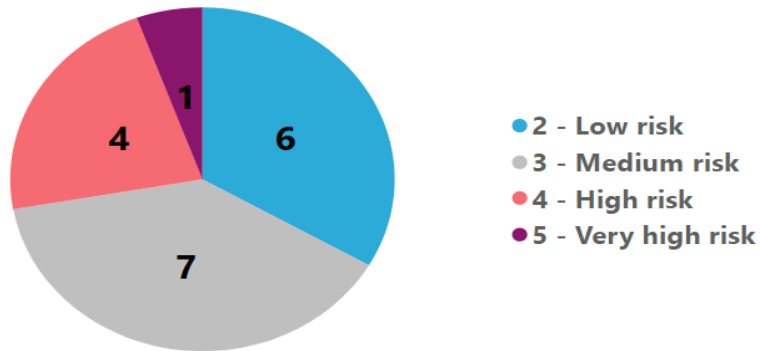# Wiltshire Council Strategic Risk and Issues Summary - 2024/25

This report provides a summary of the Council's strategic risks as they are at the time of the report's production, including those that are currently esclated to issues.
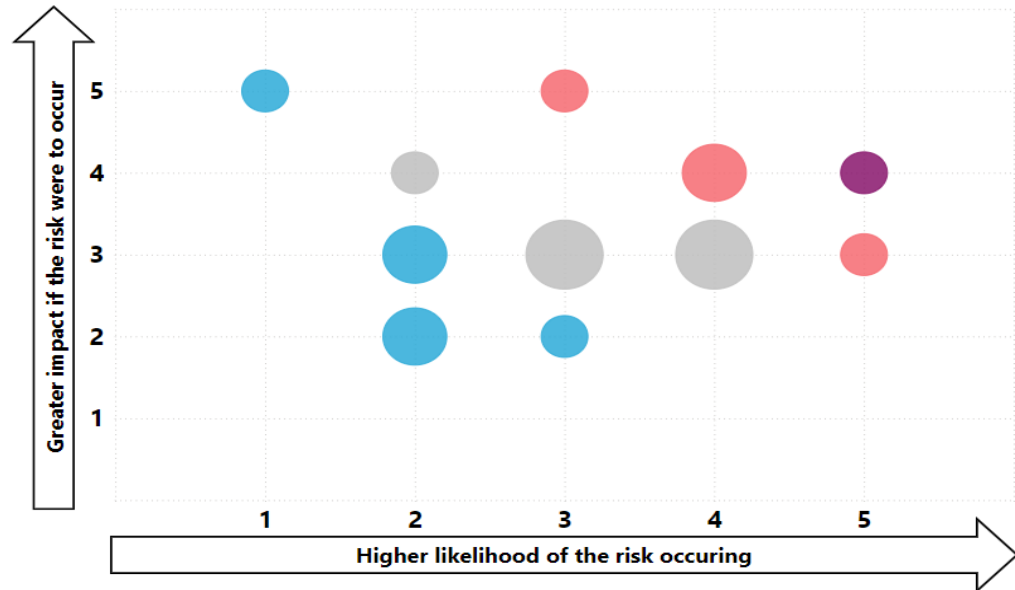
Risk profile

Overall risk level: **Medium**

Current risk profile for Strategic Risks

- 2 - Low risk
- 3 - Medium risk
- 4 - High risk
- 5 - Very high risk

Distribution of current risk scores for Strategic Risks

The size of the bubble represents the number of strategic risks with that score

Greater impact if the risk were to occur

Higher likelihood of the risk occuring

Issues

Obstacles and Challenges that are now present and being managed as issues by Wiltshire Council

