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to improve our cyber arrangements has been received and is being allocated to help implement the ISMS..
- A holistic review and update of cyber related policies, procedures and internal controls.

More information

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities has developed a Cyber Assessment Framework (CAF) for local government based on the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) CAF. Further details can be seen [here](#). LCC signed up the CAF for local government in June 2024 and work on that will commence later this summer.

An annual report, the IDS Statement of Internal Control (which includes cyber resilience and security aspects), is considered by the council's Corporate Governance and Audit Committee. The most recent report from February 2024, is available [here \(item 8\)](#).

³ PSN Code of Connection (CoCo) is an independent security assessment of external and internal network infrastructure and devices.

⁴ The NCSC also issues cyber security guidance for public sector organisations.

Care market sustainability and viability corporate risk assurance

Risk overview

Without a thriving care market in the city, there is a risk that people in need of care services are not able to access them when required or are not able to access quality services when required, placing the council in breach of its legal duty. The availability of staffing within externally commissioned services is still a major concern within the care market. In addition, there are significant financial pressures on the sector particularly in relation to rising energy and fuel costs and the ending of additional funding from the government through the Workforce Recruitment and Retention Fund and Infection Control Fund.

Key controls in place to manage the risk

- Quality frameworks implemented in services commissioned by the authority which include provisions for financial monitoring, business continuity planning as well as monitoring the quality of the service.
- Adult Social Care Provider Forum held with care providers and the wider care sector to discuss wide ranging issues affecting the care sector in the city such as financial climate and workforce.
- Additional funding has been provided for the home care contract to raise the wages of staff in the independent sector to a level above the Real Living Wage to assist providers with recruitment and retention.
- Closer working with the Integrated Care Board to better manage the oversight of the regulated care markets.
- Contract management meetings with individual providers and sector provider forums.
- A plan, including lessons learnt, is in place ready to be used in the event of a care provider failure.
- Liaison with the Care Quality Commission (CQC⁵) through regular contact between inspectors and officers and regular information sharing meetings to gather early intelligence on poor quality services being provided.
- Information sharing with the care market through a regular care bulletin and improved care quality website.
- The Market Sustainability and Fair Cost of Care Fund has supported the completion of a cost of care exercise for older adults care homes and 18+ home care to ensure the rates for commissioning care as far as possible reflect the increased costs within the sector. The reports detailing this work were published in March 2024 and can be seen [here](#).

Further actions planned

Leeds continues work to support providers recruit and retain care staff both locally and internationally.

Leeds is acting as the host authority for the Yorkshire and Humber regional coordination of the International recruitment fund for the adult social care sector. The fund will help tackle the barriers of international recruitment, while upholding ethical recruitment and employment practices. The key elements of the region's delivery plan are to:

- Develop a local ethical recruitment charter, bursary agreement and fair share agreement, building on the national code of practice.
- Develop and implement an advice and support offer for care providers, to make high quality recruitment easier.
- Provide and manage bursaries to care providers across the region as a contribution towards sponsorship licence costs.
- Bring 360 new international recruits to the region by Summer 2024, and ensure they receive quality support.

A significant programme is underway to recommission home care services in a manner which will establish a more efficient approach to commissioning and delivering care, whilst also aiming to improve career prospects terms and conditions for staff.

Work is continuing to identify and work with the providers who may be more affected by market issues and therefore at greater risk of financial instability.

⁵ The CQC monitors, inspects and regulates services to make sure they meet fundamental standards of quality and safety. It sets out what good and outstanding care looks like and makes sure services meet fundamental standards below which care must never fall.

Community cohesion corporate risk assurance

Risk overview

Our Safer Leeds Partnership is accountable for improving community safety and developing stronger, more resilient, and cohesive communities across Leeds. This aligns to our Best City Ambition to deliver a safe and welcoming city for people of all ages and from all communities in which residents feel more secure. To achieve this ambition, it is vital that we work effectively in partnership in localities across the city to identify and address the barriers to community cohesion, however we are facing a growing number of complex challenges which could potentially increase tensions. In particular, the ongoing conflict in the Middle East is having an adverse impact on communities in Leeds, specifically those from Muslim and Jewish backgrounds, who are being affected by international, national and local events.

Key controls in place to manage this risk

Safer Leeds strategic thinking and operational activity is guided by identification and prevention, early intervention and responses, recovery, and resilience. An example of which is the daily threat picture which is used to manage/monitor events/issues which will potentially increase tensions across communities. Areas currently under review are: gang activity; serious violence; anti-social behaviour (ASB); strikes - preventing people from going to work, getting medical treatment etc; cost of living crisis - people looking for other income streams (e.g., crime) to fund their lifestyles, and migration & asylum in the city.

The significant risk to community cohesion emanating from the Middle East conflict is being managed through ongoing dialogue with council services, partner organisations such as West Yorkshire Police, and key community leaders from Muslim and Jewish communities. These relate to a number of issues including offensive graffiti, online and offline hate crime, and protests and vigils. A coordinated approach to managing the tensions has been developed through a partnership response between the Community Relations and Cohesion team within the Safer and Stronger Communities Service and West Yorkshire Police strategic engagement officers, aided by intelligence analysts.

Other examples of related support and work being undertaken to help manage this risk are:

- Leeds Prevent ([seen here](#)) supports vulnerable people from being drawn into extremist or terrorist behaviour.
- Neighbourhood Improvement work in targeted wards and priority neighbourhoods.
- Monitoring of public opinion through feedback from Councillors, social media channels, local blogs, Parish and Town councils, or via bespoke events such as the Equalities Conference.
- Commissioned services with 3rd sector to provide community support, mediation and advocacy.

Internally, the council has “Be Your Best on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion” our new mandatory equality, diversity, and inclusion training and development package, which all managers have to undertake.

Further actions planned

An updated Community Safety Partnership plan is in development and is due to be presented to Executive Board in September 2024. This plan sets out the strategic direction of Safer Leeds Executive and will guide the work of the partnership and its work with and for communities across the city.

Recognising no single agency can address these complex risks, threats, and harms alone, the following are committed to working collectively through the Safer Leeds Executive, in line with agreed terms of reference and information sharing protocols: - Leeds City Council, West Yorkshire Police, Leeds NHS, West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service, West Yorkshire Probation Services, HMP Service, and the Voluntary & Community Sector.

A cohesion survey was undertaken in the summer of 2023 and an analysis of the results was shared with key partners. Linked to this, a draft strategy is in development that will link into other key council strategies such as the Best City Ambition, Hate Crime Strategy, and refreshed Community Safety Partnership Plan.

