

Draft Strategic Risk Register July 2026

Strategic Risk Description, linkage with Corporate Priority and Risk Appetite	Potential key causes of the strategic risk and possible effects if realised	Existing Key Controls & Enablers (excluding effectiveness assessment)	Residual score	Action updates
1. Successful/serious cyber security attack on the Council <u>Corporate Priority</u> Effective Council <u>Risk Appetite</u> Averse <i>We shall seek to reduce the residual risk as far as practically and reasonably possible within the constraints of resources available.</i>	Potential causes: • Lack of effective cyber security detection arrangements (out of date, not communicated, not understood) • Lack of relevant and timely training relating to cyber security • Lack of clarity in roles and responsibilities relating to cyber security • Cyber security culture not bought into • Insecure digital systems and records (Council and third-party providers) • There are increasing frequency of attacks and with increased complexity occurring • Institutions are being targeted by criminals and aggressive states Possible effects: • Inability to access systems – unable to deliver services • Data compromised – potential harm to individual/ICO fine • Investigation and rectification costs • Council reputation damage	– Creation of new cyber strategy and action plan (using MHCLG funding) – Up to date and effective IT and cyber security protections in place which are reviewed annually and are communicated to staff – Cyclical mandated IT and cyber security training provided to all staff – Elected Member cyber security training in place – Two-factor authentication now in place for elected members – Defined roles and responsibilities in relation to cyber security with an IT security lead – Regular communications, reminders, and updates to staff in connection with cyber risk – Programme for continuous updating/installation of software (including firewall) and new hardware etc – Regular reporting and monitoring of IT security/cyber incidents and remedial plans produced and actioned – Engagement with national organisations and attendance at key events to ensure continuous learning of threats and prevention – MHCLG funding to strengthen cyber resilience	Impact 4 V Likelihood 2 = High 13 <i>Note: There is no change currently</i>	Implementation of MHCLG action plan during 2026/27. This will be subject to on-going monitoring/tracking of progress supplemented by an annual review and re-set

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2. Health, Safety, Wellbeing, and Safeguarding failures by the Council <u>Corporate Priority</u> Effective Council <u>Risk Appetite</u> Averse <i>We shall seek to reduce the residual risk as far as practically and reasonably possible within the constraints of resources available.</i>	Potential causes: • Lack of effective application of health, safety, wellbeing and safeguarding policies and procedures (out of date, not communicated, not understood) • Lack of relevant and timely training relating to health, safety, wellbeing, and safeguarding • Lack of clarity in health, safety, wellbeing, and safeguarding roles and responsibilities • Health, safety, wellbeing, and safeguarding culture not bought into • Lack of effective health, safety, wellbeing, and safeguarding risk assessments • Poorly maintained systems and records Possible effects: • Harm to service user/staff member/visitor etc • Investigation and rectification costs (including potential fines) • Council reputation damage	– Corporate Health & Safety and Safeguarding policies and procedures in place which are regularly reviewed and are accessible via intranet and included as part of induction for all new starters – Health & Safety Manager and Safeguarding Lead Officers in post to provide safety advice and coordinate health and safety and safeguarding activities ie policy, procedures, communications, initiatives etc – Roles and responsibilities defined within the Health & Safety and Safeguarding policies – Health & Safety and Safeguarding annual reports to Governance & Audit Committee – Health & Safety and Safeguarding monthly reports presented to Statutory Officers Group – Monthly meetings with Chief Executive and Health & Safety Manager – Health & Safety Manager and Safeguarding Lead Officer communicate important issues to Senior Leadership Team for their consideration and agreement of action necessary – Service and activity risk assessments undertaken across the Council by managers and cyclically reviewed annually (as a minimum) – Physical deterrents including secure sites eg perimeter fencing, CCTV, site security and access to sites by authorised staff – Monthly housing compliance review by Chief Executive and Leader to ensure embeddedness of safety, wellbeing, and safeguarding arrangements for tenants – Exercise with Caution List maintained and subject to regular review	Impact 4 V Likelihood 1 = Medium 10 <i>Note: There is no change currently</i>	Consideration to be given to a wider roll out of the personal resilience survey/ workshop across Council
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		– Programme of Health & Safety audits with outcomes reported and actions monitored – County Council S11 annual Independent Audit to validate safeguarding arrangements with outcomes reported to Governance & Audit Committee – Statutory Officers Group receive a monthly report of accident figures with causes/ failures highlighted. Actions agreed and monitored – 6 year safeguarding training programme in place for identified Council staff – Annual Safeguarding training mandatory for elected members – Personal resilience survey and workshop (Mid-Managers) – Corporate well being group steers events throughout the year		
3. Unable to maintain financial sustainability (General Fund) in the medium term (to end of 2027/28) <u>Corporate Priority</u> Effective Council <u>Risk Appetite</u> Cautious <i>We are willing to accept some degree of residual risk where we have identified scope to achieve proportionate benefit –</i>	Potential causes: • External factors being increasing costs due to macro- economic play through largely outside of controls eg international war, global geo-politics, government policy change etc impacting cost of energy, supplies etc or emergence of an unforeseen financial event and cost • Outcome of Local government financial settlement including fair funding review implications, resetting of business rates etc up to Financial Year 2027/28 - this being the year of Local Government Reorganisation. In the	– Medium Term Financial Plan up to 2027/28 supported by relevant policies, including modelling of various funding arrangements and scenarios re general fund (these will be reported to Cabinet) with indications that the General Fund will remain stable during this period – Monthly financial reports including assessment/discussion of financial position produced and presented at Corporate Management Team – Financial Regulations and Contract Procedure Rules in place and regularly reviewed and updated – Financial training for all finance staff and budget holders – Scheme of Delegation in place and transparency in Officer Delegated Decision reporting	Impact 4 V Likelihood 1 = Medium 10 <i>Note: There is no change currently</i>	Continuance of existing controls to ensure risk is being managed

