

Annex C

Analysis of Key Corporate Risk 3 – Failure to ensure partnership arrangements are fit for purpose to effectively deliver outcomes

Background

1. This Annex provides a more detailed analysis of KCR3 – Failure to ensure partnership arrangements are fit for purpose to effectively deliver outcomes.
2. The description of this risk is as follows: In order to continue to deliver good outcomes and services, the council will have to enter into partnerships with a multitude of different organisations whether they are public, third sector or commercial entities. The arrangements for partnership working need to be clear and understood by partners to ensure they deliver the best possible outcomes.

Risk Detail

Failure to effectively monitor and manage partnerships

3. As a city council, we work collaboratively with a wide range of external partners — including public sector organisations, private companies, voluntary sector organisations, trade unions and community groups, both to deliver vital services and to achieve shared citywide objectives. For example, the council has several thematic partnerships convened to support development and delivery of the 10-year strategies and 10-year plans.
4. Failure to effectively monitor and manage these partnerships presents a significant organisational and reputational risk. This failure can lead to lack of clarity around roles and responsibilities for informing future ambition and delivering current priorities, diverting resources away from core city objectives and instead leading to strategic outcomes which are either diluted or unable to be delivered.
5. The scope of the 2024 Local Government Association Peer Review was discussed at Audit and Governance Committee in January 2024. The Committee recognised the importance of partnership working by considering additional partners to interview. The subsequent LGA Peer Report feedback noted the council needed to do more to understand partners objectives and work together for the city, in particular around development opportunities, and the opportunities the Local Plan will bring.

Annex C

Analysis of Key Corporate Risk 3 – Failure to ensure partnership arrangements are fit for purpose to effectively deliver outcomes

Partners who took part in the LGA Peer Challenge were invited to a focus group to discuss what good looks like and make recommendations to strengthen the controls in place (see ‘controls’ over).

Partner (especially NHS, Academies) financial pressures may affect outcomes for residents

6. When delivery partners experience financial pressures, it can directly affect the quality, availability, and sustainability of services residents depend on. Reduced capacity, staff shortages, and cost-cutting may lead to delays, limited access, or lower service standards, potentially increasing demand on council services.
7. Financially constrained partners may be unable to invest in early intervention or preventative services, increasing long-term demand on public systems. This can disproportionately affect vulnerable groups, widen inequalities, and negatively impact shared ambitions for better health and wellbeing, and reduced inequalities. Overall, financial instability in partner organisations threatens the effectiveness of our collaborative efforts to deliver for the city, and undermines our ability to deliver joined-up, resident-focused services.
8. Financial pressures experienced by private sector partners are often as recent geopolitics reducing business certainty and consumer confidence, with supply chains and raw materials costing more than pre-Brexit/Tariffs. More locally this is as a result of policy changes from central government, for example the 10 Year NHS Plan has led to anticipated changes within the Integrated Care Board, increased National Insurance contributions is adversely affecting the hospitality and social care sector, and higher education policy, such as family visas no longer being available has reduced the number of overseas students attending the universities.

Unilateral decisions made by key partners may affect other partners’ budgets or services

9. CYC works with city partners to deliver integrated services and shared ambition. When one partner makes unilateral decisions without consultation—such as withdrawing funding, changing

Annex C

Analysis of Key Corporate Risk 3 – Failure to ensure partnership arrangements are fit for purpose to effectively deliver outcomes

service models, or developing their own ambition that is at direct opposites to the council and wider city —it can have a significant knock-on effect for other partners, including the local authority.

10. These uncoordinated changes may shift demand unexpectedly onto council services, increase financial pressures, disrupt joint delivery arrangements, or undermine strategic planning. In addition, by failing to present a united and cohesive strategic ambition to key funding partners, the city could reduce its ability to attract investment for growth.
11. Without early engagement and joint decision-making, this risk compromises the stability, efficiency, and coherence of delivery — ultimately affecting outcomes for residents and putting additional financial strain on already limited council, and city partner, resources.

