



Risk Management Strategy

SEVENOAKS DISTRICT COUNCIL

Author	Date	Approved by	Date	Date of next review
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		Audit Committee	1 February 2024	

RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

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1. POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1 Risk Management is “the sum of the co-ordinated activities designed and operated to manage risk and exercise internal control within an organisation. Robust risk management enhances strategic planning and prioritisation, assists in achieving objectives and strengthens the ability to be agile to respond to the challenges faced.” (HM Government – The Orange Book: Management of Risk – Principles and Concerns).
- 1.2 The Council aims to effectively manage all risks to the achievement of its objectives, both in terms of reducing threats to an acceptable level and maximising available opportunities. Risk is present in all of the Council’s activities and it is therefore neither prudent or desirable to eliminate all risk. The Council supports a focused and empowered corporate approach to managing risks, whereby it will not be averse to a degree of commercial risk but where risk decisions are focused, balanced and proportionate.
- 1.3 The objectives of the Council’s risk management strategy are to:
- Ensure the highest standards of corporate governance, in order to protect the interests of our community and our stakeholders
 - Embed risk management into everyday operations so that the Council is able to anticipate, and proactively respond to, changes and events that may impact on the delivery of objectives
 - Ensure that risk management is integral to decision making processes so that potential impacts are clearly understood and decisions are made on the basis of the best available information
 - Enable the Council to achieve its strategic and operational objectives by recognising and managing possible events that may impact on this
 - Enable the Council to anticipate and respond to changing social, environmental and legislative requirements
 - Enable the Council to identify opportunities to maximise positive outcomes
 - Safeguard and protect our residents, staff and wider community
 - Embed a collaborative approach to risk management through sharing and aggregation of risk knowledge, thus enhancing risk awareness, responses and reporting.

2. DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 A **risk** is defined as “the possibility of an event occurring which may impact the achievement of objectives.”
- 2.2 A **control** is “any action taken by management, the board and other parties to manage risk and increase the likelihood that established objectives and goals will be achieved. Management plans, organises and directs the performance and ensures sufficient actions are completed to provide reasonable assurance that objectives and goals will be achieved.”
- 2.3 A **key control** is a primary control that is important to the management of risk; it may cover more than one area or it may fulfil a function that no other control fulfils.

3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 3.1 All officers and Members have a role to play in risk management, as risks may arise in any part of the Council's operations. In particular, managers and staff who are accountable for achieving an objective are accountable for managing risks to achieving that objective.
- 3.2 Other individuals in the Council, such as those with responsibility for Health and Safety have responsibility for risk specialisms. Representatives from particular specialisms will be part of the Corporate Risk Management Group (CRMG) so that their work co-ordinates, and feeds into, wider risk management arrangements in the Council.
- 3.3 Key roles and responsibilities are set out below.

Area	Responsibility
Audit Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve the Risk Management Strategy on behalf of Full Council • Maintain an overview of the effective development and operation of risk management in the Council, which is achieved by periodic reporting and monitoring, and independent assurance • Review the risk register on a six monthly basis
Strategic Management Team (SMT)	<p>As a collective, Strategic Management Team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Own, and are accountable for, the Strategic Risk Register (SRR) • Ensure that all risks have been identified, that all scores and responses selected are appropriate, and that effective controls are in place to manage the risk to the desired levels • Set the risk management strategy and determine the risk appetite, prior to final approval by Audit Committee • Ensure there are resources and arrangements in place to provide periodic assurance on the risk management framework (as this cannot be undertaken by the in house internal audit team)

Chief Officer – Finance and Trading (s151 Officer)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chief Officer – Finance and Trading leads on Risk Management at SMT • This includes preparing and promoting the Risk Management Strategy and ensuring that this is maintained under regular review • They will also chair the CRMG, or delegate this role to a suitable deputy
Chief Officers & Assistant Chief Executive	<p>Individually, Chief Officers are responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acting as ‘risk owners’ for identified risks on the Strategic Risk Register, including regular updates and ensuring the effectiveness of the controls to manage the risk within risk appetite • Ensuring that there are effective arrangements for Risk Management within their own areas, in line with the Risk Management Strategy, including risk escalation where appropriate • Ensuring that suitable resource is committed to the Corporate Risk Management Group
Heads of Service / Service Managers	<p>Heads of Service / Service Managers are responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying risks within their own service areas • Maintaining up to date operational level risk registers, updating at least quarterly • Implementing controls to manage those risks where appropriate • Monitoring the effectiveness of the controls to manage the risk • Ensuring that the operational risk register is subject to regular scrutiny, including the agreement of target scores
Corporate Risk Management Group (CRMG)	<p>The Corporate Risk Management Group will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider and review updates to the Risk Management Strategy and Guidance • Champion and co-ordinate risk management activities across the Council • Ensure that operational risk registers are reviewed on a regular basis • Review operational risk registers as a collective to identify any cross cutting risks that should be considered for escalation to the Strategic Risk Register • Provide scrutiny and challenge to the Strategic Risk Register, where appropriate

