RISK MATURITY ASSESSMENT

2024 → 2026 | Year-on-Year Comparison Report

Aligned to ISO 31000:2018 | 81% Response Rate | 5-Point Maturity Scale

2024 Baseline	2026 Survey
1.32 / 5.0	**3.50 / 5.0**
INITIAL	*DEVELOPING*

▲ +2.18 pts | +165% improvement

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1. Executive Summary

Between 2024 and 2026, The Council has achieved a substantial and measurable improvement in its risk management maturity across all five domains assessed. Using the ISO Risk Maturity rating table, the Council started from a weighted baseline of 1.32 out of 5.0 classified as Initial, this has progressed to 3.50 out of 5.0, classified as Developing, representing a gain of +2.18 points and an improvement of 165% in two years.

This result is the product of deliberate investment in people, process, and governance structures. The establishment of a robust Risk Management Board meeting quarterly to review, challenge and approve the corporate risk report; the embedding of quarterly corporate risk deep-dives at the Risk Management Board; the assignment of CLT level risk sponsors to each corporate risk; Corporate Leadership Team ("CLT") and Audit & Corporate Governance Committee sign off the quarterly Corporate Risk Report underpinned by the development of a Risk Champions network across the Council have all contributed to this progress.

The 2026 survey represents a meaningful advance on the 2024 baseline in another respect as the 2026 assessment draws on an 81% response rate across all directorates tier 1 – 3 employees. This provides, for the first time, a genuine organisational view of risk maturity capturing the lived experience of risk management at every level, from corporate governance to front-line operations.

Headline Results

Domain	2024 Score	2026 Score	Change	% Change	Weight	Wtd Score
Risk Culture	1.21	**3.29 Emerging**	**+2.08**	+172%	30%	**0.987**
Risk Governance	1.39	**3.71 Developing**	**+2.32**	+167%	20%	**0.742**
Risk Process	1.24	**3.73 Developing**	**+2.49**	+201%	20%	**0.746**
Risk Resources	1.20	**3.45 Emerging**	**+2.25**	+188%	15%	**0.517**
Cross-Functional	1.67	**3.39 Emerging**	**+1.72**	+103%	15%	**0.508**
WEIGHTED OVERALL	**1.32**	**3.50 Developing**	**+2.18**	**+165%**	**100%**	**3.501**

While overall progress is significant, the assessment identifies Risk Culture as the domain requiring the most focused development attention in the period ahead. Although culture has improved from 1.21 to 3.29, it carries the highest strategic weighting (30%) and its current score means it is the primary constraint on reaching the Council's target overall maturity of 4.0. Risk training, in particular, has been identified as the lowest-scoring sub-area across the entire assessment.

Technology also remains a known gap. The Council recognises the possible need for a dedicated risk management software platform, however finding a suitable system to meet council needs and having required resource is are the main constraints. This is an accepted and transparent constraint that is understood at CLT.

2. Purpose and Background

Why this assessment was carried out

Effective risk management is both a legal obligation and a strategic imperative for local authorities. The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 require all local authorities to maintain a sound system of internal control that includes risk management arrangements. The Local Government Act 1999 places a Best Value duty on councils that includes the management of risk as a dimension of service delivery. The statutory responsibilities placed on the Section 151 Officer further require that the financial and operational risks facing the Council are identified, assessed and managed.

For a Council operating under the financial pressures, these obligations take on particular significance. In a period of constrained resources, reduced service capacity, and heightened scrutiny from regulators and residents alike, the ability to identify, prioritise and respond to risk is not a peripheral governance exercise, it is central to the Council's recovery, its protection of statutory services, and its accountability to the communities it serves.

This assessment provides an objective, evidence-based picture of the Council's current risk management maturity, where it stands, how it has changed since the 2024 baseline, and what specific actions are needed to strengthen it further. The findings inform a structured action plan designed to move the Council towards a target overall maturity of 4.0, the threshold of what the ISO framework classifies as Strong risk management practice.

Context: the 2024 baseline

The 2024 baseline assessment produced a weighted overall score of 1.32 out of 5.0 which is classified as Initial. While this provided an important starting point and identified the most significant structural gaps in risk management practice, it necessarily reflected a limited and partial view of organisational experience.

