



Quarter 4 Strategic Risk Report

Mar-2021

Summary

The over all risk score for each or the risks highlighted within this report are arrived at by multiplying the score given for the probability of the risk happening and the severity of the consequences of this risk.

The probability and severity are scored 1-4 relating to their severity as shown in the below table

The severity of the overall risk score can also be found in the below table

Risk Score	Probability	Severity
1	Low	Low
2	Medium	Medium
3	High	High
4	Severe	Severe

Overall Score	RAG
0 - 4	Green
6 - 10	Amber
12-16+	Red

Inherent Probability	Inherent Impact	Inherent Risk Score	Mitigated Probability	Mitigated Impact	Mitigated Risk Score
SR1 - Funding and income is not sufficient to deliver the Council's Corporate Objectives					James Deane
4	4	16	3	3	9
SR2 - The Council is unable to recruit and retain the staff required to progress as a Modern and Efficient Council					Claire Hamilton
3	3	9	2	3	6
SR3 - Social media risk					Claire Hamilton
3	3	9	2	3	6
SR4 - Cyber Attack					Claire Hamilton
3	4	12	2	3	6
SR5 - The Council will be unable to ensure that sufficient good quality and affordable homes can be delivered, particularly for those most in need					Mark Gaynor
4	4	16	3	3	9
SR6 - That the Borough does not secure sufficient investment in essential infrastructure that is required for continued and improved economic performance and housing delivery that is sustainable and fit for the future					Mark Gaynor
4	4	16	3	3	9
SR7 - Uncertainty around Brexit negotiations could result in the Council facing additional demand for its services in the short- to medium-term					Claire Hamilton
4	4	16	4	2	8

Risk Owner : James Deane Portfolio holder : Graeme Elliot

SR1 - Funding and income is not sufficient to deliver the Council's Corporate Objectives

Quarterly Update

The Council's provisional outturn position, scheduled for report to Cabinet in July 2021, is currently indicating an in-year pressure of £2.4m.

The Economic Recovery Reserve, created within the MTFS to fund the impact of Covid over the medium-term, provided for a pressure of £3.5m in 2020/21. It is therefore able to cover the Covid pressure in line with the strategy.

The fact that the draw down required from the Reserve for 20/21 is less than was forecast at the time of its creation, means that the Council will have additional resilience against the continued uncertainty over future years' Covid impact.

Whilst it should be noted that the 20/21 outturn position at this stage remains provisional, and subject to change through the accounts process, it does indicate that based on current information the MTFS is robust. The adequacy of the MTFS continues to be closely monitored and Members will be kept updated of any material changes.

Inherent Impact	Inherent Probability	Inherent Risk Score
4	4	16
Mitigated Impact	Mitigated Probability	Mitigated Risk Score
3	3	9

Impact

The Council is currently facing two fronts of significant financial uncertainty that both hamper planning and risk deliverability of the objectives within the Corporate Plan into the medium-term: 1) the ongoing uncertainty around future Government funding of local authorities, and 2) the financial implications of Covid.

Government Funding

The Council is currently operating on a one-year Finance Settlement from Government, the second in succession, following the conclusion of the 4-year deal in April 2019. One-year Settlements, and the planning challenges that accompany them, are expected to continue until Government implements its new funding allocation model following the completion of its Fair Funding Review

As yet there is no certainty over the level of funding that Dacorum or any other authority can expect in the future, post-review. However, there is a strong belief across the sector that the new model will divert funding away from lower tier authorities in favour of those authorities with responsibility for the provision of social care. The Council must ensure that it's in a position to adapt to significant funding reductions at potentially short notice when the new model is announced.

Covid Implications

The Council faces significant expenditure and income pressures as a result of Covid. The pattern of expenditure pressures have thus far tended to be more-directly lock-down related and, therefore, are likely to be more short-term. Income pressures on the other hand, have a short-term element, e.g. dramatic loss of car parking income during lock-down, but also potentially an even more significant long-term effect through a recessionary impact on the Council's primary income generating services, e.g. commercial property.

