

Project	Corporate Risks
Risk Log Owner	Carol Chen, Group Head of Democracy and Governance
Date	28/02/23

Ref	Risk description	Cause	Consequence	Response	Action agreed to respond / mitigate / control	CURRENT RISK ASSESSMENT			Action Taken
						Likelihood 1-4	Severity 1-4	Risk Score	
1	A breakdown in community cohesion within the Town and the ability to ensure our objectives meet the needs of our residents and businesses.	Watford has a diverse population and date shows we continue to welcome people both from eastern Europe and the Asian sub continent. We have also seen a high number of people moving from London due to high house prices which has had a knock on effect on house prices in the Borough. A shortage of affordable homes, a diverse population and a constrained boundary may lead to tensions in community relations. The council may not be able to deliver the services the expanding population requires leading to a reduced level of satisfaction in council services.	Higher rates of hate crime and anti social behaviour, communities not engaging with the council or each other. Sections of communities leave the Borough. Borough gets bad reputation in the press that then discourages businesses from investing in the Town.	Treat	Good engagement by Elected Mayor and local politicians with communities. Working with One Watford to understand our varied communities. Local plan up to date and looking at partnerships to create more affordable homes. Working with the community and the implementation of Council plan and Delivery Plan for 2022-24. Delivering a range of community led and focused events and attractions that bring people together and allow different groups within the community to share their experiences and engage across the Watford community as a whole.	2	3	6	New Council Plan and Delivery Plan for 2022-26 and looking to refresh partnership and community working. Raised at One Watford sought input from stakeholders. No issues raised including the police.
2	Our major projects not being delivered on time and in budget. This includes Riverwell, the Town Hall Quarter, the Surplus Sites programme and Watford Business Park	The Council has a number of major projects, some of which are directly within its control and some of which it has to rely on third parties. Failure to deliver these projects would affect the finances of the council and its ability to provide its statutory services, will affect the economic prosperity and well being of the Borough, this would have a knock on effect for the reputation of the council. Cost of capital build and construction projects increase throughout the life of the project meaning that it becomes unviable.	The council will not have sufficient resources to provide statutory services. The council will not meet its 5 year land supply of housing. The council will not be able to engage with its customers in the way they would prefer. The Borough is not seen as a place for businesses to invest and the economic prosperity of the Town declines, leading to increased unemployment and homelessness and higher reliance on welfare benefits.	Treat / Transfer	Projects within the control of the council have good governance arrangements. Risks are regularly assessed by project boards and reported through the EPMO . For projects outside of the Council's control the council seeks to assert influence through its politicians and senior officers lobbying and influencing decision makers. Regular engagement with businesses and the LSP. Making use of external funding opportunities where ever possible such as the LEP, HLF or other similar funding streams to help make projects viable and achievable. Need to have plans in place in case critical staff are unavailable to keep projects going.	3	4	12	Review of internal governance structures and introduction of a dedicated EPMO to help the oversight of projects. Implementation of Portfolios, Programmes and projects approach underway with oversight provided to Corporate Management Board via the Business Intelligence platform and a designated CMB session every 6 weeks focused on programme and project delivery. Challenges continue as a result of global market in relation to both materials and resource but a recent review of the Capital Programme has helped to inform priorities and direct resources accordingly.
3	Failure to have (and retain) a suitably skilled workforce and the capacity to deliver the council's services and objectives	The council is unable to retain and recruit staff with the appropriate skills to deliver the council's objectives and that it does not have the correct number of staff to undertake and manage the work. This may be as a result of low morale, uncompetitive salaries / terms and conditions a bouyant local job market and competition from London authorities, as well as lack of career opportunities and failure to succession plan	Services are not delivered. Contracts are not managed, more resources are spent on using external providers without appropriate management and oversight. Loss of historical knowledge	Treat	Robust Organisational Development in place with clear reward and recognition. Robust job evaluation scheme. Employee well being and work life balance understood. Regular PDR process. Robust recruitment process. Good prioritisation of corporate objectives. Agile working environment allows for greater work/life balance, with refreshed office space, helps to attract applicants	2	4	8	Corporate plan and delivery plan, along with OD strategy provide clear direction and objectives for Watford. This assists with retention of existing staff and recruitment to key posts. Our current experience is recruitment to posts in Watford has been successful, although still some limited areas where it is more difficult. There are good job seekers on the market and Watford has been able to attract a good calibre of applicant. Pay reviews and application of market factor supplements have also supported recruitment in difficult to fill areas. New agile working space in the Annexe designed to respond to feedback from staff and provide attractive, comfortable and flexible working environment. Development of new People Strategy underway.