Dialogue and engagement with Muslim and Jewish communities will continue to ensure their concerns are being adequately heard and addressed. Further work will take place to tackle the rise in anti-Muslim Prejudice and anti-Semitism through the Hate Crime Strategic Board and Operational Group.

Infectious diseases corporate risk assurance

Risk overview

New and emerging infectious diseases pose a threat to the public's health, in particular from serious illness and fatalities, especially in those unprotected by vaccinations. The risk also has adverse impacts on social and economic inequalities as well as the workforce and its ability to deliver essential services. The pandemic highlighted the critical role of local authorities and the public in preparing for and responding to new and emerging infectious diseases.

Key controls in place to manage the risk

- The council contributes to multiagency work to prepare for and respond to infectious diseases, including the Health Protection Board (who regularly review risks) and Multiagency Infectious Diseases Review and Response meetings which aim to ensure any outbreaks of concern are proactively managed.
- A Leeds Outbreak Management Plan which incorporates learning from good practice nationally and from the Association of Directors of Public Health. This represents their professional views as the local leaders for the nation's health. This plan is developed with local partners to agree an approach to local outbreaks in Leeds.
- To strengthen the Outbreak Management Plan, a roles and responsibilities document has been developed which looks at responses to scenarios that may occur.
- The council has a good working relationship with the [UK Health Security Agency](#) (UKHSA) to review, plan and future-proof the local health protection system, including local alert systems in place across the health and social care sector to ensure that relevant organisations are aware of current and upcoming threats so that plans to deal with them can be enacted if required.
- Outbreak management response arrangements are in place through local surveillance and the council's Health Protection's Single Point of Contact system, which works closely with the UKHSA, in identifying emerging diseases. UKHSA provides guidance for infectious diseases.
- Close working with UKHSA to review, plan and future-proof the local health protection system.
- An Incident Management Team with processes established to manage outbreaks or incidents in areas of high-risk e.g. in vulnerable/complex settings.
- Robust arrangements are in place for the anticipation of winter pressures across the health protection system (including surveillance, monitoring and escalation procedures).
- The health protection surveillance system collates outbreak notifications from school and early years, care homes and other settings which allows an effective and proactive outbreak management responses.
- The Port Health Plan for Leeds Bradford Airport is being reviewed by UKHSA. LCC Health Protection, Environmental Health and Resilience and Emergencies are all involved alongside partners such as Leeds Bradford Airport, WY Fire and Rescue Service, Yorkshire Ambulance Service.

Further actions planned

The Leeds approach to prevent transmission of new and emerging infectious diseases of concern is through intensifying a combination of interventions and measures to minimise harm, keep people safe, protect vulnerable people and minimise poverty and inequalities. Our approach continues to be comprehensive across the whole health care system and is informed by a range of public health measures from vaccination, infection prevention control, communications, managing outbreaks and preventative activity, including encouraging safe practices and choices.

The Leeds Health Protection Board continues to review the Outbreak Plan and response arrangements on a regular basis with system partners to ensure they are robust with clear roles and responsibilities. Close working with partners include but not limited to: UKHSA, West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board, NHS England and the council's Resilience and Emergencies team.

UKHSA have released their Adverse Weather and Health Plan 24/25 ([Adverse Weather Health Plan \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)) which is being implemented at a local level across partners.

More information

Leeds' [Public Health Resource Centre](#) which includes information for people working to promote health and wellbeing in Leeds, including details of Public Health campaigns.

City and council resilience corporate risk assurance

Risk overview

Leeds, like any other major city, can suffer disruptions caused by the impact of a major incident or emergency. In recent years, Leeds has experienced disruptive incidents including storms, flooding, a heatwave and the pandemic. Should more than one major incident occur in the city at the same time, the risk and its impacts would be exacerbated. The impact of a major incident would be felt externally, by citizens, communities and businesses, and internally, by the services delivered by the council which may be reduced or even suspended. Under the Civil Contingencies Act (2004), category 1 responders which include local authorities, have a statutory duty to be prepared for emergencies and to be able to continue to deliver critical functions in the event of a disruptive incident.

Key controls in place to manage the risk

- A 'top down' approach to managing risks based on the National Risk Register which compares, assesses and prioritises all major disruptive risks to the UK's national security. This informs the West Yorkshire Community Risk Register which in turn forms the basis of multi-agency planning between the council and partners.
- Working closely with other local authorities and partners that together form the West Yorkshire Resilience Forum for preparedness to respond to major and often cross boundary emergencies.
- Incident Response and Business Continuity Plans that cover both the response and recovery aspects.
- Taking part in national and regional exercises designed to test our plans and cascading outcomes and recommendations into Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Management arrangements.
- Arrangements are in place to warn and inform the public and businesses about incidents via a range of channels including Leeds Alert, X: @leedsemergency and the Emergencies page of Leeds.gov.
- The council and multi-agency partner organisations' ability to quickly assemble a 'Gold, Silver, Bronze' command structure in line with JESIP (Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme) principles.
- Provision of advice and assistance to business and voluntary sector.
- Working together with partners from the [Safety Advisory Group](#) to deliver events safely.

Further actions planned

- Ongoing work with Leeds' businesses, organisations, communities and the general public to develop greater resilience in the city. This work includes relaunching the Business Continuity Network events held in the Civic Hall, at which presentations are made to organisations on a range of resilience topics.
- Continuing to support national counter-terrorism campaigns and initiatives.
- Continuing to learn from incidents that happen to other organisations and contribute to any lessons learned from them.
- Implementing recommendations from the Government's Protect Duty consultation – designed to make the public safer at publicly accessible locations.

More information

The West Yorkshire Police website contains details of the West Yorkshire Resilience Forum and the West Yorkshire Community Risk Register. The West Yorkshire Resilience Forum [Annual Report](#) summarises the work, wider collaboration and achievements of the forum over the previous 12 months.

Safeguarding Children Corporate Risk Assurance

Risk overview

The potential consequence of a significant failure in safeguarding for children is serious harm or fatality caused by abuse or neglect. Whilst sadly we cannot mitigate against all abuse or neglect, failings that lead to serious harm or child death undermine public confidence in our services and key partners which in turn impacts on trust, joint funding, service delivery, staff moral retention and recruitment, and OFSTED⁶ inspection activity and outcomes. Along with key partners from health, police and education, the council is jointly responsible for adequate provision of universal, preventative and statutory services. The post pandemic challenging context locally, regionally and nationally, in relation to complexity of need, increased demand, poverty, workforce stability and rising cost of services and provision have created a strained system.