The magnitude of the potential Covid-related losses, combined with uncertainty around the duration of the pandemic and the unknown timing and severity of the expected recession creates a significant financial threat to the Council's in-year budget. In addition it adds further complexity and risk to the already challenging medium-term planning environment arising from one-year Government funding settlements.

Controls to manage the risk

The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and the HRA Business Plan are controls that mitigate the likelihood of this risk crystallising through the effective modelling of the future financial environment. Sound financial planning maximises the opportunity for the Council to identify funding risks in advance, and therefore grants more time for it to plan to provide its services differently in order to continue delivering its corporate priorities. The Council's sound financial planning processes, detailed below, have resulted in my reducing the inherent probability score from '4', Very Likely, to a residual probability score of '3', Likely.

The MTFS details the financial implications of the Corporate Plan over a five-year period. It ensures that the Council is able to forecast likely income pressures in the medium-term, and optimise the balance between its financial resources and the delivery of its priorities. The MTFS is reviewed at least annually and is approved by Full Council, thereby providing the opportunity for Members to make informed amendments to the Corporate Plan on the basis of likely funding constraints.

The 2020 MTFS refresh was delayed from its usual July publication until October (approved by Council in November) in order to optimise the evidence base for Covid-related forecasts into the medium-term. The Strategy adopted a two-pronged approach to combine the Council's need to 1) continue driving the efficiencies required to ensure underlying sustainability; and, 2) to protect frontline services in the face of the time-bound Covid pressures. The approved MTFS can be viewed on the October 2020 Cabinet Agenda, Item 8:

(Public Pack)Agenda Document for Cabinet, 20/10/2020 19:30 (dacorum.gov.uk)

In addition to a modified approach to the MTFS, quarterly Covid Updates have been reported to Cabinet throughout the year outlining the constantly evolving of the financial implications of the pandemic and the expected recession. The forecasts are kept under constant review and any updated forecasts that threaten the viability of the approved MTFS will be reported back to Members together with updated recommendations.

As part of its Transformation Programme, the Council is seeking to deliver its Service Plans differently from 2021 – using a more cross-directorate approach and covering a longer period than the traditional one year. The closer alignment of the MTFS and Service Plans over a multi-year period should strengthen the Council's financial planning, and the cross-directorate approach unlock corporate opportunities that would be less clear under an individual approach to service planning.

The Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan maps planned income and expenditure over a thirty-year period. Government legislation that can affect the Council's delivery of social housing is incorporated within the plan and forms the basis for informed strategic decision-making.

By keeping the Corporate Plan and Communications Strategy under review the Council is able to mitigate the impact of this risk, should it occur, by keeping residents informed of the pressures faced by the Council, and consequently by managing aspiration and expectation (detail below). On this basis, I have reduced the Impact score from '4', Severe, to '3', High.

Evidence the risk is being managed

Internal Audit

In recent months, the Council has received two independent, third-party audit reviews of the financial processes that contribute to the management of this risk:

The 'Budgetary Control' process was audited by the Council's new Internal Auditors, TIAA, in October 2020, and received the highest level of assurance, with no recommendations or action points to follow up. This followed an audit by the outgoing Internal Auditors, Mazars, in March 2020 on 'Core Financial Systems and Budgetary Control' which also gave the highest level of assurance with no recommendations or action points.

External Audit

The 'Value for Money' opinion issued in Grant Thornton's 'Audit Findings' report in September 2020, was based on evaluation of the MTFS; the budget-setting process; the reserves policy and use; and, the Council's forecasting of the Covid threat and plans to deal with it. Grant Thornton's conclusion was:

'Based on the work we performed to address the significant risks, we are satisfied that the Council had proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.'