Risk ID	Risk short name	Business Plan Mission	Risk Description	Risk owner	Appetite level (Target)	Original Risk Score	Mitigations Update	Progress with mitigations	Current Likelihood * Impact	Current Risk Score (out of 25)	Current score vs. appetite
STR-24-12	**Inability to meet increasing demand for EHCPs and support to children with SEND within available budgets.**	Best start in life	Cost of provision exceeding the High Needs Block (HNB) of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), and an unstable national funding picture, can result in more of the DSG being spent on providing education for SEND, as well as a growing overspend on the High Needs Block and insufficient supply of cost-effective solutions. This would result in a shortfall in the funding for schools and unsustainable HNB deficit for the Council. High Needs Block deficit reserves would continue to grow and increases the risk to the Council in managing the deficit in line with the government's scheduled removal of the statutory override in March 2026.	Darryl Freeman (DCS)	**9**	25	See below	Partially implemented	5 * 4	**20**	Exceeds

Current Mitigations	The Council was invited to take part in the DfE's Safety Valve programme in July 2023 due to the cumulative deficit in the High Needs Budget from DSG. Following consultation with stakeholders, including parent/carers, the Council's Safety Valve management plan was approved by the DfE in March 2024, with funding of £67m from 2023/24 to 2028/29. The Safety Valve (SEND transformation) funding will be paid in six tranches and, should the agreed actions prevent costs escalating, the cumulative deficit would be reduced to £70m by 2028/29. The Council's intention is that this remaining deficit will be met by the Council's own high needs earmarked reserve. However, if the statutory override is removed by government in 2025/26 then this reserve would not be sufficient to meet the projected HNB DSG deficit at that point in time (£92.9m).

Strategic Risk Register

Ranked by the current risk score - the risk as it is now with existing mitigating actions in their current state of implementation

The summary table provides the appetite for the level of risk that the Council is willing to tollerate.
It also provides the original, untreated risk score with no mitigations in place.
Risks should be evaluated based on the current risk score - the overall assessment for the likelihood and the impact of the risk if it were to occur now, with current mitigations in place.
Current risk scores are compared to the appetite to determine whether the risk is currently within or exceeding the appetite set through the Council's Risk Management Policy.

Risk ID	Risk short name	Business Plan Mission	Risk Description	Risk owner	Appetite level (Target)	Original Risk Score	Mitigations Update	Progress with mitigations	Current Likelihood * Impact	Current Risk Score (out of 25)	Current score vs. appetite
STR-24-09	Failures in corporate health, safety & wellbeing	Safe	Inadequate or ineffective control strategies, systems and governance can result in failure to achieve full statutory compliance, resulting in injury, incident, near miss, to staff or occupiers of assets managed under the General Fund or HRA or service users. This can result in regulatory or legal action, financial and reputational damage. Failure to apply corporate policies and procedures by managers and individuals can result in staff wellbeing declining and staff absences rising. If this is not managed and increasing pressure placed on remaining staff, low staff morale can result, with an inability to deliver services in a timely and efficient way, higher costs and reputational damage.	James Barrah (Director Assets)	6	16	A full review has been undertaken following a transfer of the service to a different Directorate and an improvement plan developed, with key projects prioritised and supporting budget established. Early priorities include new governance, new software, roll out of personal protection devices, and targeted training. Increased reporting and action plan updates are also planned.	Started implementation	4 * 4	16	Exceeds
STR-24-11	Inability to provide sufficient social care placements to meet demand within available budgets	Safe	Changes in the local market (including recovery from the pandemic) means there is insufficient supply of Independent Fostering Agencies, Children's Homes and provision (Residential and Supported Living) for complex needs. Changes in regulation (including the cost of increased infection prevention, control measures, insurance costs), workforce pressures and inflationary pressures in the care market can mean that the right type of care and/or accommodation is not always available. Too often, provision needs to be secured out of county, often in competition with other local authorities at a cost higher than the local market, on a spot purchase, increasing budgetary pressures. When frameworks are recommissioned, each individual care package cost can increase for complex individuals. Collectively, this results in greater budgetary pressure to meet statuary requirements, impacting on preventative and other spend.	Darryl Freeman (DCS) & Emma Legg (DASS)	6	25	Available options to customers are being expanded, increasing choice and control. There are clear processes and terms and conditions in place for awarding uplifts and we continue to monitor every request for an uplift. We have agreed to look at intervening in the market and piloting alternative support options. We continue to work jointly with operational colleagues to monitor risk.	Partially implemented	4 * 4	16	Exceeds
EN03	Increasing vulnerability to climate impacts	Carbon neutral	An inability to adapt key infrastructure and services to increasingly severe weather impacts from climate change, would result in increased impacts from flooding, droughts, heatwaves and storms. This would have direct impacts on health, safety, environment, businesses, infrastructure and natural environment. It would also impact on service delivery, costs, insurance, vulnerable people and assets.	Parvis Khansari (Corporate Director Place)	6	15	The council's climate adaptation plan is currently being reviewed and most services have commenced Climate Change Risk Assessment and putting actions in place. The short-term target is to reduce to low risk in relation to present impacts, and we will review progress periodically. However, due to the costs associated with implementing some of these measures and the long-term nature of these impacts, the original risk score is likely to increase by mid-century.	Partially implemented	5 * 3	15	Exceeds
FI-24-03	Lack of financial resilience and sustainability	Healthy organisation	Lack of resources available to meet financial risks and poor financial management will lead to financial resilience and sustainability issues. Financial difficulties will not be able to be managed effectively during the year or pressures managed in the short or medium term, and could put the council at risk of financial failure, require exceptional financial support from government and at worst require the s151 officer to issue a s114 report.	Lizzie Watkin (Director Finance & S.151)	9	25	Transparent and detailed financial management reporting through Scrutiny to Cabinet mitigates this risk. This reporting included budget monitoring and budget setting for revenue and capital as well as Treasury Management, highlighting risk exposure and how this is being managed.	Fully implemented	3 * 5	15	Exceeds

