

Meeting: Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny
Date: 23 July 2013
Subject: Quarter 1 Risk Report
Report of: Cllr Mark Versallion, Executive Member for Children’s Services
Summary: The report to be read alongside the performance report comments on strategic risk within the Children’s Services Directorate and comments on how operational risk is managed.

Advising Officer: Edwina Grant, Deputy Chief Executive / Director of Children’s Services
Contact Officer: Sandra Einon, Head of Programme Management
Public/Exempt: Public
Wards Affected: All
Function of: Council

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS
Council Priorities:
1. The Risk Report responds to a request by members of this Committee that risk be commented on quarterly by the Committee. The management of risk ensures that progress on the delivery of the Council’s priorities is maintained.
Financial:
2. There will be financial consequences if risk is not mitigated by appropriate actions.
Legal:
3. The Council’s Audit Committee has referred consideration of risk to the Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee and consideration of this quarterly report is their response to that referral.
Risk Management:
4. Areas of on going under performance are a risk to both service delivery and the reputation of the Council.
Staffing (including Trades Unions):
5. Not applicable.
Equalities/Human Rights:
6. This report highlights areas of risk and will address, where necessary, impact on equalities and human rights.
Community Safety:
7. Identification of risk and its mitigation will support communities.

Sustainability:

8. Not applicable.

Procurement:

9. From time to time risk will relate to major procurement activity.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Committee reviews and comments on the risks set out in this report.

Background

10. The Council maintains a strategic risk log which is regularly commented on by the Audit Committee. This is a function of the Audit Committee. There are also operational risk logs within each Directorate. In addition and separate to the Council's governance, the Local Safeguarding Children's Board has a statutory duty to assure against risk and to comment on areas of risk that it sees to children's safeguarding by undertaking its assurance role across the Council and its partners.
11. This report does not comment on the role of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board as this is subject to an annual report that is presented to this Committee by the independent Chair.

Risk Summary

12. The Strategic Risk Register lists two risks allocated to children's services. These are as follows:
 - Failure of strategic partnerships – the risk control measures which are undertaken requires clear governance to be in place and a robust performance framework. The Ofsted framework requires the Council to follow a document called Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013 which has been the subject of discussion in the Committee within a presentation given by the Director of Children's Services at a previous meeting.
 - Failure to deliver service – this relates to a failure to access sufficient resources to respond quickly enough to rapid changes or a failure to implement new child protection procedures and update guidance and share good practice. The risk control measures relate to Ofsted readiness and the legislation readiness and the operation of auditing case work within the Directorate.
13. The Directorate Operational Risk Register relates to the following issues and the Director of Children's Services identifies activity to mitigate risk. The Executive Member for Children's Services is informed if risks change or it is challenging or not possible to mitigate against them at any given time.

They are as follows:

 - Maintenance of an ICT data management system
 - Budgetary control
 - A high level of service delivery to customers
 - The need to recruit and retain staff

- Health and Safety
 - The need to actively consider alternative models of service delivery
14. On the maintenance of an ICT data management system, Frameworki has been installed but there are on going challenges in the optimum use of its delivery. This is the subject of an active work programme.
 15. On budgetary control, Members receive the quarterly budget reports and risks are identified on a separate budget risk log.
 16. On Service delivery, members of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee receive a summary of statutory complaints and these are also monitored regularly by the Director of Children's Services and the Executive Member for Children's Services.
 17. On the need to recruit and retain staff, this is a high level risk for the Directorate as the need to increase the numbers of permanent staff is a constant challenge. There is a separate work programme within the Directorate to constantly address the challenges of staff recruitment. This risk has been mentioned regularly to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee when the Director of Children's Services has made presentations.
 18. On health and safety there are a number of issues that range from property health and safety and lone working that are addressed and kept under regular review within the directorate operations. The Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny receive regular reports on Council health and safety issues.
 19. On the need to actively consider alternative models of service delivery, this is on going work. In 2013 a more risk based approach to external commissions for the delivery of service has been developed so that the Director is aware when operational changes of delivery are being implemented and can overview the risk of such changes.

Appendices:

Nil

Background Papers:

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013 Guidance (DfE website)

Council and Directorate Risk Logs

Location of papers:

Priory House, Chicksands