

**Corporate Risk and Opportunity Register**  
**Executive Summary**  
**July 2024**



## **Angie Ridgwell, Chief Executive**

Since the last risk report, our risk profile has remained relatively stable which reflects the fact that many of these are complex risks, over which we have limited levers and will take time to shift. In order to foster a more structured conversation in respect of our risk management approach we have amended the style of the report. There is now a greater focus on progress and actions to ensure risk mitigations are being progressed in a timely way. It has also been reordered so that the risks with the highest council-wide impact are brought to the top.

The relatively stable risk profile masks a significant degree of work to proactively manage the organisations in an increasingly dynamic environment. The recent general election will yield a new policy framework which we will want to influence and will need to respond to. We also continue to deliver against our service plans while still experiencing increases in demand for our services across the piste.

Our four highest risks are financial sustainability, our workforce, cyber security and school places. We have, this quarter, added one new opportunity to the register in respect of Living Better Lives in Lancashire which has now been rolled out across Lancashire and seeks to support people to live independently in their own homes. The risk in respect of school places has increased as a result of continued pressures in in-year admissions and some of our expansion plans not being secured against the forecast rise in demand. This is being mitigated by new agreements being negotiated with schools to create additional places. The change programme's risk score has reduced, and it is anticipated it will drop off the corporate register soon. Cyber security risk is a significant risk nationally and the council continues to have actions in place to protect its services.

The counter terrorism threat remains 'substantial' nationally, however our arrangements for these situations are robust and our directorate risk registers have appropriate actions in place. Consideration was also given to escalating a risk around the safeguarding of adults waiting for mental health beds however, following a review of the council's actions, this continues to be managed at a directorate level.

Across the organisation, risks are being proactively managed with appropriate mitigating actions in place. We continue to monitor and respond to external threats and foster positive relationships with partners to help manage a Lancashire wide response where appropriate, recognising the strength in unity. Strong governance and a good line of sight to inform effective strategic decision making and management of both strategic and operational risk remains essential, and we continue to operate within the constitutional arrangements to secure this.



### **Jacqui Old, Executive Director of Education and Children's Services**

Our risks related to children's social care continue to stem from the difficulty in securing high-quality homes for a small yet significant number of children and young people with complex needs. In cases where unregistered homes are the only option, robust care planning, risk assessments, and decisive actions help mitigate these risks. We maintain vigilant oversight to ensure optimal outcomes for the children and young people in our care. Collaborating with agency providers and developing in-house homes remains a priority to meet their needs. We continue to work with the NHS to ensure the right level of skill and oversight is in place particularly those who need mental health support.

The continued surge in requests for Education, Health, and Care Needs Assessments presents ongoing risks regarding our ability to address the needs of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) promptly and appropriately. Our short-term investments, including additional assessment capacity and the establishment of a SEND Helpline, are having a positive impact. Furthermore, significant budgetary allocations for 2024-25 support recruitment efforts to expedite assessments and reviews, but we continue to struggle with the national recruitment challenge of employing Educational Psychologists and requests for assessments are outstripping capacity. Simultaneously, we are enhancing our Improvement Plan for Inclusion in partnership with other stakeholders to strengthen our overall response within the children's system. Our focus is to ensure sufficiency of school places, reduce waiting times, enhance the support whilst waiting, and support the most vulnerable.

### **Louise Taylor, Executive Director of Adult Services**

This quarter work has continued to focus on addressing the waiting lists and backlogs for people who are waiting for assessment and review. The directorate is using additional resource to improve performance in completion of annual reviews through the application of additional government grant (Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund). Staffing capacity is also focussed on reducing waits linked to Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) assessments and capacity within the social care teams is focussed on initial assessments, reassessments and Community DoLS. Our review work so far is not showing many significant changes to care package costs, indicating that a sound risk management approach is being applied to our waiting lists.

The directorate is well prepared for the implementation of the strength-based practice model, Living Better Lives in Lancashire, from 1st July. All relevant staff are receiving refresher training in strength-based practice and also on the refreshed case management system, LiquidLogic (LAS). Staff and managers have received a new practice guide and handbook to support the new practice model. Policies and procedures are more easily accessible to staff and residents through the new policy and procedure portal on the internet. This approach sees a change to how the service will improve independence for people who need care and support with the



establishment of the Wellbeing and Early Support (WES) function on 1st July. The function will create three front doors to triage community referrals for adult social care for north, east and central. By offering residents access to advice, guidance and community-based support in the first instance we expect Lancashire will follow trends in other local authorities which has resulted in reducing the need for formal, long term social care solutions. Data is informing how the three-step model will be operationally implemented and how many staff we will need to respond to both new contacts into the council as well as existing people who are already open to social care. Applying this methodology will also assist in understanding productivity and responding to those waiting for assessments and reviews in the medium-term.