Risk ID	Risk short name	Business Plan Mission	Risk Description	Risk owner	Appetite level (Target)	Original Risk Score	Mitigations Update	Progress with mitigations	Current Likelihood * Impact	Current Risk Score (out of 25)	Current score vs. appetite
STR-24-16	**Failure to achieve Carbon Neutral (Net Zero) ambitions**	Carbon neutral	A failure to reduce direct and indirect greenhouse gas emissions within the council and the county, causing the Net Zero by 2030 target to be missed, would result in the council having to offset a greater proportion of emissions. The Council's reputation would be impacted, as most councils are acting to reduce emissions in this area. There would be missed opportunities to innovate through the Council's supply chain, and missed potential to improve local economy and skills. Ultimately, the impact would be increased severity of climate impacts.	Parvis Khansari (Corporate Director Place)	**8**	15	Although the Council is on track for reducing its greenhouse gas emissions, the current score reflects risk related to county-wide emissions.	Partially implemented	4 * 3	**12**	Exceeds
STR-24-13	**Failure to deliver strategic housing aspirations**	The right housing	Caused by a lack of up-to-date Local Plan and a lack of housing land supply or suitable land in the right locations for development, combined with developers' unwillingness to apply for planning permission or to implement permissions, as well as a disconnect between local and central government aspirations. These causes would result in low rates of completion by developers, an inability to deliver the right homes in the right locations to meet the needs of communities, and housing development being applied for in locations that do not have community support. Impacts would include loss of community confidence in the planning system, exposure to losing planning appeals, significant costs and resource pressures defending appeals and and the right types of homes not being built in the right locations.	Parvis Khansari (Corporate Director Place)	**9**	16	We are working to secure an up-to-date Local Plan. We are working with developers to bring forwards sites, as well as bringing forward our own housing and land ownership of sites to help with land supply. We are providing support to Town and Parish Councils to encourage them to engage in shaping planning applications. We are responding to government consultations and engaging with ministers and MHCLG and are seeking government funding for infrastructure or support to accelerate delivery.	Partially implemented	4 * 3	**12**	Exceeds
HR-24-01	**Failure to recruit and retain staff**	Healthy organisation	An inability to compete with private sector pay and benefits, combined with Wiltshire's demographics and rural location, a predicted shortfall of 2.5m skills workers in the UK labour market by 2030, and a high turnover of staff due to increased workloads if vacancies can't be filled, can result in an inability to attract suitable candidates to vacant roles at the council and turnover of existing staff exceeding the ability to recruit to replace. Impacts would include increased costs through requirements to use agency staff and a requirement to apply market supplements. It would also result in spiralling turnover due to increased pressure on remaining staff, an inability to deliver services in a timely, efficient way, long waiting times, and public dissatisfaction. A lack of skills could also result in mean inability to deliver statutory duties and non-compliance.	Lucy Townsend (Chief Executive)	**9**	16	The HR&OD Workforce Strategy Action Plan tracks priorities and actions relating to this risk. Specific priority areas are identified in Directorate workforce action plans, monitored by SMTs and HR Business Partners. "Grow our own" and "career step" schemes are in place in hard to recruit areas. A Talent and Succession toolkit supports short and long-term planning, with a well-developed apprenticeship programme to attract and build capabilities, as well as staff engagement activities. A Market Supplement Policy supports competitive pay rates in hard to recruit areas, alongside a strong reward and benefits package. Recruitment and retention pilot schemes include linking in to wider public sector schemes to promote careers in public sector, development of branding, careers site and advertising channels, and a focus on under 25s recruitment.	Partially implemented	3 * 3	**9**	Within
FI-24-04	**Lack of commercial and contractual oversight**	Healthy organisation	Lack of an up-to-date Procurement Strategy, failure to update the Procurement Pipeline, failure to train relevant officers in contract management and a lack of awareness can result in failure to implement and comply with the Procurement Act. As a result the council would be liable to unforeseen and escalating costs and risks, service failures, and would potentially be open to legal challenge.	Lizzie Watkin (Director Finance & S.151)	**12**	16	Procurement processes will be improved via an updated Procurement Strategy, an improved Procurement Pipeline, peer review of tender documents, and improved training for 'contract management' available and undertaken by relevant officers, all of which will ensure an increased profile of the impact of the Procurement Act. An Audit Action Plan in place to address recently identified gaps. Procurement Act awareness sessions are being delivered in Head of Service Forums.	Mostly implemented	3 * 3	**9**	Within
FI24	**Inability to withstand the impact of excessive inflation on suppliers**	Healthy organisation	Inflation rates significantly increase or remain at sustained high rates, resulting in an inability to contain costs within budget set. The impact is overspend, draw from reserves, and an inability to fund priorities.	Lizzie Watkin (Director Finance & S.151)	**12**	16	Strong financial management, robustness of financial assumptions and adequate levels of reserves to manage assessed risks within the council's business provide confidence that should additional inflation arise it can be managed. This is set out in the financial reporting for the council.	Fully implemented	3 * 3	**9**	Within