Key controls in place to manage the risk

Early Help: Early Help Hubs are multi-agency services located in communities where families live. This ensures that families have access to the services they need to provide appropriate support in a timely and accessible manner. Early Help practitioners from the Hubs work alongside colleagues at the Front Door to better align early help services with Duty and Advice, directly preventing escalation into statutory services where appropriate by offering a timely early help response. The local authority also jointly funds Cluster services with schools and Integrate Care Board (ICB) to offer support to families in need in their locality and around their school community. We have also maintained our children's centres and youth services providing support to pre-school children as well as adolescents.

Front Door arrangements: Partners are co-located and work in partnership to safeguard children and young people. Professionals can have direct conversations with qualified social workers, which leads to a better-quality of information sharing at an early stage. These include partnership daily discussions around referrals where there are domestic violence and abuse concerns. Qualified social workers are based at the Front Door along with police and health practitioners as part of the council's partnership arrangements. This ensures timely multi-agency decisions about safeguarding concerns can be made by the relevant professionals. Out of hours safeguarding concerns are dealt with by the Emergency Duty Social Workers, based with the Police Safeguarding team.

Social work: The structure of the Social Work service in Leeds is based on a locality model of delivery close to families and communities. Social work teams are organised across three areas of the city, South, West North West, and East North East. There is also currently one Early Help Hub in each area supporting the Early Help provision in the Locality. There is also a specialist service in relation to Child Exploitation, the SAFE Project, who support work with young people at medium or high risk of harm. The Child Looked After Service and Care Leavers services provide focused long term work to support children Looked After and Care Leavers in line with corporate parenting responsibilities.

Performance management/quality assurance: There is a robust Social Care performance management and quality assurance framework that ensures management oversight at every level, internal scrutiny and review. This includes a monthly quality assurance meeting, an annual audit schedule, and a weekly multi agency referral review meeting.

Skilled workforce: There is a comprehensive workforce development offer and framework in line with national requirements for social workers. This includes additional training and support in the first year of qualifying as well as Advanced Practitioners providing practice support, mentoring and co-working around complex work. The work of social workers is supported by personal and case supervision underpinned by a clear supervision framework. In addition, a Child Leeds site has recently been launched which allows for easy to access training and development information for the whole of the Children and Families Directorate workforce.

Recruitment and retention: As nationally, Leeds continues to carry high number of social work vacancies, which has impacted on caseloads and wellbeing of staff. Nationally there are less people entering the social work profession therefore this area will remain a challenge for the foreseeable future. We have a clear support plan for workers with high caseloads and also monthly case load monitoring meetings. Regular case load review meetings are held to look at movement and capacity across the whole system. A recruitment plan is in place which oversees service recruitment and links with our feeder universities. An apprentice programme has also been established and Leeds is lead local authority for the Step up to Social Work fast track programme for North Yorkshire, Bradford, Calderdale and

⁶ The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills is a non-ministerial department of His Majesty's government, reporting to Parliament.

Wakefield. In addition, to provide some additional support to teams where there are vacancy factors some agency workers and temporary social work assistants have been appointed.

Safeguarding Partnership: The responsibilities for safeguarding are collectively held by the council, integrated care boards, and West Yorkshire Police through the Leeds Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP). Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 sets out the shared responsibility between organisations and agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in a local area. Local organisations and agencies that work with children and families play a significant role when it comes to safeguarding children. The responsibility rests with the three safeguarding partners who have a shared and equal duty to make arrangements to work together.

In Leeds the LSCP has close working relationships with a range of organisations, including housing and third sectors, Safer Leeds, and the Leeds Safeguarding Adults Board. These relationships enable partners to work towards making Leeds a Safe Place for Everyone. Partnership working also includes learning from experience (lessons learned) to improve the way we work. The effectiveness of the partnership working was evidenced by the recently published JTAI inspection report.

Reporting arrangements: Clear and well-publicised guidance is available on Leeds.gov.uk and LSCP websites for members of the public and practitioners on how to report child safeguarding concerns.

External partners: We use challenge and scrutiny from external experts, leading practitioners, and the extensive use of research to inform practice. Leeds is engaged in regular regional peer challenges and health checks that provide a strong methodology for support and challenge across the region. Leeds also undergoes a high level of inspection activity including Children's residential homes inspections, Inspecting Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS), OFSTED, SEND and Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI).

Plans and strategies: Safeguarding is a clear priority in the strategic plans of the council (Child-Friendly Leeds) and relevant partners, in particular the [Children and Young People's Plan](#) (pp13-14). Through the council's Safeguarding Policy, all council staff have an obligation to protect all children, and vulnerable adults.

Inspection: The last full ILACS OFSTED inspection in February 2022 found services for children to be outstanding, retaining the judgement from the 2018 inspection. This inspection was a full and comprehensive assessment by a team of inspectors looking at the whole system as well as children's case files and speaking with practitioners from across the directorate. The most recent JTAI inspection into Youth Violence from March 2024 has just been published and demonstrates the effectiveness of safeguarding in Leeds.

Further actions planned:

- Re-structuring Early Help services around Family Hubs following the recommendations of the National Review of Children's Social Care - Stable Homes, Built on Love. This will further strengthen early support to families in need reducing escalation in concerns the need for statutory social work intervention.
- Developing a partnership plan to the improvement areas and feedback from the recent JTAI in response to Youth Violence. Reviewing our pay and retention offer for social workers and residential workers.
- Continuing to work with the Health and Social Care Academy and Adults and Health around recruitment.
- Working with 'Frontline' (social work charity) around entry to social work
- Exploring the development of a Family Help Service

More information

The work of the Leeds Safeguarding Children Partnership (LCSP) can be seen in their [Annual Report](#).

Safeguarding adults corporate risk assurance

Risk overview

The abuse of adults with care and support needs in Leeds can happen anywhere, be committed by anyone and can take many forms. To prevent this type of abuse and to support individuals to meet their desired outcomes should harm take place, a range of safeguarding measures are in place. Should any of these measures fail, an adult may suffer violence, serious harm and/or ultimately death. Such a tragic outcome could represent a failure in the council's legal and ethical safeguarding duties and have significant resource implications including financial costs, ombudsman enquiries and even judicial review. The Safeguarding adults risk is linked to the corporate risks on "Safeguarding children" and "Poor outcome from a service based inspection" which are detailed in this report.