The department's overall risk direction of travel is stable. The workforce risk remains unchanged, we are on track to deliver our Living Better Lives practice model on 1st July, and we have now established a programme approach to reduce the length of time people are waiting alongside the numbers of people waiting. Whilst some progress has been made which mitigates some of the risk linked to longest waits, risk is high relating to the numbers waiting. Safeguarding people in the community whilst they are waiting for a mental health bed remains 'red' within Adult Services' directorate risk register and we are actively monitoring this with partners via the Lancashire Safeguarding Adults Board.

### **Mark Wynn, Executive Director of Resources**

The role and identity of the Resources directorate continues to be strengthened, so we are better able to support the organisation to respond to opportunities and risks, both strategic and operational.

Financial sustainability remains one of our biggest risks as all councils continue to be challenged by demand and funding levels. A funding gap is forecast for the medium-term, which will require the identification of new cost reduction measures and savings proposals.

Work continues in developing the council's cyber defence and response mechanisms. This is an ongoing threat, and the council is working with external specialists to ensure it has the best available defences and continues to promote awareness and provide training internally.

Another key area of focus is workforce recruitment and retention. The development of our People Strategy has provided coherent and cohesive direction for the organisation. The People's Service's new operation model has been in place since April 2024 and has established key priorities, including supporting managers to robustly manage sickness absence levels and launching a new Leading Lancashire framework, so that we have the capacity to deliver our priorities now and in the future.



The new Change Service is now in place, ensuring that the council has the right capacity, capability, and flexibility to deliver its strategic objectives and priorities. A strategic change portfolio has been developed and remains under constant review to ensure we are proactively horizon-scanning and prioritising accordingly. The fully scoped programme, once complete, will show a way forward for some of the key challenges facing the organisation including SEND. The programme will also provide key components for the next Council Plan.

As we move forward, we anticipate that the Change Programme and the Oracle Fusion risks will be removed from the risk register as they will have moved to a 'business as usual' environment.

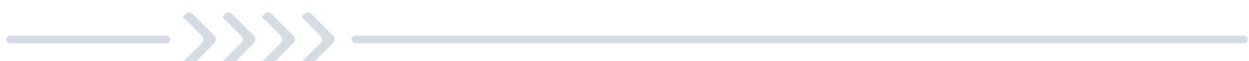
Alongside the risks on the corporate risk register the directorate also pro-actively manages a number of directorate level risks (illustratively, counter terrorism response and preparing for local elections). The directorate continues to monitor its risk register position through its monthly performance board.

### **Phil Green, Executive Director of Growth, Environment, Transport and Health**

The majority of risks are being managed towards or within their projected score. The transfer of the public health nursing service was expected to happen from October. Due to the new provider of public health nursing service not completing the mobilisation in time, the current contract has been extended with the incumbent organisation until October 2025. The recommissioning programme has already begun with a decision on the new service provision scheduled for October Cabinet.

The key risk relating to devolution has materialised albeit the trigger and timing being out of our control. In the first part of the period, progress continued at pace towards a Devolution Deal and Combined County Authority within Lancashire, including to commence work on legislation. However, following the announcement of the General Election, devolution will now be a matter for the new Government. Alongside our partners, we remain committed to securing a devolution deal for Lancashire. Early signs from the new Government indicate support for devolution, which is encouraging. Representation has been made to reinforce the value of the deal and our state of readiness. Devolution remains as an opportunity on the corporate register.

Following an extremely wet winter and the impact this had on our highways, the Directorate Leadership Team put in place a recovery plan. Cabinet allocated additional resources and the latest data confirms improvements in the defect backlog which in tune will lower the risk of damage claims. We are seeing a slight drop in construction material cost which will also help to the deliver schemes within estimates/budget for the year ahead however this remains a risk. In the wider economy, as inflation rates



continue to drop and ahead of anticipated reductions in interest rates, investor markets remain 'guardedly optimistic' with improved confidence. Risks to the delivery of major projects continue to be carefully monitored and mitigated with overall scores being managed towards target.

Increased funding opportunities for infrastructure projects continue to emerge which can help mitigate financial gaps. The full potential of the recently announced Local Transport Funding will only be confirmed following the General Election. Detailed assessment of priorities, managing external risk and the allocation of staff is crucial in maintaining delivery as well as a considered approach to securing new funding for projects. Increased funding, whilst welcome, increases the pressure on already stretched staffing resources to delivery additional programmes of work, with recruitment for additional roles being highly competitive in some core areas. The Directorate Leadership Team have commissioned a targeted piece of work to help mitigate this emerging risk to achieve the necessary capacity and/or specialist skills to deliver key projects.