The 2026 assessment has been designed to address this directly. With an 81% response rate across all directorates, it provides a genuinely organisational perspective capturing the variability, the consistency, the strengths and the gaps in risk management practice as they are experienced at every level of the Council. This makes it a more credible and more useful instrument for accountability, planning and improvement.

Note on the financial position

Where this report references investment constraints, in particular regarding risk management technology and software, these reflect the Council's current financial position. The need for a suitable risk management software platform is acknowledged throughout, however finding a suitable system to meet council needs and having required resource is are the main constraints. The action plan addresses this through interim measures and by maintaining an investment-ready business case for when the funding is available.

3. Assessment Methodology

The assessment is structured around 94 questions across five domains, each aligned to a specific section of ISO 31000:2018 the international standard for risk management as well reference to The Orange Book. Responses are scored on a five-point scale as follows:

Score Range	Level	Description
1.0 – 1.9	**Initial**	Risk management is largely absent or ad-hoc. Processes are undocumented and rely on individual effort.
2.0 – 2.9	**Repeatable**	Some processes exist but are inconsistently applied. Awareness is growing but embedding is limited.
3.0 – 3.4	**Emerging**	Defined processes are in place and beginning to be embedded. Ownership and accountability are developing.
3.5 – 3.9	**Developing**	Processes are well-defined, owned and largely embedded. Management is proactive with clear reporting structures.
4.0 – 5.0	**Strong / Optimised**	Risk management is fully integrated, data-driven and continuously improving. Culture is embedded at all levels.

Domain weighting

Domains are not weighted equally. The weighting reflects the relative importance of each domain to long-term risk management effectiveness, as informed by ISO 31000:2018 and recognised practice in the sector:

Domain	Weight	Rationale
Risk Culture	**30%**	ISO 31000 identifies behavioural and cultural embedding as the primary determinant of long-term effectiveness. A 1-point gain in Culture adds 0.30 to the overall weighted score. More than any other domain.
Risk Governance	**20%**	Governance structures, leadership commitment and oversight mechanisms are foundational requirements. Without them, process and culture improvements cannot be sustained.
Risk Process	**20%**	Defined, consistently-applied risk processes from identification through to reporting, are the operational engine of risk management.
Risk Resources	**15%**	The skills, tools and technologies available to the risk function determine its capacity to operate effectively and scale.
Cross-Functional	**15%**	Cross-functional embedding ensures risk management is integrated into day-to-day decision-making rather than treated as a compliance exercise.

The same weighting has been applied consistently to both the 2024 baseline and the 2026 survey results, enabling a valid like-for-like comparison. Weighted scores are calculated by multiplying each domain's raw score by its weighting factor. The sum of all weighted domain scores gives the overall weighted maturity score.

4. Overall Results at a Glance

The 2026 survey demonstrates a comprehensive and consistent improvement in risk management maturity across all five domains assessed. Every domain has moved upward by at least 1.72 points, with Risk Process (+2.49) and Risk Governance (+2.32) showing the largest absolute gains. No domain has declined.

The Council has progressed from an Initial profile (1.32/5.0) to a Developing profile (3.50/5.0). A transformation that reflects two years of sustained work to build the foundations of effective risk management. Process and Governance now sit firmly in the Developing band; Culture, Resources and Cross-Functional sit in the Emerging band and represent the primary areas for continued development.

Domain	2024 Score	2026 Score	+/−	% Gain	Weight	Wtd Contribution
Risk Culture	1.21 / Initial	**3.29 / Emerging**	**+2.08**	+172%	30%	**0.987**
Risk Governance	1.39 / Initial	**3.71 / Developing**	**+2.32**	+167%	20%	**0.742**
Risk Process	1.24 / Initial	**3.73 / Developing**	**+2.49**	+201%	20%	**0.746**
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Cross-Functional	1.67 / Initial	**3.39 / Emerging**	**+1.72**	+103%	15%	**0.508**
WEIGHTED OVERALL	**1.32 / Initial**	**3.50 / Developing**	**+2.18**	**+165%**	**100%**	**3.501**

5. Weighted Score Analysis

The weighted scoring methodology is designed to reflect the differential strategic importance of each domain. The most significant implication of this weighting relates to Risk Culture with a 30% weighting, a one-point gain in Culture adds 0.30 to the overall score, more than any other single domain. This means that achieving a target overall score of 4.0 depends more heavily on Culture improvement than on gains in any other area.

