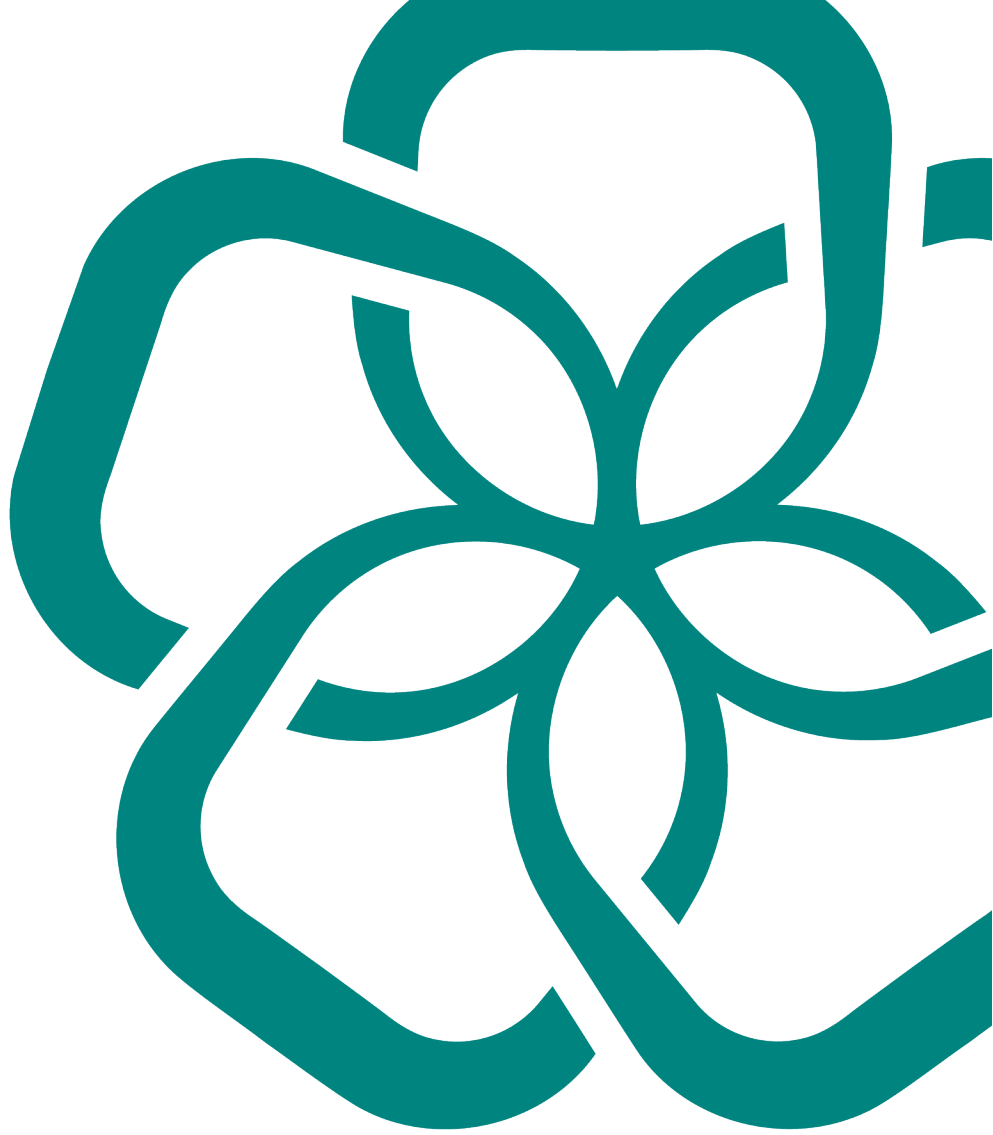West Yorkshire Combined Authority | Tracy Brabin Mayor of West Yorkshire

2025 Organisational Risk Management Strategy

Driving Continuous Improvement Through the Risk Maturity Cycle

Ismail Mayat | March 2025

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1. Introduction

This Risk Management Strategy forms a key part of our Risk Management Framework 2025, supporting our Risk Appetite Statement 2025, Control Effectiveness Evaluation Framework, Risk Management Policy, Risk Management Procedures, and Risk Management Guideline tailored individually towards directors, heads of service, programme & project managers, and service leads. The Risk Management Framework has been developed whilst implementing the RMS (Risk Management Strategy) Development Plan.

The West Yorkshire Combined Authority is committed to evolving its risk management approach to reflect the best practice standards, including ISO 31000 and HM Treasury's Orange Book, ensuring risk is managed in a way that enhances decision-making, drives successful outcomes, and accelerates delivery while maintaining strong governance and accountability.

This strategy moves us away from inconsistent, silo-based risk management, focusing on integrated, transparent, and evidence-based practices that align with our corporate and strategic objectives. By embedding the risk maturity cycle, we will drive continuous improvement in how risk is assessed, developed, embedded, and matured across the organisation.

2. Strategic Objectives

- Establish a unified, structured approach to risk management, aligning with ISO 31000 and the Orange Book.
- Ensure risk management is embedded into everyday business activities, including business planning, performance reviews, and reporting.
- Transition from reactive to proactive risk management, enabling dynamic resilience and timely, appropriate control measures which are monitored and managed to achieve the best outcomes in all projects and functions.
- Provide clear governance, assurance, and transparency through improved risk reporting to boards and committees.
- Promote shared learning to avoid duplication of effort and strengthen our collective ability to manage risk effectively.
- Strengthen public confidence and organisational reputation by demonstrating adherence to best practices in risk management.

