

THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

CABINET: 13TH SEPTEMBER, 2021

REFERENCE FROM GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE: 20TH JULY, 2021

“258 CORPORATE RISK REGISTER QUARTER 4 UPDATE (MD) –

The Head of Policy and Business Transformation presented the report which updated the Committee on the Quarter 4 position of Corporate Risks for the period April 2020 – March 2021 as contained within the Corporate Risk Register and outlined in the Corporate Risk Summary Report and the emerging issues.

It was reported that overall, good progress had been made during Quarter 4 in relation to the actions associated with the Risk Management Plans across all aspects of the Register. In total there were 136 mitigating actions currently being monitored via the Register, the majority of which were also aligned to a Corporate Plan activity. During Quarter 4, the Council had been able to assign a Red, Amber or Green (RAG) status to 135 of these mitigating actions. Where it had not be possible to note a RAG status for an action, this was noted as N/A (not applicable) against the action and an explanation provided in the relevant Risk Management Plan. Shown in Section 5.

During Quarter 4, a total of 64% actions (87) were completed and 36% (48) actions were allocated a red status for slippage. For several actions, COVID was quoted as a contributory reason for any slippage. A full breakdown of these individual exceptions along with a rationale was provided in Section 6.

It was requested that any comments from the Committee be referred to Cabinet for their consideration and endorsement at the meeting when Cabinet would consider a report on the Corporate Risk Register for Quarter 4.

In addition, Cabinet had referred the Coronavirus Update report to the Committee as further contextual information when considering the Corporate Risk Register as the report provided a high-level overview of the current position regarding Coronavirus and the Council’s current arrangements to respond and recover from the pandemic and well as an update on the latest position for Council services and the regional arrangements for managing the public sector response to the pandemic, and specific aspects of this, including mass vaccinations and the Test, Trace, Protect service.

Councillor Dr. I.J. Johnson queried the impact on the Council’s waste recycling strategy as result of planning permission being granted for the new waste transfer facility. Councillor Dr. Johnson also queried the risk status given to Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS), commenting whether this was something that would always be given a high risk status. In reply to the impact of the new waste transfer station, the Head of Policy and Business Transformation advised that he would look

into this and relay information back. The impact would also be reflected in the Quarter 1 position update.

Similarly, with regards to DoLS, an update would be sought from the service area and circulated. The Monitoring Officer/Head of Legal and Democratic Services added that investment had been made into legal resources to support the DoLS assessment process.

Councillor M.R. Wilson referred to difficulties and issues around staff recruitment and attracting those with the right skills. He queried the Council's measures to address this and whether it should be given a higher risk status. Councillor Wilson also queried whether there was dialogue with other local authorities around the use of new technology and agile working as well as succession planning. In response, the Head of Policy and Business Transformation advised that the Workforce Needs risk reflected Councillor Wilson's concerns, as some work was required. A further update would be provided for Quarter 1. In relation to this query, the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development stated that the Council was considering work force planning, particularly for those service areas where there were known issues such as Social Services. With regards to dialogue with other local authorities, the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development stated that there were monthly meetings with Human Resources managers where best practice would be shared and discussed. Where possible Councils would work together in areas with recruitment difficulties or where Councils could pool skills. It was also important for the Council to improve the skills knowledge of its own staff. For example, and within the area of Social Services, the Council's Learning and Development Team were currently working with Social Care Wales to align the Council's strategy to the wider strategy across Wales around succession planning, which included a new apprenticeship scheme. It was also important to recognise that in some areas, such as business support, the Council was seeing an increase in the number of people submitting applications, so a piece of work was underway to look at the reasons behind that. Findings of this would be reported back.

Councillor M.R. Wilson also commented on the last point regarding an increase in applications for vacancies, stating that this maybe because the Council now had a higher profile and people more aware of what the Council did. He added that it would also be beneficial to see information regarding the supply of labour and whether the Council was meeting its obligations to Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority communities as well as recruiting sufficient Welsh speakers.

In terms of agile working, the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development advised that the Council was currently reviewing its policy, including consultation with Trade Unions, to support new and different working arrangements including the use of Council accommodation and working environments. The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development also referred to findings of the Staff Wellbeing Surveys, which showed that most staff that could work from home wished to continue with a hybrid working arrangement, with a balance of working from home and in the office. Data from the survey was currently being reviewed to identify the best way to support that.

The Operational Manager Engineering, in conjunction with the Engineering Manager – Environment, provided an update around Flood Risk Management and the major flooding event which occurred on 23rd December 2020.

It was noted that the Council had a duty to undertake a Section 19 report to ascertain the causes for a major flooding event and to outline the Council's response. The report had been split into two. The first related to the area of Sully and was due to be published in a few weeks. The second related to Dinas Powys and would be published by the end of August.

The Operational Manager went on to advise that the causes of major flood incidents tended to be very complex with many reasons which were not all linked to climate change. For example, the flooding in Dinas Powys could mainly be attributed to it being located on a flood plain. A few months before the flooding incident, Natural Resources Wales (NRW) had suggested a flood alleviation scheme for Dinas Powys. However, the consultation had received significant local opposition, so the proposed scheme had been shelved. In terms of the Council's response, drains had been cleared and regular update meetings held with NRW, Welsh Water and elected representatives. These were in addition to the Council's legal duty to complete a Section 19 report.

Councillor Dr. I.J. Johnson referred to the length of time it would take for flood alleviation projects to be completed, and he queried whether the risk status was high enough given the level of risk. Councillor Dr. Johnson also suggested that regular updates on flooding and coastal erosion should be reported to the Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee. In reply, the Head of Policy and Business Transformation stated that the status of the risk would be reviewed, and this would take into account the issue of coastal erosion. Discussion of an update to the Scrutiny Committee would also take place.

Councillor Mrs. J.M. Norman queried how much consideration was given to new housing developments and the impact on the sewage network. This needed to be looked at in more detail before any new development was agreed. In reply, the Engineering Manager – Environment stated that in terms of foul water there were planning and Welsh Government guidance and regulations, such as Technical Advice Note 15, that had to be met before any new development was agreed.

The Committee also discussed local flooding issues which had affected parts of Penarth and Llandough. These although flooding incidents, were not significant enough to require the Council to complete Section 19 reports. This, however, did not mean that the Council had not investigated causes or looked at measures to reduce the risk of flooding.

With regard to the cleaning regime for drains and gullies, the Operational Manager stated that the Council wanted to target those areas which had experienced flooding issues. A new Asset Management System had been procured which would allow more detailed data to be captured that would assist the Council to better recognise what the causes and issues were. The Council would then be able to better assess its drain cleaning priorities.

Having considered the Risk Register report and the reference regarding Coronavirus, the Committee subsequently

RESOLVED –

- (1) T H A T the content of the Coronavirus Update report be noted.
- (2) T H A T the Quarter 4 position of corporate risks for the period April 2020-March 2021 as outlined in Annex A be noted.
- (3) T H A T the comments of the Governance and Audit Committee be referred to Cabinet for their consideration and endorsement at the meeting when Cabinet will consider a report on the Corporate Risk Register.

Reasons for decisions

- (1) Having regard to the contents of the Coronavirus Update report and the related content contained within the Quarter 4 Risk Register Update.
- (2) Having regard to the Quarter 4 Risk Register position and actions.
- (3) To ensure Cabinet receives the comments of the Governance and Audit Committee when considering the Quarter 4 position.”