4	Unable to provide our statutory services at all times	The council is unable to fulfil its statutory responsibilities to its residents and businesses due to catastrophic service failure or as a result of a civil emergency	The council is unable to perform its statutory obligations, it fails its citizens and the government intervenes to run the services in its place. National media and government criticism. Major reputational damage and loss of trust and confidence in the council	Tolerate	Belong to Herts Resilience Partnership which supports the county response to civil emergencies. Keep emergency plan up to date. Encourage staff to volunteer to assist/look to change employment contracts to compel assistance. Developed relationships with partner agencies to also provide assistance. Undertake regular EP exercises. Keep Business Continuity Plans up to date and regularly tested. Statutory Service KPIs regularly monitored by Corporate Management Board and will form part of upcoming KPI Review.	2	4	8	
5	Decline in economic prosperity and vibrancy of the borough	Global economic challenges, including those from Covid-19 and the Cost of Living Crisis. Insufficient funds to provide the necessary infrastructure to promote growth. South West Herts Joint Strategic Plan is not delivered.	Piecemeal inappropriate development in the Borough. Resident dissatisfaction, increased legal challenges to planning decisions with resultant expense. Businesses do not locate in the Borough, rise in house prices and unemployment, more homelessness, more congestion. South West Herts Joint Strategic Plan fails which would undermine South West Herts' ability to deliver the growth agenda.	Treat	Good working relationships at officer level with neighbouring authorities and joint working already taking place. Good dialogue with the County Council and input into SW Herts Transport Strategy. Making use of external funds like the LEP to bring forward infrastructure projects, robust use of s106 for site specific infrastructure, like schools. MARF, Developers Forum. Core strategy in place. Up to date Economic Growth Strategy. Establish a JSP Steering Group (Member and Officer)	3	3	9	Cabinet approved JSP with other SW Herts Councils and HCC to work together to produce joint policies on Housing and employment supply and infrastructure, statement of common ground being developed. Leaders in Hertfordshire agreed a Memorandum of Understanding to work together in a Hertfordshire Growth Board. Local Plan examined by the Planning Inspectorate in public January/February 2022 and adopted July 2022. Economic Growth Strategy approved at Cabinet in July 2021. EU Exit was planned for. Focus on economy in Council Plan and Delivery Plan 2022-26. Enhanced Economic Development team now in place. JSP Regulation 18 consultation complete. SPMG to agree next steps for JSP with recommendation from Steering Group to continue working towards a statutory plan.
6	Failure of investments or commercial ventures, including at Croxley Park or unable to borrow as required.	Downturn in commercial markets lead to failure in investments or reductions in income levels. Poor investment decisions. Services offered for sale may not be as high as anticipated and/or commercial properties may remain vacant for prolonged periods of time, including at Riverwell. . PWLB borrowing rules and lack of Council's own funds for investment	Council does not have sufficient funds to undertake it's day to day activities, reductions in service budgets, s151 officer constrains spending, intervention by central government. The income built into the budget may be less than the estimate. This may cause a budget pressure which will need to be managed.	Treat	Ensure appoint appropriate advisers to consider any potential transaction. Have proper governance arrangements in place. Clear monitoring and reporting. Effective management of reserves to guard against downturns.	3	4	12	Pre-PIB now in place and operating to actively manage income levels and investment decisions. Croxley Park sinking fund invested with RLAM.
7	Council budget is not sufficient to undertake all services and projects desired / required	Inflation, inaccurate calculation of fees and changes, ambition for projects outstrips budget, poor business casing and budget planning	Increasing income or reduction in income causing an in year budget pressure and the need to stop or reduce services and reprioritise projects	Treat	Capital programme review completed and budget setting process underway, including need to reprioritise project provision. All Associate Director areas have proposed savings which have been reviewed by Portfolio Holders and accepted into the MTFS.	3	3	9	Due to C19 losses of income on parking and Leisure Management fee have been incurred and built into budgets. Longer impact continues to be kept under review. Retention of contingency at corporate level.