Internal validation

The fact that the Council was in a position to approve an MTFS which is capable of funding forecast Covid pressures from reserves, is practical validation of its approach to managing the MTFS and reserves over recent years. Although the planned use of reserves will inevitably reduce the amount available for future investment in the borough, it has meant that the Council is able to protect the delivery of its frontline services into the medium-term.

Risk Owner : Claire Hamilton Portfolio holder : Julie Banks

SR2 - The Council is unable to recruit and retain the staff required to progress as a Modern and Efficient Council

Quarterly Update

The impact of the Covid pandemic has been significant on recruitment as there has been a need in some areas (e.g. Homelessness Team) to increase the size of the team to meet the increased demand. However this work is only being funded on a temporary basis by the Government which means DBC is only able to recruit temporary fixed term posts rather than full-time positions.

This has led to the appointment of agency staff across the Council in order to maintain service delivery.

A review is currently being undertaken against vacant posts and funding sources to see where possible we can create full time roles and not lose staff to other organisations due to lack of job security

Inherent Impact	Inherent Probability	Inherent Risk Score
3	3	9
Mitigated Impact	Mitigated Probability	Mitigated Risk Score
3	2	6

Impact

The Council is currently finding it challenging to recruit and retain staff with the appropriate skills to deliver all of its services, particularly within professional areas such as Legal, Finance, Surveyors, Environmental Health and Planning etc.

This challenge has grown significantly over recent years – as the economy has emerged from the worst of the recession, the private sector employment market has become relatively more buoyant due to the continued constraints on public sector funding. General competition with the private sector for skilled employees is exacerbated for Dacorum by its close proximity to the higher salaries of the London market.

This has led to the appointment of agency staff across the Council in order to maintain service delivery. A reliance on agency staff brings a number of specific risks:

- Statutory – staff shortages can put delivery of the Council's statutory services at risk, e.g. Environmental Health, Housing repairs and Fire safety, and Building Control;
 - Resilience – any need for agency staff leaves the Council vulnerable to potential higher turnover and loss of knowledge which can affect continuity of service provision;
 - Financial – the cost of agency staff is higher than for permanent staff, which can pressurise budgets in several areas across the Council.
- Staff Morale - could be affected in areas which are carrying vacancies, due to increased workload pressure and as a result of lack of team rapport

This challenge affects all public sector organisations within the region, and a solution is high on the agenda for county-wide working groups of which DBC is a member.

Controls to manage the risk

A programme of work has been developed to enhance our ability to recruit and retain staff:

- Terms and conditions have already been reviewed to develop a range of benefits within the remuneration package
- Flexible working arrangements are in place to ensure staff achieve a good work/life balance. Many of the Council's staff have been able to work successfully from home during the pandemic.

Further measures currently being developed and implemented include:

- Enhanced and expanded Graduate/apprenticeship scheme to create up to 8 new posts within areas experiencing recruitment and retention difficulties, this will be supported by a planned approach to utilising the Council's apprenticeship levy to support some of the professional training costs
- SLT has agreed a further three graduates for 2021/22 from the National Graduate Development Programme (hosted by the Local Government Association)
- Succession planning approach embedded into appraisals and service plans with supported by the career development plans.
- Implementation of more robust management information which will be enabled by the implementation of a new Human Resources technology system
- Streamlining of recruitment campaigns and modernisation of recruitment web pages including video clips; further develop the use of social media platforms for recruitment.
- Hosting of recruitment days to generate interest in high volume recruitment service areas and retain CV's for future reference to fast track the filling of vacancies
- Establish DBC as employer of choice by presence at careers fairs, developing links with Schools, Colleges and Universities.

Evidence the risk is being managed

Turnover remains reasonably low and it is infrequent that posts are re-advertised.
Graduates have been appointed and we are working for LGA to appoint the next batch of three. HR will be working with services with recruitment challenges to ensure the graduates to support these areas in the first instance.