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AF-24-01	**Failure to achieve full statutory landlord compliance**	Healthy organisation	Inadequate or ineffective control strategies, systems and governance can result in a failure to achieve full statutory compliance in provision and maintenance of buildings. Impacts would include injury, incidents and near misses, to staff or occupiers of assets managed under the General Fund or HRA or service users, leading to regulatory or legal action, financial and reputational damage.	James Barrah (Director Assets)	**6**	12	Service reviews have been completed and action plans established to implement the preferred 5-layer model. Additional resources are being established for the HRA team, and a new GF compliance team manager appointed. Greater prominence on KPI scorecards and monthly compliance meetings established for both portfolios. A full policy and procedure review is underway, and both portfolios have increased KPI reporting to CLT and Scrutiny, and additional audits.	Partially implemented	2 * 4	**8**	Exceeds
STR-24-02	**Failure to respond to emergencies**	Safe	A failure to fully embed reviewed and well-rehearsed Business Continuity Plans in business as usual activities across all Directorates, and a lack of capacity within the Emergency Planning Team, combined with severe and unexpected events, can result in the Council's inability to respond quickly to emergency situations or council systems and services taking excessive time to restore. Disruption could include failure to deliver statutory or critical services, failures to meet the needs of residents and businesses during emergency situations, increased pressure on key response and frontline services, threats to the health and safety of residents and potentially high levels of mortality, and possibly widespread disruption to travel, health, supplies, education and other core needs.	Perry Holmes (Director Legal & Governance & Monitoring Officer)	**6**	20	Business Continuity Plans within the Council are reviewed annually with support from qualified specialists in the Emergency Planning Team. The team undergo regular training and implement learning from national exercises and the previous pandemic, and integrating this into new plans and ways of working. Pandemic planning includes robust surveillance systems as part of an integrated public health system and a regulatory framework with operational capacity to implement border measures. The BSW Communicable Disease Plan and LRF structure provide the framework for multiagency and cross border working on contingency plans for essential services in the event of an outbreak of infectious disease. Public Health interventions and education around effective mitigations such as vaccination and infection control are required. The Vulnerable Individuals Plan owned by the LRF has been exercised and amended per feedback. A Managing Excess Deaths Plan is in place, as is the LHRP emergency treatment plan alongside other LRF owned plans.	Partially implemented	2 * 3	**6**	Within
STR-24-14	**Failure to deliver strategic employment and economic aspirations**	Right skills to prosper	A lack of an up-to-date Local Plan or lack of suitable land in the right locations for employment development, combined with an unwillingness of land owners to release land for employment development and low rates of delivery by developers can result in an inability to support business expansion or to attract inward investment to support economic growth. Unfavourable economic conditions and the impact of economic downturn and post-covid environment on high street retail can result in increased or prolonged vacancy rates and deterioration of town centres. The impacts would be a loss of business investment to places outside of Wiltshire and a lack of employment opportunities for local communities, as well as reduced financial stability for the authority with reduced NNDR income.	Parvis Khansari (Corporate Director Place)	**9**	9	We are working to secure an up-to-date Local Plan. CPO powers are being used to acquire land and the Council is working with developers and partners to bring forward additional sites. We are also bringing forward our own housing and land ownership of sites to help with land supply. We are responding to government consultations and engaging with ministers and MHCLG, as well as seeking government funding for infrastructure or support to accelerate delivery. We are working closely with Town Councils in partnership to address short-term needs and medium-to-long-term actions.	Partially implemented	3 * 2	**6**	Within

