

A23. Corporate Risk Management Update

The committee considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Housing Services which provided an update on corporate risks and assurance arrangements, including the Corporate Risk Register, Risk Dashboards, and Risk Management Improvement Plan.

Members referred to Risk Ref. COR_CHS_05, 'Equalities: Failure to properly discharge' which was scored High for Residual (With Controls) and Medium for Target Risk Appetite (After Actions). They suggested a review may be necessary to ensure equality policies were fully implemented, especially in regard to recruitment. The Chief Executive stated that Internal Audit reported in 2019 about the Council's approach to equalities and more recently, a report about the Corporate Management Team on their responses. He explained that an action plan was in place to implement recommendations; address concerns around recruitment and to be more reflective of minorities.

In terms of Risk Ref. COR_CHS_10, 'Health, Safety and Wellbeing: Failure to provide a safe environment for employees and visitors', the committee emphasised the need to be cautious of the wellbeing of staff whilst balancing the need to deliver services. The Chief Executive explained wellbeing was a concern for all and recognised the increased challenges staff were under, which had preceded the pandemic. Mr Lawrie was the Chair for the Wellbeing Group which was attended by representatives for all staff as well as Trade Union representatives – the group had open and important discussions about how to support staff appropriately.

The committee recognised the importance of the wellbeing for school staff but questioned if actions were in place to support the wellbeing of pupils especially with the anticipated anxieties surrounding the uncertainty of exams. The Head of Planning & Resources explained that financial aid had been given to secondary schools to employ a number of officers to support pupil's mental health and that further funding was planned, for example from the Scottish Government in regard to the Pupil Equity Fund. Information of the devolvement of finances to local authorities was yet to be distributed but was anticipated to partially aid young adults' mental health.

Referring back to Risk Ref. COR_CHS_05, members asked if it was appropriate to adjust the equalities approach to be reflective of the anticipated increase of inequalities due to the pandemic. Mr Ritchie explained equalities was included in the Workforce Plan presented as part of the Business Plan in May 2021 which handled many of the recruitment issues raised previously in the meeting as well as recommending actions. An Equalities Working Group had been established which undertook to report on equalities to members.

In terms of Risk Ref. COR_CHS_04, 'Financial Sustainability, Insufficient funding to deliver Services', members asked if the current budget position should be categorised as High instead of Medium. Mr Smail explained that as with many of the risks, it was initially categorised as High and was later re-evaluated as Medium. He stated that the actions taken proved that the

Council was willing to do what was necessary to secure financial sustainability and fulfil their statutory duty to deliver a balanced budget. In terms of increasing the risk, it would be dependent on whether the Council was able to achieve financial sustainability – this discussion was expected to arise at the forthcoming process for the 2022/23 budget plans and furthermore, a budget update was to be presented at Executive in October.

Following a question about when the last review of Risk Appetite was undertaken, the Chief Finance Officer stated that in the previous week to the meeting, the Corporate Risk Management Working Group discussed this point. It recognised that the Risk Appetite had to be reviewed which may include a training aspect of what is meant by this term. He assured Committee that work would be undertaken to update the Risk Appetite.

Members requested a briefing note about the breakdown per school of mental health issues that had been handled in schools over the last 5 years. The purpose was to establish a benchmark of issues prior to the pandemic to have a better insight on how to handle current issues. The Head of Planning & Resources stated this would come to Committee.

In Risk Category 'Sustainability/Climate Change' the Key Issues/Actions stated 'No Services have given assurance that they have implemented effective Climate Change Plans', members asked why this was. The Chief Finance Officer explained that it reflected the inherent challenges in delivering on this agenda – previously in the Capital Programme, a discussion was held for a provision to be built into the programme to deal with climate issues. There were active corporate groups in which all Services were involved to work towards tackling sustainability/climate change. He stated that before a true assessment could be made, more tangible actions had to be implemented. The Acting Director of Development Services explained that a report had been considered by the Executive in June that detailed the climate emergency response as well as an initial action plan which would be developed. He assured that issues were being taken seriously by Services, although would take some time to complete actions.

Decision

The Committee:-

(1) noted the:-

- **Corporate Risk Register – Summary of Risks;**
- **Corporate Risk Dashboards;**
- **Corporate Risk Improvement Plan, and**
- **Corporate Risk Register – Details of High Corporate Risks, and**

(2) referred the report to the Executive (for review and approval of corporate risks).