

**Report of the Head of Internal Audit,
Anti-Fraud and Assurance**

AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE – 15th NOVEMBER 2023

STRATEGIC CONCERNS / RISK REGISTER

1. Purpose of the report

- 1.1 To introduce the next scheduled strategic risks for the Audit and Governance Committee meeting to consider as presented by the appropriate Executive Director.
- 1.2 Two strategic risks will be considered at this meeting:
- SEND – Executive Director Children’s Services
 - Safeguarding in Children’s Services – Executive Director Children’s Services

2. Recommendation

2.1 The Committee is asked to note the update.

3. Current Position

- 3.1 The Strategic Risk Register was reviewed by the Senior Management Team (SMT) on 5th September and at that time there were no changes to the number or ratings given to the 13 strategic risks.

Following the outcome of the recent Ofsted inspection which rated Children’s Services as Good – the Safeguarding Risk has been reviewed and reclassified from a high rating to a medium rating by the Executive Director Children’s Services.

This means that in relation to the Strategic Risk Register there are now 3 risks classified as **high** (red response rating*) and 10 risks classified as **medium** (amber rating). No risks are classified as **low** (green rating) in relation to the level of response and intervention required.

* NOTE - The response rating reflects the degree of urgency and importance of the interventions and management oversight rather than the inherent risk.

The next SMT review of strategic risks is scheduled for 12th December.

- 3.2 The actions associated with these risks are included in Appendix 1.

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Strategic Risk to be reviewed in the meeting – 15th November 2023

Risk Title	Risk Description	Impact	Status	Response Rating	SMT Owner
SEND	<p>Risk Description: Ensure the Local Area SEND and Alternative Provision Partnership effectively delivers the Local Area Inclusion Plan (Improvement Programme), Written Statement of Action and Safety Valve Programme to ensure that children with SEND are fully included, engaged and connected with their education setting and wider community leading to positive outcomes educationally, socially and emotionally leading to independence and an effective preparation for adulthood.</p> <p>Risk Assessment: Ensure accelerated progress against the WSOA and implementation of the Improvement Programme (Local Area Inclusion Plan) which addresses areas for improvement identified in the SEND Inspection.</p> <p>Action 1 Implement the SEND Improvement Programme (Local Area Inclusion Plan) and ensure that it adheres to statutory guidance and requirements, including the SEND Code of Practice and Children and Families Act. RAG Rating – Green</p> <p>Action 2 Ensure multi-agency arrangements are robust and adequately governed and effective and the Oversight Board arrangements are fit for purpose and regularly reviewed. RAG Rating – Green</p> <p>Action 3 Strengthen and build consistent and effective co-production, engagement and participation, strengthening the strategic engagement and influence of parent carers. RAG Rating – Amber</p> <p>Action 4 Implement the DSG Management Action Plan to ensure effective use of resources and reduce the in-year deficit which will be scrutinised under the safety valve programme. Home to School transport will be positively impacted by less children travelling out of borough for their education and reducing numbers of children requiring specialist support Robust and timely financial monitoring and reporting is in place. RAG Rating – Green</p>	Actual	Actual	Medium	Executive Director Children's Services

Risk Title	Risk Description	Impact	Status	Response Rating	SMT Owner
	<p>Action 5 Increase the number of children receiving SEN support in local provision supported by early identification of need, leading to long term positive outcomes. RAG Rating – Amber</p>				
<p>Potential death of a child / safeguarding failure in Children’s Services</p>	<p>Risk Description: A need to continually appraise the controls to minimise the potential for death of a child or safeguarding failure in children's services - need to be able to identify any changes which may weaken current levels of assurance. Factors which may impact should be assessed include: the impact of Covid 19 upon both families and workforce capacity, increasing poverty which have increased need and demands for services, increasing caseloads, which presents a risk. Future financial settlements which could impact on service provision, awareness of system pressures e.g., workload. If systems break down there is potential for huge reputational damage - seen across a number of UK authorities - including removal of Director of Children’s Services, and government imposition of Commissioners to run services until improvements are made.</p> <p>Risk Assessment: Need to continually appraise the controls to minimise the potential for the death of a child or a safeguarding failure.</p> <p>Action 1 Assurance that the suite of policies and procedures are in place, that are routinely updated twice yearly and immediately where required. Robust review is undertaken by the BSCP Policy + procedure Subgroup, under the governance of BSCP. RAG Rating - Green</p> <p>Action 2 Suite of metrics, indicators and data exists to be able to identify changes that could impact on the risks to safeguarding. RAG Rating - Amber</p> <p>Action 3 Staff workloads are adequately monitored to ensure consistency and the adherence to good practice, with strong, proactive recruitment and retention initiatives to avoid vacancies and reduced caseloads. RAG Rating - Green</p> <p>Action 4 Multi-agency arrangements are robust, adequately governed and effective. The Safeguarding Partnership arrangements that oversee these have been strengthened</p>	Potential	Potential	Medium	Executive Director Children’s Services

Risk Title	Risk Description	Impact	Status	Response Rating	SMT Owner
	<p>to include the Establishment of a multi-agency Development Board, which is independently chaired. RAG Rating - Amber</p> <p>Action 5 Quality of Practice across children's services is too variable. Practice workstreams have been set up and are being overseen as part of new developments. RAG Rating – Green</p>				