Priorities of the newly elected Mayor does not align with council /or city priorities

12. The election of the new Mayor risks introducing a potential for a shift in political direction, policy focus, and resource allocation. If the Mayor's priorities did not align with those of the local council or the broader strategic objectives for the city, this misalignment could have created significant risks. Diverging agendas may have led to fragmented decision-making, delays in programme delivery, and inefficient use of resources.
13. Such misalignment could weaken existing partnerships, create tension between political and operational leadership within the council, and disrupt long-term plans that require cross-organisational commitment and funding that would typically be awarded from the Mayor. A lack of alignment between mayoral and council priorities risks reducing the effectiveness of local government, creating unworkable tensions and undermining progress on key outcomes for communities.
14. At present, the city has aligned political leadership, with national, regional, local MP and local administration all within the same political party. Although there remains a risk that the newly elected Mayor does not align with the council or city priorities, this is minimal. The risk is more as a result of too many demands on the

Annex C

Analysis of Key Corporate Risk 3 – Failure to ensure partnership arrangements are fit for purpose to effectively deliver outcomes

available funding and simply not having capacity to do everything, rather than as a result of differences in strategic priorities.

Financial pressure on York and Scarborough Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (YTHFT) and the Humber and North Yorkshire Health and Care Partnership ICS Board which may have worsened further due to Covid-19 and the cost of living crisis and ongoing demand on services

15. Ongoing financial pressures on NHS partners pose a significant challenge for CYC. These pressures—exacerbated by the long-term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the national cost of living crisis, and sustained high demand for health and care services, together with recent national policy announcements—have the potential to reduce the capacity of NHS partners to deliver timely, preventative, community-based care and support early intervention and prevention.
16. As a result, there is a growing risk of increased demand being placed onto CYC services, particularly adult social care, public health, housing, and family support. This shift places additional strain on CYC's already stretched budget and can undermine the effectiveness of integrated care. This may also lead to poorer outcomes for residents, especially the most vulnerable, due to delays in hospital discharges, reduced community health provision, and disrupted access to essential services.
17. Without coordinated action, the financial instability experienced by health partners will limit the council's ability to plan, respond, and deliver on its statutory duties, and will ultimately compromise collective ambitions for improved population health and wellbeing.
18. This risk has become more likely with the planned abolition of NHS England announced in March 2025, leading to an estimated 20k-30k job cuts nationally. The position for Yorkshire and Humber ICB is not yet clear.

Cumulative impacts of the pandemic and cost of living crisis and a reduction in volunteering on voluntary and community sector

19. The voluntary and community sector (VCS) plays a vital role in supporting residents, particularly vulnerable and hard-to-reach groups, and is a key partner in delivering preventative and

Annex C

Analysis of Key Corporate Risk 3 – Failure to ensure partnership arrangements are fit for purpose to effectively deliver outcomes

community-based services alongside CYC. However, the cumulative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the ongoing cost of living crisis, and a noticeable decline in volunteering levels have placed the sector under significant strain.

20. Many VCS organisations are facing increased demand for support at the same time as experiencing rising operational costs, reduced income, and workforce shortages—both paid and voluntary. This reduces their capacity to deliver critical services, contribute to early intervention work, and support community resilience. For the local council, this poses a substantial risk: the weakening of the VCS could lead to increased pressure on statutory services, widening inequalities, and slower recovery in key areas such as mental health, social isolation, and poverty.
21. If these challenges continue without adequate support or collaboration, there is a risk of long-term damage to the ecosystem of local support networks, limiting CYC's ability to achieve its strategic objectives and meet the needs of residents.

Implications

22. The implications for the Council include:
 - Key partnerships fail to deliver or break down
 - Failure to utilise commitment to the city, reduced impact overall impact
 - Misalignment of organisations' ambitions and direction of travel
 - Ability to deliver transformation priorities undermined
 - Delays in funding lead to missed opportunities
 - Adverse impact on service delivery
 - Funding implications
 - Reputational impact

Controls

23. Below are examples of the formal controls put in place by the council to mitigate KCR3. In reality, many more formal and informal arrangements take place every day, with officers at every level working closely with partners in a variety of different ways and for different outcomes.