The table below shows the full weighted calculation for both 2024 and 2026, enabling direct comparison of how each domain has contributed to the overall score change:

Domain	Weight	2024 Raw	× Weight (2024)	2026 Raw	× Weight (2026)	Δ Raw	Δ Wtd
Risk Culture	30%	1.21	0.363	**3.29**	**0.987**	**+2.08**	**+0.624**
Risk Governance	20%	1.39	0.278	**3.71**	**0.742**	**+2.32**	**+0.464**
Risk Process	20%	1.24	0.248	**3.73**	**0.746**	**+2.49**	**+0.498**
Risk Resources	15%	1.20	0.180	**3.45**	**0.517**	**+2.25**	**+0.337**

Domain	Weight	2024 Raw	× Weight (2024)	2026 Raw	× Weight (2026)	Δ Raw	Δ Wtd
Cross-Functional	15%	1.67	0.251	**3.39**	**0.508**	**+1.72**	**+0.258**
WEIGHTED TOTAL	**100%**		**1.320**		**3.501**	**+2.18**	**+2.18**

What does this mean for the path to 4.0?

To reach an overall weighted score of 4.0, the Council needs an additional +0.50 points from its current 3.50. Given Culture's 30% weighting, a single point of improvement in Culture alone would add 0.30 representing more than half of the remaining gap. Raising Culture from 3.29 to at least 3.75 is therefore the single highest-leverage action available. Risk Process (already at 3.73) and Governance (3.71) are close to the 4.0 threshold individually; maintaining these is as important as the cultural push.

6. Section Analysis

6.1 Risk Culture

2024: 1.21 (Initial) **2026:** 3.29 (Emerging) **+2.08 pts | +172% | Weight: 30%**

Risk Culture has improved substantially since 2024, rising from 1.21 to 3.29. This improvement reflects real and visible change in the Council's approach to risk. Senior leadership engagement has strengthened, escalation pathways are broadly perceived as open, and the Risk Champions network is established, operational and effective across directorates.

The most significant strength in this domain is the openness of the organisation to escalation. Scores for 'escalation not blocked by management' (Q40) are among the highest in the dataset, suggesting that the cultural environment is permissive of raising concerns. This is a foundational strength that more sophisticated risk management practice can be built upon.

However, Culture remains below both Governance and Process in 2026, and its 30% weighting means it has a proportionately greater impact on the overall score than any other domain. The principal area of weakness is training. Interactive, role-specific risk training is largely absent across the Council: scores for training-related questions (Q45, Q46, Q47) are consistently the lowest in the entire survey. Without systematic investment in how risk management knowledge and behaviours are developed, embedded and refreshed, the cultural improvements seen so far will struggle to deepen.

Key development priorities - Culture

- Develop and deliver role-specific risk training pathways. Strategic for CLT, operational for directorates/divisions.
- Expand the existing Risk Champions network's remit. Formalise good-practice sharing, cross-directorate learning.
- Annual all-staff briefings that bring risk to life through real Council examples
- Launch a Risk Culture diagnostic survey to baseline behavioural patterns and track improvement over time

6.2 Risk Governance

2024: 1.39 (Initial) **2026:** 3.71 (Developing) **+2.32 pts | +167% | Weight: 20%**

Risk Governance has undergone one of the most significant transformations in the assessment, rising from 1.39 to 3.71, the joint highest domain score alongside Risk Process. This reflects the substantial structural work carried out since 2024 to establish the formal architecture of risk oversight within the Council.