Risk Owner : Claire Hamilton Portfolio holder : Andrew Williams

SR3 - Social media risk

Quarterly Update

The DBC Communications Strategy is being independently reviewed and any actions for further improvements in relation to social media risks will be identified and acted upon.

Inherent Impact	Inherent Probability	Inherent Risk Score
3	3	9
Mitigated Impact	Mitigated Probability	Mitigated Risk Score
3	2	6

Impact

"Almost nine in ten (86%) of UK adults now have internet access at home, and this is highest among those aged under 55. Facebook continues to be the largest social network service in the UK. In April 2016, it attracted a digital audience of 38.9 million (more than three-quarters of active internet users). This was larger than that of LinkedIn (21.8 million) and Twitter (20.9 million)" (Ofcom report 2016).

By design, social media is widely accessible and offers users easy electronic communication of personal information and other content, such as news, videos and photos. With public participation and exchange of content so readily available, this introduces a certain level of risk.

The consequences of using social media include members of the public, pressure groups or employees using DBC social media accounts to raise negative, confidential, incorrect or abusive statements/campaigns aimed at damaging the reputation of DBC. Similarly, the risk of DBC not using social media will exclude a large proportion of residents and key demographic groups including younger residents and businesses.

Controls to manage the risk

The Council monitors and protects its social media presence through a Social Media Management Platform (Social SignIn). Social SignIn provides management options for automatic moderation of abusive messages and other risk mitigation tools.

All staff are required to read and sign up to a range of policies including:

- Corporate Information Security Management Policy
- Corporate Information Technology Security Policy
- Data Protection Act Policy
- Freedom of Information Policy
- PSN/Government Connect (GSx) Acceptable Usage Policy
- Information Security Incident Procedure

Evidence the risk is being managed

An audit of DBC's internal controls in strategy and governance, training and awareness, processes and technology, found that there is a sound system of internal control designed to achieve the system objectives.
The communications team carry out training for new staff members and refresher training when needed.
Social Media remains a key role in sending information and engaging with our residents/customers. This remains controlled and well managed as we experience very few instances where this causes issues for the Council.

Risk Owner : Claire Hamilton Porfolio holder : Andrew Williams

SR4 - Cyber Attack

Quarterly Update

All controls are approved and continue to provide prevention of any cyber attack for the council.

Communications have been sent to staff to remind them of the importance of not opening emails or attachments of emails of any email that they don't immediately recognise.

Inherent Impact	Inherent Probability	Inherent Risk Score
4	3	12
Mitigated Impact	Mitigated Probability	Mitigated Risk Score
3	2	6

Impact

At least 263 million cyber-attacks were carried out on UK local authorities in the first half of 2019 alone. Nearly half of all local authorities had experienced an attempted cyber-attack on their IT systems since 2017 and 37% of them had experienced cyber-attacks in the first half of 2019.

The Council's ICT team is aware that its network is the subject of attempted cyber-attacks on a daily basis from a range of sources, likely to include organised crime and state operators.

The potential consequences of a successful cyber-attack are extremely damaging to any organisation. In the public sector, cyber-attacks on NHS trusts have led to cancelled operations, including the WannaCry attack in 2017 that affected 45 NHS organisations. In 2016 Lincolnshire County Council were hit with a £1M demand following a ransomware infection and in 2020 Hackney Council was profoundly affected by a similar ransomware attack.

Within Dacorum, a successful and extensive cyber-attack has the potential to impair the delivery of all services to its residents as well as the potential publication of sensitive and personal data. Any successful Cyber Attack could significantly impact the Council's reputation, as residents may lose confidence in the management of electronic records.

Controls to manage the risk

The Council monitors and protects against threats with particular attention to the following, in line with the Government's Cyber Essentials direction:

- Boundary firewalls and internet gateways
- Secure configuration
- Access control
- Malware protection
- Patch management

The Council also ensures that system and operational data is backed up securely and regularly, and the process of restoring from those back-ups is tested regularly.