Key controls in place to manage the risk

The Leeds Safeguarding Adults Board (LSAB) is a multi-agency statutory partnership of organisations, including the council, that work together to both prevent and end abuse of adults with care and support needs in Leeds. The LSAB has a three year Strategic Plan and produces an annual report which sets out specific actions that help the Board and its partners achieve its ambitions. The Annual Report is taken to Executive Board (in line with statutory guidance which expects that the report will be sent to the Leader and the Chief Executive). Other controls in place to manage this risk include:

- Multi-agency [Safeguarding Adults Policies and Procedures](#), including national and regional guidance.
- Cross-Council Safeguarding Policy: all council staff have an obligation to protect all children, and vulnerable adults. The Policy helps employees to understand, recognise, and report a safeguarding concern.
- The LSAB undertake safeguarding adults reviews (in accordance with the Care Act 2014) and share the learning and associated actions with the council and partners, to ensure lessons are learned.
- The safeguarding theme runs through the work of [Safer Leeds partnership](#), the city's community safety partnership. Linked to this, the LSAB has close working arrangements with a range of organisations including the Leeds Safeguarding Children Partnership.
- Checks are made by the [Care Quality Commission](#), the independent regulator of health and social care in England on the quality of care in registered services. The council also undertakes contract management and quality assurance of commissioned care services.
- Clear, simple and easy to find information available on [what abuse is and how to report it](#).
- The Front Door Safeguarding Hub, the partnership arrangements through which a wide range of safeguarding partners work to support people who have been subject to Domestic Violence and Abuse.
- A rigorous and tiered training and competency framework for front line staff.
- [An Exceptional Risk Forum](#) was established by the LSAB, offering a fresh perspective and multi-agency advice and recommendations as to how a vulnerable person's risk could be reduced. An evaluation of progress to date was presented to the SAB in April.

Further actions planned

The LSAB's plans are based around four key ambitions that guide their work as a Board:

- Ambition One: Develop citizen-led approaches to safeguarding adults.
- Ambition Two: Promote awareness about safeguarding within communities and organisations.
- Ambition Three: Develop citywide approaches to safeguarding.
- Ambition Four: Learn from experience to improve how we work.

Further details of how these ambitions plan to be achieved can be seen in [Our Strategic Plan 2023/24](#).

More information

The most recent Leeds Safeguarding Adults Board annual report is available [here](#).

Major flooding corporate risk assurance

Risk overview

Major flooding presents a clear threat to a wide range of stakeholders in Leeds. In recent years, Leeds has experienced several major flooding incidents including Storms Clara and Dennis (2020) and Dudley, Eunice and Franklin (2023). Recently, the city faced one of its wettest periods on record, with higher than average rainfall recorded every month since July 2023. On 6th May 2024 a month's rainfall in less than an hour caused flooding to homes and damage to infrastructure across parts of North Leeds.

Specific threats to communities and businesses from major flooding include:

- Adverse impact on residents: loss of life or injury; personal distress and/or temporary homelessness.
- Damage to and contamination of domestic and business properties on large-scale.
- Damage to vital infrastructure of district, e.g. roads, rail, power, communications, water.
- Loss of confidence in the ability to cope with flooding leading to a decline in inward investment.

Key controls in place to manage the risk

Leeds is at risk from different types of flood risk, predominantly fluvial (from rivers and watercourses) and pluvial (surface water and localised drainage systems). The council plays an important role in both of these, but often the solutions and mitigation measures are different. The main controls for both aspects are summarised below:

- Reducing flood risk from rivers is largely mitigated through capital investment in flood schemes. The River Aire Flood Alleviation Scheme [Phase 1](#) is one of the UK's largest flood defence projects and the first in the country to use moveable weirs as a pioneering solution to flooding. The scheme aims to reduce the risk of flooding in the city centre. A range of local initiatives completed in recent years include the Wyke Beck Naturalised Flood Management Programme and Otley Flood Alleviation Scheme.
- Working closely with other local authorities and partners that oversee the investment in flood risk across the Yorkshire region as part of the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee. Together, these form the West Yorkshire Resilience Forum for preparedness to respond to major and often cross boundary emergencies.
- Surface water flooding is complicated, but we are developing and implementing capital and externally funded schemes across the city that directly tackle this issue and we are increasingly better equipped with surface water flood risk mapping and modelling.
- The planning system and the drive for more sustainable drainage systems for new and re-developments is our strongest mechanism for mitigating surface water flooding.
- A Local Flood Risk Management Strategy which outlines the approach the council and other agencies will take. The Strategy contains: the objectives for managing flood risk; measures proposed to achieve those objectives; timeframes for any measures and their costs and benefits and funding plans.

Further actions planned

- In conjunction with the Environment Agency, the council is progressing the Flood Alleviation Scheme [Phase 2 \(FAS2\)](#). When completed in Autumn 2024, FAS2 will see the city move from one with no flood defences to one with 1:200 year standard of protection, over the last 10 years.
- The development of a capital programme of local initiatives to reduce the risk of flooding across Leeds to improve the resilience and self-reliance of communities including the use of Nature Based Solutions. The programme, that runs to 2027 and beyond, includes over 20 schemes that will see a total investment of over £200m in flood risk reduction for the city.
- Working with partners across West Yorkshire including academia and West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA), businesses and other organisations to develop greater resilience in the city. This includes the [West Yorkshire Flood Innovation Programme](#)

More information

- Details of schemes including FAS2 can be seen at [Leeds City Council Flood Resilience](#)
- The most recent [Flood Risk Management Report](#) from February 2024 is seen [here](#) (item 7).

Climate change corporate risk assurance

Risk overview

The climate change threat is one of the greatest challenges facing this and future generations across the world. Leeds is already experiencing a warmer climate than the historical average. Further warming is highly likely, and it is important that we take steps to mitigate the impact on the people, communities, infrastructure, economy and natural environment of the city. Whether Leeds experiences the worst impacts of climate change is uncertain and will depend on progress to transition to a net zero⁷ economy both locally and globally. The council, in conjunction with partners throughout the city, has a significant role to play in tackling climate change and working towards net zero, leading by example in adapting our own operations to reduce emissions and supporting businesses, households and individuals to do the same, and also in helping to reduce the impacts of extreme weather events on Leeds.