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<i>striking a balance between the two.</i>	event of LGR not going ahead or being delayed then the Council financial position is likely to face greater pressure requiring a change in focus of the Medium Term Financial Plan • Implications of Local Government Reorganisation on finances • Poor financial information, planning, and budgetary control • Weak financial controls – financial procedures are out of date, not communicated, not understood, not followed • Lack of clarity in roles and responsibilities relating to finances/financial management • Poorly maintained systems and records Possible effects: • Council financial stability threatened • Council plans stifled • Council reputation damage • Qualified External Audit Opinion	– Service management monthly budget management routines including meetings with finance team as required – Statutory Officers review of committee reports for financial implications including commentary as appropriate – Quarterly budget report to Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet – Annual Budget Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee – Experienced finance team including Procurement Officer and support from Welland Procurement Partnership – Internal audit plan adopted by Governance & Audit Committee and monitored – Annual Governance Statement production and publication – Annual financial statements produced and signed off by CMT (and subject to external audit – unqualified opinion) – Regular bi-monthly meeting with External Audit, Chief Executive, and Section 151 Officer – Annual Member training delivered		
4. Unable to maintain and build sufficient staffing capacity and capability <u>Corporate Priority</u> Effective Council	Potential causes: • Certain areas, services, and roles within the Council are more challenging to recruit into eg planning • Competition and skill shortage in the marketplace to fill specific	– People Strategy 2025-2030 in place and monitored by Employment Committee – Resource and capacity risks are discussed in HR Business Partnering meetings and escalated to CMT where appropriate	Impact 3 V Likelihood 2 = High 9 <i>Note:</i>	Implementation of People Plan during FY 26 27. This will be subject to on-going monitoring/tracking of progress supplemented by an annual review and re-set