Evidence the risk is being managed

Adherence to National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) Cyber Essentials (formally audited 2017); Public Sector Network (PSN) Compliance (including annual vulnerabilities assessment by approved cyber security consultancy)

Risk Owner : Mark Gaynor Porfolio holder : Margaret Griffiths

SR5 - The Council will be unable to ensure that sufficient good quality and affordable homes can be delivered, particularly for those most in need

Quarterly Update

There is some optimism that by working with Homes England we should be able to access grant for new social rent homes. However the government's decision to mandate a sizeable proportion of 'affordable homes' as First Homes - on owner occupied scheme with 30% discount from market price will displace a large proportion of affordable rented homes being delivered.

Inherent Impact	Inherent Probability	Inherent Risk Score
4	4	16
Mitigated Impact	Mitigated Probability	Mitigated Risk Score
3	3	9

Impact

Housing costs in Dacorum are already extremely high and among the highest in the country outside of London. The impact of this is that local people (and potential new residents) face considerable difficulties accessing decent and affordable homes. This has potential risks in increased homelessness, difficulties in attracting new business and inward investment and breakdown of family support networks if people have to move away or have to stay longer in parental homes than is desirable.

The causes for this are complex and varied, and some are outside of the Council's control, but include:

- The high cost of owner occupation due to location, local income levels, market shortage and increasing demand from people moving out from London. This can mean owner occupation is well beyond the reach of a large number of local people.
- The Private Rented Sector is not focused on providing homes of quality to those on low incomes with short 6 months tenancies and often in poor condition.
- The planning system does not have the levers to require new homes to be built and with respect of providing affordable homes the rented product – usually affordable rent at 80% of market rent - they are too expensive for those on low incomes.
- There are still cuts being made to the benefits systems and Universal Credit has seen a dramatic increase in the levels of rent arrears in those areas that have already had the full roll out. This will cause further difficulty for low income households to afford rent and would lead to still further homelessness.

The key risks this raises for the Council are:

- The supply of homes is unable to match demand
- An increase in the levels of homelessness resulting from landlords in private renting seeking to maximise their rents
- The impact of Universal Credit roll out leading to increased arrears, debt and homelessness
- A general risk that the construction industry may not have the capacity to meet the level of demand for development
- The HRA will not be able to access sufficient funds to fulfil the Council's programme of social rented housing

Controls to manage the risk

The Local Plan is currently under development and is likely to go out for public consultation in the summer of 2019. This will incorporate a very high level of housing growth and the plan needs to ensure that the sites are identified and are likely to be delivered in the timescales identified. There will be a strong affordable housing policy, building on the current one, which will require at least 35% affordable homes on every scheme above 10 units. The council is strengthening its expertise in Planning on robustly testing developers viability submissions. This will include no longer accepting developer arguments that the cost of land prevents or reduces the amount of affordable they can deliver – they should take account of the council's policy when agreeing the price.

Ensuring good masterplanning of the larger sites emerging from the Local Plan will mean that they are more likely to be built out as planned and will be more attractive for potential buyers.

The Private Housing Service in Housing, which includes Private Renting, has been reshaped and is geared up to the licensing of up to 900 Houses in Multiple Occupation and addressing issue of disrepair and harassment in the sector. It will work with and support landlords who are prepared to grant longer tenancies which will allow families more security and stability.

There is already a new build council home programme of 370 new homes by 2022 that is just starting. The government has announced that the cap on the HRA borrowing will be ended in April 2019 and the programme will be further expanded. A full assessment of the capacity of the HRA to move to an output of around 100-200 new homes per year will be made in the very near future and will gear up for that level of delivery. This will help, though not solve, the shortage of affordable homes for rent. Housing Associations will be encouraged to include social rented homes at lower rent levels than affordable to be built as grant is now available from Homes England for this aim.