Three governance structures deserve specific recognition as strengths. First, the Risk Management Board, which meets quarterly to review, challenge and approve the corporate risk report before it proceeds to CLT. This is a robust and well-regarded senior board that provides genuine scrutiny rather than ceremonial sign-off. Second, quarterly corporate risk deep-dives, which are already embedded and operating as a regular feature of the governance calendar. Third, the assignment of CLT level risk sponsors to each corporate risk, which provides personal accountability at the most senior level and a direct link between strategic risk ownership and governance oversight.

The area requiring continued development is the quantitative dimension of risk appetite. While appetite statements are in place and are applied in decision-making, the shift towards more measurable, data-driven appetite thresholds and the use of Key Risk Indicators (“KRI”) to track exposure against them in real time remains a work in progress.

Key development priorities — Governance

- Refresh Risk Appetite Statements to include quantitative thresholds alongside qualitative ones
- Design and pilot a KRI Dashboard providing traffic-light RAG reporting for CLT and Audit & Governance Committee

6.3 Risk Process

2024: 1.24 (Initial) 2026**:** 3.73 (Developing) **+2.49 pts | +201% | Weight: 20%**

Risk Process shows the largest absolute improvement of any domain, +2.49 points and at 3.73 is the joint highest-scoring area in 2026. This reflects the significant work carried out to define, document and operationalise the core mechanics of risk management: identification, assessment, treatment, monitoring and reporting.

The formalisation of the risk reporting process is a particular strength. Q80 relating to the Risk function presenting risk reports to the Audit and Governance Committee and CLT shows the single largest improvement of any individual question in the entire assessment. The establishment of structured reporting upwards through the governance hierarchy, and the use of formal escalation triggers, has transformed what was previously an ad-hoc approach.

Risk identification and assessment are now consistently applied and well-understood. Treatment planning is documented and owner assigned. The monitoring framework, including the tracking of KRIs, is in place. The remaining developmental gap is in the analytical sophistication of risk monitoring, specifically, the extent to which trend analysis, leading indicators, and quantitative metrics are used to add forward-looking value beyond retrospective reporting.

Key development priorities — Process

- Embed risk assessment into all project initiation documents and steering committee agendas
- Introduce formal trend analysis and lessons-learned reviews following any significant risk event
- Develop the use of leading KRI indicators to move from reactive to predictive risk monitoring

6.4 Risk Resources

2024: 1.20 (Initial) **2026:** 3.45 (Emerging) **+2.25 pts | +188% | Weight: 15%**

The Risk Resources domain tells a sharply divided story: remarkable progress on people capability alongside a significant and acknowledged technology gap that cannot currently be addressed.

The introduction of a senior level risk management consultant has transformed the departments capability since 2024. Scores for analytical skills, business process understanding, and business partnership capability have all improved by approximately 2.83 points on average, the strongest individual improvement category across the entire assessment. This is a direct reflection of investment of bringing in an experienced risk professional and the development of a more proficient, strategically connected risk department.

The technology picture is starkly different. Scores for real-time monitoring (Q88, Q91), automation (Q90) and central risk data management (Q87) average just 1.65/5.0, by far the lowest sub-category in the assessment. The Council recognises the need for a suitable risk management software platform that would centralise the risk reporting, enable real-time KRI tracking, and automate reporting. However, the Council's current financial position means that the capital investment required for such a platform is not available at this time. This constraint is accepted and acknowledged.

Technology gap — accepted constraint

The absence of a suitable risk management software platform is the single largest known gap in the Council's risk management capability. The Risk Management Consultant has confirmed that the need is understood, and a future business case is being maintained in readiness. In the interim, the action plan focuses on maximising the capability of existing tools in particular SharePoint and possibly the use of Power BI to provide improved KRI tracking and risk dashboard/register management at no additional cost. This constraint should be transparently reported to the Audit and Governance Committee as a known limitation on the Council's risk management capability.

Key development priorities — Resources

- Formally document and report the technology gap to the CLT as a known constraint
- Implement interim KRI tracking improvements at no additional cost
- Maintain an investment-ready suitable risk management software platform business case for presentation when the financial position allows

6.5 Cross-Functional Activities

2024: 1.67 (Initial) **2026:** 3.39 (Emerging) **+1.72 pts | +103% | Weight: 15%**

Cross-Functional Activities, assessed across three questions, shows a consistent and positive improvement. The Risk Management department is now engaged with decision-making committees and communications have improved substantially. However, project-level steering committee participation (Q94) remains the lowest-scoring question in this domain, suggesting that risk management is not yet systematically embedded in project governance across the Council. This position comes about because of a lack of formal project management process within the council.