Annex C

Analysis of Key Corporate Risk 3 – Failure to ensure partnership arrangements are fit for purpose to effectively deliver outcomes

24. The controls facilitated by the council were strengthened following the Corporate Improvement Framework and action plan, approved by the Leader in July 2024.
25. The below references some of the partnership arrangements established by partner organisations, such as the ICB, however there are many more that support delivery.
26. Controls include:

Place partnerships

27. **Executive** At the start of the new administration, Executive were allocated lead roles on different partnership boards to ensure sufficient political oversight, with details added to the Outside Bodies¹ website. Members meet key partners regularly and share feedback with officers to take action as appropriate.
28. **Chief Officers** CYC takes an account management approach to monitoring key partnerships. CMT has identified the organisations who have the most potential to influence or affect organisational and city aims and priority outcomes for residents and have established a partner programme to continue to engage them.
29. Each chief officer, including the Chief Operating Officer, leads on specific relationships, with the pattern of meeting defined by the organisation. It includes 1/4ly meetings with each university and national government bodies, and regularly meetings with health and community partners, city partners, anchor institutions and key developers.
30. **Partner programme** Feedback from the LGA Peer Challenge about harnessing the commitment of partners, and subsequent partner discussions about what good looks like for them informed the Corporate Improvement Action Plan. As a result, an annual partner programme schedule has been developed. It is focused around the key themes of delivering the Local Plan (current growth), developing York's Growth Ambitions (future growth) with cross-cutting themes set by the council plan's four core

¹ [Outside bodies](#)

Annex C

Analysis of Key Corporate Risk 3 – Failure to ensure partnership arrangements are fit for purpose to effectively deliver outcomes

commitments of equalities, affordability, climate and health (EACH).

31. Partners meet with the council regularly to discuss key issues and identify areas to work together on, aligned to the 10-year strategies of health, climate and economy, with thematic groups focused on delivering specific ambitions and functional groups sharing expertise, insight and joining up strategic actions.
32. The annual partner programme has been designed to enable each group to understand the current context and shape the next discussion, as a cascade of discussions. This is to manage discussions in smaller groups so each partner can influence and inform, for example, developing York's Growth Ambitions in response to the Local Growth Plan has cascaded through the Economic Partnership, Strategic City Leaders Group and thematic task and finish groups.
33. **Place leadership** Two key place partnerships facilitated by the council are chaired by the Leader and Chief Operating Officer include:
 - The newly established Place Making Partnership, comprised of Mayor, MPs, Leader, Higher Education, Public Sector, Business Representative (Chamber of Commerce) and York Civic Trust set the principles for growth for further discussion by the City Leaders and thematic partnerships.
 - The Strategic City Leaders group (approximately 80 city leaders from across public, voluntary, and private sector) is an overarching strategic leadership group that takes a strategic look at wider place-making and city opportunities. Members also receive a quarterly e-newsletter (Inside our City).
34. **Thematic partnerships** The council has convened several thematic partnerships to support delivery of the 10-year strategies and 10-year plan, developed in collaboration with the city leaders group:

Annex C

Analysis of Key Corporate Risk 3 – Failure to ensure partnership arrangements are fit for purpose to effectively deliver outcomes

- York Climate Commission has been refreshed following a co-design workshop in January, with participants supporting delivering the Climate Change Strategy.
 - York Schools and Academies Board
 - Better Care York
 - York Economic Partnership steers the Economic Strategy and has convened several task and finish groups to develop action plans in response to the objectives - a Global City, A thriving city, City Centre Action Plan, etc.
 - The Transport Expert Panel provides expertise to support delivery of the Local Transport Strategy.
 - The Financial Inclusion Steering Group – established from the 2013 Fairness Commission - oversees development of the Financial Inclusion Strategy and initiatives including work in response to the Cost-of-Living Crisis and oversight of the emerging draft Anti-poverty Strategy (for consideration by Executive in the autumn).
35. **Functional groups** The council has convened functional groups who meet quarterly to deliver city-wide issues, for example:
- York Head of Communications Group
 - York Sustainability Leads Group
36. **Key issues** Place partners are also brought together to discuss particular issues, for example, partners were invited to three workshops during 2024 to both understand more about the council's budgetary pressures and to make recommendations, helping to inform the budget approved by Council in February 2025.
37. **Monitoring and support** The council continues to monitor key issues as a result of emerging national or local policy and engages partners to explore how it can help. This includes offering business support to workforce at risk of redundancy, working with partners to consider how best deliver joint-funded services and convening discussions to identify growth proposals.
38. **Additional partnership arrangements** There are several partnerships across the city. The council participates in these by invitation, building insight and understanding, representing the

Annex C

Analysis of Key Corporate Risk 3 – Failure to ensure partnership arrangements are fit for purpose to effectively deliver outcomes

council's strategic priorities and reflecting how the council can adapt practices to support local issues.