Key controls in place to manage the risk

Some of the controls to mitigate climate change are seen in the city and council resilience risk seen earlier in this report, with additional climate change-specific and net zero orientated controls as follows:

- The [Leeds Climate Commission](#) and [Yorkshire & Humber Climate Commission](#) informs the work we do to tackle climate change and work towards net zero. The Commissions bring together key organisations and actors from across the city and region and from the public, private and third sectors and helps Leeds make positive choices on issues relating to energy, carbon, weather and climate.
- Continuing to reduce the carbon footprint from council operations to net zero having surpassed the halfway mark. Working with West Yorkshire Combine Authority to deliver the Connecting Leeds Transport Strategy, which includes the promotion of public transport usage and active travel.
- Increased use of electric vehicles in the council fleet.
- A successful track record of grant applications, with the funding awarded being used to support areas such as electric charging infrastructure, housing retrofit, public building decarbonisation and the expansion of the district heating PIPES network.

Further actions planned

Reduce the level of greenhouse gas emissions from the city to become the first net-zero city in the UK by:

- Supporting businesses and homeowners to implement energy efficiency and renewable energy projects to reduce their own carbon footprints.
- Promoting cycling, walking, the use of public transport and zero emission vehicles. This includes tackling emissions from 'grey fleet' – staff-owned vehicles used to carry out council services.
- Building sustainable infrastructure, including large scale renewable energy projects.
- The council's website will continue to be updated to reflect, and signpost to, current plans and policies in relation to climate adaptation, along with information and guidance for residents and businesses summarising the hazards and how to build preparedness within Leeds communities.
- Deliver enhanced city-wide engagement with every community in Leeds to raise awareness of, and receive feedback on, the council's activity to support climate mitigation and adaptation.
- The actions that the council can take within the current powers and resources at its disposal will not be sufficient to unilaterally move the city to a net zero carbon position. There are areas where government policy changes are required and where further funding is needed. The council will seek to influence national policy through national and regional engagement.

More information:

Further details about the actions we are taking can be seen in the most recent [Climate Emergency Annual Report](#)

⁷ The term net zero means achieving a balance between the carbon emitted into the atmosphere, and the carbon removed from it. This balance – or net zero – will happen when the amount of carbon we add to the atmosphere is no more than the amount removed.

Transport issues - keeping the city moving corporate risk assurance

Risk overview

Failure to adequately maintain and manage the transport infrastructure required to keep the city moving can lead to road closures resulting in reduced capacity on the network; re-routing; increased congestion; longer journey times and damage to the city and council's reputation. The wider consequences arising from risks materialising with the transport infrastructure include adverse impacts on the climate, the economy and road safety.

Key controls in place to manage the risk

- The [Connecting Leeds Transport Strategy](#) and [Leeds Vision Zero 2040 Strategy](#) – articulate our ambition that by 2040 no one will be killed or suffer serious injuries on roads in Leeds. These outline the key issues and explain how the council and key partners will attain our stated ambition via a series of actions and priorities.
- Working with a range of partners to ensure the network continues to operate. Key partners include the West Yorkshire Combined Authority, National Highways, Network Rail and utility companies. The West Yorkshire Resilience Forum (see Major Incident risk assurance) also plays a key role in preparing for, responding to, and recovering from a major incident involving the transport infrastructure.
- Application of Incident Management Protocol and the ongoing review and update of the arrangements to ensure they remain up to date and adequate.
- Arrangements to deal with adverse weather that could affect the network include the monitoring of forecasted weather conditions via a range of sources, and maintaining stocks of grit, the fleet and HGV qualified drivers needed to distribute it.
- Ongoing work to identify and upgrade highway and footway infrastructure, key structures (such as bridges) and network management and improvement programmes and projects, and the financing of these through funding including the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement together with the capital programme.
- A central control centre operated by the Urban Traffic Management and Control. The Centre monitors and control traffic signals and sends out automated messaging e.g. in response to congestion and road closures.
- Communications with the public and key stakeholders around major projects and changes to the transport network. The Connecting Leeds Transport Strategy includes a commitment to engage with the citizens and businesses in Leeds to ensure the transport strategy meets their needs. This includes reaching and engaging as many Leeds residents, organisations and businesses in a conversation about the future of transport in the City with a particular focus on diversity and targeting hard to reach groups.

Further actions planned

- Development of further schemes to deliver the outcomes of the Transport Strategy around improved reliability for buses, safer and more direct cycle provision, improved walking links and crossings.
- Development of a West Yorkshire Mass Transit system, with the first phase focused around connectivity to and around Leeds. Added to the continued improvement to Leeds Station, this should deliver a step change in public transport and further reduce reliance on use of private cars.
- Major schemes in progress include: Armley Gyratory, Bishopgate, Neville Street/Victoria Road/Crown Point Road Cycleways.
- Ongoing work to identify areas where the Climate Emergency, net zero ambition and climatic effects may impact the city's transport infrastructure.
- The launch of e-bike scheme in September 2023 to provide people who travel within Leeds (be they residents, workers, or visitors) with an opportunity to access e-bikes and to use those bikes as an alternative to other modes of travel particularly for short distance trips. The network will continue to expand as ridership increases to suburbs such as Meanwood.

More information

- The [Connecting Leeds Transport Strategy Action plan annual update 2023](#) (item 7).
- The [West Yorkshire Combined Authority Transport Strategy](#) which sets out the delivery of a modern, world-class, well-connected transport system that should make travel around West Yorkshire easy and reliable.

Economic growth lag corporate risk assurance

Risk overview

Volatility in the global, national and local economic environment all represent threats to the Leeds economy. In particular, our economy is still feeling the effects of the pandemic, cost of living crisis, a period of persistent high inflation and interest rates rises. There also continues to be adjustment for businesses arising from leaving the EU. If the council and its economic partners don't understand the current and challenges and opportunities, deliver effective business and skills, and infrastructure support, this will have an adverse impact on the economy, business survival, investment and growth. There will be further longer-term consequences for the city in terms of lack of opportunity, lower wages, falling employment levels and an increase in poverty and inequality.

Key controls in place to manage the risk

- The Inclusive Growth Strategy, published in September 2023, sets out the economic priorities for Leeds focussed on three aspects: people, place and productivity.
- We work in conjunction with our partners, including the West Yorkshire Combined Authority and the West & North Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce, on a range of aspects such as supporting inward investment, business growth and enterprise, promoting a thriving and safe city centre and delivering regeneration projects.
- The council has an Economic Development team that works on a diverse range of projects to support business, create employment and drive economic growth through programmes, including facilitating the Leeds Anchor Network.
- A range of performance information used to evaluate the Leeds Economy, including the Leeds Economic Dashboard, city centre daytime footfall, commuting activity and business growth.
- A Future Talent Plan with clear actions to help people adapt to the future of work.
- The Leeds Social Progress Index (updated spring 2024), a tool that helps measure how well Leeds is doing in terms of Inclusive Growth. The Index helps us understand what's happening in different areas of the city (ward based) by looking at multiple social indicators and offers a clear and unbiased measure of overall wellbeing in the city.