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<u>Risk Appetite</u> Cautious (and in some cases Open) <i>We are willing to accept some degree of residual risk where we have identified scope to achieve proportionate benefit – striking a balance between the two.</i> <i>In some cases we may take on an Open risk appetite where we are willing to explore a range of options and new solutions where we believe the potential benefits outweigh the residual risks and so we take informed risks eg sharing of posts with other councils etc.</i>	vacancies (intensified by LGR particular at senior level including interim market, geographical location v office working etc) • LGR uncertainties/change fear and potential for increased leavers due to staff looking for alternative employment or older staff retiring from local government etc • The Council is not seen as sufficiently attractive as an employer (image and profile, rewards and benefits, culture and values etc) • Lack of personal/career development, progression, and succession opportunities (intensified by LGR) • Poor performance goes unchecked – not identified and not addressed Possible effects: • Inconsistencies or deterioration in quality of service/provision • Reduced knowledge and experience within key roles at the Council • Deterioration in service user/stakeholder experience and outcomes • Inefficiency/increased costs experienced	– New ‘Supporting Performance Improvement’ policy approved by Employment Committee in 2025 to support performance management – Continual review of employer brand and Employee Value Proposition to improve attractiveness of roles in the Council – Focused review of pay competitiveness including benchmarking with neighbouring authorities – Attrition monitoring – All vacant and new posts subject to a business case and challenged to review if the post is still required at the requested grade prior to progression – Targeted recruitment campaigns for hard to fill roles – Alternative service provision options considered/explored as appropriate eg buying in services/sharing posts etc – Regular Joint Consultative and Negotiation Committee meetings – Employee Assistance Programme in place – Internal development through training and apprenticeships – Corporate training plan in place with focus on middle managers for upskilling and training – #Team SK Values embedded within the Council – Talent Management Strategy – Succession Planning – Employment Committee receive quarterly HR dashboard data – Development and improvement plans in place with SMART KPIs – Annual appraisal and staff development plans in place for all staff completion and outcomes subject to monitoring and review	<i>There is no change currently</i>	
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		– Annual staff survey with outcomes reported to the Employment Committee – Equality & Diversity/gender pay gap assessment – Pay policy presented to Employment Committee and Council annually – Use of apprenticeship schemes to enable home grown talent – Annual service planning undertaken which aligns to the Corporate Plan priorities – Wellbeing programme in place – Chief Executive annual appraisal undertaken by external officer and presented to Employment Committee – Use of contractors as required to address capacity/capability gaps		
5. Unable to meet requirements of new regulations and legislation affecting the Council <u>Corporate Priority</u> Effective Council <u>Risk Appetite</u> Minimal <i>We shall seek a low degree of residual risk, in a well controlled environment with limited benefit potential.</i>	Potential causes: • Lack of awareness or visibility of emerging/new regulations and legislation • Ineffective (untimely) interpretation to enable understanding of requirements and implications • Lack of communications/learning and development to meet new requirements across the Council • Ineffective response plans – what, how, who, and when • Ineffective response – lack of resources, knowledge and experience, funding etc • Currently an increasing number of legislative and regulatory changes	– Departments undertake regular horizon scanning for new legislation – Monitoring Officer and Deputy Monitoring Officer in place – Regular reporting on breaches of legislation/regulations produced by Monitoring Officer – Attendance at professional events and conferences – LGA links, District Councils' Network, LG Futures, CIPFA, and APSE wider networks etc used to raise awareness of legislative and regulatory changes – Daily briefing email to Chief Executive from the MHCLG – Review of any government data sets where the Council may be an outlier – Member briefings on regulatory changes	Impact 3 V Likelihood 2 = High 9 <i>Note: There is no change currently</i>	Continuance of existing controls to ensure risk is being managed

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	impacting local government. In particular new planning rules which will focus on the quality of decisions being made and the number of appeals/outcomes relating to major applications, including a new scheme of delegation re what Councillors can do re decision making Possible effects: • Ultra vires activities – the Council could be subject to legal challenge • Deterioration in quality of services • Council reputation damage • Regulatory intervention			
6. Societal, demographic and cultural changes impacting on communities within the district <u>Corporate Priorities</u> Effective Council Enabling Economic Opportunity <u>Risk Appetite</u> Open <i>We are willing to explore a range of options and new</i>	Potential causes: • Increasing level of misinformation in the public domain • Increasing/shifting elements of extremism, poverty, ethnicity within communities creating new demands and tensions • Increasing levels of distrust by the public in institutions and politicians • The Council has no mechanism for identifying and assessing shifts in society and assessing implications • Lack of confidence in politicians and institutions • Ineffective channels of communication with communities and individuals	– Local Economic Forum in place – Engagement of SK Team with key partnerships – Community Engagement Strategy and Plan – Community consultation framework adopted – External Communications Plans including digital comms (web site and social media) – Youth Council in place – Chief Executive/Directors/Cabinet/Members networking within communities and with agencies operating across communities – Parish councils' engagement – State of District report produced annually and presented to Cabinet – Annual Monitoring Statement produced and presented annually – Attending service specific conferences to seek service improvements and innovative ideas	Impact 2 V Likelihood 2 = Medium 5 <i>Note: There is no change currently</i>	Development of an action plan to identify how the Asylum Dispersal Funding will be applied