39. Examples include:

- The Skills Board steers the Skills Strategy (this is a city board, convened by Higher York, with the council as a member).
- Tourist Advisory Board that developed the Tourist Strategy (this is a city board, convened by Make It York, with the council as a member).
- The Pride of Place Board – anchor institutions established by Aviva to focus on tackling the cost of living crisis and inequalities
- BioYorkshire Steering Group – established by the University of York, Askham Bryan and Fera to support the economic development of the bioeconomy
- Business representative groups where the council will be invited to discuss a specific issue or attend as a member, for example the BID Board, HAY, Chamber Leaders Group, Cultural Leaders Group, etc.

Independent fund-raising partnerships

40. The Council Plan recognises that it cannot deliver its priorities alone, and the council has convened two independent (of the council) groups to focus on York based fund raising. The York Community Fund, founded by the council and Two Ridings Community Foundation, with a steering group including Joseph Rowntree Foundation, York Council for Voluntary Services (CVS) and York Together.
41. As part of this York Hungry Minds campaign steering group has been established to encourage donations to fund free school meals for all primary school children.

Health partnerships

42. **Systems leadership** The York Health and Care Partnership Executive Committee meets monthly. It is chaired by the Council's Chief Operating Officer, and the ICB's York Place Director, which supports an integrated decision-making approach across organisations.

Annex C

Analysis of Key Corporate Risk 3 – Failure to ensure partnership arrangements are fit for purpose to effectively deliver outcomes

43. York Joint Health and Wellbeing Board is a statutory board that steers the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy and action plan and is chaired by the Portfolio Holder for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Social Care.
44. **Joint strategy** The Integrated Care System has a strategy that aligns with the Health & Wellbeing Board and Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2032. The York Place Board oversees the delivery of this at a Place level.
45. **Functional groups** Adult Services, Commissioners and the ICB are working closely to deliver several key joint services across health and social care with joint workshop discussions to define delivery practices, referral pathways and identify effective and efficient delivery options. This includes allocation of the Better Care Fund, and the winter pressures group.
46. Financial pressure remains. However, a newly established joint Commissioning Group chaired by the Director of Public Health with representatives from the Council, ICS and the Acute Trust are working together to reduce delays increase flow to reduce escalation beds and increase staffing.
47. **Thematic partnerships** A Joint project group with NHS/ICB/Council has convened to develop the integrated neighbourhood model and progress a review of health and council estates to support improved access to community health. Governance for this group feeds into the above leadership groups.
48. **Monitoring and support** CYC works closely with NHS partners, formally and informally to continue to monitor emerging national policy and the impact on local services. This includes informing discussions about supporting residents through ongoing service delivery.

Regional partnerships

49. **Regional leadership** The devolution deal sets out governance arrangements for the combined authority, which has been mandated in the combined authority's constitution. This included two places for the Leader and Deputy Leader on the combined authority joint committee, ensuring York's interests continue to be

Annex C

Analysis of Key Corporate Risk 3 – Failure to ensure partnership arrangements are fit for purpose to effectively deliver outcomes

represented. York has two votes for all combined authority decisions, with two held by North Yorkshire Council and one by the Mayor.

