

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Communities, Housing and Public Protection Committee
DATE	26 August 2025
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Cluster Risk Registers and Assurance Maps
REPORT NUMBER	F&C/25/187
DIRECTOR	Eleanor Sheppard
CHIEF OFFICER	Isla Newcombe, Shona Milne, Jacqui McKenzie, Stephen Booth and Jenni Lawson
REPORT AUTHOR	Chief Officers
TERMS OF REFERENCE	1.1.4

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To present the Cluster Risk Registers and Assurance Maps in accordance with Communities, Housing and Public Protection Committee Terms of Reference to provide assurance that risks are being managed effectively within the Clusters as detailed in 3.2 below.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Committee:

- 2.1 Note the Cluster Risk Registers and Assurance Maps set out in Appendices A to I.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1 The Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Committee is responsible for overseeing the overall system of risk management and for receiving assurance that the Extended Corporate Management Team (ECMT) are effectively identifying and managing risks. Reviewing the strength and effectiveness of the Council's system of risk management as a whole is a key role for the Committee.
- 3.2 The Risk Management Policy Framework states that committees should receive assurance on the risk management arrangements which fall within their terms of reference. This is provided through the risk registers for the relevant Clusters which fall within the remit for this Committee as detailed below:
- People & Citizen Services (Citizen related risks)
 - Education & Lifelong Learning (Community Learning and Library risks)
 - Housing
 - Corporate Landlord (Building Services risks)

- Governance (Protective Services risks)

Risk Registers

- 3.3 The Council's Risks Registers are tools used by Functions and Clusters to capture and manage the risks which could prevent achievement of organisational outcomes and service delivery.
- 3.4 The Council's Corporate Risk Register (CRR) captures the risks which pose the most significant threat to the achievement of the Council's organisational outcomes and have the potential to cause failure of service delivery. The CRR is scrutinised annually by the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Committee.
- 3.5 The Cluster Risk Registers are set out in appendices A to D and these reflect the risks which may prevent each Cluster from delivering on organisational outcomes and services, these risks may be escalated to the CRR where deemed necessary.
- 3.6 The risks contained within the Risk Register for each Cluster are grouped by risk category in appendix J and show the Council's corresponding risk appetite for each category as set within the Council's Risk Appetite Statement (RAS) which was approved by the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Committee in May 2025.

The Clusters are working towards a target risk score which aligns with the risk appetite.

- 3.7 The Cluster Risk Registers provides the organisation with the detailed information and assessment for each risk identified including:
 - **Current risk score** – this is current assessment of the risk by the risk owner and reflects the progress percentage of control actions required in order to achieve the target risk score.
 - **Target risk score** – this is the assessment of the risk by the risk owner after the application of the control actions. This is aligned with the risk appetite for this particular category of risk.
 - **Control Actions** – these are the activities and items that will mitigate the effect of the risk event on the organisation.
 - **Risk score** – each risk is assessed using a 4x6 risk matrix as detailed below.

The 4 scale represents the impact of the risk and the 6 scale represents the likelihood of the risk event.

Impact						
Very Serious	4	8	12	16	20	24
Serious	3	6	9	12	15	18
Material	2	4	6	8	10	12
Negligible	1	2	3	4	5	6
Score	1	2	3	4	5	6
Likelihood	Impossible	Almost Very Low	Low	Significant	High	Very High

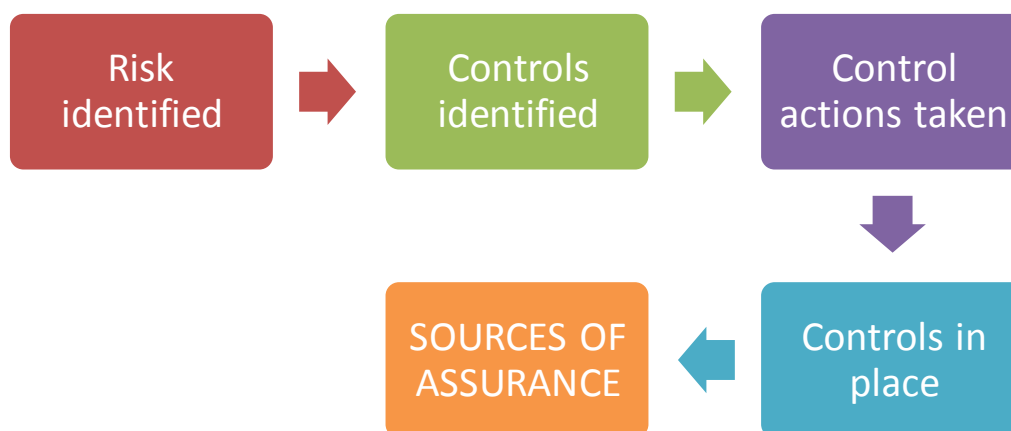
3.8 Development and improvement of the Cluster Risk Registers and associated risk management processes has continued since the Cluster Risk Register was last reported to Committee:

- The Council's Risk Appetite Statement (RAS) was reviewed and updated.
- Work to complete the recommendations from the internal audit of the Council's Risk Management arrangements including enhancements to Cluster Risk Management reporting which are incorporated within this report.
- On-going improvements and updates to the "Managing Risk" pages published on the Council's intranet pages which contains information and links for officers and elected members on the Council's RAS, Risk Management Policy, Guidance and Training. This supports the further embedding of our risk management culture and ensures that everyone knows the part they play in managing risks within the wider system.
- Risk owners and leads continue to review and update risk registers to improve monitoring and reporting across the organisation. These are mechanisms which reflect the day-to-day business of assessing and mitigating the risks and opportunities inherent in delivering public services.