8	Lack of affordable housing in the Borough to meet demand in cluding from schemes such as Homes for Ukraine, homelessness Increases, placing pressures upon temporary accommodation & bed and breakfast	Homeless / vulnerable families and individuals have no accommodation or unsuitable accommodation creating health, wellbeing and safety issues The council is unable to fulfil its statutory duty towards homeless households by offering a sufficient supply of suitable affordable accommodation within the Borough. Unable to secure sufficient suitable affordable accommodation on privately developed sites due to viability issues. Unable to source sufficient affordable accommodation in the private rented sector due to the difference between local housing allowance rates and private rental income.	Increased cost to the council in finding temporary accommodation. Increased legal challenges as homeless families placed outside of the Borough. Families split up and disconnected from their support networks, schools work. Housing Department being overwhelmed with homeless presentations and the system being silted up. Clients not being assessed in time to prevent their homelessness, increase in Temporary Accommodation usage.	Treat	Joint venture with Watford Community Housing to increase amount of both temporary and affordable housing. Use of redundant garage sites to build temporary accommodation. Framework contract with accommodation providers to get better rates. Making better use of property assets to lever more affordable housing. Make use of commuted sums from developers for affordable housing and the councils own capital receipts	3	3	9	Joint venture with WCH and WBC to provide social rented properties. TA accommodation needs reduced . WBC seem to bucking the national trend. . TA at Brindle Court Open. Review of Council owned TA underway. Local Plan now adopted. On the demand side, temporary staff in post, additional staff under recruitment, additional manager under recruitment. Additional case monitoring and management underway to secure quality outcomes for those at risk of homeless and to manage TA occupation as part of 'Strengthening Housing Services' project. Increase engagement with developers and RSLs.

9	Failure to actively manage growth within the borough, including in relation to major infrastructure schemes such as Watford Junction, Watford to Croxley Link, major sites and associated sustainable transport provision and social infrastructure for anticipated housing growth	Lack of available funding and lack of viable business case. Lack of leadership taking project forward, including inability of development partners to agree parameters of schemes and deliver in a timely and coordinated way. South West Herts Joint Strategic Plan not being delivered. Lack of political support for growth.	Impedes Watford's sustainable growth e.g. congestion of roads and unable to deliver against Local Plan. Planning applications being rejected, developers not willing to work with council to deliver strong good designs, lack of consensus with the growth of the town	Treat	Determine feasible and practical delivery options. Working closely with HCC and clear on WBC's involvement to deliver for the town and its residents. Establish a JSP Steering Group (Member and Officer)	3	3	9	Local Plan now adopted. Transforming Travel in Watford Strategy adopted to support sustainable transport options across the town.
10	Failure to ensure our ICT systems, including our customer front end, remain fit for purpose and services can maintain service delivery. This includes the risk of significant cyber attacks and the discovery of a global vulnerability discovered - LOG4 - which impacts thousands of vendors, thousands of applications and pieces of software, both cloud based and on-premise systems.	Inadequate resources secured both in-house and external leading to a skill set gap. Inadequate contract management, poor process & lack of procedures, poor governance. Service not fit for purpose. Failure of hardware and software. Increased likelihood of cyber attack.	Services unable to operate business as usual due to service interruption and down time. Security breaches leading to loss of information and reputation. Loss of income. High resident and customer dissatisfaction	Treat	ICT strategy reviewed. Resources being spent to upgrade hardware. Stronger contract management and governance arrangements around new projects. Staff structure being implemented. - Systems regularly backed up - IT Health check conducted once a year and follow-up actions completed - All non-supported operating systems and third party software either removed or isolated from the network - Annual external audit focussing on Cybersecurity - Threat alerts and advice received from National Cyber Security Centre In relation to a specific threat as result of the Russian invasion of Ukraine: - Direct user communications regarding vigilance and asking for help and support - Block at the perimeter known bad threat actors – prevention from entering our network - Review and update disaster recovery plan - Additional checks – out of hours – related to recovery and mitigation e.g. backups and anti-virus.	3	4	12	Oct 2020: De-Supported operating systems removed from the estate. 3 servers remaining. April 2021: Increased risk of cyber attack related to elections activities. Increase back frequency and volumes. July 2021: Increased all backup frequencies across all major systems. Reviewing options to increase threat management on desktops October 2022: To provide an extra layer of defence, Bullwall Ransom Care has been deployed to provide an extra layer of security from Ransom ware. Mimecast has been implemented to provide email and web content security as well as email continuity. NCSC Early Warning, PDNS, Mail and Web Check services had been implemented to provide additional layer of protection
11	Failure of Contract Management of Outsourced Services / Contractor insolvency / Increased contract costs	Failure of contracting partner to deliver required service to agreed specification. Contractor going into administration/liquidation or contract increases as a result of inflation. Failure of adequate contract monitoring. Failure to have appropriate contractual terms in place to remedy problems.	Service delivery inadequate, loss of income, reputation affected, step in to deliver services directly increasing costs	Treat	Robust procurement processes. External consultancy support used. Clear specifications and conditions. Contract monitoring officers and client teams and regular monitoring meetings in place. Legal conditions in contract. Full monitoring regime in place, and regular real time reporting procedures. Weekly / Monthly updates to review progress. Developing corporate wide "Centre of Excellence" approach in contract management and Toolkit development. Public Procurement Contract regulations complied with.	2	4	8	New governance arrangements in place to monitor contracts. Also regularly monitor financial health of companies we partner with or outsource to via Dunn and Bradstreet alerts and sharing intelligence via networks. Officers are also working with contractors to review contract performance. Development of updated Contract Management Framework underway, as per Delivery Plan 2022-24.