With only three questions, this domain is by design a relatively high-level view. The ambition, and the gap, is about whether risk is genuinely integrated into the day-to-day work of the Council in budget decisions, in project governance, in directorate-level planning, and in the standing agendas of management teams. Progress has been made, but the mainstreaming of risk into business-as-usual processes remains the defining challenge.

Key development priorities — Cross-Functional

- Integrate a standing risk update item into all DLT agendas
- Embed risk assessment into all project initiation documents and steering committee terms of reference

7. Key Strengths

The 2026 assessment identifies a number of specific strengths that represent genuine institutional assets. Established practices and structures that now provide a platform for further development. These should be recognised, protected and, where appropriate, extended.

Risk Management Board

The Risk Management Board meets quarterly to review, challenge and approve the corporate risk report before it proceeds to CLT. This is widely regarded as a robust and effective senior governance structure that provides genuine challenge — not merely a rubber-stamp process. The Board's role in validating and improving the quality of risk reporting before it reaches the Council's most senior decision-makers is a significant structural strength.

Quarterly corporate risk deep-dives

Corporate risk deep-dives are already embedded as a quarterly feature of the governance calendar. This provides a structured, regular opportunity to examine the Council's most significant risks in depth — and to ensure that risk owners, CLT sponsors and oversight bodies are aligned on current exposure, mitigating actions and residual risk.

CLT-level risk sponsorship

Every corporate risk has an assigned CLT-level sponsor. This provides direct personal accountability at the most senior level and ensures a clear escalation pathway for each of the Council's most significant risks.

Risk Champions network

The Risk Champions network is established and operating effectively across the Council's directorates. This provides a distributed network of risk-aware individuals who can embed risk thinking into local practice, surface emerging issues, and support the Risk Management team's reach across the organisation.

Risk Management department capability

The Risk Management department has transformed its professional capability since 2024 with the appointment of a senior risk management consultant. Skills in analytics, business process understanding and strategic partnership have all improved substantially. The team is now equipped to operate as a genuine business partner rather than a compliance function. This however is also one of major risks for risk management within the Council as the risk consultant is a single point of failure if they decide to leave.

Formalised risk reporting

The Risk Consultant now presents directly to the Audit and Governance Committee and to CLT. Formal reporting structures are in place, with defined escalation triggers and a clear hierarchy of oversight. This is one of the single highest-improvement areas in the entire assessment.

Open escalation culture

Across all respondents, the perception that risk escalation is not blocked by management is strongly positive. This is foundational, risk management cannot function effectively in an organisation where people fear raising concerns. The Council's culture in this respect is a genuine strength.

8. Priority Development Areas

Alongside the strengths above, the assessment identifies five priority areas where focused development is needed to sustain and build on the progress made since 2024. These are ranked in order of strategic urgency, taking into account both current scores and the weighted contribution of each area to the overall maturity score.

1. Risk training (all staff)

Risk training is the lowest-scoring sub-area in the entire assessment and sits within the highest-weighted domain (Culture, 30%). Scores for interactive training (Q46), regularly updated training (Q47), and training tailored to individual needs (Q45) are consistently at or below 2.5/5.0. Without a systematic programme of role-specific, engaging and regularly refreshed risk training, the behavioural embedding that underpins all other aspects of culture maturity will be limited. This is the single highest-priority development area in the assessment.

2. Risk technology

Technology scores average 1.65/5.0 across questions relating to real-time monitoring, automation and central risk data management. The Council recognises that a GRC software platform may be required. This investment cannot currently be made at this point in time. In the interim, the action plan focuses on maximising existing tools. However, the gap should be formally and transparently reported to the Audit and Governance Committee as an accepted risk management limitation.