Assurance Maps

3.9 The risk registers which are reviewed by the Council's Committees detail the risks identified within each of the relevant Functions and Clusters and provide detail of the risk, the potential impact and consequence of the risk materialising and the control actions and activities required to manage and mitigate the risk. Assurance Maps as set out in appendices F to I provide a visual representation of the sources of assurance associated with each Cluster so that the Committee can consider where these are sufficient. Sources of assurance are controls which are fully effective, following the completion of control actions.

Presentation of each Cluster's assurance map provides full sight of the defences we have in place as an organisation to manage the risks facing local government.



- 3.10 The Assurance Map provides a breakdown of the sources of assurance within “three lines of defence”, the different levels at which risk is managed. Within a large and complex organisation like the Council, risk management takes place in many ways. The Assurance Map is a way of capturing the sources of assurance and categorising them, thus ensuring that any gaps in sources of assurance are identifiable and can be addressed:

First Line of Defence “Do-ers”	Second Line of Defence “Helpers”	Third Line of Defence “Checkers”
The control environment; business operations performing day to day risk management activity; owning and managing risk as part of business as usual; these are the business owners, referred to as the “do-ers” of risk management.	Oversight of risk management and ensuring compliance with standards, in our case including ARSC as well as CMT and management teams; setting the policies and procedures against which risk is managed by the do-ers, referred to as the “helpers” of risk management.	Internal and external audit, inspection and regulation, thereby offering independent assurance of the first and second lines of defence, the “do-ers” and “helpers”, referred to as the “checkers” of risk management.

The lines of defence listed around housing stock are only listed on the Housing Assurance Map, but in real practical terms apply equally to Corporate Landlords housing relating activity.

Risk Overview and Comparison

- 3.11 Below is a comparison with the Cluster risks last reported to Committee in August 2024 by each Cluster:

People & Citizen Services (Citizen related risks) Overview

- 3.12 The Citizen aspect of the Cluster and the risk environment within which it operates focusses on the risk to delivery of key front-line citizen services and specific financial services (e.g. Council Tax, Business Rates, Housing Benefit) in the event of failures of systems, processes, significant increase in demand (e.g., pandemic; rise in cost of living), or in the event of an incident, e.g., climate event.

Given the nature of the business areas within 'Citizen', there are a significant number of checks, audits and scrutiny undertaken both internally and externally to help identify and manage risk. These checks include; Internal Audit (e.g. Benefits Quality Assurance; Complaints Handling;); DWP Subsidy Audit; DWP Housing Benefit Review; Scottish Public Services Ombudsman scrutiny of complaint handling; Information Commissioners Officer scrutiny of protection right request handling. Any findings or recommendations from these processes are considered and where appropriate implemented within the team and the supporting business processes.

Monthly Governance meetings within the Cluster's Senior Management Team are held to assess, review and take steps to mitigate risk as part of these Service Manager meetings. We will often have representatives from other areas of the business attend the Cluster SMTs, including members of the Risk Board where they can assess how we are managing our risks and sharing insights from the Risk Board. The Cluster has representatives on the Corporate Risk Board which provides an additional opportunity to identify risks that may need to be considered and assessed by People and Citizen Services. This continued focus on risk management and governance has enabled the cluster to assess and address identified risks over the past year(s).

Whilst there is no change to the risk score, as this is assessed to be fair reflection of the current position, risks continue to be monitored with mitigations implemented and assurances applied. The service continues to collaborate with the Digital & Technology and key stakeholders to improve service delivery and resilience with the intention to reduce and manage risk.


Risks de-escalated to Operational level or closed:

None.

New risks added or escalated to Cluster level:

None.

Risks Remaining on the People & Citizen Services (Citizen risks) Risk Register:

Risk Title	Current Risk Score 2024	Current Risk Score 2025	Movement
Customer Experience Service Delivery	12	12	

3.13 **Education & Lifelong Learning (Community Learning and Library Risks) Overview**

Monthly assessment and mitigation of risk as part of service manager meetings has supported the education and lifelong learning service to address identified risks over the year.

A risk around library service failure has been added. Staff shortages mean there is an increased risk of having to close library branches particularly during periods of staff holidays. Rotas have been changed to support revised opening hours, and a bank of casual staff are being recruited to mitigate against the need to cover in the event of holidays or unplanned staff absence.

The Cluster has representatives on the Corporate Risk Board which provides an additional opportunity to identify risks that may need to be considered and assessed.

The Cluster level risks relating to Education risks within Education & Lifelong Learning falls into the remit of the Education and Children's Services Committee and will be reported to that committee in November 2025.

Risks de-escalated to Operational level or closed:

None.