50. **Joint strategy** Arrangements with the newly established MCA are designed to support CYC understand priorities and inform strategic intent, with the Strategy and Partnerships team maintaining a central coordination role. CYC has informed development of the regional economic framework, and Local Growth Plan, co-producing York's response through close partnership working, both at a place level, with health partners and internal partnership arrangements.
51. Both the Mayoral pipeline, approved at July 2024 Leader's decision session; and subsequent Growth Ambitions, discussed at Scrutiny in December, were informed through place-based partnerships and are now steering discussions with the combined authority for future investment into the city.
52. The MCA are developing a series of consultative sessions with different officer groups to help ensure MCA Committee decisions include thorough briefings.
53. **Thematic partnerships** The MCA has established thematic partnerships the council is represented on – these either respond to different funds, such as the Trailblazers pilot or UK Shared Prosperity Fund, or to strategic commitments, such as Local Transport Plan or Local Area Energy Plan Accelerator.
54. **Functional groups** The council has convened a financial group to continue to progress the funding opportunities presented by the combined authority and ensure issues are resolved promptly to keep delivery flowing.
55. **Monitoring** This includes monitoring the "Mayoral pipeline" approved at the Leader's decision session in 2024 and representing York's interests during the development of Local Growth Plan to confirm areas of focus.
56. **Additional partnership arrangements** The council works closely in regional partnerships, sharing local expertise, building insight

Annex C

Analysis of Key Corporate Risk 3 – Failure to ensure partnership arrangements are fit for purpose to effectively deliver outcomes

and understanding, representing York's interests and informing strategic intent, such as:

- Yorkshire and Humber Leaders Group
- Yorkshire and Humber Policy Leads Group
- East Coast Mainline Association
- Yorkshire and Humber Climate Commission
- Regional Refugee Integration Forum (York and North Yorkshire representative)
- Yorkshire and Humber sub-regional Migration Group
- Home Office/Local Authority Asylum Safeguarding Board (co-Chair)
- White Rose Forest Strategic Board

Internal partnerships

57. The council works in partnership with the Trade Unions, with monthly meetings held at directorate level to discuss workforce issues and the Trade Unions consulted on new or revised workforce policies.
58. Internal co-ordination is delivered through the Policy Network. Comprised of cross directorate service representatives who have a role in policy development, the policy network meets regularly to inform policy direction, share impacts or issues of emerging policy, and understand the key issues the council asks partners to support and inform.

General Issues

59. As is noted above, the Council places great emphasis on building and maintaining effective partnerships that harness city partners commitment to the city and devotes significant time to ensuring partners continue to understand and inform city growth and service developments. Nevertheless, the risks covered by KC3 are not ones which can ever be 'managed away' and will continue to represent a risk to the Council for the foreseeable future.
60. Although recent independent assessments of the council's approach to working in partnership, for example the review of Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion, the Public Health Peer Challenge and Local Government Association Peer Challenge

Annex C

Analysis of Key Corporate Risk 3 – Failure to ensure partnership arrangements are fit for purpose to effectively deliver outcomes

Progress report - have all noted one of our strengths is building and nurturing partner relationships; the risk of partnership arrangements no longer being fit for purpose, particularly as financial pressures are felt more acutely and geopolitics creates greater uncertainty cannot be underplayed.

Risk Rating

61. The gross risk score is 20 (likelihood probable, impact major). After applying the controls detailed above the net risk score is reduced to 14 (likelihood possible, impact moderate).

Background papers

- LGA Peer Challenge interviews [Agenda for Audit and Governance Committee on Wednesday, 31 January 2024, 5.30 pm](#) item 40
- Executive (Public Pack) Local Government Association Peer Challenge Agenda Supplement for Executive, 09/05/2024 17:30
- Corporate Improvement Framework: [Annex B DRAFT IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK FINAL FOR CONSULTATION.pdf](#)
- Executive Decision Session [LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Final Report 2021](#)
- Partner involvement in budget consultation [budget-consultation-2025-26-external-report-on-budget-consultation-to-september-2024 \(2\).pdf](#)
- [Agenda for Decision Session - Executive Leader, Policy, Strategy and Partnerships on Wednesday, 17 July 2024, 10.00 am](#) item 4 (Corporate Improvement Framework) and item 5 (Mayoral pipeline)
- [Agenda for Economy, Place, Access and Transport Scrutiny Committee on Tuesday, 10 December 2024, 5.30 pm](#) item 5 (response to the Local Growth Plan)
- York North Yorkshire Combined Authority Constitution [240507- YNYCA-Constitution.pdf](#)