3. Cross-directorate risk sharing

The consistent and routine exchange of risk information across directorates remains uneven. While the Risk Management Board and formal reporting processes provide a top-down flow of risk information, the lateral sharing of risk intelligence, between directorates, between departments, and across functional boundaries is not yet systematic. This limits the Council's ability to identify interdependencies between risks and to learn from experience across the organisation. This can be addressed through the use of the risk champions.

4. Quantitative risk metrics

Risk appetite statements are in place, but the shift towards measurable, data-driven appetite thresholds and the use of KRIs to track exposure against them on an ongoing basis remains incomplete. Moving from qualitative to some quantitative risk metrics is an important next step in the maturity journey, enabling the Council to make better-informed risk-based decisions and to give oversight bodes a more reliable and forward-looking picture of exposure.

5. Full Time Risk Management Staff

The department is currently headed by an interim. This is a single point of failure if that person decided to leave.

9. Action Plan 2026–2027

The following action plan translates the assessment findings into a structured 12-month programme of improvement, designed to move the Council from its current position of 3.50 towards a target overall weighted maturity of 4.0. Actions are organised in two phases: Foundations (Q1–Q2) and Embedding (Q3–Q4).

Note: Technology actions are framed around interim measures only. The action plan does not include GRC software procurement as a near-term deliverable. All technology-related actions can be delivered using existing tools and at no additional cost.

Phase 1: Foundations — Q1–Q4 2026/27

Domain	Action	Owner	By	Target	Priority
Culture	Launch Risk Culture diagnostic survey across all directorates. Baseline behavioural patterns by team and benchmark against 2026 survey	HR / Risk Consultant	**Q2**	Culture 3.75	**Critical**
Culture	Annual all-staff risk management awareness briefing. Expand Risk Champions remit with cross-directorate risk sessions	Risk Consultant / L&D	**Q1–Q3**	Training 3.0	**Critical**
Culture	Design and launch mandatory 30-minute risk awareness e-learning for all staff; embed in new-starter onboarding	Risk Consultant / L&D	**Q3-Q4**	Training 3.0	**Critical**
Governance	Refresh Risk Appetite Statements to include more quantitative thresholds; design and pilot a Risk KRI Dashboard for CLT and Audit & Governance	Risk Consultant / CLT	**Q1–Q2**	Gov 4.0	**High**
Technology	Consider risk tracking using Power BI/ SharePoint – **predicated by resources and expertise**	Risk Consultant / IT	**Q2–Q3**	Transparency	**High**
Cross-Func	Embed corporate risk assessment process into all project initiation documents and project steering committee agendas	Risk Consultant / PMO	**Q1**	Cross 4.0	**Medium**

Phase 2: Embedding — 2027

Domain	Action	Owner	By	Target	Priority
Culture	Launch interactive risk workshops for managers	Risk Consultant	**2027**	Culture 3.75	**Critical**
Technology	Update and maintain RMIS business case to be investment-ready for presentation when financial position improves	Risk Consultant / Finance	**2027**	Future-ready	**Low**
Process	Introduce formal trend analysis and lessons-learned review process after any significant risk event	Risk Consultant / Directors	**2027**	Process 4.2	**Medium**

10. Success Metrics and Targets

The following targets define what success looks like at the end of the 24-month improvement programme. Progress against these metrics will be reviewed quarterly by CLT and reported to the Audit and Governance Committee. A full reassessment using the same 94-question survey is planned for February 2028, enabling a third data point and continued year-on-year comparison.

Metric	2024	2026	Target	By	Notes
Overall Weighted Score	1.32	**3.50**	**4.0+**	24 months	Overall risk maturity threshold indicating strong, embedded practice
Risk Culture	1.21	**3.29**	**3.75+**	24 months	Highest-weighted domain (30%); primary lever for overall score improvement
Risk Governance	1.39	**3.71**	**4.0+**	24 months	Maintain Developing status; move into Strong with appetite/KRI improvements
Risk Process	1.24	**3.73**	**4.2+**	24 months	Already Developing; target Strong with analytics and project embedding
Risk Resources (People)	1.20	**3.85**	**4.0+**	24 months	Maintain strong capability; continue development of partnership skills
Cross-Functional	1.67	**3.39**	**4.0+**	12 months	Embed risk into DLT’s and project governance
Staff training completion	N/A	**~40%**	**90%+**	6 - 9 months	% of all staff completing mandatory 30-minute risk awareness module
Risk Technology	1.0	**1.65**	**Interim**	Ongoing	Interim KPI dashboard via Power BI — full GRC investment subject to financial recovery