New risks added or escalated to Cluster level:

Library Service Failure (detailed below)

Risks Remaining on the Education & Lifelong Learning (Community Learning and Library Risk Register:

Risk Title	Current Risk Score 2024	Current Risk Score 2025	Movement
Library Service Failure	N/A	9	N/A

3.14 **Housing Risk Overview**

Unsuitable Accommodation Order

The risk relating to the Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Order 2014 continues to remain high due to the ongoing pressures of both a sustained increase in homeless presentations, and increased further

demand generated from asylum / resettlement. This is reflected in the risk being retained at a cluster level and the risk score remaining the same. This risk is a primary area of focus, and an additional 128 furnished temporary flats were added to temporary accommodation stock. Whilst the pressures are still acute, there has been a 20% reduction in the number of breaches since 2023/24.

Void Property Management (shared with Corporate Landlord)

Whilst there has been progress on control actions relating to void management over the last year which is overseen by the Housing Board, there is still further work to undertake in this area, which includes the use of digital technology to improve processes through the procurement of a “repairs” module to the NEC system, the risk score has been determined to remain at the same level as last year despite the progress made.



Risks de-escalated to Operational level or closed:

None.

New risks added or escalated to Cluster level:

None

Risks Remaining on the Housing Cluster Risk Register:

Risk Title	Current Risk Score 2024	Current Risk Score 2025	Movement
Continued Inability to meet the Unsuitable Accommodation Order	18	18	
Void Property Management	18	18	

3.15 **Corporate Landlord (Building Services risks) Overview**

At the present time, there are no Building Services related risks within the Corporate Landlord in 2024, there are no comparisons with previous risk scores to be reported. However, the Voids risk recorded by the Housing Cluster is effectively owned by both the Corporate Landlord and Housing Clusters.

The Cluster level risks relating to Asset Management risks within Corporate Landlord falls into the remit of the Finance and Resources Committee and were reported to that committee in May 2025.

3.16 **Governance (Protective Services risks) Overview**

Loss of UKAS Accreditation

The most recent UKAS Assessment in January 2025 resulted in 52 non-conformances, however evidence was submitted to UKAS to clear these and a further visit in May 2025 resulted in the majority of these being cleared. Whilst the risk score appears to have no movement when compared to 2024, the score was reduced following assessment and has increased again due to the on-going requirement for accreditation which depends on the on-going integrity and maintenance of the management system.

Non-Compliance - Interventions / Food Law Code of Practice

Aberdeen City Council is required by statute to deliver a food law enforcement service. Due to local resource shortages, and a national shortage of qualified officers, it is not possible to fulfil the requirements of the Food Law Code of Practice, and although measures are being put in place to alleviate the national shortage of available officers, this is some time away from being resolved. The risk score has increased as 2 members of staff have left this year. The Council are, however currently making use of a 'grow your own' scheme to up-skill existing staff. Despite the challenges all the high risk inspections due in 24/25 were undertaken on time and higher priority risk groups continue to be prioritised.



Risks de-escalated to Operational level or closed:

None.

New risks added or escalated to Cluster level:

None.

Risks Remaining on the Governance (Protective Services risks Risk Register:

Risk Title	Current Risk Score 2024	Current Risk Score 2025	Movement
Loss of UKAS Accreditation	9	9	
Non-Compliance - Interventions / Food Law Code of Practice	18	24	

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report. This report deals with risk management at Cluster level and this process serves to identify controls and assurances that finances are being effectively managed.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report. The Council's Risk Registers serve to manage many risks with implications for the legal position and statutory responsibilities of the Council.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no direct environmental implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

7. RISK

- 7.1 There are no risks arising from the recommendations in this report. The Committee is provided with assurance that the risks presented within the Cluster Risk Register are those that may affect achievement of organisational outcomes and delivery of services for each Cluster are identified, appropriately managed and that the Council's activities are compliant with its statutory duties.

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H) *taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
Strategic Risk	The council is required to have a management system in place to identify and mitigate its risks.	The council's risk management system requires that risks are identified, listed and managed via Risk Registers.	L	Yes
Compliance	As above.	As above.	L	Yes
Operational	As above.	As above.	L	Yes
Financial	As above.	As above.	L	Yes
Reputational	As above.	As above.	L	Yes
Environment / Climate	As above.	As above.	L	Yes

8. OUTCOMES

- 8.1 The recommendations within this report have no direct impact on the Council Delivery Plan however, the risks contained within the Council's risk registers could impact on the delivery of organisational outcomes.

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
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Integrated Assessment	Impact	No assessment required at this stage. I confirm this has been discussed and agreed with Jenni Lawson, Chief Officer Governance on 22 July 2025.
Data Protection Assessment	Impact	Not required.
Other		Not applicable.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 None.

11. APPENDICES

11.1 Appendix A to D – Cluster Risk Registers for People & Citizen Services (Citizen Services), Education, Housing and Governance.

11.2 Appendix E to I – Assurance Maps for People & Citizen Services (Citizen Services), Education, Housing, Corporate Landlord and Governance.

11.3 Appendix J – Cluster Risks grouped by category.

12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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