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<i>solutions where we believe the potential benefits outweigh the residual risks and so we take informed risks.</i>	• Laws and regulations preventing sharing of information between agencies • Service user needs are now often more complex coupled with an expectation that the Council will meet their needs • Inaccessibility of/erosion of wider public services and other agencies including charities leading to the Council becoming the focal point for assistance and help Possible effects: • Stakeholder interests not best served • Erosion of confidence in the Council and increased public criticism (perceived or reality) • Increased pressure on Council resources, services, staff and Members • Potential undermining of governance, suboptimal services and erosion of democracy • Harm to individuals, be this Council Staff, members of the public within communities or service users	– Member engagement workshop – Access to Asylum Dispersal Funding – Increased safer streets activities including by example mobile CCTV, community cohesion officer roles etc – The Council is continually seeking to effectively engage, including way and means of communication and this remains in progress		
7. Major Governance failure <u>Corporate Priority</u> Effective Council	Potential causes: • Lack of clearly defined committee structure and procedures, including terms of reference to	– Up to date Constitution in place – Clearly defined committee structure in place – Up to date Terms of Reference for all committees – Member and Officer Scheme of delegation in place	Impact 3 V Likelihood 2 = High 9	The Director of law and Governance is undertaking review of constitutional decision-making documents

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<u>Risk Appetite</u> Averse We shall seek to reduce the residual risk as far as practically and reasonably possible within the constraints of resources available.	support effective decision making and scrutiny • Behavioural expectations of members (eg adherence with the Nolan Principles/Standards in Public Life) are not clearly set out (not communicated or recognised) • Lack of governance measurement – ineffective processes, non-adherence and poor behaviours go unidentified/not tackled • Lack of Member development programme • LGR Governance drift Possible effects: • Ineffective/inefficient decision making • Illegality • Stakeholder dissatisfaction • Local democracy undermined – reputation damage	– Governance training provided at induction and cyclical updates – Committee effectiveness assessment (annually) Action plans developed to address areas of concern – Committee chairs are sufficiently experienced and trained to fulfil role – Up to date policies and procedures including compliance which are subject to cyclical review and are communicated to staff (and accepted) – Council decisions published – Annual Governance Statement produced and presented to Governance & Audit Committee – Annual Code of Conduct mandatory training for elected Members – Processes in place for complaints, FOI, Subject Access Requests and data breaches which are reported monthly to Statutory Officers meeting	<i>Note:</i> <i>There is no change currently</i>	Introduce post committee/chairing reflection session
8. Significant fraud/theft successfully committed against the Council <u>Corporate Priority</u> Effective Council <u>Risk Appetite</u> Averse	Potential causes: • Externally – increasing levels of attempted and successful digital fraud and theft occurring making use of AI etc • Lack of effective anti/counter fraud (theft and corruption) policy and procedures (out of date, not communicated, not understood), including whistleblowing arrangements	– Counter Fraud Strategy in place – Whistleblowing Policy in place – Anti-Money Laundering Policy in place – Internal audit appointed / Internal audit plan focussed on areas of high fraud risk eg depot stocks etc – Governance & Audit Committee – Monthly Statutory Officers Group meeting – Annual report on fraud prevention and detection arrangements at the Council	Impact 4 V Likelihood 1 = Medium 10 <i>Note:</i> <i>There is no change currently</i>	Develop fraud risk assessment action plan Counter fraud, whistleblowing, and anti-money laundering training has been rolled out Note: Each of these actions remain in progress with an

