Item 5
29th August 2024

West of Scotland Archaeology Service

Joint Committee

Report by WoSAS Manager

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WoSAS Risk Register Review 2024

Purpose of Report:

To advise Members of the current assessment of the level of operational risk to the Service resulting from various factors, and of recommended mitigation measures undertaken and proposed to address those risks.

Recommendations:

Members are asked:

- That this report and the attached Risk Register (Annex 1) be noted.

***PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING**:*

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1. BACKGROUND

1.1 A risk register is a record of information about identified risks. Risks are evaluated for their possible impacts and effects and in what circumstances they might take effect. The risk register can also record the form of response that can address the identified risks and which actor will undertake the necessary action and on what timescale. A risk register is updated as circumstances relevant to each risk change and when new risks are identified or where risks have been mitigated or eliminated.

2. WoSAS RISK REGISTER

2.1 The WoSAS Risk Register is a live document used as a management tool which seeks to identify, quantify and categorise operational risks to the West of Scotland Archaeology Service, and to identify appropriate mitigation measures which can negate these risks or minimize their impacts. This information is presented in tabular form, along with additional information including commentary on the current status of the risks, and the body best placed to manage each risk.

2.2 The risks identified in the WoSAS Risk Register are grouped by category; Leadership, Partnership, Organisational, and Financial. The evaluation of each risk estimates the likely impact of the risk should it occur or be realised, and scores the risk according to the likelihood of that occurrence. The predicted severity of each unmitigated risk is presented in the table in ”traffic light” red, amber, green warning colours.

2.3 The response to each risk sets out mechanisms or measures which can be used, either continuously or when required, to minimise or negate the risk, or to reduce the likelihood of its occurrence. The degree of estimated residual or managed risk if appropriate mitigation measures are employed successfully is also presented visually by colours. Finally, the perceived current status of the risk as “improving/decreasing”, “worsening/rising”, or “stable” is presented in shorthand by downward, upward and sideways movement arrows.

3. REVIEW OF THE RISK REGISTER FOR 2024

3.1 The last review of the WoSAS Risk Register was undertaken by the manager of the Service in late 2022 to assess the specific impacts of and responses to the Covid-19 pandemic. The current review was to assess changes to the identifiable risks following the implementation of changes to working practices in response to the pandemic, and before reviving the work on preparation of an updated legal agreement between the WoSAS partner authorities.

3.2 The latest review of risks to the Service identified the need for amendments to the assessed status of Partnership Risk P2, Organisational Risk O4, and Financial Risk F5 following implementation of mitigation measures. The amended status, and additional comments on some of these and others are presented in the Risk Register table (Annex 1) in blue text and symbols.

3.3 In particular, the severe impacts on business operations which led to the introduction of altered working practices have now “bedded in” successfully. The description and evaluation of the operational risk and potential responses to it which were entered in the Risk Register as Organisational Risk Heading O4 had been assessed as “improving”. Following a period of monitoring the implementation mitigation measures, the ongoing status has been assessed as “stable”.

3.4 Organisational Risk Heading O1 (“Dependence on a small Executive Team…”) has been partly realised through the retirement of one of the Service Staff. While the recruitment process to engage a replacement member of staff has commenced, the current status of the management of this risk can still be estimated as “worsening” at least temporarily due to the delays in recruitment.

3.5 An additional risk has been identified during the background work to update the WoSAS legal agreement. Despite a comprehensive search of the document storage areas within the Host Authority’s headquarters, it has not been possible to find the original copy of the 1997 Minute of Agreement. The risk of Partner authorities leaving the Partnership abruptly has been entered into the WoSAS Risk Register as Partnership Risk Heading P3, with an assessed probability of occurrence rated as “low”, but with a predicted impact rated as “high”. This risk will disappear once a new legal agreement is in place.

3.6 None of the amended entries in the Risk Register are currently so severe or so likely to occur as would require a change to their Current Risk Evaluation, and the proposed or ongoing mitigation measures are considered adequate to maintain the current estimates of the residual managed risks.

3.7 The information in the Risk Register will continue to be updated, and will help to inform Steering Group discussions on the finalised proposals for renewed service delivery which are to be brought to the Committee for consideration at a future meeting.

4 POLICY AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Resource Implications:

Financial:	None.
Legal:	None.
Personnel:	None.
Procurement:	None.

Business Plan Objectives:

Maintain and update the HER:	Will continue to be sustained by management and mitigation of the identified risks.
Provide DM advice to Planning Officers:	Will continue to be sustained by management and mitigation of the identified risks.
Provide forward planning advice to councils:	Will continue to be sustained by management and mitigation of the identified risks.
Facilitate sustainable development:	Will continue to be sustained by management and mitigation of the identified risks.
Represent the interests of councils in consultations:	Will continue to be sustained by management and mitigation of the identified risks.
Provide HER information to researchers and public:	Will continue to be sustained by management and mitigation of the identified risks.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Members are asked:

- That this report and the attached Risk Register (Annex 1) be noted.

HMcB
West of Scotland Archaeology Service
22 August 2024