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STR-24-01	**Failure to deliver statutory responsibilities**	All	Lack of capacity within services, insufficient budgets or failures in policies and processes could result in the Council failing to deliver its statutory responsibilities, resulting in potential legal challenge, reputational risk, additional costs, and importantly potential damage or harm to local residents, businesses, the environment or to staff.	Lucy Townsend (Chief Executive)	**6**	20	The Council has robust governance processes in place. It has well established performance reporting processes that involve both officers and Members to rapidly identify any areas of concern in service delivery, including Performance Outcome Groups, Performance Outcome Boards (POBs) and a Central POB. Both performance and risk are reported to Cabinet quarterly. Scrutiny processes are used effectively to monitor all services. Assurance that the council is meeting its statutory responsibilities is also provided through a comprehensive framework of internal audits, challenge through external audit, inspections by regulators, and peer reviews. Officers and Members also have regular engagement with Whitehall. A new assurance framework and CLT scrutiny will be taking place throughout the Winter.	Mostly implemented	2 * 3	**6**	Within
LG22	**Impact of negative media/social media coverage on council**	Healthy organisation	Potential negative reactions to council decision making and delivery of services can cause a negative public reaction expressed via social media and through the media, resulting in a negative impact on the Council's reputation.	Perry Holmes (Director Legal & Governance & Monitoring Officer)	**9**	16	Good controls are in place including horizon scanning, working closely with directorate SMTs with Business partners attending SMT meetings, and trained members of staff ready to respond to incidents. There is also an out of hours on call rota.	Fully implemented	3 * 2	**6**	Within
STR-24-04	**Lack of suitable governance processes**	Healthy organisation	A lack of suitable governance processes around decision making or inappropriate management of personal, sensitive or other important information such as unfair processing, insecure storage, incorrect retention or inappropriate disclosure, not in line with requirements of the Data Protection Act Principles, Freedom of Information legislation, cyber security requirements and the management of records under the Local Government Transparency code, would leave the Council open to legal challenge. The Council could incur potential penalties and fines from the Information Commissioner's Office. Other impacts would include loss of or inability to use strategic, corporate, sensitive and secure information, impacting our ability to deliver services, as well as distress to individuals concerned and reputational damage.	Perry Holmes (Director Legal & Governance & Monitoring Officer)	**9**	25	To improve staff awareness, annual e-learning modules remain mandatory on Oracle with an increased profile of current advice via EPIC hub pages. The Information Management and Governance Board is attended by Senior Leadership to ensure a corporate and strategic overview. This will consider a forward plan, which may include the introduction of an IG Strategy. Policies and set processes are in place that ensure audit trails around decision making are recorded. Records of Processing Activity (ROPA) and review periods will be rolled out by the end of 2024.	Fully implemented	1 * 5	**5**	Within