12	Provision of incorrect procurement advice, missing of crucial deadlines, lack of suitably qualified staff internally, lack of awareness to seek advice. Loss of reputation either by being successfully challenged through court action or receive a financial penalty relating to any Procurement activity	Lack of capacity internally due to staff shortage, sickness or difficulty recruiting to posts. Lack of resources to research advice. Lack of time to consider advice being given. Lack of awareness by others that procurement advice should be sought	Council fails to follow it's own procurement procedures and faces challenges from contractors. Contracts are delayed. Possible litigation. Potential for financial and reputational loss	Treat	Dedicated Procurement Manager in post. Regular monitoring of corporate procurement activity. Maintenance of the Corporate Contract Register and pipeline register. Training opportunities taken to keep abreast of case law and other relevant events affecting this service area.	3	3	9	EPMO oversees major projects. Contract register and pipeline monitored by services. Have watch list for key suppliers. Updated Procurement Strategy approved.

13	Failure to comply with the GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018	Lack of staff awareness, failure in IT system security, failure to manage Data Processors, failure to use safe methods of sending personal data	Loss, or misuse of personal data, data breach, causing complaints to ICO with potential for heavy fines and also loss of reputation to Council	Treat	Data Protection Officer post created, outsourced to HCC for greater resilience. Training to be ongoing with regular refreshers. Installation of e-mail encryption. Regular IT upgrades to maintain security of systems.	2	4	8	From 1 April 2020 established HCC as DPO for Watford. Email encryption is operational. E-learning module is live and mandatory for all staff. Periodic review of privacy notices. HCC employed to assist as DPO
14	Failure to appropriately manage safeguarding within the Council.	Lack of understanding of the correct processes and procedures for reporting concerns or complete failure to report concerns. Lack of training for staff to identify when safeguarding might apply	Children and adults at risk not being referred to the appropriate agencies. Damage to reputation of the Council.	Treat	Action plan in place following external safeguarding review. Regular monitoring to ensure actions in action plan are achieved.	2	4	8	Safeguarding plan being monitored. Safeguarding Manager in post and working additional hours to get us to acceptable practices. HCC audit findings being implemented.
15	Pandemic	Virus or other noxious substance causes major health concerns throughout the population	Potential substantial impact on the operations of the council and our businesses and residents, dependent on the nature of the pandemic situation.	Tolerate	- Robust business continuity planning and incident management planning - Ensure lessons learned from Covid-19 Pandemic - Be prepared to mobilise and take action in accordance with government advice and requirements as per the actions needed for the specific pandemic situation	3	4	12	
16	The council is unable to be sufficiently involved or engaged with initiatives and changes across the broader Local Authority landscape	Lack of internal capacity to engage sufficiently	Council unable to sufficiently engage and influence resulting in reputational damage and changes which are not considered politically acceptable or in the best interest of our residents, businesses and communities. Political concern about lack of influence.	Treat	Executive Support Officer in post to provide additional capacity to the Managing Director. Work underway in relation to shared services, agreed by Cabinet and Council. Strategic Group retains a horizon scanning focus for the organisation.	2	4	8	As an organisation and following a focus on the strategic direction of the council, additional engagement with broader county initiatives is underway with the structure in place to allow this to continue in the future.
17	Cost of living crisis	Inflation and rising bills caused by the global economic situation	Customers unable to pay council tax, further requirement for council services, challenges for staff, over-occupied council offices, outsourced service providers viability and general service delivery	Treat	Regular updates provided to CMB on progress against plan. Budget monitoring. Maintain contractual relations through SPB's and horizon scan. Budget planning and political engagement	3	4	12	Some inflation costs managed through 2023 budget and efficiency savings discussed with Veolia. SLM energy costs locked until 2024. Financial risks updated as part of 22.23 budget process. Savings exercise undertaken as part of 2023/24 budget setting and continuous improvement programme development underway.