Further actions planned

- Work to publicise, embed and deliver the Inclusive Growth Strategy.
- Deliver the [Vision for Leeds](#) – published by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities which sets out plans for Mass Transit, delivering 20,000 new homes in the inner areas of the city, the Investment Zone and other activities placing the spotlight firmly on Leeds.
- Progress links with central government to promote and maintain lobbying to ensure that the needs of Leeds businesses are fully understood, and programmes can support these.
- Growing the Leeds Anchors Network.
- Progress a communications plan for the Social Progress Index for Leeds.
- Continue to seek opportunities that enable the delivery of our innovation vision to drive a healthier, greener, and inclusive future for Leeds.
- Develop links and support with new business start-ups and scale-ups to encourage growth.
- Maintain the Outstanding Ofsted rated education and training services provided by Leeds City Council

More information

- The Leeds Inclusive Growth Strategy and Social Progress Index can be viewed here: [Inclusive Growth Leeds](#).
- Business and licensing information is available on [Leeds.gov.uk](#), including [How to start your own business](#).

Poor outcome from a service based inspection corporate risk assurance

Risk overview

Local authorities are subject to a range of inspections across the services and functions they have responsibility for, in particular for the provision of services to adults (CQC) and children and families (Ofsted and CQC). In a worst case scenario, under the Local Government Act 1999, the Secretary of State has the power to commission an inspection into a local authority which is at risk of failing in its 'best value' duty. Where there is sufficient evidence, the relevant Secretary of State can also intervene in that authority or relevant parts of an authority e.g. children's services.

The risk of the council receiving a poor (inadequate) outcome from an inspection would have adverse consequences across a range of aspects including: the resources required to undertake corrective action and the 'knock on' impact for service delivery; low staff morale and future problems attracting and recruiting staff; the potential resignation of senior officers and the associated loss of their skills and expertise, and loss of public trust and confidence in the council.

Since autumn 2023, Leeds' Childrens and Families directorate has had three comprehensive inspections; SEND Thematic AP review, One Adoption West Yorkshire Inspection and JTAI Youth violence. Whilst the JTAI and SEND were jointly undertaken with the CQC and involved partners, Children's Services had lead responsibility for the inspection activity. The most recent JTAI inspection into Youth Violence from March 2024 has just been published and demonstrates the effectiveness of safeguarding in Leeds.

Key controls in place to manage the risk

- Risks relating to specific inspections e.g. Ofsted, Care Quality Commission, are documented and managed by the respective council directorates. There is a clear escalation route up to the council's Corporate Leadership Team (CLT - consisting of the council's Chief Executive and directors) should any significant issues need to be raised or require corporate support.
- Horizon scanning of inspections and their outcomes undertaken on other local authorities and active participation in sharing best practice through professional networks. The information obtained from this research can help identify aspects of best practice and areas of weakness requiring corrective action prior to any inspection taking place on ourselves.
- Performance frameworks: Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and other performance information reported to key stakeholders including Directorate Management Teams, CLT, Scrutiny Boards and the council's Executive Board. Regular review and discussion about performance results and their implications on future inspections can help identify any areas of weakness requiring corrective action. In this respect, performance information can be used as an early warning indicator for a potential poor inspection result.
- The council undertakes a staff survey (usually annually) and its results are another way of identifying any significant issues that could contribute to a poor inspection outcome.
- The appointment of a Freedom to Speak Up Guardian - an independent person who employees can approach to raise any concerns or suggestions they may have about the workplace and how services are being delivered. Staff networks are an additional source of insight to help manage risks.

Further actions planned

- Preparation activities are taking place within council directorates and services that are expecting an inspection in the near future. This includes completing self-assessments for expected SEND and Social Care inspections within the Children and Families Directorate.

More information

- Details of Ofsted and CQC inspections can be seen [here](#). A brief guide to the Ofsted new inspection framework can be seen [here](#).
- Annual Corporate Performance Report 2023/24 (on the same Executive Board agenda as this report)
- The risk of a poor outcome from a service based inspection is linked to the corporate risks on Safeguarding adults and Safeguarding children, both of which are detailed earlier in this report.

Health and safety failure corporate risk assurance

Risk overview

Should a serious health and safety (H&S) incident arise from the many services that the council provides or commissions, it could result in death, injury or chronic ill-health to internal and external persons including service users and staff. Incidents of violence and aggression also remains a high risk for many of our colleagues across front line service areas. Any serious H&S incidents could result in reputational damage and adverse media publicity. If things go wrong, regulatory and enforcement bodies such as the [Health and Safety Executive](#) (HSE) could undertake investigations into the council and this may require the suspension of services or closure of buildings. Civil claims for compensation could also be brought against the council by employees or members of the public injured due to a significant failure in our H&S arrangements. A strong and positive trade union partnership continues to underpin the health, safety and wellbeing (HSW) work across the authority. The implementation of the trade union consultation standard ensure active consultation at all levels. Regular scrutiny of all HSW matters at the Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board ensures a risk based and proactive approach is taken with all work streams to manage the risk.

Key controls in place to manage the risk

- **Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Strategy** – setting out the council’s commitment to health, safety & wellbeing. The policy and strategy include a set of refreshed priorities, with a focus on occupational stress but also covering violence & aggression, risk management, vehicle safety and mental health.
- **H&S training, advice and support** – available for all staff and provided by the council’s Health, Safety & Wellbeing Team and Occupational Health. Regular communications and engagement with staff on health, safety and wellbeing matters. ‘Let’s Talk Health & Safety’ training for managers as part of the council’s Be Your Best programme offer for staff.
- **Processes & reporting** – regular reporting on H&S issues and performance to a range of internal stakeholders, including the Corporate Leadership Team and the Executive Board. An annual report to the Executive Board is produced which demonstrates how duties set out in the council’s Health and Safety Policy are discharged.
- **Co-operation & consultation** – between managers and employee representatives on H&S issues with various directorate and service level H&S committees. Best practice is also shared between the council and other relevant organisations through our networking arrangements. Additional co-operation on H&S matters takes place with Trade Unions.
- **Working with partner organisations** – essential pro-active maintenance of council buildings, schools and housing stock is carried out with contractors. A Fire Safety Concordat is also in place between the council and the West Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Authority. The Concordat aims to provide a framework to ensure the roles and responsibilities of the two organisations are effectively translated into practical working arrangements.
- **Staff networks** – a range of staff network groups; a valuable resource that support and represent staff on issues or topics they relate to or associate with. The networks include the Healthy Minds Group and Disability and Wellbeing Network which are both linked to health, safety and wellbeing.
- **Freedom to Speak Up Guardian (FTSUG)**: The FTSUG offers a route for employees to raise any concerns or suggestions they may have about the workplace, including health, safety and wellbeing.