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<i>We shall seek to reduce the residual risk as far as practically and reasonably possible within the constraints of resources available.</i>	• Lack of relevant and timely training relating to preventing/detecting fraud (theft and corruption) • Lack of clarity in fraud/theft prevention roles and responsibilities • Anti-fraud culture not bought into • Poorly maintained systems and records Possible effects: • Investigation and rectification costs • Council reputation damage	– Appropriately trained staff, appropriate culture and awareness, segregation of duties, whistleblowing procedures and closure reports – Financial Regulations/Standing Orders, budget monitoring regime, financial management systems, indemnity insurance – National Fraud Initiative/data matching – External audit opinion explicitly addresses regularity – Fraud risk assessment undertaken – Monthly whistleblowing report presented to Statutory Officers – External investigation undertaken where necessary		update being provided at the Member Refresh Training in June 2026
9. Increasing pressure on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) viability due to the challenges of providing and maintaining quality social housing provision within the district <u>Corporate Priority</u> Housing <u>Risk Appetite</u> Minimal <i>We shall seek a low degree of residual risk, in a well controlled environment</i>	Potential causes: • Level of demand (due to various social economic factors) for accommodation exceeds availability • Stock condition/condition of rental property in the market does not meet regulatory standards • Lack of engagement/effective strategy between the Council and housing providers to address needs etc • Insufficient resources available – financial, people (capacity and knowledge) to allocate to addressing needs as well as new housing requirements/regulations eg Awaabs Law, new decent homes standard etc	– Up to date and relevant policies and procedures communicated to staff including new policies/procedures re damp and mould – Council housing stock condition survey – Council housing stock maintenance and repair programme – HRA reserves/funding – Council tenant engagement and surveying re experiences – Regular reporting to Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Finance Committee on housing performance – Liaison with wider agencies to address housing issues across the district – Local plan development kept under review – Council enforcement team assess private rental standards, developing improvement action plans with landlords	Impact 3 V Likelihood 4 = Very High 14 <i>Note: There is no change currently</i>	Track progress/on-going refresh of the HRA finance action plan that has been developed with updates to Members during the year

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<i>with limited benefit potential.</i>	Possible effects: • Increased level of poverty • Increased demand for support from the Council (and wider agencies) and increasing costs – significant impact on the Housing Revenue Account could be expected • Stakeholder dissatisfaction/ reputation damage • Regulatory criticism/intervention including fines	– Housing KPI dashboards in place and reported monthly – Housing compliance monthly meeting with Chief Executive and Leader – A review of the HRA business plan revenue and capital outlook to ensure affordability (now part of a rolling review as a HRA key control) – External consultants engaged to provide check and challenge in connection with HRA business and action plans		
10. The implications and general uncertainty of Local Government Reorganisation on the Council <u>Corporate Priority</u> Effective Council <u>Risk Appetite</u> Open (and in some cases Hungry) <i>We are willing to explore a range of options and new solutions where we believe the potential benefits outweigh the residual risks and so we take informed risks.</i>	Potential causes: • General uncertainties and unknowns created by the proposed reorganisation of local government and the creation of single tier authorities eg timing, clarity, expectations, implications for members and officers re future role and employment, provision of services and contracts, partnerships and collaborations, funding, third tier etc • Lack of available resources (capacity and capability)/bandwidth at the Council • Insufficient finances available to support and fund LGR activities • Lack of Council leadership, direction, engagement and preparedness re LGR	– CMT continue monitoring of LGR proposals and information in the public domain via various sources eg MHCLG, LGA, DCN, CIPFA etc – Chief Executive communications/briefings to staff on LGR – LGR project team and project plan established – Cabinet receive regular LGR updates from CMT – Actions plans created in response to LGR issues emerging and progress monitored – Parish Council/Town Council briefings and engagement sessions – Regular briefings to elected Members – Working in partnership with North Kesteven District Council – Professionals commissioned to advise on specific service modelling – Data agreement in place across Greater Lincolnshire – Chief Executive monthly meeting with MHCLG Officers – Attend regular national briefings	Impact 4 V Likelihood 3 = Very High 15 <i>Note: There is no change currently</i>	Continuance of existing controls to ensure risk is being managed