Audit Manager	<p>The Audit Manager will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain and review the Risk Management Strategy and guidance in line with best practice • Participate in the CRMG • Facilitate the update of the SRR • Co-ordinate risk reporting on behalf of the CRMG, including aggregate reports of service risk registers
All elected Members and staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify risks and contribute to the management of risks as relevant and appropriate. • Project / Programme / Contract Managers are also responsible for ensuring that risk management is embedded with their project / programme / contract

4. RISK APPETITE

- 4.1 The Council recognises that it is not possible or desirable to eliminate all risk. Some acceptance or exploitation of risk may be necessary in order to maximise opportunities; other risks may be outside the control of the Council or it may not be cost effective to reduce the risk further.
- 4.2 Any risks with a current score within the 'High' category will be considered outside the Council's risk tolerance and further action to reduce the risk will be necessary.
- 4.3 Any 'Medium' risks currently scoring 10 or above are also likely to be outside the Council's risk appetite. Careful consideration should be given as to whether further, cost-effective action can further reduce impact or likelihood.
- 4.4 'Low' scoring risks will be considered within the organisation's risk appetite and further action may not be necessary.
- 4.5 In practical terms, the risk appetite for each risk will be articulated through the target score applied to the risk (see Guidance Section 4). All risks must be given a target score as well as the inherent and current scores. The target score will provide the level of risk that the Council is prepared to accept for that particular risk; hence it is important that the target score is subject to regular scrutiny separate from the risk owner. Target score may be taken to include meaning a maximum or minimum, as relevant, rather than solely an objective to be reached. The target score will also take into account the available capacity and resource to manage the risk, including cost / benefit of further controls or mitigation measures.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT PROCESS

5.1 The risk management process is cyclical and consists of the following stages:

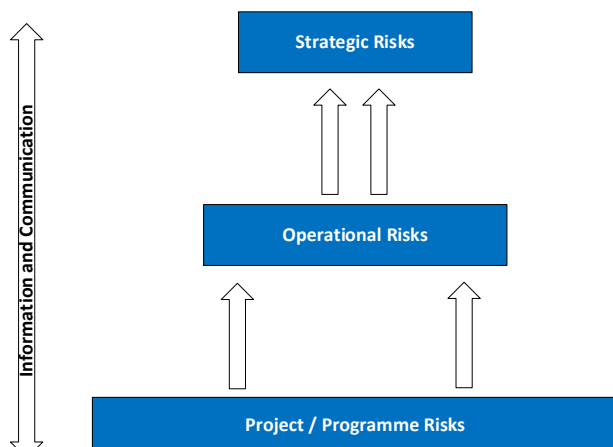


Diagram 1 – Risk Management Process

5.2 Further information on each of these stages is set out in the **Risk Management Guidance**.

5.3 Risk management takes place on three levels: Strategic, Operational and project / programme / contract as per the diagram below. The table explains each of these levels in greater detail:

Diagram 2 – Risk Management Level



Type of Risk	Description
Strategic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic risks are captured on the Strategic Risk Register (SRR) • Risk owners at this level will usually be a member of SMT although there may also be a named Senior Manager with joint responsibility. • The SRR is updated and presented to SMT quarterly; these updates are facilitated by the Audit Manager in discussion with risk owners. • The SRR is presented twice yearly to Audit Committee for assurance.
Operational (Service Level)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operational level risk management is owned by the relevant Service Manager or Head of Service. • Chief Officers ensure that effective arrangements are in place in their own services. • Service level risks are captured on operational risk registers which are owned by the relevant service manager / Head of Service. These should be updated as often as is necessary. However, as a minimum they should be updated quarterly. • Individual Chief Officer areas will need to establish processes for ensuring that operational risk registers are subject to collective scrutiny and debate. This could be achieved by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Review and discussion at service management team meetings ○ Submission to the Chief Officer alongside Service Plans ○ Review and discussion with the Chief Officer during regular 121s. • Any 'High' risks should be considered for escalation to the Strategic Risk Register, in discussion with the relevant Chief Officer. • The CRMG reviews Service risk registers as a collective to identify any cross cutting risks, interdependencies and any discrepancies in risk appetite or response.
Project / Programme / Contract	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual projects, programmes and contracts should have their own risk registers to capture and monitor risks. • These are the responsibility of the project / programme / contract manager and should be discussed regularly at project / programme boards. • Any 'High' risks should be considered for escalation to the operational risk register.

6. INTERDEPENDENCIES AND INFORMATION FLOWS

- 6.1 The cyclical process set out above in *Diagram 1 – Risk Management Process* should be in place at each of these three levels. However, none of the levels operate in isolation as there are links, interdependencies, escalation routes and information flows among them.
- 6.2 As a minimum, any risks with a current net score of ‘High’ should be considered, in conjunction with the Service Manager or Chief Officer, for escalation to the next level.
- 6.3 Similarly, any cross-cutting risks identified on two or more service risk registers should be considered for inclusion on the Strategic Risk Register.
- 6.4 The CRMG will review service level risk registers to identify any cross-cutting risks and interdependencies, and an annual report on aggregate risks from these registers will be provided to SMT.

7. STRATEGY REVIEW

- 7.1 The Risk Management Strategy will be reviewed and presented to Audit Committee for approval every two years at a minimum.