3. The Risk Maturity Cycle

Our strategy is built around a structured approach to continuous improvement using the Risk Maturity Cycle, as defined in the RMS (Risk Management Strategy) Development Plan. To summarise, the four key phases are:

3.1 Assessment

- Conduct a comprehensive evaluation of existing risk management practices across the organisation.
- Identify gaps, inconsistencies, and inefficiencies that hinder effective risk control.
- Benchmark current risk maturity against ISO 31000 and Orange Book principles.
- Engage leaders, officers, and project teams to understand challenges in managing risk at all levels.

3.2 Development

- Establish a clear roadmap for enhancing risk management, focusing on governance, culture, and capability building.
- Introduce consistent risk processes and reporting mechanisms, reducing duplication of effort.
- Strengthen risk data centralisation, improving record-keeping and risk intelligence across projects and programmes.

- Develop tailored risk management guidance for separate roles, ensuring accessibility for all staff.
- Digitising risk processes for improved data management and data driven decision making.

3.3 Embedding

- Integrate risk management into business planning, decision-making, and performance management processes.
- Provide ongoing training and awareness programmes for directors, heads of service, programme / project managers, and operational staff.
- Ensure that risk ownership is clear, with appropriate escalation routes and controls in place.
- Embed risk discussions lead by risk sponsors into leadership meetings and governance boards to drive risk-informed decisions.

3.4 Maturity

- Measure and review risk management effectiveness, ensuring a continual learning cycle.
- Foster a risk-aware culture, where all staff feel empowered to identify, manage, and escalate risks proactively.
- Strengthen engagement with governance committees, ensuring robust oversight and challenge.
- Align risk management with wider organisational transformation efforts, ensuring risks are managed in a way that supports delivery of key initiatives.

4. Integration with Organisational Activities

To ensure risk management is fully embedded, this strategy integrates risk management into:

- Strategic and Business Planning – Ensuring risk is assessed as part of setting objectives.
- Performance Reviews – Linking risk management with performance monitoring to improve service delivery.
- Programme and Project Management – Enabling real-time risk oversight, ensuring risks are mitigated before they escalate into issues.
- Governance and Transparency – Ensuring decision-makers have a clear view of risk exposure and controls.
- Senior Leadership Board – Ensuring all risk management activities have a top down eye with efficient escalation and de-escalation as required.

5. Strengthening Leadership and Governance Oversight

Effective risk management requires **strong leadership engagement.** Governance boards, directors, and service leads will play a crucial role in:

- Providing oversight to ensure risk management practices align with strategic goals.
- Challenging risk assumptions and ensuring proportionate control measures are applied.
- Ensuring transparency through structured risk reporting that allows for proper scrutiny of decisions.

This approach will provide the governance committee with the visibility needed to perform effective checks and balances on officer decisions, ensuring risk-taking is responsible, justifiable, and in the public interest.

6. Capacity Building: Training and Awareness

To embed a culture of dynamic risk management, training will be central to this strategy. We will:

- Deliver targeted training programmes for directors, senior officers, programme managers, and frontline operational staff that have a responsibility within risk management.
- Provide ongoing learning opportunities through risk forums, case studies, and shared learning sessions.
- Ensure risk management competency development is built into staff development frameworks.

By increasing awareness and capability, we will ensure all staff can **confidently identify, assess, and manage risks** in their daily roles.

7. Expected Outcomes and Benefits

This strategy aims to ensure risk management actively contributes to better service delivery and strategic success. The anticipated benefits include:

- Stronger control and oversight, reducing unnecessary use of public resources.
- Increased confidence in decision-making, with staff empowered to manage risks effectively.
- Improved risk intelligence, leading to proactive rather than reactive responses.
- Greater organisational resilience, ensuring risks do not become issues that impact delivery.
- Enhanced reputation and public trust, demonstrating our commitment to best practice.

8. Short and Medium-Term Priorities

In the **short term**, we will:

- Assess current risk practices and identify areas for improvement.
- Standardise risk reporting and recording processes.
- Deliver targeted risk training for key personnel.

In the **medium term**, we will:

- Fully embed risk management within business processes.
- Improve risk governance and transparency, strengthening reporting mechanisms.
- Foster a risk-aware culture, ensuring proactive risk management at all levels.

9. Commitment to Continuous Improvement

This strategy is not static—it is a living framework that will evolve as our organisation matures in risk management. Through regular reviews, shared learning, and benchmarking, we will continue to refine our approach, ensuring we remain at the forefront of best practice risk management among combined authorities.

By embedding risk management **into everything we do**, we will **strengthen our ability to deliver successful outcomes, accelerate projects, and ensure the best use of public resources** while maintaining **strong governance, transparency, and public trust**.

10. Document Control

Title	Control Effectiveness Evaluation Framework
Version number	1.0
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Authorised by	TBC
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Directorate	Legal, Governance & Compliance Services
Unique Document ID reference	TBC – for records management purposes

11. Review & Changes

The Combined Authority reserves the right to amend the details of this document as required, following consultation with relevant parties. This document will be monitored and reviewed on an annual basis, to ensure that it meets the needs of the Combined Authority and ensure compliance with relevant legislation.

This current document has undergone introduction and review, as follows:

Function	Date	Comment	Reviewed by	Approved by
Introduced	10/03/2025	New Version	Ismail Mayat - Risk & Compliance Manager	Caroline Norreys – Assistant Director of LGC
1st Review				

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All information correct at time of writing

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