Further actions planned

Working together for a safer workplace: Over recent years there’s been an increase in violent and aggressive incidents towards council staff. Preventing these incidents and supporting colleagues to feel safe is a priority. The violence and aggression toolkit is being refreshed in July and will provide managers and individuals with step by step guidance through Let’s talk sessions, supporting documents and de-escalation training.

Toolkits: Two new staff toolkits are being launched, Supporting Menopause and New and Expectant Mothers. These will empower both managers and colleagues to understand more, respond better and support each other.

Further information

The council’s latest [Health, Safety and Wellbeing Performance and Assurance Report](#) (item 16).

Major ICT failure corporate risk assurance

Risk overview

The council's ICT function plays a central role in supporting out Best City Ambition by providing day-to-day support to all council staff who use information, communications and technology to carry out their job. This includes standard office software as well as running major business applications. There are many factors which could trigger frequent or prolonged ICT failure, including loss of power coupled with failure of back-up generators, air conditioning units fail resulting in the data centre overheating and a power down of the ICT server equipment, a loss of internet connectivity and insufficient staffing resources to maintain the infrastructure. Should the risk arise, and the digital infrastructure not be restored promptly, there would be a significant adverse impact on our ability to deliver services leading to mass complaints, loss of public confidence in the council and reputational damage.

Key controls in place to manage the risk

- Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery Plans in place for primary systems, with periodic review and testing. A cross-council Major Incident Management process is in place and would be activated to deal with a major IT failure.
- In the event of a total or partial disruption to the power supply, IT systems are configured to shut down safely. Generators providing an alternative source of power supply are maintained and can be used to support key sites in the event of a mains power failure.
- The implementation of a resilient fibre service between key data centres has reduced the number of hardware failures that can affect service delivery. Improved fibre links enable a quicker offsite backup of data should a major incident occur, and data recovery be required.
- IT security measures such as firewalls, anti-virus software, and access controls for staff and contractors in place to mitigate against cyber-attacks.
- Senior managers within the council's Integrated Digital Service (IDS) meet weekly and act as the escalation point for any concerns raised around security and digital service delivery.
- The Essential Services capital programme that sees investment made in maintaining the IT Service across the council – including spend on devices, security, networks, software refresh, infrastructure, storage and compliance.

Further actions planned

- Regular work to review, update and test the digital aspects of Business Continuity Plans for the council's critical services.
- Leading up to 2025 there will be significant changes as the national telephony system switches over from analogue (PSTN and ISDN) to digital. A programme is underway to convert the council's phone systems to digital and this includes the identification of any "legacy lines" that will no longer work after the switchover.
- As part of the Cloud and Compliance Migration Programme more applications will be moved off premises and into cloud-based solutions

Information management and governance corporate risk assurance

Risk overview

Failure to manage personal information properly could cause serious damage, harm or even death to individuals, with the council facing legal and regulatory enforcement action and fines. The council recognises the need to protect its information assets from both accidental and malicious loss, damage and inappropriate disclosure.

In autumn 2023 the council was subject to a routine audit by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). The audit reviewed the council's compliance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation and looked at three key areas: Governance and accountability, Records management and Personal data breach management and reporting.

Key controls in place to manage the risk

- **Governance and Accountability** – The Information Governance Framework which sets out the responsibilities and relationships between key internal stakeholders: the Information Management Steering Group; the Information Assurance Board; the Senior Information Risk Owner⁸ and the Corporate Leadership Team. The Information Assurance Board's purpose is to set the council's vision and information strategy in relation to how it manages and protects its information, and to provide assurance to the Senior Information Risk Owner that the council has appropriate arrangements and controls in place. Information risk arrangements now include more detail at directorate level which are used to inform the corporate risk. This means it is easier to identify key risk trends and areas which require additional control measures as risk categories are linked to information incident categories. In addition, the information risk arrangements are embedded in quarterly performance reports which provide information to directorates.
- **People** – Roles and responsibilities are clearly set out, including a Senior Information Risk Owner, Data Protection Officer and a Caldicott Guardian (a senior person responsible for protecting the confidentiality of people's health and care information). Mandatory training for elected members and staff and internal guidance on managing information and cyber security is also provided, through which the message is reinforced that this risk is everyone's responsibility.
- **Policies and processes** – are in place that are fit for purpose and reflect of legislative requirements, in particular the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Data Protection Act (2018), including those for Information Assurance, Information Sharing, the processing of information requests and the Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIAs). The Remote Working Policy for council staff includes information security measures for staff working at home or offsite.
- **Assurance and Compliance** – Information governance forms part of the council's Annual Governance Statement which reports on the effectiveness of the council's internal controls, reviews and inspections (internal and external) and adopting compliance regimes such as the government's Public Services Network (PSN)⁹ Code of Connection and the Data Protection and Security Toolkit for Health.

Further actions planned

Progress the recommendations from the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) following their data protection audit of Leeds City Council in November 2023 in time for the ICO follow up review, scheduled for December 2024.

Development and implementation of the council's new Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA), Information Request Management and Information Incident Management Power Apps to help effective governance and assurance, and to ensure efficiency of process in line with the council's financial challenge.

Post completion of the ICO Audit Action Plan, continue with development of the council's Information Management Work Programme and embed an effective assurance framework to ensure continuous improvement.

More information

The Annual Information Governance Report, including the Annual Report of the Caldicott Guardian, was reviewed by the council's Corporate Governance and Audit Committee in February 2024 and is [here \(item 9\)](#).

⁸ The SIRO is person responsible within the organisation for managing information risks.

⁹ PSN Code of Connection (CoCo) is an independent security assessment of external and internal network infrastructure and devices.

Cost of living and the impact on the third sector corporate risk assurance

Risk overview

'Third sector organisations' (TSOs) is a term used to describe the range of organisations that are neither public sector nor private sector. It includes voluntary and community organisations, social enterprises, mutuals and co-operatives. In the last five years, there have been a number of major developments nationally and locally that have changed the way that the third sector operates, both internally and within the wider system in the city. This means that there is a risk that TSOs will not be able to deliver to same level of impact, which will affect day to day locality work and plans. TSO work also relieves the pressure on demand for our statutory services, including those provided by the council, at a later stage, so any reduction in provision will have implications on these already stretched services.