The introduction of the Homeless Reduction Act has allowed the Council to be geared up to dealing with an increased number of homeless households with the initial aim of preventing the homelessness from happening. One important route will be working with those private landlords that have a desire to help those in housing need, and there are many, to be able to continue renting without losing income.

Evidence the risk is being managed

The process for setting out development delivered is through the Authority Monitoring Report. The agreed process for CIL will see an annual report setting out income due, achieved and expenditure made on agreed infrastructure. Regular reports are made as set out above in controls.

Regular reports will also made to the Housing and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee on new build council homes, homelessness performance, and Private Renting sector performance.

Risk Owner : Mark Gaynor Portfolio holder : Graham Sutton

SR6 - That the Borough does not secure sufficient investment in essential infrastructure that is required for continued and improved economic performance and housing delivery that is sustainable and fit for the future

Quarterly Update

The government's increased use of Permitted Development - which doesn't require any developer contributions or affordable homes - is reducing the amount of infrastructure funding that the Council receives. Recent changes to affordable housing requirements will lead to more owner occupation products which will remain unaffordable to those on an average salary,

Inherent Impact	Inherent Probability	Inherent Risk Score
4	4	16
Mitigated Impact	Mitigated Probability	Mitigated Risk Score
3	3	9

Impact

The provision of infrastructure such as schools, health, transport and other facilities is crucial to sustainability of the local community and economy. Its funding, however, is increasingly complex and difficult as central government moves away from direct provision and expects the development process and local partnerships to deliver it. The risk is, therefore, that new development at a scale not experienced in Dacorum since the New Town development will not be matched with the infrastructure that a healthy and thriving community depends upon.

Failure to provide this infrastructure will have a number of damaging consequences:

- a reduction in the quality of life and opportunities for people in the Borough
- a serious constraint to economic growth with the impact on the prosperity of local people
- reduced financial contribution to service provision through Business Rates growth
- increased community opposition to new developments, particularly housing, on the grounds that existing infrastructure will not cope
- damage to the image of the area, worsening of community pride and social cohesion and reputational damage to the Council.

The provision of infrastructure such as schools, health, transport and other facilities is crucial to sustainability of the local community and economy. Its funding, however, is increasingly complex and difficult as central government moves away from direct provision and expects the development process and local partnerships to deliver it.

Controls to manage the risk

Infrastructure is provided through the development process (s106 and Community Infrastructure Levy) and elements of funding which comes from central government (increasingly through the LEP, bidding and HCC). The responsibility for some infrastructure elements is through privatised arrangements (utilities) or arms-length government agencies such as Network Rail. The ability of the Council to control these processes is limited.

The Council is able to promote the quantum, nature and timing of growth making it more likely that the infrastructure will be delivered. It is also able to promote partnerships and use its asset base and influence to stimulate desired development. Current controls include:

- Ensuring that the Local Plan (and its component elements such as site allocations, supporting policies and so on) is up to date and sets out very clearly the requirements of proposed development. This promotes sustainable development by design, access and movement, materials.
- Working with other South West Herts councils and HCC to make a case at national level for strategically important infrastructure
- Bidding into government funding pots such as the Housing Infrastructure Fund where possible.
- Use of masterplanning which supports what is required to be delivered to produce sustainability on larger sites and formalising as a Special Planning Document where appropriate to give it more 'teeth'.
- The approved Council's Community Infrastructure Levy Policy and schedule (CIL) provides for the levels of contributions that must be made by developers and the purpose for which they will be spent. This also includes an element of CIL which can be spent by local communities and act to link growth directly with infrastructure provision that local people want.
- Operating an 'open for business' approach to how the Council deals with potential development with a presumption of making acceptable development easier to deliver by proactive advice through the planning process. Allied to this is ensuring that the development management service is capable of achieving decision making within required time limits.
- Stimulating required growth through the Council's own regeneration activity, including the Enterprise Zone making inward investment being more likely.
- Increasing inward investment through initiatives such as Dacorum Look no Further, Ambassadors, direct provision of business advice and a supportive approach to new development.
- Good market intelligence through regular liaison with local employers, landowners, developers, institutional investors and land agents regarding demand and expected assistance.
- Partnership with the LEP as the main route for additional funding for infrastructure through influencing the Strategic Growth Plan (in which Hemel Hempstead and the M1 corridor is a priority) and bidding for resources for infrastructure (such as the £5M achieved for West Herts College)
- Working to create key partnerships to bring forward development capable of funding major infrastructure such as Hemel Garden Communities with the Crown Estate, St Albans and City Council, HCC, the LEP and the Enterprise Zone.