11. Conclusion

The 2026 Risk Maturity Assessment tells a story of genuine and substantial progress. From a weighted score of 1.32 in 2024, the Council has reached 3.50 in 2026, a 165% improvement that reflects real structural change. We now have a functioning Risk Management Board, embedded quarterly governance, a Risk Champions network, a capable and proficient risk department, and a formalised reporting structure that places risk at the heart of the Council's decision-making at every level.

This progress is all the more significant given the context in which it has been achieved. A Council navigating ongoing financial pressures, operating with severely constrained resources and under heightened external scrutiny, has simultaneously built the foundations of a robust risk management function. That is a considerable institutional achievement.

The work is not complete. Risk Culture, the domain that carries the greatest strategic weight and the greatest influence over the Council's long-term risk management effectiveness requires continued and focused investment, particularly in training. Technology remains a known gap that cannot currently be addressed. Cross-directorate risk sharing and the use of quantitative as well as qualitative risk metrics are areas where practice is still developing.

But the direction of travel is clear, the infrastructure is in place, and the Council has the governance structures, the team capability, and the organisational will to continue improving. The 24-month action plan set out in this report provides a practical and prioritised roadmap for the next phase, one that is grounded in the realities of the Council's financial position while maintaining clear ambition for where risk management maturity needs to reach.

A full repeat assessment is planned in 24 months. The Council's target, a weighted overall score of 4.0, placing it in the Strong category is achievable within that timeframe if the actions set out in this report are delivered with commitment and consistency.

Appendix

2026 Risk Maturity Questions

	Risk Governance
1	The Council's Risk Management Framework is defined and has been effectively embedded
2	The use of the term 'risk' is applied consistently across the Council
3	Roles and responsibilities outlined within the Risk Management Framework are understood and embedded across SBC
4	The Risk Management Framework is approved by CLT which is subject to ongoing monitoring.
5	The CEO effectively communicates the importance of Risk Management across SBC.
6	The Risk Management Framework is suitably aligned to the Council's culture.
7	The Risk Management Framework effectively supports and enables the Council's strategic objectives.
8	The Risk Management Framework enables risk-informed decision making
9	The Risk Management Framework effectively supports the Council in identifying opportunities.
10	The Risk Management Framework is subject to review and update at an appropriate frequency.
11	Members and officers understand the concept of risk appetite and apply it in decision-making.
12	The CLT effectively monitors risk exposure against risk appetite.
13	Monitoring of risk exposures takes place at least quarterly via the Audit and Governance Committee.
14	Risk appetite statements are defined and appropriately set against each of our corporate risks.
15	Risk appetite statements have been developed to include more quantitative (over qualitative) metrics.
16	Key Risk Indicators (KRIs) are effectively leveraged to track risk exposure on an ongoing basis.
17	Risk appetite is consistently considered in major Council decisions.
18	Risk appetite is subject to effective CLT review and update at an appropriate frequency.
19	Risk oversight has been effectively delegated by the CLT to the Risk Management Board
20	The Audit & Corporate Governance receives regular updates on the management of risk at an appropriate frequency
21	Quarterly risk-reporting is sufficiently detailed to support appropriate action by the CLT
22	Membership of the Risk Management Board is effective
23	The Audit & Corporate Governance approves Risk Management activities
24	Risk deep-dives are undertaken for our Corporate Risks
25	Senior officers and members receive targeted risk management training.
26	The Audit & Corporate Governance Committee maintains effective oversight of Risk Management
27	CLT Level risk sponsors are appropriately assigned to each individual corporate risk
28	The Risk Management skills and capabilities of the Risk Management team enable effective execution of their assigned roles
29	Risk owners understand their role and level of accountability for their risks
30	The Risk Manager is able to engage and communicate directly with the CEO
31	Assurance functions work collaboratively with the Risk Management team to support broader Risk Management efforts
32	Assurance functions collaborate to maximise risk management coverage
33	Internal and external auditors provide adequate assurance over Risk Management activities

