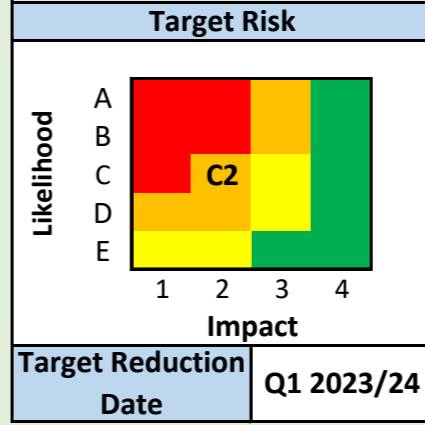
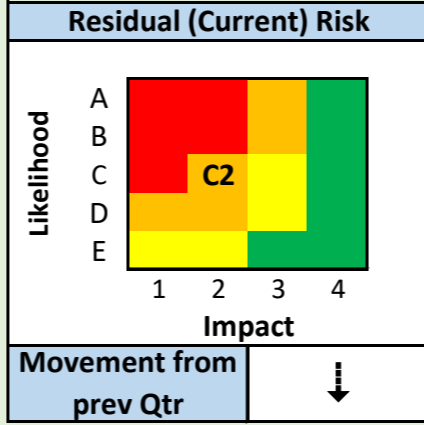
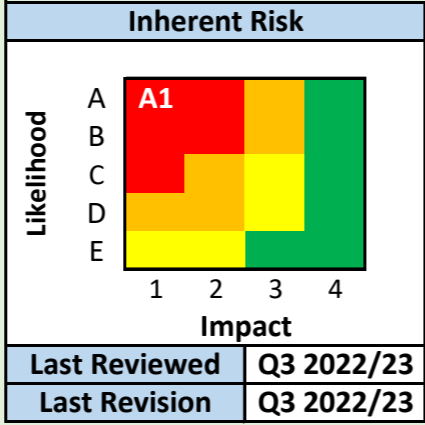


Financial Resilience

Description

- Failure to deliver a balanced annual budget and a fully informed Medium Term Financial Plan.
- Lack of appropriate mechanisms to identify and manage unexpected financial liabilities.
- The current outlook is that there is a Budget Gap of £113 million for the period 2024/25 to 2027/28.



Risk Owner(s)

Chris Lee
(Ian Allwood)

Councillor Chris Weaver
Finance, Modernisation and Performance

What we've done/are currently doing to achieve the Residual Risk Rating

2022/23 and Medium Term

- Regular monitoring to understand the in-year position and gain early insight into emerging risks that need to be factored into the MTFP work. This includes the identification of earmarked reserves that were either increased during outturn of 2021/22 and those being reviewed to establish level of need reflecting the current priority is balanced budget.
- Engaging and working in partnership with directorates during the budget process to ensure that budget proposals and services are deliverable within timescales and quantum (revenue and capital)
- Mechanisms in place such as Treasury Management Reserve and Financial Resilience Mechanism in order to dampen the impact of a worse than anticipated financial climate / settlements.
- Preparation of Prudential Indicators to help assess the affordability, prudence and sustainability of the capital programme and associated levels of borrowing
- Close alignment with Corporate Plan objectives, to ensure resources are allocated appropriately, and that longer term financial savings are developed in enough time to be realised.
- Annual review of contingent assets and liabilities, and provisions to ensure the Council has adequate cover for emerging liabilities.
- An approved TM Strategy that identifies borrowing interest cost as a significant risk to be managed. Security, Liquidity and Yield in that order to preserve investments.
- A Major Projects accountancy function supporting the identification of key risks / financial issues in relation to large schemes. Targetted accountancy support to Children's Services, VAT and Outside Bodies.
- Maintaining approach to robust financial control mechanisms and strengthening complex / areas of risk through training e.g. VAT.
- Undertaken initial assessment against CIPFA FM code with high level findings. There will be a future need to review and refresh.
- Inclusion within the 2022/23 Budget of a £10 million COVID Contingency Budget to protect the Council's resilience in light of the ending of the Hardship Fund on 31/3/22.
- Established a corporate approach to business case development, approval and post project monitoring to ensure expenditure assumed to pay for itself can do so over its expected life thus providing assurance that financial resilience will not be undermined by projects exceeding their cost parameters.

What we plan to do to meet target

2023/24 and the Medium Term

- Strengthening links between financial planning and asset management strategies, which consider the current condition of assets and future requirements. Q2 2023/24
- Work with Property Service to ensure clear, detailed plans and timescale for delivery of capital receipts targets. Q2 2023/24
- Enhance focus on a multi-year position (recognising limitations where settlement information is for one year only.) Q2 2023/24
- Review approach to governance and financial monitoring of special purpose vehicles to ensure liabilities and any financial guarantees are understood and are appropriate. Q2 2023/24
- Refresh self-assessment against the CIPFA FM code and Balance Sheet Review and develop implementation plan in respect of any findings or recommendations, which provide further financial resilience. Q3 2023/24
- Confirm approach and reporting of commercial investments as part of standard monitoring processes and reports. Q3 2023/24
- Continue to work within current structures to ensure appropriate governance is undertaken. ONGOING

Potential Impact(s)

Failing to meet statutory obligations and potential for service delivery to be adversely affected.

- Reputational damage to the Council.
- Needing to draw down significant unplanned amounts from reserves.
- Inability to progress policy initiatives through incomplete Full Business Cases and no forthcoming external funding to bridge any affordability gap
- Inability to manage adverse external factors - e.g. adverse settlements, WG rent policy etc.
- Financial constraints and budget proposals result in unintended consequences such as increased instances of non-compliance and financial impropriety.
- Requirement for significant savings at short notice that are therefore not identified in a coherent, strategic way and which impact on service delivery.
- Level of borrowing limits the ability of future generations to take forward new priorities.
- Reaching the point where a s114 notice is required to be issued by the S151 Officer.

Linked Risks

Budget Monitoring (Control)

Key Indicators / Measures used to monitor the risk

- Financial Snapshot which highlights historical & current performance with regards budget monitoring, achievability of savings, levels of borrowing, and financial ratios.
- Outturn vs Budget: Main budget lines under or overspend as a % of budgeted expenditure.
- Delivery of planned savings: Total (£) unachieved planned savings as a % of total (£) planned savings.
- Use of reserves: 1) Ratio of useable reserves to Net Revenue Budget (NRB), 2) Amount of useable reserves used to balance budget as % of NRB.
- Council tax: 1) Council tax and other income as % of NRB, 2) Council tax collection rates (in-year actual).
- Borrowing: Capital interest costs and MRP as a proportion of NRB.
- Performance against Budget Timetable.
- Frequency / timeliness of engagement with SMT/Cabinet.
- Proportion of Savings Proposals in Realised or at Delivering stage.
- Section 151 Officer Statement in respect of capital strategy, adequacy of reserves and other statutory commentary.
- Consider usefulness of benchmarking data re: financial resilience produced by External Audit Bodies - e.g. Audit Wales

Type(s) of Impact

- Service Delivery
- Reputational
- Legal
- Financial
- Stakeholder