Key controls in place to manage this risk

To ensure the resilience of the sector throughout the cost-of-living crisis, to enable the third sector to continue supporting communities, Third Sector Leeds¹⁰ published a position statement which led to a workshop being undertaken. The outcomes from the workshop were used to produce a new third sector strategy and a set of key actions which have been taken forward as part of securing the resilience of the sector. This includes responding to the need to plan for the longer-term resilience of the sector through the development of a city owned Third Sector Strategy, in order to set out a path for more detailed and longer-term work around key areas such as social value and inward investment. The 'Third Sector Strategy 2023 – 2028', developed in partnership with Third Sector Leeds and key stakeholders, was launched in October 2023. The sets out nine priorities with the overarching ambition of the strategy being: Leeds is a city where all partners work together to ensure that the third sector is more diverse and resilient, and therefore better able to continue supporting our communities. The strategy can be found here, and further updates and progress will also be published [Leeds Third Sector Strategy - Doing Good Leeds](#).

Further actions planned

In developing a strategy for investment in the third sector, we are not starting from scratch. There has been a decade of developing trust and understanding and adopting a teamwork approach within the broad framework of the Best City Ambition and its predecessor, the Best Council Plan. This is not just a strategy for the third sector; it's a strategy for the whole city to better understand and support the sector to continue playing a vital role in supporting communities in Leeds to thrive. In addition, this work recognises there are ongoing opportunities for the third sector to leverage inward investment from other areas and lessen the pressure on statutory partners; however, this needs to be further understood and quantified.

Third Sector Leeds will be the focus for co-ordinating the third sector "ownership" of the development of the strategy, supported by Voluntary Action Leeds, working closely with key partners, with the governance arrangement of Third Sector Partnership. A series of Third Sector Goes Local events across the city identified the priorities for the third sector as commissioning and funding, social value and partnerships. A plan of action is currently being developed with key stakeholders to drive forward the agenda and key priorities. Meanwhile work is progressing on priority agendas, this includes Social Value, whereby partners are collaborating to establish a shared understanding of social value seeking to co-design a clear set of priorities for where social value activity will have most impact. In addition, the development and maintenance of partnership and engagement relationships with the sector, including city-wide strategic bodies such as Third Sector Partnership. Dialogue with the third sector continues including budget pressures, future direction of travel and investment in the sector.

More information

Two key pieces of research have been published which have enabled us to better understand our sector sustainability, impact and trends; State of the Sector Update 2022 [State of the Sector - Doing Good Leeds](#) & [The structure, dynamics and impact of the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector report \(2021\)](#)

Information on Third Sector Leeds can be seen [here](#).

¹⁰ Third Sector Leeds is the leading policy body that advocates for the third sector's values and interests in supporting Leeds' Best City ambition.

EHCP and SEND pressures corporate risk assurance

Risk overview

Nationally, applications for Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) for children and young people are increasing, which is putting a strain on the Special, Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) services that local authorities have responsibility for providing. This in turn is adding to the significant budget pressures being experienced by councils.

As a result of these pressures, many local authorities, including Leeds, are looking for ways to increase the efficiency of their EHCP processes. Leeds City Council commissioned external resources to undertake a review of its EHCP system. The aim of the review is to better understand the opportunities and obstacles around securing improvements in outcomes for children and young people, whilst considering the council's position around operating in accordance with the relevant legislation and codes of practice.

There are significant financial, reputational and operational risks associated with any significant service redesign and these are being monitored with appropriate mitigation measures put in place.

Key controls in place to manage the risk

The work forms an integral element of the Children and Families Directorate Transformation Programme, which aims to drive forward a series of improvements across the directorate, and is reported to and scrutinised by an established officer cross council delivery board, chaired by the Director of Children and Families.

There are reputational and financial risks associated with the council's arrangements not being legally compliant and the review will ensure that sufficient focus is maintained to ensure that this risk is mitigated by appropriate arrangements being in place and being consistently managed to ensure delivery remains in line with policy.

The risks associated with the change process and also the current arrangements are included within the Children and Families directorate's routine risk reporting and monitoring arrangements. There is a direct link to the wider set corporate risks on In-year budget; Medium-term financial strategy, Workforce and Inspections – poor outcomes seen elsewhere in this report.

Further actions planned

A number of changes are being implemented to support service delivery which puts the needs of children and their families at the forefront of the process, these being:

- **A new operating model** - the way in which the council delivers its arrangements for administering the EHCP process will change and a new operating model will be developed to support collaboration across teams for more effective case management, improved tracking of cases, which will also support improved and timely communication with parents, carers and settings.
- **Simplification of process, decision making and funding arrangements** – the amalgamation of multiple application forms into a single, simplified form. The introduction of multi-agency panels for decision making and the consideration of assessment, setting, funding and transport needs, facilitated by a single application and panel process.
- **Tackling backlog and future demand** - additional external Educational Psychologist resources will be secured to provide additional resource to reduce the backlog over the short term whilst the new operating model is implemented to manage ongoing demand.
- **Automation, training and cultural change** - digital improvements which will aim to improve the availability of performance data so that the service can use data and insight to improve outcomes. Process automation solutions are planned to reduce manual inputting to systems and facilitate automated updates to parents and carers regarding the status of their EHC application or assessment. There will also be a significant focus on organisational development to support these changes with a view to support cultural change which is child centred, solution focussed, embraces continuous improvement.

More information

Update reports on the SEND and EHCP review to Executive Board can be seen here: [June 2024](#) (item 6) and [December 2023](#) (item 13).

Annex 1: Leeds City Council’s Risk Evaluation Matrices

Risks that have been identified need to be analysed and evaluated (scored) using Risk Evaluation Matrices so that they can be prioritised for treatment. Risks ratings are based on a combined assessment of how likely the risk is to occur – its **probability** - and its potential **impact** after considering the controls already in place to manage/mitigate the risk.

A ‘5x5’ scoring mechanism is used to carry out this assessment of probability and impact which ensures that the risks are rated consistently. Together, these two scores combine to give a risk rating, one that is based on the **reasonable worst-case scenario**, which helps prioritise the risks for review and action.

The scores allow the risks to be plotted onto a risk map (below) used to illustrate and compare a group of risks.