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<i>In some cases we may take on a Hungry risk appetite where we are eager to be innovative and choose and work with a range of options based on maximising opportunities and beneficial outcomes, even if those activities carry a very high level of residual risk eg where SKDC can see advantages in driving and influencing the agenda in the best interests of the Council stakeholders. In doing so we recognise that failures are an opportunity for learning and improvement.</i>	• Inter-authority relationship challenges as Councils move towards LGR Possible effects: • LGR risks/opportunities go unmanaged • The Council loses its ability to influence outcomes that will best serve residents • Quality of business as usual is compromised • Recruitment and retention challenges • Poor Value for Money • Criticism of the Council/Members	– Governance timeline for decision making in place – Completion of LGR submission risk assessment and SWOT analysis (these will be kept under review) – Creation of “No Regrets” work plan to ensure that the Council is safe and legal on day of new unitary authority		
11. Not maximising the opportunities of Devolution <u>Corporate Priority</u> Effective Council <u>Risk Appetite</u> Hungry <i>We are eager to be innovative and choose and work with a range of options based on</i>	Potential causes: • General uncertainties re devolution – clarity, expectations, implications for members and officers re future role and employment, provision of services and contracts, partnerships and collaborations, funding, third tier etc • Lack of available resources (capacity and capability)/bandwidth at the Council to support devolution activities	– CMT continue monitoring of devolution proposals and information in the public domain via various sources eg MHCLG, LGA etc – Chief Executive communications/briefings to staff – Devolution project team established – Cabinet receive regular updates from CMT – Actions plans created in response to issues emerging and progress monitored – Chief Executive update from the combined Authority – District Joint Committee established – Leader represents South Kesteven on Committee – Nominations to sub committees and Mayoral Combined County Authority in place	Impact 3 V Likelihood 3 = High 12 <i>Note: There is no change currently</i>	Continuance of existing controls to ensure risk is being managed

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<i>maximising opportunities and beneficial outcomes, even if those activities carry a very high level of residual risk eg where SKDC can see advantages in driving and influencing the agenda in the best interests of the Council stakeholders. In doing so we recognise that failures are an opportunity for learning and improvement.</i>	• Insufficient finances available to support and fund devolution activities • Lack of visible communications and engagement by the GLCCA with the Council Possible effects: • Devolution risks/opportunities go unmanaged • The Council loses its ability to influence outcomes that will best serve residents • Quality of business as usual is compromised • Recruitment and retention challenges • Poor VFM • Criticism of the Council/members	– Completion of devolution submission risk assessment and SWOT analysis (these will be kept under review)		
12. NEW RISK: Artificial Intelligence (AI) governance lag The rapid emergence and adoption of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies presents a significant disruptive risk to the Council. Without robust governance, policies, and controls, the use of AI—particularly unsanctioned tools—could	Potential causes: • Absence of policy and accountability regards AI • Limited understanding at senior levels of AI capabilities and risks • Staff independently using publicly available AI platforms (eg generative AI tools) without approval • Entry of personal, sensitive, or commercially confidential information into external AI	NOTE: The controls and enablers are in development – Senior responsible officer for AI – Data Governance meeting for oversight purposes as the AI governance arrangements develop – IT faculty can monitor use of AI tools by staff through checks performed	Impact 3 V Likelihood 4 = Very High 14 This is a new risk	Development and communication of a Council-wide AI governance framework, including relevant tactical action plans, for purposes of managing and making legitimate use of AI. As part of this, by example, certain software incorporating AI is being is being trialled by Executive Assistants

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lead to breaches of data protection legislation, loss of confidential or personal data, poor decision-making, and erosion of public trust . Equally, external stakeholders are able to use AI for purposes of enquiry creation and questioning of the Council reports and publications which can increase the demands on Council staff and resources in providing responses within given timelines. Conversely without appropriate and effective AI governance arrangements in place the Council could be disadvantaged in its use of AI for the purpose of more efficient service delivery. <u>Corporate Priority</u> Effective Council <u>Risk Appetite</u> Cautious	systems without appropriate controls • Lack of clarity over data ownership, storage location, and reuse by AI providers • Lack of technical capability to evaluate AI risks and outputs • Stakeholder/public use of AI for purposes of undermining the Council eg disproportionate levels of enquiries/questions, deep fake etc Possible effects: • Increased vulnerability to cyber and information security incidents eg data breaches, ransomware etc • Loss of public trust and negative media attention • Poor-quality or biased AI outputs leading to flawed decisions/legal challenge • Resource waste due to inefficient investment in AI tools without strategic coordination and/or responding to increased levels of external enquiry by stakeholders			and an AI training programme is being put in place.
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<i>We are willing to accept some degree of residual risk where we have identified scope to achieve proportionate benefit – striking a balance between the two</i>				
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