Evidence the risk is being managed

These controls are exercised and reported within the following:

- Regular reporting to the Growth and Infrastructure Group, CMT, Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Fortnightly reporting on key projects to CMT
- Reporting to Performance Board before each Cabinet Meeting
- A clear programme for the Local Development Framework and CIL Quarterly reporting to Overview and Scrutiny
- Regular reporting to Cabinet
- Adherence to the agreed performance and project management processes

The process for setting out development delivered is through the Authority Monitoring Report. The agreed process for CIL will see an annual report setting out income due, income achieved and expenditure made on agreed infrastructure. Regular reports are made as set out above.

Risk Owner : Claire Hamilton Portfolio holder : Andrew Williams

SR7 - Uncertainty around Brexit negotiations could result in the Council facing additional demand for its services in the short- to medium-term

Quarterly Update

There have been no significant impacts on council services as a direct result of Brexit to June 2021. This will continue to be monitored by SLT as the year progresses and actions agreed as appropriate.

Inherent Impact	Inherent Probability	Inherent Risk Score
4	4	16
Mitigated Impact	Mitigated Probability	Mitigated Risk Score
2	4	8

Impact

On 23rd June 2016, the UK voted in a referendum to leave the European Union (EU). Article 50 was triggered on 27th March 2017 starting a two year formal process for leaving the EU. The UK left the EU on 31 January 2020 with a withdrawal agreement which is subject to a transition period which ended on 31st December 2020. The UK have now reached agreement on how the future relationship will work, including trade, energy, transport, social security, law enforcement, health and scientific collaboration and dispute settlement.

The agreement now reached gives the Council greater certainty and there has been no noticeable increased demand for its services in 2021 as a direct result of Brexit.

Brexit does still pose a strategic threat to the Council primarily because there is lack of clarity over how or to what extent the outcome may threaten achievement of its corporate priorities. In the absence of more detail, the Council is, in general terms, planning to 'be prepared'.

In addition, there is the possibility that the Council may be required to carry out functions under its Civil Contingencies responsibilities, although in the first half of 2021 this threat has not come to fruition to date.

Controls to manage the risk

The Chief Executive prepared a report to Members outlining the sector's view on where the key Brexit risks currently lie.

The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) has received a report from the Assistant Director (Corporate and Contracted Services), who is leading on Brexit risk, highlighting key risk areas for the Council which continue to be monitored with the wide Corporate Leadership Team. All service areas are represented at SLT, and the majority of SLT members operate within county- and nation-wide professional groups. This means that the knowledge reach of the group is wide and varied, meaning that emerging issues are likely to be raised for discussion around impact as they arise.

The Assistant Director, Corporate and Contracted Services also sat on a multi-agency county wide Tactical Coordination Group which monitors the EU Transition period although as the risk has reduced in early 2021 the group was stood-down in March 2021.

SLT has also ensured that all service areas revisit their Business Continuity plans to ensure that they remain up-to-date and capable of mitigating known and emerging risks.

SLT also review and update the Corporate Brexit risk register.

The Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive have taken part in webinars hosted by MHCLG with various Government departments in preparation for Brexit.

Evidence the risk is being managed

The subject of Brexit is reviewed by SLT if there are any specific issues or impacts for discussion. Members will be kept advised as more information becomes available.