18	The council is unable to meet its goal of achieving net carbon zero by 2030	No strategy agreed or plan undeliverable. Ambitions do not align with reality.	Damage to reputation, additional impact of climate change on council operations leading to increased costs	Treat	Development of Environmental Strategy covering the period 2023-2030 and 2 yearly delivery plan, accompanied by additional programme management resource to support delivery and benefits management. Existing Sustainability action plan underway, including decarbonisation of the Town Hall, Colosseum and PSDS funding for other council buildings, as well as the implementation of the Transforming Travel in Watford Strategy.	3	4	12	Sustainability Board established. Sustainable Transport Strategy prepared - now a programme of action (TTIW), Property services undertaking reviews.
19	Council activities are impacted by the inability to mitigate against, and adapt to, the challenges created by climate change, such as extreme weather events.	Climate change and lack of action to address impact	Impact on service delivery, additional mitigation costs, inability to support customers adequately.	Treat	Development of Environmental Strategy covering the period 2023-2030 accompanied by additional programme management resource to support delivery and benefits management. Work with HCCSP to develop and implement the climate adaptation sub-group actions. Climate change risks addressin all service risk plans.	2	3	6	
20	Home Office places significant numbers of Asylum seekers within Watford.	Significant increase in asylum seekers arrivals to the UK, need for Home Office to secure satisfactory interim accommodation.	Increase in a community tensions, potential for rough sleeping, demands on partner agencies such as health and staff capacity to support arrivals and manage/mitigate impacts.	Treat	Continue to monitor situation locally, engage in SMP meetings and activity, respond effectively and actively to approaches from accommodation providers.	2	4	8	Ongoing engagement with County and East of England meetings and responses. Actively responded to approaches from Clear Springs.

21	Failure to have suitable capacity and arrangements to provide sufficient response for all rough sleepers in the event of severe weather	Increase in demand for temporary accommodation and units within the SHP has removed void capacity. Hotels and B&Bs unwilling to house rough sleepers on nightly lets due to failure to manage impacts of previous use.	Death/severe illness for rough sleepers not accommodated. Reputational impact. Increased costs of provision if alternatives can be found.	Treat	Work with local partners to develop solution. Enquire with neighbouring LAs to understand any options for joint working. Explore alternative hotels and B&Bs for nightly lets. Explore vacant properties for temporary use managed by partners. Explore options for communal humanitarian solutions in community spaces. Explore bid to Health Protection Board for warmer space at The Haven until early hours of the morning throughout winter.	2	4	8	Contract secured with OYMCA for 4 bed spaces and New Hope for 6. Protocol agreed with New Hope for activation and sourcing hotel accommodation for any additional bed spaces needed during SWEP activation periods.
22	Increased resource and capacity needed to respond to damp and mould housing conditions within social housing, WBC accommodation and privately owned properties following government guidance and the need to provide suitable assurance on the council's response if issues are identified locally.	Increased service demand due to changes in guidance, government requirements, internal review and action plan findings, increase in service requests from residents due to publicity of fatal case and inadequate response from social landlords within the town. Review finds inadequate competency of EHOs, inadequate processes and procedures, inadequate arrangements with property managers of WBC owned accommodation and inadequate arrangements of social landlords.	Delays in service provision, ongoing health impact on residents, reputational damage to council and housing providers, increased pressures on EHOs. Increased capacity and resource needed to implement review outcomes. Delays to service provision, increased risks to residents health, reputational risks. Need to bring in additional specialist services. Need to review previous service provision. Reduced motivation and increased anxiety of EHOs. Need to review contract with WCH and challenge contractual performance.	Treat	Create action plan. Review current provision of services and arrangements, after approval implement agreed findings.	3	3	9	Action plan approved being implemented, reporting to CMB. DLUCH information returns made. Meeting with Health and Care Director from HCC and ICP being arranged. Complaints reduced from pre Xmas, capacity being managed.
23	Upcoming election is not successfully delivered	Changes to voter ID requirements, lack of resource, Elections Act 2022	Polling stations not sufficiently staffed, residents unable to vote	Treat	Elections delivered in line with project management framework, pro-active communications in relation to changes to voter ID, early engagement with Polling Station staff.	2	3	6	