	Risk Culture
34	Senior leadership maintain effective engagement in Risk Management activities
35	Risk Management efforts are adequately resourced by the Council
36	Risk Management training is sufficient and effectively delivered to the Council
37	The Council is effective in sharing Risk Management information across Directorates

38 The Council sets a strong 'tone at the top' for Risk Management
39 Employees are actively encouraged to speak up about risk and issues
40 Escalation of risks is not blocked by management
41 The communication of risk-related information by the Risk Management team utilises effective methods, such as internal comms
42 There is an exchange of risk information on a regular basis across departments & directorates
43 Employees are aware of their Risk Management responsibilities (as set out in the RM Strategy)
44 Adverse risk outcomes are clearly communicated
45 Formal Risk Management training is established, aligned to the specific requirements of individuals, with a clear schedule in place
46 Risk Management training is interactive
47 Risk training is updated regularly and remains relevant to the council

Risk Process

48 The risk identification process is consistently applied across the Council
49 The business functions identify local risks on their risk registers with relevant risks escalated
50 Risk categories are tailored to the council through the Risk Assessment Matrix
51 The council reviews its risk identification methodology regularly
52 The Council has a formal risk register structure to align/interconnect risks where relevant
53 The Risk Management Board and CLT identify strategic risks for assessment (top-down approach)
54 The council has defined and adopted a company-wide approach to assessing the impact and likelihood of its most significant risks materialising
55 Risk assessments measure risk at appropriate points (e.g. current, target)
56 Risk assessment considers a range of impacts, including financial impacts
57 Quantitative metrics are used to add value to risk assessments (where appropriate)
58 Rating criteria are consistently applied in the council
59 Risk assessment considers the interdependencies between risks
60 Risk owners develop risk treatment/mitigation plans proactively
61 The council documents risk treatment/mitigation plans for all risks
62 The council assigns every risk treatment/mitigation plan to an action owner
63 The council reviews risk treatment/mitigation plans regularly and at least quarterly
64 The council considers cost-benefit analysis in determining its risk treatment/mitigation
65 The council assesses treatment/mitigation plan effectiveness
66 The council links treatment/mitigation plans to risk appetite
67 Treatment/mitigation plans focus on balancing risk and opportunity
68 The council uses a formal process to monitor all risk exposure at an agreed frequency e.g. monthly, quarterly
69 The council identifies and monitors leading and lagging key risk indicators (KRI's)
70 The council tracks both internal and external risk factors
71 The council monitors exposure to emerging risks
72 The council has a formal process with defined triggers/thresholds for escalating risks
73 The risk owner monitors control status
74 The council monitors the effectiveness of its management of risk
75 The Council analyses trends in risk exposure
76 The Council evaluates past assessment effectiveness
77 The Council uses a formal process to monitor all risk exposure at an agreed frequency
78 The Council has a formal process with defined triggers/thresholds for escalating risks1
79 There is a formalised process for reporting at all levels (incl. Audit & Governance Committee and CLT)
80 The Risk Manager presents risk reports to the Audit & Governance Committee and CLT
81 The Risk Management team uses feedback to improve risk reports

	Risk Resources
82	The Risk Management team has the necessary quantitative/analytical skills
83	The Risk Management team has an adequate understanding of Council processes
84	The Risk Management team has the skills required for success
85	The risk management team has appropriate business partnership skills
86	Risk Management tools are able to be used across the Council
87	Risk data from across the Council is collated in a central Risk Management software database
88	Technology monitors risk exposures in real time
89	Risk Management tools are customised and tailored to the Councils needs
90	The Council automates risk information collection
91	Technology monitors risk exposures in real time1

	Cross-functional Activities
92	Risk Management is integrated within our day to day business activities
93	The Risk Management team communicates with the various decision-making committees
94	The Risk Management team participates in project-level steering committees