Risk ID	Risk short name	Business Plan Mission	Risk Description	Risk owner	Appetite level (Target)	Original Risk Score	Mitigations Update	Progress with mitigations	Current Likelihood * Impact	Current Risk Score (out of 25)	Current score vs. appetite
STR-24-03	**Failure in safeguarding**	Safe	The council and/or multi- agency partners failing to follow procedures or to undertake a thorough assessment can result in the council and/or multi- agency partners providing inappropriate intervention or no intervention. As a result, children or vulnerable adults would not being protected from harm.	Darryl Freeman (DCS) & Emma Legg (DASS)	**6**	25	Robust policies and procedures, as well as an Early Help Strategy are in place. MASH continues to be strategically developed, with the introduction of case closure audits. A joined-up approach with Commissioning is engaging with providers and raising awareness on specific subject matters and strategic engagement with key partners is focused on sharing risk and agreed escalation processes. POBs, POGs and SASA are used to monitor performance around safeguarding activity. Quality assurance work is ongoing, with regulatory bodies, Ofsted and CQC inspections, quality assurance frameworks and audits used to regularly identify gaps and areas of good practice, stimulating improvement and development through action plans. Learning forums are scheduled and ongoing, with feedback from partners considered via action planning and audit activity. Vacancy rates are being reduced through a workforce development plan and the use of Market Supplements to enhance our workforce strategy. Leadership capacity is being increased to develop peer skills and a training matrix for all investigation managers.	Mostly implemented	2 * 2	**4**	Within
IT-24-01	**Lack of ICT resilience and security**	Healthy organisation	Failure of IT systems through equipment failure, power outages, system and software failures or failings, or malicious attacks can result in Wiltshire Council's IT systems being compromised, potentially leading to loss, theft or corruption of personal and corporate data, and/or an inability to deliver services.	Mark Tucker (Director ICT)	**8**	15	A new recovery plan was enacted with a phased delivery over the preceding two years and now, though largely complete, there is ongoing planning and upgrades to ensure that services remain deliverable in the long term. A Cybersecurity Strategy is currently in draft and will be issued once reviewed and agreed by all the relevant stakeholders. As noted, we continue to invest in ICT services via the Staywell capital investment. This project continues to ensure availability of on premise IT services and continuity of connection to cloud based IT services.	Fully implemented	2 * 2	**4**	Within